



## Career Adaptability on Transferred Employees: The Role of Emotional Intelligence

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### Abstract

Career transitions, such as job transfers, present significant psychological and professional challenges for employees. A person's career adaptability, which encompasses concern, control, curiosity, and confidence in managing career transitions, is crucial for sustaining performance and well-being in dynamic work environments. Emotional intelligence (EI) has been highlighted as an important aspect in allowing successful adaption during such shifts, as it enhances individuals' capacity for flexibility and self-regulation—core components of career adaptability. is described as the ability to notice, analyze, manage, and regulate emotions. Numerous studies have explored EI and career adaptability separately; limited research has specifically examined their relationship within the context of transferred employees. This study investigates the impact of EI on career adaptability among transferred employees—individuals who often face significant professional and psychological adjustments due to organizational relocation or role changes among employees of the West Java & Banten Regional Division of Perum Perhutani. Employing a quantitative approach with descriptive and verification analysis, data were collected from 77 transferred employees using structured questionnaires. EI was measured using Goleman's EI Theory, while career adaptability was tested using Savickas' Career Adapt-Abilities Scale. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 22.0. The results indicate that both EI and career adaptability levels are generally high among participants, with average scores of 82.4% and 82.9%, respectively. Regression study shows a moderate but statistically significant positive connection between EI and career adaptability, with EI accounts for 69.8% of the variance in career adaptability. These findings emphasize the significance of developing EI as a strategic asset in enabling employee transitions and improving adaptive career behaviors.

**Keywords** *Career Adaptability; Career Transition; Emotional Intelligence; Employee Adaptability; Job Transfers*

### INTRODUCTION

Career adaptability is particularly crucial in competitive business societies; the ability to deal with job limits and cope with career transitions (Coetsee, 2014). Emotional intelligence and career adaptability are critical psychological meta-capabilities for successful adaption in a variety of settings, including the workplace. The significance of increasing people's emotional intelligence in order to improve their job adaptability (Coetsee & Harry, 2014a). Researchers have paid more attention to career adaptability in recent years, primarily because it is associated with factors including self-esteem, self-efficacy, personality, emotional intelligence, and meaningful living. (Celik & Storme, 2018). Emotional intelligence has been highlighted as one of the major variables that reinforce an individual's job adaptability (Ismail, 2017). Another thing to consider is emotional intelligence, which may aid with career transitions. Emotional intelligence plays a helpful influence in employment decision-making, as experimentally established (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014). psychosocial meta-capabilities that aid in successful adaptation in numerous aspects of life, including employment. The association between emotional intelligence and career adaptability is not well explored. (Savickas, 2013).

Furthermore, monotonous work routines can also be challenging because they can decrease motivation, especially if the tasks don't align with one's interests or skills. Job transfers are a strategic step to reduce boredom, boost work enthusiasm, and create flexibility in the face of change. Job transfers are the process of transferring positions or work locations by management,

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either vertically or horizontally. This process requires employees to be able to adapt to social and cultural differences (Putra & Alfinuha, 2024). The capacity to adapt to career changes is called career adaptability. Career adaptability implicates the psychosocial ability and skills to make changes in oneself and the circumstances required to manage the responsibilities, transitions, and traumas connected with career search, job selection, and work adjustment (Maree, 2017). Career adaptability encompasses four aspects: concern for change, control over choices and actions taken, curiosity to learn new things, and confidence to face challenges. These abilities play a role in completing career development tasks, work transitions, and career trauma.

Emotional intelligence holds a crucial role in adapting to a new work culture and managing the emotional impact of a career transition. Individuals who have high emotional intelligence tend to be better able to plan career development and adapt (Potgieter, 2014). Emotional intelligence is the ability to detect and control one's own emotions, understand and differentiate between the emotions of others, and then use this information to facilitate thinking and behavior to reach desired goals. (Goleman & Dale, 2020).

Perum Perhutani, a state-owned enterprise operating in the forestry sector, implements a job transfer policy to align employees with the competencies and needs of the organization, including at the West Java & Banten Regional Division Office. Based on transfer data from August 2023 to August 2024, 77 employees underwent transfers. Following the transfers, employees displayed varying emotional responses. Some employees felt enthusiastic and motivated, viewing the transfers as an opportunity to learn and develop in a new work environment. However, many more employees felt insecure, accompanied by feelings of anxiety and stress due to having to adjust to new tasks, teams, and responsibilities that they had not yet fully mastered.

Based on Recapitulation of Final Individual Employee Performance Values shows that 70.1% of employees managed to maintain or improve their performance after a job transfer, but 29.9% experienced a decline in performance. This indicates that some employees have not fully adapted to the changes in position, team dynamics, or cultural differences that arise after a transfer. Challenges in adapting to new roles or different environments can impact their performance. One cause is suboptimal emotional intelligence, making it difficult for them to regulate their emotions, develop strong interpersonal relationships, and navigate change with the required flexibility.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore the influence of emotional intelligence on the career adaptability of employees who have undergone job transfers. This research is important considering the challenges employees face in adapting to changes after job transfers, as well as the need to manage emotions in facing new tasks. Based on the background explanation, this study is entitled "The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on the Career Adaptability of Employees at the West Java & Banten Regional Division Office of Perum Perhutani (Study on Employees Who Have Experienced Job Transfers)". The study's aims are:

- a. To determine and analyze the level of Emotional Intelligence among employees of the West Java & Banten Regional Division Office of Perum Perhutani who have undergone job transfers.
- b. To determine and analyze the level of Career Adaptability among employees of the West Java & Banten Regional Division Office of Perum Perhutani who have undergone job transfers.
- c. To determine and analyze whether there is a significant influence between Emotional Intelligence and Career Adaptability among employees of the West Java & Banten Regional Division Office of Perum Perhutani who have undergone job transfers.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Emotional Intelligence**

The first model and definition of EI was formally introduced by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. Several research have resulted to confusing and inconsistent results for trait EI and EI, therefore

the essential distinction between typical and maximal performance has been neglected. (Siegling et al., 2015). A frequently used competency-based model of EI is the four-pronged hierarchical model that divides emotional intelligence into four competencies. These competencies refer to how individuals' reason about their own emotions, including perceiving those emotions, using them to facilitate thinking, understanding their meaning, and managing their own and others' emotions. (Pong & Leung, 2023). is the ability to understand one's own and others' emotions, reason and judge about them, and adapt and control them. It also includes the ability to experience and express emotions. These characteristics provide an internal resource for adaptive intrapersonal and interpersonal partnerships. They are also related with increased life adaptability, a lower risk of suicide, stronger academic accomplishment, and better social relationships (Domínguez-García & Fernández-Berrocal, 2018).

Several recent studies have explored emotional intelligence in relation to career adaptability. Emotional intelligence is closely tied to other types of intelligence that aid with job adaptation. Emotions are the thinking and reasoning part of the mind that controls feelings and promotes intellectual development (Pong & Leung, 2023). Emotional intelligence is equally crucial in allowing individuals to fulfill their potential. In this study, we use the conceptualization of EI presented by Goleman.

### **Career Adaptability**

Career adaptability is an individual's readiness to respond to changes in their work. To survive, workers must be able to be flexible and adapt to ongoing changes (Savickas et al., 2009). Career adaptability can be defined as the relationship between individuals and their constantly changing environment. Environmental changes include not only movements in economic power and the labor market, but also workplace changes, such as changes in coworkers as a result of job transfers. Several studies have looked into employees' decisions to change jobs, careers, or even their sector of employment. They have shown that career adaptability is used as a purposeful and flexible strategy to face and respond to changes in complex new environments. Compared to other workers, they are often more ambitious and enthusiastic about their jobs, more sensitive to their surroundings, and more aware of changes in their organizations and industries (Savickas, 2013).

Savickas' three key areas of career adaptability are exploration, intelligent preparation, and adaptable decisions. In this structural model, the three major domains are separated into four lower-order dimensions: career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career self-efficacy. These four components depict how workers deal with career duties, job transitions, and important events as they advance in their careers. In this study, we used a model-based measure of career flexibility. The measure, consistent with the conceptual model, has four subscales. Career concern: the individual's concern for their future development, and awareness of the importance of preparing for this development; Career: the individual's sense of control over their future development and the belief that they can take responsibility for a self-constructed career; Career curiosity: an individual's curiosity about and anticipation of the possibility of self-development in the future, and willingness to actively explore this possibility; Career confidence: an individual's confidence in overcoming difficulties that will be encountered in the development of the self, including a sense of self-efficacy about whether they can handle themselves properly.

### **Previous research on emotional intelligence and career adaptability**

Several studies related to the correlation between emotional intelligence and career adaptability were demonstrated by a cross-sectional survey conducted by Coetzee and Harry (2014a) revealed that the link between emotional intelligence and career adaptability is driven by emotions, which contribute most to explaining emotional intelligence, including attention, control,

self-confidence, and curiosity.

In accordance with [Udayar, et al. \(2018\)](#), emotional intelligence is controlled by the individual's own intelligence, gender, and personality. Career adaptability highlights the impact of emotional intelligence on work capacity in career decision-making, particularly when problems or difficulties develop in a workplace with insufficient reliable support.

Meanwhile, a two-wave longitudinal study conducted by [Parmentier et al., \(2019\)](#), controlling for previous career adaptation levels and socio-demographic variables, found that emotional intelligence at the first time could predict career adaptation at the second time.

According to [Pong and Leung \(2023\)](#), first study on the trait emotional intelligence of Chinese youths in the Asia-Pacific region, Chinese youth graduates with high trait emotional intelligence are more likely to demonstrate concern, control, curiosity, and confidence in their career adaptability. These findings provide useful information for those responsible for well-rounded development, promoting healthy lifestyles, emotional stability, and career adaptability.

This study examines the effect of emotional intelligence to career adaptability in employees who transferred to a State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) responsible for managing state forest resources on the islands of Java and Madura, with regional divisions in West Java and Banten, Indonesia. A survey based on employee transfer data from August 2023 to August 2024 revealed 77 employees who transferred. This study adds to the existing knowledge by investigating the association between several aspects of emotional intelligence and career adaptability. This study adds to the existing empirical literature on employee transitions by focusing on the effect of EI in shaping career flexibility among transferred employees—an underexplored yet increasingly relevant group. The findings offer practical insights for HR practitioners in designing EI development programs to support employee adjustment and long-term career success.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed quantitative methods with descriptive and verification approaches. These methods objectively describe the phenomenon and test the relationships between variables through statistical analysis. The descriptive approach was chosen because it provides a systematic overview of emotional intelligence levels and career adaptability. The verification approach examined the influence of emotional intelligence on career adaptability. The population of this study was 77 employees of the West Java & Banten Regional Division Office of Perum Perhutani who underwent job transfers between the third quarter of 2023 and the third quarter of 2024. This study employed a non-probability sampling technique with a saturated sampling method, where the entire population was sampled because they possessed specific characteristics relevant to the phenomenon under study.

Data was collected utilizing both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was gathered by the distribution of an online questionnaire to respondents using a Likert scale. Secondary data was obtained from journals, the internet (articles and e-books), and the official Perum Perhutani website, which supported the research analysis.

**Table 1.** Likert Scale Interpretation

Scale Value	Category	Interpretation Description
1	Strongly Disagree	Very low level / Very negative perception
2	Disagree	Low level / Negative perception
3	Neutral	Moderate level / Neither positive nor negative
4	Agree	High level / Positive perception

Scale Value	Category	Interpretation Description
5	Strongly Agree	Very high level / Very positive perception

This research was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS 22.0. The ordinal data from the questionnaire was first converted to an interval scale using the Method of Successive Interval (MSI) in Excel. Next, the analysis was conducted using SPSS 22.0, which included a validity test to measure instrument accuracy, a reliability test to assess consistency, a normality test to assess data distribution, and a linearity test to ensure linear relations between variables. Simple linear regression analysis was used to determine the effect of emotional intelligence on career adaptability, followed by a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) test to measure the contribution of the influence, and a t-test to test the significance of the partial influence.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Survey participants were 77 staff working at a State-Owned Enterprise (BUMN) responsible for managing state forest resources on the islands of Java and Madura, with regional divisions in West Java and Banten, Indonesia.

**Table 2.** Respondents' Demographic Profile (N = 77)

By Gender	Frequency	%
Male	53	68.8%
Female	24	31.2%
By Age	Frequency	%
18-27	10	13%
28-37	27	35.1%
38-47	18	23.4%
48-57	22	28.6%

The highest number of employees was in the 28-37 age group, reflecting an active period in employee career development. The 48-57 age group represents senior employees who have been transferred to fill strategic positions based on their experience. Two were in the division secretaries, 43 in the HR, general affairs, IT, and finance departments, 5 in the business planning and development department, and 27 in the SDH management and production departments.

Permission for the study was acquired from the Human Resources managers and the research institution. Questionnaires were delivered to 77 individuals undertaking job transfers, each accompanied by a cover letter requesting respondents to freely participate in the study and ensuring that their individual responses would be kept anonymous and confidential. The cover letter further indicated that completing and returning the questionnaire constitutes agreement to use the results solely for research purposes. The study approach produced 77 useable questionnaires (response rate = 100%).

**Table 3.** Respondents' response on Emotional Intelligence (X)

No.	Dimensions	Score	Percentage	Category
1.	Self-awareness	319	82,3	Good
2.	Self-regulation	316	82,1	Good
3.	Motivation	316,5	82,2	Good
4.	Empathy	319,4	83	Good
5.	Social Skills	316,9	82,3	Good
	Average	317,6	82,4	Good

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the level of emotional intelligence (EI) of employees is in the good category, with a percentage of 82.4%. The empathy dimension emerged as the highest, reflecting employees' strong ability to understand other people's feelings, recognize perspectives, and respond appropriately to emotional cues. This finding resonates with [Goleman's \(2005\)](#) conceptualization of EI, where empathy is identified as a core dimension that strengthens interpersonal effectiveness. More recent studies have confirmed that empathy plays a critical role in organizational life, especially in fostering trust, collaboration, and positive workplace climates ([Sanchez-Gomez & Bresó, 2020](#); [Vallette d'Osia & Meier, 2024](#)). This finding is consistent with studies in Indonesia showing that emotional intelligence—including empathy—is significantly related to positive work outcomes. For example, [Mayyora and Sumartik \(2024\)](#) found that EI significantly drives employee performance in an Indonesian company.

In the workplace, empathy has been associated with stronger teamwork, reduced conflict, and improved leadership effectiveness ([Al-Hamdan et al., 2019](#)). Employees with higher empathy are also more likely to engage in prosocial behavior, active listening, and constructive communication, which enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment ([Khalili, 2016](#)). The fact that empathy scores are the highest in this study suggests that employees already possess a strong foundation for creating supportive work relationships, which is essential for sustaining both individual well-being and organizational performance in the long run ([Di Fabio & Kenny, 2021](#)).

**Table 4.** Respondents response on Career Adaptability (Y)

No.	Dimensions	Score	Percentage	Category
1.	Concern	311,8	81	Good
2.	Control	321	83,4	Good
3.	Curiosity	319,2	82,9	Good
4.	Confidence	324,5	84,3	Excellent
	Average	319,1	82,9	Good

The level of career adaptability of employees is also categorized as good, with a score of 82.9%. Among its dimensions, confidence is the highest, reflecting employees' strong belief in their ability to overcome difficulties and successfully perform tasks after a job transfer. In his career construction theory, [Savickas \(2013\)](#) identifies confidence as a crucial resource that enables individuals to view career-related challenges as manageable and to act effectively in uncertain situations. Recent studies confirm that confidence not only enhances problem-solving and persistence but also promotes resilience during organizational transitions ([Hou et al., 2012](#); [Maggiori et al., 2017](#)).

In contemporary workplaces, confidence has been consistently linked to positive outcomes such as increased job satisfaction, better career engagement, and stronger performance ([Maggiori et al., 2017](#); [Rudolph et al., 2017](#)). More recent evidence suggests that confidence within career adaptability plays a pivotal role in reducing turnover intention and enhancing career sustainability, particularly during role transitions or job restructuring ([Chan & Mai, 2015](#); [Urbanaviciute et al., 2015](#)). The finding that confidence is the highest dimension in this study indicates that employees not only perceive themselves as capable of handling changes but also possess the psychological readiness to thrive in new assignments, turning transitions into opportunities for professional growth.



**Table 5** Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results

		<b>Coefficient</b>			
		<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>		<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>	
<b>Model</b>		<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>
1	(Constant)	1.365	3.290		.415
	Emotional Intelligence (X)	.528	.040	.835	13.155
					<b>Sig.</b>
					.679
					.000

Table 3 shows that the constant value obtained is 1.365 with a regression coefficient value of 0.528. Thus, the regression equation model obtained is as follows:

$$Y = 1.365 + 0.528 X$$

The simple linear regression equation above can be concluded that a positive constant value of 1.365 indicates a unidirectional influence between the independent and dependent variables. This means that if the independent variable, emotional intelligence, is 0 or unchanged, then the career adaptability value is 1.365. Furthermore, the regression coefficient for emotional intelligence is 0.528, indicating that a one-unit increase in emotional intelligence will increase career adaptability by 0.528. In other words, the better an employee's emotional intelligence, the better their career adaptability will be.

The coefficient of determination test aims to determine how much of the percentage of the diversity of the career adaptability variable (Y) can be explained by the diversity of the emotional intelligence variable (X) or in other words, how much the emotional intelligence variable can contribute to career adaptability.

**Table 6.** Determination Test Results  
**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Errorpr the Estimate</b>
1	.835 <sup>a</sup>	.698	.694	4.315

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Intelligence (X)

b. Dependent Variable: Career Adaptability (Y)

A simple linear regression analysis revealed that emotional intelligence (EI) had a considerable beneficial effect on career adaptability, with a regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.564. This means that for every one unit gain in emotional intelligence, career adaptability rises by 0.564 units, assuming other variables remain constant. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.698$ ) demonstrates that 69.8% of the variance in career adaptability can be explained by emotional intelligence, while the remaining 30.2% is influenced by other factors outside the model.

This research highlights EI as the major predictor of career adaptability. Employees with higher emotional intelligence—characterized by greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy—are more capable of managing career-related stress, adapting to job transfers, and navigating transitions effectively. These results are consistent with prior research demonstrating that EI enhances confidence, control, and resilience, which are central resources of career adaptability (Coetzee & Harry, 2014b; Jiang, 2016; Rudolph et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, the finding that 30.2% of career adaptability is influenced by other factors suggests that EI is necessary but not sufficient to fully explain adaptability outcomes. Other studies identify personality traits (e.g., openness and conscientiousness), learning orientation, social support, and organizational environment as additional factors contributing to career adaptability

(Maggiori et al., 2017; Urbanaviciute et al., 2015). This implies that organizations seeking to strengthen employees' career adaptability should not only foster emotional intelligence through training and coaching but also create supportive structures and learning opportunities that enable employees to thrive in changing career landscapes. Therefore, it is recommended for further researchers to explore other variables such as resilience or social support.

Research shows that emotional intelligence levels are at a level that can help employees cope with changes after a job change, particularly in managing emotions, adapting to a new environment, and thinking more flexibly. However, challenges remain, such as a lack of awareness of one's own emotional state, difficulty adapting to work dynamics, and a less-than-optimal ability to find innovative solutions. In a dynamic work environment, these aspects are crucial for employees to develop optimally. Consistent with this, the results of the career adaptability measurement indicate that employees generally possess good skills in dealing with career change, with the highest percentage being in the self-confidence aspect. However, several aspects, such as career planning, exploring the work environment, and confidence in decision-making, still require further attention. Therefore, increasing proactivity in determining career direction, exploring opportunities, and building self-confidence is necessary for more effective adaptation. Regression results indicate that emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on career adaptability, with a moderate percentage of 69.8%, reinforcing the belief that strong emotional skills support career readiness and adaptation to change. This finding supports various previous studies that conclude that emotional intelligence can enhance adaptive readiness and individual effectiveness in facing career adaptation.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study looked into the relationship between emotional intelligence and career adaptability among employees of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) responsible for managing Indonesia's forest resource environment. The findings from the path model demonstrate that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in enhancing career adaptability, highlighting its importance as a psychosocial capacity in contexts of organizational change and job transitions. Despite certain limitations, such as the cross-sectional design and the specific organizational setting that may limit generalizability, the study provides valuable contributions to the growing body of literature on career development in transitional work environments.

By incorporating Savickas' (2013) concept of career adaptability into the framework of emotional intelligence, this research offers new insights into how employees can be better supported in navigating career challenges in resource-based organizations. The results underscore the need for targeted interventions that strengthen employees' emotional intelligence, enabling them to identify and leverage personal strengths while building resilience in the face of change. For practitioners and organizational leaders, fostering both emotional intelligence and career adaptability should be seen as strategic priorities to prepare employees for dynamic work demands and ensure organizational sustainability.

Future study should expand on these findings by exploring longitudinal techniques, encompassing varied organizational contexts, and investigating additional characteristics that may influence career adaptability. Such efforts will deepen understanding and inform the design of more effective career development interventions that can empower employees to thrive in an era of constant transition.

## LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study is restricted by its relatively small sample size and its focus on a single organizational context, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings to broader



populations or different industries. The cross-sectional design limits the capacity to demonstrate causal linkages or to capture how emotional intelligence and career adaptability evolve over time, particularly in dynamic work environments. Future research is encouraged to expand the sample size across diverse organizational settings to improve external validity, as well as to employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches that can provide a deeper understanding of developmental trajectories and contextual influences on career adaptability.

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