CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, a review of literature of past studies is presented that helps in hypotheses building. The chapter gives a review of some of the important studies that directly or indirectly highlight the relationship between career planning, social support, job search strategies, and job search outcomes. The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part of the literature review discusses the studies pertaining to the relationship between individual factors (i.e. career planning attitudes namely; career adaptability, career optimism, and perceived knowledge of job market) and job search strategies (i.e. focused, exploratory, and haphazard search strategies). The second part discusses the studies on relationship between contextual factors (i.e. social support namely, emotional, financial, and informational support) and job search strategies. The third part of this chapter describes the studies on relationship between job search strategies and job search outcomes (i.e. number of job offers, percentage of success, and pre-entry fit perceptions). Lastly, the chapter ends with the discussion of the research gaps identified from the review of literature.

3.1 Relationship between Career Planning Attitudes and Job Search Strategies

Ganster and Lovell (1978) examined the relationship between career adaptability and career decision-making. The data for the study was collected from 273 business management students in US who were participants of a career development program. A quasi-experimental design was used which included two by two factorial design. The results revealed that career adaptability training provided during career development program was positively related to career decision making and career choice. The study although was one of the first to report the linkages between career adaptability and career decision-making, the other components of career
planning attitudes were not included. Further, the study being an experimental design did not include any control group which is likely to restrict the adequacy and validity of the findings. Since career decision-making or lack of it are the prerequisites of using specific job search strategies, further studies are warranted to examine the linkages between career adaptability and job search strategies.

Dzibun, Tango, and Hynes (1994) examined the impact of vocational exploration (proxy for measurement of PJK) on career decision-making. Using experimental design, the authors tested whether career decision-making of participants exposed to vocational exploration training (N=39) were different from the participants of control group (N=40). ANOVA was conducted to analyze the data. The results revealed that the students provided with vocational exploration training (i.e. treatment group) exhibited career decision-making while the students of control group showed career indecision. Although, the findings showed a positive impact of career planning attitude on career decision-making, only one component of career planning attitude i.e. perceived knowledge of job market was included in the study. It is likely that other components of career planning attitudes equally impact career choices and career-related goals and in turn the use of specific strategies while searching for a job. Hence, further studies are warranted to examine the relationship between career planning attitudes and job search strategies used by the entry-level job seekers.

Reese and Miller (2006) investigated the impact of career planning attitudes on career decisiveness and identification of career goals. It was hypothesized that an increase in career planning attitudes post training, increases career decisiveness and clarity of career-related goals. A quasi-experimental design with two by two factorial design was used with treatment group (N=30) consisting of students who were enrolled in the career development course in US and
control group (N=66) consisting of students who were not enrolled for the same course. ANOVA was conducted to examine the difference between the two groups. The results revealed that the students of the treatment group after completion of their course showed increase in career planning attitudes with regard to setting career related goals, acquiring occupational information, and career exploration. Further, they showed a decline in perceived difficulties during career decision-making. The findings once again revealed the significance of career planning attitudes in fostering career decisiveness, career exploration, and commitment to an employment or career-related goal. However, the study used an experimental design and there is a need to reassess the generalizability of the findings across different research and contextual settings. Thus, further studies are warranted to examine the effect of career planning attitudes on job search strategies that are largely driven by career decisiveness, career exploration, and career indecisiveness.

Gunkel et al. (2010) conducted a cross-national study on career planning attitudes and career decisiveness across three countries namely, USA, Germany, and China. One of the main objectives of their study was to assess the impact of career planning attitudes (i.e. career adaptability, career optimism, and perceived knowledge of job market) on career decisiveness. Career decisiveness is defined as “the degree to which individuals feel decided about their career choice” (Lounsbury, Tatum, Chambers, Owens, & Gibson, 1999, p. 648). The authors hypothesized that career adaptability, career optimism, and perceived knowledge of job market have a positive effect on students’ career decisiveness. Data was collected from 559 undergraduate students enrolled in economics and business management courses in China (N=196), Germany (N=210), and USA (N=153). Data was analyzed using an ordinary-least-squares (OLS) regression analysis within the two-stage least square setting. Results of the study
revealed that career adaptability had a positive significant impact on career decisiveness for the students of USA however, no significant relationship was found to exist between career adaptability and career decisiveness for students of Germany and students of China. The authors suggested that the higher unpredictability in the job market being witnessed by the students in USA during the time the study was conducted, may have fostered greater adaptability towards changes in their career plans when compared to the students from Germany and China. Career optimism was found to be positively related to career decisiveness in the sample of students across the three countries considered for the study. The findings indicated the importance of ensuring strong positive attitudes among the students to foster decidedness about their future career choice. The results also revealed a positive relationship between perceived knowledge of job market and career decisiveness. The results demonstrated that perceived knowledge of job market was a predictor of career decisiveness amongst students of China and Germany, but not for the students of USA. The authors argued that as the students in China and Germany relied more on different forms of media as sources for acquiring information with regard to job knowledge as compared to the students of USA, perceived knowledge of job market positively influence their career decisiveness.

Although, the study makes a noteworthy contribution by measuring the antecedents of career decisiveness amongst the student sample across three countries, the study did not include the possible outcomes of career decisiveness such as employment quality, life satisfaction, and job search strategy. Specifically, the impact of career planning attitudes on the possible outcomes of career decisiveness was not measured. Since identification and commitment towards a career goal is a prerequisite of a successful job search process, it is important to examine the impact of career decisiveness on use of specific job search strategy, employment quality, and overall career
success. Similarly, as career planning attitudes foster career decisiveness, it is relevant to empirically examine the relationship between career planning attitudes and job search strategies.

With regard to job search strategy, an individual with clear career decisions is more likely to adopt a focused search strategy during job search, due to the high level of decidedness involved in the process. Career decisiveness is defined as the progression of thoughts, by which an individual combines self-knowledge (i.e. knowledge about one’s interest, expertise, skills etc.) and occupational knowledge (knowledge about the industry, nature of work to be performed, organizational culture etc.) to arrive at an occupational choice (Osipow, 1987; Osipow 1999). This implies that individuals high on career decisiveness, in order to arrive at the most suitable job choice, will combine knowledge about themselves and the occupation (i.e. carefully screen the potential employers to ensure person-job fit and person-organization fit); which are prerequisites of using a focused search strategy.

Chatterjee (2014) conducted a study on career planning attitudes and its impact on career decisiveness using a longitudinal research design in the Indian context. One of the main objectives of the study was to explore the predictors and outcomes of career decisiveness in emerging economy such as India. It was hypothesized that all the three components of career planning attitudes (i.e. career adaptability, career optimism, and perceived knowledge of job market) are positively related to career decisiveness. Further, it was proposed that career decisiveness is positively related to life satisfaction amongst post graduate management students in India. The data was collected in two phases with a gap of 8 months. At time 1, data was collected on the components of motivational systems theory and career planning attitudes through offline and online survey questionnaire method from 473 final semester MBA students enrolled at various management colleges in India. At time 2, the follow up questionnaire were
filled by 254 respondents via both offline and online surveys on their career decisiveness and life satisfaction by the students who had joined their jobs after completion of the management program. Data was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling via Amos. The results showed that career adaptability and perceived knowledge of job market were positively related to career decisiveness, while there was no relationship between career optimism and career decisiveness. The author attributed this result to the competitive job market condition in India during the time (2013-2014) the study was conducted. The author explained that prevailing job market conditions may influence an individual’s career optimism to a large extent; thereby a competitive job market condition could lead to diminishing career optimism. Further, career decisiveness did not have an impact on life satisfaction of the respondents. The author attributed this finding to the short time gap between two measurement points and suggested that a longer time gap would yield enriching results for the proposed relationship in the study. This is because life satisfaction is a broad concept and might include several components of life other than career decision. Hence, a time gap of 8 months may not be considered sufficient for an individual to evaluate his/her satisfaction with life. Though this is one of the first known studies on career planning attitudes and career decisiveness in the Indian context, only life satisfaction was included as an outcome of career decisiveness. The study did not include other possible outcomes such as speed of employment, person-job fit and person-organization fit, and use of specific job search strategy. The impact of career choice or career decisiveness on job search behavior and employment outcomes can be noted as the proximal consequences of career decisiveness, which in turn determines the life satisfaction in a long run. In the context of job search strategies, career decisiveness is likely to foster a more focused search strategy while career indecisiveness is likely to promote a more haphazard search. Since job search strategies play a vital role in
determining the employment quality and fit between individuals and the job, empirically examining the possible linkages between career planning attitudes and job search strategies is of utmost relevance.

Spurk et al., 2015 examined the role of overall career planning and career optimism on subjective career success among 81 young academics working at German universities. The study involved a quasi-experimental design pre and post intervention with two treatments and two control groups. Participants of the first treatment group received networking training and participants of the second treatment group received the same networking training along with career coaching. The participants of the control groups were not exposed to any intervention. It was hypothesized that networking training and career coaching will increase the career planning and career optimism of the participants of second intervention group. Further it was hypothesized that career planning and career optimism will increase the subjective career success measured through perceived career success, job satisfaction, and external marketability (a proxy for perceived employability). Data was collected using the German version of existing scales. Path analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The results revealed a significant positive association between overall career planning and perceived career success. Similarly, career optimism was found to be positively related to job satisfaction and external marketability. The researchers concluded that career optimism as a component of career planning attitudes is positively related to subjective career success.

Although the study examined the impact of career optimism on a number of subjective career success indicators such as job satisfaction and perceived employability, other two components of career planning attitudes were not included. Further, the mediating role of job
search behavior in linking career planning attitudes and job satisfaction or subjective career success was not examined. As a result, further studies are warranted to fill these limitations.

The studies discussed above highlight the relationship between career adaptability and job search outcomes. The studies have examined the relationship between career planning attitudes and career decisiveness solely, but none of them have considered to explore the impact career planning attitudes might have on job search behavior or use of a specific job search strategy that determines a successful career. Further, most of the studies have used an experimental design which limits the generalizability and adequacy of the findings. Since past studies (Koen et al., 2010; Zikic and Klehe, 2006; Van Hooft, Wanberg, & Van Hoye, 2013) have reported the positive association between career planning and job search behavior, an empirical investigation is required to be conducted to measure the impact of career planning attitudes on the use of specific job search strategies in the emerging markets such as India following a longitudinal research design.

3.2 Relationship between Social Support and Job Search Strategies

In the job search literature (van Hoye et al., 2015; Liu, Wang, Liao, & Shi, 2014), social support has been considered as one of the motivational factors for job seekers to engage in job search activities. Extant literature on job search behavior suggests that social support as a contextual factor is positively associated with job seekers’ job search efforts and the likelihood of finding employment (Kanfer et al., 2001; Maddy, Cannon, & Lichtenberger, 2015; Lim et al., 2016). Rife and Belcher (1993) and Saks (2005) found that social support provided by family and/or friends was positively related to individuals’ job search intensity. Furthermore, social support is found to be an important mechanism for instigating job search behavior (Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & Van Ryn, 1989). McDonald, Erickson, Johnson, and Elder (2007) suggested
that job search interventions might be more effective if family members, friends, and acquaintances are actively involved to provide support to during the job search process.

However, despite the availability of conceptual framework for exploring the impact of different social support types on the outcomes, majority of the studies have measured social support in a holistic manner and did not examine specific types of support (Malecki & Demaray, 2003). Studying different types of social support individually, would be essential in understanding the importance of one support type over other in different contexts. The impact of different types of social support has been examined extensively in the nursing literature to establish relationship between different types of social support and recovery of patients. Leung, Pachana, and McLaughlin (2014) noted that emotional and informational support were found to be positively associated with better health and lower symptom intensity among the breast cancer patients whereas instrumental support was not related to lower symptom intensity. Health care literature suggests that the role of emotional support amongst patient of a chronic disease is likely to have a positive impact on patient optimism and recovery rate. Literature in nursing has demonstrated the differential effect of social support types on participants’ outcomes; which varies depending on the type of support received by them (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984; Davis, Morris, & Kraus, 1998; Munoz-Laboy, Severson, Perry, & Guilamo-Ramos, 2014; Houston, Osborn, Lyons, Masvawure, & Raja, 2015). Similarly, in the job search context, the type of social support received could impact the type of job search behavior exhibited by the job seeker which in turn could lead to positive impact on job search outcomes. However a positive association between social support and the outcomes is possible only when the type of social support extended matches the needs of a person experiencing the stress and/or anxiety (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Baek, Tanenbaum, & Gonzalez, 2014; Ditzen & Heinrichs, 2014; Fong, 2016). To
elaborate further, individuals in need of financial support, when supported with information exclusively, may not help overcome stress in that individual, unless provided with the required financial support. Similarly, people in need of emotional support if given financial support, may continue to be stressed until they find someone to listen to their problems and show concern towards them. Therefore, different types of social support are expected to have different impact on support consequences depending on the support needs of the individual. Furthermore, the use of a holistic social support measure gives the summary score only, irrespective of the social support types.

Thus, it is evident from the literature that measurement of a holistic social support gives limited insight into the significance of one social support type over the other. Further, such conceptualization of social support fails to capture the actual support type received by the respondents (MacGeorge, Feng, & Burleson, 2011). Thus, an understanding of which social support type is regarded as most efficaciously impacting the job search behavior of entry-level job seekers is relevant and worthy of investigation (Russell et al., 2015).

Zikic and Klehe (2006) in their two-wave longitudinal study measured two different types of social support (emotional and instrumental) in the job search context. The main objective of their study was to examine the role of career exploration and career planning in determining employment quality of unemployed job seekers in the presence of social support and self-efficacy. It was hypothesized that emotional support and instrumental support have a positive impact on career exploration self, career exploration environmental, and career planning. Career exploration in this study has been segregated into exploration of the job market, employment trends and patterns (environmental) and exploration of self interests and abilities (self). Further, it was hypothesized that that career planning and career exploration will have a
positive impact on employment quality. At time 1, data was collected from 304 unemployed job seekers attending different outplacement firms in Canada. Six months later, at time 2, the follow-up questionnaire was filled by 215 respondents of time 1 about their employment quality. Data was analyzed through structural equation modeling via Amos to test the hypothesized, direct, and indirect relationships between time 1 and time 2 variables. The results revealed that career planning and career exploration environmental was positively related to employment quality. Similarly, career exploration self was negatively related to employment quality. The findings highlight the positive linkage between career planning and successful job search, reflected through the employment quality. With respect to social support types, instrumental support predicted both career exploration environmental and career exploration self but did not predict career planning and was not directly linked with the employment quality. The authors explained that as instrumental support, in the form of resources, was provided at the outplacement firm, the job seekers were motivated towards career exploration activities. Emotional support was found to be directly influencing the employment quality and was not predicting either career exploration or career planning. The authors explained that since emotional support was provided by family and friends, it motivated the job seekers to pursue the most suitable and desired jobs; leading to a better quality of job search outcome. These findings confirmed that different social support dimensions will have different impact on the outcomes considered for the study. Therefore, as argued by the social support researchers (Himle, Jayaratne, & Thyness, 1991; Malecki & Demaray, 2003; Wolff, Lindenberger, Brose, & Schmiedek, 2016), it is important to measure each social support dimensions individually across different contexts; including vocational behavior domain.
However, although this is one of the first known study in job search literature to have measured different dimensions of social support (i.e. emotional and instrumental) against the commonly used global measure, it included only two dimensions of social support out of the four types presented by House (1981). Inclusion of the other two types of social support (i.e. informational and appraisal) may have a differential impact on career exploration, career planning, job search behavior, and job search outcomes such as number of job offers and employment quality. It is because job search behavior is widely conceptualized as the process of gathering job related information and generating employment alternatives (Kanfer et al., 2001; Saks, 2006); support received in the form of job leads and job related information is likely to influence job search behavior including job search strategy. Further, information pertinent to self-evaluation and feedback (i.e. appraisal) may also foster job search preparation of entry-level job seekers.

Koen (2007) conducted a study amongst the participants of a reemployment course in Netherlands. One of the main objectives of the study was to investigate the impact of social support on the use of specific job search strategy. The author hypothesized that social support is positively related to focused search strategy and exploratory search strategy and negatively related to a haphazard search strategy. It is because receipt of social support encourages the job seekers to search for the most suitable job or explore their alternatives to make the final choice. Further, availability of social support is likely to reduce a hit or miss approach (i.e. haphazard strategy) in the job search. Data was collected from 305 participants of a reemployment course. Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyze the data via Amos. The results revealed that social support was positively related to the focused and exploratory search strategies while the result showed no linkages between social support and haphazard search strategy. The authors
explained that perceived social support would induce the job seekers to indulge in more discussion with others regarding the preferred jobs and employment alternatives leading to focused and exploratory search strategy. Likewise, no linkage was found between social support and haphazard search strategy. It is because receipt of support is likely to buffer the effect of distress and negative experiences during the job search process and keep the job seekers motivated to perform the job search activities leading to career exploration and identification of specific career choices and eliminating haphazard strategy in the job search.

Although, this is the only known study to examine the relationship between social support and job search strategies, social support was measured as a uni-dimensional construct. The different dimensions of social support were not examined with respect to job search strategies which would give an insight into the impact of social support types on the use of job search strategies.

Van Hoye et al. (2015) examined the impact of social support on job search behavior (proxy for job search intensity). A two-wave longitudinal study was conducted with a gap of 3 months between the measurement points. Data at time 1 was collected from 1876 unemployed job seekers in Belgium out of which 1177 respondents completed the survey at time 2. It was hypothesized that social support positively relates to job search self-efficacy which in turn positively relates to job search intention and job search behavior. SEM was conducted to analyze the data. The results revealed that social support was positively related to job search self-efficacy. Further, job search self-efficacy was positively related to job search intention and behavior. It is because receipt of social support helps the job seekers to overcome the stress during job search process and instills the belief of being capable to perform the job search activities effectively; leading to high job search self-efficacy. Likewise, belief in one’s ability to
effectively perform the job search activities and cope with the distress and uncertainty during job search forms an intention to exhibit job search behavior.

Although, this study provides useful insights into the significance of social support during job search process, it measured social support via global or holistic scale focusing only on the emotional support received by the job seekers. Hence, further research is warranted to explore the influence of different social support types on job search behavior of entry-level job seekers.

Russell et al. (2015) conducted a study to investigate the differential impact of social support types such as emotional, instrumental, informational, and companion support on job search behavior (a proxy for job search intensity). Data was collected from 175 entry-level job seekers at a large university in the US. The respondents were asked to respond on the different social support types received by them during their job search followed by job search self-efficacy and job search behavior. For measurement of the four social support types considered in the study, different social support scales were adapted and modified to suit the job search context. It was hypothesized that social support positively relates to job search self-efficacy and job search behavior. The hypotheses pertaining to the impact of each social support types on job search self-efficacy and behavior were kept open-ended. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The results revealed that composite scores of all the social support types were positively related to job search self-efficacy and job search behavior. Further, the test of exploratory hypotheses examining which social support type is a strong predictor of job search self-efficacy and behavior indicated differential impact of social support types on the outcomes. Specifically, the results revealed that instrumental and informational support did not predict job search self-efficacy, while both emotional and companion support were equally strong predictors
of the same. One of the possible reasons for this finding could be the emotional turmoil faced during school-to-work transitions such as separation from friends; which leads to the need of emotional and companion support. With respect to job search behavior, the results showed that instrumental and companion support did not predict job search behavior while both emotional and informational support were equally strong predictors of job search behavior. The authors attributed this finding to the economic recession and global youth employment crisis, which is double the overall unemployment rate (Mishel, Bivens, Gould, & Shierholz, 2012). Due to the high level of uncertainty and distress associated with job search process amongst youth, emotional support acts as a buffer and coping mechanism to maintain the self-esteem and persistence in job search. Emotional support is also likely to promote perseverance amongst job seekers during failed attempts and rejections. Similarly, receipt of informational support during job search provides leads to the job seekers to work on; leading to high job search intensity. It is especially relevant for the entry-level job seekers or newcomers who lack extensive social networks to advance in their professional goals.

Although, this is one of the few studies to investigate the differential impact of social support types in job search context, the job search behavior was restricted to job search intensity. Thus, further studies are warranted to examine the differential impact of social support types on the use of job search strategies among entry-level job seekers.

The studies discussed above provide evidences of the impact social support has on job search self-efficacy, job search behavior, use of specific job search strategy, and employment outcomes. The studies by Zikic and Klehe (2006) and Russell et al. (2015) also reported that different types of social support have differential impact on the job search behavior and employment outcomes of the job seekers. However, these studies only measured the impact of
social support types on one job search behavior, without considering the other dimensions of job
search behavior such as job search strategies. Furthermore, most of these studies were conducted
amongst the sample of unemployed job seeker (i.e. individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily
lost their jobs and were seeking reemployment), and extant literature on job search provide
limited evidence of the relationship between social support and job search behavior amongst new
entrants to the job market or the entry-level job seekers. Additionally, most of the studies are
conducted in the US or European contexts, and therefore further studies are warranted in the
Indian context to examine the impact of social support types on job search strategies amongst
entry-level job seekers. Since, use of specific job search strategies are critical in determining the
employment quality and job search success, studying the influence of social support types on use
of job search strategies will provide a comprehensive understanding of the contextual factors
affecting job search. Such study would also provide an in depth insight into the potency of one
social support type over other in ascertaining quantity and quality of job search outcomes.

3.3 Relationship between Job Search Strategies and Job Search Outcomes

Studies on job search behavior and employment have mainly focused on job-search intensity
as a predictor of job search outcomes such as employment status (Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009;
Noordzij, Hooft, Mierlo, Dam, & Born, 2013; Koen et al., 2013), number of job offers obtained
(Kanfer et al., 2001; Van Hoye et al., 2009), and speed of employment (Vansteenkiste et al.,
2004; Wanberg et al., 2012). Further, most studies in the past have solely focused on quantitative
job search outcomes as indicators of job search success (Kanfer et al., 2001; Saks, 2005; Van
Hoye et al., 2009; Van Hoye, et al., 2013). It was only recently that the researchers began
drawing attention towards quality of job search (Van Hooft et al., 2013) and quality of
employment obtained (Koen et al., 2010; Vogtenhuber, 2014; Konstam, Tomek, & Celen-
Demirtas, 2015). In this regard, past studies (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Rotundo, 1999; McArdle et al., 2007; Van Hooft et al., 2013; Manroop & Richardson, 2015) have suggested that the method of searching for a job (i.e. job search strategy) is relevant for employment success as it has been found to predict both quantity and quality of job search outcomes.

Crossley and Highhouse (2005) were the first to empirically examine the impact of job search strategies (i.e. focused search strategy, exploratory search strategy, and haphazard search strategy) on both qualitative (job satisfaction) and quantitative (number of job offers) job search outcomes. The hypotheses in the study were open-ended that proposed relationships between job search strategies and job search outcomes (i.e. job satisfaction and number of job offers). Data was collected using a self-constructed scale with 16-items measuring job search strategies from 204 employees working at 30 small companies in the United States. Additionally, data was also collected from 503 undergraduate students, who worked either full time or part time besides attending a computer school. Step wise hierarchical regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The study found that focused search strategy was positively related to job satisfaction whereas; haphazard search strategy was found to be negatively related to job satisfaction. The authors explained that since use of focused search strategy signifies careful screening of employer to obtain better person-job (P-J) fit, it results in higher level of job satisfaction. Person-job fit is defined as the match between an individual’s abilities and requirements of a job and the needs of an individual and what is supplied by a job (Edwards, 1991). Likewise, use of haphazard search strategy reflects an underdeveloped sense of person-job fit amongst job seekers, leading to lower level of job satisfaction. Exploratory search strategy was found to have no significant relationship with job satisfaction. The authors highlighted that job seekers using exploratory search strategy apply for many job openings and not all the jobs applied for are in
sync with their interest and expertise, therefore, causing lack of P-J fit and lower level of job satisfaction. With regard to number of job offers, focused search strategy and haphazard search strategy were found to be negatively related to number of job offers, while exploratory search strategy was found to be positively related to number of job offers received. The authors explained that, the job seekers using a focused search strategy apply only for specific jobs that are in sync with their interest, abilities, and qualifications; therefore, the number of job offers will be few. On a contrary, the job seekers with a haphazard search strategy apply randomly to the available job openings without considering the compatibility between one’s abilities and requirements of the job, fetching none or less number of job offers. Finally, the job seekers using an exploratory search strategy apply widely to different type of jobs by fully exploring their alternatives, yielding many job offers to choose from.

Crossley and Highhouse (2005) in their study, captured job search strategy used by respondents in retrospection (i.e. the respondents were asked to recollect the strategy they followed while searching for their present job) to capture the current level of job satisfaction amongst employees working in different companies. Since, the respondents were not searching for a job at the time of data collection; it is likely that cognitive dissonance and outcome bias may have influenced the respondents’ ratings of their use of job search strategies and outcomes (Hawkins & Hastie, 1990; Gruppen, Margolin, Wisdom, & Grum, 1994). Thus, the results may not be generalizable across the population of unemployed and new entrants to the job market without further empirical investigation.

Koen et al. (2010) examined the impact of career adaptability dimensions such as career planning on the use of job search strategies by the job seekers and the impact of job search strategies on the quantity and quality of job search outcomes. The authors proposed that career
planning positively relates to the use of focused search strategy and negatively relates to the use of haphazard search strategy. It was hypothesized that focused search strategy will have a negative impact on the number of job offers and a positive impact on employment quality. The authors suggested that since job seekers using focused search strategy apply selectively for the most suitable jobs, the number of offers will be less. Further, since person-job fit and person-organization fit is ensured by the focused job seekers before submitting the job applications, the employment quality will be high. The authors further hypothesized that exploratory search strategy will have a positive impact on the number of job offers and employment quality. On the contrary, it was hypothesized that haphazard search strategy will have a negative impact on the number of job offers and employment quality. The study was conducted through a two waved longitudinal design, where data was collected from 1250 candidates of a reemployment agency operating in the Netherlands. A gap of 8 months was kept between time 1 and time 2 and data at both the time periods were collected via online survey. A total of 248 individuals responded to the questionnaire at time 1 out of which 113 respondents completed the follow-up questionnaire pertaining to employment quality at time 2. Structural equation modeling, using Amos, was conducted to test the hypotheses. Results revealed that career planning was positively related to focused search strategy and negatively related to haphazard search strategy. Furthermore, exploratory search strategy resulted in more number of job offers but was negatively related to the quality of new job which was measured in terms of job satisfaction, turnover intention, and person-job fit perception. The authors explained that since job seekers using exploratory search strategy explored a large number of job alternatives and applied to many job openings they came across; the number of job offers obtained was higher. However, not all the jobs applied for were in sync with the qualification, expertise, and interest of the applicant, resulting in poor person-
Focused search strategy was also found to have a positive impact on the number of job offers but showed no linkage with the re-employment quality. As job seekers with focused search strategy are known to carefully screen the employers and apply only for the jobs they are suitable for, the number of offers received should be ideally less. The authors attributed this finding to the sample characteristics in this study. Since the job seekers in this study were assisted by the reemployment agency, the job seekers were obligated to apply for many job openings that were announced during the 8 months’ time gap maintained in the study; leading to a positive relationship between focused search strategy and number of job offers and no linkages between focused search strategy and employment quality. Haphazard search strategy was found to have no relationship with quantitative as well as the qualitative job search outcomes. This can be attributed to the unplanned approach of job seekers following haphazard search strategy. The above findings suggest that career planning plays a vital role in determining the use of a particular job search strategy over the other, and that the strategy followed by job seekers has a significant influence on the job search outcomes.

Although, this study provides useful insights about the impact of job search strategy on both quantity and quality of job search outcomes, the predictors of job search strategies were limited to career adaptability dimensions as an individual level constructs. The usage of job search strategy is likely to be equally influenced by situational factors such as financial hardship, social support, and labor market demand (Boswell et al., 2012). Past researchers (Saks, 2005; Koen, 2007) have suggested that situational factors such as financial hardship will lead to the use of haphazard search strategy. The author explained that a situation governed by an immediate need of money induces job seekers to apply for all possible available jobs, irrespective of their interest, qualification, expertise, and experience. However, all such situational factors were
controlled for in the study. Furthermore, similar to many developed countries, the respondents of this study were recipients of unemployment benefits from the government and therefore findings of this study may not be generalized across emerging economics such as India; where no unemployment benefits are provided to individuals seeking employment. Similarly, as the study was conducted amongst a sample of unemployed job seekers, the results may not be extended to the sample of new entrants or entry-level job seekers without empirical examination due to change in the context of job search.

Taggar and Kuron (2016) examined the relationship between job search strategies and number of job applications submitted in the USA. The authors also investigated the relationship between job search strategies and number of over-qualified and under-qualified job applications submitted by the job seekers. The authors suggested that an over-qualified job application is one where job seekers perceive themselves to be more qualified and competent than the occupational requirements. Similarly, an under-qualified job application is one where the job seekers perceive themselves to be less qualified and competent than the requirements listed in job specification. It was hypothesized that focused search strategy is negatively related to the number of job applications submitted and the number of over-qualified and under-qualified jobs applications. The authors stated that since focused job seekers directed their job search efforts to employers with good perceived fit, they submitted fewer job applications and were less likely to submit any over-qualified and under-qualified applications. Further, it was proposed that exploratory search strategy is positively related to the number of job applications submitted and the number of over-qualified and under-qualified applications. The authors argued that since exploratory job seekers are open to opportunities, they submit many job applications including the over-qualified and under-qualified applications. Lastly, it was hypothesized that haphazard search strategy is
negatively related to the number of job applications submitted and positively related to the number of over-qualified and under-qualified applications. The authors explained that since haphazard job seekers have unclear job search plan, they are likely to submit less number of overall job applications but are likely to submit applications without matching their educational background and prior experience with requirements of the job thereby leading to both over-qualified and under-qualified job applications. Data was collected through an online survey from 254 unemployed job seekers who were actively searching for a job. The results revealed that as hypothesized, focused search strategy was negatively related to the total number of applications submitted and the number of over-qualified application. However, focused search strategy was found to have no significant relationship with the number of under-qualified applications. Similarly, as hypothesized, exploratory search strategy was found to be positively related to total number of applications submitted and number of over-qualified applications, however, exploratory search strategy was found to be negatively related to the number of under-qualified applications. Finally, haphazard search strategy was found to be negatively related to all the job search outcomes considered in the study. The results were consistent with the findings by Crossley and Highhouse (2005) and Koen et al. (2010) and suggested that focused individuals are likely to apply only for the job openings that look like what they want. The job seekers with focused search strategy clearly outline their preferences and apply for the jobs they are suitable for, opting-out of the jobs that do not match their abilities, skills, qualifications etc. On the other side, as haphazard job seekers are likely to accept any initial job offer; they did not submit many over-qualified or under-qualified job applications. Furthermore, the job seekers with exploratory search strategy submit large number of job applications including the over-qualified applications, in order to obtain various job offers and alternatives to choose from. However, since the
exploratory job seekers are dedicated in their job search, they do not apply for the jobs they perceive to be under-qualified due to less scope of receiving a job offer; leading to the negative relationship between exploratory search strategy and under-qualified job applications.

Although, this is one of the most recent study that examines the antecedents and outcomes of job search strategies, only the number of applications submitted (i.e. total number of job applications, number of over-qualified applications, and number of under-qualified applications) were included as the outcomes job search strategies, without considering the number of job offers received by the job seekers. When the objective of the study is to examine the success of job search behavior, the number of job applications submitted alone is insufficient to determine the same. However, taking into account the number of interview calls and job offers received by the applicant will give a clear picture of the success of job search behavior in terms of quantity. Furthermore, this study was conducted amongst the sample of unemployed jobseekers with a cross-sectional research design. A longitudinal research design is considered more appropriate while investigating the impact of job search behavior on job search outcomes as it allows for the measurement of different employment outcomes such as employment status, speed of getting employment, number of interview calls, number of job offers, person-job fit, person-organization fit, and job satisfaction, among others.

The studies discussed above provide evidence that use of specific job search strategy plays a vital role in determining the quality of job search outcomes, in addition to the quantitative outcomes. However, these studies have only measured either the number of job offers received or the number of job applications submitted as quantitative job search outcomes. Extant literature does not measure job search success in terms of the percentage of success (i.e. the ratio of number of job offers received to number of applications submitted) as a more
objective outcome. Furthermore, the impact of job search strategies on job search outcomes have been examined only amongst the unemployed job seekers in the European and US contexts. Thus, the results of these studies may not be generalized across the sample of entry-level job seekers in emerging economies, without further empirical examination.

3.4 Identification of Research Gaps

The research gaps identified after review of literature are discussed in the following sections.

3.4.1 Lack of Studies among Entry-Level Job Seekers

It is evident from the literature that job search strategy applied by the job seekers has a major role to play in determining the job search success and quality of employment by ensuring person-job fit and person-organization fit during the job search process itself. However, existing literature on job search strategy has majorly focused on the unemployed job seekers (i.e. those who were previously employed and faced involuntary job loss) (Koen et al., 2010; Taggar & Kuron, 2016, Koen et al., 2016), and the impact of job search strategies on job search outcomes amongst the entry-level job seekers has been scarcely explored. Stevens and Turban (2001), through a qualitative study conducted amongst graduating students, found a multidimensional aspect to job search strategy (i.e. focused, exploratory, and haphazard search strategies), thus, empirically examining the same amongst the sample of entry level job seekers is likely to yield enriching results and help the graduating students in successful school-to-work transition. Furthermore, since job search strategy determines the quality of employment in addition to the quantitative outcomes (Konstam et al., 2015), it is important to investigate the impact of different job search strategies on job search outcomes such as number of job offers, person-job fit
perception, and person-organization fit perception across different job search contexts and cultural settings such as entry-level job seekers in India.

3.4.2 Lack of Studies on Career Planning Attitudes (CA, CO, and PJK) and Job Search Strategies (FSS, ESS, and HSS)

Past studies in vocational psychology have focused on wide range of career related variables such as career exploration, career self-efficacy, career identity, and career planning to predict job search behavior and job search success. However, examination of career planning attitudes (career adaptability, career optimism, perceived knowledge of job market), which fosters effective career planning, and their impact on career related outcomes are relatively scarce. In this regard, it is important to investigate the career planning attitudes mainly because it involve elements of both job search goals and job search planning (Van Hooft et al., 2013), that are essential for using specific job search strategies. Although Gunkel et al. (2010) found positive relationship between the career planning attitudes and career decisiveness (the prerequisite to use focused search strategy); past studies did not make an attempt to empirically test the linkages between career planning attitudes and job search strategies.

3.4.3 Lack of Studies on Contextual Factors and Job Search Strategies

Most studies in vocational psychology have focused only on the individual level antecedents of job search strategies (Keon et al., 2010; Taggar & Kuron, 2016; Koen et al., 2016; Kuron & Taggar, 2016; De Battisti, Gilardi, Guglielmetti, & Siletti, 2016) to measure the job search success. Past studies have suggested that contextual factors are likely to influence the use of job search strategies. Not many studies, to date, have made an attempt to examine the contextual factors that predict job search strategies. Given that the outcomes of job search
strategy such as; employment quality and job satisfaction, depends to a large extent on the use of a particular job search strategy, it is important to examine both individual and contextual factors that influence the use of focused, exploratory, and haphazard job search strategies amongst the entry-level job seekers.

3.4.4 Lack of Studies on Differential Impact of Social Support Types on Job Search Strategies

In vocational behavior literature, social support has been studied primarily in relation to one job search dimension i.e. job search intensity, without considering other dimensions of job search such as job search strategy that might be equally important in determining the success of job search. As Koen (2007), in her dissertation work, demonstrated the impact of social support on job search strategies in the Netherlands, it warrants scholarly investigation from the emerging markets perspective. Furthermore, social support has been widely examined as a uni-dimensional construct that has been measured through a global or composite social support scale. In this regard, there is dearth of studies in job search context that measures the impact of different social support types (emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal) as presented by House (1981) on job search behavior and employment outcomes.

3.4.5 Lack of Scales for Measurement of Social Support Dimensions

Since social support has been extensively measured as a uni-dimensional construct through the global measure without considering the specific types of social support outlined by House (1981), there is paucity of scales to measure each social support dimension individually. As shown by Zikic and Klehe (2006) and Russell et al. (2015), different social support types will have a differential impact on job search behavior and career-related outcomes, it is important to examine the social support types separately and not through the global measure with summary
score of social support. Accordingly, there is a necessity to construct a scale for the measurement of social support dimensions in job search context so as to examine their differential impact on job search strategies and job search outcomes.

This chapter presents a review of literature that explains the relationship between constructs used in this study and help in identification of the research gaps. The next chapter presents the objectives of this study followed by the hypotheses development.