

COMPARING THE CAREER TRANSITIONS OF YOUNGER AND OLDER
ADULTS: CONTRIBUTIONS OF ADULT ATTACHMENT ORIENTATION AND
CAREER ADAPTABILITY TO SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Katherine Ramos

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Abstract

Understanding career transitions and what drives particular utilization of adaptive strategies during these life periods are important to examine as they provide valuable information regarding how people cope. To date, limited research has examined the impact that career transitions have on overall health and functioning across two distinct generational cohorts. This proposal addresses current gaps within the literature by examining career transitions from a life span perspective, focusing exclusively on career adaptive strategies outlined in career construction theory (Savickas, 2005) and attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982). Results from this study highlight that attachment insecurity was negatively associated with career adaptive strategies and well-being. Younger adults are more concerned with control and confidence while older adults are concerned with control and curiosity when undergoing transitions. Moreover, career concern and control emerged as significant mediators between attachment insecurity and well-being for both cohorts. Lastly, relationships with parents and significant others were also important features to well-being for these two age cohorts. Implications of this line of research highlight that while similarities involved in transitions exist, it is equally important to test and identify which individual difference variables are important to well-being. Future research directions and implications to vocational and counseling interventions are provided.

Keywords: attachment, career adaptability, career transitions and generational differences

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Chapter I

Introduction

The accelerated pace of contemporary work life is affecting the nature of work and the experience of career transitions. Dating back to the early 20th century and continuing through the 21st century, economic recessions, the advent and introduction of technology, greater business participation in global markets, and demographic shifts in the U.S., have altered and modified the workplace landscape (Brody & Rudi, 2011). These changes and shifts have collectively played a role in the instability of the labor force that has impacted transitions in the workplace (Hollister, 2011).

Additionally, the profile of the U.S. labor force has changed in the last 50 years with continued growing changes in the next 50. With an aging population (e.g., Baby Boomer generation) tied with the lengthening of the life span (Blagosklonny, 2010), the age structure of the labor force will see an increase of older adults (55 and older) from 13% in 2000 to 20% in 2020 (Monthly Labor Review, 2002). In regards to employment trends in younger adults, within the ages of 18-24, individuals held an average of 5.4 jobs with college educated women spending more time employed in comparison to college educated men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Given the changes in the world of work, compounded by the changing age structure of the workforce, there is increasing need to understand how people adapt to career transitions.

How persons experience such transitions may vary as a function of when the career shift occurs. Transitions that involve entry to a job, for example, require an individual to negotiate a new identity and life role that is assumed to play a significant part in a person's life for the next 30-40 years. Conversely, exiting a career (i.e.,

retirement), while similarly positioning an individual to negotiate a new life role, requires an active disengagement from one's established career identity. Research examining similarities and differences across distinct age groups may uniquely speak to the salient aspects of vocational decision-making that significantly influence a sense of self, one's identity, and one's relationships with others. Comparing the career transitions of young and older adults may identify distinct differences that can lead to improved interventions for helping people successfully segue through their respective transitions.

Over the years, vocational psychology research has improved our understanding about career development processes. Theoretical models of career transitions (Schlossberg, 1981), career development across the life span (Super, 1953) and career adaptability while undergoing career transitions (Savickas, 2002, 2005) have all highlighted how people make decisions about work and its relation to their work identity development. Yet our understanding of individual adjustment and adaptive processes during vocational transitions remains limited. Specifically, an important and understudied area of research is how one's life context influences subjective appraisals that facilitate adaptation and contribute to well being during these transitions. The likelihood of undergoing a career transition is becoming more common throughout one's career trajectory *and* particularly inevitable when first entering a career and when making decisions to retire.

In an effort to better understand career transitions, I proposed a theory-guided study to examine predictors of career adaptability resources during career transitions that are contextually and possibly developmentally different across two distinct age groups (i.e., emerging and older adults). This effort drew from attachment theory (Bowlby,

1982), and career construction theory (Savickas, 2002) to examine these aims.

In the major sections to follow, I discuss the nature of career transitions. Then, I examine the developmental perspectives of entering (for emerging adults) and exiting a career (retirement for older adults). Third, I will introduce research and theoretical foundations relevant to career construction theory and attachment theory. Lastly, I propose a model of how to examine the quality of career transition in two age cohorts.

Chapter II

Career Transitions

Transitions are characterized as turning points in a person's life involving the 'letting go' of one identity and 'taking on' a new life role (Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg, 2012). Transitions produce changes in assumptions about oneself and the world and the acknowledgement that corresponding adjustment behaviors are needed (Schlossberg, 1981). Similarly, transitions require the awareness and recognition that discontinuity in one's life is occurring (Blair, 2000). In entering transitions, individuals evaluate the change, examine its significance, and determine the availability of interpersonal and personal resources to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Although not all transitions are the same, even in the context of starting a new career or deciding to retire from one, they still affect and alter life roles, routines, and social relationships (Schlossberg, 2011).

In Schlossberg's (1981) model, three factors associated with adaptive transitions are identified. Those factors are characteristics of the (a) individual (e.g., personality) (b) the environment before and after the transition and (c) the transition itself. How people best adapt, however, is also affected by the type of transition, and the cognitive and emotional appraisals of the life-changing event. Transitions commonly fall along dimensions of predictability and choice. Transitions, for example, can be predictable and voluntary (e.g., choosing to retire at 65), predictable and involuntary (e.g., going into forced retirement at 65), unpredictable and voluntary (e.g., leaving a job to care for an ailing family member), and unpredictable and involuntary (e.g., losing one's job due to downsizing) (Adams, Hayes, & Hopson, 1976). As much as we know about transition

types, much less is known about predictors of career transition experiences that may be contextually and developmentally different across age groups.

Moreover, how people utilize adaptational resources is a function of both person characteristics and the affordances in their particular environments. Further, it is also recognized that coping during transitions can be multifaceted, fluid, and sometimes quite difficult (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). This complexity can vary by the context of a transition as well. Contextual transitions, such as starting and exiting a career are an important and natural component in the lives of most adults. Adapting in either of these two life periods has significant mental health implications. Even with the acknowledgement that work and work transitions are central to human functioning (Fouad, 2007; Fouad & Bynner, 2008) the paucity of research on career transitions underscores the need for continued inquiry.

In the current study, I will examine transitions as an anticipated change that is predictable and voluntary within the context of career entry and exit. To date, there is no empirical evidence testing differences in psychological affect when experiencing transition types that vary along predictability and choice. For this reason, testing a transition that is seemingly more straightforward, may allow for an initial and more parsimonious perspective regarding transitions across two distinct age groups. Furthermore, I will specifically consider the adaptive resources people use to cope while transitioning. I define career transitions in young adults as a person reaching post college status who is choosing to enter/transition into a career (Schmidt & Welsh, 2010). For older adults (age 55 or older), a career transition is defined as their voluntary decision to retire.

Developmental Perspectives and Career Transitions

Donald Super's (1980) life-span, life-space approach theory is one of the most widely recognized developmental perspectives describing vocational choice, identity, and the nature of career transitions. He viewed development as a process whereby the self-concept is implemented in vocational choice. This choice is developed through mastery of developmental tasks when transitioning across five life/career stages by function of career maturity (e.g., readiness to master developmental tasks) and career adaptability (e.g., readiness to cope with changes in work conditions). The five-life/career stages (and their approximate chronological age periods) are growth (ages 4 -13), exploration (ages 14-24), establishment (ages 25-44), maintenance (ages 45 to 65), and disengagement (65 and over). Super (1980) further suggested that career patterns in a person's life (e.g., numbers of jobs held and maintained) are influenced by individual characteristics (e.g., career adaptability) and environmental changes. Individuals that master the developmental tasks of a transition not only are more effective in managing transition-related stress, but also cope better with subsequent changes in work and working conditions.

In this vein, emerging adults aged 18-29 (those who have passed adolescence yet do not consider themselves as full-fledged adults) are experiencing life stages of narrowing their vocational choice and settling into a career (Arnett, 2001). This age cohort is characterized as individuals who do not have a stable residential status, are seeking financial stability, and many have yet to marry or establish firm relational commitments (Arnett, 2000). People in this age group continually seek opportunities to self explore and to engage in experiences that are vocationally meaningful and identity

congruent (Arnett, 2004). Thus, emerging adult college students, particularly those who are approaching graduation or recently graduated, are poised to transition between Super's stages of exploration and establishment.

Conversely, older adults who are approaching retirement or are recently retired are likely transitioning between the life/career stages of maintenance and disengagement. Retirement is yet another developmental process and a transition that requires adjustment. In one conceptual overview of retirees, adults follow varied paths during the gradual process of exiting their work roles to adjust (Schlossberg, 2004). For example, some retirees opt to experiment with other career options, others design travel plans and leisure activities, while others disengage completely from the outside world and become isolated. Yet, like young adults, older adults exhibit a "psychological portfolio" when adapting to transitions (Schlossberg, 2004). This portfolio consists of the merger between one's past and present, and requires a reorganizing of one's self-concept while redefining social relationships with others (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012). Other developmental concerns of younger and older adults, while undergoing career transitions, are highlighted below.

Emerging Adults. When emerging adults are transitioning from college to their respective careers they face many issues that can potentially affect their psychological adjustment. One central issue is finding a job based on their career-related educational preparation (i.e., degree). As completing one's education and establishing a career path are considered key features of entry into young adulthood, this process can be worrisome and anxiety provoking. This is especially true if finding and securing a job remains unknown or unclear. Although there is considerable research about emerging adults and

their adjustment to college (Arnett, 2000; Blustein, 1997), there is no empirical evidence discussing the psychological impact these emerging adults face once they graduate.

Despite the lack of evidence regarding the psychological impact that emerging adults experience when undergoing a transition, previous research indicates that having psychological resources such as feeling ready, confident, in control and having access to social support resources, facilitate progress toward a career transition (Heppner, 1991). Further, emerging adults expressing confidence in identifying personal preferences, abilities and work values feel better prepared to make a transition (Yang & Gysbers, 2007) and express greater certainty over their career goals (Vuolo, Staff, Mortimer, 2011). Taken together, emerging adults should successfully adapt to transitions to the extent they perceive themselves as having access to psychological resources that enhance their confidence to transition. Additionally, the resources to adapt well are not just dependent on individual characteristics a person exhibits; they also hinge on perceptions of available social support.

As previously highlighted, when undergoing a career transition, themes of strong parental support, having clear expectations, and resiliency all contribute to satisfaction with career decisions and placement (Johnson & Mortimer, 2002). Empirical and qualitative evidence suggest that close relationships with others (e.g., friends, partners, and parental figures), and support systems also enhance transition adjustment (Polach, 2004; Whiston & Keller, 2004). Specifically, feelings of support and connections with others during transition periods help shape both positive views of the self and career decision-making. Yet, important psychological resources to transition and adapt well have been identified in the psychological literature, predictors that impact and shape

perceptions of resource availability are not well understood. This gap in the literature is also evident in retirement transitions for older adults.

Older Adults. The nature of retirement for older adult Americans is changing, and among individuals actively choosing to retire, not all retirement transition patterns are the same. These changes challenge conventional views of retirement as a distinct event and underscore the importance of viewing retirement as a process (Cahill, Giandrea, & Quinn, 2006). Currently, four major factors have been widely accepted as influencing retirement decisions. Flynn (2010) suggested that financial stability, caring responsibilities towards a spouse/significant other, having prominent social networks both in and outside of work, and career flexibility all impact retirement decisions and transitions. Not only must retirees consider what to do after work; they must also consider the impacts of their choices on their family and finances. Moreover, in addition to the resources that retirees have at their disposal, personal attitudes and dispositions also impact adjustment (Reitzes & Mutran, 2006).

Retirees exhibiting high self-esteem, goal directed behavior, healthy physical functioning, and increased social contacts reported higher levels of psychological well-being compared to retirees without these personal and social resources (Kubicek, Korunka, Raymo, & Hoonakker, 2011). Additionally, when undergoing retirement, the acknowledgement of negative life circumstances was associated with neurotic dispositions whereas exhibiting conscientiousness and agreeableness traits were positively related to life satisfaction and enjoyable experiences (Robinson, Demetre, & Corney, 2010).

Shifts and changes in resources also occur, often leaving the retiree to renegotiate

instrumental and emotional support needed for their psychological well-being. Despite general consensus in contemporary research that finances, marital status, gender, health, and socioeconomic status influence transitions, ambiguity remains as to how these life domains are influenced, shaped, and managed. Examining the personal dispositions of retirees and their impacts on accessing career adaptive resources can provide an entry point for understanding the unique experience of career transitions within this age cohort.

As such, it is evident that both younger and older adults must address and resolve their respective and changing life circumstances in order to experience adaptive career transitions. Yet how those resolutions occur for each respective group varies across personal resources (e.g., agentic striving) (Vuolo, Staff, & Mortimer, 2012), emotion regulation strategies (Carstensen, Fung, & Charles, 2003) and emotional stability (Brose, Scheibe, & Schmiedek, 2013). Given current literature on the transitions of young and older adults, it is reasonable to assume that adaptive functioning during these life periods is based on the social (e.g., relationship with others) and psychological capital (e.g., emotion regulation capacities) available to these persons (Fouad, 2007). Despite research efforts examining generational differences in the workplace (Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, & Mainero, 2009) and how people conceptualize career transitions (Chudzikowsky, 2009), there is still limited research on what *specific* individual differences influence the psychological capital to pursue adaptive coping strategies when undergoing a transition. To address this gap, I begin with an initial review of career adaptive coping strategies.

Theoretical Foundations

Career Construction Theory: Concern, Control, Curiosity and Confidence

Savickas (2005) defined career adaptability as a person's access and readiness to

deploy four adaptive strategies: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence.

Concern. Concern is highlighted as the most salient adaptive strategy when experiencing a transition. Savickas defined this dimension of career adaptability as a person's purposeful consideration of their future in the context of their career-related decision-making. It requires an individual to be proactive by adopting a future-oriented approach to transitions and vocational tasks. In exhibiting career concern, an individual can successfully integrate his or her vocational past, present, and future. This integration allows an individual to make plans and be active in addressing his or her career issues. Failure to do so, leads to feelings of apathy and career indifference.

Control. Career control is the second most important adaptive strategy. Control is defined as a person's belief that he or she is appropriately positioned and responsible for constructing his or her career. Individuals with career control are decisive, disciplined and willful. Some may even seek out the help of significant others when making career related decisions. Those who lack career control are unable to make career-related decisions and may be stymied by indecisiveness.

Curiosity. Curiosity follows control whereby the individual is open to vocationally explore their identity in the context of work. Individuals exhibiting a curious adaptive strategy are willing to explore career options, take risks and seek out information to make career decisions. Conversely, exhibiting a lack of curiosity leads to a naïve sense of one's personal and vocational identity.

Confidence. The fourth and last adaptive strategy in career construction theory is career confidence. This adaptive strategy is defined as a person's perceived efficacy in successfully making, implementing and executing a vocational plan. Exhibiting poor

career confidence results in inhibition, thus affecting persistence in pursuing vocational goals and aspirations.

The adaptive individual in the midst of a career transition is one who demonstrates concern over their vocational future, contemplates and exercises control, shows curiosity of future and possible selves, and is confident in executing transitional tasks. Across these four domains, individuals will ask themselves: What am I going to do? Who controls my future? How will I do it? And can I do it? Behaviors of planning, being organized, inquisitive, making decisions, and feeling efficacious, are integrated to adaptive career transitions. On the other hand, if people report low levels of engagement in these four strategies they will typically express feelings of indifference, inhibition, and unrealism, and likely experience less adaptive transitions.

The 24-item Career Adaptabilities Scale (CAAS) recently developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) contains subscales that respectively assess the four adaptive strategies of concern, control, curiosity and confidence. Each 6-item sub-scale assesses the extent to which people believe they have developed strengths in that adaptive domain. Studies using this measure can greatly add to the vocational literature as it appropriately identifies and measures important career resources. Moreover, using a measure that captures dimensions versus global indicators of career adaptability can provide a more nuanced understanding of career transition experiences.

The availability of this new measure also permits consideration of another important research question – *what specifically contributes to these dimensions of career adaptability, particularly among individuals who are facing or engaged in a significant career transition?* In efforts to explore predictors of adaptability, I argue that specific

dispositions of the self (e.g., personality and adult attachment orientation) influence how a people organize and understand the world around them and who they are within their environmental context. Accordingly, these dispositions should shape, impact, facilitate, or hinder how the individual uses personal and relational coping resources when adapting to a career transition.

For example, findings of comparative personality studies of young and older adults show that younger adults are more neurotic and extraverted, and older adults are more agreeable and conscientious (Lounsbury, 2003; Robinson, Demetre, & Corney, 2010). These findings suggest that certain personality dispositions may play a role with activating the pursuit of specific resources to cope during transitions. Attachment theory offers another, more relational and context-sensitive perspective on personality dispositions that can inform and guide how career adaptive strategies are internally organized and configured by both young and older adults. Although there has been research that has used global facets of personality (as mentioned above), this construct was not examined in this study. This decision is based on research arguing for the possible redundancy in looking at personality and attachment theory together as both really speak of dispositions. Moreover, there is evidence that adult attachment dispositions enhance the prediction of relationship outcomes even when global personality traits are controlled (Shaver & Brennan, 1992; Nettle & Shaver, 2006). To date, however, the relationships between adult attachment dispositions and Savickas' (2005) career adaptive strategies have not been empirically examined.

Attachment Theory

John Bowlby (1969/1982, 1988) developed attachment theory as a life span

perspective on personality formation and psychosocial functioning wherein the quality of one's attachment orientations or close emotional bonds with others, operate as a key mechanism. Bowlby posited that the "attachment system" functioned as a unique and innate motivational system for regulating human coping in response to threat and uncertainty. He argued that an individual's attachment orientation is formed based on the experience of early caregiver responses during times of need and distress. If the caregiver is able to provide and meet the needs of the child appropriately (e.g., soothing the child when needed; providing comfort when the child is distressed), a secure sense of attachment is developed. However, if the caregiver response is inconsistent, unreliable and inappropriate in meeting the needs of the child an insecure attachment is then developed.

Attachment in infancy. The origin of attachment theory stemmed from Bowlby's and Mary Salter Ainsworth's work describing infant and caregiver relationships. In Bowlby's work (1969/1982) with infants and attachment figures, he noted that when caregivers are inconsistent or neglectful in responding to a child's experience of threat or distress, this variation alters the normative operation of the attachment system. More specifically, when comfort, relief, and security are not experienced, the child will either become preoccupied with needing trust, love, and protection or will emotionally disengage from seeking these relational reassurances. By the time a child enters his/her first year of life, patterned experiences of proximity seeking with caregivers become cognitively represented as a schema (or internal working model of self and other) of how one behaves and believes others will react and respond to them. In periods of distress, the attachment system is activated and these internalized schemas become "chronically

accessible” to the person (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007, p. 25). Although Bowlby described his theory based on his clinical observations with children, it was Ainsworth’s (1967/1978) empirical work of mothers and infants that led to the development and creation of qualifying patterns of attachment as either secure, anxious, or avoidant.

Attachment in adulthood. Hazan and Shaver (1987) further developed attachment theory to understand how close relationships (with romantic partners or friends) are shaped, formed and maintained. These two researchers posited that individuals who grow up to be securely attached are better able to attain comfort and relief for themselves based on the internal, mental representation of secure attachment figures experienced in the past (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Cooper, Shaver, and Collins (1998) found that insecure attachment orientations in adulthood are associated with great anger, resentment, anxiety, and depression. Whereas individuals with secure attachment orientations are more capable of appropriately self-regulating their distress, individuals with insecure orientations are more likely to over-depend on others for support or to withdraw emotionally from others, thus limiting their coping resources (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). A core element in attachment security is the ability of individuals to adaptively regulate negative emotions during times when they feel threatened or in danger (e.g., graduating college and needing to find a job).

It is suspected that the reasons why attachment security influences the relationship between perceived relational support and anxiety experienced during periods of transitions is through self-regulatory (i.e., affect regulation) processes that motivate behavior. As one example, Lopez and Gormley (2002) examined whether patterns of stability or change of adult attachment orientations within a sample of college freshman were associated with indicators of psychosocial adjustment during their first year college

transition. Findings indicated that students exhibiting stable and secure attachment orientations reported higher levels of confidence and adaptive problem coping (e.g., less affective reactivity and suppression) compared to those with less stable and more insecure attachment orientations. With regard to patterns of stability and change, results also suggest that changes in attachment orientation while undergoing a transition period were associated with corresponding changes in adaptive coping.

Since the introduction of attachment theory, various measures have been created to assess the typology of attachment orientations. Attachment orientations were first understood along three categorical types of anxious, avoidant, and secure (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). As previously noted, this typology was developed based on the work of Mary Ainsworth in examining infant behavior (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Yet with further research, and issues found in the instability of classifying individuals along ‘types,’ a more refined conceptualization of attachment that fell along four dimensions of attachment security and insecurity was derived (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The construction of dimensional versus categorical measures of adult attachment provided greater understanding in the interpretation of internal working models of self and other.

Adult attachment orientations are therefore best understood and assessed as variability along two dimensions of attachment security: avoidance and anxiety (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Fraley & Waller, 1998). A secure individual is one who is comfortable being around and depending on others. The expression of an avoidant attachment is characterized by a person who fears getting too close and depending on others and who thus resists help-seeking, while an anxious attachment is manifested by a person who fears separation and abandonment, and thus chronically depends on others for support and reassurance.

Within the literature, two prominent and well-validated measures of attachment include the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), and the Experiences of Close Relationships (ECR) by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), for example, derived four types of attachment in the Relationship Questionnaire. Those dimensions are: Secure (ability to depend and be emotionally close to others), Fearful (desiring emotional closeness, yet have difficulty being comfortable with others), Preoccupied (desiring proximity yet feeling that others are reluctant to get close) and Dismissing (being comfortable without emotional closeness and preferring autonomy versus dependence).

Brennan et al. (1998) developed the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale. This scale distinguishes attachment along two dimensions: Anxious Attachment and Avoidant Attachment. Anxious attachment refers to fear of abandonment and separation. High scores on the anxious dimension describe individuals who are in constant need of others, express high levels of vulnerability, and become angry when significant others are unresponsive to their needs (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Avoidant attachment refers to a fear of depending on and becoming too close to others. High scores in the avoidant dimension describe individuals who suppress their needs for support from others, avoid interdependence, and prefer to be alone (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The attachment orientations referred throughout the remainder of this document and tested in this study are based on Brennan et al.'s (1998) two-dimensional perspective of attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety. This decision is based on (a) the measurement work of Brennan et al. (1998) and Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000) that suggest dimensions of attachment avoidance and anxiety best define adult attachment and (b) the improved

reliability of the ECR and its current revision (the ECR-R) compared to previous measures of attachment.

The role of relationships: Socio-emotional selectivity theory

The current literature on adult attachment would be remiss without mention of how the nature of our close relationships may change across the life span. As attachment theory provides us with a context of how relationships are formed and maintained, socio-emotional selectivity theory provides information regarding how relationships are accessed and negotiated as we age. According to Carstensen and colleagues (2003), as adults age and develop more limited time perspectives regarding their futures, they will selectively construct a social and cognitive world that maximizes emotional pay offs by filtering out peripheral social relationships and optimizing their relationships with close family and friends. In line with this view, Segal, Needham, and Coolidge (2009) found that, as people age, levels in ambivalence and preoccupation in relationships decrease.

It thus seems that selectivity with regard to network members for social support is affected by both age and adult attachment style. As an example, drawing upon Carstensen's work, Gillath and colleagues (2011) examined two developmentally distinct groups, young and older adults, when undergoing significant life transitions. Older adults (age 58 and older) were caring for a significant other, while younger adults were acclimating to their first year in college. Results indicate that older adults, in a period of becoming a caregiver, were less likely to initiate new social ties and more likely to terminate social relationships compared to young adults transitioning to college. Moreover, older adults who maintained their social networks reported higher levels of well-being and also endorsed a secure attachment orientation. Overall, these findings

provide a conceptual foundation to explore how attachment orientations and age intersect and influence perceptions of adaptability when experiencing a transition. This idea is tested here in the context of attachment orientation and career adaptability when undergoing a career transition.

Attachment theory, career adaptability, and career transitions

Attachment orientations have been linked to career development and life transitions (Blustein, Preizoso & Schultheiss, 1995; Kenny & Rice, 1995; Lopez & Gormley, 2002). For example, a secure attachment style has been related to lower career thought dysfunction (van Eecke, 2007) and to greater optimism and enhanced perceptions of career exploration (Brown, 2002). Additionally, recent studies have also shown that insecure individuals score lower on problem analysis, task concentration, behavioral organization, decision-making, scores higher on procrastination than secure individuals (Nofle & Shaver, 2006; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). As a result, insecure attachment impacts career problem solving, decision-making, and adjustment during transitions (Duffy, 2010).

With regard to other attitudes relevant to career transitions, attachment orientations affect perceptions of social support, relating to others (Reis & Gold, 1993) and well-being. Specifically, there has been evidence that insecurely attached individuals access fewer support systems and feel more anxious, lonely, and depressed (Kafetsios & Sideridis, 2006). Attachment orientations have also been associated with perceptions of personal control (Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003) and emotion regulation (Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998). For example, secure individuals and older adults are better able to regulate emotions than anxiously and avoidantly attached individuals (Carstensen et al.

2003; Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998). Moreover, securely attached individuals and older adults are better at cognitively reappraising situations, less likely to ruminate on negative feelings (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998) and more likely to deal with a distressing event and adapt well (Gross & John, 2003; Richards & Hackett, 2012).

Studies comparing young and older adults, have also found that older adults are more secure and dismissing than younger adults while younger adults are more preoccupied than older adults (Segal et al., 2009; Zhang & Labouvie-Vief, 2004). Additionally, older adults are more likely to terminate peripheral social relationships and less likely to initiate new relationships in comparison to younger adults (Gillath et al., 2011).

Based on the literature reviewed, in the context of attachment insecurity, older adults present as more avoidant than their younger counterparts whereas younger adults are more preoccupied and anxious than older adults. These attachment differences may inform how participants representing two distinct age groups may react to and manage their relationships during career transitions differently and thus forecast the quality of their transitions experiences.

As an example, when experiencing transitive distress, preoccupied and anxious young adults are oriented toward seeking support from others yet concurrently fear that others may not want to get close. This may unfortunately place greater burden on others and overtax their capacities to provide support. High levels of attachment anxiety may also exacerbate emotional distress and thereby dampen one's ability to pursue and appropriately use adaptive strategies in career transitions. Older adults, who are avoidant and dismissing, may exert greater efforts to preserve their autonomy and consequently

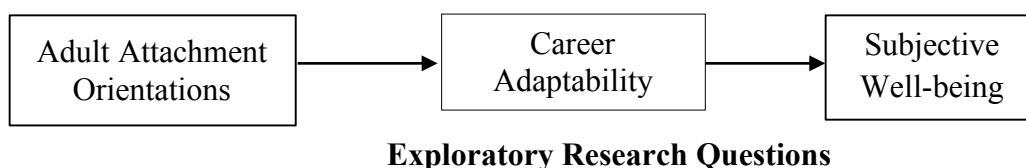
push people away more than necessary. The outcomes expressed here can also lead to not having sufficient support that affects poor coping and poor utilization of the resources needed to effectively adapt in transitions to retirement.

Examining the Quality of Career Transitions in Two Age Cohorts: A Proposed Model

Research about career transitions among emerging and older adults suggest that both groups may respond differently to their current career transition and their manner of accessing support. These two age groups can also uniquely speak to similarities and differences when making vocational decisions that significantly impact a sense one's identity and relationships with others. This research also carries significant implications for career counseling interventions. This proposal seeks to address a new line of inquiry by examining the career transitions of two distinct age groups in a comparative study of how their attachment orientations influence their utilization of career adaptability resources as well as their subjective well-being.

The general model under investigation (*see* Figure 1) proposes that, for both younger and older adults currently experiencing career transitions, their adult attachment orientations will be predictive of subjective well-being. The model further proposes that the relationship will be indirect and mediated by participants' deployment of career adaptive strategies.

Figure 1. Proposed Model



Provided that the experience of older and younger adults undergoing a career

transition may be distinct, it is also possible that emerging and older adults may differentially prioritize their use of adaptive resources of concern, control, confidence, and curiosity. For example, it may be that how career adaptive strategies are experienced or prioritized is influenced by differences in attachment orientation (e.g., younger adults as more anxious and older adults as more avoidant). Additionally, the link between attachment insecurity and well-being may be mediated by career adaptability strategies. Moreover, it is not fully clear how the quality of relationship across multiple domains in addition to the use of career adaptive strategies relates to well-being. As such, three exploratory aims are also considered in this proposal.

The first aim was to explore the contribution of attachment anxiety and avoidance along the four career adaptive strategies. To date, the relationships of Savickas' career adaptive strategies to subjective well-being during transitions have not been specifically examined. Also, there is no empirical evidence in current literature linking attachment insecurity directly with dimensions of career adaptability. The reason for the above mentioned gaps in the literature are because, until recently, no measure existed that directly assessed the dimensions of career concern, control, curiosity and confidence. Now, with Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) development of the CAAS measure the opportunity to explore and test new research questions is possible. A secondary aim was to explore whether differences in the utilization of career adaptive strategies exist across two developmentally different cohorts experiencing contextually different work transitions.

Lastly, in light of expected relationships between adult attachment orientations and career adaptabilities resources, another tertiary aim was to test whether attachment

anxiety and avoidance dimensions in more delineated relationships (e.g., mother, father, partner, and friend) provide more variegated information regarding the contributions of adult attachment security and career adaptabilities to well-being across emerging adult and older adult cohorts.. Recent evidence suggests that attachment orientations may vary by relationship (Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary & Brumbaugh, 2011). In a recent meta-analytic review of the studies of parental attachment and college student adjustment, Mattanah, Lopez, and Govern (2011) reported that the quality of parental attachment security indicated a significant albeit modest effect size across several indicators of student adjustment and development. However, it is not well understood whether the importance of relationships shift and change when undergoing contextually different life transitions. Furthermore, assessing attachment dimensions across a variety of relational contexts may detect greater within-person variability for capturing the complexity of people's relationships with significant others.

A recent measure proposed by Fraley and colleagues (2011), addresses attachment orientations across relationships and will provide the opportunity to test this tertiary aim. The relationship domains include mother, father, partner and friend. The Experiences in Close Relationships: Relationship structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS) is an adapted and well validated version of the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised by Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000). Therefore, to improve current understanding of the relations between dimensions of attachment, career adaptabilities and relationships with others in the context of career transitions, exploratory analyses are pursued to test the above research aims. Formal hypotheses of already known relationships between attachment security and generational differences as well as research questions with

proposed secondary analyses are provided in the method section.

Chapter III

Method

Participants

A sample of 476 emerging and older adults (316 women, 151 men) participated in a web-based online study. Eligibility criteria for participation included emerging adults who had six months left to graduate and/or had graduated within the last six months and older adults (ages 55 and over) who were either planning to retire within six months or had retired in the last six months from work. All participants were English speaking. Participant demographics and recruitment details are described below; additional demographic information related to transition status and socioeconomic background for both samples is presented in Table 1.

Emerging adults. Participants who were still in college were awarded research credit in their respective university courses. Emerging adults who graduated in the previous six months were recruited via alumni listserv announcements through the University of Houston, social networking sites and convenience sampling when possible. Non-student emerging adults were offered a raffle drawing to win a \$10.00 gift card. A total of 298 emerging adults (234 women, 64 men) participated in this study. The participant's age ranged from 21-29 ($M_{\text{age}} = 23.36$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 2.25$). The ethnic make up of the sample was 33.9% Caucasian, 32.6%, Hispanic, 16.8% African American, 16.1% Asian American 0.6% American Indian or Alaskan Native (*see* Table 1).

Older adults. Following a similar strategy with emerging adults, recruitment flyers were sent to the Society of Adult Development and Aging and the Gerontological Society of America. Additionally, older adult participants were accessed via CINT a well-known research panel that provides access to surveying a nationally representative sample. Participants who were not from the research panel were incentivized to

participate by signing up for a raffle drawing as well. Those in the research panel were incentivized through the panel's own token reward system. A total of 169 adults participated in this study (82 women, 87 males). The participant's age ranged from 55-81 ($M_{\text{age}} = 64.58$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 5.62$). The ethnic make up of the sample was 89.9% Caucasian, 5.9% African American and 0.6% Hispanic (*see* Table 1).

Procedures

Each group was asked to participate in a study focused on understanding perceptions and experiences with career transitions. Interested participants were given a consent form detailing the information and procedures of the study. Upon retrieving informed consent, participants were asked to complete a survey packet that was available either in paper and electronic format (to suit personal preference). No identifying information was collected and participation was completely voluntary. The survey packet included the measures described below.

Measures

Demographic questionnaire. This measure gathered information regarding participants' age, gender, dating/marital/family status, living situation, employment status, transition period, education level, perceived social class level and extracurricular activities.

Adult attachment orientations. Two measures of adult attachment orientations were used in the current study. The Experience in Close Relationship Scale-Revised (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), a revised version of Brennan, Clark, and Shaver's (1998) Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) measure, was used in the study's primary analyses. The ECR-R was developed to improve item response metrics of the measure. However, no significant gains in validity have been established and both

scales can be interpreted as being similar in meaning (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The ECR-R is a 36-item measure on a 7-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Sample items include “I prefer not to show a partner how I feel” and “I’m afraid that I will lose my partner’s love.” The avoidance and anxiety subscales show strong internal consistency with alpha reliabilities of $\alpha = .94$ for anxiety and $\alpha = .95$ for avoidance. The ECR-R demonstrates strong temporal stability across a 3- and 6-week assessment period (.90-.92) (Sibley, Fisher & Liu, 2005; Sibley & Liu, 2005). The ECR-R also has good convergent validity ($r = .50$) with measures of diary ratings of anxiety and avoidance experiences in social interactions (Sibley, Fisher, & Liu, 2005).

The Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS; Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, & Brumbaugh, 2011), a 9-item measure assessing anxious and avoidant attachment orientations in each of four relationships (mother, father, friend, and significant other), was used in the secondary analyses to gather more relationship-specific information regarding their influences on participants’ career transitions. The scale is from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Sample items include “I can easily depend on this person.” This scale has shown strong psychometric properties with alphas for anxious attachment at .80 (domain reliabilities range from .83 - .87) and avoidant attachment at .88 (domain reliabilities range .82 - .92). In assessing convergent validity Fraley et al., (2011) found that the ECR-RS romantic domains displayed modest convergent validity with the ECR-R anxious dimension ($r = .66$) and the avoidant dimension ($r = .56$). The ECR-RS anxiety in romantic relationships also exhibited convergent validity with relationship commitment ($r = -.22$), and relationship investment ($r = -.37$). This was also found, albeit weakly, for the friend domain and relationship investment ($r = -.12$). For the

ECR-RS avoidance in romantic relationships, convergent validity was found with relationship commitment ($r = -.53$), relationship satisfaction ($r = -.49$), and relationship investment ($r = -.28$) and desirability of alternative partners ($r = .38$). Moreover, ECR-RS measures of anxiety and avoidance across the four relational domains correlated with measures of depression symptoms (range of r s for anxiety = .15- .39; range of r s for avoidance = .11- .27).

Career adaptabilities. Career Adaptabilities Scale (CAAS) by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) is 24-item measure assessing all four career adaptive strategies across the subscales of concern, control, curiosity and confidence on a Likert scale from (1) not strong to (5) strongest. Sample items include “Preparing for the future,” “Investigating options before making a choice,” and “Planning how to achieve my goals.” The measure has shown strong psychometric properties, has been translated to other languages, and has demonstrated a similar factor structure among participants in 13 countries. The psychometric properties of the U.S. scale demonstrates strong internal consistency with the global scale at $\alpha = .92$ and across the subscales of concern ($\alpha = .83$), control ($\alpha = .74$), curiosity ($\alpha = .79$) and confidence ($\alpha = .85$). Savickas and Porfeli (2012) established initial concurrent validity correlating CAAS adaptability scores with six dimensions of vocational identity status assessment (VISA) (e.g., commitment making, and identification; in-depth and in-breadth exploration; and commitment flexibility and self-doubt). Strongest relationships were found with in- depth exploration ($r = .52$) followed by commitment identification ($r = .44$), in-breadth exploration ($r = .36$) and commitment making ($r = .26$). CAAS scores were weakly related to commitment self-doubt ($r = -.20$). No relationship was found between commitment flexibility and adaptability scores.

Correlations between the career adaptability subscales and the vocational identity status subscales were comparable to the correlation coefficients found between overall CAAS adaptability scores and VISA subscales scores (as described above).

Subjective well-being. This study assessed the following three indicators associated with overall subjective well-being among both emerging and older adults: life satisfaction, presence of life meaning, and search for life meaning. The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener, Emmons, Larson, and Griffin (1985) assesses perceptions of life satisfaction on a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A sample item includes “Am satisfied with life.” The SWLS has demonstrated good psychometric properties with an overall scale reliability of .87 and a two-month test-retest of .82. The SLWS has good criterion related validity with SWLS scores significantly correlated ($r = .43$) with scores on an independent measure of life satisfaction of .43, and with scores on other measures subjective well-being (range of r s: .47 - .75 (Diener et al., 1985). This measure has been used with both younger and older adult populations (Robinson et al., 2010).

When undergoing a significant life transition, persons are also in a unique position to make sense and attach meaning to their life experience. Meaning making has garnered attention in the vocational literature and been linked to career fulfillment (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997), career decision-making (Cohen, 2003), and, more recently, with career indecision (Miller & Rottinghaus, 2014). Although the construct of life meaning has yet to be examined with regard to the experience of career transitions, the experience of career transitions may prompt persons to make sense and decisions about their vocational identity and status, and as such, re-evaluate the

extent that meaning is personally and professionally felt. Therefore, for this study, I also examined meaning in life to expand current knowledge about how undergoing a career transition relates to the experience of meaning.

The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) by Steger and colleagues (2006) is a 10-item measure assessing perceptions of life meaning across two 5-item subscales of search and presence. ‘Presence of Meaning’ addresses the extent that people feel their lives have meaning and ‘Search for Meaning’ addresses extent that respondents want to find meaning in their lives. All subscale items are answered on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Absolutely untrue) to 7 (Absolutely true). Sample items include “I understand my life’s meaning” (Presence) and “I am always looking to find my life’s purpose” (Search). This particular measure was chosen to address both positive and negative indicators of well-being.

The MLQ has convergent validity with measures of life satisfaction and positive emotions, and discriminant validity with measures of social desirability (Steger et al., 2006). The MLQ has good internal consistency: $\alpha = .86$ (Presence) and $\alpha = .88$ (Search), and modest one-month test-retest reliability: $r = .70$ (Presence) and $r = .73$ (Search). MLQ Presence and Search scores have demonstrated a modest negative association in prior studies (Steger et al., 2006; Steger, Oishi, & Kashdan, 2009). Relatedly, presence of meaning in life has been associated with authentic living and attachment security, while search for meaning was linked to self-alienation and attachment anxiety (Lopez, Ramos, Nisenbaum, Thind, & Ortiz-Rodriguez, 2014).

There is also evidence of age group differences in perceptions of meaning in life. For example, Steger and colleagues (2009) found that older adults report greater presence

of meaning in life compared to younger adults, and younger adults report greater levels of searching for meaning. It is unclear, however, if differences exist between young and older adults when undergoing parallel career transitions that prompt similar levels of existential angst about vocational status. As such, no formal hypotheses were tested to examine if differences about meaning in life exist between emerging and older adults.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Taken together, the present study sought to understand the interrelationships among adult attachment orientations, career adaptability strategies, and indicators of well-being across two distinct age cohorts undergoing a career transition. Toward this end, measures of adult attachment security, career adaptability, and well-being were used to test the general proposed model in Figure 1 and the following hypotheses were advanced:

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Adult attachment insecurity (i.e., attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) will be significantly associated in expected directions with scores on positive and negative indicators of subjective-well-being for both young and older adults during career transitions.

- 1a. Attachment anxiety and avoidance scores will each be negatively related to life satisfaction scores.
- 1b. Attachment anxiety and avoidance scores will each be negatively related to presence of life meaning scores.
- 1c. Attachment anxiety and avoidance scores will each be positively related to searching for life meaning scores.

Hypothesis 2: Age cohorts will significantly differ with regard to their scores on each dimension of adult attachment insecurity.

2a. Older adults will report higher levels of attachment avoidance relative to emerging adults.

2b. Younger adults will report higher levels of attachment anxiety relative to older adults.

Hypothesis 3: Scores on each of the four career adaptive strategies will be positively associated with life satisfaction and presence of meaning and negatively associated with searching for meaning.

Hypothesis 4: Controlling for their adult attachment orientations, participant's career adaptive strategies of concern, control, curiosity and confidence will collectively account for significant incremental variance in the prediction of life satisfaction, presence and search for meaning in life.

Research Questions

Lastly, I explored whether (a) age differences exist when testing if dimensions of attachment insecurity differentially contribute to the four career adaptive strategies (b) if the relationship between attachment insecurity and well-being is mediated by career concern, control, curiosity, and confidence and whether age cohort moderates this mediational model, and (c) whether indicators of attachment relationships across four relational domains and career adaptability uniquely contribute to subjective well-being in young and older adults.

Research Question 1: Within each age cohort, do dimensions of attachment anxiety and avoidance differentially contribute to career concern, control, curiosity and confidence?

Research Question 2: Within each age cohort, do each of the four career-adaptive strategies similarly mediate the relationship between attachment security and subjective well-being?

Research Question 3: Within each age cohort, do indicators of attachment insecurity in different relationships (i.e., mother, father, partner, friend) further differentiate the contribution of adult attachment security and career adaptabilities to subjective well-being?

Analyses

Main analyses. For the main analyses correlations, a one-way MANOVA, and multiple linear regressions were performed. Bivariate correlations were examined for Hypotheses 1- 1c. For Hypotheses 2a and 2b, a one-way MANOVA, treating age cohort as the independent variable and attachment anxiety and avoidance as dependent variables was performed. For Hypothesis 3, bivariate correlations were examined to address the relation between each of the four career adaptive strategies and life satisfaction, presences and search for meaning in life. Lastly, for Hypothesis 4, multiple regression analyses were performed (three for each cohort) whereby predictor variables were entered in hierarchical steps. In the first step, attachment anxiety and avoidance were entered first, and controlling for these two dimensions, the four adaptive strategies were entered in the second step to examine whether they account for additional incremental variance in the prediction of subjective life satisfaction, presence and search for meaning in life.

Exploratory analyses. For research question 1, multiple linear regressions were performed for each age cohort. Specifically, attachment anxiety and avoidance were

entered as predictor variables and the four career adaptive strategies were entered as dependent variables. Research question 2 was examined by testing a moderated mediational model (via conditional process analysis) as outlined by Hayes (2013). Conditional process analysis is a statistical procedure involving the simultaneous testing of moderation and mediation. Moderated mediation address the direct effects (relationship between the independent and dependent variables), indirect effects (mediation), and the conditional indirect effects (moderation) of the model in question. Specifically, this model addresses whether the indirect effect (e.g., career adaptive strategies) is contingent on a moderator variable (e.g., age cohort), and whether the interaction between age cohort and attachment avoidance and anxiety on subjective well-being operates through the career adaptive strategies.

Compared to Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation and moderation testing, the advantage of and rationale for using conditional process analysis is that multiple parallel mediation and moderation models can be tested in one analysis without running independent multiple regression models, thus conserving power and reducing Type I error. For this study, moderated mediation models were tested for each of the three outcome variables capturing subjective well-being (i.e., satisfaction with life, presence and search for meaning). These analyses were performed using a bootstrapping method. This method treats the original study sample as a small representation of the population at large, and observations in the sample are resampled with replacement multiple times (5,000-10,000 is recommended) to construct an empirical representation of the sampling distribution. To examine the statistical significance of the bootstrapping estimates, a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval was examined such that estimates with confidence

intervals containing zero in its range would be considered as a ‘non-significant’ effect (see Figures 2 and 3).

Research Question 3 explored, within each age cohort, whether indicators of attachment insecurity in different relationships (i.e., mother, father, partner, friend) would further differentiate the contributions of adult attachment security and career adaptabilities to each indicator of their subjective well-being. Accordingly, ECR-RS scores on attachment anxiety and avoidance with mother, father, partner and friend were simultaneously entered the first step of the regression model. The four career adaptive strategies were then entered as a block in step two. Life satisfaction, presence and search for meaning in life were entered as dependent variables.

Chapter IV

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics and correlations among key study variables are presented in Table 2. Within the overall sample, scores on all measures used ($N = 467$) exhibited strong internal consistencies (range of α s = .88 - .95). Alpha reliabilities were also calculated for each cohort. In the emerging adult sample, all measures demonstrated internal consistency estimates ranging from .88 - .94, and in the older adult sample internal consistency estimates ranged from .86 - .96.

Overall, key study variables demonstrated significant intercorrelations in expected directions, with a few exceptions. Specifically, MLQ Search scores were not significantly correlated with career concern ($r = .08$) and career control ($r = .07$) for emerging adults. For older adults MLQ Search scores were not significantly correlated with attachment avoidance ($r = .11$), career concern ($r = .14$), control ($r = -.02$), curiosity ($r = .01$), confidence ($r = -.03$) and having presence of meaning in life ($r = -.08$).

Also unexpectedly, two modest yet positive bivariate correlations (in the emerging adult sample) were found between MLQ Search scores and both career curiosity and career confidence ($r = .13$, $p < .05$, for both). No significant bivariate correlations between MLQ Search scores and the four career adaptive strategies were found in the older adult sample.

Main Analyses

Hypotheses 1, 1a, 1b and 1c. Hypotheses 1 predicted that attachment insecurity would be significantly related to subjective-well-being scores for both young and older

adults experiencing career transitions. Consistent with Hypotheses 1a and 1b, findings indicated that, for emerging and older adults, each index of attachment insecurity (i.e., attachment anxiety and avoidance) was negatively associated with life satisfaction (range of $r_s = -.26 - [-.38]$) and with presence in life scores (range of $r_s = -.26 - [-.38]$), respectively. In addition, each index of attachment insecurity was positively associated with searching for meaning in life scores (range of $r_s = .12 - .19$, both $p_s < .05$) for older adults. However, among emerging adults, only the relationship between attachment anxiety and MLQ Search scores reached statistical significance ($r = .18, p < .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 1c was only partially supported.

Hypothesis 2, 2a, and 2b. Hypothesis 2 predicted that emerging and older adults would significantly differ with regard to their scores on each dimension of attachment insecurity. More specifically, hypothesis 2a predicted that older adults would score higher on the dimension of attachment avoidance compared to younger adults, whereas hypothesis 2b anticipated that younger adults would score higher on the dimension of attachment anxiety relative to older adults. The results of a one-way MANOVA of ECR subscale scores revealed a significant multivariate main effect for age cohort group, Pillai's Trace = .06, $F(2, 453) = 14.35, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$, power = 1.0. Given the significance of the overall test, the univariate main effects were examined. No significant univariate main effect of group was observed on adult attachment avoidance scores $F(1, 454) = .004, p = .95$, thus failing to support Hypothesis 2a. However, a significant univariate main effect on adult attachment anxiety scores was found, with emerging adults reporting higher levels of adult attachment anxiety related to older adults $F(1, 454) = 22.42, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$, power = 1.0, thus supporting Hypothesis 2b.

Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 predicted that, across both age cohorts, scores on each of the four career adaptive strategies would be positively associated with life satisfaction and presence of life meaning, and negatively associated with the search for life meaning. Bivariate correlations yielded partial support for this hypothesis. As expected, scores on all four career adaptive strategies were positively and either moderately or robustly related to life satisfaction and presence of life meaning scores among both emerging adult (range of $r_s = .20 - .45$, all $p_s < .001$) and older adult cohorts (range of $r_s = .29 - .52$, all $p_s < .001$). However, contrary to expectations, career adaptability scores were unrelated to MLQ Search scores among older adults, and, among emerging adults, career curiosity and career confidence were positively (albeit) modestly related to the search for life meaning scores.

Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4 predicted that, controlling for participants' adult attachment orientations, their career adaptive strategies of concern, control, curiosity and confidence (entered at Step 2) would collectively explain significant incremental variance in the prediction of each of the three measures of subjective well-being among emerging and older adults, respectively Tables 3 and 4 present the results of these analyses.

Satisfaction with life. For emerging adults, the first step of the regression model was significant $F(2, 283) = 18.34, p < .001; R^2 = .12$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (in step two) accounted for significant incremental variance ($\Delta R^2 = .06, p < .001$) in the prediction of life satisfaction. With all predictors in the model, attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.12, p < .05$), avoidance ($\beta = -.19, p < .001$), and career control ($\beta = .25, p < .01$) emerged as significant individual predictors of life satisfaction, while career confidence reached marginal significance. ($\beta = -.16, p = .08$).

For older adults, the first step of the regression model was significant $F(2, 162) = 14.48, p < .001; R^2 = .15$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (in step two) accounted for significant incremental variance ($\Delta R^2 = .06, p < .05$) in the prediction of life satisfaction. However, only attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.32, p < .001$) emerged as a significant individual predictor in this age cohort group.

Presence. For emerging adults, the first step of the regression model was significant, $F(2, 284) = 21.44, p < .001; R^2 = .13$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (at step two) accounted for significant incremental variance ($\Delta R^2 = .15, p < .001$) in the prediction of presence of meaning in life scores. Attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.20, p < .001$), and career concern ($\beta = .28, p < .001$) emerged as significant individual predictors, with career control evidencing marginal significance ($\beta = .16, p = .06$) in this prediction.

For older adults, the first step of the regression model was significant $F(2, 164) = 14.88, p < .001; R^2 = .15$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (at step two) accounted for significant incremental variance ($\Delta R^2 = .23, p < .001$) in the prediction of presence of meaning in life. Attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.29, p < .001$), and career control ($\beta = .35, p < .01$) emerged significant individual predictors.

Search. For emerging adults, the first step of the regression model was significant $F(2, 284) = 5.79, p < .01; R^2 = .04$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (in step two) accounted for significant incremental variance ($\Delta R^2 = .04, p < .05$) in the prediction of searching for meaning in life. Attachment anxiety ($\beta = .20, p < .01$) emerged as a significant individual predictor.

For older adults, the first step of the regression model was marginally significant

$F(2, 164) = 2.90, p = .06; R^2 = .03$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (in step two) accounted for significant incremental variance ($\Delta R^2 = .08, p < .05$) in the prediction of searching for meaning in life. Attachment anxiety ($\beta = .18, p < .05$) and career curiosity ($\beta = .31, p < .05$) emerged as significant individual predictors. Career concern reached marginal significance ($\beta = .20, p = .07$).

Summary. For emerging adults, the indicators of adult attachment insecurity were negatively related to life satisfaction and presence of meaning in life. Moreover, attachment anxiety and avoidance were positively predicted by searching for meaning in life scores. For older adults, high scores of insecure attachment were negatively related to life satisfaction and presence of meaning in life. Attachment anxiety was positively associated to searching for meaning in life (similar to results found for emerging adults). However, attachment avoidance was not significantly associated with searching for meaning in life.

Results also indicated that emerging adults undergoing a career transition reported high levels of adult attachment anxiety compared to older adult transitioners. For each age cohort, perceptions of each of the four career adaptive strategies were positively related to reports of life satisfaction and life meaning. Career curiosity and confidence in the emerging adult sample was positively associated with searching for meaning in life. No significant bivariate correlations between search for meaning and the four career-adaptive strategies were found for older adults. Lastly, in regression analyses examining the collective contribution of career adaptive strategies in the prediction of well-being when controlling for attachment insecurity, career control and concern consistently emerged as significant and positive contributors to life satisfaction and presence of meaning in life.

(respectively) for emerging adults. Career control emerged as a significant positive predictor of presence of meaning in life for older adults. For older adults only, career curiosity emerged as a significant predictor of search for meaning in life in the positive direction.

Exploratory Analyses (Research Questions and Secondary Analyses)

In addition to testing formal hypotheses, three distinct research questions were examined. For the first research question, attachment anxiety and avoidance dimensions were entered as predictors to career concern, control, curiosity and confidence. For the second research question, each of the four career-adaptive strategies were tested as mediators between the relation of attachment security and subjective well-being, (treating each age cohort as a moderator). Lastly, attachment insecurity across four relational domains and career adaptability strategies were entered as predictors of subjective well-being across three independent regression models. Correlations between dimensions of attachment insecurity and outcome variables of interest are discussed first (see Table 5). The majority of variables demonstrated significant intercorrelations, with a few exceptions.

For emerging adults, having attachment anxiety with one's mother and father was not significantly correlated with life satisfaction, presence of or search for meaning in life (r_s = from $-.08$ to $.10$). Anxiety with partner was not significantly correlated with mother avoidance, father avoidance and friend avoidance (r_s = from $-.06$ to $-.11$). Moreover, attachment avoidance with mother, father, partner and friend was not significantly correlated with life search for meaning in life (r_s = from $-.06$ to $.01$).

For older adults, attachment anxiety with parents and attachment avoidance with

parents were not significantly correlated (r_s = from $-.08$ to $-.01$). Attachment anxiety with mother was not significantly correlated with life satisfaction ($r = -.002$), presence ($r = -.01$) and search for meaning in life ($r = .01$). Attachment anxiety with father was not significantly correlated with friend avoidance ($r = -.11$), life satisfaction ($r = -.01$), presence ($r = -.02$) and search for meaning in life ($r = .04$). Attachment anxiety was not significantly correlated with partner with mother and father avoidance ($r = -.01$, and $r = -.02$), friend avoidance ($r = -.10$), and search for meaning in life ($r = .07$). Attachment avoidance with mother was not significantly correlated with life satisfaction ($r = .12$), and search for meaning in life ($r = .09$). Father, partner and friend avoidance were not significantly correlated with search for meaning in life (r_s = from $-.07$ to $.13$). Friend avoidance was not significantly correlated with life satisfaction and presence for meaning in life ($r = .11$, and $r = .14$). Lastly, presence and search for meaning in life were not significantly correlated ($r = -.08$).

Research Question 1: Research question one explored whether, within each cohort, differences exist between attachment insecurity in the prediction of the four career-adaptive strategies.

Emerging adults. The overall regression model testing attachment insecurity predicting career concern was significant $F(2, 284) = 12.18, p < .001; R^2 = .08$. Attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.18, p < .01$) and avoidance ($\beta = -.16, p < .01$) emerged as significant individual predictors.

The overall regression model testing attachment insecurity predicting career control was significant $F(2, 284) = 11.62, p < .001; R^2 = .08$. Attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.23, p < .001$) emerged as a significant individual predictor and attachment avoidance (β

$= -.09, p = .17$) did not.

The overall regression model testing attachment insecurity predicting career curiosity was significant $F(2, 284) = 4.90, p < .01; R^2 = .03$. Attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.12, p = .07$) and attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.10, p = .13$) did not emerge as significant individual predictors.

The overall regression model testing attachment insecurity predicting career confidence was significant $F(2, 284) = 7.04, p < .001; R^2 = .05$. Attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.18, p < .01$) emerged as a significant individual predictor, and attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.07, p = .26$) did not.

Older adults. The overall regression model testing attachment insecurity predicting career concern was significant $F(2, 164) = 6.59, p < .01; R^2 = .07$. Attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.15, p = .09$), and avoidance ($\beta = -.16, p = .06$) did not emerge as significant individual predictors.

The overall regression model testing attachment insecurity predicting career control was significant $F(2, 164) = 7.44, p < .001; R^2 = .08$. Attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.26, p < .01$) emerged as a significant individual predictor and attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.04, p = .61$) did not.

The overall regression model testing attachment insecurity predicting career curiosity was significant $F(2, 164) = 8.18, p < .001; R^2 = .09$. Attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.19, p < .01$) emerged as a significant individual predictor and attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.16, p = .06$) did not.

The overall regression model testing attachment insecurity predicting career confidence was significant $F(2, 164) = 9.85, p < .001; R^2 = .11$. Attachment anxiety ($\beta =$

-.20, $p < .05$) and attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .05$) emerged as significant individual predictors.

Research Question 2. Research question two examined whether each of the four career-adaptive strategies similarly mediated the relationship between attachment security and subjective well-being in each age cohort. Six moderated mediation models were tested to examine the indirect effect of career adaptability on well-being through attachment insecurity and whether the relationship between attachment insecurity and career adaptability is moderated by age cohort. Results of the six models exhibited significant direct and indirect effects, no interaction effects were found (see Figures 4-9 for a detailed summary of path estimates in the stated models).

Attachment anxiety and satisfaction with life. Attachment anxiety had a conditional direct effect on life satisfaction for both emerging and older adults ($ES = -.92$, $SE = .22$, $p < .001$, [CI -1.35, -.48]). Career concern ($ES = .21$, $SE = .07$, $p < .05$ [CI .07, .35] and control ($ES = .24$, $SE = .07$, $p < .01$ [CI .06, .42] mediated the relationship between attachment anxiety and life satisfaction holding cohort group constant.

Attachment avoidance and satisfaction with life. Attachment avoidance evidenced a conditional direct effect on life satisfaction for both emerging and older adults ($ES = -1.51$, $SE = .24$, $p < .001$, [CI -1.99, -1.04]). Career concern ($ES = .15$, $SE = .07$, $p < .05$ [CI .02, .29] and control ($ES = .30$, $SE = .09$, $p < .05$ [CI .13, .47] mediated the relationship between attachment avoidance and life satisfaction holding cohort group constant.

Attachment anxiety and presence of meaning in life. Attachment anxiety had a conditional direct effect on presence of life meaning for both emerging and older adults

($ES = -.98$, $SE = .19$, $p < .001$, $[CI -1.35, -.61]$). Career concern ($ES = .19$, $SE = .06$, $p < .05$ [$CI .07, .31$]) and control ($ES = .29$, $SE = .08$, $p < .05$ [$CI .13, .44$]) mediated the relationship between attachment anxiety and presence holding cohort group constant.

Attachment avoidance and presence of meaning in life. Attachment avoidance demonstrated a conditional direct effect on presence of life meaning both emerging and older adults ($ES = -1.10$, $SE = .21$, $p < .001$, $[CI -1.51, -.68]$). Career concern ($ES = .14$, $SE = .05$, $p < .05$ [$CI .02, .26$]) and control ($ES = .35$, $SE = .08$, $p < .05$ [$CI .21, .50$]) mediated the relationship between attachment avoidance and presence holding cohort group constant.

Attachment anxiety and search for meaning in life. Attachment anxiety had a direct effect on search for both emerging and older adults ($ES = 1.38$, $SE = .24$, $p < .001$, $[CI .90, 1.86]$). Career concern ($ES = .43$, $SE = .08$, $p < .05$ [$CI .28, .58$]) and control ($ES = .23$, $SE = .10$, $p < .05$ [$CI -.42, -.03$]) mediated the relationship between attachment anxiety and search holding cohort group constant.

Attachment avoidance and search for meaning in life. Attachment avoidance demonstrated a conditional direct effect on search for both emerging and older adults ($ES = .99$, $SE = .27$, $p < .001$, $[CI .45, 1.53]$). Career concern ($ES = .48$, $SE = .08$, $p < .05$ [$CI .33, .63$]) and control ($ES = -.32$, $SE = .10$, $p < .05$ [$CI -.52, -.13$]) mediated the relationship between attachment avoidance and search for life meaning holding cohort group constant.

Research Question 3. This analysis tested the contributions of four relational dimensions of attachment insecurity entered in step one, and the four career adaptive strategies entered in step two (*see* Tables 7 and 8) in the prediction of well-being. Of note, all tests were examined for multicollinearity using the variance inflation factor

(VIF). A VIF above 5 is indicative of multicollinearity. There were no issues of multicollinearity for the emerging adult sample. However, for the older adult sample there was a high correlation between mother and father anxiety ($r = .91$) that created multicollinearity issues in the regression analysis. Provided that for older adults their experiences with parents may be more reflective and collective in terms of memories and experiences, both variables were collapsed and a composite score was created and labeled 'Parental Anxiety.'

Satisfaction with life. For emerging adults, the first step of the regression model was significant $F(8, 277) = 7.32, p < .001; R^2 = .17$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (in step two) accounted for an additional 7% (ΔR^2) of the variance in the prediction of life satisfaction. Mother anxiety ($\beta = .19, p < .05$), partner anxiety ($\beta = -.24, p < .01$), mother avoidance ($\beta = .16, p < .05$), father avoidance ($\beta = .18, p < .01$), career concern ($\beta = .19, p < .05$), confidence ($\beta = -.19, p < .05$) emerged as significant individual predictors. Career control reached marginal significance. ($\beta = .18, p = .06$).

For older adults, the first step of the regression model was significant $F(7, 157) = 3.88, p < .01; R^2 = .15$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (in step two) accounted for an additional 10% (ΔR^2) of the variance in the prediction of life satisfaction. Partner anxiety ($\beta = -.31, p < .01$), father avoidance ($\beta = .23, p < .05$), emerged as a significant individual predictors. Career control reached marginal significance. ($\beta = .23, p = .08$).

Presence. For emerging adults, the first step of the regression model was significant $F(8, 277) = 3.52, p < .001; R^2 = .09$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (in step two) accounted for an additional 18% (ΔR^2) of the variance in

the prediction of presence of meaning in life. Career concern emerged as a significant individual predictor ($\beta = .35, p < .001$).

For older adults, the first step of the regression model was significant $F(7, 159) = 3.05, p < .01; R^2 = .12$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (in step two) accounted for an additional 28% (ΔR^2) of the variance in the prediction of presence of meaning in life. Partner anxiety ($\beta = -.20, p < .05$), father avoidance, ($\beta = .19, p < .05$), and career control ($\beta = .35, p < .01$) emerged significant individual predictors. Parental anxiety reached marginal significance. ($\beta = .16, p = .051$).

Search. For emerging adults, the first step of the regression model was significant $F(8, 277) = 2.40, p < .05; R^2 = .07$. The change in R^2 from the first to the second step was not significant ($\Delta R^2 = .09, p = .14$). Partner anxiety ($\beta = .29, p < .01$) emerged as a significant individual predictor.

For older adults, the first step of the regression model was marginally significant $F(7, 159) = 1.95, p = .07; R^2 = .09$, and the inclusion of the four career adaptive strategies (in step two) accounted for an additional 6% (ΔR^2) of the variance in the prediction of searching for meaning in life. Friend anxiety ($\beta = .32, p < .01$) and career curiosity ($\beta = .30, p < .05$) emerged as significant individual predictors. Career concern reached marginal significance. ($\beta = .20, p = .07$).

Summary. For emerging adults, attachment anxiety and avoidance predicted career concern. Attachment anxiety, alone, predicted career control and confidence. Results for older adults were different. In the older adult sample, attachment anxiety, alone, predicted career control and curiosity and both attachment anxiety and avoidance predicted career confidence. In the emerging and older adult sample, career concern and

control consistently mediated the relationship between attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance and life satisfaction, presence and search for meaning in life.

Overall, dimensions of attachment insecurity across four relational domains were predictive of well-being in addition to the four career adaptive strategies. For emerging adults, having an insecure attachment with mother and father avoidance was positively predicted by life satisfaction. Moreover, partner anxiety was negatively predictive of life satisfaction and searching for meaning in life. Career concern was positively related to predicting life satisfaction and presence of meaning in life. Lastly, career confidence was negatively associated in the prediction of satisfaction with life. For older adults, partner anxiety negatively predicted life satisfaction and presence in meaning life and positively predicted searching for meaning in life. Father avoidance was positively related to predicting life satisfaction and presence of meaning in life.

Chapter V

Discussion

The dynamic and unstable characteristics of the contemporary American workplace have intensified scientific interest in how adults adapt to significant career transitions. However, to date, it remains unclear whether persons similarly or differentially experience career transitions at distinct life periods. Toward this end, the present study examined generational differences between cohorts of emerging and older adults undergoing normative, yet distinct career transitions given their respective life stages. In particular, and within each age cohort, the contributions of participants' adult attachment and career adaptability orientations to their experiences of subjective well-being were assessed.

This work sought to enhance current understanding about predictors of career adaptability, or how a person adapts to transitions, and how these transitions relate to life satisfaction and meaning in life. Moreover, for exploratory aims, I examined differences within each age cohort in the differential prediction of attachment insecurity to the four career-adaptive strategies. This aim was then followed by testing six mediational models to explore the indirect effects of career adaptability in the relationship between attachment insecurity and well-being. Additionally, novel testing of moderated mediation was pursued to examine whether age cohort moderated the relationships between participant's adult attachment orientations and career adaptability strategies. Lastly, I tested the contribution of attachment insecurity (across relational domains of mother, father, partner, and friend) and the collective contribution of the four career-adaptive strategies in the prediction of well-being.

Findings from the current study extend previous theoretical and empirical work. To begin, bivariate correlations within each age cohort supported the hypotheses that adult attachment anxiety and avoidance would each be respectively and negatively related to life satisfaction and meaning in life scores (Hypotheses 1a and 1b); in addition, the expectation (i.e., Hypothesis 1c) that each of the two dimensions of adult attachment insecurity would each be positively related to existential distress (i.e., search for life meaning scores) was supported within the emerging adult group, but only partly supported within the older adult group, wherein the observed positive relation between attachment avoidance and MLQ Search scores did not reach significance ($r = .11$).

Overall findings from these first set of hypotheses aligns with current findings in the broader attachment literature indicating that attachment insecurity poses as a risk factor to negative emotions, distress, anxiety, depression and resentment (Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). These results also indicate that experiencing fears of either interpersonal rejection or of intimacy may activate existential anxiety and motivate the search for life meaning and purpose (Bodner et al., 2014; Lopez, et al., 2014). Further, attachment insecurity may cloud or bias the meaning that individuals place about a career transition leaving them vulnerable to experiencing anxiety about meaninglessness (Davila & Sargent, 2003; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). It may also be that attachment security reduces a person's concern of existential isolation that may be exacerbated by a significant life change (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Although the relation between attachment avoidance and search did not reach significance for older adults, the act of possibly distancing from others later in life may influence perceptions that search for meaning is either unnecessary or irrelevant to their

current life circumstance. It is unclear whether this connection may be found in later adulthood for other types of life transitions independent of a career context. Further research using older adult samples undergoing varied types of life transitions may provide a clearer connection between attachment avoidance and searching for meaning.

MANOVA analyses partly supported the hypothesis that scores in attachment insecurity would differ across age (Hypotheses 2a and 2b). Older adults were not more avoidantly attached compared to emerging adults (Hypotheses 2a), yet younger adults were more anxiously attached compared to older adults (Hypothesis 2b).

Results about age differences in anxiety replicate previous research findings, (Segal et al., 2009). It seems that older adults, who have more life experience personally and professionally may be better at regulating emotions, feel less anxious and are less likely to experience unease when undergoing a life transition (Urry & Gross, 2010). However, emerging adults may feel pressured and overwhelmed to explore different career options and interests. As such, these young adults are more anxious and unsure about what career opportunities may lead to favorable long-term decisions (Arnett, 2004).

As hypothesized, bivariate correlations within each age cohort supported the positive association between the four career adaptive strategies and life satisfaction and presence in meaning, yet the negative relationship among career adaptability scores and search was not supported (Hypothesis 3). Specifically, career adaptability was unrelated to search for meaning among older adults. Among emerging adults, career curiosity and career confidence were positively related to scores in searching for life meaning.

Savickas (2005) theorized that persons exhibiting strategies of concern, control, curiosity and confidence would be more adaptive and flexible in areas regarding career

decision-making. Within this study, such adaptability for both young and older adults showed significant positive associations with life satisfaction and meaning in life in expected directions. Upon closer examination, the relation of search and career adaptability was not found for older adults. This finding may be attributed to how salient work is for older adults compared to younger adults. That is, at the point of retirement, older adults have had extensive work experience such that preserving one's identity is rooted in integrating and making sense of one's career and future (Osborne, 2012). Moreover, search for meaning may be less relevant to older adults because they, compared to emerging adults, may already taken the time to reconcile their identity and life perspective.

Unexpectedly, search for meaning was positively associated with confidence and curiosity in the younger adult cohort. Current findings, in the emerging adult sample are suggestive of the nascent development of building a personal vocational identity. For emerging adults who are just starting to crystallize their careers, searching for meaning in life may very well be a normal and possibly necessary developmental task in adapting well (Mayseless & Keren, 2014), at least in context of career transitions.

Hierarchical regression analyses within each age cohort supported the hypothesis that career adaptive strategies of concern, control, curiosity and confidence would collectively account for incremental variance in the prediction of each of life satisfaction, presence and search for meaning when controlling for attachment anxiety and avoidance (Hypothesis 4). Overall, for emerging adults, attachment anxiety, career control and career concern emerged as positive significant predictors of life satisfaction and meaning in life. Career confidence was a marginally significant negative predictor of life

satisfaction. However, for older adults it was attachment avoidance, career control and career curiosity that emerged as consistent predictors of life satisfaction, presence and search for meaning. These findings may be attributed to how young and older adults internalize and conceptualize their own existential angst when experiencing a life change.

For example, it may be that for younger adults the preoccupation of entering adulthood and starting a career activates their need to seek and achieve control in order to feel satisfied with life. However, such need may overwhelm one's ability to carefully consider possible resources and options to transition well and thus negatively impact perceptions of life satisfaction. Moreover, in a period of a career transition, the level of purposeful consideration of a vocational future (i.e., career concern) may prompt thoughts and feelings of whether meaning in life is present. Lastly, for emerging adults, the entrance to a career may influence a more realistic confidence level regarding perceptions of how one will be successful in making, implementing and executing a vocational plan. This realization may feel underwhelming, due to current realities of securing a job, and thus influence a lowered sense of life satisfaction.

As for older adults, attachment avoidance may offer a semblance of regaining or at least maintaining autonomy during a life change, but such a disposition can become quite solitary thus negatively impacting life satisfaction and presence of meaning in life. Interestingly, attachment anxiety was positively associated with the search for meaning for both age cohorts. Making sense of a new life change can be perplexing or uncertain, and the anxiety that comes with such change may thus internally motivate people to search for meaning regardless of age or emotion-regulatory capacities.

Exploratory Findings

Another important contribution of this study was the exploration of three research questions examining (a) the associations between adult attachment orientations and career adaptability, (b) the mediation effects of career adaptability and the moderation effect of age cohort, and (c) the contribution of attachment insecurity across four relational domains with career adaptability in predicting well-being.

Within each cohort, differences did emerge between attachment insecurity in the prediction of the four career-adaptive strategies (Research Question 1). During a career transition attachment anxiety and avoidance predicted career concern, while attachment anxiety, alone, predicted career control and confidence for emerging adults. These findings were different for older adults for whom attachment anxiety, alone, predicted career control and curiosity, and both attachment anxiety and avoidance predicted career confidence. These differences may be a direct reflection of both perceived availability of resources based on an individual's attachment system in addition to experiencing a contextually different career transition. Constructing or deconstructing one's career may call for prioritizing career adaptive strategies differently. Prioritization, therefore, is a function of how insecure or secure (i.e., one's attachment disposition) the individual feels about his or her respective career transition. Provided that emerging adults are beginning their career and have to manage the difficulties found in an unstable work force, career concern may be prioritized as an adaptive strategy to a greater extent above control and confidence. Similarly, for older adults, career control and confidence were predicted by attachment insecurity. However, curiosity about leaving one's career may be more salient to older adults compared to curiosity of entering a career for emerging adults.

Moreover, Bodner and colleagues (2014) found that older adults scored higher on presence of meaning compared to younger adults, and those with higher levels of attachment insecurity reported higher levels of search. It may be that for older adults the presence of meaning affords greater opportunity to engage in personal exploration from a secure base and such curiosity enhances well-being. Additionally, older adults perceive fewer stressors than younger adults (Brose et al., 2013) and are better apt to regulate their affect (Charles & Carstensen, 2010). Taken together, older adults may be developmentally more prompt in identifying their needs and better equipped to self-regulate their distress during a significant life change based on their more extensive life experiences with successes and failures. Conversely, emerging adults are still at a time when they are concurrently tasked to make work decisions about their identities (Arnett, 2003) and so career concern, control and confidence are more important than having career curiosity.

Of interest, this study also explored and found partial support for dimensions of career adaptability mediating the relationship between attachment insecurity and well-being (Research Question 2). Within each age cohort, conditional process analysis revealed that career concern (i.e., concern about the future and one's vocation) and career control (i.e., belief of being responsible to construct one's vocation) mediated the relationship between attachment anxiety and avoidance with life satisfaction and presence and search for meaning for both older and younger adults. No moderation effect of age cohort emerged in the respective moderated mediation models.

Results from these analyses suggest that as persons experience significant preoccupation, excessive neediness -or conversely- emotional distancing, perceptions of

having career adaptive strategies of concern and control are diminished which, in turn, contribute to the experience of life dissatisfaction and purposelessness. In addition, as seen in the last two models of attachment insecurity with search for meaning, it seems that the negative relationship between attachment insecurity and perceptions of having vocational control is associated with increased need to search for meaning in life.

These findings are consistent with Savickas's (2005) contention that career concern and control are the two most important dimensions of career adaptability. It may be that these two salient adaptive strategies carry more weight to young and older adults when reflecting and making decisions about their respective life transitions. For example, career concern and control may necessitate more attention because these domains more clearly direct behavior of how to manage a life transition and inform what next steps should be taken. Beyond the noted differences between cohorts (from previous analyses), when undergoing a significant life change, one's willingness to address the questions of "*What am I going to do?*" and "*Who controls my future?*" may be especially crucial to adaptive transitional coping regardless of age or life circumstances.

Finally, within each age cohort, support was found for dimensions of attachment insecurity in different relationships further differentiating the contribution of adult attachment security and the four career adaptive strategies to life satisfaction, presence and search for meaning (Research Question 3). Across four relational domains for emerging adults, (e.g., anxiety with their mother; avoidance with parents) was found to be positively related to predicting life satisfaction yet partner anxiety was negatively associated in the prediction of life satisfaction and searching for meaning in life. These findings may be suggestive of emerging adults' own needs to become adults, become less

dependent on their parents yet seek out new relationships in romantic partners to fulfill personal needs. For older adults, partner anxiety was negatively related to predicting life satisfaction and presence in meaning life and positively related to searching for meaning in life. For older adults, personal romantic relationships were also most important to the state of well-being when undergoing a career transition.

Overall, it seems that for younger adults, needing others and seeking social connection may be imperative and valued when undergoing life changes whereas for older adults continuing to exert autonomy and minimizing social dependence on others may be more important. The dichotomy of *seeking* versus *shedding* relationships as described by socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen et al., 2003) may be a notable developmental change that is further reinforced by the experiences of life transitions.

Practice Implications

This study provides a keener understanding about career transitions and how this may relate to improving current practices to career counseling (Savickas, 2000). Specifically, career counselors can examine the results from this study and consider the risks and resiliency factors of emerging and older adults that influence when and how career adaptive strategies are adopted. For example, using an attachment-based framework, career counselors could evaluate how attachment dispositions filter perceptions of adaptability resources to provide psycho-education to their clients. Using such framework can prove function as an effective tool in helping individuals examine their needs in the contexts of social relationships when experiencing a life transition. Moreover, provided that there are differences in the importance of adaptive strategies across age, counselors can now better strategize in developing confidence for emerging

adults and fostering a greater sense of curiosity for older adults.

Strengthening these assets may occur in a number of ways. First, counselors can provide or deliver assessments that address these adaptive strategies. Second, using the information from such assessment, counselors can then invite conversations and exploration about a client's attachment and how this relates to beliefs and experiences with adaptability. Third, career counselors can develop homework assignments and provide opportunities for clients to seek models of individuals who have undergone career transitions. Lastly, sessions could also incorporate an existential framework that emphasizes concepts of responsibility, meaning, accountability and authenticity (Cohen, 2003). Moreover, couching the experience of transition and adaptability from an existential perspective can improve upon a client's ability to create and draw meaning to foster personal growth and insight (Maglio, Butterfield, & Borgen, 2005; Miller & Rottinghaus, 2014).

Career counselors are also well positioned to engage clients in conversations that stimulate having meaning in life and being satisfied both intra- and interpersonally. Additionally, engaging the individual in exploring and the relationships most salient to him or her may be another means of enhancing the career counseling process. Provided that exploration and meaning may be important ways to link multiple identities of what makes a person a complete individual, future studies should examine how these processes shape vocational identity.

This study extends current research on career adaptability by specifically examining cohort differences regarding transitional adjustment. It is also noteworthy that this study takes a novel approach in evaluating cohort differences by proposing a model

addressing the role of career adaptability in the context of attachment dispositions, life satisfaction, presence, and search for meaning in life. The findings of this study suggest that personality dispositions (i.e., attachment orientations) play a role in shaping and influencing perceptions of career adaptability for both young and older adult groups. Moreover, career adaptability dimensions were also associated with indicators of well-being during a career transition. Differences in generational cohorts emerged in the context of experiencing a career transition. However, there were also similarities between these two groups that underscore the commonality of existential contemplation stemming from a significant life change. Lastly, this study offers preliminary evidence about how life context influence subjective appraisals that facilitate career adaptation and contribute to well-being and more importantly links these findings with practice and career counseling implications.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study is not without limitations. The cross-sectional and correlational design precluded causal inferences regarding interrelationships among the study variables. Pursuing longitudinal studies that examine transition periods over time may provide additional information about the stable and fluctuating features of adapting to a new life change. Additionally, for the emerging adult sample, the majority of participants were women. Further inquiry about possible gender differences across attachment orientation and experiences of career adaptability may prove useful to describe respective unique experiences. Moreover, the older adult sample in this study was predominantly Caucasian, thus making current findings less generalizable to older adults undergoing a retirement transition who identify as ethnic minorities. Although the eligibility criteria in

this study welcomed older adults 55 and older, this work does acknowledge that ethnic minority elders face significant income and accumulated wealth disparities compared to Caucasians (American Psychological Association, 2014) and thereby be much less likely to retire before the age of 65. This may present as a possible reason for the limited access to ethnic minorities in this study.

This line of inquiry would benefit from including more specific information about financial circumstances that may facilitate or inhibit the prospect of retirement and the extent that health and wellness play a role in career transitions. As an example, the Retirement Resources Inventory by Leung and Earl (2012) is a 35-item measure composed of three subscales assessing social, cognitive, and financial resources relevant to retirement adjustment and well-being. The inventory was validated with retirees aged 50 years and older. Future studies could draw from this measure and investigate whether having access to resources across these three domains influence the experience of a career transition (whether positively or negatively) and effect psychological well-being.

Future research may also consider how individual difference characteristics like attachment, gender, race/ethnicity, and age, along with health and financial circumstances, all intersect to form 'profiles' describing what makes for an adaptive person during a life transition. It is also worth noting that while interpersonal relationships and person characteristics may influence adaptability examining other factors like religion and spirituality may be of interest. Experiencing a significant life change may elicit existential distress and in this period of uncertainty, turning to figures of a higher power may improve adaptive coping and well-being (Earl, 2010; Yonker, Schnabelrauch, & Dehaan, 2012).

An additional area of inquiry could include testing whether gender differences exist as a function of transitions status (e.g., pre and post transition). As Schlossberg (1981, 2011) notes, transitions involve an ebb and flow of re-negotiating new life roles, however such re-negotiation may vary. Future work exploring a person's perception of their transition as predictive/non-predictive or voluntary/involuntary may shed more light on the construct of adaptability across multiple contexts.

This work emphasizes the need and value of studying constructs that make people adaptive and contribute to well-being when undergoing career transitions. It is the hope of this study that current findings further improve our understanding about career development processes. Moreover, this work is a first step in understanding adjustment and adaptive processes during vocational transitions by using novel methods, and exploring the role of relationships and personal dispositions. Further research in this area is still needed in effort to facilitate successful adaptation and improve well being.

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Appendix A

Tables

Table 1

Demographics of Emerging Adults (N = 298) and Older Adults (N = 169)

Variable	Emerging Adult		Older Adult Retirees	
	<i>Male</i> (N=64)	<i>Female</i> (N=234)	<i>Male</i> (N=87)	<i>Female</i> (N=82)
Race				
Caucasian	9.4%	24.75%	46.1%	43.8%%
African American	3.4%	13.4%	3.6%	2.4%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	5.4%	27.2%	0.6%	0%
Asian American	3.4%	12.8%	1.2%	2.4%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0%	0.7%	0%	0%
Age				
M_{age}	25.11	22.88	63.69	65.52
SD_{age}	.31	.13	.53	.68
Transition Status				
Pre Six Months	12.1%	70.5%	24.3%	18.9%
Post 6 Months	9.4%	8.1%	27.2%	29.6%
SES				
Lower Class	8.7%	51.7%	7.1%	8.9%
Lower to Middle Class	7.0%	16.4%	20.7%	20.7%
Middle to Upper Class	4.0%	9.1%	17.2%	14.8%
Upper Class	1.7%	1.3%	6.7%	4.2%

Note. Total % of Race in Emerging Adult Sample: Caucasian (33.9%), African American (16.8%), Hispanic (32.6%), Asian American (16.1%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.6%). Total % of Race in Older Adult Sample: Caucasian (89.9%), African American (5.9%), Hispanic (0.6%), Asian American (3.6%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (0%). Overall Emerging Adult $M_{age} = 23.36$, $SD_{age} = 2.25$. Overall Older Adult $M_{age} = 64.58$, $SD_{age} = 5.62$.

Table 2

Correlations and Descriptive Statistics among Key Study Variables in Young and Older Adult Sample (N =467)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. ECR Anxiety	(.95)	.51***	-.23**	-.29***	-.27***	-.29***	-.26***	-.26***	.18*
2. ECR Avoidance	.43***	(.95)	-.24**	-.18*	-.26***	-.28***	-.38***	-.38***	.11
3. Career Concern	-.24***	-.23***	(.89)	.62***	.70***	.61***	.31***	.46***	.14
4. Career Control	-.26***	-.18**	.71***	(.90)	.75***	.79***	.30***	.52***	-.02
5. Career Curiosity	-.16**	-.15*	.70***	.72***	(.91)	.82***	.27***	.49***	.01
6. Career Confidence	-.21***	-.15*	.70***	.76***	.72***	(.93)	.29***	.48***	-.03
7. Satisfaction with Life	-.26***	-.29***	.29***	.32***	.26***	.20***	(.88)	.57***	-.16*
8. Presence	-.34***	-.26***	.45***	.41***	.37***	.33***	.51***	(.89)	-.08
9. Search	.19***	.12*	.08	.07	.13*	.13*	-.14*	-.16**	(.91)
<i>M</i>	3.22 ^a 2.61 ^b	2.86 ^a 2.87 ^b	22.61 ^a 16.54 ^b	22.16 ^a 22.28 ^b	21.77 ^a 20.02 ^b	22.94 ^a 21.85 ^b	24.16 ^a 23.33 ^b	26.03 ^a 26.24 ^b	25.82 ^a 19.77 ^b
<i>SD</i>	1.34 ^a 1.34 ^b	1.14 ^a 1.34 ^b	4.81 ^a 5.28 ^b	5.40 ^a 5.40 ^b	5.51 ^a 5.72 ^b	5.20 ^a 5.85 ^b	6.58 ^a 6.68 ^b	6.21 ^a 6.10 ^b	6.50 ^a 7.23 ^b
α	.94 ^a .95 ^b	.94 ^a .96 ^b	.88 ^a .86 ^b	.90 ^a .91 ^b	.92 ^a .91 ^b	.93 ^a .95 ^b	.89 ^a .88 ^b	.88 ^a .91 ^b	.89 ^a .90 ^b

Note. $p < .05$ *, $p < .01$ **, $p < .001$ ***. Emerging Adult^a. Older Adult^b. Emerging adult data is found at the bottom of the diagonal. Older adult data is above the diagonal. Alpha reliabilities of the overall sample are found along the main diagonal in parentheses.

Table 3
Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Emerging Adults' Subjective Well Being (N = 298)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Step 1									
ECR Anxiety	-.61	.30	-.12*	-.95	.27	-.20**	.96	.32	.20**
ECR Avoidance	-1.13	.35	-.19**	-.42	.31	-.08	.40	.37	.07
Step 2									
Concern	.12	.12	.09	.37	.11	.28**	.03	.12	.02
Control	.30	.12	.25**	.19	.10	.16†	-.08	.12	-.07
Curiosity	.10	.11	.09	.10	.09	.09	.13	.11	.11
Confidence	-.21	.12	-.16†	-.12	.10	-.10	.17	.12	.14
R^2		.12**			.13**			.04**	
ΔR^2		.06**			.15**			.04*	

Note: † $p < .08$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Model 1 represents Satisfaction with Life; Model 2 represents Meaning in Life (Presence); Model 3 represents Meaning in Life (Search).

Table 4

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Older Adults' Subjective Well Being (N = 169)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Step 1									
ECR Anxiety	-.11	.42	-.02	.16	.34	.04	.97	.48	.18*
ECR Avoidance	-1.58	.42	-.32**	-1.33	.34	-.29**	.32	.48	.06
Step 2									
Concern	.19	.13	.15	.17	.10	.15	.27	.15	.20†
Control	.25	.16	.20	.40	.13	.35**	-.15	.18	-.11
Curiosity	-.09	.16	-.08	.08	.13	.07	.39	.19	.31*
Confidence	.001	.16	.001	-.03	.13	-.03	-.31	.18	-.25
R^2	.15**			.15**			.03†		
ΔR^2	.06*			.23**			.08*		

Note: † $p < .07$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Model 1 represents Satisfaction with Life; Model 2 represents Meaning in Life (Presence); Model 3 represents Meaning in Life (Search).

Table 5
Correlations among Outcome Variables in Young and Older Adult Sample with Dimensions of Attachment Insecurity ($N = 467$)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Mother Anxiety	-	.91***	.39***	.55***	-.19*	-.06	-.01	-.16*	-.002	-.01	.01
2. Father Anxiety	.71***	-	.37***	.53***	-.08	-.08	-.03	-.11	-.01	-.02	.04
3. Partner Anxiety	.45***	.39***	-	.47***	-.01	-.02	-.40***	-.10	-.29***	-.22**	.07
4. Friend Anxiety	.49***	.38***	.65***	-	-.27***	-.17*	-.21**	-.37**	-.16*	-.21**	.18*
5. Mother Avoidance	-.33***	-.21***	-.11†	-.27***	-	.66***	.28**	.44***	.12	.16*	.09
6. Father Avoidance	-.16**	-.39**	-.06	-.12*	.43***	-	.33***	.27***	.21**	.19*	.13
7. Partner Avoidance	-.16**	-.21***	-.34***	-.24***	.17**	.23***	-	.20*	.26***	.23**	-.07
8. Friend Avoidance	-.22***	-.11†	-.08	-.28***	.27***	.15*	.24***	-	.11	.14	.01
9. Satisfaction with Life	.02	-.02	-.20***	-.21***	.24***	.21***	.14*	.16**	-	.57***	-.16*
10. Presence	-.07	-.08	-.17**	-.23***	.19**	.09	.11†	.17**	.51***	-	-.08
11. Search	.10	.05	.23***	.11†	-.05	.01	-.06	.05	-.14*	-.16**	-
<i>M</i>	5.62 ^a 6.95 ^b	6.52 ^a 7.34 ^b	8.39 ^a 6.55 ^b	8.01 ^a 7.13 ^b	31.71 ^a 21.99 ^b	26.16 ^a 19.55 ^b	32.48 ^a 29.60 ^b	31.94 ^a 28.75 ^b	24.16 ^a 23.33 ^b	26.03 ^a 26.24 ^b	25.82 ^a 19.77 ^b
<i>SD</i>	4.75 ^a 4.66 ^b	5.32 ^a 4.70 ^b	5.35 ^a 4.90 ^b	5.26 ^a 4.42 ^b	9.32 ^a 9.54 ^b	10.81 ^a 7.89 ^b	8.54 ^a 10.01 ^b	7.52 ^a 8.93 ^b	6.58 ^a 6.68 ^b	6.21 ^a 6.10 ^b	6.50 ^a 7.23 ^b

Note. † $p < .07$ $p < .05$ *, $p < .01$ **, $p < .001$ ***. Emerging Adult^a, Older Adult^b. Emerging adult data is found at the bottom of the diagonal. Older adult data is above the diagonal.

Table 6

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Career Adaptive Strategies (N = 467)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Emerging Adult												
ECR Anxiety	-.64	.23	-.18**	-.93	.26	-.23**	-.49	.27	-.12	-.69	.25	-.18**
ECR Avoidance	-.67	.27	-.16**	-.41	.30	-.09	-.48	.31	-.10	-.33	.29	-.07
Older Adult												
ECR Anxiety	-.59	.34	-.15	-1.07	.35	-.26**	-.80	.37	-.19*	-.88	.37	-.20**
ECR Avoidance	-.65	.34	-.16	-.17	.35	-.04	-.69	.37	-.16	-.77	.37	-.18*
R^{2a}		.08**			.08**			.03**			.05**	
R^{2b}		.07**			.08**			.09**			.11**	

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Model 1 represents Concern; Model 2 represents Control; Model 3 represents Curiosity; Model 4 represents Confidence. Emerging Adult^a. Older Adult^b.

Table 7

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Emerging Adults' Subjective Well Being (N = 298)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Step 1									
Mother Anxiety	.26	.12	.19*	.08	.11	.06	.04	.13	.03
Father Anxiety	.10	.11	.08	-.04	.10	-.03	-.09	.11	-.07
Partner Anxiety	-.30	.09	-.24**	-.11	.09	-.10	.35	.10	.29**
Friend Anxiety	-.08	.10	-.06	-.10	.09	-.08	-.08	.10	-.07
Mother Avoidance	.11	.05	.16*	.07	.04	.11	-.05	.05	-.07
Father Avoidance	.11	.04	.18**	.01	.04	.01	.01	.04	.02
Partner Avoidance	-.02	.05	-.03	-.03	.04	-.04	-.004	.05	-.01
Friend Avoidance	.06	.05	.07	.05	.05	.06	.03	.06	.04
Step 2									
Concern	.26	.12	.19*	.44	.11	.35**	-.04	.13	-.03
Control	.22	.12	.18†	.17	.11	.15	-.09	.12	-.07
Curiosity	.08	.11	.07	.09	.10	.08	.14	.12	.12
Confidence	-.24	.12	-.19*	-.15	.11	-.12	.17	.12	.14
R^2		.17**			.09**			.07*	
ΔR^2		.07**			.18**			.09	

Note: † $p < .06$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Model 1 represents Satisfaction with Life; Model 2 represents Meaning in Life (Presence); Model 3 represents Meaning in Life (Search).

Table 8

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Older Adults' Subjective Well Being (N = 169)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Step 1									
Parental Anxiety	.11	.07	.15	.10	.05	.16†	-.07	.08	-.09
Partner Anxiety	-.41	.13	-.31**	-.25	.10	-.20*	-.14	.14	-.10
Friend Anxiety	-.05	.15	-.03	-.13	.12	-.10	.53	.17	.32**
Mother Avoidance	-.04	.07	-.06	-.01	.06	-.01	.07	.08	.09
Father Avoidance	.20	.09	.23*	.14	.07	.19*	.07	.10	.07
Partner Avoidance	.01	.06	.02	-.002	.05	-.003	-.10	.07	-.14
Friend Avoidance	-.01	.06	-.01	-.02	.05	-.03	.07	.07	.09
Step 2									
Concern	.16	.13	.13	.15	.11	.13	.27	.15	.20†
Control	.28	.16	.23†	.39	.13	.35**	-.18	.18	-.13
Curiosity	-.09	.16	-.08	.07	.13	.06	.38	.19	.30*
Confidence	.08	.16	.07	.06	.13	.05	-.31	.19	-.25
<i>R</i> ²		.15**			.12**			.09†	
ΔR^2		.10**			.28**			.06*	

Note: † $p < .08$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Model 1 represents Satisfaction with Life; Model 2 represents Meaning in Life (Presence); Model 3 represents Meaning in Life (Search). Mother and Father anxiety variables were collapsed to Parental anxiety due to their high correlation and multicollinearity.

Appendix B

Figures

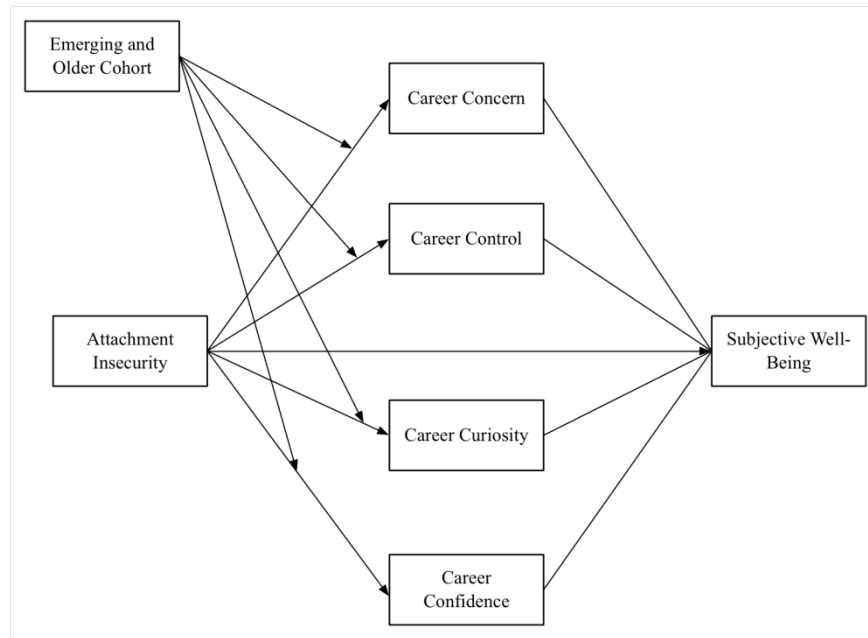


Figure 2. Conceptual diagram of moderated mediation model of attachment insecurity, career adaptability and subjective well-being.

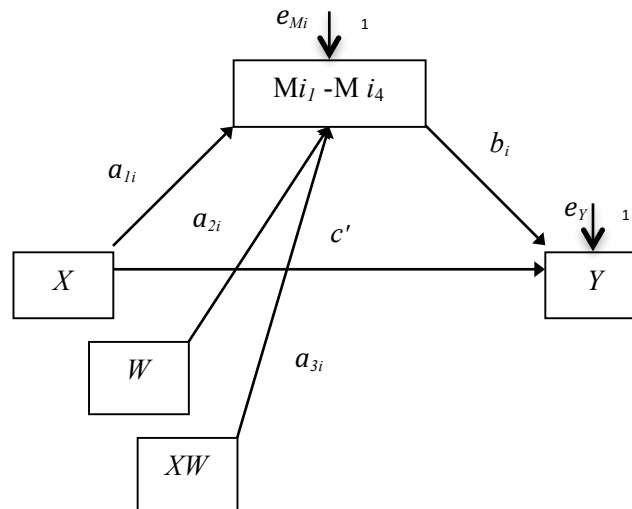


Figure 3. Statistical diagram of moderated mediation model of attachment insecurity, career adaptability and subjective well-being. X = Attachment Insecurity as assessed via Anxiety and Avoidance; $M_{i1} - M_{i4}$ = Mediators of Concern, Control, Curiosity and Confidence; Y = Subjective Well-Being as assessed via Satisfaction with Life, Meaning in Life Presence and Search. Conditional indirect effect of X on Y through $M_i = (a_{1i} + a_{3i}W)^{b_i}$, Direct effect of X on $Y = c'$.

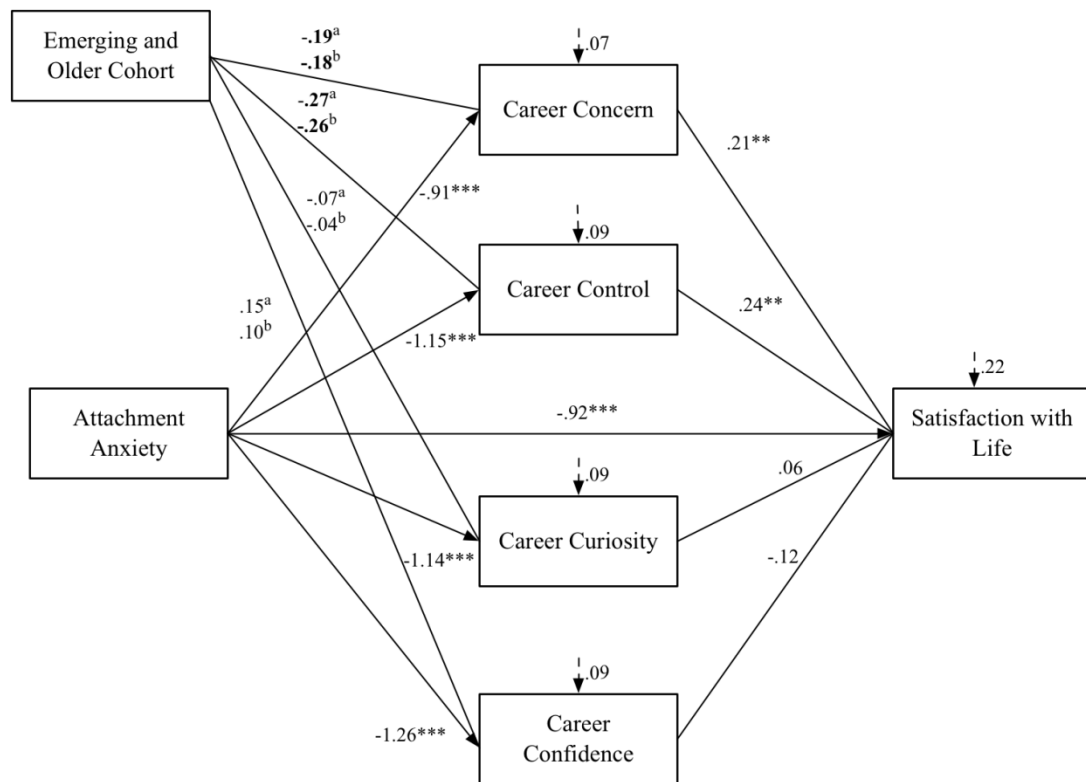


Figure 4. Moderated mediation model of attachment anxiety, career adaptability and satisfaction with life. $N = 451$. Conditional indirect effects of cohort are denoted with subscript a = Older Adults, subscript b = Emerging Adults. Significant conditional indirect effects are bolded. The interaction between emerging and older adult cohort with attachment anxiety is not shown, as no interactions were significant. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

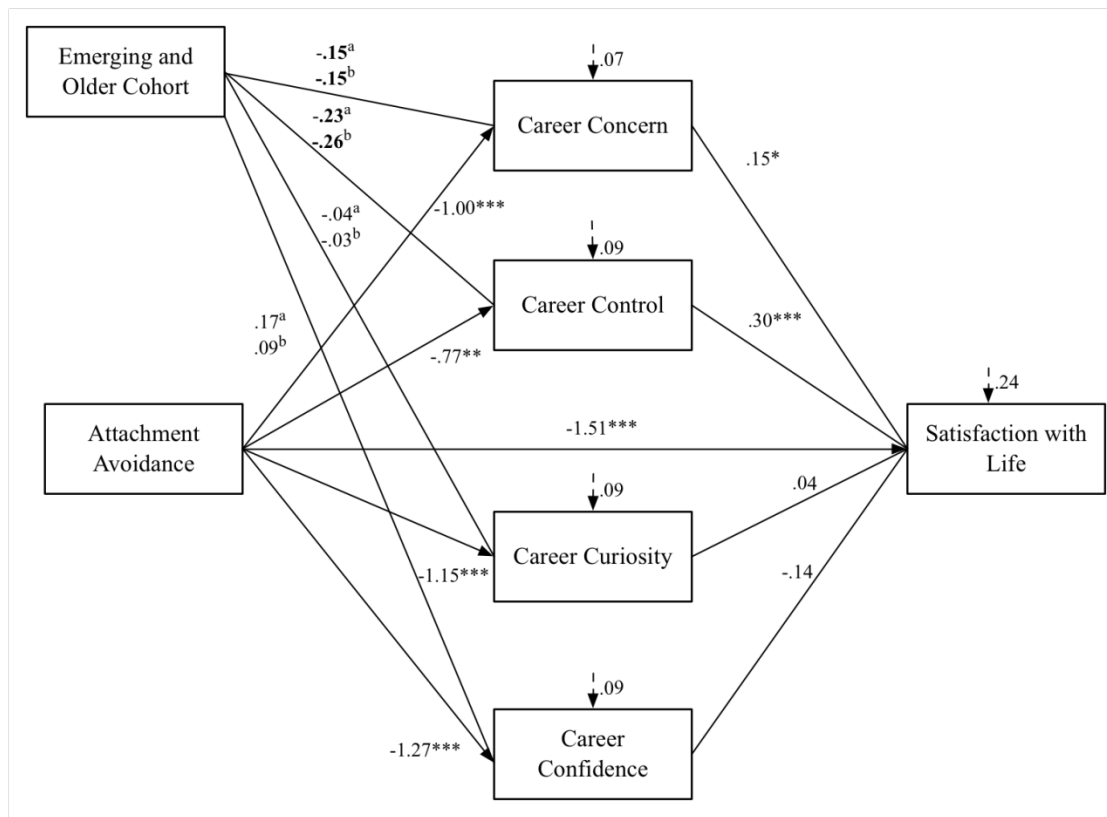


Figure 5. Moderated mediation model of attachment avoidance, career adaptability and satisfaction with life. $N = 451$. Conditional indirect effects of cohort are denoted with subscript a = Older Adults, subscript b = Emerging Adults. Significant conditional indirect effects are bolded. The interaction between emerging and older adult cohort with attachment anxiety is not shown, as no interactions were significant. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

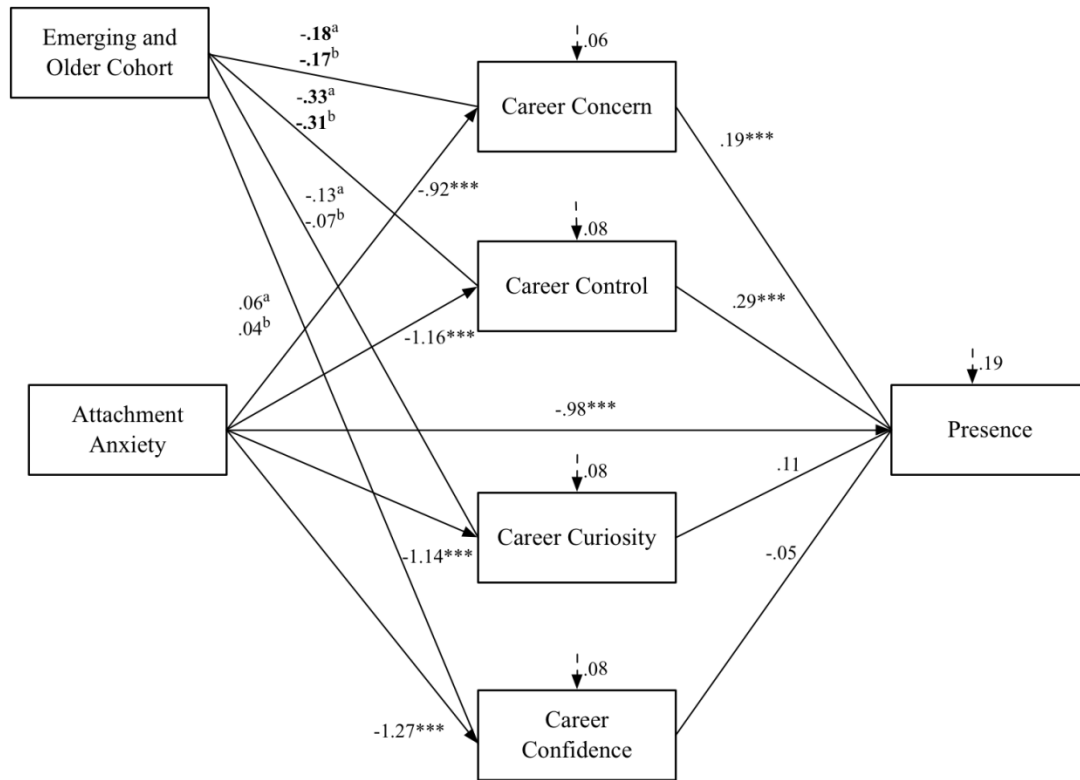


Figure 6. Moderated mediation model of attachment anxiety, career adaptability and presence. $N = 454$. Conditional indirect effects of cohort are denoted with subscript a = Older Adults, subscript b = Emerging Adults. Significant conditional indirect effects are bolded. The interaction between emerging and older adult cohort with attachment anxiety is not shown, as no interactions were significant. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

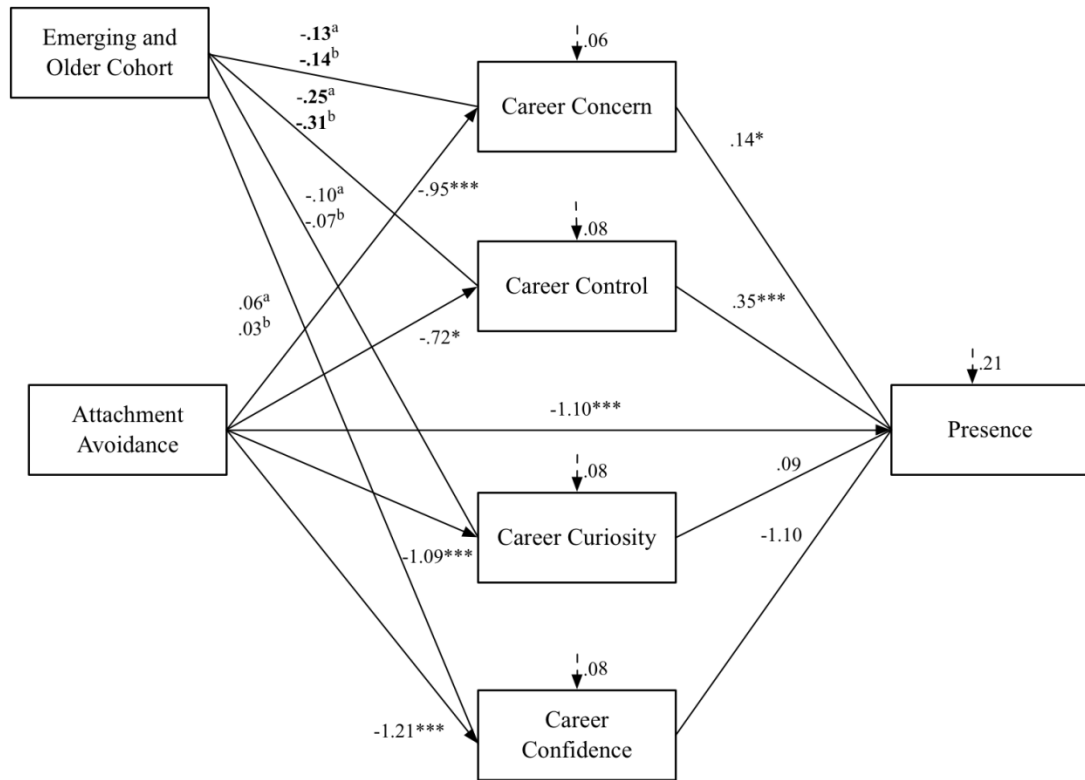


Figure 7. Moderated mediation model of attachment avoidance, career adaptability and presence. $N = 454$. Conditional indirect effects of cohort are denoted with subscript a = Older Adults, subscript b = Emerging Adults. Significant conditional indirect effects are bolded. The interaction between emerging and older adult cohort with attachment anxiety is not shown, as no interactions were significant. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

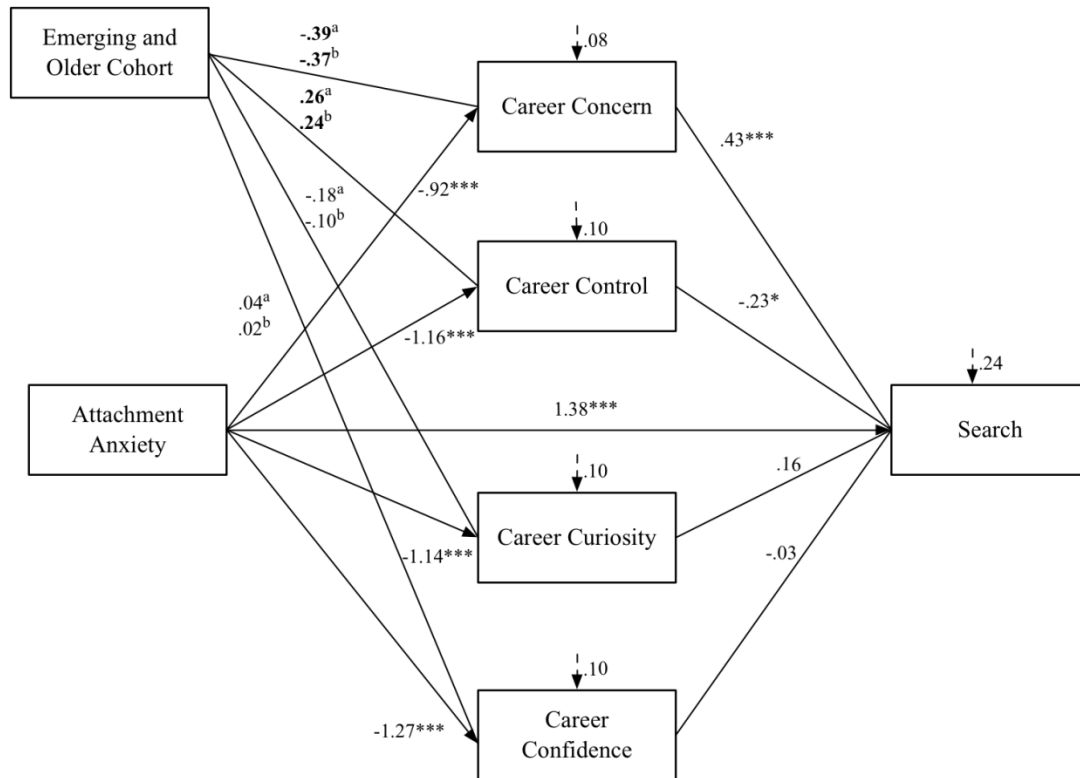


Figure 8. Moderated mediation model of attachment anxiety, career adaptability and search. $N = 454$. Conditional indirect effects of cohort are denoted with subscript a = Older Adults, subscript b = Emerging Adults. Significant conditional indirect effects are bolded. The interaction between emerging and older adult cohort with attachment anxiety is not shown, as no interactions were significant. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

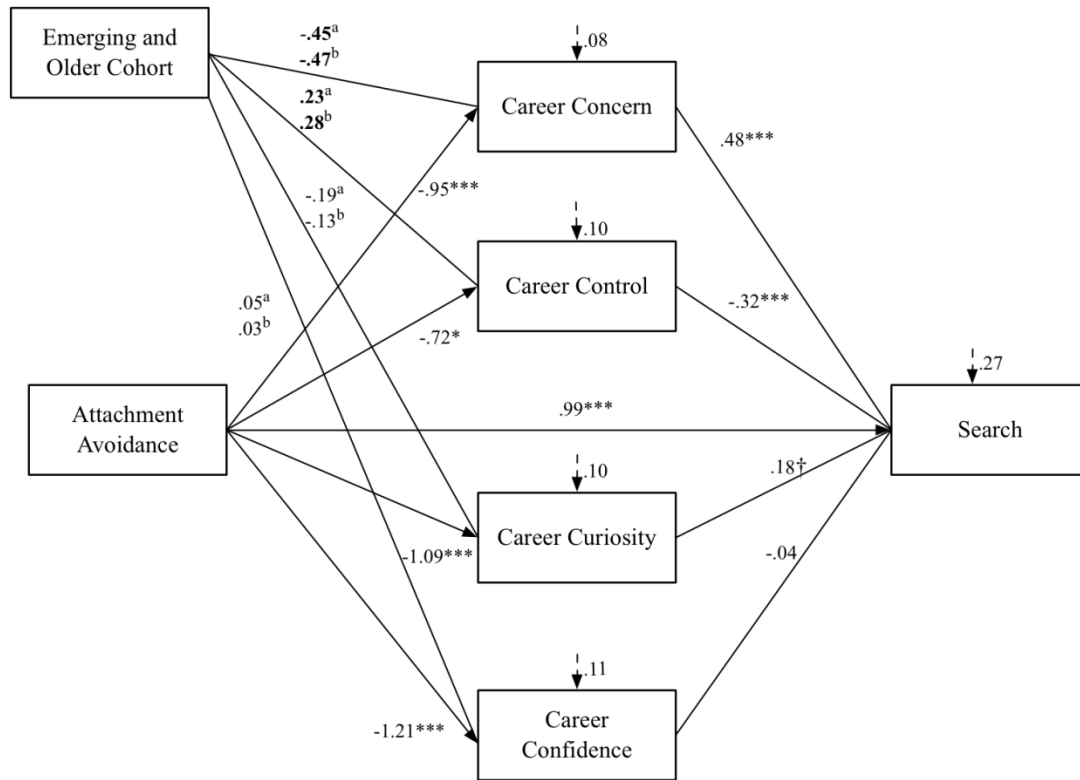


Figure 9. Moderated mediation model of attachment avoidance, career adaptability and search. $N = 454$. Conditional indirect effects of cohort are denoted with subscript a = Older Adults, subscript b = Emerging Adults. Significant conditional indirect effects are bolded. The interaction between emerging and older adult cohort with attachment anxiety is not shown, as no interactions were significant. $^\dagger p < .08$. $* p < .05$. $** p < .01$. $*** p < .001$.

Appendix C
Study Measures

Demographic Questionnaire [Older Adults]:

Health

In general, would you say your health is:

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Compared to one year ago, how would you rate your health in general now?

- Much better now than one year ago
- Somewhat better now than one year ago
- About the same as one year ago
- Somewhat worse than one year ago
- Much worse than one year ago

Sex

What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

Age

What is your age? _____

Race/ethnicity

How would you describe your race/ethnicity? (Please check an option that best describes you)

- Non-Hispanic White
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian or Asian American
- Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native

Education Completed

What is the highest education level that you have completed?

- Grades 1 through 8 (Elementary)
- Grades 9 through 11 (Some high school)
- High school diploma or certificate
- Some college or technical school
- College Degree (BA, BS)
- Graduate or Professional Degree (MA, PhD, MD, JD, etc.)

Marital status

Are you:

- Married (For how long? _____)
- Divorced
- Widowed (How long ago? _____)
- Separated
- Never been married (but have a partner) (For how long? _____)

- Single

Current living status

Are you currently:

- Living Alone
- Living in an Assisted Living Community
- Living with an Adult Child
- Living with Another Family Member (If so, with whom: _____)
- Living with a Non-Family Member (If so, with whom: _____)

Family

Do you have children? Yes _____ No _____

Employment History

What was your primary occupation during most of your adult life? _____

How would you describe your socioeconomic status (based on income) during most of your adult life?

- 20,000 dollars per year (lower class)
- 20,000 to 50,000 per year (lower to middle class)
- 50,000 to 100,000 per year (middle to upper middle class)
- Over 100,000 dollars per year (upper class)

How would you *currently* describe your socioeconomic status (based on current income)?

- 20,000 dollars per year (lower class)
- 20,000 to 50,000 per year (lower to middle class)
- 50,000 to 100,000 per year (middle to upper middle class)
- Over 100,000 dollars per year (upper class)

Employment status

Are you currently?

- Employed for wages Full Time (Name your occupation: _____)
 - Are you currently expecting to retire in the next 6 months? **Yes** _____ **No** _____
- Employed for wages Part Time (Name your occupation: _____)
 - Are you currently expecting to retire in the next 6 months? **Yes** _____ **No** _____
- Retired
 - Have you retired in the last 6 months? **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Personal Involvement

Do you engage in volunteering activities or other hobbies? **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Demographic Questionnaire [Emerging Adults]:

Health

In general, would you say your health is:

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Compared to one year ago, how would you rate your health in general now?

- Much better now than one year ago
- Somewhat better now than one year ago
- About the same as one year ago
- Somewhat worse than one year ago
- Much worse than one year ago

Sex

What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

Age

What is your age? _____

Race/ethnicity

How would you describe your race/ethnicity? (Please check an option that best describes you)

- Non-Hispanic White
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian or Asian American
- Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native

Education Completed

How would you qualify your current education status?

- Currently an undergraduate
 - Will you be graduating within the next 6 months (2- semesters)? **Yes** ____ **No** ____
- College Degree (BA, BS)
 - Did you graduate within the last 6 months? **Yes** ____ **No** ____

Marital status

Are you:

- Married (For how long? _____)
- Divorced
- Widowed (How long ago? _____)

- Separated
- Never been married (but have a partner) (For how long? _____)
- Single

Current living status

Are you currently?

- Living Alone
- Living with Parents
- Living with Another Family Member (If so, with whom: _____)
- Living with a Non-Family Member (If so, with whom: _____)

Family

Do you have children? Yes _____ No _____

Employment History

What was your primary occupation during most of your young adult life? _____

How would you describe your socioeconomic status (based on income) during most of your adult life?

- 20,000 dollars per year (lower class)
- 20,000 to 50,000 per year (lower to middle class)
- 50,000 to 100,000 per year (middle to upper middle class)
- Over 100,000 dollars per year (upper class)

How would you *currently* describe your socioeconomic status (based on current income)?

- 20,000 dollars per year (lower class)
- 20,000 to 50,000 per year (lower to middle class)
- 50,000 to 100,000 per year (middle to upper middle class)
- Over 100,000 dollars per year (upper class)

Employment status

Are you currently?

- Employed for wages Full Time (Name your occupation: _____)
 - Have you been working here in the last 6 months? **Yes** _____ **No** _____
- Employed for wages Part Time (Name your occupation: _____)
 - Have you been working here in the last 6 months? **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Personal Involvement

Do you engage in volunteering activities, or other hobbies? **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Attachment

The Experience in Close Relationships Scale Revised (ECR-R)

Instructions: The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by circling a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

- **1 = Strongly Disagree**
- **2 = Disagree**
- **3 = Slightly Disagree**
- **4 = Neither Agree or Disagree**
- **5 = Slightly Agree**
- **6 = Agree**
- **7 = Strongly Agree**

1. _____ I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.
2. _____ I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.
3. _____ I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.
4. _____ I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
5. _____ I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.
6. _____ I worry a lot about my relationships.
7. _____ When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.
8. _____ When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.
9. _____ I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.
10. _____ My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.
11. _____ I do not often worry about being abandoned.
12. _____ I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
13. _____ Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.
14. _____ My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
15. _____ I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.
16. _____ It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.
17. _____ I worry that I won't measure up to other people.

18. _____ My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.
19. _____ I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
20. _____ I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
21. _____ I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
22. _____ I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
23. _____ I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
24. _____ I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
25. _____ I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
26. _____ I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
27. _____ It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.
28. _____ I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
29. _____ It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
30. _____ I tell my partner just about everything.
31. _____ I talk things over with my partner.
32. _____ I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
33. _____ I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
34. _____ I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.
35. _____ It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.
36. _____ My partner really understands me and my needs.

The Relationship Structured Questionnaire (ECR-RS)

Instructions: Below are 9 statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number in the line preceding that item across four relationship domains. Please be open and honest in your responding.

- **1 = Strongly Disagree**
- **2 = Disagree**
- **3 = Slightly Disagree**
- **4 = Neither Agree or Disagree**
- **5 = Slightly Agree**
- **6 = Agree**
- **7 = Strongly Agree**

1. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with this person.

Mother _____
 Father _____
 Partner _____
 Friend _____

2. I talk things over with this person.

Mother _____
 Father _____
 Partner _____
 Friend _____

3. It helps to turn to this person in times of need.

Mother _____
 Father _____
 Partner _____
 Friend _____

4. I find it easy to depend on this person.

Mother _____
 Father _____
 Partner _____
 Friend _____

5. I prefer not to show this person how I feel deep down.

Mother _____
Father _____
Partner _____
Friend _____

6. I don't feel comfortable opening up to this person.

Mother _____
Father _____
Partner _____
Friend _____

7. I'm afraid this person may abandon me.

Mother _____
Father _____
Partner _____
Friend _____

8. I worry that this person won't care about me as much as I care about him or her.

Mother _____
Father _____
Partner _____
Friend _____

9. I often worry that this person doesn't really care for me.

Mother _____
Father _____
Partner _____
Friend _____

Career Adaptabilities

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale

Instructions: 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.

- Not Strong
- Somewhat Strong
- Strong
- Very Strong
- Strongest

STRENGTHS

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
13. _____ Exploring my surroundings
14. _____ Looking for opportunities to grow as a person
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

Subjective Well-being

The Satisfaction with Life Scale

Instructions: Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number in the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

- **1 = Strongly Disagree**
- **2 = Disagree**
- **3 = Slightly Disagree**
- **4 = Neither Agree or Disagree**
- **5 = Slightly Agree**
- **6 = Agree**
- **7 = Strongly Agree**

_____ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

_____ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.

_____ 3. I am satisfied with life.

_____ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

_____ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Meaning Life Questionnaire

Instructions: Please take a moment to think about what makes your life feel important to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the scale below:

- **1 = Absolutely Untrue**
- **2 = Mostly Untrue**
- **3 = Somewhat Untrue**
- **4 = Can't Say True or False**
- **5 = Somewhat True**
- **6 = Mostly True**
- **7 = Absolutely True**

- _____ 1. I understand my life's meaning.
- _____ 2. I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.
- _____ 3. I am always looking to find my life's purpose.
- _____ 4. My life has a clear sense of purpose.
- _____ 5. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.
- _____ 6. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.
- _____ 7. I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.
- _____ 8. I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life.
- _____ 9. My life has no clear purpose.
- _____ 10. I am searching for meaning in my life.

Appendix D

Sample Treatment Session Outline

Sample Treatment Session Outline (weekly 8 session treatment)

Session 1: General Introduction to Treatment

General introduction to vocational counseling. Focus for this treatment is facilitate transitions and to enhance career adaptability. The participant will be told that a set of measures will be given at the end of session to help improve the therapist's understanding of the client's well-being. Measures related to attachment orientations (e.g., the ECR-R and ECR-RS), career adaptabilities scale (CAAS), life satisfaction (LS), and meaning in life measure (MLQ) are distributed. Questions and concerns held by the client will be answered and noted.

Session 2: Exploring Career Transitions, Self-Reflection, and Personal Strengths

During this session, the therapist will provide a general check in, address any questions from the previous session and begin to invite the client's own self-exploration about his or her own perceptions of transitioning. The therapist should keep this dialogue loose while also obtaining information that informs the therapist about (a) the client's ability and or comfort with change, (b) healthy and maladaptive styles of coping, and (c) how has the client used previous transitions as a model to his or her current change in career. Additional information to be considered include: who and what are the client's available resources (e.g., social support, financial stability) that will also influence the perception and engagement with transition. Once a general conceptualization is made, the therapist can now link information obtained during the first half of session and link it with assessment findings. The therapist is first to provide general education about attachment theory and its relation to positive indicators of well-being. Once the client has a full understanding about the content of the assessment measures, the therapist can now offer insights and connections between the client's self-report and his or her reflections in the earlier part of session. This session should primarily serve as an exploration and reflection session.

Sessions 3-6: Building and Improving Career Adaptability

The focus of Sessions 3-6 is to now 'activate' the individual in selecting behavioral strategies that can strengthen adaptive capabilities and build upon adaptive strategies that may either be prioritized least, or that the client is averse in trying. Utilize the information captured from the CAAS as a guiding tool to address which adaptive strategies are most to least important to the individual and the value that the client places on each strategy. In doing so, address and normalize (whether the client is an emerging or an older adult) about common social presentations (e.g., younger adults are more anxious and older adult tend to be more avoidant) and link those with the attachment system. Then, with the client collaboratively build an adaptive strategy hierarchy that outlines 1-2 activities that client can pursue outside of session for each of the four career adaptive

strategies. Whenever needed, do a practice sample in session (e.g., information gathering as a means to improve upon career concern). In addition to these practice assignments, have the client write a short summary of his or her experiences to review for next session.

Session 7: Allocating Resources

Now that the client has engaged in activities and offered reflections that build on career adaptability, this session will help the client to consider external resources for coping. Address with the client forms of support that is available, be it with family, friends or free resources/workshops in the community. Also discuss which sources are most helpful and encourage the client to explore new insights discovered from receiving help or support from others and personal progress with career adaptive strategies. At the end of session re-offer outcome measures of CAAS, LS, and MLQ.

Session 8: Wrap up and Termination

This session will consist of a general summary of the client's experiences, successes with career adaptive strategies and overall reflections about treatment. Check in about access to social support resources and discuss new insights gained. Using post-treatment outcome measures, reflect to the client areas of growth and note successes and efforts made throughout sessions. Reinforce continued healthy adaptive styles of coping and reference any additional coping skills that can further aid during transitioning. Address any remaining questions or concerns. At the end of treatment, provide additional vocational resources and mental health services that can be accessed by the client should he or she find it necessary.