

The Impact of Emotional Self-awareness on Career Adaptability

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Abstract:

In an evolving and unpredictable job market, career adaptability has become crucial for individuals to manage career transitions effectively. This study investigates the impact of emotional self-awareness, a key component of emotional intelligence, on career adaptability. Emotional self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand one's emotions and how they affect decisions and behavior. The research adopts a quantitative approach, surveying 389 academic staff members in private universities across Greater Cairo, Egypt, to assess the relationship between emotional self-awareness and career adaptability. Findings show a significant positive correlation between emotional self-awareness and career adaptability, indicating that individuals with higher emotional self-awareness are better equipped to

handle career challenges and make proactive career decisions. The study concludes that fostering emotional self-awareness can enhance career adaptability and recommends incorporating emotional intelligence training in educational and organizational contexts to develop a resilient and adaptable workforce.

Keywords:

Emotional self-awareness, Career adaptability, Emotional intelligence, Career transitions, Resilience, Academic staff.

المستخلص:

في سوق عمل متغير وغير متوقع، أصبحت القدرة على التكيف المهني أمراً بالغ الأهمية لمساعدة الأفراد على إدارة التحولات المهنية بفعالية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تأثير الوعي الذاتي العاطفي، وهو عنصر أساسي من الذكاء العاطفي، على التكيف المهني. يُعرّف الوعي الذاتي العاطفي بأنه القدرة على التعرف على العواطف وفهمها وكيفية تأثيرها على القرارات والسلوك. اعتمد البحث على منهج كمي من خلال إجراء استطلاع شمل ٣٨٩ من أعضاء هيئة التدريس في الجامعات الخاصة في القاهرة الكبرى، مصر، لتقييم العلاقة بين الوعي الذاتي العاطفي والتكيف المهني. أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة إيجابية كبيرة بين الوعي الذاتي العاطفي والتكيف المهني، مما يشير إلى أن الأفراد الذين يتمتعون بوعي عاطفي أعلى يكونون أكثر قدرة على التعامل مع التحديات المهنية واتخاذ قرارات مهنية استباقية. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن تعزيز الوعي الذاتي العاطفي يمكن أن يعزز التكيف المهني، وأوصت بدمج تدريب الذكاء العاطفي في السياقات التعليمية والتنظيمية لتطوير قوى عاملة مرنة وقابلة للتكيف.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الوعي الذاتي العاطفي، التكيف المهني، الذكاء العاطفي، التحولات المهنية، المرونة، أعضاء هيئة التدريس.

1. Introduction

In an increasingly dynamic and uncertain job market, career adaptability has become a crucial attribute for individuals to manage career transitions effectively. Career adaptability refers to the capacity to adjust to changing work demands, make informed career decisions, and cope with career-related challenges (**Savickas & Porfeli, 2012**). It encompasses a range of psychosocial resources, such as control, curiosity, and confidence, which help individuals navigate career shifts and uncertainties (**Fiori et al., 2015**). Among the psychological factors that influence career adaptability, emotional self-awareness has gained significant attention.

Emotional self-awareness, a key sub-dimension of emotional intelligence, is the ability to recognize and understand one's emotions and how they impact thoughts and actions (**Goleman, 1995**). Recent research suggests that emotional self-awareness plays a vital role in shaping how individuals manage their career development and respond to career-related stressors (**Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2021**). Individuals who are aware of their emotional states are better equipped to regulate their emotions, make more adaptive career decisions, and demonstrate resilience in the face of career challenges (**Hou et al., 2014**). By understanding how their emotions influence decision-making, such individuals can maintain a proactive and flexible approach to career planning (**Hirschi, 2018**).

Furthermore, emotional self-awareness not only aids in personal emotional regulation but also enhances social interactions and communication in the workplace, which are essential for career success (**Hall, 2020**). In a world where careers are becoming increasingly nonlinear, emotional self-awareness provides the emotional stability needed to navigate the complexities of modern career paths (**Merino-Tejedor et al., 2016**). Therefore, understanding the role of emotional self-awareness in fostering career adaptability can offer valuable insights for individuals and career counselors alike.

This paper aims to explore the impact of emotional self-awareness on career adaptability by reviewing existing research and examining the mechanisms through which emotional self-awareness enhances career resilience and flexibility.

2. Emotional Self-awareness

Emotional self-awareness is widely recognized as a core sub-dimension of emotional intelligence (EI), which refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions in oneself and others (**Mayer, et al., 2016**). Emotional self-awareness specifically involves the ability to identify and comprehend one's emotional states and the impact those emotions have on behaviors and decision-making processes (**Goleman, 1995**). In recent years, emotional self-awareness has garnered attention for its

significant role in enhancing personal well-being, interpersonal relationships, and workplace performance. Self-awareness is a combination of emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence. Emotional awareness refers to understanding and acknowledging one's emotions and what effect they have. Accurate self-assessment refers to understanding one's capabilities and boundaries. The last sub-competence is self-confidence which means sureness regarding one's value and capabilities (**Serrat, 2017**). Self-awareness is known as knowing and understanding own self, feelings, thoughts, and emotions and being aware of how all of those could affect own self and how they could change (**Serrat, 2017**).

Emotional intelligence frameworks consistently highlight emotional self-awareness as a critical element that enables individuals to regulate their emotions more effectively (**Zeidner et al., 2009**). Individuals with high emotional self-awareness are able to recognize and interpret their emotional reactions, which in turn supports emotional regulation, empathy, and communication skills (**Côté, 2014**). Studies have shown that emotional self-awareness contributes to improved mental health outcomes, such as reduced stress and anxiety, and fosters better interpersonal relationships in both personal and professional settings (**Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2021**).

3. Previous Studies of Emotional Self-Awareness

Several recent studies have explored the role of emotional self-awareness, particularly concerning emotional intelligence and its impact on personal and professional outcomes. These studies highlight the significant influence of emotional self-awareness on emotional regulation, leadership effectiveness, and career adaptability.

1. **(Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2021)** examined the role of emotional intelligence, including emotional self-awareness, in promoting well-being and sustainable development in organizational contexts. Their findings suggested that individuals with higher emotional self-awareness tend to exhibit better emotional regulation, resulting in enhanced interpersonal relationships and improved job performance. The study also emphasized that emotional self-awareness plays a critical role in relational management, which is essential for career success and adaptability in dynamic work environments.
2. **(Boyatzis, 2018)** focused on the behavioral components of emotional intelligence, including emotional self-awareness, in leadership settings. This study found that leaders with high emotional self-awareness were more effective in managing their teams and navigating social complexities within the workplace. By being attuned to their emotional triggers and

understanding how their emotions affect their behavior, these leaders were able to foster more productive and harmonious work environments, thus positively impacting team dynamics and organizational performance.

3. **(Hou et al., 2014)** investigated the effect of emotional intelligence, specifically emotional self-awareness, on career adaptability among university graduates. Their findings indicated that individuals with greater emotional self-awareness were better equipped to handle career uncertainties and make informed career decisions. This ability to recognize and manage emotions enabled participants to remain resilient in the face of career challenges, which enhanced their overall adaptability to changing career environments.

4. Career Adaptability

Originally, **(Savickas, 1997)** adaptability was explained as the ability to change without much difficulty in dealing with new or changed circumstances and career adaptability refers to the capacity to manage both the predictable duties involved in preparing for and doing a job as well as the unanticipated adaptations brought on by adjustments like the job and the environment in which one works. Also, career adaptability is defined as the ability to appropriately handle developmental duties to prepare for and engage in a professional position. **(Nota et al., 2012)** added that it includes being able to adjust

to unexpected needs brought on by changes in the labor market and working environment. Moreover, **(Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)** explained that career adaptability resources are the self-regulation skills or abilities that a person can use to address the unknown, complicated, and undefined challenges that developmental vocational tasks, occupational transitions, and work traumas provide. Adaptability is more changeable as psychological resources or transactional abilities. Through interactions between a person's inner and external worlds, adaptabilities are developed. They have a close connection to specific functions and situational circumstances. These resources are called the four adapt-ability syndromes (4Cs), which are:

- i. Concern for the future encourages people to think ahead and make plans for what may occur next.
- ii. Control empowers people to take control of their environments and themselves to prepare for what comes next by exercising self-control, perseverance, and effort.
- iii. Curiosity causes one to consider oneself in different situations and positions.
- iv. Confidence that the person can make decisions to carry out their life plan.

Career adaptability is an essential concept that helps to understand how individuals navigate their careers in response to different obstacles and changes. It includes a collection of

essential psychological abilities that individuals utilize to manage work-related responsibilities and navigate their professional paths efficiently. The adaptability of individuals is defined by their different attitudes, abilities, and behaviors that enable them to effectively navigate through changes, assume additional duties, and successfully overcome challenges in their professional lives. Career adaptability is crucial for achieving long-term career success since it provides individuals with the essential skills to excel in ever-changing work settings, enabling ongoing personal and professional development (Li & Chang, 2024).

5. Previous Studies of Career Adaptability

Career adaptability has been a significant focus in vocational psychology, as it reflects an individual's ability to cope with career transitions and changes in the workplace. Recent studies emphasize the importance of psychosocial resources, including adaptability, for managing career challenges and ensuring career success.

1. (Hirschi, 2018) explored the implications of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on career adaptability, highlighting the increasing relevance of adaptability in an era of rapid technological change. The study found that individuals who demonstrated higher levels of career adaptability were more

capable of navigating the uncertainties and disruptions brought about by technological advancements. Hirschi emphasized that career adaptability helps individuals not only adjust to changing job demands but also proactively shape their career paths in uncertain environments.

2. **(Fiori et al., 2015)** examined the link between career adaptability and job satisfaction, as well as the role of affect in this relationship. Their research indicated that individuals with higher career adaptability exhibited lower job stress and greater job satisfaction. The study demonstrated that career adaptability enables individuals to manage work-related challenges more effectively, ultimately contributing to greater well-being at work. Furthermore, positive affect acted as a mediator, enhancing the relationship between adaptability and job satisfaction.
3. **(Merino-Tejedor et al., 2016)** focused on the connection between career adaptability and academic engagement among university students. Their study revealed that students with higher levels of career adaptability were more engaged in academic activities and had better career planning skills. This adaptability helped students handle academic pressures and better prepare for their future careers. The study also emphasized the importance of self-regulation as a key factor that complements career adaptability in achieving academic and professional success.

6. Previous Studies of Emotional Self-awareness and Career Adaptability

The relationship between emotional self-awareness and career adaptability has become an area of increasing interest in vocational psychology. Recent studies suggest that individuals who possess a high degree of emotional self-awareness are better equipped to manage career challenges, make informed decisions, and adapt to changing career environments.

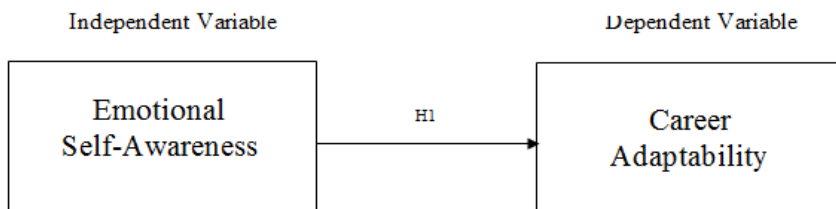
1. **(Di Fabio & Kenny, 2016)** examined the role of emotional intelligence, with a focus on emotional self-awareness, in promoting career adaptability among young adults. Their findings indicated that individuals who were more aware of their emotional states showed greater adaptability in their career planning and decision-making processes. Emotional self-awareness was found to enhance one's ability to cope with career-related stress and uncertainty, contributing to more proactive and flexible career behaviors. The study highlighted emotional self-awareness as a crucial resource for developing resilience and confidence in career transitions.
2. **(Hou et al., 2014)** investigated the impact of emotional self-awareness as a component of emotional intelligence on career adaptability in a sample of university graduates. They found that individuals with higher levels of emotional self-awareness were better able to regulate their emotions and

respond flexibly to career changes. Emotional self-awareness helped individuals understand their career-related emotions, which in turn improved their adaptability and decision-making skills. The study underscored the importance of emotional awareness in enhancing career adaptability, particularly in the early stages of one's career.

3. **(Hall, 2020)** explored the link between emotional self-awareness and career adaptability in the workplace. This study found that emotionally self-aware employees demonstrated greater flexibility and resilience in managing career transitions, such as job role changes or organizational restructuring. Emotional self-awareness helps individuals recognize and manage their emotional responses to career uncertainties, allowing them to take proactive steps in their career development. The findings suggest that fostering emotional self-awareness can enhance career adaptability by promoting emotional stability and effective decision-making.

7. Conceptual Model

Figure 1: conceptual model



Source: developed by the researcher

8. Research Hypothesis

Research suggests that individuals with higher emotional self-awareness are better equipped to handle career changes, manage stress, and make proactive decisions about their careers. By being aware of their emotions, they can respond more effectively to career uncertainties and challenges, which may lead to greater career success and satisfaction. Based on this understanding, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H1: There is a significant impact of emotional self-awareness on career adaptability.

9. Research Methodology

9.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to a specific perspective or approach to the collecting, examining, and using of information about a phenomenon. This research adopts a positivist philosophy, focusing on observable and measurable phenomena. Positivism is an approach to philosophy that prioritizes the significance of empirical evidence and observable phenomena as the basis for achieving knowledge. Positivism, which emerged in the early 19th century, particularly via the contributions of Auguste Comte, promotes the application of the scientific method to collect facts, develop hypotheses, and establish cause-and-effect connections. The theory asserts that social realities have an

existence that is separate from individual perceptions and can be examined objectively. It dismisses philosophical explanations that cannot be proved by empirical evidence. Positivism seeks to generate dependable, law-like generalizations about social behavior and occurrences by emphasizing observable and quantifiable evidence (**Saunders et al., 2015**).

9.2 Research Approach

The research used a quantitative approach, defined by the systematic collecting and analysis of numerical data to investigate and comprehend relationships between variables. This study uses a questionnaire as the main technique of data collecting, specifically targeting academic staff in private universities located in greater Cairo, Egypt (**Williams, 2007**).

9.3 The Study Sector

The study sector analyzed in the research is the education sector, with a specific emphasis on academic staff working in private universities located in greater Cairo, Egypt. This focus on the education sector is significant because it encompasses a unique professional environment where emotional self-awareness and career adaptability can play crucial roles in navigating the complexities of academic careers.

9.4 Research Population

The research population consists of academic staff (PHD holders) employed in private universities in greater Cairo, Egypt. Which was 4,524, as reported in the most recent statistical yearbook (September 2019) published by the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS).

9.5 Sample Size

The research will be conducted on private universities' academic staff (PHD holders and above).

The Sample size is calculated using the following formula (Robert D. Mason and Douglas A. Lind, 1996):

$$n = \frac{p(1-p)}{\frac{p(1-p) + \frac{E^2}{N}}{SD^2}}$$

n: Sample size

N: Population size = 4524

SD: Standard deviation which is equal to 1.96 at a degree of confidence of 95%

P: It is estimated to be equal to 0.5

E: Allowable Error and is estimated to be 5%

$$n = \frac{0.5(1-0.5)}{\frac{0.5(1-0.5)}{4524} + \frac{0.05^2}{1.96^2}} = 354$$

9.6 Data Collection Method

The data collection method used is a survey. This method involves the systematic gathering of information from participants through structured questionnaires designed to assess their levels of emotional intelligence and career adaptability.

According to (Cochran, 1977) the sample size formula “n” is designed to calculate the minimum number of participants required to ensure that the sample is representative of the entire population.

3.1 Questionnaire design

This research adopted a quantitative approach; the data collection was through a survey to test the impact of emotional self-awareness on career adaptability. The survey includes 2 scales. The study’s purpose is to test the hypotheses of whether there is an impact of emotional self-awareness on career adaptability or not. The first scale is the Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory (Palmer et al., 2009) it measures the

dimensions of emotional self-awareness (Independent variable), it is composed of 4 questions. The second scale is tested with the (CAAS) Career Adaptabilities Scale by **(Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)** it measures the dimensions of career adaptability (Dependent variable), it is composed of 24 questions (4 groups) each group measures one of the dimensions.

3.2 Procedures and Participants

The study surveyed 389 academic staff members (PhD holders or above) from private universities in Greater Cairo. These participants completed a questionnaire that was distributed online and designed to measure the impact of emotional self-awareness on career adaptability.

4. Findings and Results

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Using a 5-point Likert scale, the respondents in this study expressed their opinions about the current relationship between emotional intelligence and career adaptability (from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, to strongly agree). As a result, the descriptive statistics analysis is carried out next, which shows the means, standard deviations, and lowest and maximum scores of the responses regarding the variables and dimensions under study.

Table 4 displays the analysis. A normally distributed variable's dispersion on either side of the mean value is measured by the standard deviation, which is used in descriptive statistics analysis to show a variable's central tendency. The study employed descriptive statistics analysis and interpretation (mean, standard deviation, and standard error) to investigate the levels of emotional intelligence that are most prevalent in Egypt's education sector. According to (Frankfort-Nachmias, 2000), the more respondents agree with the dimension, the lower the mean indicates that they disagree with this dimension.

Table (1): Descriptive Statistics of the Emotional Self-Awareness

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean		SD
				Statistic	SE	
Emotional Self-Awareness	389	1	5	3.14	.068	1.34

Source: Results of Statistical Analysis

Table (2): Descriptive Statistics of Career Adaptability dimension

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean		SD
				Statistic	SE	
Concern	389	1	5	3.17	.068	1.349
Control	389	1	5	3.16	.068	1.350
Curiosity	389	1	5	3.14	.067	1.335
Confidence	389	1	5	3.17	.069	1.362

Source: Results of Statistical Analysis

4.2 Normality Test

As a result, table (3) shows that all measurement items, dimensions, and variables have Skewness and Kurtosis scores that fall within the previously stated ranges.

Therefore, according to (Pallant, 2010) , applying the parametric analysis with the current sample will not be a matter of question despite of the violation of the normality assumption, especially when the sample size is over 100 respondents.

Table (3): Normality Teste

Variable	N	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Self-Awareness	389	1	5	-.405	.124
Concern	389	1	5	-.483	.124
Control	389	1	5	-.475	.124
Curiosity	389	1	5	-.464	.124
Confidence	389	1	5	-.466	.124

Source: Results of Statistical Analysis

4.3 Correlation Matrix

Correlation analysis is a statistical technique for determining a relationship and the strength of a linear relationship between two variables. The researcher performed a Pearson correlation analysis for every hypothesis in this study.

Hypothesis H1: According to The Pearson correlation analysis, this hypothesis is supported. There Is a Significant Relationship (0.957**) at 0.000 Sig Level, Between Emotional Self-Awareness and Career Adaptability

Table (4): Pearson Correlation Analysis

		Emotional Self-Awareness
Emotional Self-Awareness	PC Sig.	1
Career Adaptability	PC Sig. N	0.957** .000 389

Source: Results of Statistical Analysis

4.4 Testing the Hypothesis

According to the study analysis, the independent variable (Emotional Self-Awareness) has a 98% impact on career adaptability in the Egyptian education sector, according to the R-squared = 0.98.

Table (5) Adjusted R-squared (R^2) Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.993	0.986	0.986	0.158

Dependent Variable: Career Adaptability.

4.5 Results

Unstandardized Coefficients (β)

Constant: The intercept of the regression line, which is 0.000.

This is the expected value of the dependent variable when all independent variables are zero.

Emotional Self-Awareness: A coefficient of 0.073, indicating that for every one-unit increase in Emotional Self-Awareness, Career Adaptability is expected to increase by 0.073

t-Values and Significance (Sig.)

- The t-value tests whether the coefficient is significantly different from zero. Higher absolute t-values indicate higher levels of significance.

Constant: $t = 1.494$, $p = 0.000$ (significant)

Emotional Self-Awareness: $t = 3$.

The model suggests that all the independent variable (Emotional Self-awareness) have a statistically significant positive impact on the dependent variable (Career Adaptability).

- **Emotional Self-Awareness has a significant (0.000) β (0.073) impact on career adaptability.**

- **Table (6): Summary**

Hypotheses	Result
<i>H1: Emotional self-awareness has a significant impact on career adaptability.</i>	Accepted

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows a significant impact of emotional self-awareness on career adaptability, indicating that individuals with higher emotional self-awareness have a better ability to handle professional obstacles and changes. Emotional self-awareness is a vital psychological ability that promotes control of emotions, self-awareness, and interpersonal abilities, resulting in improved job performance and satisfaction.

The findings indicate that organizations and educational

institutions should give high importance to the development of emotional intelligence as a whole through training programs and supportive settings in order to foster a workforce that is resilient and flexible. This study adds to the existing body of literature on emotional self-awareness in professional settings and recommends that stakeholders utilize its potential as an essential tool in attaining career success in a rapidly changing work market.

6. Recommendations

According to the study's findings, various recommendations might be proposed:

1. **Integrate Emotional Intelligence Training into Educational Programs:** Educational institutions should include emotional intelligence training as part of their curriculum. These activities may include workshops, seminars, or courses that specifically aim to enhance abilities such as emotional regulation, self-awareness, and interpersonal communication. By providing students with these abilities, they can improve their career adaptability and more effectively prepare for working life.
2. **Promote Self-Assessment Tools:** Encourage the utilization of self-assessment instruments to test individuals' degrees of emotional intelligence. Gaining insight into their strengths and identifying opportunities for growth might enable individuals to concentrate on developing specific emotional

competencies that enhance their ability to adapt in diverse professional circumstances.

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