It is normal for everyone to think negatively from time to time. But too much negative thinking causes problems. Even one or two negative thoughts can make decision making more difficult.

Career plays an important role in an individual’s life. The career planning process can sometimes be impeded due to career barriers we may not be aware of. It's common to have barriers related to “negative” thoughts, behaviors and emotions when choosing a major or a career. Career barriers can also involve inadequate self-awareness, insufficient decision-making skills, lack of motivation, external pressures and influences from peers and family, or physical and learning barriers. However, not resolving these barriers can counteract the process of effective decision-making when developing our career plan and should be addressed in the earliest stage of choosing a major or deciding on our career plan.

Do I fear making the wrong decision will impact me negatively?

Do I worry about the disapproval of others when it comes to my major or career choice?

Do peers and family pressurize me about making a major or career choice?

Do I have difficulty making a commitment to a major or career choice even though I have been very thorough in exploring my options?

Do I procrastinate in making a decision about my major or career?

If we answer “yes” to any of these questions above, we are having negative or dysfunctional career thoughts.
If we look closely, we’ll see that negative thoughts stem from negative emotions. They feed off each other in a vicious cycle.

Career decidedness is a dynamic and interactive problem (Savickas, 1995). Career indecision is the inability to specify a career choice within a career decision making milieu (Steward, 1995).

Career indecision has demonstrated empirical relationships with other factors in the literature. In particular, emotional factors such as low self esteem (Chartrand, Martin, Robbins, Mc Cauliffe, Pickerelle and Calliottee, 1994; Resnick, Faubles and Osipow, 1970; Stead, Graham and Foxcroft, 1993), and anxiety (Fuqua, Blum and Hartman, 1988; Holland and Holland, 1977; Larson, Piersel, Imao and Allen, 1990; Ohare, and Tamburi, 1986; Serling and Betz, 1990; Skorupa and Agresti, 1998; Stead, Graham and Foxcroft, 1993) have contributed to career indecision.

Moreover, cognitive factors such as external decision-making style (Osipow and Reed, 1985), low problem solving confidence (Larson and Heppner, 1985; Larson, Heppner, Ham and Dugan, 1988), external appraisal of control (Fuqua, Blum and Hartman, 1988; Larson, Piersal, Imao and Allen, 1990; Taylor, 1982), and greater self appraised pressure and barriers (Larson, Heppner, Ham and Dugan, 1988) also impair career decision making. Career indecision has also demonstrated a significant relationship to self defeating beliefs (Taylor and Betz, 1983), irrational thinking (Enright, 1996; Skorupa and Agersti, 1998; Stead, Graham and Foxcroft, 1993), poor career beliefs (Enright, 1996) and negative career thoughts (Saunders, Peterson, Sampson and Reardon, 2000).

Most career indecision research has largely been studied with student populations (Gordon, 1998; Mc Whirtner, Rasheed and Crolhers, 2000), leaving the majority of adults outside of this domain of research (Weinstein, Healy, and Ender, 2002). Many adults do not make career choices in college or university settings (Desruisseaux, 1998; Perry, 2003), but rather in the midst of life and work transitions
such as unemployment (Amundson and Borgan, 1996; Osipow, 1999; Phillips and Bluestein, 1994).

Career thoughts are defined as outcomes of one's thinking about assumptions, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, feelings, plans and/or strategies related to career problem solving and decision making (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, Saunders, 1996). When such thoughts are negative they are referred to as dysfunctional career thoughts which are expressed through their behavior (e.g., incomplete homework), emotions (depression and anger) and negative verbal expression (e.g., negative statements, Corbishley and Yost, 1989) leading to self defeating behavior and experience (Kinner and Krumboltz, 1986).

Dysfunctional career thoughts have been conceptualized as dysfunctional career beliefs (Krumboltz, 1990), dysfunctional cognitions (Corbishley and Yost, 1989), dysfunctional self beliefs (Borders and Archedel, 1987), self-defeating assumptions (Dryden, 1989) and faulty self-efficacy beliefs (Brown and Lent, 1996). Kinner and Krumboltz (1986) reported that dysfunctional career thoughts have also been related to distorted, misinformed and biased career beliefs.

Two fundamental realities of career problem solving are that it can be a cognitively complex and affectively unsettling task. Bruner (1985) pointed out that ordinary problems are often poorly defined; have multiple, interdependent goals; and shifting standards of success. Similarly, individuals attempting to resolve career problems are faced with ambiguous cues, interdependent alternatives and uncertain outcomes. Furthermore, solving one career problem usually creates only new problems requiring the individual's attention (Peterson, Sampson, and Reardon, 1991; Peterson, Sampson, Lenz and Reardon, 2002; Sampson, Reardon, Peterson and Lenz, 2004).

Because of the high level of cognitive complexity, many individuals have difficulty working through the career problem-solving
process. However, it is the indecisive individual, who is generally thought to have a maladaptive approach to problem solving accompanied by a dysfunctional level of anxiety (Gordon, 1998; Peterson, Sampson, Jr, Reardon and Lenz, 1996; Peterson et al., 1991; Sampson et al., 2004). The high level of anxiety of the indecisive client limits cognitive capacity and motivation for career choice. Intensifying emotion has been found to further bias the perception, thus creating a self-perpetuating cycle of increasing cognitive dysfunction and affect (Freeman, Pretzar, Fleming and Simon, 1990). Such a reciprocal relationship between negative thinking and mood is supported by the evidence available in empirical setting (Marzillier, 1986).

The conceptual evolution of career indecision has been described by Savickas (1995) as moving from a dichotomy, to a one dimensional continuum, to a multidimensional concept. For example, in undergraduate college students, career indecision has been found to be, "------- complex problem space of both cognitive and affective variables that are in themselves highly interrelated and ostensibly interactive. Vocational identity, state and trait anxiety, locus of control, depression and dysfunctional career thoughts are all significantly associated with the state of career indecision and with each other" (Saunders, Peterson, Sampson, and Reardon, 2000). Specifically, Saunders found that dysfunctional career thoughts captured significant amounts of independent variation in career indecision (Saunders, 1998).

Cognitions have been widely recognized as an important factor to consider regarding issues related to vocational development and career decision making (Lustig and Strauser, 2000). An individual's vocational behavior is influenced by the interaction between vocational cognitions, behaviors and environments and is often cognitively mediated (Keller et al., 1982). Individuals who express and verbalize positive cognitions regarding the career decision making
process tend to make effective decisions, whereas individuals who express and verbalize negative or dysfunctional cognitions regarding career decision making process tend to experience difficulty and avoidance (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon and Saunders, 1996).

Individual factors such as poor problem solving skills (Peterson et al., 1991), lack of self knowledge related to career interests, abilities and values (Holland and Holland, 1977), maladaptive career beliefs and assumptions (Krumboltz, 1983; Nevo, 1987), personality disorders, depression, anxiety and schizophrenia (Fuqua, Blum and Hartman, 1988; Gibb, 1991) have also been implicated in the development of dysfunctional career thoughts.

Research has suggested that dysfunctional career thoughts usually revolve around the issues of self-worth, perfectionism, and over-generalization and have a tendency to decrease overall life satisfaction (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon and Saunders, 1996; Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon and Saunders, 1998).

Dysfunctional career thoughts have also been linked to subjective well-being or a person’s self perception of his/her current status, job dissatisfaction, poor job performance, unhappy significant others, job failure, job avoidance, depression and anxiety (Judge and Locke, 1993; Newman, Fuqua, Seaworth, 1989; Saunders, Peterson, Sampson and Reardon, 2000; Serling and Betz, 1990).

Lack of opportunity to develop choice making and problem solving skills during adolescence can also affect their ability to make effective and productive career decisions as adults (Czerlinsky and Ryan, 1986; Peterson and Gonzalez, 2000; Powers, Sowers and Stevens, 1995). Specifically individuals with disabilities have been reported to experience significant problems in career decision making (Czerlinsky and Ryan, 1986; Enright, 1996; Luzzo et al., 1999).

Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon and Saunders (1996b) identified dysfunctional career thinking as a component of the career
decision making process. Sampson et al., (1996) seek to enhance career decision making and reduce the impact of dysfunctional career thinking on the career decisions.

Dysfunctional career thoughts (DCTs) are used to describe a specific category of difficulties in career decision making (Peterson, Sampson, and Reardon, 1991). Such thoughts are inappropriate, inaccurate, or irrational thoughts that inhibit effective career problem solving and decision making for almost everyone (Sampson et al., 1996b). Sampson et al., (1996) estimated that 95% of adults have some level of dysfunctional career thinking. The challenge is how to reduce the influence dysfunctional career thoughts exert when levels become problematic to the career decision making process. Student who view their involvement in the career decision process in an accurate, positive way tend to make effective decisions. Those students with inaccurate views of themselves or who view the decision making process negatively (e.g. due to the influence of dysfunctional career thoughts) tend to make poorer career decisions (Sampson et al., 1996).

Dysfunctional career thoughts not only hinder the career decision making process, they also have a detrimental impact in other areas related to students’ career development. Osborn (1998) indentified three areas of impact, on emotional states, self related issues and cognitive tasks. Cognitive tasks important to student’s career development that can be negatively influenced by dysfunctional career thoughts, include premature foreclosure of potentially satisfying career options (Brown and Lent, 1996), inadequate planning (Lewis and Gilhousen, 1981), irrational or distorted views of the role or the work (Lewis and Gilhousen; Nevo, 1987), poor decision making (Sampson et al., 1996 ), the erroneous perception of barriers to making career decisions (Sampson et al., 1996) and misconceptions about the process of making career decisions (Thompson, 1976).
Gati and Saka (2001) identified career related dysfunctional beliefs as one of the most prominent problems youth face as they try to make satisfying decisions about education or employment.

Among our youth, dysfunctional career thoughts are a major problem for students (Gati and Saka, 2001). Peterson et al., (1996) found that students who have distorted cognitions about themselves and their career options have difficulty making educational and career decisions. Dysfunctional career thoughts are also related to problems students may have with their emotional states, self-related issues, or cognitive functioning (Hinkelman and Luzzo, 2007; Osborn, 1998).

INFLUENCE OF COGNITION ON CAREER DECISION MAKING

Betz (1992) and Dryden (1979) attributed the first acknowledgement that career beliefs to be impacted by dysfunctional thinking to Ellis (1977) and Meichenbaum (1977). Prior to the advent of the Cognitive Information Processing approach (Peterson et al., 1991; Peterson et al., 2002; Peterson et al., 1996; Sampson et al., 2004), several researchers began to explore the impact of irrational thinking on career development by identifying dysfunctional ways of thinking specific to career decision making (i.e., irrational or maladaptive beliefs that adversely impact an individual’s ability to make rational career choices) (Corbishley and Yost, 1989; Dryden, 1979; Krumboltz, 1983; Lewis and Gilhousen, 1981; Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1987; Nevo, 1987; Thompson 1976).

Thompson (1976) was the first one to address the relationship between faulty cognitions and career problems. Thompson (1976) postulated that irrational expectations and faulty beliefs were at the root of many career problems. He identified four misconceptions peculiar to career decision making that tended to dominate students’ attitudes toward career development:
1. Thompson noted students had the idea that career decision making and problem solving were precise processes producing a plan fitting their needs exactly.

2. He also identified the erroneous idea that these students believed career decisions were made at point in time and that these decisions were final.

3. Thompson reported students believed career assessment instruments would produce answers that would tell them “what they should do”, (p. 32).

4. Thompson identified a faulty causal relationship between interests and abilities. He noted that many students mistakenly believed if they identified their interests, success in their area of interest would follow as a matter of course.

Corbishley and Yost (1989) loosely grouped dysfunctional career cognitions into three categories. The first, constraining category (I can’t) dealt with an individual’s belief he/she lacked the ability or resources, or was restrained by someone else from pursuing career desires. Cognitions described in this category included beliefs about being unable to make satisfying career decisions or not being good enough at the process to meet other’s expectations.

The second category (I won’t) was used to classify individuals who chose to withdraw from or refused to participate in the career choice process. Cognitions in this category included withdrawing or refusing to participate because the career choice process was too difficult and unfair or the process would likely not end in a satisfying solution.

Finally, the third category (I shouldn’t) was based on the theme that individuals should not have to participate in a process that violated their own or someone else’s rules (e.g., participation would displease family members or go against rigid role expectations or occupational stereotypes).
Dryden (1979) identified four common irrational beliefs found among youth:

(a) "There is only one career for me and it will be an absolute disaster if I am not accepted."

(b) "It is absolutely essential for me to be approved of by the people I go to work with."

(c) "It is absolutely essential for me to reach the top of my career."

And

(d) "My parents want me to go into "x" career, how can I pursue the career of my choice?" (p. 186).

Cognitions are generally recognized as important factors in career decision making. Based on the reciprocal interaction model of Bandura (1974), Keller, Biggs, and Gysbers (1982) identified the following propositions about career behavior:

(a) Career behaviors can be conceptualized as responses to cognitive representations of career environments; (b) these cognitive career representations are functionally related to and modifiable through application of the laws of human learning and cognitive development; (c) vocational cognitions, behavior; and (d) career behavior changes are cognitively mediated. (p. 367)

Practitioners, researchers, and theorists have noted over time that some clients verbalize dysfunctional statements about career choice that make career problem solving and decision making more difficult. Dysfunctional career thinking has been characterized as misconceptions (Thompson, 1976), self-defeating assumptions (Dryden, 1979), self-defeating behavior (Hornak and Gillingham, 1980), myths (Dorn and Welch, 1985; Lewis and Gillhousen, 1981), private rules (Krumboltz, 1983), self-defeating statements (Strawser and Figler, 1986), irrational expectations (Nevo, 1987), self-beliefs (Borders and Archadel, 1987), dysfunctional cognitions (Corbishley and Yost, 1989), and dysfunctional career beliefs (Krumboltz, 1990. Corbishley
and Yost (1989) noted that clients reveal dysfunctional cognitions via their behavior (e.g., incomplete homework assignments and indecision), their emotions (e.g., depression and anger), and verbal expression (e.g., client statements).

Kinnier and Krumboltz (1986) observed that biased, misinformed, or distorted career beliefs generally remain unnoticed and lead to self-defeating experiences. Judge and Locke (1993) found that dysfunctional thought processes were related to subjective well being, job satisfaction, and job avoidance. Judge and Locke (1993) concluded that dysfunctional cognitions related to self-worth, perfectionism, and overgeneralization decrease the chances for job and life satisfaction.

There is a continuous need to enhance career decision among youth. Although interventions to reduce the detrimental impact of dysfunctional career thinking vary in terms of specifics, most approaches include some type of cognitive restructuring. Kinnier and Krumboltz (1986) defined cognitive restructuring as “uncovering or identifying maladaptive thoughts or beliefs that are irrational, exaggerated, or inaccurate and then correcting or modifying them so that they become more adaptive, rational, realistic, or accurate” (pp.312-313).

Ellis (1962), Beck (1976), and Meichenbaum (1977) are often cited by career practitioners and researchers as providing a theoretical basis for cognitive restructuring. Stone (1983) noted that, although each of these theoretical perspectives shares a common focus on cognition, different mediators exist. Ellis focused on irrational beliefs, whereas Beck focused on faulty thinking styles, and Meichenbaum focused on internal speech, self-statements, and coping skills as causes of emotional and behavioral problems.

In summary, these various conceptions focus on restructuring particular cognitive framework that are related to self-preoccupation and negativity and are assumed to be responsible for Cognitive
restructuring therapy or Counseling uses performance-based intervention in order to modify cognitive experience so that adaptive and creative functioning is enhanced. (Stone, 1983, p.6)

Corbishley and Yost (1989) observed that interventions for treatment of dysfunctional cognitions have two basic components: "a cognitive evaluation of the 'old' cognition and of less dysfunctional alternative 'new' beliefs, and in vivo experimentation designed to test out the validity and usefulness of both old and new cognitions" (p.23). Although the specific steps and techniques may vary from one suggested approach to another, interventions recommended by Borders and Archadel (1987), Dryden (1979), Hornak and Gillingham (1980), Krumboltz (1983), Lewis and Gilhousen (1981), Nevo (1987), Strawser and Figler (1986), and Thompson (1976) all include strategies for identifying and challenging dysfunctional cognitions, then replacing them with more rational assumptions or beliefs.

Mitchell and Krumboltz (1987) found that cognitive restructuring was more effective than either decision making training or a no-treatment control in reducing career decision making anxiety and in promoting exploratory behavior. In comparison with the other groups, the cognitive restructuring group reported that the skills they learned were more useful and they were more satisfied with their experience. The literature on dysfunctional career thinking and related counseling interventions (cited earlier) consistently show the potential detrimental impact of dysfunctional cognitions on career choice as well as the potential benefits of cognitive restructuring in enhancing career choice.

The literature on dysfunctional career thinking and career choice indicates that cognitive processes have an impact on the quality of career decisions made by individuals. Because cognitions are a key factor influencing career decision making, theoretical perspective emphasizing cognition are relevant for developing
assessments and interventions that are designed to improve decision making.

With cognitive processes and career thoughts playing such a significant role in the career and vocational development process, it is important for individuals to have healthy and appropriate career thoughts and to minimize their dysfunctional thoughts (Young and Chen, 1999). The career thoughts inventory (CTI); Professional manual and workbook (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon and Saunders, 1996) is helpful in this regard.

Developed using a rational empirical method, the CTI yields a total score which is a global indicator of dysfunctional career problem solving and decision making and three construct scale scores: Decision making confusion (DMC), Commitment anxiety (CA) and External conflict (EC).

1. The decision making confusion scale measures the extent to which an individual's emotions or lack of decision making skills knowledge interferes with his/her ability to make a career decision.

2. The commitment anxiety scale examines the impact anxiety has on a person's ability to commit to a career decision.

3. The external conflict scale examines how well the person uses input from others and self perceptions in decision making.

Specifically, the CTI can be used as an instrument for screening and need assessment and as a learning resource.

As a screening measure, the CTI can be used to identify individuals who are likely to experience problems in making career choices as a result of their dysfunctional thinking.

As a need assessment measure, the CTI can be used to identify the specific nature of dysfunctional thinking noted in the screening process.
Then as a learning resource, the CTI and the CTI workbook can be used with various counseling interventions in assisting individuals to challenge and alter the specific dysfunctional thoughts identified as problematic in the prior needs assessment process.

The CTI is based on cognitive information processing theory (CIP), (Peterson, Sampson and Reardon, 1991; Peterson, Sampson, Reardon and Lenz, 1996) and a Cognitive therapy (Beck, 1976; Beck, Emery and Greenberg, 1985; Beck, Rush, Shaw and Emery, 1979) in relation to career problem solving and decision making.

The information processing domains related to career problem solving and decision making can be conceptualized as a pyramid, comprised of three knowledge domains (Figure 1.1).

![Figure 1.1: The Pyramid of Information Processing Domains in Career Decision Making](image)

The foundation of the pyramid symbolizes the knowledge domains, which include self knowledge and occupational knowledge. The middle of the CIP pyramid represents the decision making skills domain which includes generic information processing skills essential in gathering and using information to solve problems and to make decisions. These skills include five CASVE phases for receiving
external or internal signals of gap between one’s current and desired situation (Communication), interrelating problem components (Analysis), generating alternatives (Synthesis), prioritizing options or alternatives (Valuing) and forming an action plan to close the gap (Execution). At the top of the pyramid is the executive processing domain which relates to metacognitions, such as self talk, self awareness and control and monitoring that govern the choosing and sequencing of cognitive strategies used to make career decisions.

Lower CTI total scores tend to reflect limited dysfunctional career thinking and are best interpreted at the item level. Higher CTI total score tend to reflect greater dysfunctional career thinking and the emergence of specific issues that can be interpreted at both scale and item levels.

The CTI functions of screening, need assessment and interventions are interrelated in practice. The screening process uses the CTI total score to identify the likelihood of career choice difficulty and subsequent level of career intervention needed. For example a higher CTI total score signals that a more thorough need assessment is required.

The following four levels of interventions are designed to correspond to specific levels of dysfunctional thinking as measured by the CTI and to provide practitioners with potential intervention strategies:

**Level 1: Item-level analysis**

At this level of intervention, individuals have a CTI total T score of less than 40 (i.e., < the 16th percentile) and endorse only 1 to 5 items as Agree or Strongly agree. Such scores represent a minimal amount of dysfunctional thinking impending career problem solving.

For individuals with scores in this range, we need to discuss each item individually to ascertain whether or not it signals a particularly troubling concern. When an item is pointed out and
briefly discussed with the individual, the individual is usually not only aware of the particular difficulty but may know how to go about coping with it so that it will not hinder career exploration and career problem solving. Thus merely pointing out the dysfunctional thoughts and making individuals aware of their thinking may be sufficient to bring about positive change.

**Level 2: Item-level analysis plus Cognitive restructuring**

When individuals have a CTI total T score from 40 to 50 (i.e., 17th to 50th percentile) and endorse 4 to 16 items as Agree or Strongly agree, there is likely a degree of dysfunctional thinking that needs to be specifically addressed in order for the client to effectively progress through the CASVE problem solving and decision making cycle. Clusters of items may suggest content themes or categories of difficulty within either the pyramid of Information processing domains or the CASVE cycle.

Dysfunctional thoughts may be altered in conjunction with other career exploration activities specified in the IAP (Individual action plan) included in the CTI workbook.

**Level 3: Item-level analysis, Cognitive restructuring and Rehearsal and practice**

This intervention is suggested for individuals who have CTI total T scores in the 51 to 60 range (i.e., 51st to 84th percentile) and who endorse 9 to 28 items as Agree or Strongly agree. At this level of dysfunctional thinking, not only are individual items and themes discussed with the individual and the CTI cognitive restructuring exercises performed, but the practitioner also devotes time in individual counseling with individual to rehearse the reframing of key statements.
Level 4: Item-level analysis, Cognitive restructuring, Rehearsal and practice, Progressive relaxation and guided imagery

This level of intervention is suggested for individuals who earn a CTI total T score greater than 60 (i.e., 85th percentile or higher) and endorse more than 28 items as Agree or strongly agree. Individuals scoring in this range may indicate considerable levels of confusion and uncertainty. There may be intense feelings of anxiety, despair and hopelessness regarding prospects for finding a rewarding occupation or field of study.

Progressive relaxation (Freeman et al., 1990) and guided imagery practiced on a daily basis can help to channel career thoughts and to keep them focused and under control.

Once the individual is in this relaxed state, the practitioner can take the dysfunctional statement for the day and help the individual restructure the dysfunctional statement into a more functional statement.

PRESENT STUDY

Emergence of a global economy, rapidly advancing technologies and fundamental changes in the nature of work may not be well understood by students and may contribute to the anxiety they experience when facing educational and occupational decisions (Kroger, 2007). Work is becoming more dynamic; its requirements, nature and distribution are changing significantly (Carnevale and Desrochers, 2003, Feller, 2003a; Jarvis and Keeley, 2003; Lum, Moyer and Yuskarage, 2000). Because of these changes, students can no longer view the workforce as predictable and stable; they cannot make career decisions the same way their parents did (Carnevale and Desrochers, 2003). Students must cope with relatively frequent job transitions (Jarvis and Keeley, 2003; Mann et al., 1989), global competition, technological sophistication of work, and occupational insecurity (Feller, 2003b). According to Seligman (1998), if students do
not understand and adapt to this changing occupational environment, their misconceptions may lead them to dysfunctional ways of thinking and poor choices regarding education and work. To succeed in today's environment students need a clear understanding of their “goals, interests and talents” (Holland et al., 1980a) and an accurate way of thinking about themselves in relation to career decisions (National Commission on the High School Senior Year, 2001).

Keeping the current employment or occupational status in view, it is not surprising to have dysfunctional or negative career thoughts. The problem of unemployment and underemployment is very common among youth. People think that even after doing good academically, it would be a matter of chance to get a good job or being employed. To a certain extent, it is undoubtedly true. Even students who are up to the mark are not sure about success which brings negative thoughts. Moreover the constant changes in the world of work i.e., privatization and corruption has made the situation more difficult. Students at the University level which is supposed to be the higher level of studies are more particularly concerned about employment, regardless of interests, abilities or choice which shows their hopelessness and disappointment, as they say, “what matters at the end of the day is the result.” One can easily predict the consequences of their ways of thinking. Keeping all these things together, the outcome is the negative or dysfunctional career thoughts. Moreover it leads to dysfunctional self beliefs which usually change the whole frame of mind and one cannot deny the negative consequences.

Anxiety is an important factor to be considered regarding issues related to dysfunctional career thoughts. Anxiety has been shown to be a prominent feature of career indecision (Newman, Fuqua and Seaworth, 1989). Sampson Peterson, Lenz, Reardon and Saunders (1996) have noted a direct correlation between anxiety and dysfunctional career thoughts. Higher levels of anxiety and low self
Esteem can lead to dysfunctional cognitions and perceptions (Herr and Crammer, 1996).

Dysfunctional career thoughts have been characterized as dysfunctional self-beliefs (Borders and Archadel, 1987), self defeating assumptions (Dryden, 1999) and faulty self-efficacy beliefs (Brown and Lent, 1996). It usually revolves around the issues of self-worth (Sampson et al., 1996, 1998). It has been suggested that higher levels of anxiety, low self esteem (Betz and Hackett, 1981; Herr and Cramer, 1996); and poor problem solving skills (Peterson, Sampson and Reardon, 1991) can lead to dysfunctional cognitions and perceptions that not only result in failure to realize individual career potential, they may often cause the individual to avoid it all together and may also decrease life satisfaction (Sampson et al., 1996; Sampson et al., 1998).

Students are also influenced by achievement motivation (Atkinson, 1999; Spence, 1983; Wlodkowski, 1985). Everyone has a need to achieve and a fear of failure. Individuals with need to achieve have high attitude toward success and work hard to ensure they are successful (Atkinson, 1974). On the other hand, fear of failure predisposes some students to have a little desire to accomplish a certain goal (Atkinson, 1999). To avoid failure and protect their self-worth they may actually decrease effort (Alderman, 1999) or choose not to have a goal or even attempt the task (Veroff, Mc Clelland and Marquis, 1971; Grabe, 1979; Atkinson, 1974).

Tracy (1993) observed that whatever we accomplish is determined by the way we think and use our mind. Studies have shown that people with limited self beliefs (Simon, 1988) and low self-efficacy (Alderman, 1999) often lack confidence, are negative and pessimistic and they expect to fail.

In view of above it is clear that dysfunctional career thoughts, life satisfaction, self-efficacy, self esteem, anxiety and achievement motivation are interconnected. Any attempt to change dysfunctional
career thoughts will also have positive impact on the rest of the variables.

The issue of dysfunctional career thoughts is more or less new in India. Not a single attempt has been made till now to deal with such thoughts. In the present pioneering attempt, an effort has been made to study the efficacy of four different levels of interventions, designed to correspond to four specific levels of dysfunctional thinking among university students.

It appears that if the students are highly motivated and keep their self esteem high they can be more positive and optimistic regarding their career and vocational development, thus enhancing their life satisfaction (Sampson et al., 1996).

Based on four different levels of CTI interventions university students have been selected and corresponding interventions have been initiated to reduce their dysfunctional career thinking and help them engage in effective career problem solving and decision making behavior. Interventions and control groups have been included with equal number of subjects at each level.

Pre, post and follow-up effects of the interventions have been assessed on all the dependent variables.

**THE OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

The purpose of the investigation is to study the efficacy of four interventions (designed to improve four corresponding specific levels of dysfunctional career thinking) on dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, external conflict, life satisfaction, self-efficacy, self esteem, anxiety and achievement motivation of university students.