

CAREER ADAPTABILITY: THE ROLE OF GRIT, MINDSET, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Václava KLOUDOVÁ JIŘIČKOVÁ

Prague University of Economics and Business, Prague, Czech Republic
xjirv07@vse.cz

Zuzana KŘEČKOVÁ KROUPOVÁ

Prague University of Economics and Business, Prague, Czech Republic
zuzana.kreckova@vse.cz

Bianka ŽÁKOVÁ

Prague University of Economics and Business, Prague, Czech Republic
zakb02@vse.cz

Abstract

The contemporary organisational environment is characterised by ever-present change and continuous demands for workforce reskilling and upskilling. The ability to adapt the career path has become critical for long-term relevance not only for individuals but also for organisations and whole economies. Drawing on the microfoundations perspective, the ability of teams, organisations and even economies is an aggregate outcome of individual-level attitudes and resources. This pilot study examines the relationship between career adaptability and three constructs from organisational psychology: psychological safety, grit, and growth mindset. The study represents the first wave of a planned longitudinal research programme and was conducted among 55 executives in the Czech market who currently lead teams across various industries. Spearman's rank-order correlations were computed to assess the strength of associations. The results suggest that only grit is positively and significantly associated with career adaptability ($\rho = .39, p = .004$), particularly to three of the four components of career adaptability - control, concern, and confidence (concern: $\rho = .34, p = .011$; control: $\rho = .33, p = .015$; confidence: $\rho = .47, p < .001$). The findings provide a preliminary indication that grit (perseverance and consistency of effort) is more closely associated with career adaptability than contextual (psychological safety) and mindset-oriented (growth mindset) factors. The study contributes to the growing discourse on individual-level determinants of career adaptation and highlights the central role of proactive self-regulation in navigating the contemporary challenges of escalating demands for adjustments to career paths and skill profiles.

Keywords: career adaptability; upskilling; grit, psychological safety

1. INTRODUCTION

"Europe's competitive strength lies in its people. Our human capital is key to the EU's prosperity, its economic resilience and unique social market economy" (European Commission, 2025, p. 1).

The Future of Jobs Report 2025 describes a global labour market as an environment shaped by overlapping technological, economic, geopolitical, and demographic shocks; an environment that can be characterised by sustained uncertainty rather than temporary volatility. (World Economic Forum, 2025). Within this context, employees, employers and policy makers will face large-scale skill disruption as: "on average, workers can expect that two-fifths (39%) of their existing skill sets will be transformed or become outdated over the 2025–2030 period" (World Economic Forum, 2025, p. 6). This trend only emphasises the importance of readiness - at all levels - to adjust to constantly evolving conditions. "Skill gaps are categorically considered the biggest barrier to business transformation by Future of Jobs Survey respondents, with 63% of employers identifying them as a major barrier over the 2025-2030 period" (World Economic Forum, 2025, p. 6). The scale of the skills gap and the speed of change necessitate all stakeholders (policymakers, employers, and employees) to actively identify gaps, evaluate educational opportunities, and prioritise lifelong education and training.

EU policymakers are actively preparing to support employers and employees in narrowing the skills gap, as outlined in the document 'Union of Skills' (European Commission, 2025). Building on the key points of Draghi's report, it outlines the principal barriers to EU growth: structural talent shortages and slow adaptation (Draghi, 2025). The Union of Skills document presents a response to the turbulent, challenging, and unpredictable state

of the world through an emphasis on education, training, and lifelong learning of European citizens, calling for programmes that will support both organisations as well as individual citizens in their individual upskilling and reskilling journeys (European Commission, 2025).

The Future of Jobs Report 2025 also brings employers' perspective, highlighting an increasing need for development of skills that complement technological and analytical ones – notably “Resilience, flexibility and agility”, “Curiosity and lifelong learning” and “Motivation and self-awareness” (World Economic Forum, 2025). We can conclude that organisations are evaluating the increasing need to reskill and upskill employees, stating that they expect 59% of employees will need some form of reskilling. Organisations estimate that 29% of their workforce will be upskilled without the need to redesign role descriptions, and 19% to be transferred to newly created or modified roles (intra-organisational transition) (World Economic Forum, 2025). However, it leaves 11% of the workforce uncared for and vulnerable to declining employment prospects. This underscores that individual employability increasingly depends on a person's capacity to independently and proactively evaluate their skills, identify gaps, and engage in learning - precisely the strengths and capacities captured by the career adaptability construct.

Individual self-regulatory resources that enable career planning and adjustment, including upskilling, are captured by the concept of career adaptability (M. Savickas, 2021). A deeper understanding of the dynamics of career adaptability is critical for enterprises, enabling them to create better conditions for people to fully employ individual adaptability resources and engage in proactive reskilling and upskilling. It is equally important for policymakers to understand these dynamics so they can design structural support that empowers individuals to deploy their capacity and, consequently, engage in upskilling to achieve the macro goals of sustainable economic growth and competitiveness. Achieving macro-level goals through the reskilling and upskilling of the workforce is also supported by a micro-foundations approach that connects aggregate phenomena with micro-level dynamics (Santangelo et al., 2025). Economic growth is an aggregate outcome of organisations' performance. However, organisations do not act per se, but through their managerial and employee-level participants. Micro-level interventions can be seen as a starting point that, through the transmission mechanism of organisational processes, leads to higher organisational productivity and innovation. Micro-foundations provide a conceptual framework for connecting workforce upskilling to macroeconomic performance, as well as a rationale for policymakers' initiatives in the education and training of EU citizens.

This study aims to shed light on the relationship between career adaptability and three constructs: psychological safety, grit, and growth mindset.

Career adaptability was first coined by Super and Knasel (1981) as the capacity to effectively respond to dynamic job demands and work settings. Savickas and Porfeli (2012) define it as “a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions, traumas in their occupational roles that, to some degree, large or small, alter their social integration” (p. 662).

Tunan (2005, p. 229) defines psychological safety as “how emotionally safe an individual feels with another, whether he or she feels the other is likely to embarrass him or her, and how much he or she feels trusted and respected by the other.”

Grit is defined as “perseverance and passion for long-term goals” (Duckworth et al., 2007, p. 1087) and can serve as a self-regulation mechanism, buffering against drawbacks when working on long-term goals.

Growth mindset is defined as “the belief that human capacities are not fixed but can be developed over time” (Dweck & Yeager, 2019, p. 1) and can serve as a psychological resource for learning from mistakes and successes, as well as for maintaining a future and goal-oriented mindset (rather than focusing on gaps and being insufficiency-oriented).

The research addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent is the individual level of psychological safety associated with career adaptability?

RQ2: To what extent is grit associated with career adaptability?

RQ3: To what extent is a growth mindset associated with career adaptability?

These research questions are exploratory. Although we can see some recent publications on career adaptability and its links to the above-described constructs (Gong et al., 2020; Gong et al., 2023; Çarkıt, 2024; Zhai et al., 2023; Fan et al., 2025; Kim, 2024; Li et al., 2021; Marcionetti et al., 2025), these specific associations are understudied in general as well as in a Czech context. Furthermore, these studies do not address the researched constructs as in the resource-like role in relation to career adaptability. The Czech labour market is characterised by low talent availability, and local organisations are rather pessimistic about the outlook for improvement (only 6% in Czechia vs 29% globally). To address the pessimistic outlook, 70% of Czech employers expect to invest in reskilling and upskilling of the current workforce due to a lack of talent on the market (World Economic Forum, 2025). Focus on reskilling and upskilling of Czech organisations, however, confronts the reality of very low employees' inclination to reskill and upskill in the European comparison. The AES (Adult Education Survey) provides insight into the EU-27 adult population (ages 25-64) participation in education and training, revealing significant differences across countries. In the EU-27 comparison, the Czech Republic ranks 16th with 45,7% of the adult population (ages 25-64), slightly below the EU-27 average. Considering the top 3 countries (Sweden – 73,9%, the Netherlands 65,2% and Hungary 62,4%), the Czech Republic lags behind (Eurostat, 2022). Furthermore, adult Czechs exhibit a lower inclination to intensify upskilling than adults in the EU-27. Among Czech survey participants who participated in education and training in the past 12 months, only 5,6% expressed an interest in more intensive education and training, which positions the Czech Republic 25th in the EU-27. Also, 51,5% of Czech respondents who did not undertake any educational activity in the past 12 months expressed a lack of interest in any form of education and training, which positions the Czech Republic 21st in the EU-27 (Český statistický úřad, 2022). These findings stand in stark contrast to the future imperative for active, self-motivated, intensive upskilling.

The following text presents the results of the first wave (pilot) of planned longitudinal research whose broader ambition is to generate empirically grounded, Czech-labour-market-relevant insights. Respondents of the first wave were leaders participating in the executive training programme, leading teams across various industries in the Czech Republic.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Literature Review pursues two objectives: rather than providing an exhaustive treatment of each construct, as explored in the extensive, multifaceted body of peer-reviewed studies, it (1) anchors the authors' perspective of career adaptability within established research traditions, and (2) aims to describe how constructs of psychological safety, grit, and growth mindset can be related to career adaptability.

Career adaptability in academic discourse is either narrowly focused on *career adaptability* as defined by Savickas (M. Savickas, 2019) or, in a broader interpretation, encompasses related areas of career development, including readiness, responses, and outcomes. The authors decided to approach the term *career adaptability* in the original Savickas's perspective and cite below the definition from the paper that also presented the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS).

2.1. Career adaptability in the context of the Career Construction Theory

Currently, the most prevalent framework for studying individual career development is Savickas's Career Construction Theory (CCT) (M. Savickas, 2019), which emphasises that careers are constructed in interaction with the environment; careers are continually constructed and adjusted, not chosen once and forever; and that individuals need to be active players in the process of career construction, rather than passive "matchers to the existing jobs". Therefore, he argues that the core of career construction is an adaptation process which starts with:

- (1) adaptive readiness ("people are more or less prepared to change" (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p. 661)), followed by
- (2) adaptability resources ("people ... differ in their resources to manage change" (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p. 661)), then continues with

(3) adapting responses (“people ... demonstrate more or less change when change is needed” (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, pp. 661-662)), which leads to

(4) adaptation results (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

In other words: (1) adaptive readiness is the “personality trait of flexibility of willingness to change” (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p. 662); (2) adaptability resources are the “self-regulation strengths or capacities that a person may draw upon to solve the unfamiliar, complex, and ill-defined problems presented by developmental vocational tasks, occupational transitions, and work traumas” (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p. 662); (3) adapting responses are the actual behaviours of individuals, e.g. proactive skills development or proactive networking behaviours (Johnston, 2018); (4) results are e.g. organisational loyalty or turnover (Johnston, 2018).

The cascade postulates that (1) adaptive readiness, (2) adaptability resources, (3) adapting responses, and (4) adaptation results differ (Hirschi et al., 2015).

This study focuses on career adaptability resources (Savickas's framework) as one of the four distinct elements within the career adaptation process. The present study focuses specifically on career adaptability resources within the framework.

2.2. Career adaptability resources measure – Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)

Savickas identified four career adaptability resources: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (M. L. Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Those four resources are measured by the Career Adapt-abilities Scale (CAAS 2.0), which was used by the authors in the Czech translation (Hlaďo et al., 2020).

Savickas is a co-author of CAAS (Career Adapt-Abilities Scale), a 24-item scale frequently used to assess career adaptability (M. L. Savickas & Porfeli, 2012); it consists of four sub-scales: Concern, Control, Curiosity, and Confidence:

Concern about the future helps individuals look ahead and prepare for what might come next. Control enables individuals to become responsible for shaping themselves and their environments to meet what comes next by using self-discipline, effort, and persistence. Possible selves and alternative scenarios that they might shape are explored when curiosity prompts a person to think about self in various situations and roles. These exploration experiences and information-seeking activities produce aspirations and build confidence that the person can actualize choices to implement their life design. (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p. 664)

Sample questions for each stage are as follows: (1) Concern: „Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make“, (2) Control: „Taking responsibility for my actions“, (3) „Becoming curious about new opportunities“, (4) „Overcoming obstacles“ (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p. 672).

The authors were investigating the relationships among career adaptability (adaptability resources), psychological safety, grit, and growth mindset. The following sub-chapters will lay the theoretical findings related to the observed elements.

2.3. Psychological safety

Before popularising Edmondson's (1999) foundational framework of team perception of psychological safety (PS) by Duhigg (2016), psychological safety was primarily researched through the individual's perception (Kahn, 1990). For the purpose of this study, we will use the definition of individual-level of PS by Tunan (2005, p.229) as: “how emotionally safe an individual feels with another, whether he or she feels the other is likely to embarrass him or her, and how much he or she feels trusted and respected by the other.” This definition is in line with the original Kahn (1990) paper, where he acknowledges that PS is the person's perception related to how safe or unsafe it is to express the true self. Following Kahn's interpretation of the individual level of PS, it can be operationalised through personal perception. It does not mean the individual level of psychological safety is an individual trait or property, but it is the individual's perception of team climate (Baer & Frese, 2003; Kahn, 1990; Liang et al., 2012; May et al., 2004; Tynan, 2005). In their review, Edmondson and Bransby (2023)

identified 40 studies published in peer-reviewed journals that observed psychological safety on the individual level, making individual-level perception legitimate.

The most prominent individual-level psychological safety study focused on learning and performance observed hospitality workers' interplay of self-efficacy, individual psychological safety and mistake reframing (Wang et al., 2020). The observed pattern reveals how individual psychological safety functions as a protective mechanism in reframing mistakes into learning opportunities and, thereby, unlocking performance gains. Individual psychological safety was found to moderate the relationship between task interdependence and peer feedback seeking (De Stobbeleir et al., 2020), one of the important elements of learning (Anseel et al., 2015). The moderating effect shows that learning potential from being surrounded by team members that can improve individual skills and outcomes through providing feedback can be fully explored only if the feedback seeker feels psychologically safe. The mediating role of individual psychological safety in the interplay between knowledge hiding and thriving in a workplace was observed by (Jiang et al., 2019). Knowledge hiding negatively impacts a person's psychological safety, which, in turn, reduces their thriving. Knowledge hiding does not directly translate into detrimental effects on thriving; it operates through individual psychological safety. Lin et al. (2020) observed individual psychological safety in the context of helping behaviour, where psychological safety led to increased job involvement. The individual-level psychological safety was established as a distinct level of analysis that captures subjective evaluation. However, subjective evaluation is possible only when the person is a team member. Therefore, we argue that the individual level of psychological safety should not replace the team-level construct but complement it, offering a more granular perception on barriers and enablers of career adaptability.

While (Gong et al., 2020, 2023) began examining the relationship between career adaptability and psychological safety, the emerging work conceptualises psychological safety as an outcome of career adaptability. However, the organisational psychology literature gives us reasons to explore the role of psychological safety as a resource-like element in career adaptability, considering its effects on learning, sharing information, feedback seeking and job involvement. This theoretical contradiction suggests an important gap that should be explored. The present study addresses this gap.

The present study investigates whether psychological safety (conceived at the individual level) can be conceptualised as a resource-like element in the career adaptation process (given the enabling role of psychological safety in learning and exploring new opportunities, via lowering impression-management barriers and enabling frequent peer feedback).

2.4. Grit

Grit is defined as "perseverance and passion for long-term goals" (Duckworth et al., 2007, p. 1087). It can be viewed as a personal trait that supports individuals in achieving goals through two factors: passion and perseverance, and therefore is not limited to only hard work. Grit inherently involves self-initiated interest and persistence (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). It empowers individuals to maintain focus on achieving long-term goals despite adversities, uncertainties, and a changing environment.

Observing learning outcomes was at the centre of grit research from the very beginning. The original (founding) paper by Duckworth et al. (2007) was based on three distinct respondent cohorts (Spelling Bee participants-pupils, Ivy League Students and West Point Academy cadets). Results across all groups indicate that grit was positively associated with achieving learning and training-oriented goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). Since then, the concept of grit has been established in the work context (Southwick et al., 2019), related to engagement and performance. Grit has also been studied in connection with career adaptability. Career adaptability mediates the relationship between grit and life satisfaction (Çarkıt, 2024) when observed in a group of university students. Also, grit was related to greater career adaptability (Li et al., 2021) when career adaptability mediated the relationship between grit and career construction (Zhai et al., 2023).

Referring to the career resources definition (self-regulation strengths or capacities) and nature of grit (self-regulation process), we investigate whether grit can be viewed as a resource-like element in career adaptability.

2.5. Growth mindset

Growth mindset is defined as: “the belief that human capacities are not fixed but can be developed over time” (Dweck & Yeager, 2019, p. 1). We will draw particularly on the following features of growth mindset, i.e. (1) malleability of abilities – conviction that intellectual and physical skills can be developed, (2) resistance to setbacks – failures and mistakes are perceived as informative inputs to increase effort or change approach, rather than permanent personal insufficiency indicator.

Similar to grit, growth mindset research was originally focused on children and adolescent learning (C. S. Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Later, the growth mindset was researched in different contexts and was found to be associated with workplace learning, collaboration, innovation, commitment, engagement, as well as the ability to adapt to changes (C. S. Dweck, 2017).

Studies focusing on the relationship between career adaptability and a growth mindset offer helpful insights. Schmitt & Scheibe (2023) report that employees' growth mindset is an indicator predicting career adaptability and adaptive responses (learning). Kim (2024) examined the role of career adaptability and growth mindset in career preparation behaviour among nursing students. Career adaptability was observed as a mediator in the relationship between growth mindset and career preparation behaviour.

A growth mindset can be seen as a psychological resource that enables coping with challenges during the learning process. We investigate whether a growth mindset can be viewed as a resource-like element that facilitates adaptation during career transitions.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was adopted for this pilot study. Participants completed a set of validated questionnaires measuring career adaptability, psychological safety, grit and growth mindset.

3.2. Participants and Sampling

Participants were executives with leadership experience from various industries working in the Czech Republic. They were recruited from an in-person executive development programme and completed the questionnaire during a group learning session in Q3 2025.

3.3. Data Collection

Questionnaires were distributed in paper form, and responses were collected anonymously. Participation was voluntary. No grading was assigned to the responses. 56 questionnaires were distributed in paper form and 55 questionnaires were returned.

3.4. Measures and Instruments

3.4.1. Career Adaptability

Career Adaptability was measured using the CAAS (Career Adapt-Abilities Scale), a 24-item scale frequently used to assess career adaptability. It consists of four sub-scales: Concern, Control, Curiosity and Confidence (M. L. Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) in a validated Czech translation (Hladó et al., 2020). The Czech validated translation confirmed the factor structure of the original measure. A 5-point Likert scale was used as in the original. The 4 sub-scales (concern, control, curiosity, confidence) were assessed. Sample question: (1) concern: “Preparing for the future”, (2) control: “Taking responsibility for my actions”, (3) curiosity: “Looking for opportunities to grow as a person”, (4) confidence: “Solving problems” (Hladó et al., 2020). The scores for four sub-scales, as well as the total scale, were calculated as the arithmetic average of the respective questions (Hladó et al., 2020).

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The items of the scale (24 items, measured on Likert 1–5 scale) ranged from 3.47 (CA17) to 4.31 (CA09). The four subscales results: Concern ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.69$), Control ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.54$), Curiosity ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.63$), and Confidence ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.67$). The total scale ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.47$) results range from 2.75 to 4.83. The descriptive statistics of the items and the total score are presented in Table 1

TABLE 1 - DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS – CAREER ADAPTABILITY – CZECH TRANSLATION

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CA01	55	2	5	4,15	,93
CA02	55	2	5	4,02	,93
CA03	55	2	5	3,80	,95
CA04	55	2	5	3,78	,90
CA05	55	1	5	3,67	1,02
CA06	55	2	5	3,93	,88
CA07	55	1	5	3,67	1,11
CA08	55	2	5	4,00	,75
CA09	55	2	5	4,31	,81
CA10	55	2	5	4,13	,79
CA11	55	2	5	4,24	,79
CA12	55	2	5	3,69	,84
CA13	55	2	5	3,49	,98
CA14	54	2	5	3,81	,95
CA15	54	1	5	3,67	,93
CA16	55	2	5	3,69	,92
CA17	55	1	5	3,47	1,07
CA18	55	2	5	4,07	,86
CA19	55	2	5	3,87	,94
CA20	55	2	5	4,09	,89
CA21	55	2	5	3,93	,79
CA22	55	2	5	4,05	,80
CA23	55	2	5	3,87	,94
CA24	55	2	5	3,82	,92
CA_CONCERN	55	2,17	5,00	3,89	,69
CA_CONTROL	55	2,67	5,00	4,01	,54
CA_CURIOSITY	55	2,17	4,67	3,71	,63
CA_CONFIDENCE	55	2,50	5,00	3,94	,67
CA_TOT	55	2,75	4,83	3,88	,47
Valid N (listwise)	54				

Source: Authors' own research, formatting SPSS (IBM Corp., 2024)

The Cronbach's Alpha in the observed sample is .89. This is a high value, indicating good internal consistency among the items. Also, the individual sub-scales' reliability showed good internal consistency (concern: .83; control: .70; curiosity: .73; confidence: .85). None of the 24 items, if deleted, would increase Cronbach's Alpha.

Item-total correlations ranged from .14 to .72, with only two items (CA07, CA13) showing poor correlations. However, considering the Cronbach's Alpha if deleted scores (none of the items' deletion would lead to improvement), all items were kept for further analysis. Examination of the distribution properties showed acceptable skewness (0.007) and kurtosis (-0.236).

3.4.2. Psychological Safety

Psychological safety was measured using the Psychological Safety Scale developed by Amy C Edmondson (1999), consisting of 7 questions (out of which 3 reverse-coded items). This questionnaire is one of the most widely used instruments for assessing Psychological safety across different languages and cultural settings. The version used in this study was translated into Czech, back-translated by the author, and reviewed in consultation with a Certified Practitioner of the Psychological Safety Scan by The Fearless Organisation. The original 7-point Likert scale was used as in the original study (A. Edmondson, 1999). Reverse-coded items were adjusted during data processing. The average score per participant was calculated as the arithmetic mean (average) (A. Edmondson, 1999). The translation reflected the transposition to the individual level.

The descriptive statistics of the items and the total score are presented in Table 2. The Cronbach's Alpha is .80, indicating good internal consistency among the items. Cronbach's Alpha-if-item-deleted results show that only item PS2 deletion would contribute to an increase in the Cronbach's Alpha of the scale (to .836). The PS2 item also showed a low Item-total correlation (.143) in the analysis. The remaining items' results are (.341 - .732), being in the acceptable ranges. The two lowest-scoring items, PS2 (.143) and PS6 (.341), will be subjected to

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revisions of wording. The method of cognitive debriefing will be used to address the issue. Good distribution properties were demonstrated (skewness: 0.473, kurtosis: -0.383), showing the responses are approximately normally distributed. Prior to factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity were examined. The KMO value was .677. The Bartlett's test of sphericity results were $\chi^2 = 161.252$, $p < .001$. This allowed us to proceed with factor analysis. Original Edmondson's (1999) paper does not explicitly state the factor structure and number of factors (Liu et al., 2024; Plouffe et al., 2023). Therefore, authors referred to the latest cross-culturally validated studies for guidance. Both Brazilian and Norwegian studies considered the scale as a single factor, and their findings confirmed a single-factor structure of the scale (Ramalho & Porto, 2021; Rødsgjød et al., 2024) which was in line with the general usance when using the Psychological safety Scale in English-language studies.

TABLE 2 - DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS – PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY SCAN – CZECH TRANSLATION

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PS01	55	1	7	3,16	1,79
PS02	55	1	7	3,45	1,53
PS03	55	1	7	2,96	1,89
PS04	55	1	7	3,11	1,64
PS05	55	1	5	2,44	1,07
PS06	55	1	6	3,02	1,69
PS07	55	1	6	2,78	1,26
PS_TOT	55	1,14	5,71	2,99	1,06
Valid N (listwise)	55				

Source: Authors' own research, formatting SPSS (IBM Corp., 2024)

Exploratory factor analysis supported a single-factor solution: factor loadings ranged from .181 to .851, detailed results (PS1: .851, PS2: .181, PS3: .751, PS4: .781, PS5: .697, PS6: .441, PS7: .619), indicating a satisfactory item-factor relationship: PS1, PS3, PS4, PS5, PS7 and a low to borderline relationship for PS2 and PS6. Those results are in line with previous findings on Item-total correlations. The extracted factor explained 42.8% of the total variance (extracted eigenvalue = 2.995). As previously stated, addressing the issues in items PS2 and PS6 is going to be a priority before the next waves of research. For the analysis of this pilot study, all items were kept to maintain integrity and comparability with previous research.

3.4.3. Grit

Grit scale (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009) was used in the Czech validated translation (Kropáčová et al., 2018) using 8 questions (4 reverse-coded items were adjusted). The two-factor structure of the original scale was confirmed in a Czech-language validation study performed by Kropáčová et al. (2018). The average score per participant was calculated as the arithmetic mean (average) (Kropáčová et al., 2018).

The descriptive statistics of the items and the total score are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3 - DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS – GRIT SCALE – CZECH TRANSLATION

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
GR01	55	1	5	3,13	1,02
GR02	55	1	5	3,33	1,28
GR03	55	1	5	3,11	1,24
GR04	55	2	5	3,62	1,05
GR05	55	1	5	3,44	1,00
GR06	55	1	5	3,69	1,07
GR07	55	1	5	3,75	1,09
GR08	55	2	5	4,15	,87
GR_CONSIST	55	2	5	3,34	,75
GR_EFFORT	55	2	5	3,71	,73
GR_TOTAL	55	2	5	3,53	,64
Valid N (listwise)	55				

Source: Authors' own research, formatting SPSS (IBM Corp., 2024)

The Cronbach's Alpha in the observed sample is .73, indicating acceptable internal consistency among the items. One item (GR02), if deleted, would increase Cronbach's Alpha to .76. Item GR2 also showed insufficient correlation (Total-Item) of .173, while other items scored within an acceptable range (.34-.593). The results of skewness (0.207) and kurtosis (-0.653) indicate approximately normal distribution.

3.4.4. Growth Mindset

The Growth Mindset scale (C. S. Dweck, 2000) was downloaded from Stanford University SPARQtools (C. Dweck, b.r.), and was translated by the authors following Beaton et al. (2000) guidelines. The scale consists of three items, all reverse-coded. The average score per participant was calculated as the arithmetic mean (average) (Rammstedt et al., 2024).

The descriptive statistics of the items and the total score are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4 - DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS – GROWTH MINDSET – CZECH TRANSLATION

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
GM01	55	1	6	3,16	1,36
GM02	55	1	6	3,38	1,28
GM03	55	1	6	3,51	1,33
GM_TOT	55	1,00	6,00	3,35	1,18
Valid N (listwise)	55				

Source: Authors' own research, formatting SPSS (IBM Corp., 2024)

The Cronbach's Alpha is .87, indicating very good internal consistency among the items. Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted was .885 (suggested deletion of item GM1). However, the item was kept for future analysis as the Item-total correlations for all items scored in the good to excellent range (.688 to .817). Both skewness (0.072) and kurtosis (-0.155) showed approximately normal distribution. Prior to factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) showed .71, together with Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 86.205$, $p < .001$), indicated that the data were suitable for factor analysis. The original Growth Mindset Scale is designed as a single-factor scale consisting of three items: factor loadings of the researched sample ranged from .73 to .931 (GM01: .73, GM2: .853, GM03: .931). The results confirm a single-factor structure (eigenvalue = 2.40), the first factor explaining 80.0% of the total variance.

3.5. Data Analysis

All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS (IBM Corp., 2024) with a predefined significance level of .05 for two-tailed tests.

Although the scales' scores were calculated as arithmetic averages for each participant and construct, Spearman's correlations were applied given the ordinal origin of the data (Řezanková, 2011).

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Participants were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. The study followed ethical research guidelines to protect participants' privacy and ensure the integrity of the data collection process. Approval code of the Ethical Committee of Prague University of Economics and Business is 2025/10.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study assesses the relationships among psychological safety, grit, growth mindset, and career adaptability. Spearman's rank-order correlations were computed using SPSS. Sample size ranged from N=54 to 55. The complete correlation matrix is presented in Table 5 (Correlations).

The results indicate no significant correlation between psychological safety and career adaptability within the sample ($\rho = -0.15$, $p = .281$), nor between growth mindset and career adaptability ($\rho = -.08$, $p = .573$).

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A moderately significant correlation was found between grit and career ($\rho = .39, p = .004$). Three out of four sub-dimensions of career adaptability were correlated with grit (concern: $\rho = .34, p = .011$, control: $\rho = .33, p = .015$, confidence: $\rho = .47, p < .001$).

The constructs of psychological safety, grit and growth mindset did not confirm intercorrelations. Correlation: psychological safety and grit ($\rho = -.13, p = .343$), psychological safety and growth mindset ($\rho = .14, p = .323$), grit and growth mindset ($\rho = -.18, p = .196$).

TABLE 5 - CORRELATIONS

Correlations			PS total	Grit_TOTAL	GM_TOTAL	K_concern	K_Control	K_Curiosity	K_Confidence	K_TOTAL
Spearman's rho	PS total	Correlation Coefficient	--							
		Sig. (2-tailed)								
		N	55							
	Grit_TOTAL	Correlation Coefficient	-.130	--						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.343							
		N	55	55						
	GM_TOTAL	Correlation Coefficient	.136	-.177	--					
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.323	.196						
		N	55	55	55					
	K_concern	Correlation Coefficient	-.113	.341*	-.060	--				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.411	.011	.665					
		N	55	55	55	55				
	K_Control	Correlation Coefficient	-.142	.328*	-.111	.343*	--			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.301	.015	.421	.010				
		N	55	55	55	55	55			
	K_Curiosity	Correlation Coefficient	-.031	.024	-.002	.553**	.253	--		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.823	.862	.986	<.001	.065			
		N	54	54	54	54	54	54		
	K_Confidence	Correlation Coefficient	-.074	.467**	-.090	.382**	.466**	.417**	--	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.589	<.001	.512	.004	<.001	.002		
		N	55	55	55	55	55	54	55	
	K_TOTAL	Correlation Coefficient	-.149	.386**	-.078	.769**	.659**	.718**	.781**	--
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.281	.004	.573	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
		N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' own research, formatting SPSS (IBM Corp., 2024)

Research question 1 examined whether the individual level of psychological safety is associated with career adaptability. The present findings do not permit the conclusion that there is an association between the individual level of psychological safety and career adaptability. Team psychological safety's effect on learning in a team (A. Edmondson, 1999) does not allow for a straightforward extension to the individual level. From the research sample, we cannot assume that a higher level of individual psychological safety is associated with a higher level of career adaptability. Further investigation needs to assess a larger sample. Also, a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between the contextual construct (psychological safety) and individual self-regulation mechanism (career adaptability) is needed. Future research on a larger sample is needed. Also, further examination of whether psychological safety functions as a mediator or moderator in the relationship between grit and career adaptability (such an analysis requires prior specification and theoretical grounding of causal order between grit and career adaptability).

Research question 2 examined whether grit is associated with career adaptability. A moderate positive correlation suggests that the self-regulation construct of grit (consistency of interest and sustained effort) maps to career adaptability (self-regulation strengths or capacities that individuals can employ to address career-related challenges). In particular, grit is associated with the sub-scales of concern (future orientation and preparedness), control (personal agency and responsibility), and confidence (believing in one's own competence). The findings indicate that individuals could benefit from perseverance during the dynamic process of lifelong career adaptation. Future research is needed on how leaders' grit can be translated into team members' grit behaviours through role modelling and structural support.

Research question 3 examined whether the growth mindset is associated with career adaptability. Although the growth mindset has been frequently linked to enhancing learning outcomes (C. S. Dweck, 2000), the present findings did not show a relationship between growth mindset and career adaptability. In the examined

sample, the belief about the malleability of abilities alone can not be automatically linked to higher levels of adaptability resources. Future research on a larger sample is needed to confirm the preliminary findings, and also a more nuanced mechanism through which the mindset can moderate or mediate the career adaptability process (again, assuming the causal relationship between growth mindset and career adaptability will be established).

Overall, the research summarised the results of the first (pilot) phase, and future confirmation on a larger sample is necessary. However, it offered an interesting indication of the dynamics that can enhance the career adaptation process, particularly career adaptability resources. The construct of grit, which is similar to career adaptation (both self-regulation constructs), was positively moderately associated. While the contextual construct (psychological safety) and belief construct (growth mindset) did not show a direct association, a more nuanced dynamic investigation is needed.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In the context of an unstable and unpredictable organisational environment characterised by constant skill obsolescence, this study presents the findings of the first (pilot) wave of a longitudinal research examining the three constructs of organisational psychology (psychological safety, grit and growth mindset) that could serve as additional resources for coping with demands of the lifelong career adaptation process. The current findings suggest that career adaptability, as defined by Savickas, is positively associated with grit. The self-regulation construct of grit appears to function as a resource within the career adaptation process, while the contextual (psychological safety) and belief (growth mindset) constructs did not demonstrate a comparable direct association.

The findings contribute to the ongoing discussion on career adaptation and workforce upskilling and reskilling. By linking grit (a trainable disposition) to career adaptability, the preliminary results offer practical implications for practitioners and policy-makers. The results of the study highlight the potential importance of training in perseverance as a universal, individual-level asset that may help people navigate the increasingly challenging process of updating skillsets in the workplace (World Economic Forum, 2025). Developing grit is not linked to developing any particular skill, but it can serve as a meta-skill empowering people to cope with the need for continuous learning and reskilling.

The present findings are necessarily preliminary, given the pilot sample size (N=55) and cross-sectional design of the pilot study. Confirmation of the findings in a larger sample is, of course, the primary direction for future research. Also, future studies should examine the structure of the relationships, exploring the roles of psychological safety and growth mindset as potential mediators or moderators, rather than predictors. Additionally, further investigation into how executives' (leaders') grit may influence career adaptation in their teams and organisations through role modelling and social mechanisms is needed.

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