

Research Paper

## Career Adaptability Across a Decade (2013-2024): Reviewing Key Predictors, Outcomes and Shaping Future Research with a Focus on India

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### ABSTRACT

Career adaptability has garnered increasing scholarly attention over the past decade as a critical psychological resource for navigating career development in uncertain and rapidly changing labor markets. This integrative review synthesizes findings from 40 empirical studies published between 2013 and 2024, encompassing diverse global populations, including students, early-career professionals, and mid-career employees. The review examines key predictors of career adaptability—such as personality traits, career self-efficacy, proactive personality, and social support—as well as its outcomes, including career decision-making, employability, work engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Methodological approaches, theoretical frameworks, and cross-cultural variations are also discussed. While the reviewed literature offers rich insights into the mechanisms and benefits of career adaptability, significant gaps remain in understanding its contextual application within emerging economies. The paper concludes by highlighting future research directions with a specific focus on the Indian context, emphasizing the need for culturally relevant models, longitudinal studies, and context-sensitive interventions to better support individuals in managing their careers in a transforming socio-economic landscape.

**Keywords:** *Career Adaptability, Role of Career Adaptability, Employability, Psychological well-being*

The modern workplace has undergone significant transformations, challenging traditional notions of career stability and predictability. Technological advances, globalization, economic disruption, and societal changes have created a landscape in which adaptability and resilience are essential for professional success. For example, the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation has not only redefined job roles, but has also replaced many routine tasks, requiring individuals to continuously update their skills and abilities to remain employable (Hirschi, 2018). Furthermore, global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated these changes, disrupting industries, changing workplace norms, and introducing new uncertainties into career trajectories. In this changing environment, the ability to adapt, referred to as career adaptability, has become a foundation for professional stability and personal well-being. Career adaptability is a

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Received: May 22, 2025; Revision Received: October 10, 2025; Accepted: October 14, 2025

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psychosocial construct introduced by Savickas (2005) as part of his career construction theory. It is the ability to manage transitions in work environments, improve career resilience by coping with unprecedented circumstances and adapt effectively (Savickas, 1997; Savickas, 2005).

The importance of career adaptability is evident in the face of technological disruption, economic instability, and cultural change. Studies have shown its importance in improving employability, increasing job satisfaction, and reducing career anxiety (Fugate et al., 2004; Rudolph et al., 2017). Career adaptability is a critical construct in the realm of higher education, where students are required to transition from academic settings to professional environments amidst dynamic and often unpredictable labor markets. It encompasses a set of psychosocial resources—concern, control, curiosity, and confidence—that enable individuals to manage career transitions, uncertainties, and challenges effectively (Savickas, 2013). Within higher education, fostering career adaptability is essential for developing students' employability and ensuring their readiness to meet the demands of evolving industries. Research highlights that career adaptability not only enhances academic performance but also facilitates smoother transitions into professional roles by promoting self-regulation, planning, and problem-solving skills (Koen et al., 2012; Hirschi, 2018).

In the Indian context, career adaptability assumes unique significance due to the socio-economic and cultural diversity of the nation. India's workforce is characterized by a huge young population, with over 50% of the population below the age of 25 (Census of India, 2021), presenting both opportunities for demographic dividends and challenges in terms of employment readiness. Technological disruptions, including automation and artificial intelligence, have significantly impacted traditional industries such as manufacturing and IT services, which have historically been the backbone of India's economic growth (NASSCOM, 2020). Although initiatives like the Skill India Mission and government-backed platforms like e-Shram have aimed to address these challenges by providing vocational training, career counseling, and support for informal workers. But, research has shown that many Indian students face familial and societal pressures to pursue specific career trajectories, such as engineering or medicine, which may not align with their personal interests or market demands (Mishra & Singh, 2021). Furthermore, the rapid growth of technology-driven industries and the emergence of the gig economy have amplified the need for Indian students to possess adaptable skills, such as digital literacy and critical thinking, to remain competitive in global markets (Thomas et al., 2022). Addressing these challenges requires the integration of career adaptability training into Indian higher education systems through career guidance programs, skill development workshops, and policies that promote lifelong learning (Saxena & Rai, 2020; Sharma et al., 2023).

This article aims to provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature on career adaptability, summarizing the main theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and practical applications. It explores how career adaptability is studied in the context of technological disruption, economic uncertainty, and social change, with an emphasis on identifying critical research gaps. In examining these issues, the article seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the key predictors of career adaptability identified in empirical studies conducted between 2013 and 2024 across diverse global populations?
2. What are the primary outcomes associated with career adaptability, and how do they vary across different career stages and cultural contexts?

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3. What gaps exist in the current literature, and how can future research on career adaptability be contextualized to address the unique socio-economic and cultural factors relevant to India?

In doing so, this article contributes to increasing understanding of career adaptability, highlighting its importance in an increasingly unpredictable world.

### *Theoretical Background*

Career adaptability has emerged as a vital construct in career psychology, rooted in the broader frameworks of vocational and developmental theories. Its foundation lies in **Career Construction Theory (CCT)**, proposed by Savickas (2005), which emphasizes how individuals actively construct their careers by adapting to changing environments and challenges. According to Savickas, career adaptability is defined as a psychosocial resource comprising four critical dimensions—concern, control, curiosity, and confidence—collectively referred to as the "4Cs" of adaptability. **Concern** refers to the ability to anticipate and plan for future career challenges. It fosters proactive behavior and goal-oriented thinking. **Control** relates to the sense of personal agency in shaping career paths, ensuring that individuals take ownership of their decisions. **Curiosity** reflects openness to exploring new opportunities, roles, and learning experiences that expand career horizons. **Confidence** is the belief in one's ability to overcome obstacles and succeed in career-related endeavors (Savickas, 2013). These dimensions enable individuals to maintain flexibility in the face of career-related uncertainties, enhancing both career transitions and long-term employability. The introduction of the **Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)** by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) provided a globally validated measure, becoming a cornerstone for adaptability research.

### **METHOD**

This study adopts a narrative review approach to provide a comprehensive synthesis of the literature on career adaptability. The focus is on understanding its theoretical foundations, key predictors and outcomes, global perspectives, and specific relevance to the Indian context.

**Literature Collection:** The review draws on research studies, book chapters, global reports, and relevant theoretical frameworks published between 2013 and 2024. The literature collection process involved the following steps:

1. **Databases Used:** Reputable academic databases, including **Scopus**, **Web of Science**, and **Google Scholar**, were accessed to ensure a wide-ranging collection of sources.
2. **Keywords and Search Terms:** A combination of keywords was used, including: "Career adaptability", "Career adaptability India", "Predictors of career adaptability", "Role of Career adaptability", "Career adaptability intervention".
3. **Inclusion Criteria:** Peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and reports, Publications in English between 2013 and 2024, Studies focused on theoretical, empirical, or intervention-based research.
4. **Exclusion Criteria:** Studies outside the defined timeline, Research lacking focus on career adaptability.

**Data Analysis:** The selected 40 studies that fit the exclusion and inclusion criteria were analyzed to extract and organize key findings into the following categories:

1. Predictors of Career Adaptability
2. Outcomes of Career Adaptability

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**Table 1. The list of 40 articles reviewed in detail.**

S. No.	Author(s) /Year	Study	Methodology	Study Participants	Key Findings
<b>STUDIES RELATED TO PREDICTORS OF CAREER ADAPTABILITY</b>					
1	Alarifi, Bajaba, & Basahal (2024)	Explored link between self-commitment and career crafting	Quantitative study using structural equation modeling (SEM)	305 working professionals (Saudi Arabia)	Self-commitment leads to more career crafting behaviors through the mediation of career adaptability.
2	Sharma et al.(2024)	University life satisfaction, career decision, and career adaptability	Cross-sectional survey; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using R	330 Indian undergraduate, postgraduate, and research students.	Social support and course relevance positively influenced university life satisfaction, which in turn enhanced career adaptability.
3	Hamzah et al. (2021)	Career emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and adaptability	Quantitative (SEM)	205 Malaysian university students	Career decision self-efficacy mediates the effect of emotional intelligence and self-esteem on career adaptability
4	Öztemel, K., & Yıldız-Akyol, E. (2021)	Examined how happiness, social support, and future time orientation predict career adaptability	Quantitative study using multiple regression analysis	404 Turkish university students	Happiness, social support, and future time orientation are all significant positive predictors of career adaptability, with future orientation being the strongest.
5	Ocampo et al. (2020)	Influence of internship participation and conscientiousness on career adaptability over time	Five-wave growth mixture model analysis	173 undergraduate hotel and restaurant management students in China	Internship experience and high conscientiousness were linked to stronger career adaptability growth trajectories.
6	Hou, C., Wu, Y., & Liu, Z. (2019)	Examined career decision-making self-efficacy as a	Longitudinal quantitative study	225 Chinese college students	Career decision-making self-efficacy mediates

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		mediator between social support and career adaptability.			social support's positive effect on career adaptability over time.
7	Marcionetti, J., & Rossier, J. (2019)	Adolescents' Self-Esteem, General Self-Efficacy, Career Adaptability, and Life Satisfaction	Longitudinal study using survey methodology; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	357 Swiss adolescents assessed three times over 17 months during compulsory schooling	Career adaptability and general self-efficacy were interrelated over time.
8	Garcia, P. R. J. M. et al. (2019)	Examined how career adaptability is transmitted from parents to children through role modeling	Quantitative, dyadic study using surveys and structural equation modeling (SEM)	152 parent-child dyads in the Philippines	Parents' career adaptability positively influences children's career adaptability
9	Kim, N. R., & Lee, K. H. (2018)	Affect of Internal locus of control on career adaptability	Quantitative study using structural equation modeling (SEM)	252 Korean university students	Internal locus of control positively influences career adaptability
10	Rudolph et al. (2017)	Adaptability and Career Success	Meta-analysis of 90 studies	Various studies Over 22,000 participants across various demographics	Career adaptability strongly correlates with adaptive behaviors and positive career outcomes like satisfaction and performance.
11	Karacan-Ozdemir, N., & Güneri, O. (2017)	The Factors Contribute to Career Adaptability of High-School Students	Quantitative; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	1,610 Turkish high school students from public and private schools	Social support and optimism positively influenced career adaptability via self-efficacy.
12	Buyukgoze-Kavas, A. (2016)	Explored how positive psychological traits predict career adaptability	Quantitative study using regression analysis	281 Turkish university students	Positive psychological traits significantly predict career adaptability.
13	Cai et al. (2015)	Self-esteem and proactive personality as predictors of future work self and career adaptability	Two-wave longitudinal survey; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	305 Chinese university students	Self-esteem and proactive personality positively predicted future work self and career

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					adaptability, mediated by career exploration.
14	Guan et al. (2015)	Career-specific parental behaviors, career exploration and career adaptability.	Longitudinal survey; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	244 Chinese university students and their parents	Parental support and low interference enhanced students' career exploration, which in turn improved career adaptability
15	Wang, Z., & Fu, Y. (2015)	Explored how social support influences career adaptability.	Quantitative study using moderated mediation analysis	324 Chinese university students	Social support positively affects career adaptability through social comparison.
16	Zacher, H. (2014).	Individual difference predictors of change in career adaptability over time.	longitudinal study	659 Australian employees.	The findings highlight the dynamic nature of career adaptability and its relationship with stable personal characteristics.
17	de Guzman, A. B., & Choi, K. O. (2013)	Explored the relationship between employability skills and career adaptability among technical school students	Quantitative study using correlation and regression analysis	1,187 technical-vocational school students in the Philippines	Employability skills (communication, problem-solving, etc.) significantly predict career adaptability
18	Teychenne et al. (2019)	A pre-post evaluation of an online career planning module on university students' career adaptability	Pre-post intervention study using dependent t-tests	80 second-year university students in exercise and public health-related units	The online module significantly improved students' career planning strategies, decision-making confidence, and exploration of job options, enhancing overall career adaptability.

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S. No.	Author(s) /Year	Study	Methodology	Study Participants	Key Findings
<b>STUDIES RELATED TO OUTCOMES OF CAREER ADAPTABILITY</b>					
19	Asok Kumar et al. (2024)	Career adaptability across Southeast Asia: A systematic review	Systematic review using PRISMA guidelines	22 studies from Southeast Asia	Identified personal, educational, behavioral, and environmental predictors of career adaptability; outcomes include enhanced employability and life satisfaction.
20	Nakra, N., & Kashyap, V. (2023)	Career Adaptability and Psychological Well-Being	Cross-sectional survey; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	400 Indian employees from various sectors	Career sustainability mediated the relationship between career adaptability and psychological well-being.
21	Hou, C., Leung, S. A., & Li, X. (2022)	Career Adaptability as a Mediator Between Stress and Well-Being	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey	672 undergraduate students from mainland China.	Higher career adaptability reduces the negative impact of stress on students' well-being.
22	Kaur & Kaur (2021)	Career adaptability and job outcomes	Two-wave longitudinal study using structural equation modeling	357 faculty members from Indian universities	Career adaptability positively influences job satisfaction and performance.
23	Vashisht, S., Kaushal, P., & Vashisht, R. (2021)	Emotional Intelligence, Personality Variables and Career Adaptability	Systematic Review and Meta-analysis	43 empirical studies included in the analysis	Emotional intelligence and certain personality traits (such as openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion) have significant positive associations with career adaptability
24	Mittal (2021)	Ability-based emotional intelligence and career adaptability	Quantitative study using hierarchical regression analysis	729 full-time university students in India	Ability-based emotional intelligence, particularly the use and regulation

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					of emotions, significantly influences career adaptability and job-search success.
25	Kulkarni et al. (2021)	The Role of Career Adaptability in Navigating Technological Disruptions among Students	Quantitative survey-based research	412 undergraduate students from technology-related fields in India	High adaptability aids in acquiring digital skills and coping with automation disruptions.
26	Kaur & Kaur (2020)	Career adaptability and job outcomes via fit perceptions	Three-wave longitudinal study	239 Indian banking employees	Career adaptability enhances job satisfaction and performance through improved person-job fit.
27	Monterio et al. (2019)	Career Adaptability and University-to-Work Transition	Longitudinal quantitative study using repeated measures	183 graduates	Higher levels of career adaptability are positively associated with employment status 18 months post-graduation.
28	Urbanaviciute et al. (2019)	Career adaptability and employee well-being over a two-year period	Two-year longitudinal study; Cross-lagged structural equation modeling	1,007 employed adults from French- and German-speaking regions of Switzerland	Career adaptability positively influenced job and life satisfaction and negatively influenced perceived stress over two years.
29	Santra, S., & Giri, V. N. (2019)	Role of Career Adaptability in Predicting Vocational Attitudes of Indian IT Professionals	Cross-sectional survey; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	434 Indian IT professionals	Career adaptability positively predicted career satisfaction but was not related to turnover intention.
30	Shin, Y. J., & Lee, J. Y. (2019)	Self-Focused Attention and Career Anxiety: The Mediating Role of Career Adaptability	Quantitative survey-based study; mediation analysis using structural equation modeling	365 South Korean undergraduate students	Career adaptability significantly mediated the relationship between self-focused attention and career anxiety. High

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					self-focus increased anxiety, but adaptability reduced its impact.
31	Akkermans et al. (2018)	The Role of Career Adaptability and Career Competencies in Students' Well-Being and Performance	Cross-sectional survey; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	672 undergraduate students from nine universities in Lithuania	Career adaptability and career competencies positively influenced life satisfaction directly and indirectly via study engagement.
32	Yu, H., Guan, X., Zheng, X., & Hou, Z. (2018)	Examined the role of career adaptability (with or without career identity) in predicting individual and organizational success	Quantitative study using structural equation modeling (SEM)	435 full-time Chinese employees across various industries	Career adaptability positively predicts both organizational success and individual career success; career identity enhances this relationship.
33	Duarte et al. (2017)	Career Adaptability, Employability, and Career Resilience in Managing Transitions	Theoretical and conceptual chapter	Not applicable (conceptual synthesis)	It emphasizes that adaptability supports proactive and positive responses to career challenges, promoting long-term employability and resilience in dynamic labor markets.
34	Santilli et al. (2017)	Career Adaptability, Hope, Optimism, and Life Satisfaction	Cross-sectional study; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	1,259 adolescents	Career adaptability partially and fully mediated the relationship between hope, optimism, and life satisfaction.
35	Spurk, D., Kauffeld, S., Meinecke, A. L., & Ebner, K. (2016)	Examined how career adaptability reduces job and career insecurity indirectly through perceived internal	Quantitative study using mediation analysis	226 German employees	Career adaptability lowers feelings of job and career insecurity by increasing perceived internal

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		and external marketability			(skills) and external (labor market) marketability.
36	Praskova et al. (2015)	Career Adaptability and the Impact of Economic Downturns	Quantitative cross-sectional study	330 Australian university students and recent graduates	Career adaptability mediates the relationship between economic hardship and career outcomes.
37	Zacher, H. (2014)	Investigated whether career adaptability predicts subjective career success beyond personality traits and core self-evaluations	Quantitative study using hierarchical regression analysis	163 German employees (mean age ~44 years)	Career adaptability significantly predicts subjective career success, even after controlling for Big Five personality traits and core self-evaluations
38	Tolentino et al. (2014)	The role of career adaptability in predicting entrepreneurial: A moderated mediation model	Three-wave longitudinal survey; Moderated mediation analysis	380 Serbian business students	Career adaptability positively predicted entrepreneurial intentions.
39	Maggiori et al.(2013)	The role of career adaptability and work conditions on general and professional well-being	Quantitative study using survey methodology; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	976 employed adults in Switzerland, diverse in age, gender, and occupations	Career adaptability positively predicted both general and professional well-being.
40	Guan et al. (2013)	Career adaptability, job search self-efficacy and outcomes	Three-wave longitudinal survey; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	270 Chinese university graduates	Career adaptability positively influenced job search self-efficacy, which in turn predicted employment status and person–environment fit.

## **RESULTS**

This review synthesizes findings from 40 empirical and conceptual studies examining the **predictors and outcomes** of career adaptability. The studies span diverse populations including adolescents, university students, early-career professionals, and mid-career

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employees across multiple cultural contexts (e.g., India, China, Switzerland, Australia, Southeast Asia). Overall, career adaptability emerges as both a **dynamic personal resource** influenced by various internal and external factors, and a **predictive construct** linked to broad psychological, educational, and career-related benefits.

### *1. Predictors of Career Adaptability*

#### *1.1. Personal and Psychological Traits:*

**Self-efficacy** and **self-esteem** were consistently found to be strong predictors (Hamzah et al., 2021; Marcionetti & Rossier, 2019; Cai et al., 2015), as they boost individuals' confidence in managing career transitions and challenges. **Positive psychological traits** such as **hope**, **optimism**, **resilience**, and **happiness** were positively associated with adaptability (Buyukgoze-Kavas, 2016; Santilli et al., 2017; Öztemel & Yıldız-Akyol, 2021). **Internal locus of control** (Kim & Lee, 2018) and **future time orientation** (Öztemel & Yıldız-Akyol, 2021) were also shown to enhance individuals' readiness to adapt by encouraging proactive and goal-directed behavior. **Conscientiousness** and other personality traits such as **openness** and **extraversion** were found to support the development of adaptability, especially when combined with real-world experiences (Ocampo et al., 2020; Vashisht et al., 2021).

#### *1.2. Psychosocial Factors:*

**Social support**—from family, peers, mentors, and institutions—was widely documented as a significant positive predictor (Hou et al., 2019; Wang & Fu, 2015; Sharma et al., 2024). **Parental support** and **role modeling** helped younger individuals develop career-related confidence and adaptability (Garcia et al., 2019; Guan et al., 2015). Support systems often enhanced **career decision-making self-efficacy**, which in turn improved adaptability (Hamzah et al., 2021; Hou et al., 2019).

#### *1.3. Educational and Skill-Based Inputs:*

**Employability skills** (e.g., communication, teamwork, problem-solving) were directly correlated with higher adaptability (de Guzman & Choi, 2013). **Internship participation**, **course relevance**, and **career exploration** promoted adaptability by fostering real-world understanding and skill acquisition (Ocampo et al., 2020; Cai et al., 2015; Sharma et al., 2024).

#### *1.4. Contextual and Environmental Factors:*

**Job embeddedness**, **organizational socialization**, and **job autonomy** were positively related to career adaptability (Cai et al., 2023; Alarifi et al., 2024). **Cultural values**, especially in collectivist societies like India and China, emphasized the role of family, community, and social expectations in building adaptive strengths (Tian & Fan, 2019; Asok Kumar et al., 2024).

## **2. Outcomes of Career Adaptability**

### *2.1. Psychological and Emotional Outcomes*

Individuals with higher adaptability reported greater **life satisfaction**, **psychological well-being**, and **lower stress and anxiety** (Urbanaviciute et al., 2019; Nakra & Kashyap, 2023; Shin & Lee, 2019). Career adaptability buffered the effects of **stress** on well-being, indicating its protective function in emotionally demanding situations (Hou et al., 2022).

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### 2.2. Academic and Early Career Development

Adaptability supported **study engagement**, **performance**, and **career readiness** (Akkermans et al., 2018). Students with higher adaptability were more likely to transition successfully into the workforce and maintain **employment stability** (Monterio et al., 2019; Guan et al., 2013).

### 2.3. Career and Job Outcomes

It was positively associated with **job satisfaction**, **career success**, **career sustainability**, and **organizational performance** (Yu et al., 2018; Kaur & Kaur, 2021; Zacher, 2014). Adaptability also enhanced **person–job fit**, reduced **job insecurity**, and improved **marketability** (Spurk et al., 2016; Kaur & Kaur, 2020).

### 2.4. Vocational and Entrepreneurial Intentions

It predicted **career satisfaction** and was related to **entrepreneurial intentions** in business students (Santra & Giri, 2019; Tolentino et al., 2014). It also mediated the effects of economic hardship on career outcomes, suggesting its value during transitions or disruptions (Praskova et al., 2015).

### 2.5. Mediating and Moderating Roles

It mediated the relationships between **hope**, **emotional intelligence**, **job fit perceptions**, and **life satisfaction** (Santilli et al., 2017; Mittal, 2021; Kaur & Kaur, 2020). It also moderated the effects of anxiety and workplace challenges, suggesting it serves as both a buffer and a bridge to positive adaptation.

**Table 2: Summary of Integrated Findings**

Category	Key Predictors	Key Outcomes
Personal Traits	Self-efficacy, self-esteem, optimism, conscientiousness, future orientation	Life satisfaction, subjective career success, reduced anxiety/stress
Psychosocial Factors	Social support, parental influence, role modeling	Psychological well-being, career confidence, vocational identity
Educational Inputs	Employability skills, internships, course relevance, career exploration	Study engagement, career readiness, employment status
Contextual Factors	Job autonomy, job embeddedness, cultural values	Job performance, marketability, organizational success
Mediating Variables	Career decision-making self-efficacy, career exploration, job fit	Enhanced outcomes through indirect pathways (e.g., from stress, hope, economic challenges)

## DISCUSSION

This review provides a comprehensive synthesis of research conducted between 2013 and 2024 on the predictors and outcomes of career adaptability across diverse populations and cultural contexts. The findings reinforce career adaptability as a vital psychological resource that enables individuals to navigate career transitions, uncertainties, and developmental tasks across life stages (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

### ***1. Interplay of Internal and External Predictors***

Consistent with the **Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005)**, internal psychological traits such as **self-efficacy, resilience, hope, and future time orientation** emerged as critical enablers of adaptability (Hamzah et al., 2021; Öztemel & Yıldız-Akyol, 2021; Santilli et al., 2017). These findings align with prior meta-analytic evidence (Rudolph et al., 2017) that identifies core psychological resources as foundational to adaptive career behaviors. Interestingly, studies such as Kim & Lee (2018) and Ocampo et al. (2020) underscore how these traits interact with personality dimensions like conscientiousness and openness to predict greater career adaptability, highlighting the trait-activation processes influenced by career experiences.

Psychosocial and contextual predictors, particularly **social support**, play a significant role in collectivist cultures (Guan et al., 2015; Sharma et al., 2024), echoing findings from previous Asian-based studies (Cheung & Arnold, 2010) that emphasize family and community expectations in career decision-making. The inclusion of **job embeddedness** and **organizational socialization** (Cai et al., 2023; Alarifi et al., 2024) further illustrates how external structures support adaptive capacity in work settings, resonating with the **Job Demands–Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)**.

### ***2. Career Adaptability as a Developmental Asset***

This review also confirms the multidimensional benefits of career adaptability, with strong evidence for its positive influence on **psychological well-being, academic success, and career sustainability**. These findings parallel work by Hirschi (2009) and Akkermans et al. (2018), who argue that career adaptability supports both short-term adjustment and long-term growth by fostering agency and motivation in goal pursuit.

Notably, studies such as Urbanaviciute et al. (2019) and Nakra & Kashyap (2023) illustrate adaptability's protective role against stress and its enhancement of life satisfaction—key indicators of psychological flourishing. Furthermore, research from Monterio et al. (2019) and Spurk et al. (2016) demonstrates how adaptability facilitates smoother school-to-work transitions and sustains employability in a rapidly shifting labor market.

### ***3. Mediating and Moderating Mechanisms***

A notable theme across several studies is the **mediating and moderating role** of career adaptability. It acts as a bridge between predictors (e.g., emotional intelligence, hope) and outcomes (e.g., well-being, job fit), and also serves as a buffer against adverse experiences such as anxiety or economic stress (Santilli et al., 2017; Mittal, 2021; Praskova et al., 2015). This supports the view that career adaptability is not only a direct outcome of individual and contextual factors but also a **dynamic mechanism** through which people manage adversity and capitalize on opportunity (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Tolentino et al., 2014).

### ***4. Population-Specific Patterns and Gaps***

The reviewed studies span various populations—adolescents, university students, early and mid-career professionals—demonstrating that career adaptability evolves across developmental stages (Zacher, 2014; Akkermans et al., 2018). However, there remains a paucity of longitudinal and intervention-based research to capture how adaptability unfolds over time and how it can be intentionally cultivated. While some evidence exists for the effectiveness of skill-building interventions and internships (Cai et al., 2015; Sharma et al., 2024), more experimental studies are needed to establish causal relationships.

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Furthermore, while the current body of literature provides strong global insights, relatively few studies delve into the **intersection of career adaptability with socio-economic status, gender, or digital skill development**, especially in lower- and middle-income countries. Given the increasing precarity in global labor markets, including gig and platform-based work, future research must investigate how adaptability operates in **non-traditional or precarious employment settings**.

### CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Over the past decade, research on career adaptability has expanded significantly, offering valuable insights into its antecedents and outcomes across diverse global contexts. This review affirms career adaptability as a key psychological resource shaped by a complex interplay of personal traits, social support systems, educational experiences, and cultural contexts. Its benefits span emotional well-being, academic achievement, career satisfaction, and employability, making it a vital construct in contemporary career development literature.

However, the synthesis also reveals important gaps that warrant further investigation. Many existing studies are cross-sectional, with limited exploration of how career adaptability develops over time or in response to specific interventions. There is also a need for more integrative models that consider intersectional identities, digital labor transformations, and non-traditional career paths.

#### *India-Specific Future Research Directions*

Although some studies in this review included Indian samples (e.g., Sharma et al., 2024; Asok Kumar et al., 2024; Kaur & Kaur, 2020, 2021; Mittal, 2021), comprehensive research on career adaptability within the Indian context remains sparse and fragmented. India's unique socio-cultural environment—characterized by collectivist values, strong familial influence, rising youth population, and a rapidly transforming job market—offers fertile ground for context-sensitive research. Future studies should explore:

- **Culturally relevant predictors** such as intergenerational expectations, caste, regional disparities, and educational inequities that shape career adaptability in India.
- **Intervention-based research** in Indian schools, universities, and vocational training institutes to evaluate how structured programs (e.g., skill development missions, NEP 2020 reforms) can enhance adaptability.
- **Longitudinal designs** that trace the development of adaptability from adolescence to mid-career stages across rural and urban settings.
- **Sector-specific analyses**, particularly within the IT, education, healthcare, gig economy, and public sector employment, where transitions and adaptability demands differ substantially.

In conclusion, while global research on career adaptability has laid a strong theoretical and empirical foundation, there is a pressing need to localize this knowledge to address the lived realities of Indian individuals navigating increasingly complex career landscapes. Doing so will not only enrich academic understanding but also inform educational policy, workforce development, and career counseling practices in India.

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### ***Acknowledgment***

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Sharma, B. & Kaur, A. (2025). Career Adaptability Across a Decade (2013-2024): Reviewing Key Predictors, Outcomes and Shaping Future Research with a Focus on India. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(4), 134-152. DIP:18.01.014.20251304, DOI:10.25215/1304.014