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*To What Extent Does Adaptive Functioning of Vocational Training Participants With Intellectual Disabilities Predict Their Job Preferences?***

ABSTRACT

Decades-long research into the role of occupational interests has demonstrated their importance for suitable employment and an effective and satisfying career (Nye, Prasad, & Rounds, 2021). Based on that knowledge, this study set out to determine the degree to which the adaptive functioning of vocational training participants with intellectual disabilities shapes their preferred job choices.

The study sample consisted of 1,000 individuals with an intellectual disability, 547 men (54.70%) and 453 women (45.30%), who had enrolled in vocational training provided by urban and rural Vocational Training Centres. Their ages ranged from 19 to 67 years (M = 38.09, SD = 9.02). Data for analysis were collected using the Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System (ABAS-3) and the Reading-Free Job Choices Inventory for ID Persons (RFPJCI-ID).

The study provided a wealth of data and an interesting insight into the predictors of the study participants' preferences, or non-preferences, regarding specific jobs. Its findings partially confirmed the tested hypothesis, according to

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which adaptive functioning is a significant predictor of job areas favoured by vocational training participants with intellectual disability. The largest number of preferred job areas, eight out of twelve considered, was predicted by a higher score on the General Adaptive Composite. In five cases (areas I, II, III, IX, and X), it was a positive predictor, and in three cases (areas VI, VIII, and XII), it functioned as a negative predictor.

KEYWORDS: job preferences; adaptive functioning; intellectual disability; vocational training

INTRODUCTION

As a vital component of personality (Holland, 1997), occupational and professional interests have for decades been recognised as one of the key factors underlying a person's fulfilment in working life (Van Iddekinge, 2011; Stoll et al., 2017; Ginevera, 2018; Nye et al., 2017, 2019, 2021; Du, 2025). In recent years, they have also been increasingly seen as an important criterion in recruitment processes (Van Iddekinge, 2011; Nye, 2022; Bart, 2023) and studied from the perspective of labour market demands (Hoff et al., 2025).

The concept of "occupational interests" that most researchers refer to in their studies is Holland's (1997) theory of vocational personalities and work environments. Six primary types of occupational interests have been identified, namely, realistic interests (e.g., preferences for working with one's hands, tools, or outdoors), investigative interests (e.g., preferences for activities related to the physical, social, and medical sciences), artistic interests (e.g., preferences for activities that allow creative expression), social interests (e.g., preferences for activities that involve interaction with others), enterprising interests (e.g., preferences for activities that involve management, sales, or persuading other people), and conventional interests (e.g., preferences for well-structured

environments such as in business settings). These types of occupational interests underlie the RIASEC model.

Occupational and professional interests emerge through a combination of personal, environmental, and social factors. Some of them are internal, such as individual preferences that reveal themselves through skills, values, and personality. Others come from the outside and include family expectations, one's socioeconomic status, and cultural norms. Understanding these factors is crucial for career exploration (Berdie, 1944; Bajcar & Gąsiorowska, 2006, p. 29).

Among the personal factors, a major predictor of occupational interests and career paths is adaptive behaviour, comprised of skills essential to independent living, i.e., daily living, self-care, and work skills (Harrison & Oakland, 2015). People with better adaptive skills tend to explore a broader range of occupational interests and exhibit greater career adaptability, understood as the ability to plan, solve problems, and make decisions related to their careers (Ginevera et al., 2018; Lousky et al., 2024). At the same time, adaptive functioning difficulties can impede career exploration and development, impacting the types of jobs individuals pursue and their workplace performance (Farley et al., 2009; Duncan & Bishop, 2015).

Studies of occupational and professional interests as factors to be considered in individual career development and employee recruitment are not limited to the general population. Researchers emphasise that consistency between an individual's occupational and professional interests and a job is particularly meaningful in the case of persons in a special life situation, including individuals with a developmental or intellectual disability (Otrębski, 1999, 2007; Dean et al. 2022; Hennessey & Goreczny, 2022; Lousky et al., 2024; Taylor et al., 2024), which is usually defined as a functional state in which significantly lower cognitive and executive functioning co-occurs with a low or very low level of adaptive functioning (Schalock et al., 2021; Otrębski et al., 2022).

As mentioned above, in the general population, the level of adaptive functioning is seen as one of the predictors of individuals' occupational and professional interests. Therefore, this study set out to ascertain whether the same predictive relationship would also hold for adults with intellectual disabilities enrolled in Poland's Vocational Training Centres (VTC).

As recommended by Becker (1988), Otrębski (2007) and Nye et al. (2021, 2022), in planning our research, we took into consideration the fact that situational interests, including occupational interests, are formed as a result of *initial spark of interest that piques an individual's curiosity about a topic or activity but does not necessarily generalize beyond the initial stimuli* (Nye et al., 2022, p. 416). We found this explanation of interest formation is more relevant to the purpose of our study because of what is known about the functioning of persons with an intellectual disability (Otrębski et al., 2022). We also concluded that because of their reading comprehension challenges, our study required a reading-free research tool (Becker, 1988). Consequently, we used in our study a concept that Otrębski et al. (2012) developed specifically to examine the occupational preferences of persons with an intellectual disability, which divides them into twelve broad areas of preferred jobs: personal services; customer service; kitchen and food-handling work; plant care; animal care; construction and finishing work; work with paper, ceramics, and plastics; carpentry and work with wood and wicker; tailoring; cleaning; warehousing; maintenance of vehicles and machines.

The authors of the concept emphasise that men and women with an intellectual disability are similar to those in the general population in that they, too, differ regarding their preferred jobs in each of these areas. Specifically, women are more likely to choose jobs ancillary to personal services and kitchen work, while men more often favour jobs ancillary to construction and finishing works and maintenance of vehicles and machines.

Using the above knowledge as a framework for our research made it possible for us to gain an insight into the study's participants' preferences regarding jobs they would like to pursue or avoid. It needs to be noted, however, that the identified preferences should be viewed as dynamic and, therefore, subject to change over time.

METHOD

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which the adaptive functioning of vocational training participants with intellectual disabilities predicts their job preferences.

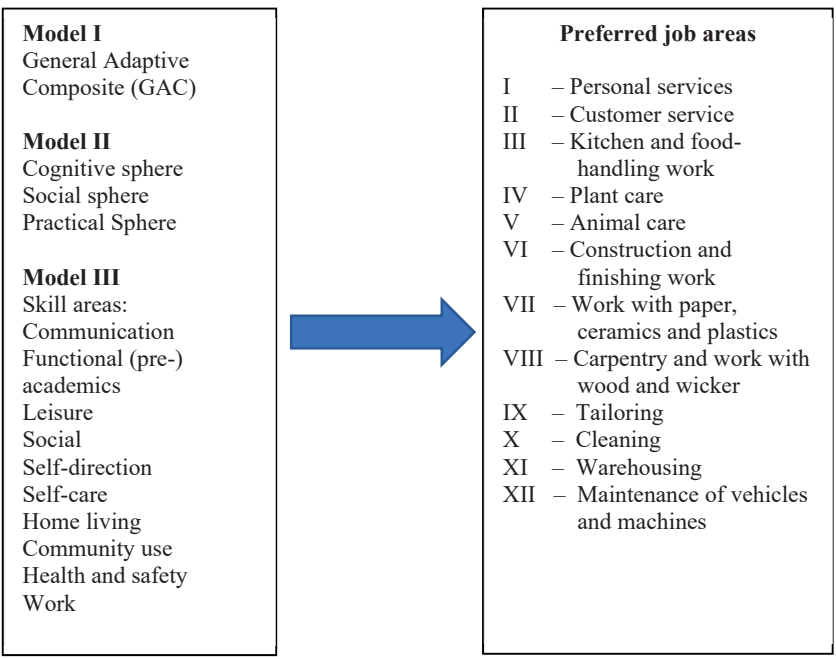

Figure 1. The theoretical model of the study.

The research question that our study sought to answer was the following:

"To what extent does adaptive functioning of vocational training participants with intellectual disabilities predict their job preferences?"

The question led to the following hypothesis:

H. Adaptive functioning (represented by scores for the GAC, adaptive skills domains, and individual adaptive skills) significantly predicts job preferences among vocational training participants with intellectual disability.

Participants

The study recruited 1000 individuals with intellectual disability, 547 men (54.70%) and 453 women (45.30%), who participated in vocational training provided by Polish VTCs situated in towns, cities and rural areas. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 67 years ($M = 38.09$, $SD = 9.02$). Men and women were not statistically significantly different in mean age ($t = -0.85$, $p = 0.39$). Most of the participants were early or middle-aged adults (29–47 years; 67.50%) who had enrolled in VTCs from 1 month to 31 years earlier ($M = 12.41$ years, $SD = 8.55$); the majority of the sample (65.60%) used vocational training for 4 to 21 years. The mean length of training was comparable between men and women ($t = -0.12$, $p = 0.90$) (Table 1).

Table 1 Participants' socio-demographics.

	Whole sample (*f*/*P*)	Women (*f*/*P*)	Men (*f*/*P*)
Sample size	1000 (100.00%)	453 (45.30%)	547 (54.70%)
Age groups (years):			
19–28	163 (16.30)	74 (16.30)	89 (16.30)
29–47	675 (67.50)	301 (66.50)	374 (68.30)
48–67	162 (16.20)	78 (17.20)	84 (15.40)

	Whole sample (*f*/*P*)	Women (*f*/*P*)	Men (*f*/*P*)
Mean age	*M* = 38.09, *SD* = 9.02	*M* = 38.36, *SD* = 8.96	*M* = 37.88, *SD* = 9.07
Training duration:			
1 month to 3 years	173 (17.30)	69 (15.40)	102 (18.90)
4 to 21 years	656 (65.60)	313 (68.80)	347 (63.00)
22 to 31 years	171 (17.10)	71 (15.80)	98 (18.10)
Mean training duration	*M* = 12.41, *SD* = 8.55	*M* = 12.45, *SD* = 8.37	*M* = 12.38, *SD* = 8.71
Rural residents	104 (10.40)	51 (11.30)	53 (9.70)
Residents of urban			
areas with populations:	120 (12.00)	58 (12.80)	62 (11.30)
below 20,000	197 (19.70)	88 (19.40)	109 (19.90)
20,000–50,000	175 (17.50)	76 (16.80)	99 (18.10)
50,000–200,000	123 (12.30)	57 (12.60)	66 (12.10)
200,000–500,000	281 (28.10)	123 (27.20)	158 (28.90)
above 500,000			

Tools

The research was conducted using the Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System – ABAS-3 (Harrison & Oakland, 2017) and the Reading-Free Preferred Job Choices Inventory for ID Persons (RFPJCI-ID; Otrębski & Wiącek, 2012). The ABAS-3 is a proxy questionnaire completed primarily by the parents and caregivers of children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Designed to thoroughly describe adaptive skills at each developmental stage, the ABAS-3 is especially instrumental in assessing persons affected by intellectual disabilities and other developmental delays or neuropsychological disorders. It examines ten adaptive skill areas grouped into three core domains of adaptive skills: the cognitive domain (communication; functional (pre-)academics), the social domain (leisure; socialisation; self-direction), and the practical domain (self-care; home living; community use;

health and safety; work[1]), and provides the General Adaptive Composite (GAC) that summarises performance across all ten skill areas. GAC scores and the scores for individual adaptive spheres and functions are converted into standardised values divided into the following ranges indicating the level of adaptive behaviour: ≤ 70 – extremely low; 71–79 – low; 80–89 – below average; 90–109 – average; 110–119 – above average; ≥ 120 – high. The ABAS-3 forms are for parents and caregivers/teachers/instructors of children aged 0 to 5, parents and day-care providers of children and young adults aged 5 to 21, and adults aged 16 to 89 (Harrison & Oakland, 2015). This study only used the adult assessment form. The Polish adaptation of the ABAS-3 (Otrębski, Domagała-Zyśk, & Sudoł, 2019) has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.99, i.e., the same as that obtained in this study.

The RFPJCI-ID (Otrębski & Wiącek, 2012) was created to identify the occupational preferences of persons with intellectual disabilities. It consists of 66 pairs of pictures of jobs divided into: I. personal services, II. customer service, III. kitchen and food-handling work, IV. plant care, V. animal care, VI. construction and finishing works, VII. work with paper, ceramics and plastics, VIII. carpentry and work with wood and wicker, IX. tailoring, X. cleaning, XI. warehousing, XII. maintenance of vehicles and machines. The first three of these jobs and tailoring involve interaction with other people, in contrast with the other jobs. Respondents are asked to indicate which job in each pair they would like to do. The total scores for each job area are expressed on a centile scale. The areas above the 75th centile and below the 25th centile represent the most and least preferred jobs, respectively.

[1] The "work" subdomain is only examined in the 18-80 version of the ABAS-3.

Statistics

Descriptive statistics (means, medians, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis levels, and minimum and maximum values) were first calculated to present the data. To determine which variables predicted participants' preferences regarding ancillary jobs within the twelve job areas, a multiple linear regression analysis (a stepwise method) and the Shapiro–Wilk test for data distribution normality were utilised. The skewness and kurtosis values were ±1 and ±2, respectively. The linearity and homogeneity of variance assumptions were verified using the scatter plots, which did not reveal the presence of either heteroscedasticity or a clear data pattern. Additionally, multicollinearity and the minimum and maximum variance inflation factors (VIF) were checked. The general *F*-test was performed, and an adjusted *R*-squared was calculated. In multiple linear regression analysis (MLRA), the effects of association and statistical significance were assessed by calculating unstandardised (B) and standardised beta coefficients (β). The MLRA results were assumed to be statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. All analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics, ver. 29, 2024).

RESULTS

The descriptive statistics presented below characterise predictor variables subjected to regression analysis (Table 2).

Because the predictor variables were correlated, the MLRA considered three models, where the predictors of preferred job choices were scores for the GAC (Model I), adaptive skills domains (Model II), and individual adaptive skills (Model III). The MLRA results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the predictor variables.

	M	*Me*	*SD*	*S*	*K*	Min.	Max.
Global score	38.11	33.00	23.41	0.97	0.77	9.00	133.00
Cognitive sphere	11.71	10.00	7.44	0.97	0.73	3.00	43.00
Social sphere	8.26	7.00	5.19	0.91	0.63	2.00	30.00
Practical sphere	18.11	15.00	12.19	1.04	0.85	4.00	68.00
Communication	48.60	51.00	14.90	–0.64	–0.04	2.00	75.00
Community use	29.88	30.00	17.06	0.18	–0.83	0.00	72.00
Functional (pre)academics	27.70	27.00	18.25	0.23	–0.99	0.00	70.00
Home living	41.05	42.00	14.90	–0.50	–0.27	0.00	72.00
Health and Safety	35.52	36.00	11.55	–0.19	–0.53	2.00	60.00
Leisure	35.18	35.00	12.09	–0.12	–0.25	2.00	65.00
Self-care	59.79	63.00	14.02	–1.02	1.36	2.00	78.00
Self-direction	44.77	46.00	15.44	–0.30	–0.38	0.00	75.00
Socialization	49.93	51.00	13.97	–0.56	–0.07	7.00	75.00
Work	40.53	41.00	13.62	–0.35	–0.25	0.00	72.00

Table 3. The MLRA results for Models I, II, and II

Table 3. The MLRA results for Models I, II, and II.

Model	Predictors	I			II			III			IV		
		B	β	*p*	*B*	β	*p*	*B*	β	*p*	*B*	β	*p*
I	(Constant)	5.023		< .001	5.446		< .001	6.224		< .001	6.175		< .001
	Global score	0.011	0.098	0.002	0.006	0.075	0.018	0.014	0.157	< .001	0.002	0.022	0.481
		$F = 9.586$; $p = 0.002$ $R = 0.098$; $R^2 = 0.010$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.009$			$F = 5.601$; $p = 0.018$ $R = 0.075$; $R^2 = 0.006$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.005$			$F = 24.976$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.157$; $R^2 = 0.025$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.024$			$F = 0.497$; $p = 0.481$ $R = 0.022$; $R^2 = 0.001$ Adjusted $R^2 = -0.001$		
II	(Constant)	4.923		< .001	5.360		< .001	6.228		< .001	6.262		< .001
	Cognitive sphere	−0.057	−0.156	0.024	0.074	0,282	< .001	−0.029	−0.105	0.129	0.013	0.047	0.504
	Social sphere	0.142	0.271	< .001	0.026	0.071	0.199	0.041	0.105	0.056	−0.076	−0.188	0.001
	Practical sphere	0.002	0.008	0.903	−0.042	−0.263	< .001	0.028	0.170	0.008	0.026	0.149	0.021
		$F = 10.391$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.175$; $R^2 = 0.031$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.028$			$F = 9.884$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.171$; $R^2 = 0.029$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.026$			$F = 10.888$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.173$; $R^2 = 0.030$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.027$			$F = 4.800$; $p = 0.003$ $R = 0.120$; $R^2 = 0.014$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.011$		
III	(Constant)	3.889		< .001	5.421		< .001	5.126		< .001	6.426		< .001
	Communication	0.011	0.057	0.352	0.013	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.002	0.971	−0.002	−0.014	0.825
	Community use	−0.037	−0.231	0.005	−0.002	−0.014	0.860	−0.020	−0.164	0.042	0.009	0.075	0.360
	Functional (pre-) academics	0.019	0.124	0.069	0.010	0.092	0.176	0.012	0.104	0.123	−0.004	−0.036	0.595
	Home living	0.029	0.158	0.028	−0.017	−0.133	0.065	0.032	0.227	0.002	0.009	0.061	0.400
	Health and safety	−0.020	−0.082	0.298	0.017	0.104	0.190	0.005	0.030	0.701	0.016	0.085	0.281
	Leisure	0.011	0.046	0.477	0.008	0.050	0.447	−0.013	−0.076	0.243	−0.029	−0.162	0.014
	Self-care	−0.002	−0.008	0.894	−0.014	−0.100	0.100	0.003	0.024	0.691	0.003	0.022	0.715
	Self-direction	−0.026	−0.142	0.095	−0.007	−0.057	0.505	−0.008	−0.059	0.485	0.037	0.265	0.002
	Socialization	0.052	0.263	< .001	0.004	0.026	0.715	0.024	0.158	0.025	−0.018	−0.115	0.106
	Work	−0.016	−0.077	0.263	0.004	0.031	0.650	−0.005	−0.034	0.623	−0.027	−0.172	0.013
		$F = 3.875$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.209$; $R^2 = 0.044$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.033$			$F = 3.174$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.190$; $R^2 = 0.036$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.025$			$F = 4.881$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.234$; $R^2 = 0.055$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.043$			$F = 3.003$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.185$; $R^2 = 0.034$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.023$		

Model	Predictors	V			VI			VII			VIII		
		B	β	*p*	*B*	β	*p*	*B*	β	*p*	*B*	β	*p*
I	(Constant)	5.335		< .001	5.139		< .001	5.410		< .001	5.119		< .001
	Global score	−0.005	−0.042	0.189	−0.013	−0.136	< .001	0.013	0.149	< .001	−0.014	−0.154	< .001
		$F = 1.071$; $p = 0.382$ $R = 0.112$; $R^2 = 0.013$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.001$			$F = 18.483$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.136$; $R^2 = 0.018$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.017$			$F = 22.382$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.149$; $R^2 = 0.022$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.021$			$F = 23.842$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.154$; $R^2 = 0.024$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.023$		
II	(Constant)	5.341		< .001	5.165		< .001	5.363		< .001	5.140		< .001
	Cognitive sphere	−0.040	−0.112	0.109	0.013	0.045	0.520	0.057	0.208	0.003	0.010	0.032	0.639
	Social sphere	0.016	0.031	0.582	−0.053	−0.122	0.027	0.019	0.048	0.385	−0.049	−0.116	0.035
	Practical sphere	0.008	0.039	0.552	−0.013	−0.073	0.258	−0.016	−0.093	0.148	−0.015	−0.085	0.185
		$F = 1.257$; $p = 0.288$ $R = 0.062$; $R^2 = 0.004$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.001$			$F = 7.216$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.147$; $R^2 = 0.022$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.019$			$F = 10.333$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.173$; $R^2 = 0.030$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.027$			$F = 8.801$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.162$; $R^2 = 0.026$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.023$		
III	(Constant)	5.329		< .001	6.147		< .001	5.263		< .001	6.227		< .001
	Communication	−0.013	−0.072	0.251	0.003	0.019	0.758	−0.004	−0.027	0.663	0.002	0.010	0.867
	Community use	−0.003	−0.018	0.824	0.031	0.230	0.005	−0.019	−0.156	0.053	0.032	0.245	0.002
	Functional (pre-) academics	−0.010	−0.072	0.298	−0.015	−0.124	0.067	0.035	0.307	< .001	−0.032	−0.258	< .001
	Home living	0.000	−0.002	0.982	−0.020	−0.128	0.076	−0.004	−0.028	0.695	−0.025	−0.165	0.021
	Health and safety	0.002	0.008	0.917	−0.015	−0.076	0.335	−0.019	−0.103	0.189	0.010	0.050	0.518
	Leisure	−0.005	−0.020	0.758	0.015	0.081	0.217	0.009	0.055	0.399	0.010	0.052	0.423
	Self-care	0.007	0.035	0.568	−0.001	−0.008	0.897	−0.008	−0.052	0.387	−0.008	−0.053	0.373
	Self-direction	0.014	0.078	0.364	−0.009	−0.063	0.455	−0.005	−0.038	0.649	0.003	0.021	0.807
	Socialization	0.006	0.030	0.674	−0.030	−0.182	0.010	0.019	0.124	0.078	−0.039	−0.242	0.001
	Work	−0.009	−0.048	0.493	0.016	0.095	0.167	0.016	0.108	0.116	0.021	0.129	0.060
		$F = 1.729$; $p = 0.189$ $R = 0.042$; $R^2 = 0.002$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.001$			$F = 3.957$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.211$; $R^2 = 0.045$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.033$			$F = 4.897$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.234$; $R^2 = 0.055$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.044$			$F = 5.366$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.244$; $R^2 = 0.060$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.049$		

Model	Predictors	IX			X			XI			XII		
		B	β	*p*	*B*	β	*p*	*B*	β	*p*	*B*	β	*p*
I	(Constant)	4.938		< .001	6.119		< .001	5.549		< .001	5.503		< .001
	Global score	0.008	0.073	0.021	0.010	0.115	< .001	−0.004	−0.039	0.223	−0.029	−0.257	< .001
		$F = 5.334$; $p = 0.021$ $R = 0.073$; $R^2 = 0.005$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.004$			$F = 13.190$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.115$; $R^2 = 0.013$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.012$			$F = 1.484$; $p = 0.223$ $R = 0.039$; $R^2 = 0.002$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.000$			$F = 69.597$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.257$; $R^2 = 0.066$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.065$		
II	(Constant)	4.958		< .001	6.239		< .001	5.519		< .001	5.480		< .001
	Cognitive sphere	−0.044	−0.131	0.060	−0.035	−0.123	0.074	0.042	0.145	0.058	−0.005	−0.015	0.825
	Social sphere	0.029	0.060	0.278	−0.053	−0.129	0.018	−0.013	−0.032	0.565	−0.027	−0.053	0.323
	Practical sphere	0.031	0.150	0.021	0.062	0.357	< .001	−0.027	−0.153	0.059	−0.043	−0.203	0.001
		$F = 3.486$; $p = 0.015$ $R = 0.062$; $R^2 = 0.004$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.001$			$F = 12.931$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.195$; $R^2 = 0.038$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.035$			$F = 2.394$; $p = 0.067$ $R = 0.085$; $R^2 = 0.007$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.004$			$F = 23.632$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.259$; $R^2 = 0.067$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.064$		
III	(Constant)	3.499		< .001	5.714		< .001	5.765		< .001	7.164		< .001
	Communication	0.000	−0.001	0.985	−0.006	−0.040	0.515	0.002	0.012	0.845	−0.007	−0.037	0.535
	Community use	−0.042	−0.283	< .001	−0.005	−0.040	0.619	0.008	0.066	0.421	0.045	0.292	< .001
	Functional (pre-) academics	0.026	0.186	0.006	0.015	0.131	0.052	−0.013	−0.114	0.098	−0.039	−0.275	< .001
	Home living	0.005	0.027	0.703	0.036	0.247	0.001	−0.014	−0.099	0.172	−0.029	−0.165	0.018
	Health and safety	0.007	0.033	0.673	−0.012	−0.063	0.421	0.004	0.020	0.802	0.004	0.019	0.808
	Leisure	−0.039	−0.186	0.004	−0.030	−0.169	0.009	0.043	0.238	< .001	0.021	0.098	0.122
	Self-care	0.018	0.101	0.091	0.010	0.065	0.278	0.001	0.006	0.915	−0.011	−0.058	0.318
	Self-direction	−0.010	−0.059	0.483	0.003	0.021	0.807	0.020	0.143	0.096	−0.012	−0.071	0.385
	Socialization	0.046	0.250	< .001	−0.001	−0.004	0.959	−0.037	−0.235	0.001	−0.025	−0.133	0.054
	Work	0.007	0.037	0.587	0.005	0.029	0.671	−0.012	−0.078	0.262	0.002	0.008	0.904
		$F = 4.642$; $p = 0.189$ $R = 0.228$; $R^2 = 0.052$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.041$			$F = 5.434$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.246$; $R^2 = 0.060$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.049$			$F = 2.338$; $p = 0.010$ $R = 0.164$; $R^2 = 0.027$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.015$			$F = 9.519$; $p < .001$ $R = 0.318$; $R^2 = 0.101$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.091$		

Note. I = personal services, II = customer service, III = kitchen and food-handling work, IV = plant care, V = animal care, VI = construction and finishing work, VII = work with paper, ceramics and plastics, VIII = carpentry and work with wood and wicker, IX = tailoring, X = cleaning, XI = warehousing, XII = maintenance of vehicles and machines.

Table 4. The verification effect of theoretical between-variable relationships.

	Global score	Cognitive sphere	Social sphere	Practical sphere	Communication	Community use	Functional (pre) academics	Home living	Health and safety	Leisure	Self-care	Self-direction	Socialization	Work
I														
II														
III														
IV														
V														
VI														
VII														
VIII														
IX														
X														
XI														
XII														
	Red = negative prediction				Green = positive prediction									

Note. I = personal services, II = customer service, III = kitchen and food-handling work, IV = plant care, V = animal care, VI = construction and finishing work, VII = work with paper, ceramics and plastics, VIII = carpentry and work with wood and wicker, IX = tailoring, X = cleaning, XI = warehousing, XII = maintenance of vehicles and machines.

In Model I, the GAC score did not predict participants' preferences for ancillary jobs in only 4 out of 12 job areas, namely, plant care (IV), animal care (V), work with paper, ceramics and plastics (VII), and warehousing (XI). As regards the other 8 job areas, the GAC score positively predicted participants' preferences for jobs in five areas. In other words, participants with higher GAC scores tended to favour more jobs related to personal services (I), customer service (II), kitchen and food handling (III), tailoring (IX), and cleaning (X). In the case of the other three job areas, a higher GAC score was a negative predictor of job preferences. At the same time, these participants disfavoured jobs ancillary to construction and finishing works (VI); carpentry and work with wood and wicker (VIII); and maintenance of vehicles and machines (XII). Interestingly, the GAC score was a negative predictor of preferences for jobs that did not involve interaction with other people (Table 3). Both correlations and variances obtained in Model I were relatively weak, as shown by beta coefficients ranging from 0.022 to 0.26 and R^2 values from 0.001 to 0.066 (Table 4).

Regarding Model II, the MLRA showed only 2 job areas (animal care (V) and warehousing (XI)) where the scores for adaptive skills domains did not predict participants' preferences for ancillary jobs. Concerning the other 10 areas, the domain scores functioned as positive and/or negative predictors (Tables 3 and 4):

– the social domain was a positive predictor for a preference for ancillary jobs related to personal services (I), while the cognitive domain predicted it negatively;
– the social domain positively predicted a preference for jobs related to customer service (II) while the cognitive domain was a negative predictor of it;
– the practical domain was only a positive predictor of a preference for jobs related to kitchen and food handling work (III);
– the social and practical domains were only positive predictors of a preference for plant care-related jobs (I);

– the social domain was only a negative predictor of a preference for jobs related to construction and finishing works (VI);
– the cognitive domain was only a positive predictor of a preference for jobs involving work with paper, ceramics, and plastics (VII);
– the cognitive domain was only a negative predictor of a preference for jobs related to carpentry and work with wood and wicker (VIII);
– the practical domain was only a positive predictor of a preference for tailoring-related jobs (IX);
– the practical domain was a positive predictor of a preference for cleaning jobs (X) while the social domain predicted it negatively;
– the practical domain was only a negative predictor of a preference for jobs ancillary to the maintenance of vehicles and machines (XII).

According to the above, high cognitive domain scores predict a preference for ancillary jobs related to customer services and jobs involving work with paper, ceramics and plastics materials; high social domain scores predict a preference for jobs ancillary to personal services and plant care; and high practical domain scores indicate a preference for jobs ancillary to kitchen and food-handling work, plant care, and tailoring. On the other hand, low cognitive domain scores are a negative predictor of a preference for jobs ancillary to personal services; low social domain scores negatively predict a preference for jobs ancillary to construction and finishing works, carpentry and cleaning; and low practical domain scores are a negative predictor of a preference for jobs ancillary to customer service and maintenance of vehicles and machines (Table 4). Correlations and variances in Model II were also relatively weak, as beta values ranged from 0.010 to 0.282 and R^2 varied between 0.004 and 0.067 (Table 3).

The regression analysis of Model III showed that there were only two job areas, customer service (II) and animal care (V),

where participants' job preferences were not predicted by adaptive skills. For the other ten job areas, seven adaptive skills functioned as positive and/or negative predictors (Tables 3 and 4):

– home living and socialisation positively predicted a preference for jobs ancillary to personal services (I), while community use was a negative predictor of it;
– home living and socialisation were also positive predictors of a preference for jobs ancillary to kitchen and food-handling work (iii) while community use predicted it negatively;
– self-direction positively predicted a preference for jobs ancillary to plant care (iv) while leisure and community use predicted it negatively;
– community use was a positive predictor of a preference for jobs related to construction and finishing works (vi), and socialisation predicted it negatively;
– functional (pre-)academics was a positive predictor of a preference for jobs ancillary to work with paper, ceramics, plastics (vii), while community use predicted it negatively;
– community use was a positive predictor of a preference for jobs ancillary to carpentry and work with wood and wicker (viii), while functional (pre-)academics, home living, and socialisation predicted it negatively;
– functional (pre-)academics and socialisation positively predicted a preference for ancillary tailoring jobs (IX), while community use and Leisure predicted it negatively;
– home living was a positive predictor of a preference for ancillary cleaning jobs (X) while leisure predicted it negatively;
– leisure and socialisation positively and negatively predicted a preference for ancillary warehouse jobs (XI), respectively;
– community use positively predicted a preference for jobs ancillary to the maintenance of vehicles and machines (XII), while functional (pre-)academics, home living, and socialisation predicted it negatively.

Summing up, of the 10 adaptive skill areas examined, only 7 were found to predict (positively and/or negatively) participants' preferences for ancillary jobs. In all these adaptive skill areas, higher scores predicted preferences for some specific category or categories of ancillary jobs:

– community use predicted preferences for jobs ancillary to construction and finishing works, carpentry, work with wood and wicker, and the maintenance of vehicles and machines;
– Functional (pre-)academics predicted preferences for jobs involving paper, ceramics, and plastics, and ancillary tailoring jobs;
– home living predicted preferences for jobs ancillary to personal services, kitchen and food-handling, and cleaning;
– leisure predicted preferences for ancillary warehousing jobs;
– self-direction predicted preferences for ancillary plant care jobs; and
– socialisation predicted preferences for jobs ancillary to personal services, kitchen and food-handling work, and tailoring (Table 4).
– work predicted preferences for jobs ancillary to kitchen and food handling work.

Beta coefficients in Model III ranged from 0.131 to 0.307 and R^2 from 0.027 to 0.101, indicating relatively weak correlations and variances (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

The results of the study offer an interesting insight into the predictors of preferences, or non-preferences, for specific jobs among persons with intellectual disability enrolled in VTC training. They partially confirm a significant predictive relationship between the persons' adaptive functioning (represented by scores for the GAC, adaptive skills domains, and individual adaptive skills)

and their occupational preferences. A higher GAC score was found to predict preferences for jobs in as many as eight of the twelve job areas; three of these areas (I, II, and III) contained jobs that involved interaction with other people, and the other five (VI, VIII, IX, X, XI, and XII) could be done away from people. As regards the adaptive skills domains, higher scores on the practical domain predicted preferences for jobs in the largest number of job areas (6/10). Two of the six areas (II and III) included jobs that required interaction with other people, and the other four (IV, IX, X, and XII) related to jobs that could be done in seclusion. The number of preferred job areas indicated by higher scores on the social domain was almost as high (5/12); among those, only one (V) required interaction with other people; the other four (IV, VI, VIII, and X) could be done without any interaction. Surprisingly, a higher score on the cognitive domain only predicted preferences for jobs in three out of the twelve job areas, two of which (I and II) contained jobs that involved interaction with other people, and one (VII) included jobs that could be done without interacting with others.

Among 10 adaptive skills, three (communication, health and safety, and self-care skills) did not predict preferred job areas, and two (self-direction and work skills) predicted only 1 area (IV); higher scores on Self-direction skills and Work skills indicated weaker and stronger interest in area IV, respectively. As regards adaptive skills, two types of skills predicted six job areas: Community use was a positive predictor for areas I, III and IX, and a negative predictor for areas VI, VIII and XII, and socialization was a positive predictor for areas VI, VIII and XI, and a negative predictor for areas I, III and IX). One type of adaptive skills, home living, was predictively related to five job areas (positively with areas VII and XII, and negatively with areas I, III and X); two types of adaptive skills were predictively related to four areas: functional (pre-)academics was a positive predictor for areas VIII and XII, and a negative predictor for areas VII and IX). Leisure

was a positive predictor for areas VI, IX and X, and a negative predictor for areas XI (Table 4).

The study's findings indicate a need for continued research on the adaptive functioning of adults with intellectual disability transitioning to the labour market, not only because of its strong association with work adjustment (Otrębski, 2007) but also to gather more information about their occupational interests. The most recent research has provided evidence that efforts to improve the adaptive functioning of people with ASD significantly expand their soft skills and, consequently, their occupational interests (Lousky, 2024).

The results of our study are as important for the practice of occupational rehabilitation of people with developmental and intellectual disabilities as those presented by Lousky et al. (2024), who studied young autistic adults preparing for military service. They clearly indicate that occupational rehabilitation for people with disabilities should be comprehensive and foster the development of their adaptive competencies, including specific job preferences, rather than narrowly focusing on individual job-related skills.

One of the areas worth exploring by future research is the conditions under which the situational interests of a subpopulation as specific as people with intellectual and developmental disabilities could turn into long-term ones.

A limitation of our study, as well as of other studies in the same field, is the same national and cultural background of the participants. Comparative, international, and cross-cultural studies are thus needed to confirm whether the same or different results would be obtained for other nationalities or cultures.

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