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Career Frameworks: How Career Frameworks Frame Communication

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by

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ABSTRACT

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by

Jacova K. Snyder

Changes to the way work is performed over the past several decades due to economic recessions, unstable job markets, and global turmoil facilitated by COVID-19 call for research into the way today's young adults idealize, evaluate, and select careers. Informed by the theory of vocational anticipatory socialization, this study surveyed university students through a series of open- and closed-ended questions to investigate how they think about "making a living". This project also explores the career frameworks young adults use to evaluate potential careers, compares them to the ability, enjoyment, and goal frameworks identified by Jahn and Myers (2014), and takes a step towards validating a career frameworks scale. Content analysis of open-ended responses indicate that compensation, work-life balance, making a difference in society, company or workplace culture, stability, and continuous learning opportunity are common motivating factors in career or job selection. Content analysis also identified ability, enjoyment, goal-identity, and goal-lifestyle frameworks informing young adults' career pursuits, which differed in form and frequency from Jahn and Myers (2014) original work. Confirmatory factor analysis did not confirm predicted components, but exploratory factor analysis revealed emergent factors. Several

theoretical and practical implications are discussed as well as limitations and suggestions for future research.

I. Career Frameworks: How Career Frameworks Frame Communication

Career selection is an essential task for young people as they move through adolescence into adulthood. This process of developing interests, skills, and experience, often called career development (Herr, 2001), has various financial, social, and familial implications both for the individual and for society at large. For the individual, work is not only a means for income, but for many it is also a source of dignity as they exercise autonomy to make career choices that facilitate the life they desire (Buzzanell & Lucas, 2013; Thomas & Lucas, 2019). In western culture, career choice often shapes identity as "work-place organizations have usurped the meaning-giving functions of other types of institutions such as religion, family, and community" (Wieland et al., 2009, p.100). This careerism is evident in the question often asked at first meetings, "What do you do for a living?". Starting in childhood, individuals begin to form ideals for their adult life and learn about careers by observing friends and family navigate their own working lives, cultivating relevant knowledge and skill in school, and watching occupations modeled on television, amongst other influences (Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 2010). Research on adolescents' interpretation of these experiences and their influence on career development is important for equipping educators and parents to help young people discover a career that facilitates the job satisfaction and lifestyle they desire (e.g., Ashby-King & Anderson, 2021; Gan, 2021; Jahn & Myers, 2014; Scarduzio et al., 2018).

Beyond individual happiness, research regarding career development is important when considering the contextual forces that influence career decisions on a national level. The labor force in the United States has undergone tremendous change over the last several

decades due to the economic decline facilitated by the Great Recession, rapid advances in technology, and ongoing demographic changes as Baby Boomers are rapidly being replaced by Generation Z (Gomez et al., 2018). According to a 2018 report by Deloitte, the US will face a shortage of 8.2 million workers from 2017 – 2027 due to Baby Boomers retiring (Gomez et al., 2018). This projection doesn't account for the "great resignation" among younger individuals and the mismatch between the supply and demand of available workers currently haunting companies looking to hire following the COVID-19 pandemic (De Smet et al., 2022). Described by De Smet and colleagues (2022) as a "quitting trend that just won't quit" this shift demonstrates many individuals' reevaluation of what they expect from their career in the wake of the pandemic. Today's adolescents and young adults are starting their careers in a rapidly changing labor market after witnessing significant national disruption. With this context in mind, it is even more crucial for researchers to understand how adolescents' values and desires inform the way they filter and interpret career messages. This knowledge will help educators, parents, and employers better understand how they can empower and equip the emerging workforce to achieve personal success within available workforce needs.

Although many studies have explored the process of career development and the various contextual factors that influence career decisions (i.e., Clair, 1996; Myers et al., 2011; O'Connor & Raile, 2015), updated research is needed to capture how young adults are interpreting, processing, and prioritizing career-related information in this cultural moment. Towards this end, this study will approach career development using vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS) as a theoretical framework for exploring the career frameworks that color how adolescents interpret and evaluate career messages.

II. Literature Review

The following sections review existing career development theories, justification for a communicative approach to career development through VAS, and career framework findings thus far.

A. Career Development Theories

In order to justify VAS as an appropriate theoretical frame for this study, I will begin by summarizing and critiquing three common approaches to career development: social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent et al., 1994), expectancy-value theory (EVT; Eccles, 2009), and Ciulla's (2000) reasons for work. While each of these identifies important elements of career development, they fall short in identifying the role of communication in the process of developing career interests and articulating those interests.

Lent and associates (1994) proposed a theory for career development called social cognitive career theory (SCCT) and a supporting model that emphasizes the roles of agency and self-referent thinking in the career development process. They argue that a person's self-efficacy ("Do I have the ability to do this?") and their outcome expectations ("Will it be worth it?") influence career interests, which in turn influence career choice goals (Lent et al., 1994). Accordingly, if an adolescent thinks they have the skill or ability to advance in a particular career path *and* they believe the career will produce the outcome they desire (i.e. stability, financial success, fulfillment, etc.), they will be more likely to be interested in that career. Lent and colleagues (1994) describe this effect as additive, with the weight of both self-efficacy and outcome expectations dependent on the individual's context and influenced by personal factors such as gender and race. SCCT has been used to study adolescent interests across disciplines and demographics, such as evaluating Spanish high school

students' interests in technology (Inda-Caro et al., 2016) and exploring representation of women in sports management programs (Sellars, 2022).

Expectancy-value theory (EVT) is another theoretical approach to career development that focuses on understanding identity formation and its impact on vocational selection (Eccles, 2009). EVT says that individuals make behavioral choices based on their expectation for success and the subjective value they place on that task (Eccles, 2009). Expectations for success are formed as adolescents compare their task performance against others' performance and against their own across domains. Self-efficacy and perceived competence develop relative to particular tasks when the individual realizes they excel at or can quickly advance at those tasks. EVT says that adolescents are drawn to careers that allow them to exercise these skills. In addition to expectations, the subjective value that adolescents place on a task also influences their vocational choice. Eccles (2009) describes this subjective value as determined by how much adolescents enjoy the task, its perceived utility towards their long-term goals, how congruent it is with their desired identity, and its perceived cost. For example, an adolescent's decision to go to medical school may be driven by good grades in science classes *and* their desire to help others. In summary, identity formation has influence on career selection through the formation of expectations for success and the value one places on a particular job or field. In recent years, Eccles and Wigfield (2020) have redefined EVT as situated expectancy-value theory (SEVT) to highlight the complex situational mechanisms that impact expectations for success and subjective task value. EVT and the more recently developed SEVT have been used to study adolescents' educational experiences, including feelings of success in mandatory general education courses (Goegan

et al., 2001), and social comparison, motivation, and achievement in undergraduate physics courses (Lee et al., 2021).

Finally, Ciulla (2000) outlined several "reasons" or values that influence the types of career choices that individuals make. These values include meaningful work, leisure, money, and stability. While every job contains some degree of each, the manifestation of each value within a workplace and an individual's personal regard for that value influences career choice (Buzzanell & Lucas, 2013). While it would be ideal to have a satisfactory amount of each value in a career (having a secure role and being paid well to do something an individual enjoys with adequate time for leisure), it is most common for people to make tradeoffs that allow them to achieve satisfaction in the area of most value for them (i.e., working for a non-profit despite low pay because it allows one to pursue their passion, or staying in a role an individual finds uninteresting because it offers generous paid-time off and a decent salary). Ciulla (2000) qualifies that the relative importance of each of these four reasons for career choice fluctuates across the lifespan. The demands of different seasons of life and an individual's circumstances may necessitate value shifts, such as a parent prioritizing money or stability for the sake of their family or a recent graduate prioritizing leisure after several strenuous years in school.

Each of these approaches to career selection highlights important aspects of career development such as the cognitive processes that influence choice and the role of values in identify formation, but they skim over the crucial role of *communication* in career development. Communication about work from influential others plays an important role in the development of career interests (e.g., Jablin, 1987, 2001; Myers et al., 2011; Powers & Myers, 2017). Messages sent both directly and indirectly to adolescents about career

opportunities, relevant skills needed, professional expectations, and the like significantly impact adolescents' self-efficacy and work-related values. These self-concepts and ideals in turn filter career-related messages and inform the career development process (Jahn & Myers, 2014; Myers et al., 2011). Essentially, communication is a key mechanism in the formation of the theoretical components (self-efficacy, outcome expectations, subjective value, etc.) described by SCCT, EVT, and Ciulla's reasons for work model. Furthermore, through communication we can capture and analyze the outcome of these processes, as young adults articulate their interests, motivations, and desires for their work lives. With these outcomes in mind, a communicative theory of career development is needed for the present study.

B. Vocational Anticipatory Socialization

Vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS) describes the communicative process of career development and provides an approach to studying career selection that acknowledges the influential roles of communication *and* other factors (experience, self-efficacy, gender, etc.) in interest formation, including many of the cognitive and value formation processes accounted for by SCCT, SEVT, and Ciulla's reasons for work choice. This study will use VAS as a theoretical framework to investigate what young adults expect from their careers and how they filter career-related messages, with the implicit acknowledgment that these expectations are formed in large part through communication.

Long before choosing to pursue employment or membership in a specific organization, VAS begins during childhood as individuals actively and passively obtain occupational information from the environment around them (Aley & Levine, 2020; Jablin, 2001). Throughout adolescence, youth encounter VAS messages that shape their academic and

career interests (Aley & Levine, 2023; Gan, 2021; Jahn & Myers, 2014; Myers et al., 2011), workplace expectations (Jablin, 1985; Levine & Aley, 2022; Omilion-Hodges & Ptacek, 2019; Powers & Myers, 2017; Woo & Bertram, 2022), and their orientation towards the meaning of work (Hymlo, 2006; Jahn & Myers, 2014; Levine & Aley, 2022; Medved et al., 2006; Omilion-Hodges & Ptacek, 2019). Communication scholars have traditionally identified five sources for VAS messages: parents and family, peers, educational institutions, media, and organizational experiences through part-time jobs, internships, or volunteer opportunities (Aley & Levine, 2020; Jablin, 1985; Kramer 2010; Vangelisti, 1988). Some scholars also consider the internet as a sixth VAS source distinct from traditional mass media as adolescents can proactively seek career information online (Levine & Aley, 2022). Messaging from these sources can at times be direct, such as encouragement from a parent or teacher that an adolescent should pursue a specific profession, or they can be indirect, such as the impressions a child forms about a line of work from watching TV or volunteering in the community.

Although the effect of these sources on adolescents' VAS is cumulative, many studies focus on one of these message sources and adolescents' reports of their impact. Research on VAS messages from families and parents are particularly abundant with findings such as memorable messages from parents about the roles of family and work in life (Daniels & Ritenour, 2020; Medved et al., 2006; Scarduzio et al., 2018), the ability for parents to pass on work ideologies (Clair, 1999), and the lasting impact of parents' work-related stress, agency, and reward on their adolescents' orientation towards the future (Neblett & Cortina, 2006). Most children first learn about life skills and values such as responsibility, discipline, social exchange, and leisure through household chores (Kramer, 2010). Although the teenage years

are often marked by a certain amount of rebellion against family, studies have shown that adolescents highly value their parents' opinions, including those related to career choice (Vangelisti, 1988). When asked to recall encouraging career messages, almost half of participating college students named their mothers as the most influential source of encouraging messages (Powers & Myers, 2017).

Studies have also revealed the influence of media on adolescents' aspirations and work-related values. Ingersoll and Adams (1992) demonstrated in their thematic analysis of American children's books how organizational values of conforming to authority, solving problems, and describing organizational routines, amongst other work-related lessons, are translated through these stories. Hoffner and colleagues (2008) found that undergraduate freshmen's occupational goals were influenced by their favorite television character such that they aspired to be like characters who achieved more extrinsic rewards (money, status, etc.) through their jobs, while intrinsic rewards (intelligence, skill, etc.) did not influence them to identify with the character's career path. Other studies have demonstrated how movies targeting young girls reinforce gender stereotypes (Hymlo, 2006) or how unethical and unvirtuous workplace behaviors displayed in popular TV shows can influence adolescent perceptions of an occupation, depending on how much exposure they have to the profession outside of mass media consumption (Woo & McDermott, 2019). Socializing messages from these forms of media can be helpful in exposing adolescents to career opportunities they would not be appraised of otherwise (Levine et al., 2021), but they also over-represent and glamorize occupations such as law enforcement and medical professions (Kramer, 2010). Regardless of their accuracy, the media plays an influential role in socializing adolescents towards the world of work.

In addition to parents and the media, adolescents' peers, educational institutions, and part-time jobs are also important sources of VAS. As young people age, the influence of their peers' thoughts, experiences, and choices may increasingly influence career aspirations (Vangelisti, 1988), such that many high school students develop academic interests similar to those of their friends (Kramer, 2010). In an evaluation of sources for encouraging versus discouraging career messages, college students most frequently named their friends as the primary source of messages discouraging them from pursuing a particular career (Powers & Myers, 2017). Adolescents also develop important relational patterns with their peers that may carry over into the workforce, such as practicing communication skills through group projects, building interpersonal trust between friends, and keeping secrets from authority figures (Kramer, 2010). Schools and educational institutions are the primary settings where these social interactions take place, and therefore contribute to the development of professional skills, perceived career options, or the desire to pursue higher education in order to get a good job (Ashby-King & Anderson, 2022). Jablin (1985) found that classroom activities such as textbook reading and group discussions over- or under-represent certain occupations as well as leave specific impressions on children about what kind of communication to expect at work. Finally, part-time jobs, internships, or volunteer opportunities facilitate VAS for adolescents. Dailey (2016) demonstrated how VAS experiences in the form of internships may encourage interns towards or away from similar full-time work opportunities. In their study of dialectical tensions surrounding the work identity of interns, Woo and colleagues (2017) reported that most interns sought out their position in order to learn more about an industry or organization. They also found that interns with previous part-time work experience knew how to communicate with their supervisors

better than those without experience (Woo et al., 2017). All these sources of VAS provide adolescents with opportunities to develop skills and refine career interests.

What is important to note is that while socializing messages from each of the five VAS sources have a cumulative effect on career selection, not all messages are created or received equally. Depending on their life experiences, adolescents: a) have differential access to career messages and b) retain some types of messages better than others. First, I will discuss some of the factors that constrain career information. Then I will introduce the concept of career frameworks, which explain how adolescents may filter or process the career messages they receive.

1. Constrained VAS

In their study on adolescents' interests toward science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers, Myers and associates (2011) outlined a VAS model of STEM that provides a helpful heuristic for understanding some of the demographic and personal factors that influence youth's interest in STEM careers. According to this model, a) VAS messages, b) experiences, and c) personal factors including exposure to different careers, self-efficacy beliefs, enjoyment, and resilience interact on a foundation of gender and socioeconomic status (SES) to influence academic and career interests (Myers et al., 2011). This heuristic demonstrates how SES and gender may constrain or expand the career opportunities an adolescent considers available to them. For example, women are often socialized to consider their careers as secondary to their familial role as mother or wife or are encouraged towards roles traditionally associated with caretaking (Kramer, 2010; Medved et al., 2006; Myers et al., 2011). Furthermore, in contrast to research on upper-class youth which positions VAS and meaningful work as rooted in self-actualization, working class youth understand work as a

means to contribute to their families or communities by taking responsibility and demonstrating reciprocity, which may impact the careers they consider worthwhile (Way, 2020). Using Ciulla's (2000) four reasons for career selection as a framework, Buzzanell and Lucas (2013) demonstrated how many individuals' choices are constrained both materially and discursively by communication about work. They argue that popular discourse about careers (which primarily reveres white-collar work) limits the dignity of those whose SES, race, or gender keeps them from making certain career choices. For example, gender can impact women's ability to select careers that prioritize leisure or money due to gendered expectations of motherhood and the pay gap between men and women (Buzzanell & Lucas, 2013). Myers and associates (2011) also found that female students from higher SES or white families felt they could establish a career from an array of options and then start a family, while female students from lower SES or Latino families thought they should have a family and then find a job (as opposed to a career) to support them. Additionally, in comparison with students whose parents graduated from college, first generation colleges students (FGCS) reported greater career barriers regarding finances, professional connections, and not knowing which career to pursue (Levine & Aley, 2021). In all these examples, access to career information and belief about opportunities and obligations can be limited depending on a variety of demographic characteristics.

2. Career Frameworks

In addition to having constrained access to career-related information, VAS research indicates that adolescents retain some career messages better than others. Frameworks have been used to describe the moderating or filtering devices that individuals employ based on their motivations, identity, and experiences in order to interpret messages and make decisions

(Bahrick et al., 1996; Harvey, 1985; Story, 1998). In a follow-up to the Myers et al. (2011) study, Jahn and Myers (2014) used the concept of "frameworks" to identify the filtering mechanisms or framing devices through which adolescents receive career messages and make career decisions. While frameworks are conceptually similar to schemas or heuristics, the present study will use the framework construct to build on prior literature and framework-focused research (i.e., Harvey, 1985; Jahn & Myers, 2014).

Based on past experiences, individuals develop frameworks for processing information they believe to be congruent with their self-concept or relevant to their aspirations and abilities (Harvey, 1985). Scholars have used "in order to" and "because of" statements as indicators for framework-like motivations (Schutz, 1932). For example, Harvey (1985) explored high schoolers' career frameworks, or their socially constructed knowledge of career and self, to make decisions about staying in school by identifying what they feel they must do "in order to" achieve their goals or what they are limited from doing "because of" who they are or how they believe the world works. These perceptions function as powerful tools for either accepting or rejecting messages. To expand, Story (1998) demonstrated how self-esteem functions as a "framework" that filters messages an individual perceives favorable or unfavorable towards their self-concept. When responding to a favorable or unfavorable personality profile (manipulated by the experiment), participants had more accurate recall of message valence when it was congruent with their self-esteem (favorable messages were recalled more accurately by those with higher self-esteem, and unfavorable messages were recalled more accurately by those with lower self-esteem; Story, 1998).

When applied to career-related messages, Jahn and Myers (2014) found three distinct career frameworks that seemed to guide students' attitudinal and behavioral response to the

career messages they received. In pursuit of these interpretive frameworks, Jahn and Myers (2014) analyzed transcripts of focus groups with middle and high school students regarding their interest in STEM-related careers, the messages they can recall receiving about these careers, and who those messages came from. Transcripts were coded using Schutz's (1932) "in order to" and "because of" statements to identify the values and motivations that might influence career interest and filter messages. The emerging filtering lens were enjoyment-, ability-, and goal-based frameworks (Jahn & Myers, 2014). Students held an *enjoyment-based framework* when they were driven towards or away from a possible career path by how much they enjoyed relevant coursework. They expressed a desire to "pursue their passions" and find a job where they are satisfied in day-to-day tasks. An *ability-based framework* was driven by a student's aptitude or skill in their area of interest. Students with this framework were inclined to pursue careers in subject areas where they were successful and avoid careers in subject areas where they struggled. Students with a *goal-based framework* were driven towards careers that allowed them to achieve the lifestyle, status, or identity they desired, such as becoming an engineer in order to make good money.

In each case, the relevant framework seemed to amplify certain types of career-related messages and filter out others (Jahn & Myers, 2014). For example, self-actualization messages where students were advised to pursue career paths that maximized their interests and passions seemed to both form and inform the career interests of students who held an enjoyment-based framework (Jahn & Myers, 2014). Additionally, students with a goal-based career framework recalled helpful messages from influential others about how to overcome the challenges they might experience on the path towards their goal and may be more receptive to these career-detail messages as opposed to personal fulfillment messages (Jahn

& Myers, 2014). Overall, it seems likely that career messages will be most impactful when they are aligned with an adolescent's primary career framework.

Although Jahn and Myers (2014) provide a compelling outline of three career frameworks relative to adolescent interest or disinterest in STEM careers, further investigation into their enduring presence beyond STEM, possible differences in frameworks based on demographic groupings, or the possible existence of additional frameworks has yet to be pursued. As described in the previous section, research has shown various ways that VAS differs for women (i.e., Medved et al., 2011), those of lower socio-economic status (i.e., Myers et al., 2011), and first-generation students (i.e., Levine & Aley, 2021). It's possible that young adults may develop different frameworks depending on these demographics and life experiences. Furthermore, as introduced at the outset of this paper, the landscape of work has changed significantly since Jahn and Myers collected their data. Today's young adults may (or may not) regard the idea of a "career" much differently than they did 15 years ago. Before introducing my research questions, I will conclude this review with a summary of how the emerging generation approaches work.

C. Changes in Work and Motivation

As previously articulated, in addition to influencing specific career interest and selection, VAS also instills orientations towards work, how it is defined, and what kinds are valuable for society. In her seminal work on colloquialisms and socialization, Clair (1996) demonstrated how Western capitalist values are deeply ingrained in everyday speech as reflected in adolescent interpretations of what constitutes a "real job". When asked to define what constitutes a "real job", young adults at that time named money, the extent to which education or potential was utilized, and how enjoyable the job was as top criteria for a job's

"realness" or significance (Clair, 1996). A replication study in 2015 revealed similar results with Millennials naming financial autonomy, the use of college education, and the classification of a job as career-like as qualifiers for a "real job" (O'Connor & Raile, 2015). A basic Google search defines a "career" as "an occupation undertaken for a significant period of a person's life and with opportunities for progress" (Oxford Languages, 2023) and "a profession for which one trains and which is undertaken as a permanent calling" (Merriam-Webster, 2023). At least for the Generation X students in Clair's (1996) study and the Millennials in the O'Connor and Raile (2015) study, these values for stability, financial abundance, and continual advancement describe young adult's posture towards work. However, in the wake of sweeping changes and value shifts instigated by the Coronavirus pandemic, recent and current economic recessions, and other generational changes, is this still how young adults think of or approach their work lives? Does the connotation of the word "career" account for the diverse experiences of minorities or the increasing number of individuals choosing non-standard work paths?

Many argue that the way society approaches work on a large scale is changing (i.e., Bajrami et al., 2021; Kaufman & Taniguchi, 2021; Rhyu, 2022). These sources discuss how the way people perform work, their motivation, and expectations are changing. One *Forbes* article states:

> *"*The days of the hashtags #sidehustle, #GoalDigger and #IGotTheJob are fleeting; they're quickly being swapped out with quirky, tongue-in-cheek Instagram posts of #WFH, #CorporateAmerica and #IQuit. While comical in tone, this viral digital narrative underscores a very serious truth: Our country's perception and expectations of work are shifting, so we must shift with them*"* (Rhyu, 2022).

Social media accounts with massive followings such as @CorporateNatalie and @It'sMeRod on Instagram represent the "age of anti-ambition" with videos and memes about how to work the least and get the most from your employer in order to live the life you really want to live outside of work (Malone, 2022). These seem to indicate that prestige, acclaim, and "climbing the ladder" might not matter as much in the way people think about work as it has in the past.

Additionally, values for flexibility and freedom dominate online conversations about the benefits and work arrangements that matter most to workers. *Harvard Business Review* reports that flexible options regarding working hours and location, reimagined productivity standards, and working on diverse teams are paramount for the current workforce (Minahan, 2021). A sentiment analysis of tweets about working from home revealed that 73.1% of participants felt positively about the arrangement, associating work-from-home culture with emotions such as trust, anticipation, and joy (Dubey & Tripathi, 2020). In a similar study, Zhang and associates' (2021) sentiment analysis and topic modeling of tweets demonstrated that participants saw remote work as beneficial for productivity, remote learning, flexible work, and resource gains through technological tools. Even before the pandemic, Mais and Pallais' (2017) discrete choice experiment on call center workers value for alternative work arrangements found that on average workers were willing to take an 8% pay cut in exchange for the ability to work from home (although interestingly they were largely not willing to trade compensation for scheduling flexibility). Furthermore, Deloitte reported that while Generation Z (born between 1996-2012) still holds salary and stability in high regard, they also want work-life balance, flexible hours, and benefits from employers (Gomez et al., 2018). While choosing a career that maximizes compensation, potential, and fulfillment may

have been (and may continue to be) top of mind, the desire to do work that makes room for other lifestyle accommodations seems to have risen in importance.

Furthermore, this increasing emphasis on work that enables flexibility and work-life balance may be contributing to the rise of non-traditional forms of work and impacting the ways young people define a respectable career. Typically, "real jobs" are thought of as full-time positions (40-hours/week) with regular schedules (Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm) at an office (Clair, 1996; O'Connor & Raile, 2015), but the rise of the "gig economy" is challenging these assumptions. Gig work is non-standard work that is usually short-term or project-based (Gig Economy Data Hub, 2023). There are various ways to define what constitutes gig work, but it is often recognized by work arrangement (freelance, temp agency, self-employment, subcontracted work), legal classification (employees/W2 vs. independent contractors/1099), and the nature of the work itself (day-to-day tasks such as scheduling, flexibility, oversight; Gig Economy Data Hub, 2023). According to research aggregated by Cornell University's IRL School and the Aspen Institute's Future of Work Initiative, more than 25% of the workforce is engaged in gig work in some capacity, and over 10% rely on it as their primary source of income (Gig Economy Data Hub, 2023). Another survey conducted by Upwork estimates that as of 2021, 36% of the overall workforce conducts full- or part-time freelance work, and it is growing more amongst the most educated, with 51% of post-grad workers freelancing (Ozimek, 2021). Whether by necessity due to massive layoffs or by choice due to the desire for increased autonomy and flexibility, non-standard jobs may be more attractive to young adults than in the past.

These evolving sentiments towards work and the increase in alternative work arrangements may affect the frameworks young adults draw upon to evaluate their career

options as well as how the way they think about "careers" in general. With so many sweeping changes to the job market and the economy in recent years, incoming workers from Generation Z may have formed entirely new frameworks through their VAS that guide their interests and selections. If certain motivating factors have increased or decreased in salience (i.e., higher value for flexibility), it's also possible that traditionally held ability, enjoyment, or goal frameworks mean slightly different things to young adults in a post-Pandemic society. Finally, it's worth exploring how young adults think about work by considering the work-related labels and terms they prefer or find relevant. In order to account for and capture the breadth of possible orientations towards work, this project will sometimes use the term "making a living" to describe young adult's work lives. Ideally, this broad description will account for various approaches to work and give young adults permission to define their work aspirations as they see fit, be that as careers, callings, gigs, etc.

III. Research Questions

Taken together, the landscape of work is changing, and the time is ripe for investigation into the outcome of socializing experiences and messages on how emerging adults think about their work, evaluate their options, and articulate their interests and expectations. Inspired by current events and grounded in prior research on VAS and career frameworks, I pose the following research questions:

RQ1: How do young adults in 2022 think about "making a living"?

RQ2: Can we identify a typology of common frameworks that young adults use when evaluating jobs or incoming-earning options?

RQ2A: If so, how does the typology correspond to the enjoyment, ability and goal frameworks as identified by Jahn and Myers?

RQ3: Can items be written associated with scales that would assess the Jahn and Myers typology, plus additional typologies that are theorized based on current literature?

Table 1 provides an overview of the research questions and associated measures, methods, and results, which will also be described in the sections to follow.

IV. Methods

This study used an embedded mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) to explore how young adults conceptualize and communicate about their ideal work lives, investigate the potential existence, extension, and alignment of career frameworks with those identified by Jahn and Myers (2014), and begin the validation process for an instrument that assesses how much an individual values each framework.[1] Towards this end, I developed and administered a survey to undergraduate students at a large university on the west coast of the United States. The survey contained a variety of open-ended questions to draw out possible emergent frameworks (RQ2 and RQ2A) and closed-ended questions as a first step towards developing an instrument for measuring the extent to which an individual draws upon each framework (RQ3). Some open and closed ended questions were also designed to explore how young adults think about making a living (RQ1).

[1] While a sequential exploratory design might be recommended to explore students' career frameworks using qualitative data prior to refining and validating a measurement instrument, the three-dimension framework developed by Jahn and Myers (2014) was also used by Powers and Myers (2017). As necessary, I will develop new items to assess any additional frameworks and revalidate the instrument at a later time.

Survey participants were recruited through convenience sampling from undergraduate communication courses through the Department of Communication's online research management system. At this university, communication students in lower division courses are required to participate in a certain amount of research for course credit, and upper division courses often offer extra credit for research participation, which incentivized student participation. College students were appropriate participants for this study because career choice is extremely salient during this season of life. During these years, young adults are actively reflecting on their future goals and are making academic and professional decisions to achieve these. They are able to reflect on the impressions they have formed about the world of work as well as articulate what criteria they use to evaluate career opportunities as they consider their future.

A. Participants

A total of 389 students completed the survey. In terms of gender participation, 282 identified as female (72.5%), 100 identified as male (25.7%), 4 identified as non-binary (1%), and 3 did not disclose their gender (0.8%). The age of participants ranged from 18 to 35, with a mean of about 20. Respondents reported their ethnicity to be 5 African American (1.3%); 105 Asian (27%); 176 Caucasian/White (45.2%); 41 Hispanic/Latino (10.5%); 10 Middle Eastern (2.6%); 5 Pacific Islander (1.3%); 43 Multi-racial (11.1%); 3 other (0.8%), and 1 did not disclose (0.3%). In terms of degree completion, most participants were upperclassman with junior or senior standing (61.7%). Participants estimated their family's income across several categories with 39 reporting their family made less than $40k a year (10%), 69 reporting income of $40 -$80k (17.7%), 108 reporting income of $80-120k (27.8%), and 168 reporting their family's income as over $120k a year (43.2%). Five

participants abstained from this question (1.3%). Finally, first-generation status was identified using a question included in the survey but associated with a separate project. This project explored the impact of a parent working from home on students' perceptions of their parent's career. Participants were asked to identify one parent whose work arrangement changed due to the Pandemic and answer questions regarding that one parent. 117 of the total participants reported that this parent had not completed a 4-year bachelor's degree (30.1%), classifying these students as first-generation college students for the purpose of this analysis.

B. Measures

The mixed-methods survey began with open-ended questions to explore RQ1 and RQ2 before administering a *preliminary* career frameworks instrument to address RQ3. Some additional closed-ended questions were also included to explore how young adults regarded their work lives (RQ1).

1. RQ1 and RQ2: "Making a Living" and Career Frameworks

In order to explore RQ1 and RQ2, respondents were prompted through several open-ended questions to describe their ideal vision for making a living (Q1), the criteria they use when selecting a job (Q2), and their primary work interests at this time (Q3; see Appendix A for full survey).[2] Responses to these questions ranged from just a few words to full paragraphs. Several closed-ended questions asked participants to select or rank the terms and phrases they felt best described their future work, such as a "job", "career", "calling", or

[2] While these questions did not explicitly ask participants to report messages or sources that impacted these sentiments, a plethora of research connects VAS message and sources to resulting career attitudes, interests, and expectations. The connection between the two in this study is reasonably assumed based on the literature.

"gig" and provide an open-ended explanation for this selection (Q5). One question (Q7) directly asked students to select what was more important to them when considering their future work between "*prestigious identity (people will admire/respect you)*", "*enjoyment in doing the job*" and "*using your unique talent/skills*" as an attempt to overtly name Jahn and Myers' (2014) frameworks and have students choose.

2. RQ3: Career Frameworks Instrument

Participants also completed an instrument designed to evaluate an individual's primary career framework. To create these experimental scales, I drew upon a preliminary career frameworks instrument designed by Dr. Karen Myers and former students Jody Jahn and Bernadette Gailliard, which included nine Likert-type questions on a six-point scale with three questions pertaining to each of Jahn and Myers (2014) frameworks. For example, an enjoyment-based framework was assessed with statements such as '*In hearing about careers, what's is most important to me is that I am passionate about my work*' where participants respond from 1 (not at all like me) to 6 (very much like me). Similarly, an ability-based framework was assessed with statements such as '*I became interested in this career/job because I was told it fit my abilities*' and a goal-based framework was assessed with questions such as '*I chose this career/job because it reflects the image of who I want to be.*'

I also wrote 15 new items to explore the possibility of other unidentified career frameworks based on recent literature (i.e., Bajrami et al., 2021; Gomez et al., 2018; Kaufman & Taniguchi, 2021; Rhyu, 2022). These frameworks emphasized flexibility ('*I am interested in hearing about jobs that will let me work from any location'*), autonomy ('*I am interested in jobs that enable me to work independently'*), service ('*A criteria for my future career is that I am able to make a difference'*), continuous learning opportunity ('*A career*

should provide opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills'), and stability (‘*I am only interested in hearing about jobs that provide steady income and benefits'*) as possible frameworks for career evaluation and selection. Items were phrased in such a way to underscore the role of communication in forming these student’s sentiments (i.e., *“I was told...”, “In hearing about careers…”* etc.).

C. Data Analysis

In this section, I describe how I analyzed the qualitative and quantitative data and the criteria I used to derive my findings.

1. RQ1 and RQ2: Content Analysis and Binary Logistic Regression

RQ1 asked how young adults in 2022 think about “making a living”. Following Neuendorf’s (2017) recommended process for content analysis, I organized a research team of two undergraduate research assistants to iteratively analyze the qualitative responses using a combination of deductive and inductive codes. First, as the principal investigator, I read through a random selection of the data to get a feel for participant responses. Based on this review, I drafted an initial codebook that included deductive codes according to the enjoyment, ability, and goal-based frameworks identified by Jahn and Myers (2014) and inductive codes that reflected emergent framework themes I perceived in the data. At this stage, and throughout codebook iterations, I treated my research assistants as key informants and consistently solicited their feedback because they are members of the target population. One key change that I immediately made to the deductive codes was splitting the goal framework into two separate constructs: a *goal-identity framework* and *goal-lifestyle framework*. There appeared to be a distinct difference between participants who saw their

career as a means to achieve a particular *identity* by holding a specific title, working in a certain industry, or being the type of person who makes an impact on the world through work, versus those who sought to achieve a desired *lifestyle* through their career, such as living in a specific city or making the amount of money necessary to maintain their desired standard of living. The conceptual distinction that we drew here was that those with an identity goal engaged with their career "in order to" align with a particular identity (being a difference maker or a lawyer or a strategist who worked in public relations, etc.) while those with a lifestyle goal engaged in career choices "in order to" facilitate desired non-work outcomes (maintaining a particular income level or work arrangement, etc.). Additional emergent framework codes included flexibility, autonomy, service, continuous learning opportunity, and stability frameworks (see Appendix B for the original codebook including operationalization). In total, the initial codebook contained 12 framework codes including an opportunity for the coders to identity other emergent frameworks that I did not discern in my initial read of the data, a code for being unable to determine a framework from the response, and a code for missing data. Coders were instructed to identify a primary framework (that which was most salient) for the response as well as a secondary framework when possible. When frameworks held the same level of salience, they were to code primary and secondary in order of appearance in the response. The unit of analysis was each participant's full open-ended response to an individual survey question. Therefore, the process of selecting a primary and secondary framework from the 12 possible framework codes was conducted for each participant's response to Q1 (*What's your ideal vision for how you'd like to make a living in the future?),* Q2 (*What criteria do you use when considering and selecting a job or income-earning activity?*), and Q5 (*Which one of the following statements best describes how*

you view your future work? Please explain your answer to the previous question.) separately. Q3 (*What is your primary work interest at this time? Briefly describe what has caused you to be interested in this.)* was not analyzed because responses to this question had the least amount of relevance to the research questions.

An initial coding test on the responses from 25 participants (75 units of analysis) revealed much disagreement between coders. Discussion revealed difficulty differentiating between goal-lifestyle and some of the new framework codes (autonomy, flexibility, stability) as these characteristics often reflect lifestyle considerations. Mentions of salary and benefits were also difficult to code because there was ambiguity as to whether they facilitated a lifestyle goal or represented an identity goal due to the societal status they facilitated. Finally, coders were confused by the semantics of phrases like "*I am interested in…."* or *"I would like to…."* because they weren't sure if this interest and liking were indicative of *enjoying* a job, pointed towards a *goal*, or was just a restatement of the question prompt.

After thoroughly discussing with the research assistants and consulting with an advising researcher, I decided to make a number of significant changes to the codebook. First, we revisited the difference between a career *framework* and elements of a job or career that are particularly *motivating*. We conceptualized a framework as an actual conceptual structure that individuals use to process information and make decisions – a guiding principle or lens that filters the job opportunities that young adults are interested in (Jahn & Myers, 2014). By contrast, a *motivating factor* is an attribute or benefit of a specific job that an individual might value. Its presence enhances the attractiveness of a job, but it is not the *primary* driver for career interests. By this definition, individuals who hold different frameworks could be similarly motivated by an element of a job (although certain motivations might be valued

more strongly within certain frameworks), but their reason for valuing this factor could be different.

It was clear that the new "frameworks" I added to the initial codebook were really reflecting these additional motivating criteria. With this distinction in mind, I restructured the coding scheme so that each unit of analysis was coded for a primary and secondary framework (ability, enjoyment, goal-lifestyle, goal-identity, other, or unable to determine) as well as for the presence of absence of six motivating factors: Work-life balance, company culture, stability, continuous learning opportunity, impact, and compensation. I also clarified areas of confusion related to the goal-focused frameworks (compensation considered indicative of lifestyle considerations) and instructed coders to evaluate the focus of "*I am interested in…"* statements. I proceeded to retrain the coders on the new codebook and asked them to code 45 participant responses (135 units of analysis).

This next data analysis test revealed ongoing reliability issues for most variables, some despite high percentage of agreement. Analysis and discussion made it clear that discerning what framework was most salient and coding for primary and secondary framework was too subjective and difficult to reliably determine. After consulting with advising faculty, I decided to switch to presence-absence coding for the next codebook so that each unit of analysis was coded for either the presence (1) or absence (0) of each framework. The downside of this decision was that we would not be able to identify which of the frameworks was operating most strongly, but it was clear from the nature of the data that this was not an evaluation we could reliably make.

Due to the nominal, binary nature of the coding scheme, I determined that I_r was the most appropriate reliability measure for this content analysis moving forward (Perreault & Leigh,

1989). Perreault and Leigh (1989) developed I_r (index of reliability) in response to the limitations of reliability measures ill-suited for research involving nominal scale data based on qualitative judgements. Popular reliability measures such as Cohen's Kappa rely on the assumption of fixed marginal distribution between coders' judgements – that is they measure coder's reliability together on an expected distribution and only give "credit" for judgments beyond that expected by chance (Brennan & Prediger, 1981; Perrault & Leigh, 1989). This is problematic in nominal data where binary codes significantly increase the probability that coders will agree by chance or that codes may reliability converge in one category, resulting in an extremely low Kappa despite high levels of agreement. I_r provides a more realistic picture of coding reliability of nominal, binary data because it does not assume marginal distribution and instead a) considers each coder's reliability independently and b) takes into account the number of categories in the coding scheme to produce values ranging from 0.0 (no reliability) to 1.0 (perfect reliability). Codes receiving $I_r > 0.8$ are considered sufficiently reliable (Perrault & Leigh, 1989).

After determining that I would use binary coding and I_r as a reliability measure, additional refinements were made to the codebook to clarify areas of disagreement between various frameworks and motivating factors and another round of coding ensued. Several additional rounds of testing were conducted on different sub-samples of the data to continue honing in on clear definitions of the emergent motivating factors and the newly distinguished goal-lifestyle framework. During this process, we stopped coding for "other" as no new frameworks or factors emerged. We also dropped career framework codes for Q2 due to significant difficulty achieving reliability as many responses just listed motivating factors in bullet form, making frameworks nearly impossible to discern. Eventually, sufficient

reliability was achieved to complete data analysis testing (I_r > .90 for all frameworks, I_r > .89 for all motivating factors). We then moved on to code the full data set (see Table 2 for data analysis testing reliability coefficients).

Reliability was reassessed at the midpoint (n = 200) in order to ensure there wasn't any coder drift (Neuendorf, 2017). While I_r remained fairly high across variables (I_r > .85), I was concerned about the proportion of disagreement compared to the number of times the coders agreed that the construct was present. For some variables, I_r indicated sufficient reliability due to a significant amount of agreement as to when the framework was not present. However, when the framework *was* indicated present by one or both coders, agreement was mixed. For example, for the enjoyment framework code on Q5, I_r = 0.85 with 170 agreements and 30 disagreements. Further examination indicated that most of the agreement (142 cases) come from coding that the framework was absent and coders were only in agreement that the framework was present for 28 cases, while the coders disagreed on the frameworks presence in 30 cases. This indicated the need for additional clarity in the codebook. To ensure the highest level of accuracy, I reviewed areas of disagreement thoroughly and made notes about areas where either coder went particularly "rogue". I discerned some of the disagreement amongst the coders was likely due to mixing up different versions of the codebook and coding from memory which did not always reflect the most recent coding decisions. Together, we created a coding "cheat sheet" summarizing operationalizations in order to simplify the coding process. Another test on a sub-sample of the data (n = 30) using this coding cheat sheet generated I_r > .86 for most variables, and I was advised by consulting researchers to proceed with coding the full data set. At this juncture, framework codes for Q5 were dropped due to low reliability (I_r < .77).

The final data set (n = 389) included framework and motivating factor codes for Q1 and motivating factor codes alone for Q2 and Q5. Final reliabilities were deemed sufficient *(I_r >* .85; see Table 2 for all final reliability coefficients). Once again, I met with the coders to review and discuss disagreement. Clear patterns emerged for these areas of disagreement, such as for Q1 that asked "*What's your ideal vision for how you'd like to make a living in the future?",* one coder coded compensation as present only when a specific salary number was disclosed, while the other coder indicated presence of compensation for any mention of income. We reached agreement on how each of these areas of disagreement should generally be resolved (operationalizations reflected in Appendix C). Based on this discussion and what we had learned about career frameworks and motivating factors throughout the coding process, I reviewed each disagreement and made a call about what the final code should be. Descriptions of each framework and factor and the frequency of their occurrence in the data will be described in the results section.

As a final step of analysis in addressing RQ1, I ran several regressions including binary logistic regression and multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to analyze and explore group differences across frameworks between gender identity, ethnicity, family income, and first-generation status. These findings are also discussed in the results section.

3. RQ3: Career Frameworks Instrument

In order to address RQ3, the 30-scale items were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and Cronbach's alpha reliability tests. First, since the measurement scale to assess career frameworks had been used successfully in previous research (Powers & Myers, 2017), I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using MPlus. CFA examines the relationships between indicators and latent variables to

assess validity of the instrument. This analysis allows for the assessment of theoretically relevant reliability, as well as convergent and discriminant validity. In reviewing each of the CFAs, I examined the items' loadings with the other items in the factor to confirm convergent validity and also the loadings of the items on the other factors to assess discriminant validity. Items must load higher on the hypothesized factor than on the other factors, and items within factors must have at least a moderate correlation with each other.

Based on CFA results, it was necessary for me to explore relationships in the data further. To do so, I used an EFA to examine factor structure of the items without telling the model to look for specific theoretical relationships. EFA using Equamax rotation was appropriate because of the exploratory nature of the study and CFA results. Criteria used to determine and interpret factors required a primary loading of at least .40 and the item must load at least .20 greater than on any secondary factor. Also, at least three items were necessary for each dimension to be reliable.

Finally, Cronbach's alpha reliability of each factor was assessed using established guidelines for reliability of instruments. These guidelines suggest that scales producing Cronbach's alpha scores below .70 can be problematic because they could lack internal consistencies in how they measure the construct (Cronbach, 1951). If possible, alpha was recomputed with problematic items deleted to improve reliability. These criteria in additional to model fit will be discussed in the following results section.

V. Results

A. RQ1: Careers and Motivating Factors

The first research question sought to explore how young adults in 2022 think about "making a living". Towards this end, both qualitative and quantitative data were used to

assess their perceptions and expectations for their work lives. The content analysis of Q1 (*What's your ideal vision for how you'd like to make a living in the future?*), Q2 (*What criteria do you use when considering and selecting a job or income-earning activity?*), and Q5 (prompt to explain selection to previous question: *Which one of the following statements best describes how you view your future work?*) revealed six criteria motivating career interest: Work-life balance, company culture, stability, continuous learning opportunity, impact, and compensation (see Table 3 for frequencies). These motivating criteria and their frequencies are described below.

1. Work-life Balance

Students were motivated by job opportunities that reflected work-life balance when they discussed how their career might integrate *or* separate work and non-work parts of their lives. Some described generally wanting a "healthy" balance of work and life or a job arrangement that supported their mental health by not demanding too much of them. Others identified specific work schedules, total hours/days worked, or work location in giving them the balance they wanted. For some, this involved jobs that were flexible, allowing them to set their own schedules or work from wherever they wanted in order to integrate personal time into their workday (*"I would like to work remotely so that I have the flexibility to travel and live wherever I want")*. Others saw traditional work schedules of 8-hour workdays during the week with weekends off as facilitating optimal work-life balance ("*My ideal vision would be something in corporate, from Monday through Friday so that I have the weekends to wind down and spend time to myself*").

A substantial amount of communication literature conceptualizes the "life" side of work-life balance as pertaining to family-related responsibilities (i.e. Blithe, 2023; Clark, 2000;

Leppäkumpu & Sivunen, 2023). However, considering today's young adults are lagging behind past generations on major milestones, including the age for marrying and childbearing, it's reasonable to assume that the majority of participants in this study do not yet have or expect imminent child-rearing responsibilities (Fry, 2023). Although some participants discussed the desire for careers that facilitated future work-family balance, many participants approach "life" as the ability to invest in personal hobbies, maintain mental health, travel, or spend time with friends. In addition, while some articulated the desire for less work or stress and more "life" or boundaries, others discussed more broadly the value for *control, freedom, and flexibility* to choose their unique orientation of the "work-life" scale. It wasn't necessarily that they wanted less work and more life, but that they wanted control over where, when, and how they were doing their work.

Work-life balance was the second most common motivating factor in participant's ideal career (Q1; 17.7%; n = 69). It was also the second most common motivating factor when selecting a specific job (Q2; 30.1%; n = 117). For Q5, where participants were asked to identify their intent to pursue either a job, career, calling, or "gig" and then explain this selection, work-life balance was only evident in 2.6% (n = 10) of responses.

2. Company Culture

A company or team's culture, workstyle, or values were mentioned as a motivating factor for some participants. This was distinct from describing the job tasks or naming the desire to work at a specific company. Being motivated by company culture was evident in response such as, *"I want to have a positive work environment with lots of coworkers I get along with that range from different ages", "I look for jobs with good working environment as well as strong sense of community",* or *"I'm really looking for a team (family) that will grow and*

adapt together, making something together". Other responses identified their alignment with a company's mission statement or values as motivating criteria for career selection ("*Working for a company who has the same morals and passions as I do")*. Company culture as a motivating factor was reflected in 4.6% (n = 17) of participant responses regarding their ideal future work (Q1), 24.2% (n = 94) of responses to criteria used when selecting a specific job (Q2), and only 1% (n = 4) of responses explaining the label they associated with their future work (Q5).

3. Stability

Students motivated by stability mentioned stable work or pay as criteria in selecting a job. For Q1 and Q2, this motivation was commonly articulated as the desire for a career that provided "job security", "consistent pay", or a "stable living". Stability was evident as a motivating factor in 7.2% (n = 28) of participant response to Q1 and 5.7% (n = 22) of responses to Q2. Interestingly, stability manifested in slightly different but related ways in Q5. This question asked participants to reflect on the difference between careers, jobs, callings, and gigs in identifying which they prefer to pursue. Most participants opted to pursue a career and 28.3% (n = 110) explained this choice as being motivated by the long-term stability a career was perceived to provide. In addition to identifying how the career or compensation might be inherently secure or stable, they discussed finding a job they could *"stick with for a long time"* or one where they might *"pursue a long-term position in a field that [they] find interesting"*. Here we see stability as manifest in participants enjoying a job enough to be faithful to it, which in turn would provide them with more overall life stability. In sum, participants thought of jobs as stable when they either directly gave a participant

security *or* when they were enjoyable or interesting enough to keep the participant engaged long term.

4. Continuous Learning Opportunity

Continuous learning was a motivating factor in career selection when participants named growth, advancement opportunity, gaining experience, learning, or development as criteria they considered. Some comments focused more on the "internal" experience of learning and personal growth, such as *"Something that always has the possibility of a further challenge, or next step. Room to grow and do better."* or *"I value learning and challenging myself and so I hope that where I found myself working, it will allow me to express my creativity and encourage creativity as well."*. Others were more focused on "external" markers of growth, such as, *"For now, I prefer jobs that can build up my resume"* or "*career projection, position and promotion"*. These externally-oriented comments were still considered markers of continuous learning because they communicated a value for advancement and upward movement, and it was assumed that promotion inherently require improved performance and ability in some capacity. Motivation for continuous learning opportunity was evident in 3.3% (n = 13) of response to Q1, 14.1% (n = 55) of responses to Q2, and 15.4% (n = 60) responses to Q5.

5. Impact

Some participants identified making a difference or helping others through their careers as motivating factors. In order to streamline the coding process and minimize confusion, identifying career aspirations towards traditional helping professions, such as teaching, social work, or therapy were considered evidence for impact as a motivating factor. Some examples

include, "*I want to fulfill my responsibility as a global citizen by working for a global society,*" *"I believe that it is only through education one can make an influence to society. By pursuing a career in teaching and research I will be able to make positive changes to society in the long run",* or "*if it is useful to the general public".* Impact was a motivating factor in 12.9% (n = 50) of responses to Q1, 3.1% (n = 12) of responses to Q2, and 3.9% (n = 15) of responses to Q5.

6. Compensation

Compensation in the form of salary and/or benefits was often mentioned as a motivating factor in career selection. Some participants directly articulated a desired salary or pay range with comments such as ideally "*Making six-figures*" or *"I hope to be making over $75K per year."* Others mentioned a value for adequate compensation more broadly, saying they wanted *"a stable career that brings me financial abundance"* or *"I would like a decent paying job, I don't need to be rich, but just comfortable and not living paycheck by paycheck."* It seemed notable that more comments than expected, articulated they didn't need to make much money to be happy, they simply wanted a "sustainable wage", "financial independence", or just enough to support themselves and their future families as opposed to the desire to accrue wealth. Compensation was the most frequent motivating factor for both Q1 (21.9%; n = 85) and Q2 (71%; n = 276). It was the second most common motivating factor for Q5 (15.9%; n = 62).

In relation to RQ1, I also wanted to understand which terms young adults preferred to describe their orientation towards work and used a few closed-ended questions to do so. When asked to choose between the pursuit of a "job", "career", "calling", or multiple "projects/gigs" (Q4), the majority of participants said they wanted to pursue a "career"

(68.9%; n = 268). In much smaller quantities, some participants said they wanted to pursue a "calling" (15.9%; n = 62), a "job" (8.2%; n =32), "multiple projects or 'gigs'" (5.7%; n = 22), or some other label (1.3%; n = 5; See Figure 1). The survey also prompted participants to rank a number of additional work-related terms in order of relevance to their future (Q6). "Career" was ranked as most relevant for 214 participants (55%), "Vocation" for 84 participants (21.6%), and "Occupation" for 44 participants (11.3%; See Figure 2). While more than half of participants agreed that "Career" was the most relevant and desirable label for work, "job" was most frequently ranked second (21.9%, n = 86). The least relevant terms for participant's future were "gig work" with 152 participants (39.1%) ranking it second to last and "freelance" with 143 participants (36.5%) ranking it last (see Figure 3).

B. RQ2: Career Frameworks

The content analysis of Q1 for career frameworks helped address RQ2, which asked whether a typology of common frameworks was evident in young adults' description of their ideal means of "making a living," and if those frameworks aligned with Jahn and Myers' (2014) analysis. Although the originally theorized ability, enjoyment, and goal frameworks did emerge from the qualitative data, the frequency with which they emerged was quite different than that reported by Jahn and Myers (2014). Additionally, the goal framework was split into two distinct categories, goal-identity and goal-lifestyle (see Table 4 for career framework frequencies).

1. Ability Framework

Students displayed an ability framework when their career aspirations were filtered through their personal strengths, skills, or abilities. Comments reflecting an ability

framework typically named a specific occupation, field, or area of expertise and explained the student's interest by identifying how they could use their skills in that line of work. For example, one student wrote,

> "*I would like to write for a living, whether in journalism, advertising, technical/copywriting, fiction, academic/research writing, or editorial/publishing. I haven't narrowed down the exact area that I want to pursue, but I know that my strength is in the humanities/writing/mass communication."*

This student identified that they are interested in a variety of fields because they have strong writing abilities. Another said, "*My ideal future career will allow me to use my creativity and critical thinking skills and be fulfilling while also giving me and my family financial freedom."* Multiple frameworks are evident in this response, but the ability framework in particular emerges in this student's interest in careers that capitalize on their creativity and critical thinking ability. The ability framework was only evident in 2.6% (n = 10) of the participants' responses to Q1.

2. Enjoyment Framework

An enjoyment framework was evident when students were driven towards careers based on how much they liked, enjoyed, or were fulfilled by the work it entailed. Often participants would explicitly state that their ideal career would be doing something they enjoyed or were fulfilled by (i.e., *"Doing something fulfilling that I'm passionate about"*). Others described their priority for enjoyment using similar adjectives, such as, *"I would like to pursue a career in the arts that makes me feel like I'm having fun but getting work done"* or *"I would like to do something engaging that gives me purpose."* An enjoyment framework was coded in 21.6% (n = 84) of the responses.

3. Goal-identity Framework

An identity-focused goal framework reflected an emphasis on achieving a specific occupational identity or level of occupational prestige through one's career. This was operationalized as when a student identified their ideal career was directed at a very specific occupation or industry (such as being a teacher or working in public relations), named a career achievement (such as finishing graduate school or becoming a CEO), or identified a specific company that they wanted to work for. Some example responses include, *"In the future I would like to make living by working for a MLB team"* or *"Working in San Francisco, as a tax accountant for Deloitte."* Both of these responses articulate a specific role, industry, and/or company that they are aiming for in their career. A goal-identity framework was coded most frequently in our data set with 66.6% (n =259) of response reflecting our operationalization in some part of the response.

4. Goal-lifestyle Framework

Some goal-oriented responses were more focused on lifestyle achievements as opposed to a specific identity. The difference between these two goals was distinct enough to merit a separate code. A goal-lifestyle framework was evident when students communicated that they viewed their career as a means for facilitating a desired lifestyle, whether that was conceptualized through family, leisure, living in a specific city, being able to afford certain luxuries, or having a particular schedule. Comments describing work-life balance were coded as evidence of a goal-lifestyle framework (i.e., *"I want to work a solid 9-5 on weekdays and still have time to spend with family and friends."*), but this code is distinct from the work-life balance motivating factor because it incorporates other lifestyle considerations as well (i.e.,

"*I can afford to have the life I want."*). A goal-lifestyle framework was evident in 38.3% (n = 149) in the coded data.

The aim of this content analysis was to confirm the presence of identifiable career frameworks. The nature and constraints of the data and inability to ask follow-up questions makes the true focus and strength of participants' career frameworks difficult to discern. For example, this response contains indicators of enjoyment, goal-identity, and goal-lifestyle frameworks: *"I would like to work at a big name brand company that has a high paying salary with interesting work."* Although we aren't able to determine participants' primary framework from this qualitative data, we are able to see distinct evidence for four career frameworks that describe how young adults direct their career interests. I theorize about these frameworks and their contrast with previous research in the Discussion section of this thesis.

Interestingly, results from Q7 illuminate a discrepancy in the frequency of how frameworks emerged through our content analysis and how participants identified what was important to them between ability, enjoyment, and identity-related considerations when explicitly asked. This question asked participants to select what was most important to them in their future work between *"prestigious identity (people will admire/respect you)"*, "*enjoyment in doing the job"*, "*using your unique talent/skills*" or some other factor. An overwhelming majority of 266 participants (68.4%) selected *"enjoyment in doing the job"* as most important to them, followed by 72 (18.5%) selecting "*using your unique talent/skills"* and only 34 (8.7%) selecting "*prestigious identity"* as the most important criteria (4.4% selected other or abstained from the question). These responses appear to contrast with their open-ended responses to Q1 where goal frameworks were most common. However, the participants' response to this closed-ended question closely align with Jahn and Myers'

(2014) framework study that found enjoyment frameworks most common, ability frameworks the second most common, and goal frameworks third. In the Discussion section, I theorize about why this inconsistency may have appeared in the data.

5. Group Differences

In order to explore possible group differences for career frameworks, I performed several logistic regressions and a MANCOVA to ascertain the effects of gender, ethnicity, family income level, and first-generation status on the likelihood that participant responses would reflect a particular career framework. To run these tests, I used the demographic data reported by participants in the study, sometimes recategorizing groups to achieve appropriate sample sizes (i.e., focusing my analysis on gender expressions of males versus female or specific ethnic groups such as Asian versus white).

First, I used binary logistic regression to compare demographic groupings of gender, family income level, and first-generations status separately to the career framework content analysis results for Q1 (*What's your ideal vision for how you'd like to make a living in the future?*). The ability framework was excluded from this analysis because it was hardly represented in the sample (only 2.6%). None of the models exploring gender (males versus females) or first-generation status (first generation versus legacy students) was statistically significant for enjoyment, goal-identity, or goal-lifestyle frameworks (see Tables 5-7 for logistic regression results). However, logistic regression models exploring differences in family income level (those who made 120k or more annually versus those who made less than 120k, as described below) and between ethnic groups yielded significant or almost significant results across several frameworks.

Students were asked to report their family's annual income as either less than $40k, $40k - $80k, $80k – $120k, or $120k or more. Responses were regrouped to compare those whose families made under $120k (n = 216) versus those families made $120k or more (n = 168). While logistic regression models comparing these groups on enjoyment and goal-lifestyle frameworks yielded non-significant results, the model comparing them on the goal-identity framework approached significance, $\chi^2(1) = 3.75$, $p < .053$. The model explained .013% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in the enjoyment framework and correctly classified 66.1% of the cases. The odds ratio indicated that those from a higher income bracket were slightly less likely than those whose families made less to display a goal-identity framework (OR: 0.829, 95% CI [0.547 – 1.256]), but, again, this result was not quite statistically significant.

Due to the distribution of ethnicities in the sample, it was most appropriate to compare the career framework codes of Asian students (n = 105) to those of white students (n = 176). Participants of other ethnicities (n = 108) were excluded from analysis because any differences related to this group taken as a whole would not be interpretable. A one-way MANCOVA comparing Asian students and white students on the career frameworks including gender, family-income, and first-generation status as covariates was nonsignificant overall, F (4, 269) = 1.849, $p < .120$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .973$, partial $\eta^2 = .027$ (see Table 8 for MANCOVA results). Further analysis of between-subject effects revealed no significant differences ($p > .05$) between these ethnic groups for ability ($M = .02$), enjoyment ($M = .25$), or goal-identity frameworks ($M = .63$). However, there was a statistically significant difference in the presence of a goal-lifestyle framework ($M = .42$) based on whether a student was Asian or white, F (1, 279) = 5.006, $p < .026$, partial $\eta^2 = .018$ (see Table 9 for ethnicity-specific between-subject MANCOVA results).These results indicate that Asian students ($M =$

.50) were more likely than white students (M = .37) to idealize their careers with lifestyle considerations in mind. However, this difference only explained 2% of the variance (partial η^2 = .018) and it must be noted that the overall MANCOVA was non-significant.

C. RQ3: Career Frameworks Instrument

Finally, RQ3 assessed if scale items could be written to evaluate a student's primary career framework. Per Mackenzie and colleagues' (2011) recommendation, rigorous scale development procedures require pretesting, evaluation, and refinement before scale validity can be assessed using new data from a separate sample. While some career frameworks items have been used in previous research (Powers & Myers, 2017), recent changes in work and generational shifts called for the addition of new items. Therefore, this study serves as a scale pretest for the newly drafted measure. In order to run the analysis, missing data was replaced with the mean score for that item. I then factor analyzed the career frameworks scale using CFA in MPlus to assess the fit of the theorized eight-factor model (flexibility framework, autonomy framework, service framework, continuous learning framework, stability framework, ability framework, enjoyment framework, and goal framework). The resulting model fit achieved insufficient results: χ^2 (377) = 1190.84, p < .00, SRMR = .07, RMSEA = .07 with 90% CI [.07, .08], CFI = .76, TLI = .73. Specifically, CFI and TLI were well below the recommended cut off value of .95, and RMSEA was above the cutoff value of .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Additionally, the chi-square value was large and significant, indicating poor model fit. Since the model failed goodness-of-fit tests, I moved to EFA to explore unforeseen relationships in the data.

An EFA was performed using SPSS on the 30 career frameworks items to examine the item loadings onto possible factors. Sampling adequacy was assessed using the KMO index,

which must be greater than 0.60, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which must be significant at $p < .05$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The data was deemed suitable for EFA with a KMO index of 0.885 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity significant at $p < .00$. Results of the EFA indicate the emergence of seven components. Eigenvalues for each of the seven components were above the cutoff value of 1 (see Table 10). The scree plot revealed a slight plateau after factor four and a distinct plateau after factor seven. Factor loadings on each of the seven components were assessed using the ".40–.30–.20" rule to ensure discriminant and convergent validity (Howard, 2016). To be considered a satisfactory variable, a factor loading should be above 0.40 on its primary factor, load onto other factors less than 0.30, and have a difference of 0.20 with other items on that factor. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, I applied the .20 rule loosely in order to entertain all possible relationships amongst the items. Using these criteria as a general guideline, I determined that there were four components containing enough items with convergent and divergent validity to be considered factors. The final three components only contained one or two items, so these were discarded (see Table 11 for all factor loadings and comparisons).

Internal consistency of each of the four retained factors was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha test of reliability, including evaluation of the coefficient if any of the items were deleted. For factor 1, $\alpha = 0.749$, which indicates acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.7$; Cronbach, 1951). Factor 2 also achieved acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.764$) and Cronbach's Alpha did not improve if any of the five items were deleted. Similarly, factor 3 was acceptable without dropping any items ($\alpha = 0.739$). Factor 4 was approaching the acceptable threshold but did not achieve adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.644$).

Removing any of the items did not improve Cronbach's Alpha for factor 4. Table 12 contains all four factors and their associated items.

The four components generated by the EFA and evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha did not contain item groupings as theorized. While this was somewhat anticipated due to the results of the CFA, it was particularly surprising that the items pertaining to ability, enjoyment, and goal frameworks did not respectively cluster together, considering their basis in academic literature (Jahn & Myers, 2014; Powers & Myers, 2017). Instead, factor 1 was comprised of three ability-oriented items and two enjoyment-oriented items, indicating that students seem to equate doing what they love or enjoy with what comes easily or naturally to them. Factor 2 consisted of three continuous learning opportunity and two service- or impact-oriented items. It seems that young adults who value ongoing opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills, develop professionally, and continuously learn similarly desire to make a difference and fulfill a higher purpose through their career. Perhaps they believe they can best serve others when they are in jobs that push and challenge them to extend their capabilities. Factor 3 constituted stability- and goal-oriented items. The specific items that loaded together related to a receiving a reliable paycheck, high risk and reward careers, prestige, and reputation or image. While the stability items were intended to be distinct from goal items, it makes sense that these status-related concepts all mapped together. Finally, factor 4 contained flexibility- and autonomy-related items. This loading actually made a lot of sense because these items mostly related to the concept of freedom through identifying the desire for personal time during the workday, working independently, working from any location, and not having a manager continuously overseeing one's work. Fascinatingly, the fifth item seems paradoxical as it states, "*I am interested in work in which I have frequent*

guidance from my supervisor." It seems that young adults want freedom but also direction in their work. While these relationships were not anticipated, further evaluation of each factor does reveal reasonable relationships and illuminates how young adults converge in the way they think about their careers.

In the next section, I review these findings and offer plausible explanations for some of the unanticipated findings. I also discuss theoretical as well as practical implications, and end the section with limitations and potential direction for future research.

VI. Discussion and Limitations

This project explored broadly how young adults think about making a living and specifically what cognitive frameworks might guide their career interests and selections. Informed by VAS research, I used Jahn and Myers (2014) typology of ability, enjoyment, and goal career frameworks as well as more recent literature to evaluate college students written messages about their career aspirations and interests. I also wrote and began validation of scale items that could theoretically assess an individual's identification with each framework.

Results indicate that young adults approach their careers with specific expectations for what their work lives and places of employment should facilitate. Common motivating factors in career selection were work-life balance, a company's culture or work environment, opportunity for continuous learning and development, stability, the ability to make an impact or difference in the community/society through work, and compensation and benefits. Factors such as work-life balance and compensation were highly represented across the sample. Although compensation as a key motivator was not particularly surprising, a high value for work-life balance is something not commonly seen in college student samples (e.g., Clair, 1996; O'Connor & Raile, 2015). While flexibility and work-life balance have been identified

as workplace values for Millennials who are already part of the workforce (e.g., Mahmoud et al., 2020), special attention to the interplay between work and life has not been reported by college students when prompted to describe ideal forms of work (e.g., Clair, 1996; O'Connor & Raile). Also, regarding work-life balance, participants varied substantially in their definition of what constituted healthy work-life balance or adequate compensation. Some defined balance as integration of work and life (blurred boundaries) while others preferred total separation (rigid boundaries; Clark, 2000). The common thread across responses was the desire to control and manage the relationship between work and non-work. Regarding compensation, many participants identified their objective of simply wanting to make enough to live sustainably. We also found that the traditional label "career" was still the preferred term to describe their orientation towards work, as opposed to occupation, job, calling, gig, etc.

In regards to career frameworks, results were somewhat inconclusive. The qualitative data did contain indicators that young adults lean on career frameworks to direct their interests and pursuits. Messages about their ideal work lives reflected Jahn and Myers' (2014) ability, enjoyment, and identity goals as well as the emergent lifestyle goal as guides or schemas in career considerations. However, these themes emerged from the data with vastly different frequencies than how they emerged in Jahn and Myers (2014) original work. Further, comparison with the quantitative data also reveals inconsistencies, which could either be attributed to the overall construct of career frameworks or to their operationalization in this project. Factor analysis did not confirm anticipated factors and instead revealed unexpected item loadings. Young adults also identified in their close-ended survey responses that enjoyment of work was of primary importance to their work lives, while this theme was

not heavily manifest in their open-ended responses. The following discussion will outline implications of these findings and future directions for research on career frameworks.

A. Theoretical Implications

This project contributes to career development theory and VAS research in several ways. By identifying common frameworks and motivators for career selection in today's young adults, this study sheds light on the outcome of career development processes theorized by SCCT and EVT. These theories describe the way self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and subjective values interact to influence career interests (Eccles, 2009; Lent et al., 1994). This study specifies the career interests and expectations resulting from these processes for college students in 2022. Findings also indicate young adults' priorities according to Ciulla's (2000) identification of meaningful work, leisure, money, and stability as "reasons for work". While some participants in this study did indicate a value for meaningful work (enjoyment and impact), they were much more motivated towards careers that facilitated leisure (work-life balance), money (compensation), and stability.

The career frameworks and motivators identified in this study also advance VAS scholarship through insight into the present-day outcome of young adults socializing experiences to the world of work via communication. Ongoing study of frameworks beyond the work done by Powers and Myers (2017) and Jahn and Myers (2014) is valuable for understanding how young adults filter and prioritize career-related information. In this project, factor analysis results indicate that young adults do prioritize career messages differently depending on their foci (e.g., flexibility and autonomy focused messages clustered together). However, results from this study also indicate potentially significant issues with the current understanding of career frameworks, which could be attributed to several issues.

First, there are a number of differences in the source and form of data collection and analysis in this project versus that in the Jahn and Myers (2014) study that may have influenced results. Jahn and Myers (2014) collected their data through focus groups with high school STEM students. They analyzed transcripts using resolutely qualitative methods of constant comparison and grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). In contrast, I used a survey to collect my data from college students, primarily in social science, and analyzed the open-ended responses using a more quantitative approach to content analysis (Neuendorf, 2017). It's possible that career frameworks emerged from Jahn and Myers' (2014) study in such distinct ways because high school students think about their careers in more binary, simplistic terms based on their limited exposure to career options and the criteria available for consideration. In contrast, open-ended responses from college students in my data set reflected evidence of multiple, if not all, frameworks in a single response. At this stage of their life, it could be that college students are more acquainted with the nuances of career selection and have expanded the ways they think about and filter career related information. This would indicate that career frameworks are engaged to different degrees in different forms depending on life stage.

On the other hand, it is possible that individuals do operate using one distinct career framework as Jahn and Myers (2014) suggested, but the nature of my data limited me from identifying this primary framework. Focus groups allow for follow-up questions to clarify meaning, while I was limited to interpreting the comments my participants chose to provide. This limitation as well as the quantitative approach I used in my analysis forced very specific operationalizations of each framework (which we struggled to define throughout the coding process due to ambiguity in the data). This quantitative approach can be a strength as it

necessitates clear definition of constructs (Neuendorf, 2017), but it can also force binary choices that may not accurately reflect the messy reality of the data. In this case, incongruent findings between the content analysis and factor analysis either imply a methodical limitation, or a theoretical issue in the definition of what career frameworks are and what dimensions and types they are comprised of.

Finally, it's worth noting that Jahn and Myers (2014) originally collected their data in 2008-2009, before the effects of the Great Recession had taken root or COVID-19 came into effect, which caused major shifts in the way white collar work was performed during and after the pandemic. It's possible that over the past 15 years these factors significantly altered the form and utility of career frameworks. This presents a puzzling problem for scholars interested in career frameworks. If career values changed so much as to significantly alter the schemas of today's youth, what constitutes a career framework may be too unstable to assess using a validated measure. Additional research is needed to explore this issue.

Despite these tenuous conclusions, the data does imply several themes about the way young adults think about their careers, with implications for message interpretation (though not fully explored in this project). Although career frameworks did not manifest as expected in my data set, there was an identifiable difference between and within participant responses that focused on their abilities, enjoyment and passion, or achieving identity-related or lifestyle goals. Many responses contained indicators of multiple frameworks, but there were still distinct foci within each element of their comments. The idea that individuals approach their careers with different motivations is not new, but this project provides a more complex understanding of multiple goals and a launchpad for additional research.

While the mixed-methods approach revealed some inconsistent findings and presented challenges as described above, this methodological choice also offers unique, valuable insight into the research questions. The concert of qualitative and quantitative methods together provides a more robust picture of young adult's career motivations and frameworks, which either method on its own would not provide. For example, the content analysis of open-ended responses indicated that flexibility is important to young adults as evident in the goal-lifestyle framework and work-life balance motivating factor. Generally, young adults described flexibility as the ability to work remotely, travel, and control the balance between work and life. The EFA further described their orientation towards flexibility because scale items related to flexibility and a reverse-coded autonomy item loaded together, demonstrating their desire for freedom but also guidance from a supervisor. Had this study only employed a qualitative or quantitative approach alone, a descriptive, quantifiable representation of career frameworks and motivations could not be offered.

Finally, logistic regression and MANCOVA results indicated that there were very few significant differences in career frameworks based on demographic groupings. One logistic regression model comparing family-income level on the goal-identity framework approached but did not obtain significance. Additionally, there was a significant difference in the mean frequency of goal-lifestyle frameworks between Asian and white students, but the effect of ethnicity on career frameworks when accounting for gender, family-income, and first-generation status was nonsignificant overall. Based on these results, cultural and contextual issues did not impact career frameworks in this study.

B. Practical Implications

The results of this study provide several practical implications for educators, employers, and parents. First, educators and parents should note the seemingly contradictory results. As evidenced by the remarkably low frequency of ability framework indicators in the content analysis and students' conflation of ability and enjoyment, it seems that young adults in this study do not have a cognitive schema for connecting their abilities to their future career path. This could either be because they do not believe they have skills or do not know how to apply them to career interests (Jahn & Myers, 2015). Either implication is concerning considering these young adults are investing time and money into an education that should generate tangible capabilities and workforce preparedness. Knowing how to communicate one's skillset and relate it to specific roles or occupations is a crucial task for job candidates during the interview and recruitment process. Organizations expect university graduates to articulate their competencies in job applications, cover letters, and interviews. Therefore, educators, university career counselors, and parents should consider how they can help students identify their strengths and connect those to occupations, in addition to identifying work they enjoy doing or goals they hope to achieve through their career. While task enjoyment and goal attainment are worthy foci for career interests, employers are primarily concerned with how candidates are skilled for potential roles. It is possible that this effect is distinct amongst students in the social sciences since most participants in this study were recruited from communication classes. Future research might explore differences in ability awareness between degree programs, particularly amongst students in STEM versus social science.

Furthermore, this study offers practical implications for organizations. The findings suggest that young adults use slightly different criteria to evaluate specific job opportunities

in contrast with the values they espouse for their overall career trajectory. Motivating factor findings indicated that some participants want to make a difference in their ideal career (12.9% in Q1) but they mentioned impact as evaluative criteria in selecting specific jobs far less frequently (3.1% in Q2). Instead, they placed a higher value on a company or team's culture in this context (24.2% in Q2). Additionally, students overwhelmingly indicated that enjoying their work was of significant importance in their future work (68.8% in Q7), but an enjoyment framework was less frequently employed in their ideal vision for making a living (21.6% in Q1). Perhaps when asked to articulate their ideal career, participants focused on the overall achievements they hoped to realize through their work lives rather than thinking about the day-in, day-out experience of working in these careers. However, when prompted to consider what is important for evaluating specific roles, they express the desire to enjoy their jobs along the way as they work towards their goals. These findings are well aligned with recent academic research on Generation Z and their career characteristics, which identifies organizational culture and intrinsic motivation towards purposeful work of high importance to this cohort (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). Naturally, this supports the importance of person-organization fit and person-job fit in the recruitment process as young adults desire workplace environments they align with and also roles/tasks they enjoy. Organizations might consider how they can invest in and emphasize elements of their culture in the recruitment process in order to attract younger talent. They might also draw a connection to how working at their organization makes a difference in the world, as this is a high-level value for young adults.

Additionally, managers should note another contradiction. The current study shows that young adults ironically desire both freedom and frequent guidance in their work. Items on an

emergent factor indicate that young adults who value flexible work arrangements and resist continuous oversight simultaneously want frequent guidance from their supervisor. The participants perceived a difference between a manger who is looking over their shoulder and a manager who regularly provides feedback and support. This implies a unique challenge for employers. Supervisors should be encouraged to adopt a management style that provides these kinds of workers with both the assurance and independence they expect. Hybrid or remote work arrangements and flextime policies afford workers autonomy in addition to adopting technological resources, incentive structures, and management training that help maintain feedback channels and teach supervisors how to stay close, but not too close.

Regarding work labels, despite the emphasis in the popular press that gig work is on the rise (i.e., DePillis, 2022; Zgola, 2021), young adults in this study expressed overwhelming agreement that they intend to pursue careers in the future as opposed to gigs, freelance, or side-hustles. Content analysis of their open-ended responses revealed this choice was motivated by the stability, increased compensation, and professional development careers were perceived to provide. While recent data does suggest that an increasing amount of the population is engaged in some form of gig work (i.e., Gig Economy Data Hub, 2023; Ozimek, 2021), it does not appear that young adults prefer this form of labor over and above the traditional value of a career. This implies that if emerging adults are engaging in project-based work, this is likely out of necessity and not their primary work pursuit.

This study also indicates that lifestyle considerations—work-life balance and compensation--are increasingly important to the emerging workforce. Whether they desire full integration, full separation, or something in between, entry-level workers are cognizant of the relationship between their work lives and their personal lives, and they are drawn to

career choices that allow them to control this balance. For some, this lifestyle value is reflected in adequate compensation to afford basic necessities in a society with rising living costs. For others, lifestyle values relate more directly to daily work schedule, the ability to travel, a job's impact on mental health and wellness, family-friendly policies, etc. Organizations should consider these needs and desires in their policies, while keeping in mind that "one size doesn't fit all". They will need to recognize the great diversity amongst workers' interpretations of a quality lifestyle or healthy work-life balance. Organizations that want to accommodate the range of desires will need to be creative, accommodating, and flexible in their implementation and anticipate the challenges that arise from these differences.

Finally, this project captures several ways the Coronavirus pandemic may have shaped young adults' expectations for work. Remote work and school necessitated by stay-at-home guidelines demonstrated that in many cases work can be done anywhere, anytime. Working at home afforded some people more time for family life, household chores and errands, or hobbies throughout the work day. Adapting to these new rhythms may have made lifestyle values of flexibility, autonomy, and work-life balance more salient for today's young adults. Additionally, compensation considerations, especially the sentiment of simply desiring an adequate living, may be a product of the economic upheaval and instability today's young adults witnessed through the Pandemic (and the Great Recession), leading them to value a modest living over and above an extravagant one. Relatedly, two dimensions of stability were evident in participants' responses. Some viewed stability as a job's inherent security, while others described careers as stable when they were interesting or enjoyable enough to keep the student engaged long term. It might be this reflects two alternate responses to the instability

of the job market and rates of unemployment in recent years (Bennett, 2021). Those who valued "extrinsic" stability facilitated by a secure job may value stable careers as a way to weather the unstable job market. On the other hand, those who valued "intrinsic" stability facilitated by their commitment to a profession over the long term may have taken this perspective due to recognition that the market is inherently unreliable and believe it's important to find an enjoyable line of work they can keep returning to despite job changes. Educators and parents should recognize these influences as they guide students through emerging adulthood and help them make sense of what to expect in the workplace and from their careers.

C. Limitations and Future Research

As previously articulated, this project has several limitations. In addition to the methodological constraints already mentioned, the sample was non-diverse in the sense that all participants were recruited from a traditional four-year university and represented upper-division students primarily in one major. Many career theories, including VAS, emphasize the impact of socio-economic status and cultural background on exposure to career options, and therefore resulting career interests (i.e. Myers et al., 2011). A generalizable picture of career frameworks cannot be formulated without exploring the filtering mechanisms developed by individuals outside of higher education who are less likely to be people with higher socio-economic status who are pursuing white collar work. Furthermore, this sample was also ethnically non-diverse as the majority of students were either white or Asian. Ideally, samples should be collected from ethnically diverse groups and across different life stages and occupational foci.

Additionally, future projects related to career frameworks should return to a focus group or in-depth interview format. Gehlback and Brinkworth (2011) identify this as a crucial step in scale development as researchers must reconcile differences between academic literature and lay conceptualizations of the construct in question. While Jahn and Myers' (2014) data originated from focus groups, factor analysis results from this project indicate that additional qualitative research is needed to a) better understand career frameworks in general and b) develop a corresponding measure well informed by the population in question. Focus groups and interviews will allow researchers to probe young adults' frameworks and the messages that formed them. The survey method used in this project did not allow this follow-up.

D. Conclusion

Drawing on closed- and open-ended survey data, this study explored how young adults think about making a living, what criteria motivates them towards occupational choices, and what career frameworks help direct their overall interests. Results showed factors motivating young adults' interests as of 2022 and indicate several shifts in expectations for work post-Pandemic. They also illustrate practical implications for organizations, educators, and parents to consider as they guide young adults through career selection. Finally, results substantiate the need for additional qualitative research to better conceptualize and operationalize career frameworks and VAS theory.

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Appendix A

Career Frameworks Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey! Your responses will help us better understand how young adults evaluate their job options. Please note that the survey will use language related to careers, jobs, work, etc. interchangeably to reflect how you intend to make a living post-graduation.

1. What's your ideal vision for how you'd like to make a living in the future?
   [Open-ended response]

2. What criteria do you use when considering and selecting a job or incoming-earning activity?
   [Open-ended response]

3. What is your primary work interest at this time? Briefly describe what has caused you to be interested in this?
   [Open-ended response]

4. Which one of the following statements best describes how you view your future work?
   a. I want to pursue a *job.*
   b. I want to pursue a *career.*
   c. I want to pursue a *calling.*
   d. I want to pursue multiple *projects* or *"gigs".*
   e. Other: ____ Please describe:

5. Please explain your previous answer.
   [Open-ended response]

6. From the list below rank your top 3 terms in order of relevance to your future.
   - Career
   - Vocation
   - Occupation
   - Making a living
   - Job
   - Hustle/side-hustle
   - "Gig" work
   - Freelance

7. From the list below, select what is most important to you as you consider future work.
   - Prestigious identity (people will admire/respect you)
   - Enjoyment in doing the job
   - Using your unique talent/skills

- Other: ____

8. Please rate how well the following statements describe you, using the following scale:

1 – Strongly disagree
2
3
4
5
6 – Strongly agree

1. I would not want a job that would require me to work M-F, 8-5. [F]
2. I will only consider jobs that allow me to incorporate personal time during my day. [F]
3. I am interested in hearing about jobs that will let me work from any location. [F]
4. I am interested in jobs that enable me to work independently. [AU]
5. I would not want a job in which a manager continuously oversees my work. [AU]
6. I am interested in work in which I have frequent guidance from my supervisor. [AU]
7. I am interested in hearing about jobs that enable me to be of service (to the community, environment, animals, etc.). [SE]
8. I seek information about jobs that enable me to fulfill a higher purpose. [SE]
9. A criteria for my future career is that I am able to make a difference in the world. [SE]
10. I would only choose a career that allows me to continuously learn. [C]
11. A career should provide opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills. [C]
12. I would like to learn about careers that allow me to develop professionally. [C]
13. I am only interested in hearing about jobs that provide steady income and benefits. [ST]
14. A reliable paycheck is an important criterion for me in exploring careers. [ST]
15. I am interested in learning about careers that might be high risk but have high reward. [ST]
16. I am interested in choosing a career primarily because it reflects my talents. [AB]
17. I am looking for a career/job primarily in which the work/tasks just seem to come naturally to me. [AB]
18. I became interested in this career/job because I was told it fit my abilities. [AB]
19. I'm looking for work that allows me to focus on my strengths. [AB]
20. If I receive negative feedback about my performance in a career, I will consider alternative career options. [AB]
21. In hearing about careers, what's most important to me is that I am passionate about my work. [E]
22. Based on what I've been told, I chose this career/job because I love the tasks involved. [E]
23. I am guided by the idea that *you should do what you love.* [E]
24. I am not interested in hearing about work that isn't directly tied to my passions. [E]
25. I dismiss information about careers that I do not believe I would enjoy every day. [E]

26. Mostly, I am interested in hearing about careers/jobs that have a high earning potential. [G]
27. I chose this career/job because it reflects the image of who I want to be. [G]
28. Regardless of the challenges I'm told will come, I selected this career/job and focused my efforts towards meeting that goal. [G]
29. I believe I will be respected in my chosen career, which is important to me. [G]
30. I am interested in pursuing careers because of the prestige they will bring me. [G]

Demographic Questions

Data was also collected as part of this survey on the impact of parents working from home on participants. Question 31 regarding parent income from that section of the survey was used to estimate first generation status.

For the following questions, consider ONE parent/guardian as your focus, preferably one whose work arrangement changed due to the pandemic.

31. What is the highest level of education this parent attained?
    - Completed some High School
    - High School graduate
    - Earned an Associate's (2-year) degree
    - Earned a Bachelor's (4-year) degree
    - Completed some graduate school (or higher)
    - None of the above
32. What is your gender?
    - Female
    - Male
    - Transgender Female
    - Transgender Male
    - Non-binary
    - Prefer not to say
    - Other not listed: _____
33. What is your age?
34. What is your ethnicity?
    - African American (Black)
    - Asian
    - Caucasian (White)
    - Hispanic/Latino
    - Pacific Islander
    - Middle Eastern
    - Multi-racial
    - Other: _____
35. What is your home zip code? If you are an international student, please list your home country.

36. Which best describes you?
    - Freshman
    - Sophomore
    - Junior
    - Senior
37. Which of the following best describes you?
    - 1st Generation American (you were both outside the US but now live in the US)
    - 2nd Generation American (one or both of your parents were both outside the US)
    - 3rd Generation American (one or both of your grandparents were both outside the US)
    - 4th Generation American or more
    - Unsure
    - My permanent residence is outside the US
38. Please estimate your family's annual household income.
    - Less than $40,000
    - $40,000-$80,000
    - $80,000-$120,000
    - $120,000 or more

Appendix B

Original Career Frameworks Codebook
Updated 11.10.22

Unit of Data Collection: We will be unitizing by survey response and theme. Each survey response will be associated with a participant ID and will be coded for both a primary and secondary framework.

Other Coding instructions: Some responses may only reflect one framework, and others may indicate more than two frameworks. The instructions below will guide you through each of these scenarios.

Some survey responses will only reflect one framework theme (e.g. "*I look for jobs I will enjoy*."). In this case, you would code the primary framework as "2" for an enjoyment framework and the secondary framework as "99" for no framework.

Some responses may reflect two frameworks (e.g. "*I look for jobs that allow me to maintain a work-life balance and do something that I enjoy every day*"). In this case, you would code the primary framework as "3" for a goal-lifestyle framework ("*I look for jobs that allow me to maintain a work-life balance*") and the secondary framework as "2" for an enjoyment framework ("*do something that I enjoy every day*").

We will only code up to two themes per survey response. When there are more than two themes present, code the first two that appear in the participants response (e.g. "*I consider if I'll enjoy the job, make enough to live comfortably, and whether they have flexible hours or not*"). In this case you would code the primary framework as "2" for an enjoyment framework ("*I consider if I'll enjoy the job*") and the secondary framework as "3" for a goal-lifestyle framework ("*make enough to live comfortably*"). While the final clause reflects a flexibility framework, you would not code for this because we are only identifying primary and secondary frameworks.

In these examples, responses are provided in neatly ordered sentences/lists. This might not always be the case. Some responses may contain several sentences where the first few relate to one framework and the last few relate to others. In these cases, remember that you are coding for primary and secondary themes within the *overall* response, not just by sentences/phrases (E.g. "*My ideal vision for a career is to have a job that I love and that I enjoy going to everyday. I also want to have a good relationships with all my coworkers. I want my job to be stable and I want to be able to make enough money so I can support myself very well*."). In this case, you would code the primary framework as "2" for an enjoyment framework based on the first two sentences ("*My ideal vision for a career is to have a job that I love and that I enjoy going to everyday. I also want to have a good relationships with all my coworkers.").* You would code the secondary framework as "9" for a stability framework because of the last sentence ("*I want my job to be stable and I want to be able to make enough money so I can support myself very well*.").

Coder: Your coder identity should be indicated via your initials in the name of your spreadsheet and the column names (E.g. "Q1AR" for Richard; "Q1AL" for Lexie).

Participant ID #: Participant ID #'s are already included in the coding form. Do not edit this column.

Date of Coding: Please input the date you are coding in this column. *Beware of coder fatigue! Your mind should be sharp and engaged while you are coding to ensure accuracy. Only code for an hour or so at a time. Take breaks and spread coding sessions out over multiple days.*

Q1. ***What's your ideal vision for how you'd like to make a living in the future?***

- **Q1A_:** Identify the *primary* framework reflected in the response using the codes below.
    - 99 – Unable to determine
    - 1 – Ability framework
    - 2 – Enjoyment framework
    - 3 – Goal-lifestyle framework
    - 4 – Goal-identity framework
    - 5 – Flexibility framework
    - 6 – Autonomy framework
    - 7 – Service framework
    - 8 – Continuous learning framework
    - 9 – Stability framework
    - 10 – Other framework
- **Q1B_:** If applicable, identify the *secondary* framework reflected in the response using the codes below. If there is only one apparent framework, code as "0" for "no data".
    - 99 – Unable to determine
    - 0 – No data
    - 1 – Ability framework
    - 2 – Enjoyment framework
    - 3 – Goal-lifestyle framework
    - 4 – Goal-identity framework
    - 5 – Flexibility framework
    - 6 – Autonomy framework
    - 7 – Service framework
    - 8 – Continuous learning framework
    - 9 – Stability framework
    - 10 – Other framework

Q2. ***What criteria do you use when considering and selecting a job or income-earning activity?***

- **Q2A_:** Identify the *primary* framework reflected in the response using the codes below.
    - 99 – Unable to determine

    - 1 – Ability framework
    - 2 – Enjoyment framework
    - 3 – Goal-lifestyle framework
    - 4 – Goal-identity framework
    - 5 – Flexibility framework
    - 6 – Autonomy framework
    - 7 – Service framework
    - 8 – Continuous learning framework
    - 9 – Stability framework
    - 10 – Other framework
- **Q2B_:** If applicable, identify the *secondary* framework reflected in the response using the codes below. If there is only one apparent framework, code as "0" for "no data".
    - 99 – Unable to determine
    - 0 – No data
    - 1 – Ability framework
    - 2 – Enjoyment framework
    - 3 – Goal-lifestyle framework
    - 4 – Goal-identity framework
    - 5 – Flexibility framework
    - 6 – Autonomy framework
    - 7 – Service framework
    - 8 – Continuous learning framework
    - 9 – Stability framework
    - 10 – Other framework

Q5: ***When describing their view of future work (career/calling/job/projects).. Please explain your answer to the previous question.***

- **Q5A_:** Identify the *primary* framework reflected in the response using the codes below.
    - 99 – Unable to determine
    - 1 – Ability framework
    - 2 – Enjoyment framework
    - 3 – Goal-lifestyle framework
    - 4 – Goal-identity framework
    - 5 – Flexibility framework
    - 6 – Autonomy framework
    - 7 – Service framework
    - 8 – Continuous learning framework
    - 9 – Stability framework
    - 10 – Other framework
- **Q5B_:** If applicable, identify the *secondary* framework reflected in the response using the codes below. If there is only one apparent framework, code as "0" for "no data".
    - 99 – Unable to determine
    - 0 – No data

- 1 – Ability framework
- 2 – Enjoyment framework
- 3 – Goal-lifestyle framework
- 4 – Goal-identity framework
- 5 – Flexibility framework
- 6 – Autonomy framework
- 7 – Service framework
- 8 – Continuous learning framework
- 9 – Stability framework
- 10 – Other framework

Notes: Takes notes as you go about any codes you struggled to assign and why. If you use code "10" for other, please describe what you think the framework might be. Ask yourself, ***what criteria is this student using to evaluate their career options?*** We will discuss these patterns and observations in our meetings and will potentially develop additional codes!

Code operationalizations and examples:

99: Unable to determine Use this code if there is data available, but no clear evaluative criteria is evident. Think about "99" as synonymous with "I don't know".	E.g. "My career is too far away for me. I hope to find a job first, and then consider my career." *This is different from no data (0) and data reflecting a possible emergent new framework (10).*
0: No framework data Use this code if there is no data (i.e. only one framework is clearly reflected). Think about the "0" as synonymous with leaving the column blank.	
1: Ability Does the student want to pursue a career where they can capitalize on their strengths or skills?	E.g., "I consider my personal strengths and abilities" "What you have to do/the **skillset**" *Not the same as considering the job tasks – must mention in relation to skills/abilities specifically*
2: Enjoyment framework	E.g., "Will I be happy in the place where I do the job?" "Good work environment/good coworkers"

Does the student want to pursue their passion or find a job they enjoy doing?	"Adventure is my calling, and if i can find a way to make money while doing it that would be the goal." *Not the same as considering the job tasks – must mention in relation to enjoying or being interested in them specifically*
3: Goal-lifestyle framework Does the student want to achieve a particular lifestyle?	E.g., "I would look for a job that promotes a good work-life balance." "I want to make a decent amount of money to be able to live comfortably in a nice neighborhood."
4: Goal-identity framework Does the student have a clearly defined career goal or identity they want to achieve?	E.g., "I plan on becoming a captain for a commercial airline in the future" "I would like to do something in PR or marketing" "I would like to be a teacher, I have not decided on a grade yet but I know I want to be an educator."
5: Flexibility framework Does the student consider flexibility of schedule or location of work as important evaluative criteria?	E.g. "I want to make sure it is accommodating to the schedule I hold as a student" "Flexible hours" *Should explicitly reference some degree of flexibility in the role, rather than just naming "location" or "hours" as criteria.*
6: Autonomy framework Does the student look for jobs that allow them to work independently without much oversight?	E.g., "I want to work independently" "I don't want to work in a job that requires a lot of oversight" "I would like to end up working for myself"
7: Service framework Does the student want to be in a career focused on service or making a difference in the world?	E.g., "My primary work interest would be working with children and being able to make a difference by helping people." "My ideal vision is being able to make a direct and impactful difference in the community or the lives of others."
8: Continuous learning framework	E.g., "I consider if the job has lots of opportunities for growth and for me to reach higher positions."

Does the student look for careers with growth and advancement opportunities?	"…room for growth on a personal level as well as the business." "… a growth environment"
9: Stability framework Does the student primarily look for jobs that provide stable income and benefits?	E.g., "Find a stable, consistent job that has consistent pay" "I would like my job to be life-long because I don't like changes"
10: Other framework Does the comment relate to another possible means of evaluating career options, beside those available here?	If you use code 10, please make notes about what additional framework you think might be present.

Appendix C

Final Career Frameworks Codebook
Updated 2.6.23

2.6.23

- Removing "Other" framework since none emerged during pilot testing

2.1.23

- Remember to keep the relevant survey question in mind when coding responses. Reading the responses with that context in mind will help you understand what they are saying (especially when they restate the question).
- "I would **love** to be…" does not equate to enjoyment. It is synonymous with saying "I want", "I intend", "I would like", etc. and is just a way of responding to the stated question. To be coded as enjoyment, it should be clear that the student would "love" to do this job because they think they will enjoy/be fulfilled by it (as opposed to loving it because it fulfills an identity/lifestyle goal or incorporates their skills/abilities).
- In order to code for an enjoyment framework, make sure the participant is describing enjoying **the job** and not just enjoying their lifestyle. For example, "*I would like to live a happy life with not much pressure"* is describing their desire to make a living in such a way that makes their holistic life enjoyable, as opposed to framing their career decision around finding a job with tasks they enjoy. For this comment you would code "0" for enjoyment and "1" for goal-lifestyle.
- Anytime the participant frames their career decisions towards a specific income level, this indicates a **goal-lifestyle** framework (i.e. *"I want to make six figures"*).

1.26.23

- Only code that a framework is present if you are **sure** it is there. If you have to speculate about what is driving their career choice, code "0" for that framework.
- We are conceptualizing **"lifestyle"** as when the participant is considering how work fits into other parts of their life.
    - For example, one participant said: "*I would like to work in a city, hopefully for a media production company (Netflix, Disney, Amazon Prime Video, etc.)."* Here we see a goal-identity framework at play in their desire to work for a well-known media production company, and we also see goal-lifestyle framework driving their interests because they want to work in a city – a clear consideration of how their work will fit into a city lifestyle.
- When you see the keyword "passion", consider **what is *driving* the passion** (Enjoyment? An identity goal? A lifestyle goal? An ability?) and code appropriately.
    - For example, one participant said: "*My ideal vision for making a living in the future would have to involve working within exclusive beauty companies, something I am very passionate about."* We could code this as "1" for goal-identity because this student has a career goal of working for exclusive beauty companies. Their passion is directed towards this goal. We could code "0" for the other frameworks.
    - The "pursue their passion" language was removed from the enjoyment framework description to help clarify this. Enjoyment framework: *Is the*

*student driven towards careers based on how much they **like, enjoy, or are fulfilled** by the work?*

- We will no longer code Q2 for frameworks. We will only code for the motivating factors. Coding forms will reflect this moving forward.

1.19.23

- Replaced primary and secondary framework variables with presence/absence coding for each framework. See "Other Coding Instructions" and "Codes".
- Points of clarification added to operationalizations of codes

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Research questions and important definitions: Consider the RQs and definitions below as you immerse yourself in the data. Return to these throughout the coding process to remind yourself of the questions we are trying to answer.

RQ1: How do young adults think about "making a living"?

RQ2: Can we identify a typology of common frameworks that young adults use when evaluating jobs or incoming-earning options?

RQ2A: If so, how does the typology fit with enjoyment, ability and goal frameworks as identified by Jahn and Myers?

RQ3: Can items be written associated with scales that would assess the Jahn and Myers typology, plus those that are theorized based on current literature?

What is a framework? Career frameworks serve as **guiding principles** that drive career decisions (Jahn & Myers, 2014). They function as a sort of "lens" through which individuals evaluate their options. They are often articulated through "because of" or "in order to" statements, such as, *"I want to be a teacher **because** I love working with kids"* or *"I want to be an engineer **in order to** use my mathematical skills"* (Schutz, 1932).

Frameworks are different than **motivating factors**, such as particular work arrangements, benefits, or attributes of a career that might attract an individual to it. While individuals may consider these criteria when making career decisions, they are not primarily driven towards certain career paths purely based upon them.

For example, an individual pursuing a career as an architect may be *motivated* to pursue a particular job at a firm because of the stability it affords them, but they will be *primarily driven* towards this career path by a framework that supersedes the specific aspects of the job, either by a goal framework (they desire the lifestyle or status the occupation affords), an enjoyment framework (they are passionate about city planning or enjoy the tasks involved), or an ability framework (they have strong analytical skills and want a career where they can exercise those skills).

Unit of Data Collection: We will be unitizing by participant and survey question. Each survey response will be associated with a participant ID. Responses will be coded for the presence/absence of career frameworks and common motivating factors.

Other Coding instructions: Some responses may only reflect one framework/motivation, and others may indicate multiple frameworks/motivations. For each variable simply indicate whether the framework/motivation is present (code: "1") or absent (code: "0").

The instructions below provide a few sample scenarios.

Some survey responses will only reflect one framework theme (e.g. "*I look for jobs I will enjoy*."). In this case, you would code a "1" in the enjoyment framework column and "0" in all the additional framework columns.

Some responses may reflect two or more frameworks (e.g. "*I look for jobs that allow me to maintain a work-life balance and do something that I enjoy every day*"). In this case, you would code a "1" in the goal-lifestyle framework column ("*I look for jobs that allow me to maintain a work-life balance*"), a "1" in the enjoyment framework column ("*do something that I enjoy every day*"), and a "0" in the remaining framework columns.

Coder: Your coder identity should be indicated via your initials in the name of your spreadsheet and the column names (E.g. "Q1AR" for Richard; "Q1AL" for Lexie).

Participant ID #: Participant ID #'s are already included in the coding form. Do not edit this column.

Date of Coding: Please input the date you are coding in this column. *Beware of coder fatigue! Your mind should be sharp and engaged while you are coding to ensure accuracy. Only code for an hour or so at a time. Take breaks and spread coding sessions out over multiple days.*

Codes: Use the structure below to code for the presence/absence of career frameworks (ability, enjoyment, goal-lifestyle, and goal-identity) and motivating factors (work-life balance, work environment, stability, continuous learning, making a difference, and compensation) for each response.

Q1. ***What's your ideal vision for how you'd like to make a living in the future?*** ***Code for frameworks and motivating factors.***
Q2. ***What criteria do you use when considering and selecting a job or income-earning activity?*** ***Only code for motivating factors.***
Q5: ***When describing their view of future work (career/calling/job/projects)… Please explain your answer to the previous question.*** ***Code for frameworks and motivating factors.***

1. **Q_A_: Ability Framework.** Does the response reflect an ability framework when evaluating career options?
    - 0 – No
    - 1 – Yes
2. **Q_B_: Enjoyment Framework.** Does the response reflect an enjoyment framework when evaluating career options?
    - 0 – No
    - 1 – Yes
3. **Q_C_: Goal-lifestyle Framework.** Does the response reflect a goal-lifestyle framework when evaluating career options?
    - 0 – No
    - 1 – Yes
4. **Q_D_: Goal-identity Framework.** Does the response reflect a goal-identity framework when evaluating career options?
    - 0 – No
    - 1 – Yes
5. ~~**Q_E_: Other Framework.** Does the response reflect another identifiable framework for evaluating career options?~~
    - ~~0 – No~~
    - ~~1 – Yes~~
6. **Q_F_: Work-life Balance.** Does the response reflect work-life balance or schedule flexibility as motivating factors in career decisions?
    - 0 – No
    - 1 – Yes
7. **Q_G_: Work Environment/Culture.** Does the response reflect the company's culture or the work environment as motivating factors in career decisions?
    - 0 – No
    - 1 – Yes
8. **Q_H_: Stability.** Does the response reflect career stability as a motivating factor in career decisions?
    - 0 – No
    - 1 – Yes
9. **Q_I_: Continuous learning.** Does the response reflect continuous learning, development, or advancement potential as motivating factors in career decisions?
    - 0 – No
    - 1 – Yes
10. **Q_J_: Impact** Does the response reflect making a difference or impact on the world as motivating factors in career decisions?
    - 0 – No
    - 1 – Yes
11. **Q_K_: Compensation.** Does the response reflect salary or benefits as motivating factors in career decisions?
    - 0 – No
    - 1 – Yes

Notes: Takes notes as you go about any codes you struggled to assign and why. If you code a "1" in the other framework column, please describe what you think the framework might be. Ask yourself, ***what is the primary driver for this student as they evaluate their career options?*** We will discuss these patterns and observations in our meetings and will potentially develop additional codes!

Operationalizations and Examples:

Career Frameworks

1: Ability Does the student see their career as a means to capitalize on their strengths or skills? 0 – No 1 – Yes	E.g., "I consider my personal strengths and abilities" "What you have to do/the **skillset**" *Not the same as considering the job tasks – must mention in relation to skills/abilities specifically.*
2: Enjoyment framework Is the student driven towards careers based on how much they like, enjoy, or are fulfilled by the work? 0 – No 1 – Yes	E.g., "Will I be happy in the place where I do the job?" "I want to do something I love so that I enjoy getting up and going to work every day." *Not the same as just mentioning the job tasks – must mention in relation to enjoying or being interested in them specifically.* *Saying "I would love to be an engineer" does not necessarily equate to enjoyment. "I love" is equivalent to "I want", "I intend", "I would like", etc. and is just a way of responding to the stated question. To be coded as enjoyment, it should be clear that the student would "love" to do this job because they think they will enjoy/be fulfilled by it (as opposed to loving it because it fulfills an identity/lifestyle goal or incorporates their skills/abilities).* *Make sure the participant is describing enjoying **the job** and not just enjoying their lifestyle. For example, "I would like to live a happy life with not much pressure" is describing their desire to make a living in such a way that makes their holistic life enjoyable, as opposed to framing their career decision around finding a job with tasks they enjoy. For this comment you would code "0" for enjoyment and "1" for goal-lifestyle.*

3: Goal-lifestyle framework Is achieving a particular lifestyle a driver of the student's career decisions? 0 – No 1 – Yes	E.g., "I would look for a job that promotes a good work-life balance." "I want to make a decent amount of money to be able to live comfortably in a nice neighborhood." *Be careful not to project your assumptions about lifestyle benefits onto a career. For example, if a participant says that they want to be an entrepreneur, you can't assume this is incentivized by the lifestyle it affords unless they directly say that is why they are interested.* *Lifestyle is not the same as valuing work environment/culture.* *A goal-lifestyle framework is at play when the participant is driven towards a career based on **how work fits into other parts of their life.*** *Anytime the participant frames their career decisions towards a specific income level, this indicates a **goal-lifestyle** framework (i.e. "I want to make six figures").*
4: Goal-identity framework Does the student view their career as a way to achieve a specific identity, goal or status? 0 – No 1 – Yes	E.g., "I plan on becoming a captain for a commercial airline in the future" "I would like to do something in PR or marketing" "I would like to be a teacher, I have not decided on a grade yet but I know I want to be an educator." *If company image and aligning oneself with it functions as a lens, this is an identity framework (individual wants to work somewhere congruent with their perceived identity/status).*
~~5: Other framework~~ ~~Does the comment relate to another possible means of evaluating career options, beside those available here?~~ ~~0 – No~~ ~~1 – Yes~~	~~If you use code 1, please make notes about what additional framework you think might be present.~~

Motivating Factors

Work-life Balance Does the student consider how things like schedule, hours, or the general integration of work and "life"/non-work are manifest when choosing a job/career? 0 – No 1 – Yes	E.g. "My ideal vision would be something in corporate, from Monday through Friday so that I have the weekends to wind down and spend time to myself" "Flexible hours" *Student considers how work (or multiple kinds of work) and "life" activities come together – any mention of hours, schedule, or time spent working*
Work Environment/ Culture Does the student consider things like the company/team's culture, values, or overall environment when making career decisions? 0 – No 1 – Yes	E.g. "The work environment and staff are huge factors for me when it comes to selecting a job. The people I will be working with should be friendly and communicative, as we will ideally be spending time together in the work space."
Stability Does the student mention stability of job industry or salary as a motivating factor in their career decisions? 0 – No 1 – Yes	E.g., "Find a stable, consistent job that has consistent pay" "I would like my job to be life-long because I don't like changes"
Continuous Learning Does the student look for careers with growth and advancement opportunities? 0 – No 1 – Yes	E.g., "I consider if the job has lots of opportunities for growth and for me to reach higher positions." "…room for growth on a personal level as well as the business." "… a growth environment"
Impact	E.g., "My primary work interest would be working with children and being able to make a difference by helping people."

Does the student want to be in a career focused on service or making a difference in the world? 0 – No 1 – Yes	"My ideal vision is being able to make a direct and impactful difference in the community or the lives of others."
Compensation Does the student identify compensation (salary and/or benefits) as motivators in their career decisions? 0 – No 1 – Yes	E.g., "Income of more than $75000 a year." *Using the phrase "making a living" doesn't necessarily denote that they are motivated by compensation – be careful to discern between when they are saying they consider how much they will make when selecting a career VS. when they are restating what we just asked them in the survey question.*

Table 1

Research Questions, Measures, Methods, and Results

Research Questions	Measures	Methods	Results
RQ1: How do young adults in 2022 think about "making a living"?	Q1, Q2, and Q5 (open-ended questions)	Neuendorf"s (2017) Content Analysis	Work-life balance, company culture, stability, continuous learning opportunity, impact, and compensation identified as common motivating factors in career selection (see Table 2 for frequencies)
	Q4 and Q6 (closed-ended questions)	Frequency of selection	Q4: The majority of students intend to pursue careers (68.9%) as opposed to jobs, callings, or projects/"gigs". Q6: When provided with a list of common work labels, 55% selected "career" as most relevant to their future. "Freelance" was the least relevant to their future (36.5%).
RQ2: Can we identify a typology of common frameworks that young adults use when evaluating jobs or incoming-earning options?	Q1, Q2, and Q5 (open-ended questions)	Neuendorf"s (2017) Content Analysis	Jahn and Myers' (2014) goal framework split into different foci: goal-lifestyle framework and goal-identity framework. Ability, enjoyment, goal-lifestyle, and goal-identity frameworks are reliability identified in Q1, but not in Q2 or Q5 (see Table 3 for frequency). No additional frameworks emerge. Frequency of frameworks differs from Jahn and Myers' findings with goal-identity as most common (66.6%) instead of enjoyment (21.6%).
RQ2A: If so, how does the typology correspond to the enjoyment, ability and goal frameworks as identified by Jahn and Myers?	Q7 (closed-ended question)	Frequency of selection	68.4% of participants selected "enjoyment in doing the job" as most important to them in contrast to "using your unique talents/skills" and "prestigious identity", aligning with the frequency in Jahn and Myers' findings.
RQ3: Can items be written associated with scales that would assess the Jahn and Myers typology, plus additional typologies that are theorized based on current literature?	Q8 (scale items 1 – 30)	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and Cronbach's Alpha	CFA failed goodness-of-fit-tests. Factors did not load as predicted. EFA produced four-factor model (see Table 6). Factors still did not load as predicted. Cronbach's Alpha indicated that dropping items would not improve reliability on any factor.

Table 2

Content Analysis Training and Final Reliability for all Variables

			Training Reliability		Final Reliability	
Question	**Variables**	**Level of Measurement**	**Percent Agreement**	**I_r (95% CI)**	**Percent Agreement**	**I_r (95% CI)**
Q1	Ability Framework*	Nominal	97	0.97	98.72	0.99
	Enjoyment Framework*	Nominal	93	0.93	95.66	0.96
	Goal-lifestyle Framework*	Nominal	93	0.93	94.13	0.94
	Goal-identity Framework*	Nominal	90	0.89	93.37	0.93
	Other*	Nominal	100	1	NA	NA
	Work-life Balance	Nominal	94	0.94	92	0.91
	Company Culture	Nominal	92	0.92	97	0.97
	Stability	Nominal	92	0.92	98	0.98
	Continuous Learning Opportunity	Nominal	98	0.98	98	0.98
	Impact	Nominal	96	0.96	94	0.94
	Compensation	Nominal	90	0.89	86	0.85
Q2	Ability Framework	Nominal	96	0.96	NA	NA
	Enjoyment Framework	Nominal	94	0.94	NA	NA
	Goal-lifestyle Framework	Nominal	68	0.6	NA	NA
	Goal-identity Framework	Nominal	82	0.8	NA	NA

	Other	Nominal	100	1	NA	NA
	Work-life Balance	Nominal	94	0.94	96	0.96
	Company Culture	Nominal	96	0.96	96	0.96
	Stability	Nominal	98	0.98	99	0.98
	Continuous Learning Opportunity	Nominal	98	0.98	96	0.96
	Impact	Nominal	100	1	98	0.98
	Compensation	Nominal	96	0.96	97	0.97
Q5	Ability Framework	Nominal	98	0.98	NA	NA
	Enjoyment Framework	Nominal	86	0.85	NA	NA
	Goal-lifestyle Framework	Nominal	90	0.89	NA	NA
	Goal-identity Framework	Nominal	74	0.69	NA	NA
	Other	Nominal	100	1	NA	NA
	Work-life Balance	Nominal	100	1	97	0.97
	Company Culture	Nominal	98	0.98	99	0.99
	Stability	Nominal	98	0.98	92	0.92
	Continuous Learning Opportunity	Nominal	94	0.94	95	0.95
	Impact	Nominal	96	0.96	97	0.97
	Compensation	Nominal	90	0.89	94	0.94

Note: Training reliability reflects reliability coefficients obtained at the end of training (N = 50). Codes marked with an (*) required additional and separate training and reflect reliability coefficients across 30 cases instead of 50. Final reliability reflects reliability coefficients at the end of the content analysis (N = 389). NA indicates that this variable was dropped.

Table 3

Frequencies of Motivating Factors

	Q1		Q2		Q5	
Variable	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Work-life Balance	69	17.7%	117	30.1%	10	2.6%
Company Culture	17	4.6%	94	24.2%	4	1%
Stability	28	4.6%	22	5.7%	110	28.3%
Continuous Learning Opportunity	13	3.3%	55	14.1%	60	15.4%
Impact	50	12.9%	12	3.1%	15	3.9%
Compensation	85	21.9%	276	71%	62	15.9%

Note: N = 389

Table 4

Frequency of Career Frameworks

	Q1	
Variable	**n**	**%**
Ability Framework	10	2.6%
Enjoyment Framework	84	21.6%
Goal-lifestyle Framework	149	38.3%
Goal-identity Framework	259	66.6%

Note: N = 389

Table 5

Binary Logistic Regressions of Gender, Family-income Level, and First-generation Status on Enjoyment Framework

Variable	β	*SE*	95% CI		*p*	Odds ratio e^{β}
			LL	*UL*		
Gender	.142	.294	.648	2.048	.629	1.152
Family Income	.261	.248	.799	2.110	.291	1.299
First Generation	-.092	.272	.535	1.553	.743	.912

Note. Regression models were run separately for each demographic variable.

Table 6

Binary Logistic Regressions of Gender, Family-income Level, and First-generation Status on Goal-lifestyle Framework

Variable	β	*SE*	95% CI		*p*	Odds ratio e^{β}
			LL	*UL*		
Gender	.291	.245	.827	2.162	.235	1.338
Family Income	-.187	.212	.547	1.256	.377	.829
First Generation	.164	.226	.756	1.834	.469	1.178

Note. Regression models were run separately for each demographic variable.

Table 7

Binary Logistic Regressions of Gender, Family-income Level, and First-generation Status on Goal-identity Framework

Variable	β	*SE*	95% CI		*p*	Odds ratio e^{β}
			LL	*UL*		
Gender	-.396	.257	.406	1.115	.124	.673
Family Income	.425	.221	.992	2.359	.054	1.530
First Generation	-.212	.232	.514	1.274	.361	.809

Note. Regression models were run separately for each demographic variable.

Table 8

One-Way Multivariate Analyses of Covariance in Career Frameworks by Ethnicity (Asian versus white), Gender (male versus female), Family Income, and First-generation Status

Demographic Variable	***F*(4, 269)**	***p***	**Wilk's *Λ***	**η^2**
Ethnicity	1.85	.12	.973	.027
Gender	1.36	.25	.980	.020
Family Income	0.36	.84	.995	.005
First Generation	0.76	.55	.989	.011

Table 9

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Multivariate Analyses of Variance in Career Frameworks for Asian versus white students.

Framework	**Asian**		**White**		***F*(1, 279)**	**η^2**
	M	***SD***	***M***	***SD***		
Ability	.01	.098	.03	.167	1.15	.004
Enjoyment	.22	.416	.27	.444	0.54	.002
Goal-lifestyle	.50	.502	.37	.484	4.72***	.017
Goal-identity	.58	.496	.66	.473	1.38	.005

***$p < .05$.

Table 10

Eigenvalues, Percentages of Variance, and Cumulative Percentages for Factors for 30 Career Frameworks Items

Factor	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.53	25.08%	25.08%
2	2.47	8.24%	33.33%
3	1.93	6.44%	39.77%
4	1.46	4.87%	44.64%
5	1.38	4.60%	49.24%
6	1.22	4.06%	53.31%
7	1.03	3.42%	56.73%

Table 11

Factor Loadings for Principal Component Analysis Seven-Factor Solution for 30 Career Frameworks Items (N = 389)

	Factor Loading						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18_AB	**.651**		.193	.202			.281
26_G	.645			.117			
17_AB	**.635**	.162	.105		.267		.187
23_E	**.615**	.336	.170		.123	.122	
20_AB	**.605**	.238	.122		.118	.153	.325
24_E	.534	.440		.104	.102	.100	-.236
25_E	**.520**	.262				-.268	-.106
22_E	.516	.513		.171		.104	-.111
28_G	.434	.311	.183		.340	.195	
19_AB	.419		.294	.119	.392		
10_C	.135	**.806**			.115	-.102	
8_SE		**.725**	.174		-.263	-.259	
9_SE	.266	**.691**			.234		
11_C	.161	**.537**		.165	.109	.228	.398
12_C	.148	**.483**	.155	.184		.417	.178
13_ST	.128	.391	.379	.202		.308	.291
14_ST	.113		**.759**			-.144	
27_G			**.746**	.149	.252		.111
15_ST	.108	.129	**.738**			.147	
30_G	.270	.348	**.462**		.401	.117	
2_F				**.713**	.205	-.126	-.141
5_AU	.119			**.660**			.234
4_AU		.114	.368	**.602**		.171	.149
6_AU	.259			**.476**			
3_F	.352		.306	**.471**		-.250	
1_F	.147		.417		**.693**	-.162	
16_AB		.164	-.177	.289	**.690**		
21_E		.113		.198	.100	**-.738**	.168
29_G	.335	.372	.172		.213	**.420**	
7_SE			.188			-.129	**.795**

Note: AB = Ability Framework; G = Goal Framework; E = Enjoyment Framework; C = Continuous Learning Framework; SE = Service Framework; ST = Stability Framework; F = Flexibility Framework; AU = Autonomy Framework

Table 12

Career Frameworks Items Grouped by Factor

Factor 1: Ability and Enjoyment	18. I became interested in this career/job because I was told it fit my abilities. [AB] 17. I am looking for a career/job primarily in which the work/tasks just seem to come naturally to me. [AB] 23. I am guided by the idea that *you should do what you love.* [E] 20. If I receive negative feedback about my performance in a career, I will consider alternative career options. [AB] 25. I dismiss information about careers that I do not believe I would enjoy every day. [E]
Factor 2: Impact and Advancement	10. I would only choose a career that allows me to continuously learn. [C] 8. I seek information about jobs that enable me to fulfill a higher purpose. [SE] 9. A criteria for my future career is that I am able to make a difference in the world. [SE] 11. A career should provide opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills. [C] 12. I would like to learn about careers that allow me to develop professionally. [C]

Factor 3: Goal and Stability	14. A reliable paycheck is an important criterion for me in exploring careers. [ST] 27. I chose this career/job because it reflects the image of who I want to be. [G] 15. I am interested in learning about careers that might be high risk but have high reward. [ST] 30. I am interested in pursuing careers because of the prestige they will bring me. [G]
Factor 4: Flexibility and Autonomy	2. I will only consider jobs that allow me to incorporate personal time during my day. [F] 5. I would not want a job in which a manager continuously oversees my work. [AU] 4. I am interested in jobs that enable me to work independently. [AU] 6. I am interested in work in which I have frequent guidance from my supervisor. [AU] 3. I am interested in hearing about jobs that will let me work from any location. [F]

Note: AB = Ability Framework; G = Goal Framework; E = Enjoyment Framework; C = Continuous Learning Framework; SE = Service Framework; ST = Stability Framework; F = Flexibility Framework; AU = Autonomy Framework

Figure 1

Bar Graph Depicting Participant Responses to, "Which one of the following statements best describes how you view your future work?" (Q4; N = 389)

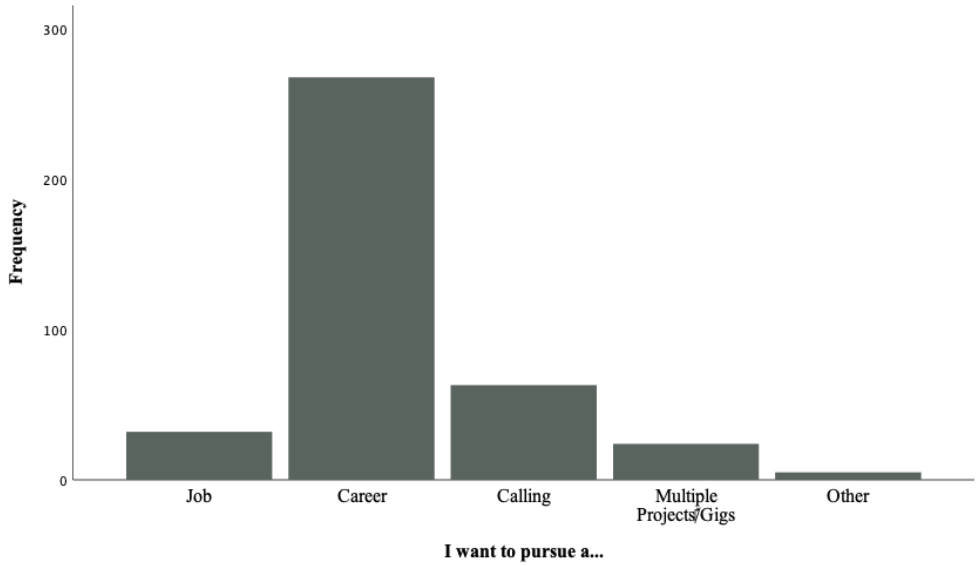

Figure 2

Bar Graph Depicting Participant Selection of the Work Term Most Relevant to their Future (Q6; N = 389)

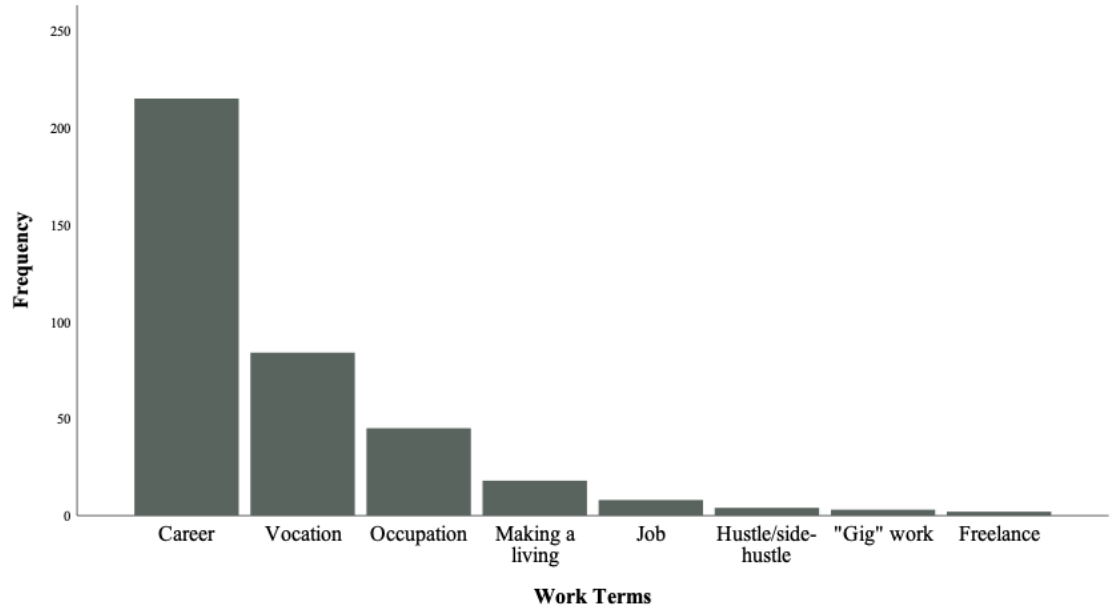

Figure 3

Bar Graph Depicting Participant Selection of the Work Term Least Relevant to their Future (Q6; N = 389)