

CAREER RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY AMONG WOMEN RETURNING TO WORK: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Career resilience and adaptability play a vital role in helping women successfully return to the workforce after taking extended breaks for personal, family, health, maternity leave or cultural reasons. The systematic literature review explores the psychological, social, and institutional challenges that can make these transitions difficult. The review highlights key strategies that support women in rebuilding their careers, such as ongoing skill development, being emotionally intelligent, emotionally resilient, and strong, building strong professional networks, and receiving meaningful support from employers. It also examines how inclusive workplace practices can promote gender equity and long-term career success. The systematic literature review follows the PRISMA framework to report the selection criteria. Drawing on the study it offers practical recommendations for employers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to help remove persistent barriers and create flexible, supportive environments where women can thrive.

Review (SLR)

Keywords: Career Resilience, Career Adaptability, Career Transitions, Skill Development, Workforce re-entry, Self-efficacy, Emotional Resilience and Emotional Intelligence, and Systematic Literature

Introduction:

Women often encounter an evolving array of obstacles that affect their ability to adapt to today's modern and fast-paced job markets after lengthy career breaks. Controlling emotions and managing the skill, as well as technical reskilling, are necessary for overcoming these challenges (Murthy & Antony, 2025; Takawira & Coetzee, 2019). As much as there is increasing awareness on the global stage regarding gender equity, there are very persistent barriers that offer resistance. These include systemic workplace biases (Tokbaeva & Achtenhagen, 2023), gaps with regard to current skill expectations (Jiang, 2016), diminished self-esteem or self-confidence (Zhou et al., 2024), alongside scarce professional networks (Arora & Rangnekar, 2014). Most of the women's ability to recover their careers had been persistently weakening by these factors.

According to this review it outlines the key reasons which is closely expected to increase mid-career women's resilience and adaptability, looking towards the development-oriented initiatives, holistic or over all organizational frameworks, and continuous upskilling efforts (Santilli et al., 2024; Ferreira & Potgieter, 2018). It also emphasizes that there is lack of equity within the workspace which is a structural barrier for any women to re-enter the employment, focusing on highlighting more flexible and compassionate workplaces (Shafique et al., 2019; Chan & Wong, 2012).

From 2001-20024 multiple peer-reviewed scholarly articles has been accessed which allowed the review to develop the empirical strategies supporting long-term career advancement for women to get adapted and aid-focused work settings. By this, the review combines actionable strategies coupled with inclusive structures aimed empowering and motivating women in achieving sustainable career progression.

Objectives

- To identify the challenges women, face while re-entering the workforce after a long absence, with particular attention to psychological, social, and structural barriers.
- Analyse effective approaches aimed at nurturing career resilience and flexibility among women re-entering the professional domain.
- Investigate how cultivating a growth mind-set and ongoing skills training influences self-efficacy and mastery in the context of women's confidence during career transitions.
- Create an integrated model for fostering an adaptable occupational setting that supports the objectives of sustained high-level professional achievement by women.

Method

The study clearly examines the methods by which women promote the career resilience and adaptability while re-entering to the workforce after a very long career breaks using a systematic literature review (SLR) as a methodology. A clear, replicable framework has been used to accumulate, assess, and synthesize findings from the prior research on a specific issue by using the systematic review process (Fink, 2014). This approach has also been characterized using PRISMA 2020 which is an internationally accepted benchmark for conducting and presenting systematic reviews within the scientific community covering all disciplines of science (Page et al., 2021).

Quality and Conformity Assessment

Exclusion and Inclusion criteria were identified to measure the quality and significance of studies in the literature. (Table 1)

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Peer-reviewed journal articles	Opinion pieces, editorials, or unpublished theses
Focus on women's career resilience or adaptability	Studies not specific to other then Career Resilience and Adaptability
Published in English between 2001 -2024	Whitepapers, online presentations, abstracts, and news
Addressing career transitions, re-entry, or professional development	
Empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods)	

Data Sources

Relevant studies were identified through electronic database searches, including **Scopus and Web of Science**. Full text of the studies found in databases were evaluated and included in the systematic review based on inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as on their quality and relevance.

Results

A total of 210 research articles were retrieved from the Web of Science and Scopus databases. Following an initial screening, 48 duplicate publications were removed, resulting

in 162 unique studies. Further refinement led to the exclusion of 100 papers due to irrelevance in titles, abstracts, or other pertinent material. Additionally, 13 of the remaining 62 papers were excluded due to the unavailability of full-text copies. Of the 62 papers, one was excluded for being non-English, leaving a total of 61 remaining. Consequently, a total of 48 studies were deemed appropriate and incorporated into the systematic review, adding 2 more review and cited from the external source which is total of 50 studies finally. Out of which one paper was not English language. The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published between **2001 and 2024**, using keywords such as: (("career resilience" OR "career adaptability") AND (women OR female OR gender) AND (work OR employment OR profession)). The website used to remove duplicates is Rayyaan.AI and the paper are limited to English language only

Figure 1 shows the flowchart for the selection of studies included in the review.

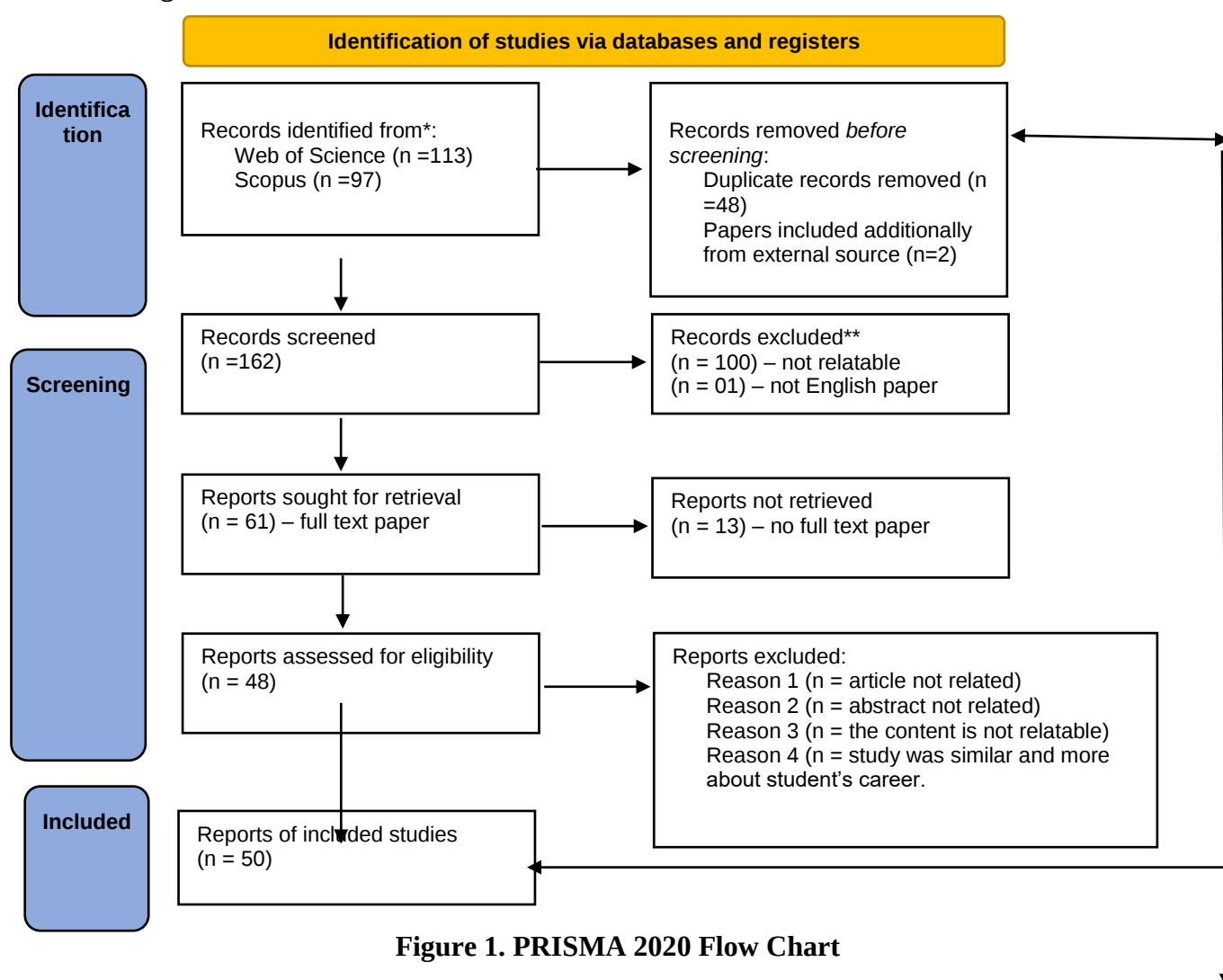


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Chart

Research Trends and Observations

The reviewed studies on career resilience and adaptability predominantly originate from South and East Asia, along with select parts of Europe, while regions like North America, South America, and Oceania remain underrepresented. The research spans from 2012 to 2025, with a notable increase in publications over the past decade, indicating growing scholarly interest in the topic. Quantitative methods, especially survey-based approaches

involving regression analysis and structural equation modeling, are most common, with a strong focus on validating scales like the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS). Career Construction Theory (CCT) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) serve as the primary theoretical frameworks, supported by others such as Resilience Theory and Hope Theory. Frequently studied constructs include career adaptability, self-efficacy, resilience, well-being, and organizational support. However, the research is often limited by its focus on specific populations and geographic contexts, with fewer qualitative or longitudinal studies, which may constrain the generalizability and depth of the findings.

Table 2. Characteristics of Studies

Study Label	Country	Year	Research Method	Research Model	Research Scale	Theory Used
S1	India	2021	Quantitative Survey	Logistic regression	NA	Career Construction Theory(Savickas's-1997) , Person-Congruent Environment Theory (Holland's-1985) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen's - 1991)
S2	India	2014	Quantitative Survey	Cross-sectional survey (Regression analysis)	Workplace Mentoring Scale & Career Resilience Scale.	Mentoring Theory (Noe-1988) , Resilience Theory(Carson & Bedeian,1994) & Social Support Theory.
S3	Malaysia	2024	Quantitative Survey	Mediation Model	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), Perceived Future Employability Scale, Career Motivation Scale.	Career Construction Theory(Savickas) & Social Cognitive Career Theory
S4	Italy	2017	Quantitative Survey	Hierarchical multiple regression analyses	NA	Career Construction Theory (Savickas-2005)
S5	USA (Review)	2016	Literature Review / Conceptual Analysis	NA	NA (Review article)	Vocational Psychology, Social Cognitive Career Theory & Career Construction Theory(Savickas)
S6	UK	2016	Qualitative (Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis/Thematic Analysis)	Conceptual/Qualitative Analysis	NA	Career Construction Theory(Savickas) , Social Cognitive Career Theory or Human Capital Theory

S7	Brazil	2019	Quantitative (Scale Validation)	Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Invariance Testing, MANOVA	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)	Career Construction Theory (Savickas)
S8	USA	2015	Quantitative Survey	Multivariate analysis of variance, Regression analyses	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), Subjective Well-Being Scale.	Conservation of Resources Theory or Leisure Theory
S9	Macau	2016	Quantitative Survey	Mediation Model	NA	Career Construction Theory ,Social Exchange Theory or Job Embeddedness Theory
S10	China	2024	Quantitative Survey	Moderated mediation model	NA	Career Construction Theory , Person-Environment Fit Theory , Conservation of Resources Theory
S11	Turkey	2017	Quantitative Survey	Independent t-tests, Multiple regression analysis	Big Five Inventory, Scale of Career Adaptability.	Personality Theory and Career Construction Theory.
S12	Portugal	2024	Quantitative Survey	Mediation study	NA	Psychology of Working Theory (PWT),Career Construction Theory
S13	South Africa	2018	Quantitative Survey (Exploratory)	Exploratory study	NA	Individual Differences and Career Development.
S14	South Africa	2017	Quantitative Survey	Step-wise hierarchical regression analysis	Career Adaptability Inventory (CAI), Employability Attributes Scale (EAS), Retention Factors Measurement Scale (RFMS).	Career Construction Theory , Human Resource Management and Retention Theories.
S15	China	2020	Quantitative Survey	Mediation and Moderation Analysis (Dualistic Model of Passion)	NA	Dualistic Model of Passion.,Career Construction Theory and Well-being theories.
S16	China	2013	Quantitative Survey (Longitudinal)	Three-wave investigation (longitudinal)	NA	Career Construction Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory

S17	South Korea	2015	Quantitative Survey	Structural equation modelling	NA	Career Construction Theory & Social Support and Job Satisfaction.
S18	South Africa	2013	Quantitative Survey	Multiple regression analyses	Orientation to Life Questionnaire (Sense of Coherence), Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS).	Sense of Coherence (SOC) Theory , Career Construction Theory
S19	South Africa	2021	Quantitative Survey	Bivariate correlation, Stepwise hierarchical analysis, Mann–Whitney U test	NA	Emotional Intelligence and Career Construction Theory.
S20	South Africa	2017	Quantitative Survey	Mediation study	NA	Career Construction Theory & Social Cognitive Theory
S21	Nigeria	2024	Conceptual/Qualitative Discussion	NA	NA	Feminist Theories, Critical Race Theory, and Sociological Theories of Gender and Work.
S22	Turkey	2018	Quantitative (Scale Validation)	Validation study (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale–Short Form (CAAS-SF)	Career Construction Theory.
S23	China	2016	Quantitative Survey	Mediation study	NA	Career Construction Theory with concepts from Person-Environment Fit Theory and Job Demands-Resources Model
S24	China	2023	Quantitative (Scale Adaptation/Validation)	Adaptation and validation study (psychometric analysis)	University-to-Work Success Scale.	Career Development Theories
S25	Australia (Cross-cultural)	2023	Conceptual/Qualitative Analysis	Cross-cultural perspective (Qualitative/Conceptual)	NA	Resilience Theory and Intersectionality Theory or Cross-Cultural Management Theories.

S26	Turkey	2022	Quantitative Survey	Structural equation modelling	NA	Career Construction Theory
S27	Hong Kong	NA	Conceptual/Theoretical Discussion	Conceptual discussion	NA	Motivation Theories & Gender and Leadership Theories.
S28	Lebanon	2024	Quantitative (Scale Validation)	Psychometric properties (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)	Career Construction Theory.
S29	China	2024	Quantitative Survey	Quantitative analysis	NA	Career Construction Theory & Self-Determination Theory (Job Performance Theories).
S30	India	2025	Quantitative Survey (Anticipated)	NA (upcoming publication)	NA	Cognitive Theories and Resilience Theory.
S31	Malaysia	2022	Quantitative Survey	Moderated-mediation model	NA	Career Construction Theory and Well-being Theories.
S32	Italy	2012	Quantitative (Scale Validation)	Validation study (Psychometric properties)	Career and Work Adaptability Questionnaire (CWAQ)	Career Construction Theory (Savickas).
S33	Finland	2023	Quantitative (Longitudinal Survey)	Longitudinal study (Person-oriented)	NA	Career Construction Theory & Dual Career Development.
S34	Belgium	2019	Quantitative Survey (Longitudinal)	Cross-lagged study	NA	Career Construction Theory.
S35	Switzerland	2012	Quantitative (Scale Validation)	Psychometric properties	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)	Career Construction Theory & Personality Theories
S36	Italy	2014	Quantitative Survey	Correlation and Regression Analysis	NA	Career Construction Theory, Hope Theory and Well-being Theories.
S37	Italy	2024	Quantitative Survey	Quantitative analysis	NA	Career Construction Theory & Courage and Well-being Theories.
S38	South Korea	2019	Quantitative Survey	Regression analysis	NA	Social Cognitive Career Theory and Career Construction Theory & Gender Stereotype Theory.
S39	Israel	2014	Quantitative (Longitudinal Survey)	Longitudinal study (Typologies analysis)	NA	Career Construction Theory.
S40	China	2021	Quantitative (Scale Validation)	Factor structure study (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)	Chinese Career Adapt-Abilities	Career Construction Theory.

					Scale.	
S41	UK	2019	Conceptual/Literature Review	NA	NA (Conceptual discussion)	Resilience Theory, Gender and Management Theories, and Human Resource Management Theories.
S42	South Africa	2019	Quantitative Survey	NA (Correlation and Regression implied)	NA	Conservation of Resources Theory and Social Support Theory, linked to Job Satisfaction Theories.
S43	South Africa	2020	Quantitative Survey	Mediation effect study	NA	Social Support Theory, Career Construction Theory, and Job Satisfaction Theories.
S44	Sweden	2023	Qualitative (Interviews)	Process perspective (Qualitative/Conceptual)	NA	Resilience Theory, Gender and Work Theories, and Organizational Behavior Theories.
S45	South Korea	2019	Quantitative Survey	Moderated mediation model	NA	Core Self-Evaluations Theory, Career Construction Theory & Job Demands-Resources Model
S46	Italy	2021	Mixed Methods (Quantitative & Qualitative)	Quantitative and Qualitative Methods	NA	Career Construction Theory & Social Cognitive Career Theory
S47	China	2022	Quantitative Survey	Mediation study	NA	Hope Theory , Career Construction Theory, Social Cognitive Career Theory Well-being Theories.
S48	Turkey	2021	Quantitative Survey	Predictive role study	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS),	NA
S49	India	2024	Quantitative Survey	Mixed qualitative–quantitative thematic model	NA	No explicit theory
S50	India	2012	Quantitative Survey	Predictive research models	Emotional Intelligence Scale & Job Satisfaction Scale	Emotional Intelligence Theory

Review of Literature

1. To identify the challenges women, face while re-entering the workforce after a long absence, with particular attention to psychological, social, and structural barriers.

Women's flexibility in the workplace is severely limited by patriarchal systems, according to research, while job satisfaction and perceived success may not be obstructed. [Imhanrenialena et al. \(2024\)](#) highlight how career paths are designed by institutional standards, with women exhibiting resilience in the face of systemic constraints. Furthermore, gender stereotypes are recognized by [Shin and Lee \(2021\)](#) as obstacles that impede decision-making self-efficacy and flexibility, especially for female students. This highlights the necessity of culturally appropriate interventions. In a similar way, [\(Kumari et al., 2024\)](#) highlights and finds that working mothers significantly experience lot of parenting stress due to demand or force of balancing both the work and family responsibilities which may lead to burnout and affect them emotionally and also the author has highlighted that the stress can be managed by maintaining certain boundaries between work and family life, asking for social support, taking care of self and prioritizing the tasks.

[Chaudhary and Verma \(2016\)](#) found that work-life discrepancy reduces resilience and adaptive capability, highlighting the significance of organizational empathy. This learning of Indian female educators demonstrates the impact of family duties on professional progression. The mediating function of social and organizational support in improving job happiness and engagement is also highlighted by [Takawira \(2020\)](#), who suggests that for intervention techniques to be prosperous, they must take into account these facilitation directions.

[Okorie et al. \(2023\)](#) claim that strong professional identity and workplace embeddedness are vital for career reintegration amongst women in the public sector. They also endorse ongoing organizational attention on identity and support networks. Disagreements of societal support by gender also have a significant role on adaptability and job satisfaction; [Kim et al. \(2019\)](#) points out that when women often agree to take greater social support, the link between support and adaptability is going to be less for females, urging the development of gender-specific support methods.

[Zhou et al. \(2024\)](#) conclude by saying that the connection or link between resilience and love towards the work is curbed or eased by occupational self-efficacy, predominantly in the face of initial career hurdles. Their findings further emphasize the importance of nurturing ambition and a clear sense of professional identity, as these factors play a pivotal role in supporting women's continued participation in the workforce. In the last decade, self-recognition of a professional and developing a career seem to have raised job satisfaction alongside adaptability.

2. Analyse effective approaches aimed at nurturing career resilience and flexibility among women re-entering the professional domain.

Women face several challenges in the male-dominated professions, restricted by cultural and psychological biases as well as systemic frameworks. As mentioned by [Tokbaeva and Achtenhagen \(2023\)](#), for a woman in this male-dominated industry, it becomes challenging, and they need to develop and practice career resilience to achieve long-lasting career advancement. In addition, [Murthy and Antony \(2025\)](#) state this perspective, emphasizing the importance of career resilience, self-regulation, and occupational self-efficacy by examining career-related cognitive factors to enable professional challenges faced by women, especially in the information technology industry. These internal resources always enhance decision-making and career resilience to develop strategies under responsive organizational support by promoting inclusive practices. By comparing employed and unemployed groups, [Azalea et al. \(2024\)](#) examine how career adaptability disturbs recent graduates' beliefs of their future

employability and motivation. The outcomes show that greater career flexibility significantly increases motivation and self-assurance, especially for those who are already employed. It highlights how vital it is to develop flexibility abilities in college in order to facilitate the transition to the workforce.

The cultural context has an undeniable impact on women's resilience throughout their careers. [Jogulu and Franken \(2023\)](#) noticed that female senior managers in large industries within diverse cultures tend to cultivate resilience through mentorship by sustaining and navigating their career path aligned with local cultural norms. Drawing from the above literature, [Shafique et al.\(2019\)](#) emphasize the relationship between resilience and career progression among women managers, which is women employee-centric resilience at the organisational level, firm human resource policies and good practice, and gender inclusivity strategies stemming towards employee engagement and flexible career progression. As they note, resilience is too often understood purely as a personal quality, and it is an effect of benevolent and intentional institutional contexts. In this study, [Gill et al. \(2012\)](#) observe the link between faculty members' job happiness and emotional intelligence in professional institutions in Indore, India. Contrary to previous other research that exposed a favourable relationship, the study found no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction in this particular setting. The authors stress how crucial it is to take demographic and professional variations into account when examining these psychological aspects in organizational contexts.

We have seen self-belief, self-efficacy, and sensitive control collectively termed psychosocial resources by [Takawira and Coetzee \(2019\)](#), who argue that their self-efficacious and career adaptability frameworks boost job performance and enhance resilience, particularly among women at the beginning phases of their careers. Self-belief assumes greater influence when integrated with supportive, structured organizational systems. [Zhou et al \(2024\)](#) illustrate and reveal that individuals with good career adaptability are likely to experience strong and long-term commitment and organizational fit, which enhance their work engagement in the teaching career among female scholars, fostering and adapting towards sustained employee engagement.

Finally, the study by [Guan et al. \(2013\)](#) examines how career adaptability and job search self-efficacy influence employment outcomes among Chinese university graduates through a three-wave investigation. The findings reveal that greater career adaptability enhances job search self-efficacy, which leads to better employment status and a stronger person-environment fit. The study underscores the critical roles of career concern and control, with self-efficacy serving as a key mediator, offering valuable guidance for career development programs.

3. Investigate how cultivating a growth mind-set and ongoing skills training influences self-efficacy and mastery in the context of women's confidence during careethisr transitions.

The spirit associated with adapting to change through a new learning process to upskill the skills through continuous learning for career development is a challenging process. [Brown, A. \(2016\)](#) reveals how limited and formal education makes an individual adapt to low-skilled work as necessary and feel stuck in their career, and find no growth or progression, and it is also told that those individuals who develop skills can seek growth and advancement. Career adaptability relies on how an individual interprets their experience and utilises the opportunities to grow in the labor market. With an focus on its primary determinants, [Bocciardi et al. \(2017\)](#) analyse career flexibility as a critical planned competency for career advancement. The study emphasizes how contextual and personal factors, such as

organizational support and self-efficacy, affect adaptability. It provides useful direction for improving worker development through focused support and training programs.

In a similar way, change has been divided into psychological and emotional components by [Santilli et al. \(2024\)](#), and they developed emotional courage and adaptability to explain focused life satisfaction through career achievement. The aggressive aspect of positive psychology vigorously undergirds favourable outcomes through endorsing courageous behaviour, adaptability, especially aided by traits like strong independence, as highlighted above, which in turn positively impact their role in life satisfaction.

In the same manner, [Murthy and Antony \(2025\)](#) identified that the work volition, career salience, and a person's educational qualifications are major determinants of career adaptability. Their conclusions help us to understand that being actively engaged in professional skill development, lifelong education, along effective personal branding is necessary to maintain employment and career resilience in the modern world. [Ferreira and Mujajati \(2017\)](#) explore the connection between employee retention in recruitment advertising firms and career meta-capabilities. The results direct that cultivating resilience, adaptability, and self-awareness can have a favourable impression on employee retention. The study emphasizes how critical it is to build these meta-capabilities as a planned way to lower employee turnover in the industry.

Similarly, from motivational psychology perspectives, [Zeng et al. \(2022\)](#) detail the correlation between adaptive future work self and life satisfaction as strongly as supported by academic self-efficacy and hope. Other aspects of their study also reveal that these factors are not equally applicable to everyone, which calls for responsive action catered to specific gender needs.

[Celen-Demirtas et al. \(2015\)](#) focus on the social leisure resilience and activity, whereby having one's own set of objectives and participating in enjoyable social leisure activities can promote career adaptability along with social well-being. Such highlights reinforce that the value towards achieving these experiences balances substituting behaviours, which provides great guidance and understanding for practitioners working towards strengthening careers. On the organizational side, [Jiang \(2016\)](#) highlights that to avoid repetition of tasks and maintain job satisfaction, roles are best fulfilled when they are integrated with one's identity, referred to as person-job fit and person-organisation fit. Employees who respect their roles as reflecting their identity tend to stay engaged throughout their careers.

Finally, [Parmentier et al. \(2019\)](#) categorize emotional intelligence as a basic skill supporting adaptability in any stage of one's career. The ability to control emotions and respond to changes appropriately is an indicator of lasting professional resilience.

4. Create an integrated model for fostering an adaptable occupational setting that supports the objectives of sustained high-level professional achievement by women.

The most recently conducted research underscores the consideration of both individual growth and organizational frameworks in fostering an all-encompassing professional achievement. [Alok et al. \(2021\)](#) referred to self-efficacy and career identity as the link between the individual and the organisation, stating that workplaces designed to include all employees enhance retention more effectively; this was later supported by [Alarifi et al. \(2024\)](#) who showed that greater freedom in performing work roles enhances and motivates employees' and set their participation toward managing their careers.

Personal traits alignment with organizational values influences the commitment and engagement of employees on a long-term basis. [Chen et al. \(2024\)](#) signifies that individuals whose experience is relevant and significant within their organisation tend to practice minimal role stressors, which allows them to stay engaged and flexible. [Ferreira and Potgieter \(2018\)](#) similarly find that emotional assumption combined with curiosity strongly drives

retention because of high career adaptability and organisational commitment. In holistic models of career success, both resilience and adaptability are considered integral, not just for achieving professional milestones but also for enhancing life satisfaction.

Brown et al. (2016) focused and emphasised the importance of personalized career development for lower-skilled workers as it helps close structural gaps by finding some ways to assist those individual's career development and fosters career possession. Jogulu and Franken (2022) further argue that career advancement can stem from educational resources and frameworks designed to promote perpetual growth. Job satisfaction and career progression are important channels in Chan et al. (2016)'s study of the relationship between career flexibility and employees' purposes to leave. According to the study, flexible workers are less likely to think about exit when they are happy and perceive prospects for advancement. It emphasizes how crucial it is to provide both individual flexibility and organizational support in order to increase retention.

Soares et al. (2023) validated the CAAS-SF tool, which helps organizations evaluate adaptability across different jobs and age groups within a workforce. This ensures fair support within a diverse workforce. Moreover, the theoretical frameworks of adaptation illuminate pathways for managing transitions in one's career, especially within educational contexts. As noted by Kara et al. (2021), inclusive educator training demands clearly defined multi-step systems to be effective.

Psychosocial resources dramatically affect women's resilience throughout their careers. According to Takawira and Coetzee (2019), timely interferences—defined as those occurring within support structures, autonomy, or self-endorsement—systematically enable women to thrive within their careers and attain deep levels of professional satisfaction

Conclusion and Discussion

This review synthesizes 48 peer-reviewed studies to understand how women re-enter the workforce after prolonged career pauses. The study's results indicate that professional resilience is cultivated by a blend of internal factors, including self-confidence, emotional maturity, and a robust growth mind-set as well as external support systems like inclusive workplaces, mentorship, and adaptable work schedules. To put it differently, professional resilience cannot be solely attributed to personal factors; it develops within wider organizational and societal structures.

Motivational factors, along with emotional stamina, do play a role in helping women transition back into the workforce, but they must also overcome deeply entrenched challenges. In particular, long-standing structural obstacles such as bias in the workplace, vague expectations of positions, and outdated skill sets accompanied by scarce networking opportunities persistently stall advancement. That said, supportive organizational cultures coupled with equitable human resource policies aimed at these gaps can provide an easier means of making transitions possible alongside additional fair return pathways

Perhaps the most salient point derived from this review is that resilience is best fostered when bolstered by strong psychosocial support alongside systemic foundations. Consistent emotional support, purpose-oriented learning, and adjustable career options all lead to sustaining engagement. Mastering the skills of self-management, self-control, emotional intelligence, and regulating feelings equips individuals with the capability to manage their careers shifts adeptly.

As such, this review encourages us to think about resilience in a broader sense—not as an inherent emotion or trait someone possesses, but rather as a fluid interplay between people and their surroundings. Such a view calls for significant change at the policy level; it challenges policymakers, business leaders, and educators to shift focus from cosmetic changes to deep structural alterations that eliminate real obstacles. In contrast, these systems

would seek to align personal aspirations with organizational objectives. These frameworks not only permit participation from experienced women but can also enhance workforce innovation and equality.

Final thoughts on this review suggest an initial strategy for designing adaptable environments that aid women transitioning back into the workplace while providing a strong conceptual framework. Future studies should build these frameworks by adapting them for specific cultural contexts, social groups within different economic brackets alongside cross-sector evaluations of practical interventions. Achieving successful reintegration and career progression for women in organizations requires sustained empirical strategies.

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