




# Effectiveness of Career Construction Theory (CCT) in Reducing College Students Career Anxiety: Systematic Literature Review

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	ABSTRACT
<p><b>ARTICLE INFO:</b> Received March 10, 2024</p> <p>Revised March 09, 2024</p> <p>Accepted April 19, 2024</p> <p><b>KEYWORDS:</b> Career Adaptability, Career Anxiety, Career Construction Theory (CCT), College Students</p>	<p>Entering the transition period from college to the world of work presents many challenges and uncertainties, causing intense anxiety for students. This condition causes students who are at the tertiary stage of development to experience a decline in mental health and experience a series of career anxieties. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of career construction theory (CCT) intervention in reducing career anxiety in students in higher education. This research uses a systematic review of the Eric Journal and Science Direct databases. The search used Career Construction Theory (CCT), Career Adaptability, Career Anxiety, and College Students. From the search results, 320 articles were found and filtered using the PRISMA method until 6 articles matched the discussion and met the inclusion criteria. The research results show that career construction theory (CCT) intervention significantly reduces career anxiety in students. Therefore, career construction theory (CCT) intervention is needed to assist career development in higher education and help deal with career anxiety problems in students. Thus, career construction theory (CCT) intervention is valuable in assisting students to prepare themselves to achieve career success as expected.</p>

## INTRODUCTION

Transitioning from college to the workforce can be incredibly challenging in a volatile labor market, and uncertainty about job prospects can cause intense anxiety for college students (Wang & Li, 2024). Declining mental health is one of the impacts of a very unstable labor market. This condition causes students who are at the tertiary stage of development to be vulnerable to anxiety and experience a series of career anxieties (Rith-Najarian et al., 2019). The increasing pressure to find work makes students anxious about becoming unemployed after graduating (Belle et al., 2021). For most students, making a career choice will likely trigger anxiety because they want to find a fulfilling and meaningful career. In this case, career-related anxiety can impact a student's overall sense of well-being (McKenzie & Bennett, 2022).

College students entering a transition period often show anxious thoughts and attitudes when considering their future employment possibilities or looking for work (Lapada, 2023). Boo et al. (2021) explained that career-related anxiety includes four categories: process anxiety (e.g., feelings of stress and anxiety before starting the decision-making process), uncertainty anxiety (e.g., uncertainty about the future), choice anxiety (e.g., fear of missing out on other potentially suitable options), and outcome anxiety (e.g., fear of not meeting one's expectations and preferences in the chosen job). The career anxiety faced is an individual's concern about what his career will be like in the future.

Academics suggest that targeted interventions, including on-campus programs, are important to reduce the grip of anxiety faced by college students (Autin et al., 2020). The results of the research conducted Wang & Li (2024) explain that it is very important to understand the causes of student work anxiety and propose intervention strategies. This aligns with career construction theory (CCT), which conceptualizes career adaptation resources as interventions in preparing oneself to face

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transition periods and exploiting opportunities appropriately to achieve career success as expected (Ocampo et al., 2020). The findings of this research indicate that career construction theory is an effective intervention to help overcome the problems faced by students who experience career anxiety (Sopah et al., 2023). Furthermore, career construction theory (CCT) can overcome the problem of career anxiety by developing career adaptation resources (Syakir et al., 2016).

Research conducted Boo et al. (2021) shows that career adaptation results in a reduction in students' career anxiety because adaptation resources help them overcome challenges. College students need adaptability resources to overcome negative career-related emotions contributing to indecision and anxiety (Wan et al., 2023). Career adaptability is a psychosocial construct that indicates an individual's resources for coping with current and anticipated career-related assignments, transitions, and trauma (Huckins et al., 2020). Career adaptability in career construction theory (CCT) is very important because it reflects an individual's flexibility and ability to respond to changes in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world of work (Lorig & Holman, 2003).

## Literature Review

Career construction theory (CCT) believes that the essence of individual career development is a dynamic construction process in pursuing the goal of adaptation between the subjective self and the external objective world, and different people construct different stories (Bassi et al., 2007). Career construction theory (CCT) provides a dynamic perspective for giving personal meaning to memories, current experiences, and plans, building a career through a sense of meaning and clarifying future direction (Wang & Li, 2024).

Career construction theory (CCT) includes vocational personality, career adaptability, and life themes. Vocational personality refers to an individual's career-related abilities, needs, values, and interests. Career adaptability is "a psychosocial construct that indicates an individual's resources for coping with current and future vocational development tasks, transitions, and traumas. Life themes are dynamic systems that primarily explain why individuals make career choices and the significance of those choices and express the individual's uniqueness in a particular context, which provides a way of viewing the world (Wang & Li, 2024).

Career construction theory (CCT) is a theoretical and conceptual framework because career construction can help people articulate their life stories (Maree, 2022). These micro-stories can then be unpacked (deconstructed), clarified, revised, and intertwined (reconstructed) by counselors and their clients (co-constructed) to increase the client's sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in life so that CCT can address the career anxiety issues students face. Obi (2015) explains that career construction counseling intervention effectively addresses career anxiety in students. Research findings show that students who take part in career construction counseling experience a reduction in doubt, anxiety, uncertainty, and insecurity after being given the intervention.

The career construction theory (CCT) approach is still rarely used to overcome career problems in higher education. So, the level of career anxiety faced by students is still very high. Students in higher education face a lot of uncertainty regarding career opportunities, this causes students to increasingly worry about current and future career prospects (Boo et al., 2021). This shows that problems related to career anxiety faced by students have a very important urgency that must be immediately addressed and considered. However, much of the research on CCT approaches focuses only on individual career decisions. There is still not much CCT research that focuses on the career anxiety faced by individuals. This research focuses more on CCT literature studies in overcoming career anxiety problems. So, in this research, the article that will be studied further is the application of CCT to career anxiety in students.

## **Objectives**

This study explores the application of Career Construction Theory (CCT) in addressing career anxiety experienced by college students during the transition from higher education to the workforce. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, the study seeks to identify common forms of career-related anxiety among students, examine the effectiveness of career adaptability resources within the CCT framework, and analyze how CCT-based interventions can reduce anxiety and improve career readiness. Through a structured and comprehensive literature review, this research intends to provide valuable insights and recommendations for developing more effective career guidance strategies in higher education.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to explore the application of Career Construction Theory (CCT) in addressing career anxiety among college students. The review followed a structured and comprehensive approach to collect, analyze, and synthesize relevant literature from established academic databases, ensuring the findings are evidence-based and grounded in current research trends (Creswell, 2014).

### **Eligibility Criteria**

Articles included in the review were selected based on specific inclusion parameters. Only original research articles published between 2015 and 2025 were considered. These articles had to be written in English, accessible in open-access format, and available in complete text. Furthermore, they were required to specifically discuss the implementation or effectiveness of Career Construction Theory (CCT), career adaptability, or interventions to reduce career anxiety among college students.

### **Information Source**

The literature was sourced from two reputable academic databases: ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) and ScienceDirect. The search strategy utilized a combination of keywords such as "Career Construction Theory (CCT)," "Career Adaptability," "Career Anxiety," and "College Students." Boolean operators like "AND" were used to refine and focus the search results for maximum relevance.

### **Data Search**

The method used in this research is a systematic review using databases from Eric Journal and Science Direct. The search used the keywords "Career Construction Theory (CCT)" and "Career Adaptability" and "Career Anxiety" and "College Students" with inclusion criteria, namely articles published in 2015-2025 in English, using only original research, having open access and full text and articles containing the effectiveness of career construction theory (CCT) interventions in reducing career anxiety in college students. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria in this study were articles discussing other complications. The screening process was carried out using the PRISMA method, as in Figure 1.

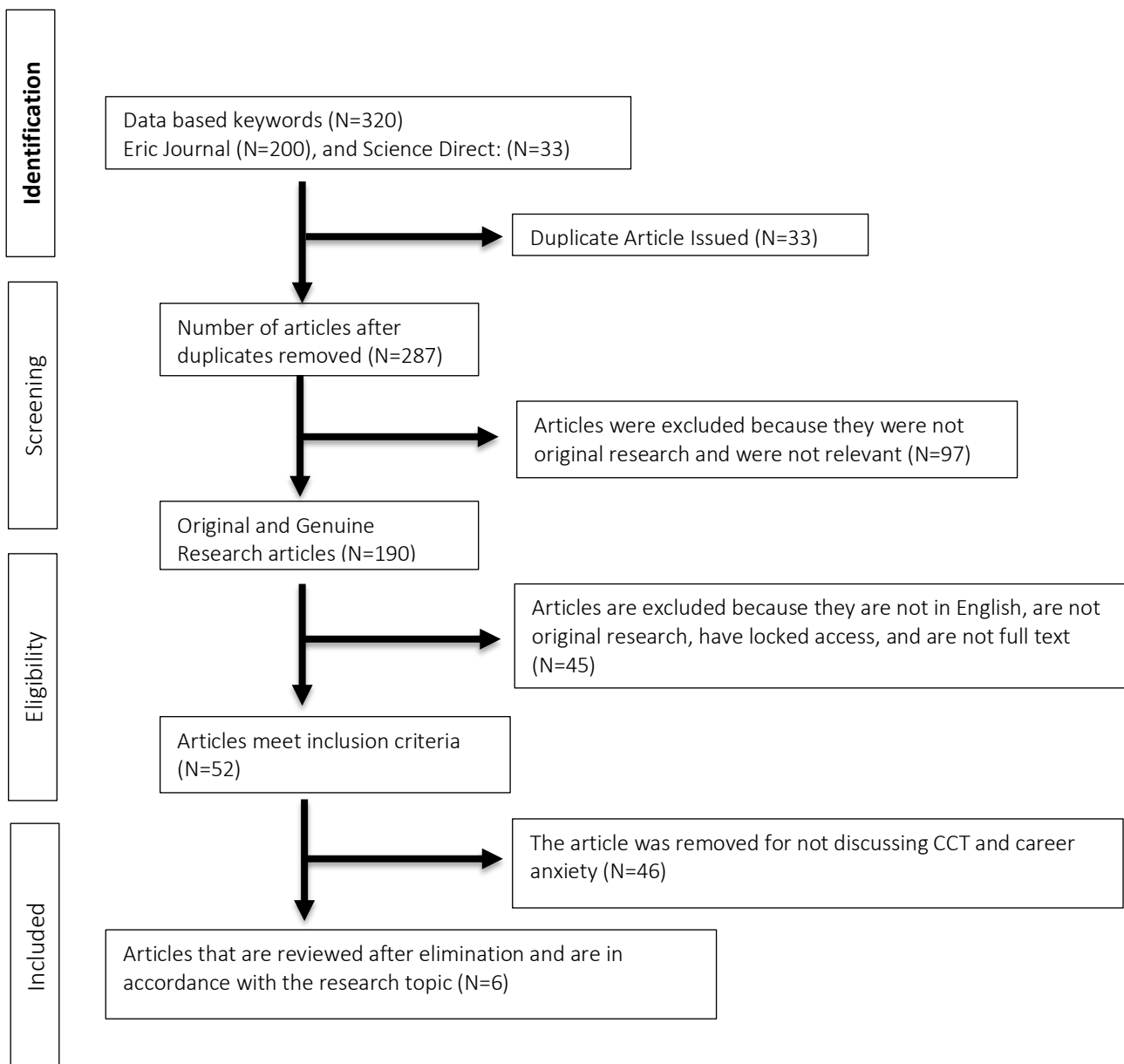


Figure 1. Diagram PRISMA, Systematic Review Step

### Data Extraction and Reporting of Findings

The number of articles found through the Eric Journal database was 200 articles, and 120 articles were found from Science Direct, bringing the total to 320 articles. After filtering by removing duplicate and irrelevant articles, 287 met the criteria. Then, after screening again, 190 articles were obtained, which were original research, and 52 met the inclusion criteria. Furthermore, the quality of the studies was assessed from the 52 articles, and 6 articles were found which could be categorized as good, and data extraction could be carried out. This data extraction was done by analysing the data based on the author's name, title, objective, type of research study, population, time and location, and research results (Table 1).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Based on the analysis of 6 articles that have been determined, it shows that the six articles analyse the influence of career construction theory intervention on reducing career anxiety in students in higher education through developing individual career adaptation resources. The

research results show a significant impact of interventions using career construction theory (CCT) on reducing career anxiety faced by higher-education students.

Table 1. Article Extraction Results

Article Title	Author/ Year	Research Objectives and Types of Research	Data Collection Methods and Population Size	Research Result
The relationship between basic psychological needs satisfaction, career adaptability and career construction in nursing students: A career construction theory perspective	(Sonmez et al., 2024)	This research aims to analyze the role and relationship of career construction theory (CCT) towards fulfilling basic psychological needs in nursing students.	The sample in this study was 536 nursing students in Türkiye.	The results of this research indicate that Career Construction Theory describes a road map from adaptive readiness to adaptation resources, adaptation responses, and adaptation outcomes. The findings of this study indicate that students receiving CCT career counseling can make effective career decisions in nursing by ensuring that students know and discover themselves this can help reduce career anxiety faced by students.
Career adaptability and career coping styles among Chinese medicine specialty students during the COVID-19: The mediating role of career decision-making self-efficacy	(Zhang et al., 2024)	This study examines the interconnection between career coping style, career adaptability, and career decision-making self-efficacy among Chinese medical specialty students and the mediating role of career decision-making self-efficacy.	The sample in this study was 1700 students from medical specialties in grades 1–5 from a university in Guangdong province.	The results of this study indicate that higher career adaptability is associated with more optimistic subjective feelings and self-appraisals, stronger vocational role transitions, and better handling of changing career tasks. This proves that career construction theory is effective in helping reduce career anxiety experienced by students through developing career adaptability abilities.
Career counseling for college students: Assessment of an online and group intervention	(Carvalho et al., 2023)	This study aimed to investigate the impact of a career counseling intervention, in groups and online, on the career adaptation resources and perceptions of professional development and employability of students in the final stages of the undergraduate program.	The sample in this study was 28 students who faced career uncertainty, which caused students to experience career anxiety.	The results of this study show that career construction intervention (CCT) positively impacts students' perceived work abilities in the transition phase to the job market, so it can be concluded that CCT is a career intervention that can help reduce career anxiety in students.
Future Time Perspective, Career Adaptability, Anxiety, and Career Decision-Making Difficulty: Exploring Mediations and Moderations	(Jia et al., 2020)	This study aimed to investigate the implications of incorporating FTP into adaptability-based career intervention practices in reducing Chinese students' career anxiety.	The sample in this study was 1,074 students recruited from 19 universities located in 13 districts in China who had career anxiety problems.	Career construction intervention (CCT) can increase adaptation readiness to reduce anxiety levels through resources to adapt (adaptability), reducing difficulties in making career decisions.

Career adaptability, future time perspective, and career anxiety among undergraduate students: A cross-national comparison	(Boo et al., 2021)	This research aims to determine the effect of CCT through career adaptability in reducing career anxiety students face.	The sample for this research was students at universities in China and America who experienced career anxiety.	The results of this study indicate that CCT-based career counseling can improve career adaptability, specifically, identifying the specific resources students need to overcome challenges can help overcome career anxiety.
Constructionist career counseling of undergraduate students: An experimental evaluation	(Obi, 2015)	This study aimed to test the effectiveness of a six-session constructivist career counseling intervention in reducing the doubts, anxiety, uncertainty, and insecurity about career choices faced by students.	The sample in this study was 50 students who had career anxiety problems.	Students who received the CCT career counseling intervention demonstrated significantly less doubt about their career choices, anxiety about future career instability, uncertainty about finding a job after graduation, and insecurity about future finances. This study's findings indicate that CCT effectively reduces students' career anxiety with the intervention's emphasis on increasing students' career adaptability in building their own world by designing and writing their own life stories, thereby finding their own path in the work environment.

## Discussion

The transition period from college to the world of work is a time that presents many challenges and gives rise to feelings such as fear and insecurity that cause career anxiety, especially when considering rapid changes in the world of work (Carvalho et al., 2023). The research results Carvalho et al. (2023) show that CCT-based career counseling interventions can be recommended for students to encourage proactive action to anticipate obstacles such as career anxiety and increase awareness of work possibilities and interest among students.

Career construction theory (CCT) intervention has been proven to significantly reduce career anxiety in students. Career construction theory (CCT) helps individuals develop career adaptation resources to overcome their career anxiety problems. Career adaptability (attention, control, curiosity, and self-confidence) is a psychosocial resource that individuals must use to overcome the difficulties they face in their careers. It is considered an adaptive resource in CCT (Sonmez et al., 2024). The results of the research Sonmez et al. (2024) show that career construction theory (CCT) intervention supports a significant positive effect of the three basic psychological needs on career adaptability and can reduce symptoms of depression/career anxiety in nursing students in college.

Career adaptability is a psychosocial resource from career construction theory (CCT) that is important for students, especially in unpredictable times that require high flexibility in facing challenges and changes that cause students to experience career anxiety problems. The research findings Boo et al. (2021) show that career construction theory (CCT) can help students overcome challenges and reduce concerns about personal abilities and the work environment through high career adaptability. These findings indicate that students with a high level of career adaptability have low career anxiety (Islam et al., 2020).

Difficult and changing work situations and uncertainty about the future cause career anxiety experienced by higher-education students. The results of the research Zhang et al. (2024) showed

that the career confidence of medical and nursing graduate students was negatively affected by difficult work situations. This research shows different results from previous research, which revealed that protracted career coaching proved insufficient to help reduce career anxiety effectively (Marianti et al., 2022). Increasing career adaptation through career construction theory (CCT) intervention has proven effective in reducing career anxiety faced by students and helping increase self-efficacy in making career decisions (Zhang et al., 2024).

Anxiety is a precursor to career indecision (Jia et al., 2020). As a negative emotion, anxiety has been found to hinder career decision-making, as high levels of anxiety can lead to the narrowing of cognitive channels and greater sensitivity to threats (Kushendar & Maba, 2022). Anxious people tend to avoid uncertainty, resulting in indecision. The results of the research conducted Jia et al. (2020) show that the intervention effect of career construction theory (CCT) through career adaptability is effective in helping overcome career decision-making difficulties and reducing career anxiety in students.

Students who participated in career construction counseling (CCT) intervention activities showed decreased doubts, anxiety, uncertainty, and insecurity about career choices (Obi, 2015). The results of the research conducted Obi (2015) show that students who experience career anxiety and indecision in choosing a career can benefit from constructivist career counseling (CCT) to reconstruct their career stories and embed meaningful career goals suitable for the 21st-century workplace into their actions. Several research findings above indicate that constructivist career counseling (CCT) interventions have proven effective in helping reduce career anxiety in students.

## Implications

The implications of this research, both theoretically and practically, are that it will significantly contribute to the field of career development, especially for career development in higher education. By understanding the implications of this research, future researchers can develop more effective interventions to help students overcome career anxiety in facing transitions and make better career decisions to achieve future career success.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, research on the effectiveness of career construction theory (CCT) in reducing career anxiety in college students provides strong evidence of the importance of career construction theory (CCT)-based interventions in helping students make effective career decisions by enabling them to identify and discover their true self. Career construction theory (CCT) allows individuals overcome career anxiety by holistically integrating narrative and career conceptualizations to create clarity in understanding what, how, and why individuals write career life stories to help individuals develop a cohesive identity, adapt to the environment, and build the next chapter of their career story. Thus, career construction theory (CCT) is an intervention that can be considered in assisting career development in higher education, so it becomes a valuable intervention in helping students succeed in their future careers.

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