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**Title**

Increasing Migrants' Work Self-efficacy and Job Search Self-efficacy perceptions by developing Career Adaptability

**Abstract**

Today's unstable labor market increasingly requires flexibility and adaptability to cope with the threat of unemployment. It can cause distress in people and have a more significant negative impact on fragile workers, such as migrants. This study aimed to test whether a Career Counseling intervention designed for Migrants (CCfM) can develop Career Adaptability and, therefore, both Work Self-efficacy (WSe) and Job Search Self-efficacy (JSSe) perceptions. It was conducted in Italy and involved a sample of 233 migrants, who were asked to respond to a questionnaire available in three languages (Italian, French, and English).

Data analysis showed that an improvement was demonstrated in all the variables considered, namely career adaptability (including concern, control, confidence, and curiosity), WSe, and JSSe, even though the CCfM was not directly designed to increase the last one. In addition, the development of career adaptability explained the increase in migrants' WSe and JSSe, and the initial level of career adaptability was found to explain the increase in WSe due to the initial positive level of curiosity.

**Keywords**

refugees; career adaptability; resettlement success; labor market integration

## INTRODUCTION

### **Refugees' labor market integration: challenges and barriers**

The current labor market is unstable and unpredictable, characterized by frequent and complex career transitions that undermine the security and predictability of individuals' career paths (Savickas et al., 2009). In this scenario, the need to possess characteristics such as flexibility and adaptability increases to cope with the sense of uncertainty and the fear of incurring job loss and thus unemployment (Kalleberg, 2009; Maggiori, Johnston, Krings, Massoudi, & Rossier, 2013). This can cause distress in people and can have a more significant negative impact on categories of fragile workers, such as refugees: people who have been forced to leave their countries because of war, persecution, or violence, often related to race, religion, political opinion, nationality or social affiliation (UNHCR, 2018). Thus, refugees arrive in the host country because of sudden, unplanned, and forced migration to escape situations of violence and danger. Both the migration and the reason for which it occurs (i.e., Connor, 2010) can constitute traumatic experiences that can undermine the integrity and efficiency of the individual. After experiencing these situations, refugees find themselves in a new country, often very different from their home one, and must cope with the pain that can arise from a sense of breakdown in their lives. Usually, it is exacerbated by the experience of separation from one's family (Campion, 2018) and the interruption of one's career path (Ivlevs & Veliziotis, 2018). Brajda Bruno, Massaro, and Boerchi (under review), in a recent literature review, provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state of refugees' integration in the labor market in the European context. According to the bibliography analyzed by the authors, after a hazardous journey, when refugees enter the host country's labor market almost inevitably face barriers and obstacles on their way to economic integration, often being ill-suited to the demands of the local labor market.

The first significant barrier is the lack of fluency in the host country's language (Kogan, 2003). Inadequate language proficiency often leads migrants and refugees to rely on social networks composed of individuals from the same ethnic backgrounds (Hatami & Weber, 2012). This tendency

may be a consequence of not knowing the language of the host country and indicative of the need to seek social support for resettlement in a foreign and uncertain context (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010; Campion, 2018). Informal networks are the primary channel refugees use to acquire information about existing employment opportunities (Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008). However, these same opportunities are simultaneously reduced as they are limited to those within the network (Campion, 2018). It leads refugees to accept the first available job despite their skills and qualifications (Fuller & Martin, 2012; Verwiebe et al., 2019), leading to ethnic niche jobs characterized by low status and low pay (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). Thus, language proficiency is not only necessary to expand job search to formal channels (Haan, Korh & Toutman, 2017) but is also crucial for career development (Chiswick & Miller, 2002). Forming such ties and accessing job opportunities within their community allows refugees to create a protective shield against another element that can preclude their integration into the labor market, namely discrimination (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2014; Campion, 2018). It is prevalent in the early stages of the recruitment process (Bovenkerk, 1992), especially in jobs that require direct contact with users (Darity & Mason, 1998). Refugees, and immigrants in general, often face marginalization stemming from the tendency to be seen as competitors by native job seekers (Binggeli, Dietz, & Krings, 2013). Thus, “discrimination remains a pervasive social obstacle for any minority group in the E.U. and U.S., motivating refugees to remain close to their new social group” (Campion, 2018, p. 16). According to social role theory, people tend to look for and obtain jobs with characteristics that overlap with gender expectations (Eagly, 1997). Many refugees face social and cultural pressures to pursue job opportunities consistent with their gender (Campion, 2018). Men are more oriented towards manual jobs in factories, the construction industry, and agriculture (Correa-Velez, Barnett, & Gifford 2013). At the same time, gender expectations that tend to see women engaged in roles of child-caring and housekeeping may lead them not to seek out jobs other than these areas, thus precluding them from being more open to the occupational opportunity overview (Khoudja & Platt, 2018). Indeed, among migrants, females (experience a higher risk of unemployment and underemployment than males (i.e., Dourleijn &

Dagevos, 2011; Kokkonen, Esaiasson & Gilljam, 2014). Refugee women typically tend to have lower qualifications (Bloch, Galvin & Harrel-Bond, 2000) and low-transferable job skills (Liversage, 2009). Even when they successfully enter the labor market, they are more likely to fill job roles consistent with their social gender roles, despite their actual qualifications (Freedman, 2015). This last aspect is called deskilling and represents the common condition experienced by refugees who shift from holding a prestigious professional role in their home country to being downgraded to a low-skilled job in the host country (Campion, 2008). It often occurs because, in the host country, the credentials possessed by refugees are not valid. They need to acquire recertifications or re-licensures through additional educational pathways, often imposing unaffordable expenses for refugees (Bloch, 2004). In addition, refugees' limited knowledge of the host country, bureaucratic issues, and the highly formalized labor market in Europe (Eggenhofert-Rehart et al., 2018) can represent complicated challenges.

Empirical evidence has shown that experiences such as resettlement, unemployment, and job search can trigger personal coping resources to achieve successful labor market integration. For this reason, we have decided to base a new study on the role of career adaptability (Savickas, 1997, 2005) on the job search self-efficacy (Saks & Ashforth, 1999; Tolentino, Sibunruang, & Garcia, 2019) and the work self-efficacy (Loeb, Stempel, & Isaksson, 2016), factors involved in successful labor market integration.

### **Career adaptability**

Technological changes and the shift to short-term contracts (Tladinyane, Coetzee, & Masenge, 2013), have led to a transformation of both workplaces and the labor market, causing social and economic instability (Lodi, Zammitti, Magnano, Patrizi, & Santisi, 2020). As noted above, this puts people in the condition of experiencing many more career transitions (Savickas, 2005) and periods of unemployment (Maggiori et al., 2013), strongly influencing the construction of people's career paths, which appear no longer linear but often interrupted or fragmented (Lodi et al., 2020). With a context like this, Savickas (1997, 2005) in Career Construction Theory proposed a model to understand

occupational behavior across life cycles. Central to CCT is the concept of career adaptability, defined as “the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions” (Savickas, 1997, p. 254). In other words, the way individuals construct their careers (Savickas, 2005). Career adaptability is a construct composed of four dimensions of resources, problem-solving and coping strategies, i.e., adapt-abilities: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Savickas and Porfeli (2012) argue that adaptability resources can be activated to cope with life and career challenges, such as career transitions or work traumas. Some studies (see Maggiori et al., 2013) have shown that career adaptability resources increase in the first months of unemployment and stabilize long-term. It can be explained because unemployed people engaged in a job search must reactivate and develop resources to change their condition (Zikic & Klehe, 2006). In a study with a sample of workers and unemployed people (Maggiori et al., 2013), the relationship between job insecurity, career adaptability, and both general and occupational wellbeing was investigated. Results showed that both unemployed and employed participants with low job insecurity reported higher scores on career adaptability – particularly on control – than employed participants with high job insecurity. In addition, regardless of job conditions, adaptability resources were positively associated with both general and occupational wellbeing (Maggiori et al., 2013). Other studies have investigated refugees’ career adaptability (see Campion, 2018; Ramakrishnan, Barker, Vervoordt, & Zhang, 2018; Wehrle, Kira, & Klehe, 2019). Findings showed that career adaptability plays a crucial role in the resettlement process: it enables the activation of internal resources required to modify expectations and implement adaptive coping strategies to deal with resettlement (Campion, 2018). We have also to assume that career construction cannot ignore contextual variables (Wehrle et al., 2019). It is essential to consider that the obstacles and barriers refugees experience in the resettlement process can, on the one hand, undermine their sense of control and confidence and can, on the other hand, trigger career adaptability resources (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Wehrle et al., 2019). Furthermore, through self-regulation, refugees intervened in their thoughts and emotions and optimistically

reflected on what they could achieve in the future: this, along with taking responsibility for their actions, supported them in taking control and making decisions and boosted their confidence (Wehrle et al., 2019). In conclusion, findings suggest that career adaptability in refugees seems to be positively related to the creation of social connections, which are used for job search and promote a sense of belonging and life satisfaction (Campion, 2018), as well as control and confidence (Wehrle et al., 2019). ). It explains why refugees' social network with their compatriots in the host country plays a central role in the resettlement process (Hatami & Weber, 2012; Correa-Velez, 2013).

### **Job search self-efficacy**

Job search is defined as “a purposive, volitional pattern of action that begins with the identification and commitment to pursuing an employment goal” (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001, p. 838). Instead, job search self-efficacy (JSSE) represents the competence people perceive in engaging in job search and in obtaining employment (Tolentino et al., 2019). Job search self-efficacy is one of the most studied individual factors to predict job search intensity, job search effort, and reemployment (Kanfer et al., 2001; Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy, & Shalhoop, 2006). In a study conducted on a sample of university students engaged in the school-to-work transition (Tolentino, Sibunruang, & Garcia, 2019), the role of self-monitoring was investigated as an individual factor involved in the relationship between career adaptability and JSSE. This is because, in line with Career Constriction Theory (Savickas, 2005), the individual-agent deploys personal self-regulatory skills in learning about the complex and unstable world of work and in the process of finding employment (Tolentino et al., 2019). Possessing a solid JSSE could be even more critical for refugees seeking employment in the host country. They are often unfamiliar with how and what it takes to find work in their new environment (Pajic, Ulceluse, Kismihók, Mol, & den Hartog, 2018). Deep social and cultural differences can cause refugees to be subjected to discrimination and stereotyping by the native population, which can lead to perceptions of cultural mismatch, which along with bureaucratic barriers, could negatively affect refugees' job search efforts (Pajic et al., 2018). Conceptualizing refugee adaptive readiness in terms of psychological capital, this latter one can be considered an

antecedent of JSSE as it impacts career adaptability (Pajic et al., 2018). Psychological capital refers to a general, positive outlook on life and includes four elements: self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). In non-migrant populations, psychological capital is functional for occupational success. It is positively related to career adaptability (Tolentino et al., 2014) and perceived employability and job search (Chen & Lim, 2012). It has been shown that individuals who are more hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and confident in achieving their goals are also more trustful in engaging in job search in the host country (Pajic et al., 2018), most likely because of their greater ability to prepare for upcoming job tasks and take on multiple responsibilities regarding their job and the experience of having a job itself, their job integration and engagement in exploring alternative job opportunities (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Furthermore, the role of social and administrative barriers in mediating the indirect relationship between psychological capital and JSSE has been investigated (Pajic et al., 2018). While perceiving strong administrative barriers does not weaken the indirect relationship between psychological capital and JSSE, rather it strengthens it, experiencing significant social barriers weakens this relationship. Pajic and colleagues (2018) have shown that more hopeful, optimistic, and resilient refugees tend to view administrative barriers as transitory impediments capable of triggering fighting response instead of being a hindrance to JSSE, whereas perceiving strong social barriers – i.e., difficulty adapting to host country values and culture – seems to cause feelings of misfit between a person and the environment, “weakening the positive self-regulatory mechanisms related to psychological capital” (Pajic et al., 2018, p. 169).

### **Work self-efficacy**

Work self-efficacy (WSe) is the workers’ perception to successfully complete their job-related tasks (Loeb et al., 2016). This definition reflects the trend of research in work contexts to associate WSe with a cognitive dimension (Loeb, 2016). However, it is possible to distinguish four dimensions of self-efficacy at work: occupational, self-oriented emotional, other-oriented emotional, and social (Loeb et al., 2016). Most of the studies are related to social self-efficacy and emotional self-efficacy.



The first concerns workers' confidence in their ability to engage in the social interaction tasks necessary to begin and maintain interpersonal relationships (Smith & Betz, 2000). On the other hand, emotional self-efficacy is the belief that people have regarding their ability to both understand and use emotional information (Bandura, 1997). It is common to face tasks related to social interaction and handle emotionally challenging situations in the workplace. It is common to face tasks related to social interaction and handle emotionally challenging situations in the workplace. Thus, it seems critical to be confident in one's ability to deal with these social and emotional situations at work, impacting health and wellbeing (Loeb et al., 2016). It has been shown that WSe is negatively related to stress in work settings (Mohr, Müller, Rigotti, Aycan & Tschan, 2006) and is positively related to organizational outcomes, like job satisfaction and commitment (Rigotti, Schyns & Mohr, 2008). While few studies in the literature are focused on WSe, many others have declined the construct of general self-efficacy theorized by Bandura (1997) in organizational contexts. In general, the level of an individual's self-efficacy influences personal performance, so people who believe they are competent to perform a task are more likely to be successful.

In contrast, people who believe they are unable to perform a task will be less successful (Bandura, 1977). It has been shown that this is equally true for work performance (Stajkovic and Luthan, 1998). It is because self-efficacy, in the work context, is an important antecedent of motivation. Many studies have found that people with a high level of self-efficacy are more optimistic and confident that they can achieve goals by practicing their skills in specific tasks (Bandura, 1997; Chen, Goddard, & Casper, 2004). Several studies have investigated the effects of self-efficacy in work contexts. High self-efficacy enables persistence in coping with stressful situations (Salanova, Peiró, & Schaufeli, 2002), mitigating the adverse effects of work-related stressors, preserving wellbeing, and promoting job satisfaction (Jex & Bliese, 1999; Judge & Bono, 2001).

On the other hand, low levels of self-efficacy are correlated with stress and depressive symptoms at work (Regehr, Hill, Knott, & Sault, 2003) and burnout (Guglielmi, Simbula, Schaufeli, & Depolo, 2012). Few studies have explored the construct of self-efficacy in refugees, and no studies

on WSE were found for this target group. One study (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2013) investigated the impact of refugees' experiences on efficacy beliefs and their contribution to resettlement. Significant sources of self-efficacy beliefs are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences obtained through observation of social role models – particularly those perceived as similar to oneself – social persuasion, and psychological assessment of the individual's abilities (Bandura, 1997).

Results from the study (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2013) showed that positive experiences after resettlement could potentially improve self-efficacy and long-term outcomes. Participants with lower levels of GSE reported higher levels of distress to a greater extent. In comparison, refugees with higher levels of self-efficacy were more likely to speak English well, have higher levels of education, have a job, and reported higher levels of satisfaction with their lives in general. In addition, vicarious experiences gained from social models can influence self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997).

In addition to this, vicarious experiences gained from social “models” can influence efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). It meant that, for refugees in resettlement, compatriots with similar backgrounds who successfully learned the host country's language, obtained housing, joined social networks, and obtained meaningful work provided a model of success (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2013). By transferring knowledge, skills, and successful strategies (Bandura, 1997), positive role models can stimulate newcomers to acquire new skills and motivate them to persevere when they encounter adversity. Conversely, interfacing with compatriots who had negative experiences during resettlement can undermine trust, motivation, and the desire to learn (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2013).

In addition to the reemployment rate, host language proficiency, general physical health, financial status, acculturation, work, and employment status are among the leading indicators of resettlement success (Beiser, 2003). Given that solid efficacy beliefs can predict coping behavior and health functioning up to five years later (Bandura, 1997), further studies should focus on exploring refugees' work self-efficacy.

### **Aim and hypotheses**

This study aimed to test if a career counseling intervention designed for migrants (CCfM) effectively increases work self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy perceptions developing migrants' career adaptability. More precisely, the study aimed to test the following hypotheses:

- 1) CCfM is effective in increasing migrants' work self-efficacy;
- 2) CCfM is effective in growing migrants' job search self-efficacy even if not directly designed for this scope;
- 3) CCfM is effective in developing migrants' career adaptability;
- 4) both work self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy increasing is partially explained by the development of career adaptability;
- 5) the starting level of career adaptability partially explains both work self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy increase.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Participants**

Three hundred eighty-eight asylum seekers participated in the career counseling interventions, divided into 50 groups ranging from 6 to 10 members. The sample was mostly composed by males (82.2%). Age ranged between 18 to 56 years old, mostly concentrated between 20 to 30 years old (71.6%). Participants originated from Africa and Asia; Pakistan (23.3%) and Nigeria (22.2%) were the countries more represented, followed by Mali (7,3%), Senegal (6,9%), Gambia (6,2%), and Guinea (5,1%). Because 155 of them abandoned or were moved to a different shelter and had no opportunity to compile the questionnaire at the end of the intervention, data analyses to test the hypotheses will be conducted on a sample of 233 migrants.

### **ESPoR Career Counseling Intervention**

We have adopted the ESPoR model for this study, a CCfM intervention composed of two face-to-face interviews of one hour and nine groups meeting of three hours (see Table 1 for details). It lasts around two months, and it ends with the delivery of a skills portfolio to each participant. It is

based on autobiographical narration that is free and aimed at the migrant in the first phase and structured and addressed to operators and potential employers in the second phase. It does not seek to support migrants in finding a job or directly developing job search skills and self-efficacy perception. It would increase professional self-awareness and the knowledge of the host country labor market and support the migrants in defining a professional objective, congruent with both their features and those of the new contest, to face the challenges and contrast the barriers described at the beginning of this paper. In this study, the interventions were conducted by social workers experts in welcoming migrants, who participated in live training of five days on career counseling with migrants and the ESPoR model, and in distance coaching.

**Table 1 - ESPoR model intervention planning**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1° Face-to-face interview	The story of my career
1° and 2° group meeting	My career box
3° and 4° group meeting	The soft-skills cards
5° and 6° group meeting	How to train and work in Italy
7° group meeting	The professions' cards
8° group meeting	How to talk about personal professionalism
2° face-to-face interview	Sharing of the portfolio
9° group meeting	Synthesis of the path

## **Procedures**

Migrants participated in the intervention between October 2019 to March 2021. They were conducted live before the lockdown imposed by the COVID-19 epidemic or when restrictions were reduced. Five of them were interrupted and resumed after three months. The social workers were asked to administer the same questionnaire before and after the intervention in a paper-pencil version, giving the migrants the opportunity of choosing between the three languages: 75,3% were compiled in Italian; 16.1% in English; and 8.7% in French.

## **Measures**

Migrants answered the following scales on a Likert scale ranging from 1 - Not at all to 5 – Completely and showed good psychometrics (see Table 2 for details).

**Career Adapt-Abilities Scale** (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) was chosen to measure how people cope with change and transitions, and it consists of four scales, each including six items. *Concern* consists of being mindful, connecting with the past, and projecting positively toward designing one's vocational future. *Control* refers to the tendency to think that the future is partly manageable; thus, it reflects perceived control over one's professional future and personal responsibility for shaping one's career. *Curiosity* represents the tendency to explore the environment, selves, and possible scenarios for one's professional future, acquiring information about oneself and the world around. *Confidence* is self-efficacy in one's ability to deal with challenges, obstacles, and problems that threaten one's professional and career goals. In addition to the Italian version (Soresi, Nota & Ferrari, 2012), it was possible to retrieve the French (Johnston et al., 2013) and English (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012) versions thanks to previous research published in scientific journals.

**Perceived Job Search Self-Efficacy Scale** (Farnese, Avallone, Pepe, & Porcelli, 2007a) is a monofactorial scale composed of 12 items. It was utilized to detect people's efficacy beliefs about the various activities involved in looking for a job.

**Perceived Work Self-efficacy Scale** (Farnese et al., 2007b) consists of 10 items, and it was utilized to measure people's efficacy beliefs concerning future and current work.

These last two scales were translated using the back-translation method to ensure as much content overlap as possible between the versions in the three languages.

**Table 2 – Scales' psychometrics**

Scale	Mean	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's alfa				
					Pre	Post	IT	EN	FR
CA Concern	3.52	1.00	-0.431	-0.697	.887	.852	.893	.760	.838
CA Control	3.93	0.89	-0.881	.0148	.810	.886	.876	.701	.713
CA Curiosity	3.59	0.96	-0.468	-0.635	.859	.890	.879	.853	.831
CA Confidence	3.94	0.88	-1.019	0.678	.849	.879	.878	.752	.809
Work Self-efficacy	3.92	0.82	-1.073	0.678	.936	.939	.945	.894	.886

Job Search Self-efficacy	3.62	0.82	-0.623	-0.246	.926	.948	.944	.896	.898
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## Data analysis

All the statistical analyses were conducted with SPSS 26. Pre and post differences were tested with Student's T-Test for paired samples. Effect size has been tested with Cohen's d index (Large if  $>.80$ ; Medium if comprised between  $.51$  and  $.80$ ; Small if included between  $.21$  and  $.50$ ). The effects of career adaptability in predicting the growth of work self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy were tested with a block-wise linear regression. The differences between post and pre values for the four career adaptability scales were inserted as a first block, and the pre values of the same scales were inserted as the second block.

## RESULTS

### CCfM effectiveness in developing career adaptability and increasing migrants' work self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy

The data analysis has confirmed the first three hypotheses. As shown in Table 3, all the variables considered have significantly increased after the intervention. The effect size of the difference between post and pre was large for concern, curiosity, and job search self-efficacy and medium for control, confidence, and work self-efficacy.

**Table 3 – Statistic significance and effect size of the differences between post and pre-administration**

Scale	N	Pre		Post		Mean diff. <sup>(1)</sup>	Cohen's d
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
CA Concern	228	3,99	0,693	3,19	1,078	0,795***	0,88
CA Control	229	4,29	0,644	3,70	1,029	0,588***	0,69
CA Curiosity	227	4,03	0,722	3,28	0,997	0,751***	0,86
CA Confidence	226	4,26	0,623	3,70	1,066	0,555***	0,64
Work Self-efficacy	232	4,22	0,538	3,66	0,969	0,559***	0,72
Job Search Self-efficacy	230	4,04	0,574	3,35	0,909	0,689***	0,91

(1) Positive values mean that they have increased after the intervention

### The role of career adaptability development in explaining work self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy growing

Hypothesis four has been confirmed both for work self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy. 81% of the growth of the WSe's level was explained by the development of confidence ( $\beta = .290$ ), curiosity ( $\beta = .249$ ), and control ( $\beta = .219$ ). The model, controlled by the initial level of career adaptability, was statistically significant ( $F(8) = 121.320$ ,  $p < .000$ ; see Table 4 for details).

82% of the growth of the JSSe's level was explained by the development of curiosity ( $\beta = .387$ ), concern ( $\beta = .264$ ), and confidence ( $\beta = .204$ ). The model, controlled by the initial level of career adaptability, was statistically significant ( $F(8) = 123.139$ ,  $p < .000$ ; see Table 5 for details).

### The role of the starting level of career adaptability in explaining work self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy growing

Hypothesis five has been confirmed only for work self-efficacy. The  $R^2$  difference between models 1 and 2 was not statistically significant for JSSe, while it was .014 ( $p = .003$ ) for WSe. As shown in Table 4, this difference was due only to the initial positive level of curiosity ( $\beta = .235$ ).

**Table 4 – Role of career adaptability development and initial level in explaining work self-efficacy**

	Standardized $\beta$	t	Sign.
<b>Model 1</b>			
C.A. Concern development	.153	3.466	.001
CA Control development	.328	6.081	.000
C.A. Curiosity development	.086	1.674	.096
CA Confidence development	.425	6.755	.000
<b>Model 2</b>			
C.A. Concern development	.107	1.576	.116
CA Control development	.219	3.024	.003
C.A. Curiosity development	.249	3.394	.001
CA Confidence development	.290	3.186	.002
CA Concern initial level	-.093	-1.317	.189

CA Control initial level	-.131	-1.753	.081
CA Curiosity initial level	.235	3.060	.002
CA Confidence initial level	-.161	-1.744	.083

**Table 5 – Role of career adaptability development and initial level in explaining job search self-efficacy**

	Standardized $\beta$	t	Sign.
<b>Model 1</b>			
C.A. Concern development	.333	7.753	.000
CA Control development	.156	3.006	.003
C.A. Curiosity development	.323	6.479	.000
CA Confidence development	.213	3.508	.001
<b>Model 2</b>			
C.A. Concern development	.264	3.909	.000
CA Control development	.096	1.340	.182
C.A. Curiosity development	.387	5.310	.000
CA Confidence development	.204	2.255	.025
CA Concern initial level	-.106	-1.515	.131
CA Control initial level	-.076	-1.017	.310
CA Curiosity initial level	.101	1.324	.187
CA Confidence initial level	-.007	-0.077	.938

## DISCUSSION

This study aimed to test if a career counseling intervention designed for migrants (CCfM) is effective in increasing both work self-efficacy (WSe) and job search self-efficacy (JSSe) perceptions developing migrants' career adaptability.

Our first three hypotheses were confirmed because an improvement was demonstrated in all the variables considered, namely career adaptability (including concern, control, confidence, and curiosity), Wse, and JSSe, even though the CCfM was not directly designed to increase the last one.



Specifically, the effect size of the differences between post and pre-intervention was large for concern, curiosity, and JSSe and medium for control, confidence, and WSe. On the one hand, the CCfM is likely to have allowed them to review some perceived obstacles to their career, increasing the intention to turn their concerns into career plans to pursue (Wehrle et al., 2019). On the other hand, the CCfM aimed to increase knowledge of the Italian labor market. It could have fostered greater curiosity in exploring existing training and employment opportunities in the area. The large effect size between pre- and post-intervention detected for the JSSe could be explained by the activities of the 5th and 6th group meetings of the CCfM. It could have elicited the “preparatory job search behaviors,” which refer to the acquisition of information on the job search and the identification of potential paths to follow during the planning phase of the job search (Blau, 1994). Regarding the medium pre-post effect size detected for control, confidence, and WSe, the sense of accompaniment and support given by attending the CCfM may have promoted in migrants a “can do attitude” (Wehrle et al., 2019, p. 121), characterized by optimism and feelings of gratitude, allowing them to gain an increasing perception of control and confidence (Wehrle et al., 2019), which in turn, transferred to the workplace, can probably lead to WSe. The present study also demonstrated the role of career adaptability development in explaining the increase in WSe and JSSe, confirming hypothesis 4.

There are no studies that directly investigate the relationship between career adaptability and WSe in migrants, while many more studies (i.e., Stajkovic and Luthan, 1998; Salanova et al., 2002; Chen et al., 2004) have merely declined the construct of general self-efficacy theorized by Bandura (1997) in organizational contexts. Our study contributes to the scientific community showing that, in our sample, 81% of the increase in the level of WSe has been explained by the development of confidence, curiosity, and control. Probably, confidence growth – defined as perceived self-efficacy in dealing with obstacles that threaten one’s career goals (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) – can promote the perception of being able to approach work-related tasks (Bandura, 1997; Chen et al., 2004). Similarly, increased curiosity may contribute to the development of migrants’ openness to exploring

possible job positions they may pursue and the multiple tasks they may perform at work, while, by adopting an agentic perspective (Bandura, 2001), increased control could result in reliance on one's personal agency in building one's career.

However, some studies have investigated the relationship between career adaptability and JSSE (see Tolentino et al., 2019), including migrants (Pajic et al., 2018). Our study contributes to expanding the literature on this topic. 82% of the increase in JSSE level was explained by developing curiosity, concern, and confidence. It is not surprising, considering that increased curiosity, intended as openness to exploring current job opportunities (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), implies a greater probability of engaging in the job search. Exercising this practice could help develop familiarity with the job search process allowing the enhancement of JSSE. Similarly, the development of concern and confidence is associated with increased levels of JSSE. As shown by previous studies (see Pajic et al., 2018), career adaptability strengthens JSSE because more adaptable people prepare better for job searching (concern) and are typically more trustful (confidence).

Lastly, hypothesis 5 was also confirmed, even if just in part. The initial level of career adaptability can explain the increase in WSE due to the initial positive level of curiosity. A solid initial level of curiosity can make migrants more willing to participate in the career counseling intervention. Moreover, migrants more curious could be more open in considering different jobs they can get in the host country, generating the belief that they are competent for those jobs.

This study also has some limitations. First, the intervention occurred between October 2019 and March 2021, right in the middle of the COVID-19 epidemic. Due to restrictions in Italy, this meant that activities were often interrupted and then restarted after some time. It caused some dropouts because some migrants were no longer traceable after the interruption periods or were moved to a different shelter and had no opportunity to complete the questionnaire at the end of the intervention. The second is that the level of literacy of the migrants was not optimal for all of them. On the other hand, it is likely that in the circumstances not affected by external barriers, and after

considering the limitations in the data gathering, the CCfM could be even more compelling of how suggested by this study.

Further studies should consider measuring the consistency of the effects of the CCfM over time and the moderating role of the experts' skills and other supports in facing the labor market.

## CONCLUSIONS

The difficulties that push migrants to leave their home country, their family, and their job, do not end once they arrive in the host country, where these people must face a reality that is often very different from what they supposed. To avoid the distress given by the condition of being a migrant, refugees often create strong social ties with compatriots who have migrated to the same host country (Correa-Velez et al., 2010). As underlined by several authors (i.e., Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008; Hatami & Weber, 2012; Campion, 2018), this can influence job search and related employment outcomes, leading refugees to engage in jobs consistent with the ethnic niche to which they belong or jobs that are lower-skilled than the credentials they possess (Fuller & Martin, 2012; Verwiebe et al., 2019). Essentially, in the host country, refugees tend to put more effort into making social connections with their compatriots rather than finding a job commensurate with their qualifications. Mainly for those not speaking the language of the host country, it is difficult to connect with different people, so this results in more interaction with people with similar backgrounds to their own. Consequently, connecting with people similar to oneself produces feelings of trust that lead people to seek potential employment through these networks rather than face the uncertainty of looking for a job in line with one's skills using other, more formal, and complex channels. Thus, while social networks in which refugees are integrated assist them in fulfilling a need to belong and experience greater life satisfaction, these same networks act as a barrier to quality reemployment and higher-paying jobs. For this reason, it is possible to identify a paradox in refugees' use of social networks to obtain work. While the job gained through the network may be lower status, the perceived success may be high. It is because a distinction between the objective and subjective success of resettlement

can be made: the former is provided by objective measures of success, such as salary and current versus previous employment status, while subjective success includes mental and physical health, the strength of social ties, and life satisfaction (Campion, 2018). Hence, while labor market challenges can trigger career adaptability resources (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) which usually turn out to be associated with higher quality jobs (Johnston, 2016), refugees seem limited in achieving similar outcomes as long as they direct their resources toward what is most controllable, which is “building social support and finding any job even if it is not commensurate with their experience or qualifications.” (Campion, 2018, p. 23). Together, these findings suggest how sensible it makes to invest in implementing programs such as CCfM to foster migrant integration, by combining the benefits that can produce subjective success (informal networks, strong ties, social support, sense of belonging, trust, mental and physical health, and life satisfaction) with those that represent objective success in resettlement. In fact, programs such as CCfM could promote resettlement quality, job type and status relative to previous employment, and host country language proficiency (Campion, 2018), and this would allow migrants to not rely only on their informal networks and, thus, experience only subjective success in resettlement. Furthermore, by offering activities that promote greater career adaptability, CCfM can restore a sense of control even over those aspects that are part of the objective success of resettlement. Career adaptability is an important resource supporting employability (Savickas, 2011). The ability to get and keep the first job and the ability to manage one’s career transitions in the labor market (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). Moreover, high levels of career adaptability seem to be positively related to self-perceived employability (Atitsogbe, Mama, Sovet, Pari, & Rossier, 2019), feelings of self-efficacy in finding a job (Guan et al., 2014), ability to manage transitions (Tolentino et al., 2014), and greater job (Zacher, 2014) and life (Santilli, Nota, Ginevra, & Soresi, 2014) satisfaction. We hope that more and more CCfM interventions will be deployed to support migrants in the process of rebuilding their career paths through the development of career adaptability. It can influence the determination of goal-oriented initiations and behaviors (agency) and plans for achieving goals (pathway) that lead to greater satisfaction (Santilli et al., 2014). It is

because possessing strong career adaptability means considering oneself capable of building future career intentions, coping with career transitions and difficult work situations, and fostering the achievement of important goals for oneself (Scioli, Ricci, Nyugen, & Scioli, 2011). It is especially true for refugees, who must activate their adaptive resources by relying on their personal agency and entrepreneurial cognition, key factors in the integration process (Obschonka & Hahn, 2018).

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