CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY

The family is a dynamic network of interdependencies that exerts functional influences on the behaviors of individual members (Whiston, 1996). The kind of family in which children grow-up affect's their development by determining the kind of relationship they have with different family members (Moos & Moos, 1998).

Perfectionism is considered as a personality trait (Frost et al. 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991) which may affect coping and dichotomous thinking. In general, generalized perfectionism is thought to be motivated by both a need to achieve perfectionism and to avoid failure (Hewitt & Flett, 1991b), but it is the focus on avoiding failure and associated anxiety, that promotes negative consequences (Lalonde, 2000). Contemporary researchers have argued that perfectionism exhibits a more complex multidimensional structure where, both personal (self-oriented) and social (socially prescribed) components contribute to different forms of achievement striving and understanding various adaptive and maladaptive outcomes (Hall, 2006; also see Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Hewitt & Flett (2002) suggested that perfectionists, relative to non-perfectionists, are exposed to greater number of stressful events simply as a result of their unrealistic approach towards life.

Coping involves a constant process of trying out different ways of dealing with a situation, in order to feel better or improve this situation. Coping strategies vary depending upon the type of situation and the individual person's habits and resources. Individuals having large repertoire of coping strategies experience fewer negative consequences (Mishara, 2008). Families can be both a source of stress as well as a resource to assist in coping (Atkin, 1991; de Anda et al., 2004; Feenstra et al., 2001; Lohman & Javis, 2000).

With so many choices now available, young people trying to find their way in the world are confused and overwhelmed as to what career path to choose. Career decision-making is the process of making informed career choices based on one's personal experiences. Construct of thoughts (functional or dysfunctional) related to
career, affects career decision-making. Dysfunctional thinking limits an individual's capacity to learn effective career problem-solving and decision-making skills. The specific career thoughts of an individual are a product of individual experience, mediated by personal characteristics and by family environment as well as significant others in a cultural context (Sampson et al., 1996). Students who are more emotionally stable are more efficient in coping with dilemmas related to the further education as well as in making better decisions related to career (Pečjak & Košir, 2007).

The present piece of work is an attempt to understand or study the relationship between family environment (viz., cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, achievement-orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, active-recreational orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organization, and control), perfectionism (self-oriented and socially prescribed, both positive as well as negative), coping behaviour (problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidance coping, and social support), and career decision making (dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict) among male and female as well as arts, science, and professional stream university students. This study is a pioneering attempt to understand and determine the variables, which can have significant impact on the lives of university students—male and female—in general as well as those with different disciplinary foci. Thus keeping this in mind, the aims of the present study were:

1) To study how different factors of family environment are related to perfectionism, coping behaviour, and career decision making of university students.

2) To study how different aspects of perfectionism are related to coping behaviour and career decision making of university students.

3) To study how different aspects of coping behaviour and career decision-making of university students are interrelated.

HYPOTHESIS

For the male and female as well as for the arts, science, and professional steam university students:
1. The different aspects of family environment will be significantly and positively related to all the aspects of perfectionism.

2. The different factors of family environment will be significantly and positively related to problem-focused, emotion-focused, and social coping while, negatively related to avoidance coping.

3. All the factors of family environment except conflict and control will be significantly and negatively related to career decision making aspects.

4. Self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism will be significantly and positively related to problem-focused, emotion-focused, and social coping while, negatively related to avoidance coping.

5. Self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism will be significantly and positively related to emotion-focused, and avoidance coping while, negatively related to problem-focused and social coping.

6. Self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism will be significantly and negatively related to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict.

7. Self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism will be significantly and positively related to all the career decision making aspects.

8. Problem-focused coping will be significantly and negatively related while, emotion-focused, social, and avoidance coping will be significantly and positively related to all the aspects of career decision making.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Design:** A correlational design was used followed by factor analysis.

**Sample:** The total sample comprised of 600 university students (300 males and 300 females) from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. Equal number of males (100) and females (100) were taken from arts, science, and professional streams. A control was established by including only five courses each in the three streams at masters, level of the same university.

**TOOLS USED**

1. **Family environment scale (FES) (Form-R)** by Moos and Moos (1986). It consists of 90 true and false items related to family behaviour that fall on 10 subscales under three main dimensions viz., the relationship dimension (cohesion,
expressiveness, and conflict), the personal-growth dimension (independence, achievement orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, active-recreational orientation, and moral-religious emphasis), and the system-maintenance dimension (organization and control).

2. **Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale (PANPS) – Hindi Version** by Prabha (2002). It consists of 40 items, rated on a 5-point scale ranging from ‘5-strongly agree’ to ‘1-strongly disagree’. Based on function (i.e. positive and negative perfectionism) and content (self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism), four set of scores are derived in terms of self-oriented positive perfectionism, self-oriented negative perfectionism, socially prescribed positive perfectionism, and socially-prescribed negative perfectionism, comprising of 10 items each.

3. **Brief COPE** by Carver (1997). It consists of 28 items having two items in each of the 14 subscales. The respondents indicate on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (I haven’t been doing this at all) to 4 (I have been doing this a lot). In the present study, these 14 subscales are divided into four major scales viz., problem-focused, emotion-focused, social, and avoidance coping.

4. **Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI)** by Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, and Saunders (1996). The CTI consists of 48 items, all worded negatively to represent dysfunctional career thoughts. It has a 4-point rating scale ranging from ‘0-strongly disagree’ to ‘3-strongly agree’. It yields a CTI total score (an overall level of dysfunctional thinking related to career problem solving and decision making) as well as scores on the three construct scales i.e., decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict.

**Procedure:** The data from university students were collected in a group/classroom setting. A set of four questionnaires mentioned above were provided to them. The purpose of the study was verbally explained to them.

**Instructions:** Prior to filling each inventory, the students were asked to read the instructions written on top of each inventory carefully and to return these inventories after completing them.
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Correlational Analysis: Pearson's product moment correlation matrix was computed for the total sample of male and female as well as for the arts, science, and professional stream university students to find out the inter-correlation among all the variables of the study.

Factor Analysis: The method of principal components analysis was applied to extract unrotated components. Then, the obtained components were further subjected to rotation through Kaiser's (1958) method of varimax rotation which extracted rotated factors. It was also computed for male and female as well as for the arts, science, and professional stream university students.

MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the present study based on correlational analysis are as follows:

1. Family Environment and Perfectionism:

   (i) For both male and female university students, cohesion, achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, and organization were positively related to self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism; intellectual-cultural orientation to self-oriented positive perfectionism; and control to socially prescribed negative perfectionism.

   (ii) Conflict was positively related to self-oriented negative perfectionism for male students while, it was negatively to socially prescribed positive perfectionism for female students.

   (iii) For only males, independence was negatively related to self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism.

   (iv) For only females, a negative relationship appeared between cohesion and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism, and also between organization and self-oriented negative perfectionism. Further, a positive relationship emerged between achievement-orientation and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism; intellectual-cultural orientation and socially prescribed positive perfectionism; as well as between active-recreational orientation and self-oriented positive perfectionism.
(v) For arts, science, and professional students, a positive relationship appeared between cohesion, achievement-orientation and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism; moral-religious emphasis and socially prescribed positive perfectionism; organization and self-oriented positive perfectionism; as well as control and socially prescribed negative perfectionism.

(vi) For both arts and science students, organization was positively related to socially prescribed positive perfectionism; while for only professional students, it was negatively related to self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism.

(vii) For both arts and professional students, a positive relationship appeared between achievement-orientation and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism; and also between active-recreational orientation and self-oriented positive perfectionism. However for only professional students, active-recreational orientation was also related negatively to socially prescribed negative perfectionism.

(viii) For both science and professional students, intellectual-cultural orientation was related positively to self-oriented positive perfectionism. However for only professional students, it was also related positively to socially prescribed positive perfectionism and negatively to socially prescribed negative perfectionism.

(ix) Expressiveness was negatively related to self-oriented negative perfectionism for arts students but, it was positively related to socially prescribed positive perfectionism for science students.

(x) Moral-religious emphasis was related positively to socially prescribed negative perfectionism for arts students and to self-oriented positive perfectionism for professional students.

(xi) For only arts students, cohesion was negatively related to self-oriented negative perfectionism.

(xii) For only science students, conflict was negatively related to self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism.

(xiii) For only professional students, independence appeared to be negatively related to socially prescribed negative perfectionism.
2. **Family Environment and Coping Behaviour**

(i) For both the genders, cohesion, achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, and organization were positively related to problem-focused coping.

(ii) Conflict was positively related to emotion-focused coping and avoidance coping for male students; and negatively related to social coping for female students.

(iii) Achievement orientation was related negatively to avoidance coping for male students while, positively to emotion-focused coping, social coping, and avoidance coping for female students.

(iv) Organization was related negatively to avoidance coping for males and positively to emotion-focused coping for females.

(v) For only males, cohesion and intellectual-cultural orientation was related negatively to avoidance coping; whereas, independence is related to problem-focused coping.

(vi) For only females, moral-religious emphasis was also related positively to emotion-focused coping, social coping as well as avoidance coping and control was related positively to emotion-focused coping.

(vii) For all the three stream students, cohesion was negatively related to avoidance coping; and independence was positively related to problem-focused coping.

(viii) Organization was related positively to problem-focused coping for arts students; to social coping for science students; and to problem-focused coping for professional students. However for only professional students, it was also related negatively to emotion-focused as well as avoidance coping.

(ix) For both arts and science students, conflict was related negatively to problem-focused coping and positively to avoidance coping; whereas achievement orientation was related positively to problem-focused coping.

(x) For both arts and professional students, expressiveness was related negatively to avoidance coping for only arts students while, it was positively related to social coping for only professional students.

(xi) For both science and professional students, moral-religious emphasis was related positively to problem-focused coping.
(xii) For only arts students, cohesion was also positively related to problem-focused coping.

(xiii) For only science students, conflict and control appeared to be related positively with emotion-focused coping.

(xiv) For only professional students, a positive relationship appeared between independence and social coping while, a negative relationship appeared between intellectual-cultural orientation and avoidance coping.

3. Family environment and career decision making

(i) For both the genders, cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, and intellectual-cultural orientation were negatively related to dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion; independence to decision making confusion; and organization to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion as well as commitment anxiety. However, achievement orientation was positively related to external conflict.

(ii) For males alone, conflict was also related positively to commitment anxiety and external conflict whereas, intellectual-cultural oriented as well as moral-religious emphasis were related negatively to commitment anxiety.

(iii) For only females, a negative relationship appeared between cohesion and commitment anxiety as well as external conflict; expressiveness and external conflict; independence and dysfunctional career thoughts; and also between active-recreational orientation and dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion. On the other hand, control was positively related to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and external conflict.

(iv) For arts, science, and professional stream students, cohesion and expressiveness were related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion; and organization was also related negatively to decision making confusion.

(v) Achievement orientation appeared to be positively related to external conflict for arts and professional students while, also negatively related to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion for science students.

(vi) For both arts and science students, conflict was related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety. However for only arts students, it was also related positively to external conflict.
(vii) For both arts and professional students, organization was negatively related to dysfunctional career thoughts and commitment anxiety for both. However, cohesion was negatively related to external conflict for arts students, while to commitment anxiety for professional students.

(viii) For both science and professional students, intellectual-cultural orientation was negatively related to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion; while for only professional students, it was also related negatively to commitment anxiety and external conflict.

(ix) For only arts students, expressiveness was negatively related to commitment anxiety and external conflict whereas, control was positively related to dysfunctional career thoughts.

(x) For only professional students, active-recreational orientation appeared to be negatively related to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety as well as external conflict, whereas independence was related negatively only to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion.

4. Perfectionism and coping behaviour

(i) For both the genders, a positive relationship appeared between self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism and problem-focused coping; socially prescribed positive perfectionism and social coping; self-oriented negative perfectionism and emotion-focused as well as avoidance coping, and also between socially prescribed negative perfectionism and avoidance coping.

(ii) For only male students, self-oriented positive perfectionism was related negatively to avoidance coping.

(iii) For only female students, a positive relationship appeared between socially prescribed positive perfectionism and emotion-focused coping as well as avoidance coping; and between socially prescribed negative perfectionism and emotion-focused coping.

(iv) For arts, science, and professional students, a positive relationship appeared between self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism and problem-focused coping; and between self-oriented negative perfectionism and emotion-focused coping.
(v) For both arts and professional students, self-oriented negative perfectionism was related positively to avoidance coping.

(vi) For both arts and science students, socially prescribed negative perfectionism was related negatively to emotion-focused coping.

(vii) For only professional students, a positive relationship was evident between socially prescribed positive perfectionism and social coping; as well as between socially prescribed negative perfectionism and avoidance coping.

5. **Perfectionism and career decision making**

(i) For both male and female students, negative relationship appeared between self-oriented positive perfectionism and dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion; and also between socially prescribed positive perfectionism and decision making confusion. However, positive relationship appeared between negative perfectionism (both self-oriented and socially prescribed) and dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict.

(ii) For only males, socially prescribed positive perfectionism was negatively related to dysfunctional career thoughts.

(iii) For only females, self-oriented positive perfectionism was negatively related to commitment anxiety,

(iv) For all the three streams, a negative relationship was observed between positive perfectionism (self-oriented as well as socially prescribed) and decision making confusion. However, positive relationship appeared between self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism and dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety, and also between socially prescribed positive perfectionism and external conflict.

(v) For both arts and professional students, self perfectionism negative perfectionism was positively related to external conflict.

(vi) For only arts students, a negative relationship was seen between self-oriented positive perfectionism and dysfunctional career thoughts as well as commitment anxiety; and also between socially prescribed positive perfectionism and dysfunctional career thoughts.
6. Coping behaviour and career decision making

(i) For both the genders, problem-focused coping was related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion. However, a positive relationship emerged between emotion-focused coping and dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety; as well as between avoidance coping and dysfunctional career thoughts, commitment anxiety, and external conflict.

(ii) For only male students, a positive relationship appeared between social coping and dysfunctional career thoughts, commitment anxiety, and external conflict; as well as between avoidance coping and decision making confusion.

(iii) For only female students, problem-focused coping was related positively to external conflict.

(iv) For all the three stream students, emotion-focused coping was related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and commitment anxiety. However, avoidance coping was related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety.

(v) For both arts and science students, problem-focused coping was negatively related to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion.

(vi) For both science and professional students, a positive relationship appeared between emotion-focused coping and decision making confusion; as well as avoidance coping and external conflict.

(vii) Social coping was related positively to commitment anxiety for science students and to external conflict for professional students.

(viii) For only arts students, problem-focused coping was related negatively to commitment anxiety. However, emotion-focused coping was related positively to external conflict.

The main findings of factor analysis results are as follows:

1. Family environment and perfectionism

(i) For male students, significant and positive loadings were evident on cohesion, achievement orientation, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism in factor III; while on control, self-oriented and socially prescribed negative perfectionism in factor V.
(ii) For female students, significant and positive loadings were evident on achievement orientation, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism, self-oriented and socially prescribed negative perfectionism in factor III.

(iii) For arts students, positively significant loadings were seen on cohesion, organization, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism in factor II.

(iv) For science students, significant and positive loadings were seen on cohesion, achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organization, and organization but, a negative loading appeared on conflict in factor II.

(v) For professional students, significant and positive loadings appeared on achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism, self-oriented and socially prescribed negative perfectionism in factor II. Also in factor V, significant and positive loadings were evident on cohesion, independence, and organization along with negative loadings on conflict and self-oriented negative perfectionism.

2. Family environment and coping behaviour

(i) For male students, significant and positive loadings on cohesion, independence, moral-religious emphasis, organization, as well as problem-focused coping, and negative loadings on conflict and control in factor II. However, positively significant loadings also appeared on cohesion, achievement orientation, problem-focused coping and social coping in factor III. Also in factor VI, significant and positive loadings appeared on independence, problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidance coping.

(ii) For arts students, significant and positive loadings appeared on cohesion, organization, and problem-focused coping along with a negative loading on avoidance coping in factor II.

(iii) For science students, significant and positive loadings were seen on cohesion, achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organization, problem-focused coping and social coping along with a negative loading on conflict in factor II.
(iv) For professional students, positively significant loadings were evident on achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, and problem-focused coping in factor II.

3. Family environment and career decision making

(i) For arts students, significant and positive loadings were evident on cohesion as well as organization; and a negative loading on decision making confusion in factor II.

(ii) For science students, significant and positive loadings appeared on cohesion, achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, and organization alongwith negative loadings on conflict and decision making confusion in factor II.

4. Perfectionism and coping behaviour

(i) For male students, positively significant loadings emerged in factor III on self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism, problem-focused coping, and social coping.

(ii) For arts students, significant and positive loadings were seen on self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism, and problem-focused coping alongwith a negative loading on avoidance coping in factor II.

(iii) For science students, significant and positive loadings appeared on socially prescribed positive perfectionism, problem-focused coping, and social coping in factor II.

(iv) For professional students, significant and positive loadings were seen on self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism, and avoidance coping in factor I. However, significant and positive loadings also appeared on self-oriented as well as socially prescribed both, positive and negative perfectionism, and problem-focused coping in factor II.

5. Perfectionism and career decision making

(i) For female students, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism, dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict in factor I.

(ii) For arts students, significant and positive loadings appeared on self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism and a negative loading on decision making confusion in factor II.
(iii) For science students, significant and positive loading was seen on socially prescribed positive perfectionism, and a negative loading on decision making confusion in factor II.

(iv) For professional students, positively significant loadings appeared on self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism, dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict in factor I.

6. Coping behaviour and career decision making

(i) For males, significant and positive loadings on avoidance coping, dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict in factor I.

(ii) For arts students, significant and positive loadings appeared on problem-focused coping and negative loadings on avoidance coping decision making confusion in factor II.

(iii) For science students, significant and positive loadings appeared on problem-focused coping as well as social coping and a negative loading on decision making confusion in factor II.

(v) For professional students, positively significant loadings appeared on avoidance coping, dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict in factor I.

Implications of the present study:

The present study was an attempt to study the relationship between family environment, perfectionism, coping behaviour and career decision making among university students. Since, the present investigation was a pioneering attempt in this direction, the findings of this study might prove beneficial/useful in supporting future research in the given area.

Limitations of the present study:

- A control was established by including only five courses each in arts, science, and professional streams.
- The students from only masters' level were included.
- The study was conducted on only the university students of Himachal Pradesh University.

**Suggestions for Future Research:**

- More courses could be included in arts, science, and professional streams.
- The sample could be broadened by including research scholars as well as students at school and college level.
- The sample could be widened by taking other universities and a comparison could be made between them.