CHAPTER 6:
SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Chapter Overview

In this chapter, discussions of the results are presented first followed by a discussion on the implications of results for practitioners and academicians. This is followed by the discussion of limitations of the present study and directions for future research.

6.2 Summary of the Results

Hypotheses were tested using SEM as explained in the last chapter. Out of sixteen hypotheses, ten hypotheses (H1A, H1C, H2A, H2C, H3A, H3C, H4A, H4C, H5A, H5C) were supported and six (H1B, H2B, H3B, H4B, H5B, H6) were not supported.

Hypothesis 1A tested the impact of Goal Decidedness on Career Adaptability. The results show that there is a positive impact of Goal Decidedness on Career Adaptability which is in congruence with the earlier literature (Bertock and Reardson, 2011; Ford1987; Ford and Smith 2007; Hirschi 2009).

Hypothesis 1B tested the impact of Goal Decidedness on Career Optimism. Results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients are not significant and thus H1B was rejected. Hence as per the results of the study Goal Decidedness does not impact Career Optimism positively. This could be attributed to the fact that CO is determined a lot by the market conditions. As the
study was conducted during a time (January 2013 - December 2013) when job market was on the down side, so results were not significant.

Hypothesis 1C tested the impact of Goal Decidedness on Perceived Knowledge of Job Market. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were significant and thus H1C was supported. Thus the study results proved the positive impact of Career Self Efficacy on Perceived Knowledge of Job Market. The above results are in sync with earlier studies (Betz, 1992; Betz and Taylor, 2001).

Hypothesis 2A tested the impact of Career Self Efficacy on Career Adaptability. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were significant and thus H2A was supported. The above results are in sync with earlier studies (Betz, 1992; Betz and Taylor, 2001). Past research has found that career self-efficacy beliefs do indeed have a strong influence on career planning attitudes (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Dawes, et al.; Giles and Rea, 1999; Niles and Sowa, 1992).

Hypothesis 2B tested the impact of Career Self Efficacy on Career Optimism. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were not significant and thus H2B was rejected. This could be attributed to the fact that CO is determined more by the market conditions. As the study was conducted during a time (January 2013 - December 2013) when job market was on the down side, so results were not significant.

Hypothesis 2C tested the impact of Career Self Efficacy on Perceived Knowledge of Job Market. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were significant and thus H2A was supported. Past research has found that career self-efficacy beliefs do indeed have a strong influence on career exploration and employment outcomes and other career planning attitudes (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Dawes, et al.; Giles and Rea, 1999; Niles and Sowa, 1992).
Hypothesis 3A tested the impact of Perceived Social Support on Career Adaptability. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were significant and thus H2A was supported. The results supported the prediction that Perceived Social Support has a positive impact on the career planning attitude Career Adaptability which is in congruence with the earlier career literature which cites the role of both the individual and contextual component in career development (Brachter, 1982; Lopez and Andrews, 1987; Zingaro, 1983).

Hypothesis 3B tested the impact of Perceived Social Support on Career Optimism. Results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients are not significant and thus H2B was rejected. Hence as per the results of the study Perceived Social Support does not impact Career Optimism positively. This could be attributed to the fact that CO is determined a lot by the market conditions. As the study was conducted during a time (January 2013 - December 2013) when job market was on the down side, so results were not significant.

Hypothesis 3C tested the impact of Perceived Social Support on Perceived Knowledge of Job Market. Results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients are not significant and thus H3C was rejected. Hence as per the results of the study Perceived Social Support does not impact Perceived Knowledge of Job Market. One justification could be in order to get better knowledge of job market or career knowledge for an individual, it is necessary to have environmental or structural support. Earlier empirical studies had shown that effective support and guidance in the form of positive advice assist one to better evaluate career-related information. As a result the recipient’s experience gets enriched which further improves researching career alternatives information or seeking aid from a career counsellor (Bluestein, 1999; Rodriguez, 2012; Vignoli et al., 2005).

Hypothesis 4A tested the impact of Optimism on Career Adaptability. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were significant and thus H2A was supported. Thus the study proved the prediction that Optimism has a positive impact on Career Adaptability.
Previous research too had indicated that Optimism is positively related to career planning attitudes like Career Adaptability in the US context (Kelly and Shin, 2009; Kwon and Lee, 2004; Levy et al., 2007; Patton et al. 2005).

Hypothesis 4B tested the impact of Optimism on Career Optimism. Results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients are not significant and thus H2B was rejected. Hence as per the results of the study Optimism does not impact Career Optimism positively. The study could not prove the impact of Perceived Social Support on Career Optimism. The construct Career Optimism varies a lot depending on the market conditions (Gunkel, et al., 2010). As the study was conducted in India where the job markets are still not very promising for fresher’s (Kumar, 2013), so Career Optimism was on the lower side among students. They tend to expect very low from their jobs in such times (Hauw and Vos, 2010). Had the study been conducted in better market conditions results could have been very different.

Hypothesis 4C tested the impact of Optimism on Perceived Knowledge of Job Market. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were significant and thus H4C was supported. Thus the study proved the prediction that Optimism has a positive impact on Perceived Knowledge of Job Market. Previous research indicated that Optimism is positively related to career planning attitudes like career exploration (Kelly and Shin, 2009; Kwon and Lee, 2004).

Hypothesis 5A tested the impact of Career Adaptability on Career Decisiveness. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were significant and thus H4C was supported. This hypothesis highlights the importance of career planning attitude in deciding one’s career. This has been cited time and again in earlier career literature (Gottfredson, 1981; Greenhaus, 1979).
Hypothesis 5B tested the impact of Career Optimism on Career Decisiveness. However the study failed to explain the impact of Career Optimism on Career Decisiveness. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were not significant and thus H5B was rejected. As explained in earlier sections, Career Optimism is a construct which is related to the job market conditions, so students have marked this construct as low. Had the study been conducted in better market conditions results could have been probably different.

Hypothesis 5C tested the impact of Perceived Knowledge of Job Market on Career Decisiveness. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were significant and thus H5C was supported. The study proved the prediction that Perceived Knowledge of Job Market has a positive impact on Career Decisiveness which has been cited time and again in earlier career literature (Hirschi et al., 2011; Porfeli et al., 2011).

Hypothesis 6 tested the impact of Career Decisiveness on Life Satisfaction. The results of the path analysis indicated that the coefficients were not significant and thus H6 was not supported. One reason could be the shorter time gap between T1 and T2. The time gap for the study was around 8 months only. A longer time gap would have probably given different results. Secondly, Life Satisfaction is a composite construct which might encompass plethora of other attributes like satisfaction from social life, personal engagements. One can therefore postulate that Career Decisiveness might not be soul predictor for Life Satisfaction. Future studies should explore the effect of these variables on Life Satisfaction.

6.3 Implications for Practitioners

Various implications can be drawn from the results of the study. As discussed in the earlier chapters, all the components of MST did not have the same impact on the three career
planning attitudes. Components like Goal Decidedness, Career Self Efficacy and Optimism had a positive impact on Career Adaptability and Perceived Knowledge of Job Market which are congruent with earlier studies (Creed et al., 2009; Gunkel et al., 2010; Hirschi 2009). Perceived Social Support had a positive impact on Career Adaptability. From the results, it can be inferred that individual factors have a greater role in developing career planning attitudes (Bertock, 2010; Rogers et al., 2008). So, initiatives should be taken to promote Goal Decidedness, Career Self Efficacy and Optimism among young individuals to foster career planning attitudes (Gould, 1979; Greenhaus, 1971; Hall 1967; Super 1957). Secondly, more than emotional support or affection, the self belief needs to be incorporated among individuals (Bandura, 1977). Thirdly the construct Career Optimism had no role in determining the career progression. The crisis in the market conditions does not foster Career Optimism among individuals.

With regards to the impact of the three career planning attitudes, not all of them had an impact on Career Decisiveness. Career Adaptability and Perceived Knowledge of Job Market had a role in developing Career Decisiveness. Being adaptive in unforeseen critical career transitions and having adequate knowledge of the job market drives an individual to make effective career choices (Broscio and Paulick, 2003; Folsom and Reardon, 2003). Being only optimistic about one's career might not help an individual to show Career Decisiveness in recession times or when the economy is not very promising (Duffy 2011; Gunkel et al., 2010). Another important implication that can be drawn from the career planning attitudes is its linkage with employability (Finn, 2000; McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, and Hall, 2007). With the presence of positive career planning attitudes, one can also improve the employability skills at the same, which is the need of the hour. Again, the results of the study showed no impact of Career Decisiveness on Life Satisfaction. Thus whether one is satisfied with life is not only determined
by career choices alone. Other components of social life too have a role in fostering satisfaction or well being (Quinn and Staines, 1979; Peterson, 2006).

The findings of the study could help those who are associated with developing and conducting career planning and development programs. Suitable guidance could be provided for students in order to reinforce their adaptability and information about careers, which would result in a higher Optimism and Career Decisiveness (Rottinghaus, et al., 2005; 2012; Super and Knasel, 1979). This is especially imperative given the current financial slump and the pessimistic media reporting about the employment situation (Chang et al., 2001; Shin and Kelly 2013; Y. T. Lee and Seligman, 1997). Human resource management departments could also benefit from the results of this study. With increased ambiguity about the work force supply for various fields and types of positions, many firms are putting a greater importance on succession planning for all levels and positions within the organization. This requires a more concerted effort in providing career management and planning for all employees, particularly for new employees as they chart career paths within an organization (Folsom et al., 2001; Folsom and Reardon, 2003; Johnson and Smouse, 1993; Reed et al., 2001; Reese and Miller, 2006).

6.4 Implications for Academicians

The current study used the various components of MST thereby validating the theory in the first place. Very few studies have used MST for career choices (Campbell 2007; Ford 2007; Hirschi, 2009). The current study recognized the factors that promote positive career planning attitude which in turn had a positive impact on Career Decisiveness using the theoretical framework of Motivational Systems Theory adopting a longitudinal study design. By virtue of
using a longitudinal study design and applying MST components, both process and content theories of career were incorporated, which is recommended by various career theorists (Creed et al., 2011; Hall 2002; Hirschi, 2009; Super, 1957).

With the usage of the components of MST as predictor variables of the three career planning attitudes, the various characteristics of an individual and the context that shape the career, content theory is validated. The study integrated the individual factors of career choice namely, personality (Career Self Efficacy), cognitive style (Optimism) and motivational factors (Goal Decidedness) and the relative impact of the factors in fostering effective career planning attitudes. These individual factors have been mentioned as pertinent components which guide career choice (Crocetti et al., 2008; Kracke, 2002; Rogers, et al., 2008; Saka and Gati, 2007). And with the study being longitudinal, and having a path model, the changes and development that occurs during career development over time is explained. (Prideaux, Creed, Muller, and Patton, 2000; Prideaux, Patton, and Creed, 2002; Lent et al., 1994). Thus the study has supplemented the current body of literature on career theory by providing an integrated view on both individual and contextual factors that aid career choice.

Motivational Systems Theory has hardly been tested in the in the emerging markets. This study tested the applicability of Motivational Systems Theory in the Indian context. The results of the study can provide valuable insights to career counsellors as to what should be done to foster adequate positive career planning attitude among students which could enable them to make a career choice appropriate to them (Savickas, 1985; Scholl and Cascone, 2010).

6.5 Limitations of the Study and Future Research Scope
The present study is an attempt to enquire about the antecedents and consequences of Career Decisiveness in the context of India using motivational systems theory. As this is the first of its kind study in India in terms of hypotheses development based on MST and use of longitudinal methodology, it is limited by multiple factors.

The current study included only management students. Students from other backgrounds like undergraduate level were not taken into consideration. Because of the constraints imposed by the time and cost of collecting data, a larger sample could not be collected. However, the present sample size is more than adequate for the statistical tools used. Thus a future research should increase the sample size and include students from other streams like engineering, agriculture and allied sciences, journalism, law, etc. Comparison among the samples from different academic backgrounds would enrich the understanding of career choices.

Secondly, study used longitudinal study-model with two time periods, T1 and T2, separated by gap of about 8 months only. However a longer gap between T1 and T2 would have produced better results. A three phase data collection with MST and career planning attitudes at T1, and Career Decisiveness after 1 year at T2 and finally Life Satisfaction at T3 after another 2 years would have been the ideal for data collection. However, this could not be adopted due to time and cost constraints which are typically faced by most doctoral students.

The present study included only the MST components as predictors of career planning attitudes. However other individual factors like self esteem, locus of control, other personality traits like extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience and emotional stability could also be included as predictor variables for career planning attitudes. These factors too have been cited as important individual factors which determine the decision making process
of an individual (Duffy 2011; Rottinghaus et al., 2005; 2012). These factors could be considered for future research.

The present study included only the emotional support as context factor. However, structural factors represented by institutional support available in terms of the role of teachers and counsellors in exposing students to career guidance were not included. The role of teachers or other institutional support have been cited as pivotal mostly in the early school days for shaping career trajectories (Agarwal, 2009; Choi et al., 2010). This could be tested in the future studies.

6.6 Conclusions

The present study is an empirical enquiry into the antecedents and consequences of Career Decisiveness in the context of India. Based on the review of past literature, a conceptual model was developed and ten hypotheses were postulated. Data were collected through questionnaire based survey from a sample of final year management students studying in different colleges in Hyderabad. Results of the analysis of the data suggest that the various components of MST were the predictors of three career planning attitudes studied. These career planning attitudes in turn were responsible for Career Decisiveness which resulted in Life Satisfaction. But some of the components of MST like Perceived Social Support did not show significant relationship with career planning attitudes like Career Optimism and Perceived Knowledge of Job Market. None of the MST components showed any relationship with Career Optimism. Secondly, the career planning attitude and Career Optimism did not show significant relationship with Career Decisiveness. Age, gender and work experience and prior education
before management did not impact the career attitudes. Based on these broad findings, implications of the results were discussed in last Chapter. Following the implications, limitations of the study were pointed out. Lastly, some suggestions on scope for future research in this area were given.