

## Personality and emotional intelligence as predictors of employees' career agility



The world of work has changed significantly in the recent years, this change has been attributed to the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution, the covid 19 pandemic, rise of the gig economy, rise of new occupations, new industries, and fundamentally new ways of work. Employees need to be agile in their careers to survive the rapidly changing world of work. The uncertainties and turmoil of the modern career space necessitate positive coping attributes, such as career agility, that may help individuals cope with the new demands of the digital era (Hirschi, 2018). Career agility is a new concept, that refers to the willingness or adaptive readiness to proactively adapt to technological change and to engage in continuous learning. The change in the workplace has sparked an interest in the study of the role played by personality, emotional intelligence (EI) in the ability to be agile in a career. Whether employees from different demographic groups (i.e., age, gender, and ethnicity) differ significantly regarding these variables. I invite you to participate in my research survey for my Master's degree that explores this inter relationship of personality and EI as predictors of career agility:

Please note that your participation is voluntary and anonymous.

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In South Africa, employees have been affected by the changing nature of work that requires specific personality traits and different competencies such as emotional intelligence and career agility.

Personality is an internally and externally unique, relatively lasting aspect of individuals' character that influences their behaviour in different situations. It is believed to direct and to drive behaviour as well as influences intrinsic motivation. Personality may be defined as the characteristic patterns of thinking or emotional patterns that arise from within an individual, these enhance individuals' self-understanding and development, stress management, interpersonal communication, problem-solving and decision-making. While high levels of emotional intelligence (EI) help employees to navigate the new world of work and embrace change. Research on EI highlights that it plays a significant part in the ability to explore and understand one's reaction to different life situations; it governs an individual's ability to control and direct his or her emotions, and to recognize the emotions of others. EI ensures that people keep a sense of balance in volatile situations and adapt to changing organizational environments. It is a skill that has been shown like personality to enhance communication, problem-solving, decision-making, as well as improve empathy and facilitate constructive criticism.

Career agility is an individual's extrinsic state of adaptive readiness or willingness to adapt to and proactively respond to changes. It involves three forms of adaptive behaviour namely technological adaptivity, agile learning, and career navigation. Career agility enables individuals to effectively cope in anticipating and solving the challenges that the digital era brings to occupations, jobs, and careers (Coetzee et al., 2020). It may function as motivational energisers of adaptivity that promote the building of personal resources needed to achieve career goals. Career may be seen as a form of externally driven positive emotional coping in anticipating and solving the challenges that the digital era brings to the workplace (Coetzee et al., 2020).

These concepts are fascinating and information on them will add to literature on Career agility and the role personality and EI. The effect of personality and emotional intelligence (EI) on career agility has not been explored broadly. Research supports positive links between EI and employee outcomes, including better interpersonal functioning at work, performance, and psychological well-being. EI may be useful in helping employees navigate the workplace and their careers through career agility (Caruso et al., 2019). Personality has emerged as a key factor when trying to understand why people think, feel, and behave the way they do at work and a proactive personality may positively predict career adaptability. Personality, therefore, shapes the way information is processed and may result in positive cognitive outcomes such as career agility.

Knowledge on the constructs of emotional intelligence and personality as predictors of career agility could be used to assist individuals with career counselling, increasing career agility, and facilitating career adaptability. In addition, this knowledge may extend the limited literature on the relatively new construct of career agility, specifically in the areas of EI and personality.