



## Does Personality Affect Career Adaptability?

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**Abstract:** Qualified personnel candidates in the tourism sector are considered to be tourism students who study at universities. University students aim to have a good career in tourism sector after graduation and wish to maintain a successful professional life. However, students feel very much empty inside when choosing their careers after graduation and have to struggle with uncertainties. At this point, students' personality traits and career adaptabilities are significant. Relevant research suggests that career adaptabilities should not be ignored when career planning is made. This study examines the relationships between students' personality traits and career adaptabilities, of who study tourism and are considered to be the potential personnel candidates (n=245). Using survey method the data were collected from the students who were studying tourism. According to the data analysis results, the five-factor personality traits and their sub-dimensions were identified, and each dimension was clustered as three levels. A factor analysis was applied on the expressions of career adaptability, and four factors were found. Findings showed that students' career adaptabilities differ according to their personality traits was evaluated and significant differences were obtained.

**Keywords:** Tourism, big five personality, career adaptability.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Enterprises in the tourism sector are in search of becoming robust in the competitive environment, reducing labour turnover and employing qualified personnel candidates by improving working environments. Therefore, they provide career opportunities for the potentially qualified personnel they employ at appropriate positions to ensure they will provide services for the business in the long term. However, it is notable that there are many factors which affect and support the personnel' the compatibilities for the positions they want to build their career on. One of these factors is the personnel's career adaptabilities. In some of the relevant empirical studies in the literature, research showed that the level of job satisfaction was higher<sup>[1]</sup> and the level of work-related stress was lower in personnel who had high levels of career adaptability<sup>[2]</sup>. Also, individuals who had good career adaptabilities had a good level of the perception of work-environment adaptation<sup>[3]</sup>.

Career adaptabilities are composed of four factors, which are concern, control, curiosity and confidence as specified by Savickas<sup>[4]</sup> in his study. The personnel's personality traits currently employed in businesses and potential qualified personnel candidates differ regarding their career planning, career selection, and compatibility. Gosling et al.<sup>[5]</sup>, examined personality traits in ten items, and these traits constituted five factors as follows: openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion.

This study aims to reveal students' relationship between the personality traits and career adaptabilities, who study tourism. This study, which presents the relationship between career adaptabilities and personality traits, contributes to the relevant literature with a new perspective in terms of career adaptability and personality traits. Thus, findings are highly likely to shed light on the future studies regarding the originality of the research.

#### 1.1. Theoretical Framework

#### 1.2. Career Adaptability

Today, compatibility could be a solution for the problems employees encountered in frequent job switches, job withdrawals and career building<sup>[6]</sup>. Career adaptability is defined as a psycho-social

structure which may affect the integration of employees in their social environments and helps them manage the challenges they may encounter in work environment <sup>[7]</sup>. These challenges in work environment vary according to the situations experienced in time when in interaction with people and work environment rather than being constant, such as personality traits <sup>[8]</sup>. Thus, it is of great importance for people to be compatible with their career maps they have determined in work environment. Career adaptabilities play a resistive and regulatory role in dealing with the challenges encountered at any phase of career.

Individuals are less likely to predict career paths in career planning and often experience job switches <sup>[4]</sup>. This situation also increases the rate of labour turnover <sup>[9]</sup>. Career adaptability provides a general framework through important hints as to how people see their future in work and how to be successful <sup>[10]</sup>. In this context, individuals, who have career adaptability, tend to find a regular job with a fixed wage and believe that they could more easily obtain an opportunity for success in the job they find <sup>[11]</sup>.

When the studies conducted on career adaptability in the literature are reviewed, there are four types of psychological resources, which help individuals deal with the challenges they encounter in work environment and are defined as the resources for career adaptability <sup>[8]</sup>, which are occupational concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. These resources constitute the components which facilitate the successful management of different career switches <sup>[12]</sup>.

- **Concern:** Concern refers to questioning and being aware of the existence of an occupational future in work environment and being planned through considering possible career switches.
- **Control:** Control reflects the personal control perceived over occupational future and also aims to control the personal responsibility of an employee in career formation.
- **Curiosity:** Curiosity reflects the ability of an individual to discover his/her career environment by researching the possible situations and future scenarios s/he will encounter in work environment.
- **Confidence:** Confidence refers to the person's confrontation with the problems to be encountered in terms of jobs and career and confidence s/he has in his/her problem-solving ability.

Career adaptability increases the career motivation in work environment <sup>[3]</sup>. In a similar manner, developing the ability to be compatible with career maps prepared by individuals strengthens career motivation. Career adaptability represents an important intervening variable between the successes and challenges individuals experience in work environment. It is important for the abilities of individuals to aim for their careers and endure work-related stress as a mechanism <sup>[2]</sup>. Career adaptability helps individuals gain an ability to create different options and make use of job opportunities in order to have a successful work life and good career <sup>[13]</sup>. Encouraging career adaptability helps individuals navigate among career switches more often, and in this process, they have an opportunity to find answers to problems through their compatibilities <sup>[14]</sup>.

### 1.3. Big Five Factor

Personality is a consistent and structured type of relationship, which is formed by an individual with his/her inner and outer environment and differentiates him/her from other individuals, and there are different personality traits varying from one individual to the other. Since personality has an influence on the individual's behaviors of perception and decision-making, the trends in the classification of the personality traits of individuals are specified to be learning, emotions, thinking, life-style, attitudes, actions, and reactions <sup>[15]</sup>. On the other hand, personality traits are a system, which helps to understand individuals and what and why they do, their limitedness, what they can and cannot do, and their natural tendency in the preferences they make according to themselves in information processing. When considered from this point of view, being successful in the work environment, adaptation to organizational culture, applying common sense in problem-solving through a good relationship with colleagues and helping colleagues affect both individuals and work environment positively and are important factors in having a peaceful environment and maintaining this peaceful environment.

The five-factor model of personality traits is based on the reflection of the perceived different personality traits into the behaviors in daily life and work environment. It is possible to guess how an individual may react to a certain subject by assessing his/her personality traits. In this context, the big five personality is a model used very often in the literature. The five-factor model comprises five

components which are extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience<sup>[16]</sup>.

- **Extraversion/Introversion:** Extrovert individuals are those, who tend to experience positive emotions more intensely way, do not hesitate to spread their inner energy to the environment, and tend towards outer world rather than the self<sup>[17]</sup>. In principle, they are vivacious, excited, cheerful, talkative, assertive, and sociable. Extraversion is rather related to the amount of social stimuli in interpersonal relations. Introvert individuals have an opposite version of energy compared to extrovert individuals.
- **Agreeableness:** Agreeableness is the definition of individuals as trustworthy, easy-going, ingenuous, self-sacrificing and modest. On the contrary, individuals who are less agreeable are associated with being unfriendly, competitive, unreliable, stubborn, rude and skeptical.
- **Conscientiousness:** Conscientiousness is a combination of characteristics, such as individual's efforts for success, competency, task-oriented behavior, orderliness, self-discipline, and cautiousness. This is also called being responsible. Individuals, who are not conscientious, are irresponsible people who cannot sufficiently organize themselves and have difficulty in creating their own standards due to the lack of self-discipline and energy.
- **Neuroticism:** Neurotic individuals are those who are anxious, nervous, and angry, have confidence issues and are always busy with themselves. Neurotic personality trait is also named as an emotional imbalance. Higher levels of neuroticism increase the tendency for emotional imbalance and, thus, lead to a deeper process of psychological stress when dealing with issues in work environment<sup>[18]</sup>. Emotional imbalance is based upon emotions, such as concern, depression, anger, and distress. The opposite of this trait is a balanced personality trait. Individuals who have balanced personality traits make efforts to be compatible with their environment and remain calmer when facing problems.
- **Openness to Experience:** Individuals who are imaginative, adventurer, original, creative, curious and busy with their thoughts and emotions are defined to be open to experience and not to be traditional. These individuals remain calm in case of the occurrence of negative situations in work environment, are open to new ideas, attach importance to different perspectives, and are tolerant of uncertainties<sup>[19]</sup>. Individuals, who are opposite of the individuals who are open to experience, are shallow, ordinary, simple and display very traditional attitudes in interpersonal relations.

### 1.4. The Relationships between Personality and Career Adaptability

Career building is a phenomenon of success all people who work in businesses wish to achieve for the future. Career selections they make in different businesses affect their future work environments. Personality structure, social environment, social relationships and cultural structure are the elements which affect the career selections of individuals.

When the relevant studies are reviewed, five-factor personality traits have had an influence on the success and satisfaction of individuals in work environment<sup>[20, 21]</sup>. In other words, findings revealed that individuals who have conscientiousness personality trait have positive insights about career success and job satisfaction<sup>[22, 23]</sup>. People who are conscientious can guess whether they will be satisfied with the career processes in the jobs they do or not. Therefore, they can guess their career adaptabilities and their likelihood to be successful in their job and career plans they have selected through their conscientious personality trait.

Unlike conscientiousness, neurotic personality trait in work environment has a negative effect on career success and career adaptability<sup>[24]</sup>. In some studies, a positive significant relationship between agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness, and career success has been found<sup>[25]</sup>. Openness to experience, conscientiousness, and extraversion are the elements which trigger success in career satisfaction, career switches and career adaptability<sup>[26]</sup>.

## 2. SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

This research identifies the career adaptabilities of students whose study tourism and questions the existence of a relationship between career adaptabilities and personality traits with the aim of presenting the current situation. The data used in the research were obtained from the students who

study tourism at two-year vocational schools, four-year colleges, and faculties of different universities. Firstly, validity and reliability analysis was conducted on the scales using a statistics program, and then, a factor analysis was applied. After students' personality levels were researched, statistical analyses were conducted to reveal the relationship between students' career adaptabilities and personality traits. .

Data were collected between March and June 2016 using convenience sampling method from the students, who study tourism. The research population comprises the students from the Faculty of Tourism of Anadolu University and the Department of Tourism of Eskişehir Vocational School; the students who studied tourism at the Faculty of Management of Dokuz Eylül University, the Applied Sciences College of Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University and Söğüt Vocational School. After performing face-to-face interviews with the students and informing them about the research, they were asked to fill in the questionnaire.

Survey method was used in the research. The questionnaire had three parts. In the first part, to measure the career adaptabilities of the students, a scale of 24 items adapted from the study conducted by Savickas and Porfeli<sup>[8]</sup> and edited by Kanten<sup>[27]</sup>. In the second part, a personality scale of 10 items adapted by Atak<sup>[28]</sup> for the Turkish culture was used<sup>[29]</sup>. In the third part, there were demographic questions concerning the students.

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1. Demographic Characteristics

52.9% (129) and 47.1% (115) of the students who participated in the research were male and female, respectively. 50.9% of the students was below 20 years-old and below whereas 49.1% was 21-year-old and above. In the academic departments of the universities, faculty students comprised 42.9% of the students (105); college students comprised 21.2% of the students (52); vocational school students comprised 22.5% of the students (88).

Students were asked which career field they prefer after graduation in the questionnaire. Survey results showed that 32.5%, 21.9%, 21.9%, 11% and 5.9% of the students stated that they aim to build their careers on the fields of accommodation, food and beverage, academic, travel and transportation sectors, respectively.

#### 3.2. Career Adaptability

The skewness and kurtosis of the data were examined to see the convenience of the items regarding career adaptability with the normal distribution in the research. These values were found to be at acceptable ranges[30]. Therefore, the data of the variables were considered to display a normal distribution. The efficiency of the sample was examined to conduct the factor analysis on the statements made by the students and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test was used to determine the efficiency. Also, Cronbach's Alpha Internal Consistency and Reliability analyses were conducted on the scales and their sub-dimensions used in the research.

**Table 1.** Factor Analyse for Career Adaptability Sources

Career Adaptability Sources	Eigen Value	Explained Variance	Alpha
Concern	3,94	23,22	,73
Control	2,94	17,33	,80
Curiosity	2,23	13,12	,77
Confidence	2,10	12,38	,90

Reliability of the total scales: **0,91**

1=Strongly Disagree-5= Strongly Agree

As a result of the factor analysis, four factors as concern, control, curiosity and confidence were found. These four factors explained 66.06% of the total variance. The general reliability coefficient of each factor is shown on Table 1. The reliability coefficient of all the items in the career adaptability scale was identified to be 91. When the means of the career adaptabilities are examined, it can be seen that control (mean: 4, 19) and confidence (mean: 4, 18) have the highest means, followed by concern (mean: 3,91) and curiosity (3,85).

### 3.3. The Big Five Personality Characteristics

The five-factor personality scale was applied to present the personality traits of the students who study tourism. This scale of 10 items and its Turkish adapted version were used within the framework of the present study. This scale measures two sub-dimensions of each of the five-factor personality traits. Thus, arithmetic means and standard deviations were identified regarding the sub-dimensions of the five personality traits in the data obtained and are given on Table 2. When the table is examined, the personality traits which have the highest means were seen to be conscientiousness (mean: 4,15), openness to experience (mean: 4,10) and agreeableness (mean: 4,06), respectively. The personality traits which had the lowest means were found to be extraversion and neuroticism. From the point of view of the personality traits considered to be negative, the means of emotional imbalance, non-agreeableness and introversion have been found to be high.

**Table2.** Five Factor Personality Sub-Dimensions of Participants

	Mean	SD
<b>Extraversion</b>		
<i>Extravert</i>	3,70	1,10
<i>Introvert</i>	2,69	1,30
<b>Agreeableness</b>		
<i>Agreeable</i>	4,06	1,05
<i>Non-agreeable</i>	2,81	1,18
<b>Neuroticism</b>		
<i>Stable</i>	3,68	1,08
<i>Unstable</i>	3,05	1,27
<b>Conscientiousness</b>		
<i>Conscientious</i>	4,15	,952
<i>Non-conscientious</i>	2,48	1,20
<b>Openness to Experience</b>		
<i>Progressive</i>	4,10	1,04
<i>Conservative</i>	2,64	1,30

After determining the means of the sub-dimensions of students' personality factors, K-means cluster analysis, which is one of the non-hierarchical clustering methods, was conducted to reveal the numbers of the determined sub-sets of the five-factor personality traits. As a result of the cluster analysis, the personality levels of the students were found to have three groups, which were low, medium and high, for each personality factor.

**Table3.** Participants' Five Factor Personality Subscale Levels

	F	%
<b>Openness to Experience</b>		
<i>Progressive</i>	18	7,4
<i>Medium</i>	40	16,5
<i>Conservative</i>	185	76,1
<b>Agreeableness</b>		
<i>Agreeable</i>	21	8,6
<i>Medium</i>	43	17,7
<i>Non-agreeable</i>	179	73,7
<b>Neuroticism</b>		
<i>Stable</i>	137	56,6
<i>Medium</i>	73	30,2
<i>Unstable</i>	32	13,2
<b>Conscientiousness</b>		
<i>Conscientious</i>	13	5,4
<i>Medium</i>	34	14,0
<i>Non-conscientious</i>	195	80,6

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<b>Extraversion</b>		
<i>Extravert</i>	148	60,9
<i>Medium</i>	65	26,7
<i>Introvert</i>	30	12,3

The personality levels of the students are given on Table 3. In the light of this information, 76.1% of students who were open to experience (n=185) were identified to be progressive, whereas 7.4% of them (n=18) were identified to be conservative. When agreeableness was evaluated, those who were agreeable comprised of 73.1% (n=179) students, whereas those who were non-agreeable comprised of 8.6% (n=21) students. The ratio of students who were neurotic was 56.6% (n=137), whereas the ratio of students who were not neurotic was 13.2% (n=32). The ratio of individuals who were conscientious was 80.6% (n=195), whereas the ratio of those who were non-conscientious was 5.4% (n=13). So findings suggest that students who study tourism are conscientious, neurotic and open to experience. As for the extraversion personality trait, 60.9% of the students who study tourism (n=148) was extrovert, whereas 12.3% of them (n=30) was introvert. Also, students who study tourism tend to be open to experience, neurotic and extrovert; however, they had low levels of conscientiousness and to be non-agreeable people.

### 3.4. Differing Career Adaptabilities According to Personality Traits

ANOVA was used to determine whether or not the career adaptabilities differ according to students' personality traits, and Post Hoc Tests were run to identify the groups which were differing. The results of the analysis are shown on Table 4.

**Table 4.** *Differentiation of Career Adaptation Abilities According to Personality Characteristics of Students*

	<b>Concern</b>		<b>Control</b>		<b>Curiosity</b>		<b>Confidence</b>	
	<b>f</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Extraversion</b>	8,395	,000	4,302	,015	8,286	,000	6,850	,001
<b>Agreeableness</b>	13,763	,000	10,120	,000	4,391	,013	11,865	,000
<b>Neuroticism</b>	2,795	,063	2,198	,113	6,239	,002	,998	,370
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	16,931	,000	18,622	,000	13,449	,000	29,852	,000
<b>Openness to Experience</b>	17,162	,000	4,981	,000	11,067	,000	15,383	,000

Students' career adaptabilities showed statistically significant differences according to their personality traits. When these differences were evaluated in detail, the levels of confidence, control, curiosity and concern emotions of extrovert students were identified to be higher than those of introvert students. Extrovert students make plans for their careers, plan how to achieve their objectives and participate in activities relating to the career more often. This finding suggests that extrovert students experience more concern compared to introvert students and make plans to reduce their levels of concern. In a similar manner, the levels of control, curiosity, and confidence of extrovert students are higher than those of introvert students.

As a result of the analysis conducted on agreeableness, the levels of confidence, control, curiosity, and concern of agreeable students were higher than those of non-agreeable students. Only curiosity factor of the career adaptability factors were identified to have a difference in terms of neuroticism. In this factor, those who had an emotional balance could be said to have a higher level of curiosity than those who had an emotional imbalance. Students who had emotional balance tended to carry out more research about their careers and considered their future opportunities.

When conscientiousness was examined, a significant difference was identified between the factors of concern, control, curiosity and confidence when responsible students and irresponsible students were compared. This difference was revealed among those who were responsible and irresponsible when the groups were examined.

When openness to experience was examined, a significant difference was identified between the career adaptabilities of students regarding concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. This difference was found among those who were progressive and conservative when the groups were examined. The compatibilities of conservative students were low in all categories.

### 4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Career adaptability and evaluation play an important role in job training and working psychology. Career building requires long-term planning and determination. Career tendency is formed by the individual (such as motivation, needs, personality) and environmental (such as family effect, cultural context) factors within this process. Regarding individual factors, career development depends on the individual's management of his/her career and the effective maintenance of career development activities, especially research, planning, decision-making, job-seeking, attendance in job roles, job switching, and training. In this sense, especially the career adaptabilities of university students, who we may call youth and who are at the first phase of their career development process, are key to the success in switching from the academy to work environment and the future career movements.

This study aims to present whether the career adaptabilities of students who study tourism differ according to their personality traits or not. As it is stated in the studies reviewed above, career adaptabilities comprise concern, control, curiosity and confidence factors. Personality traits have been identified to comprise extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience factors using the big five-factor scale. When career adaptability factors are examined, control and confidence factors have been found to have the highest means. They are followed by concern and curiosity. Students who study tourism could be said that they trust themselves, do the right things, defend what they believe and to be responsible. In a similar manner, students who perform the given tasks, solve problems, learn new skills, overcome the challenges they face could be said to have high levels of self-esteem.

When the personality traits of students who study tourism are evaluated, those who have the positive traits among the five-factor personality traits could be said to have the highest means. Only those who have balanced and imbalanced personality traits, which are the sub-dimensions of neurotic personality trait, could be said to have similar means. When evaluated, students who study tourism have high levels of conscientiousness, openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Moreover, a cluster analysis was conducted to identify the student clusters that have personality traits other than the means of the five-factor personality traits and three clusters were identified. In this cluster, the number of students who are progressive and agreeable is the highest.

The students' career adaptabilities showed differences according to their personality traits. These differences were identified between the positive and negative personality traits of the five-factor personality traits. Extrovert, agreeable, responsible and progressive students' levels of confidence, control, and curiosity and concern emotions were higher than introvert, non-agreeable, irresponsible and conservative students. Only the curiosity factor of the career adaptability factors showed difference only regarding neuroticism. Students who had emotional balance conducted more research about their careers and considered their future opportunities.

The limitation of the present research is that the research data was confined to the students who studied tourism at the universities. Thus, future research may be conducted on larger groups of students or qualified personnel candidates.

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