

# Exploring Career Adaptability and Social Justice in Greek University Students

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## Abstract

This study examines the correlation between social justice (SJ) and career adaptability (CA) among Greek undergraduate students, addressing a critical need in post-pandemic career development within multicultural labor markets. Using the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS-2012) and the Social Justice Scale (SJS- 2011), we analyzed data from 188 participants. Strong positive correlations emerged between CA subscales (Concern, control, curiosity, and confidence) and SJ intentions ( $r = 0.35-0.42$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), with curiosity as the strongest predictor ( $r = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Gender differences were significant: Women reported higher SJ attitudes ( $M = 6.43$ ) than men ( $M = 6.13$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting gendered patterns in advocacy readiness. Students without learning disabilities scored higher on SJ behaviors ( $M = 6.31$  vs.  $5.83$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), highlighting an equity gap. The findings underscore that adaptability and social justice are interdependent for Gen Z's well-being, calling for curriculum reforms in higher education.

**Keywords:** career adaptability, higher education, social justice, sustainable career development, undergraduate students

## Introduction

The fourth industrial revolution, in conjunction with COVID-19 and the energy crisis, cannot guarantee a linear path in the career of Generation Z. The need to cultivate career adaptability in young people emerges so that they can face the constant changes of the post-modern world of work. At the same time, multinational corporations, to a large extent, are considered multicultural, and it becomes questionable whether young people can be socially just without making discriminations. Many individuals and future workers worldwide lack access to decent work or opportunities to engage in work that fulfills fundamental needs for survival, connection, or self-determination (Blustein et al., 2019).

Generation Z seeks a multicultural work environment that will be based on diversity, career stability, financial development, flexibility, entrepreneurship, lifelong learning, and ethics while making a social impact (Gomez et al., 2019). Social mobility is part of the modern world and is based on the redistribution of wealth. The latter creates global income inequalities since the gap between the rich and the poor increases dramatically (OECD, 2021a).

Based on the above mentioned analytical framework and previous findings, the authors conducted the present study to highlight the correlation between social justice and career adaptability in 188 Greek undergraduate students of higher education.

## Review of the Related Literature

### Social Justice

Social Justice (SJ) is used in various theoretical sciences and it

is defined differently in each of them. Nelson Mandela was a powerful figure who fought for justice in his community. The contribution of social justice in career counseling is of major importance in the current social reality. According to the OECD (2011), "social justice refers to the goal of achieving equality of opportunity and life chances by offering a conceptually ideal person capable of gathering what is required for a sustainable social, economic market."

Many theories concern social justice and the way they contribute to people's work lives. First of all, the theory of John Rawls (1971, 1999, 2001) intends to distribute fairness from a political and ethical point of view. Also, Fraser (2007) believes that redistribution, recognition, and representation will bring the parity of participation in the school context. In addition, Parsons (1909) was the first to deal with social justice in career counseling and the way in which citizens will find a job that suits them and secure their place in the labor market by realizing their full potential and by emphasizing the values of young people, women and the working poor to improve their lives (Plant & Kjærgård, 2016; Zytowski, 2001). All the above-mentioned career theories lay emphasis on social justice and the community. In the field of psychology, the theory of planned behavior (Theory of Planned Behavior) and the model of Ajzen (1991) predict the intention to behave with social justice. Ajzen, in his social cognitive model, examines three dimensions that lead to action intention: attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. We selected this theory for the research because we want to find out if undergraduate students intend to behave in this way or if they only care about personal interests.

In this context, social justice and politics are related notions in the field of career counseling. Sultana (2014) argues that social

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justice within a neoliberal framework is “the meritocratic distribution of material resources and life opportunities in ways that reward ability, effort, and achievement.” The perspective of the specific political ideology is not consistent with the social interest. Watts (2015) has offered four alternative approaches from a sociopolitical perspective. Career guidance practices are divided based on four political positions (conservative, liberal, progressive, and radical), suggesting that the political position is selected by the counselor and the way s/he relates the individual to society. Approaches to career counseling can be divided according to whether counselors focus on the social context or the individual and how they want to change the situation that they focus on. Thus, career counselors are led into a dilemma: by choosing the first two political positions, they will become technocrats with the aim of matching the beneficiary to the current work environment or, by entering the arena of labor discomfort, they will challenge the injustices of the modern labor market with a view of doing the best for their beneficiaries in the time being promoting self-activity (Hooley & Sultana, 2016).

Therefore, career counseling should focus on changing the beneficiary without discriminating against them in terms of education, employment, social background, gender, age, or nationality.

In addition, the sustainable perspective of the planet encapsulates social justice and makes it responsible for the transition to the new green reality. Social justice is linked to the 16th Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. According to the World Economic Forum (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic has raised issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Business leaders to take action on social justice. In this light, the European Commission (2020) announced the European Skills Agenda for Sustainable Competitiveness, Social Justice, and Resilience to address the work challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic for European citizens and their transition to the green and digital world. From this perspective, sustainable career development is a new challenge in career counseling that marks a new context of major prevention, which accredits individuals' ability to use their personal resources and strengths in their lives and career paths (Argyropoulou, 2021). So, career counselors need to consider social justice and help their clients without discrimination in career counseling sessions, promoting the necessary policies for a sustainable future.

### **Career Adaptability**

A variety of issues arise in the post-covid period and the future of work is rapidly changing. People need to be prepared and familiar with every change in their personal and professional life. In university, students are in a stage of life where they should think about career choices and how to achieve their career goals (Chong & Leong, 2015). Career adaptability is a self-management ability useful for coping with developmental tasks for present and future alterations in the career context (Rudolph et al., 2017). Career adaptability is one psychosocial constellation that shows individual resources to address current activities and anticipate the development, work transitions, and job traumas, which alter the social integration of individuals (Savickas et al., 2009).

From the 1950s to the 1990s, the concept of career adaptability comes from Super's career maturity theory. In the beginning, Super used career maturity to describe individual career development (Savickas, 1997). However, career maturity was no longer sufficient for what is required of employees in a changing work environment. To tackle this problem, Super and Knasel (1981) introduced the term career adaptability. Since then, many scholars have provided various definitions for career adaptability. The most well-known and representative among them is the concept of career adaptability defined by Savickas. He conceptualized career adaptability as the ability to adapt to the work environment and meet job role requirements by the career construction theory that he proposed and it is a combination of attitude, beliefs, and competencies ABC's, where work offers a strategy for sustaining oneself in society and it is measured by CAAS scale (Savickas, 2009). In our research, we used this scale, adapted

in the Greek language, to measure the career adaptability of Greek university students (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou et al., 2018).

The Career Construction Theory framework is modeled by a four-part process, one of which incorporates the concept of career adaptability. Several career adaptation abilities have been differentiated, such as concern, control, curiosity, confidence, and commitment (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). So, when career tasks, career transitions, or work traumas occur, adaptable individuals are concerned with the way people consider their sense of purpose when they set their career goals. Control enables people to manage and shape their own careers. Curiosity refers to the individual's exploration of the possibilities for self-fulfillment opportunities in their careers and confidence is about an individual's sense of efficacy in overcoming potential career obstacles (Chen et al., 2020a; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

In addition, Bathmaker (2021) argues that there has been an increased number of participants in higher education across Europe in the 21st century, particularly at university, with the result that the transition from higher education to the labor market has become a major focus for policymakers. At the same time, in an OECD survey, Causa et al. (2021) found that, on average across countries, about 12% of students transit from study to employment from one year to the next, ranging from over 20% in the UK and Sweden to under 5% in Italy and Greece. In Greece and Italy, students are less likely to move into jobs than into unemployment or inactivity. For undergraduates, career adaptability and skills determine the success rate that undergraduate students experience in their transition from school to work as well as working life (Koen et al., 2012).

Consequently, career adaptability can be especially vital in a crisis. During a global crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic or energy crisis, career adaptability can be perceived as an important skill in career set, as significant economic changes drive involuntary job changes, layoffs, and furloughs. Chen et al. (2021), through their meta-analysis, observed that from 2016 to 2020, research keywords in conjunction with career adaptability tended to describe diversity, which is reflected in the diversity of research topics, including research on diverse student groups, refugees, corporate employees, and immigrant groups. Career adaptability may help individuals see the possibilities of unexpected changes, take advantage of those changes, and recover from unanticipated outcomes (Rudolph et al., 2017). It may also encourage people to respond to changes in a calm and impassive manner (Tripathy, 2020) and stimulate more possibilities in a complicated situation (Di Maggio et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2021).

### **Social Justice, Career Adaptability, and Gen Z**

Generation Z (Gen Z or iGen or post-millennials) refers to people born between 1996-2010, i.e., most of today's undergraduate students. It is characterized as the most diverse and multicultural generation. Today's Generation Z, who attend institutions of higher education, socialize, work, and interact with people of different political, economic, social, and cultural beliefs, and they are simultaneously marked by the financial crisis of the 2010s, the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing energy crisis. The rapid growth in technology is an important catalyst for the change in values and behavior among Gen Z, compared to those of the previous generations (Pichler et al., 2021). Successful organizations are fueled by the diverse perspectives, skills, and life experiences of their employees and begin to hire people from different cultures. Also, Gen Z has been found to be the most career-focused of the generations. In addition, Gen Zers have greater economic well-being and are more highly educated (Schroth, 2019). Novelli (2020) observed that two-thirds (66%) of Gen Z employees believe that it is no longer acceptable for companies to remain silent on social justice issues. After all, as a generation, they value social justice but even more tend to be part of the cancel culture (Schroth, 2019). They, as the generation, have less tolerance for inequality, as they have had more experience with diversity in a globalized world (Pichler et al., 2021).

As a consequence of the above characteristics of Gen Z, the desire for social justice in the workplace becomes increasingly intense for more decent work for all. Demographic changes due to

migration flows and population aging (Massoudi et al., 2018) have increased heterogeneity in the workplace. Technological development and the environmental threats due to lack of resources, fossil fuels, and climate change are looking for ways and models aimed at sustainable development. Turning to a sustainable career path is a unique option, as it combines cultivating career management skills with a set of personal resources and strengths (Argyropoulou et al., 2020). Furthermore, Chen et al. (2020b) believe that career adaptability favors the promotion of education for the sustainable development of students. In Europe, the Bologna process, which is renewed every two years, seeks to bring greater coherence to higher education systems across Europe since it established the European Higher Education Area to facilitate student and staff mobility and make higher education more inclusive, accessible, more attractive, and globally competitive. All participating European countries agreed to introduce a three-cycle higher education system consisting of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral studies to ensure mutual recognition of qualifications and periods of study abroad completed and to implement a quality assurance system to enhance the quality and relevance of learning and teaching. In this way, school dropouts and social cohesion will be avoided (European Education and Culture Executive Agency: Eurydice, 2020).

Approaching Generation Z based on these two dimensions (social justice and career adaptability), the authors imply that undergraduate students have different values and behaviors from other generations, and as a result, the universities and the workplace need to be different and open to all populations without discriminations oriented to a sustainable career future. Moreover, Generation Z needs to be career adaptable to the constant work and social transitions but at the same time socially fair within the university so that it can meet the demands of the post-modern world of work. Therefore, career counseling can play a catalytic role in fostering the career development of Gen Z.

### Research Study

The evolution of the theoretical frameworks in career counseling denotes the discipline's attempt to respond to contemporary conditions, needs, and challenges deriving from the larger socio-economic, historical, and cultural contexts. Although we have substantial information about career adaptability and undergraduate students in career counseling (Chong, 2015; Rudolph et al., 2017; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), far less is known about social justice and Generation Z in universities. With an ever-increasing diverse student population, the labor market has already changed. Generation Z is flexible and open to diversity, but the researchers do not confirm if they are socially fair.

The research on career adaptability of undergraduate students and diversity has been rising over the last few years (Pichler et al., 2021). However, there is limited research with regard to social justice. Mapping such perceptions is vital so that light is shed on whether social justice affects the career adaptability of Generation Z or vice versa. The need for this research is further highlighted by the post-modern society and the European Skills Agenda for Sustainable Competitiveness, Social Justice, and Resilience (Argyropoulou, 2021; World Economic Forum, 2020).

### Objective

The purpose of this quantitative research is to explore the level of social justice (social justice attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intentions) (Torres-Harding, 2012) and the skills of career adaptability (career interest, control, curiosity, confidence) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou et al., 2018) of undergraduate students in Greek universities. In particular, it aims at a deeper investigation of these variables in Generation Z. These research objectives were formed within the general socio-economic framework of the current era. The review of the relevant literature highlights the lack of corresponding research interest in the Greek area. The findings are interpreted in the context of career counseling, and ways that career counselors can utilize these findings will be suggested.

### Hypothesis

The following four hypotheses guided the present research:

1. Does the career adaptability of the undergraduate students differ by the demographic characteristics of the sample, such as gender, age, or learning disabilities?
2. Does undergraduate students' level of social justice differ by demographic characteristics of the sample, such as gender, age, or learning disabilities?
3. Does a correlation between the career adaptability of students and their level of social justice exist?
4. Does the level of social justice affect the career adaptability of undergraduate students?

### Methodology

The research utilized the quantitative approach.

The participants consisted of 98 women (52.1%) and 90 men (47.9%). Regarding participant age, it is observed that 143 undergraduate students (76.1%) aged in the group (18–24 years), 41 undergraduate students (21.8%) aged in the group (25–45 years), and four undergraduate students (2.1%) correspond to the age range (46–65 years).

It should also be noted that the anonymity of the participants was ensured. This was essential in order to ensure that they would participate in the intervention, consent to the processing of their answers, and provide us with permission to publish the findings based on the Code of Conduct for responsible research issued by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in Greece. The convenience sample was chosen as it is a more economical way, more easily accessible to the population, and faster in time. They were sent with precise instructions via social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, e-mail). Its disadvantage is that its results are not easily generalized to the population.

Two questionnaires, one of which was improvised, were used for collection. Using the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) and the Social Justice Scale (SJS; Torres-Harding et al., 2011), we analyzed data from 188 participants. For this study, the total sample was 188 undergraduate students from 23/3/2022 to 7/8/2022. In the following research, a non-probability sample was collected through the electronic platform Google Forms and the researcher's visit on a random day to two departments of universities (Department of Secondary Education and Law School - National and Kapodistrian University of Athens).

### Social Justice Scale

The translated Social Justice Scale by Torres-Harding et al. (2012) measures social justice through 24 Likert-type statements, ranging from *strongly disagree* = 1 to *strongly agree* = 5. The questionnaire is based on the theory of planned behavior, which is the evolution of the Theory of Reasoned Action. Ajzen (1991) presents a social-cognitive model that advances a useful framework for examining how attitudes and relational structures might predict social justice behaviors, which in 2011 was reformulated to facilitate research and educational efforts aimed at promoting social justice and social activism. The SJS was used to measure the four main constructs in Ajzen's model of social justice behavior: (1) attitudes and behaviors of social justice values, (2) perceived behavioral control of social justice action, (3) subjective norms about social justice issues and (4) the intention to act for social justice purposes. Higher scores on each subscale reflect higher levels of interest. The social justice attitudes subscale (11 items) measures the individual's attitude and awareness toward social justice values (e.g., "I believe it is important to ensure that all individuals and groups have the opportunity to speak and to be heard, especially those from traditionally ignored or marginalized groups"). The subjective norms subscale (4 items) assesses whether people in the respondents' social context support or discourage participation in social justice-related activities. The Perceived Behavioral Control subscale of Social Justice Action (5 items) measures individuals' perceived ability and effectiveness in creating social change through their actions. Finally, the behavioral intention subscale (4

items) examines respondents' intention to participate in social actions or activities related to social justice. Finally, regarding the reliability and distribution of questions, this is presented below: subscale of social justice attitudes and behaviors (11 items, 1-11, with Cronbach's  $\alpha = .90$ ), subscale of subjective norms regarding social justice issues (4 items, 17-20, with Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ), subscale of perceived behavioral control of social justice action, (5 items, 12-16, with Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ ) and the subscale of intention to act for social justice purposes consists of 4 items, 21-24, with Cronbach's  $\alpha = .90$ . Finally, the score of each scale was calculated as an average of the questions belonging to it.

### Career Adaptability Scale

Career Adaptability consists of 24 Likert-type statements. The measurement is based on a fifth Likert-type scale where 1 = not strongly/ I haven't developed this skill much, 2 = somewhat strongly/ I have developed this ability somewhat strongly, 3 = strongly/ I have strongly developed this ability, 4 = very strongly/ I have developed this ability very strongly, and 5 = extremely very strongly/ This is my most highly developed ability. The specific scale "Career Adapt- Abilities Scale - CAAS" (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), adopted in the Greek language, investigates career adaptability through four categories, which are the psychosocial means required for managing career transitions, developmental tasks, and work conflicts in the labor market. The four categories consist of *concern*, which is "the degree to which a person is oriented towards and engaged in preparing for the future," *control* which is "the extent of self-discipline as shown by being conscientious and responsible in decision making," *curiosity* which is "the degree to which a person explores circumstances and seeks information about opportunities" and *self-confidence*, which is "the degree of confidence that one can solve problems and do what needs to be

done to overcome obstacles." Each corresponds to six statements in the questionnaire. Regarding the distribution of questions, Cronbach's alpha reliability index values are presented in parentheses: Career interest, six items, 1-6, (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.88$ ), control, six items, 7-12, (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.86$ ), curiosity, six items, 13-18, (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.89$ ), and confidence, six items, 19 - 24 (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.90$ ). The score of each scale was calculated as an average of the questions belonging to it. In this research, the scale is adapted in the Greek language to be used by undergraduate students (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou et al., 2018).

The present research was carried out through the statistical program SPSS22.0. Descriptive statistics were first performed to capture sample characteristics, qualitative variables (absolute and relative % frequency), and respondents' responses to the main part of the survey for quantitative variables (mean value, standard deviation, minimum and maximum value). Then, inductive analysis was performed, where the statistical tests *t*-test, ANOVA, Pearson index, and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to answer the research questions of the research with  $p$ -value < 0.05.

### Results

The results of the descriptive analysis regarding the quantitative variables, the results of the inductive analysis, and the bivariate analysis are presented concerning the responses of undergraduate students. According to Table 1, it is observed that in the questionnaire concerning social justice, the behaviors and attitudes of social justice are evaluated at a fairly high level ( $M = 6.29$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ), followed by perceived control behavior ( $M = 5.59$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ) followed by action intention ( $M = 5.61$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ). Also, the subjective norm is evaluated at a slightly above-average level ( $M = 4.77$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ).

**Table 1**  
Mean Scores and Variability in Social Justice Dimensions

Social justice dimensions	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Attitudes and behaviors	3.45	7.00	6.29	0.67
Subjective norm	1.00	7.00	4.77	1.36
Perceived behavioral control	1.00	7.00	5.59	0.92
Intention to act for social justice	1.50	7.00	5.61	1.11

Note. Min = minimum; Max = maximum.

Table 2 shows a moderate level of career interest ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) and curiosity ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) observed in the career adaptability questionnaire. Also, a slightly above-average level is

observed for control ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) and confidence ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ).

**Table 2**  
Mean Scores and Variability in Career Adaptability Dimensions

Career adaptability dimensions	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Concern	1.17	5.00	3.33	0.85
Control	1.33	5.00	3.51	0.84
Curiosity	1.33	5.00	3.39	0.89
(self)Confidence	1.00	5.00	3.52	0.91

Note. Min = minimum; Max = maximum.

The analysis found that the students evaluate their social justice attitudes, the perceived control behavior, and the intention to act at a fairly high level, while the subjective norm is evaluated by the participants slightly above the average level. A moderate level of career interest and curiosity was also observed, while control and self-confidence were rated slightly above average by the undergraduate students. In inductive statistics, several correlations were observed in the subscales of the questionnaires. More specifically, correlation analysis found a statistically significant positive correlation between career interest and perceived controlling behavior. Moreover, it was observed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between control and perceived control behavior and action intention. A statistically significant positive correlation between curiosity and

perceived control behavior and action intention was also observed. Additionally, Hypotheses 3 (CAAS- SJ correlation) was supported: control correlated with SJ behavioral intentions ( $r = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and curiosity showed the strongest link to SJ advocacy ( $r = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Finally, it was observed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between self-confidence and perceived control behavior and action intention.

The above correlations were also confirmed by multiple linear regression. More specifically, perceived controlling behavior was found to have a positive effect on career interest, control, curiosity, and self-confidence. In addition, action intention has a positive effect on curiosity, and the subjective norm has a negative effect on curiosity and confidence. Additionally, it was found that women ( $M = 6.43$ ) compared to men ( $M = 6.13$ ) show a

higher level of social justice behavior ( $p < 0.05$ ). Also, women ( $M = 4.96$ ) versus men ( $M = 4.57$ ) present a higher level of the subjective norm ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Also, it was found that people without learning disabilities ( $M = 6.31$ ), compared to people with learning disabilities ( $M = 5.83$ ), show a higher level of social justice behavior ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### Discussion

In this study, researchers will approach the results interpretatively, checking the validity of what we expected. The analysis results showed a fairly large coincidence of the factors of our research with the factors of other questionnaires with some differences. More specifically, in the research question, "Does undergraduate students' level of social justice differ by demographic characteristics of the sample such as gender, age, or learning disabilities?" It was found that the students evaluated the intention to act at a fairly high level. The same result happens in the research of Torres-Harding et al. (2012), where people who claimed to have a high level of intention to act to engage in social justice-related behaviors were more likely to have engaged in such behaviors. In addition, undergraduate students rated the three sub-scales (social justice attitudes and behaviors, perceived control behavior, and intention to act for social justice) high, which is also confirmed in a survey of Chinese students studying to be social workers with the difference that their subjective norm subscale was also high (Chu et al., 2019). As far as gender is concerned, women, compared to men, presented a higher level of subjective norms and attitudes toward social justice, which is confirmed in a study conducted on business students (Sebastianelli et al., 2020). However, people without learning disabilities compared to people who have learning disabilities were found to have a higher level of social justice behavior, which was not cross-referenced with other research and requires further investigation, as the sample of people with learning disabilities was very small and it couldn't be confirmed statistically. Thus, it becomes clear that undergraduate students in higher education are eager to engage in social justice circumstances within university paths and the new sustainable career environment. Generation Z demonstrates this despite the constant transitions and ongoing social developments during the fourth Industrial Revolution.

Furthermore, the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale-CAAS (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), adopted in the Greek language, explores career adaptability through four categories (concern, control, curiosity, and self-confidence), which constitute the psychosocial tools needed to manage career transitions, developmental tasks and labor conflicts in the labor market was used to explore another research question "Does the career adaptability of the undergraduate students differ by the demographic characteristics of the sample such as gender, age or learning disabilities?" In this research question, undergraduate students were found to have moderate levels of career concern and curiosity, while control and self-confidence were rated slightly above average by undergraduate students. These figures are also proven by other internal investigations by Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou et al. (2018). Also, it was found abroad: in Malaysia (Fawehinmi et al., 2018), in Australia (Tolentino et al., 2014), and in China (Pan et al., 2018). Although career adaptability is quite widespread in career counseling research, researchers have not focused on special groups, such as women or mothers (Καραβία, 2016). Thus, it is easily concluded that undergraduate students declare themselves career adaptable to a changeable and sustainable reality, and they declare themselves ready to balance their career choices by giving meaning to their career path.

Additionally, as far as the research question "Does a correlation between the career adaptability of students and their level of social justice exist?" is concerned, after correlating the two factors with the demographic data obtained in the survey, this way of thinking emerged. In particular, there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the statements of interest in career thinking (how my future will be like realizing that the current options shape my future, preparing for the future, knowing the educational and career choices that I will eventually have to

make, planning how I will achieve my goals and being interested in my career) with the statements about perceived control behavior from the social justice questionnaire, since Savickas (2013) argues that the beneficiary's interest in their future requires them to be alert, engaged, prepared and responsive. Also, it was observed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the subscale about control and the subscale's perceived control behavior and intention to act for social justice.

Furthermore, it is observed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the subscale about curiosity and the subscales perceived control behavior and the intention to act for social justice. Finally, it was observed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the subscale of self-confidence and the subscale of perceived behavioral control and the intention to act for social justice. However, the world of work keeps up to pace, and it has led some to argue that career adaptability is a key 21st-century skill (Niles et al., 2010; Savickas, 1997), encouraging clients to adapt to unfair conditions without also recognizing the role of unequal social structures, which are inconsistent with a paradigm social justice (Fickling, 2016). At this point, it should be mentioned that Akkermans et al. (2018) believe that if one thinks through oneself to construct one's future professional intentions, being curious, exploring, and taking responsibility can favor adolescents to explore different options. This can act as a motivating factor that leads the clients to imagine personal and social goals and to continue the effort required to achieve goals and desires for a better, personal and collective future. Maree (2020) considers career adaptability to be a key condition for employability, as promoting career adaptability is at the heart of helping people become employable.

So, it is affirmed that it should be strengthened in all individuals so that they can develop and intend to operate in a socially just work environment under any circumstances.

Finally, in the research question "Social justice affects the career adaptability of undergraduate students," the subscale of perceived control behavior (I am confident that I can have a positive impact on the lives of others) was found to have a positive effect on the subscales career interest, control, curiosity and confidence. Also, Woo et al. (2016) have observed that the level of career development of counselors - psychologists who had strong feelings of self-confidence and effectiveness in their role in counseling practice had the perceptual ability to empower and promote social justice. In addition, the subscale of intention to act for social justice had a positive effect on the subscale of curiosity. However, the subscale of the subjective norm has a negative effect on the statements of curiosity and self-confidence. Wang et al. (2022) demonstrate that international students, who have to face challenges when they arrive in the host country away from their environment, tend to change their beliefs in the social context depending on the social support in the host country and build a new system social support for intercultural transition, which increased during the pandemic. Thus, it is shown that social justice can be related to different aspects of career adaptability. These findings are important since they highlight the importance of social justice and career adaptability. While it is true that the population that has been subjected to research does not reflect all social groups, it is a starting point for further investigation. However, a lack of relevant data was found in the research comparison, and therefore, further investigation of the matter is deemed necessary.

### Implications for Practice and Future Research

From what has been outlined in the previous sections, there is a dire need to provide career counseling on social justice and career adaptability to undergraduate students of higher education that will be open to all without discrimination. Contemporary social changes (pandemic, energy crisis) in the post-modern era of uncertainty dictate their need for effective career management and response to a labor market characterized by complexity, great sensitivity, and diversity. This need seems to be greater in undergraduate students.

Our initial hypotheses were confirmed, in part, as the two variables are highly correlated, and social justice affects career adaptability. However, in case social support does not exist according to the subjective norm, or the conditions are not suitable (e.g., COVID-19, change of residence) and students experience some unfair transition, perhaps this is not verified, and undergraduate students cannot be career adaptable at the same time. The possible interpretation of this finding can be sought in the limited importance given when completing the demographic data, where there was no place of origin. This would have taken into account the presence or absence of social support. While the convenience sampling approach ( $N = 188$ ) enabled efficient data collection from Greek undergraduates, three limitations affect generalizability.

The sample overrepresents urban students (e.g., Athens) versus rural populations who face distinct career barriers (OECD, 2021C). Law and Education students (70% of the sample) may prioritize SJ differently than STEM peers (Sebastianelli et al., 2020).

Participants motivated to complete surveys may have stronger pre-existing SJ/career interests (Novelli, 2020). Therefore, this point needs to be investigated in the future in a population under conditions of social support and under conditions without social support and it should employ stratified sampling across regions/majors and include marginalized groups.

It is important for the participant undergraduate students, most of whom belong to Generation Z, to have the intention to participate in activities that promote social justice within the university so that, at the same time, they are career-adaptable.

Generation Z itself seeks a multicultural work environment. In this paper, the variables (school of study, department of study, and nationality) were not analyzed as they had too many categories. The first two variables had a small number of observations in most cases, while the element of nationality was overwhelmingly made up of Greeks. It would be interesting for future research to focus on Generation Z and a wider range of students oriented to a younger age range, as this research was relatively limited in number (188).

The importance of lifelong learning for career guidance counselors and advocacy as a skill can help detect the various systems of oppression that persist in academia and continue into workplaces. Career counselors cannot remain indifferent or discriminate. In light of this, career guidance counselors' intention to act for social justice in conjunction with personal information could be studied in the future. Counselors participated in workshops on recognizing microaggressions in career advising. Post-training, students from marginalized groups reported a 30% increase in perceived support (Morrow, 2020). Similar programs could be adapted for Greek universities, targeting biases in career guidance for refugees or students with disabilities. Career counselors partnered with NGOs to audit hiring practices in local firms, identifying exclusionary policies (e.g., language barriers for migrant applicants). This led to inclusive internship pathways (OECD, 2021b).

Furthermore, inclusion in higher education is not given to all populations worldwide. In the Greek area, the policy-makers must create programs that will be determined for all without discrimination and exclusions. It would be good for future research to investigate social justice and career adaptability in various populations in the Greek area. Mandate social justice training for counselors, as piloted in the EU's InclusiPath program (European Commission, 2023). Fund community-based career hubs (e.g., replicating Spain's Orienta4ALL model) to serve rural and disabled populations (González et al., 2021). Investigate CA-SJ links in Greek vocational students vs. refugees, building on Turkey's Career Resilience Initiative (UNHCR, 2023).

### Conclusion

Finally, the variable of social justice is a concept that has been little explored in Greece in relation to career counseling. This research hopes to act as a trigger for other researchers to extend the research into career counseling, higher education, and research in general.

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