CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job search process comprises of predictors, behaviors and outcomes. The predictors considered are EI, coping strategies and academic performance. The job search behaviors considered are intensity of job search, source used to collect job information and the amount of job information collected by the first time jobseeker. The job search outcomes considered are performance in the interview, number of job offers received and the number of attempts made to get a job. The employment quality is measured by ESI and the overall satisfaction with the job offer. The other variable studied is the psychological wellbeing. This chapter reviews literature on these variables. Both empirical and theoretical researches are reviewed here.

2.1 JOB SEARCH

Job seeking is a major life transition event, which results in high stress levels. Unemployment is a stressful situation (Paul and Moser 2009). Individual differences in coping have created a lot of interest among researchers because of the curiosity it has created as why some individuals fare better than others during stressful situations. During stress, the person with more emotional stability can handle the situation by formulating better strategies when compared to the person with less emotional stability. This has been proved in the context of academic stress and performance (O’Connor and Paunonen 2007). When a job seeker searches for a job, he / she faces challenges like preparation for job interviews, tackling examinations and
meeting the deadlines of academics. Hence, a greater understanding of any influential relationship will benefit the job searchers.

Researchers who are interested in the job search process look into three main aspects of job search namely: predictors, behaviors and outcomes. Fortunately, there has been an increasing amount of research on job search, including a meta-analysis on the antecedents and consequences of job search behavior (Kanfer et al 2001).

Theory of planned behavior is a widely used model in the area of determinants of human behavior (Ajzen 1991). Though it has been used in many social contexts, the use of the theory of planned behavior in the job search research is more pronounced (Van Ryn and Vinokur 1992; Vinokur and Caplan 1987). As theory of planned behavior suggests, an individual’s intention is a major determinant of job search behavior. Job search intention is predicted by job search attitude (Van Ryn and Vinokur 1992) and the confidence one has. Confidence is required to perform various job search activities like attending interviews, tackling questions, taking failure in the right spirit, etc. Moreover, job search behavior is predicted by the amount of time spent and the effort taken by the individual.

The individual’s job search attitude is dependent on the attitude towards job seeking process and job search self efficacy. Demographic variables like age, gender and the personality are other variables that affect the attitude of an individual. These in turn predict the job search behavior. Very little research has been carried out to find the effect of personality on the job search process.

Job seeking is an important aspect in an individual’s life. It determines the opportunity for getting more number of jobs out of which the individual can apply choices and there by attain a quality employment as well
as psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction. This study looks at the effect of EI on the job search process of first time job seekers.

2.1.1 Job Search Models

There are various models of job search ranging from a simple model with one or two determinants and only one outcome to complicated models having several determinants and outcomes.

Job search models can be categorized under four heads. They are:

- Sequential Models
- Learning Models
- Emotional – Response Models
- Determinant – Outcome Based Models

1. Sequential Models

Soelberg (1967) views job search as a two phase process- planning for job search and actual job search with choice making process. Blau (1994) categorized the job search process as preparatory and active search process. In both these models the process begins with collecting information and identifying opportunities followed by intense job search activities like using social networks, and attending interviews. Saks (2005) in his model conceptualizes job search process as a sequence of activities namely identifying the goals of the job seeker, job search behavior (Job search intensity, effort), job search outcomes (interviews, offers), employment outcomes(employment status, person fit to job and organization), and seeking employment quality (job satisfaction, organizational commitment).
2. Learning Models

Barber et al (1994) are the major contributors in this area. According to their model job search is not a static process, it is very dynamic in nature. During the job search process, an individual learns many techniques and strategies which they use to reframe their job search activities and their behaviors. Hence, according to the learning model, the process varies according to the learning that takes place in an individual.

3. Emotional – Response Models

This model assumes that job seeking is a highly stressful process and according to the stress experienced by an individual, the individual reacts to the search process. Depending on the stress experienced, an individual attempts to cope with the stress. Sometimes it may lead to avoidance and helplessness. At other times, the stress experienced might be so high such that the individual quits the search process (Barber et al 1994).

4. Determinant – Outcome Based Models

Schwab et al (1987) proposed a model in which self esteem and financial need predict the job search intensity which in turn predicts the job search outcome (employment). This is one of the simplest models of job search behavior in the job search literature. Since then, researchers have started adding variables to the model of Schwab et al (1987).

Studies by researchers like Saks and Ashforth (2002; 1999), Wanberg et al (2002; 1999) lead to multi-disciplinary models of job search with numerous factors as predictors. These could be categorized as personal and situational predictors. They also identified numerous factors as outcomes
viz employment status, speed of employment, fit of the person with job and organization, quality of employment and the number of offers.

With this background, Saks (2005) proposed an integrative self-regulatory model of job search consisting of predictors, behaviors and outcomes. This model has been proposed for a general job seeking behavior of an individual including new job entrants, temporarily unemployed, employed job seeker, and job losers. Saks (2005) suggests that the model could be used to guide future job search research.

2.1.2 Job Search Process

Kanfer et al (2001) have conceptualized job search as a motivational self regulatory process with a purposive, volitional pattern of action that begins with the identification and commitment to pursue an employment goal. They also state that individuals engaged in job search identify, initiate and pursue actions for the purpose of obtaining new employment or reemployment. The goal of job seekers is always not to get employment, but also to seek a bargaining leverage to improve one’s present job situation (Boswell et al 2004). Most of the research assumes that the objective of job search for many individuals is to get a new job (Kanfer et al 2001). In this study, the new entrants in the job market are taken into account. Hence, it can be assumed that the objective of the job seeking process is to get employment.

2.2 PREDICTORS OF JOB SEARCH BEHAVIORS

The predictors of job search behaviors can be categorized under three heads. They are demographic variables, education and academic achievement, and individual differences.
2.2.1 Demographic Variables

Many of the job search models do not address gender and as a result assume that the job search models are gender invariant (Huffman and Torres 2001). Kanfer et al (2001) in their study have reported that age, race, gender, education and tenure were related to the job search behavior. Tziner et al (2004) could not find any differences in the job search intensity based on gender. Huffman and Torres (2001) have proved that women used more newspaper ads and employment agencies to collect information on job and men used more informal sources like friends and relatives to collect information. Sverko et al (2008) found that age strongly determined employment.

2.2.2 Education and Academic Achievement

In many of the job search studies education has been taken as a major predictor of employment. Klauw and Vuuren (2010) in their study have found that study effort and academic achievement were more sensitive to the wage they get in employment when compared to the job search effort. Level of education was shown to be related to job search intensity (Kanfer et al 2001; Sverko et al 2008).

High academic performance need not guarantee job success. As the expectation for cognitive success is different from the expectations for job search success, there may be less correlation between these two items. High academic performance which is being measured by grade point average did not predict hiring interview outcome (Graves and Powell 1988; Cable and Judge 1997). Superior academic performance does not necessarily transfer to employment interview where the emphasis is on social and image management skills (Bandura et al 1977). Psychosocial and non-cognitive factors predict college outcomes like getting a job, but they are largely
ignored (Allen et al 2010). Unlike academic achievement, skills developed and processed may play a role in interview success.

Wittekind et al (2009) found that education, support for career and skill development, current level of job related skills and willingness to change jobs were significant predictors of perceived employability.

2.2.3 Individual Differences

In general, personality has an effect on job search behavior (Zimmerman et al 2011). Caldwell and Burger (1998) in their study on graduating college students have found that less neurotic, more extraverted, more open and more agreeable received more number of offers when compared to the others, and extroversion acted as a better predictor of number of job offers when compared to the other Big Five personality facets. Their study has found that personality is related to the number of interview calls an individual receives. Their study has also reported that the impact of grade point average on the number of offers is decreased when the personality mediates. Tews et al (2011) have reported that even though general mental ability is highly valued in hiring decisions, but when compared to personality general mental ability is less valued during hiring process.

Kanfer et al (2001) in their study have reported that personality has a strong relationship with job search intensity for the new entrants of job. Personality variables like extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability have been reported to be positively associated with job interview outcomes (Tay et al 2006; Posthuma et al 2002; Kanfer et al 2001; Caldwell and Burger 1998).

Personality dimensions like agreeableness, openness and neuroticism have been found to be related to job search (Boudreau et al 2006).
Dunn et al (1996) have found conscientiousness to be most important predictor of hirability. While conscientiousness plays a positive role in finding a job quickly, neuroticism plays a negative role in finding a job quickly (Uysal and Pohlmeier 2011). Steffy et al (1989) have proved that Type A personality predicted selection in the interview process. Internal locus of control predicted job search. People with internal locus of control searched more intensely for their job when compared to people with external locus of control (Caliendo et al 2010). In another study Schmit et al (1993) have found the Big Five personality types to be related to the intensity of job search. In short, personality differences as reflected in Big Five affect the success in job search not only because personality affects the behavior of an individual in the interview but also because of the information search process and preparation for job search (Caldwell and Burger 1998).

Self esteem is the most commonly used personality variable in job search process. Ellis and Taylor (1983) in their study on 86 college students have found that self esteem predicted the source used for getting job related information, interview performance, satisfaction with the job search, number of offers received. Kanfer et al (2001) have found self esteem to be related to the job search intensity and job search self efficacy is related to job search intensity and the number of job offers an individual gets. Another variable which affects the job search process is the perceived control an individual has over the job search process (Saks 2005).

Steffy et al (1989) proved that confidence in obtaining search outcomes more consistently predicted interview and placement outcomes. Schoon and Polek (2011) have showed that only career aspirations predict career success and not the cognitive ability. Thus, individual differences play a major role in the number of alternatives examined by the job searchers,
preparation and performance in the interview process, search and belief over the information and the intensity with which the job is searched.

Sverko et al (2008) in their longitudinal study found that motivational variables especially financial strain and employment commitment predicted the job search intensity, but they could not predict employment. Ellis and Taylor (1983) have found that self esteem is found to be positively related to job search intensity. Kanfer and Hulin (1985) found that greater number of search behaviors has resulted in employment and the attitude of the individuals also played a vital role in the reemployment success. There is a continuing need for research investigating the role of individual differences in explaining job search strategies and outcomes (Brasher and Chen 1999; Saks and Ashforth 1999; Caldwell and Burger 1998; Moser and Barber 1998). Understanding the predictors of job search success and in general job search process will help to identify fruitful avenues of counseling and training for a job seeker.

Though there are numerous factors that predict job search success, consensus seems to be emerging. These include personality traits and situational variables. In their meta analysis, Kanfer et al (2001) have summarized the job search literature by identifying five psychological complexes of job search predictors namely Big Five personality traits (extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, emotional stability, and agreeableness), self evaluations (self esteem, job search self efficacy), motives (Financial need, employment commitment), perceptions of social support and locus of control / optimism expectancies. Of all these variables they found locus of control to have a weak relationship with job search intensity.

Hirschi et al (2011) found that personality of the individual predicted more self exploration which in turn was found to predict the career
decisions and the active career planning. Career decisions, career adaptability and goal orientation is also predicted by self exploration (Yousefi et al 2011). Also, individual characteristics like career adaptability and career confidence predicted employment quality positively (Stringer et al 2011; Koen et al 2010). Saks and Ashforth (2000) found a relationship between self esteem and job search outcomes as well as a positive relationship between job search self efficacy and job search behavior which resulted in employment.

Theory of planned behavior shows that job search behavior is being predicted by the effort an individual intends to put and the confidence an individual has over one’s performance in activities like interview. The theory also suggests that intention is being predicted by an individual’s attitude, in turn attitude is predicted by demographic and personality traits. Hence, the career planning process which involves the exploration of career and job search is greatly influenced by the personality of the individual and the assessment of the self.

In the search for individual differences variables which have immense predictive power, researchers and theorists now look into the concept of EI (Petrides and Furnham 2006).

2.2.3.1 EI

EI has become a major topic of interest in the scientific circles as well as with the lay public since the publication of a bestseller by the same name in 1995 by Goleman. There is a heightened level of interest in this new idea in the past decade. However, scholars have been studying this construct for the greater part of the twentieth century. The historical roots of this topic can actually be traced back to the nineteenth century.
Twentieth century research in EI began in 1920 when Thorndike identified the concept of social intelligence. The concept of social intelligence is one of the three groups of intelligences (abstract, concrete, and social) identified by psychologists of that time. Thorndike (1920) defined social intelligence as the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls in order to act wisely in human relations. Thorndike’s (1920) definition included interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences in the definition of social intelligence.

Many of the early studies focused on describing, defining and assessing socially competent behavior. Possibly influenced by Thorndike, Wechsler (1940) proposed that non-intellective abilities are crucial in predicting one’s ability to succeed in life. Wechsler (1940) referred to ‘non-intellective’ and ‘intellective’ factors as meaning affective, personal and social factors. Guildford’s (1956) research into social intelligence hints at the importance of emotions to intellectual functioning. In 1953, Wechsler proposed that non-intellective abilities are essential for predicting one’s ability to succeed in life. Following Wechsler, Gardner (1983) introduced the concept of multiple intelligences including ‘personal intelligence’ which encompasses intrapersonal intelligence (knowing oneself) and interpersonal intelligence (knowing how to get along with others).

Researchers started showing more interest on the role that emotions play in organizational settings after the publication of Hochschild’s ‘The Managed Heart’ in 1983. Along this line, it is believed that the notion of intelligence should be expanded to include not only cognitive abilities but also the experience and expression of emotions (Barrett and Gross 2001).

The early definitions of social intelligence influenced the way EI was later conceptualized. Contemporary theorists like Salovey and Mayer (1990) originally viewed EI as a part of social intelligence, which suggests
that both concepts are related and may, in all likelihood, represent interrelated components of the same construct. Since 1990, Salovey and Mayer have been the leading researchers on EI. In their influential article on EI, Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined EI as the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions and use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions. EI can be considered as a mental ability that involves the ability to reason validly with emotional information, and the action of emotions to enhance thought.

EI involves behaviors related to the experience of emotion; specifically EI involves expressing, recognizing, understanding and managing emotions. Salovey and Mayor (1990) stated that emotionally intelligent people understand and express their own emotions, recognize emotions in others, regulate affect, and use moods and emotions to motivate adaptive behaviors. EI refers to an ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of these. EI is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them (Mayer and Salovey 1997). Bar-On (1997) defined EI as a group of personal, emotional, and social competencies and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures, and directly affect one’s overall psychological wellbeing.

Though the word EI was coined by Salovey and Mayer (1990), the concept was popularized by Goleman through the success of his book on EI in 1995. Goleman (1998) described emotional competence as a learned capability based on EI that results in outstanding performance. Further emotional competencies are skills that can be learned, and thus people have the potential to become skilled at these competencies (Cherniss and Goleman 2001).
A recent model of EI is proposed by Goleman et al (2002). According to this model, EI is considered as a four dimensional structure, where each dimension consists of several competencies. The four dimensions are self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management. Self management refers to the understanding of one’s own emotions as well as the strengths and weaknesses. It includes the ability to accurately and honestly self assess and use this information to make decisions. Self management refers to the ability to control and regulate one’s emotions, ability to stay calm, clear and focused even during unexpected time and failures. It includes keeping impulses in check, displaying honesty and integrity, flexible and remaining optimistic all times. Social awareness is the ability to understand other’s feelings, needs and concerns which stem from the awareness of one’s own feelings. This includes understanding other’s situation, experiencing other’s emotions, and acknowledging other’s unstated needs. This extends to include organizational awareness and understanding social networks. Relationship management is the ability to manage relationships with others and involves the ability to communicate, influence, collaborate, and work with others. It also includes influencing others, conflict management, managing change, nurturing teamwork and collaboration.

The concept EI has started gaining popularity as there are research evidences which show that EI is a better predictor of success when compared to intelligence quotient (Goleman 1995). EI predicts many life outcomes (Brackett et al 2011). Many researchers have shown the relevance of EI in career success (Epstein 1998; Cooper 1997; Townsend and Gebhardt 1997). In the realm of academic success, many researchers have reported the importance of EI (Schutte et al 1998; Swart 1996; Gough 1993). Brooks and Dubois (1995) have found that emotional variables exerted a strong influence on how well students adjusted to their first year of college. However, little
research has addressed the influence of EI on the job search process for the first time job seekers.

2.2.3.2 Coping

Coping can be defined as the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate or reduce the external and internal demands and conflicts created by stressful situations (Lazarus and Folkman 1993). The techniques that are being employed to deal with stress are called coping strategies. The process view of coping gives importance to the situational context in which stress occurs and how an individual looks into the situation (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Coping has been widely viewed as a response to the emotion experienced by an individual during a stressful encounter (Folkman and Lazarus 1988).

Coping refers to the thoughts and acts used by individuals to manage the internal or external demands or both that tax or exceed their psychological resources (Callan and Hennessey 1989; Folkman and Lazarus 1986). Coping strategies can be defined as the cognitive and behavioral tactics employed by the individuals to work with real or perceived problems and difficulties (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). More specifically, coping strategies are thoughts or actions that people sometimes engage in when under stress (Carver et al 1989). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) coping could be categorized under two broad heads viz emotion – focused strategies and problem focused strategies. While the former strategies are related to regulating the emotions and seen to be dysfunctional, the latter strategies are related to altering the person-environment relation causing the distress and seen to be functional.

Problem focused coping is utilized when the person perceives to have control over the situation to change the stressful situation for the better.
Emotion focused strategies aim to reduce the negative response. In this case, individuals may not only believe that the event has to be tolerated but may also indulge in some distracting activities (Folkman and Moskowitz 2004).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have suggested that there are no coping strategies that are to be preferred a priori, instead situational characteristics determine the adaptability of the strategy. Coping strategies measured by the WCQ are part of the theory that talks about the various links that exist between psychological stress and emotions (Lazarus 1993).

The transactional model of stress proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) proposed stress as a three step process where the first two are appraisal processes involving perception of threat and determining an appropriate action and the last step is an action process which involves carrying out the chosen response. Hence, the transactional model of stress focuses on the person–environment relationship. If life events seem to be dictated by external factors over which an individual may have no control, then the belief may lead to the use of emotion focused coping strategies. The deemed controllability of the situation also dictates how the demands will be met and whether or not the necessary actions are considered to be manageable (Folkman and Moskowitz 2004).

Evaluation is the most pervasive dimension in the human thought and it affects an individual’s experiences (Lazarus 1991). Level of stress may be less important to wellbeing, compared to how an individual appraises and copes with stress (Kelso et al 2005). The process model of coping put forth by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) takes into account how an individual appraises the events rather than the occurrence or the severity of the event itself. The individual’s ability in facing the stress is given importance and hence, the individual difference plays a predominant role in the coping process. This individual difference has been studied from the perspective of EI in this study.
2.2.3.3  EI and Coping

Coping strategies are therefore initiated in the emotional environment by the response to multiple factors influencing the situation. The emotion felt, understood and managed when presented with a situation dictates how the situation is addressed by utilizing various problem focused coping and emotion focused coping strategies. Hence, coping strategies are related to the psychological capabilities that are inherent in individuals which help them to deal with the stress they face. Association between personality and coping is well documented in research to the extent of defining coping as personality in action (Bolger 1990).

Some theorists argue that the differences in the coping styles are intrinsically tied to personality differences. People adopt certain coping strategies during stressful encounters based on the assumption of relatively stable preferences. These stable preferences may be driven by personality. The study on the role of traits in successful coping strategies is of research interest (Carver et al 1989). Antonovsky (1987) argues that an individual’s response to a stressor may take any of the forms – indifference, positive, pathogenic, or a state of tension. The response also depends on the individual differences.

Coping has been widely viewed as a response to the emotion experienced by an individual during a stressful encounter and anxiety related thoughts may hinder people’s normal functioning (Folkman and Lazarus 1988). In a longitudinal study on changes in job search behaviors, Barber et al (1994) proposed an ‘emotional model’ and argued that individuals decrease their job search efforts overtime because of the accumulated stress during job search. Hence, the stress created affects the behavior of an individual to a great extent during job search. As the stress levels vary according to the
perception individuals have towards the stress, their job search behavior also differs accordingly.

EI is all about how an individual understand his/her and others emotions and act appropriately using these emotions. Hence, the internal nature of EI which results in the behavior of an individual cannot be explained by the situation alone. Coping on the other hand has been identified as a specific behavior and not a consistent style associated with one’s personality (McCrae and Costa 1986). Hence, the implemented coping strategy is a result of the situational demands on the nature or characteristics of a person. Research has indicated that when an individual faces stress, optimism acts as a protestor against adversity, which leads to more effective coping strategies (Trucker 2008). Hence, how people adapt to change, how they try to achieve their goal depends on the individual differences of an individual.

Saklofske et al (2007), while examining the relationship between EI, coping and health behaviors have found that all these three factors were inter-correlated. Mikolajczak and Luminet (2008) in their study have proved that EI is a valid predictor of resistance to stress.

Coping strategies and EI help the individuals who work in stressful situations (Belanger et al 2007). Their study could prove that students taking active steps to alter the problem strategy had higher grade point average. Their study could also prove positive relationship between devaluation coping strategy and grade point average. Devaluation coping strategy is related to diminishing the importance of the situation by persuading oneself that the problem is not as significant as one thinks of. Their study has also established negative relationship between grade point average and coping strategies like accommodation, avoidance and symptom reduction. Accommodation strategy is about accepting the existence of the stress and in turn revising one’s
expectations. Hence, this strategy may lead to lessening one’s expectations which in turn may lead to giving up one’s high aims. Avoidance is an emotion-focused coping strategy which is associated with ignoring a stressful situation by not thinking about it. Symptom reduction strategy is related to venting out emotions that cause stress.

Coetze and Esterhuizen (2010) in their study have found that there is a significant relationship between individual’s psychological career resources and their coping resources. Psychological resources include self esteem, self skills, stability, and EI. Coping resources include cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual and physical coping resources. People with high perceived control are likely to engage in problem focused behavior than people with low perceived control (Conway and Terry 1992). Individuals high on self esteem relied more on problem focused coping strategies than emotion focused coping strategies (Terry 1994; Kinicki and Latack 1990).

Salovey et al (2000) have suggested that people who are emotionally intelligent are in a better position to meet the demands of stressful situations as they could perceive, analyze and regulate their emotions in a better way. They have suggested that EI is related to coping strategies like seeking social support, and disclosure of trauma, suggesting that higher EI is related to the usage of effective coping strategies and there by coping with stress in a better way. Salovey et al (2002) have also reported higher levels of EI to be associated with lower passive coping and higher active coping. Study by Bastian et al (2005) has shown that higher EI is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and better coping strategies. EI has been shown to be related to coping strategies adopted during exam related stress (Austin et al 2010).

In this context, it could be postulated that how individuals perceive and manage stress created due to job search have an impact over the job
search process. Depending on the stress perceived and the personality traits, individuals adopt a coping strategy. The coping strategies adopted could be positive or negative, depends on the personality of an individual. EI is a capability of an individual to understand the emotions, hence, it could determine the coping strategy adopted. Barber et al (1994) have proved that heightened stress will trigger negative reactions such as withdrawals and avoidance during job search. If the stress encountered is very high, job seekers may become discouraged. This in turn will make an individual to be less motivated to engage in job search activities. The negative encounters faced could have negative effects on one’s self efficacy and self esteem. If people are too stressed they might not be in a position to perform well in the interview and get a job.

Chan (2003) in their study has proved that there is no significant difference in the EI levels based on gender. The study has also established a positive relationship with EI and social coping strategies like valuing peer acceptance and involvement in activities with peers. Hence, there exists a relationship between EI and the coping strategies adopted by an individual during any stressful encounter.

2.3 JOB SEARCH BEHAVIORS

Saks (2005) included five behaviors namely job information sources, job search intensity, job search effort, assertive job-seeking behavior, and network intensity. Only some studies could prove the predictive relationship between these variables that too taking a few variables together as suggested by Saks (2005). These are discussed below.

2.3.1 Job Information Sources

Collection of information about the job is the most neglected step in the job search process ((McFayden and Thomas 1997). Job information
sources are the means and ways used by the job seeker to gather information regarding the job they aspire for. A job seeker uses formal and informal sources to collect information about the job. Both the recruitment and the job search literature differentiate formal and informal sources used by the job seekers (Saks 2005).

Formal sources include public intermediaries like advertisements (recruitment advertisements, company advertisements), reports associated with the companies (financial records like year ending annual reports, reports like published articles from research organizations (for example Fortune companies, Best company to work for being published by ‘Great place to work for’), government and private employment agencies, and educational institutes’ placement offices. Informal sources include private intermediaries like friends, acquaintances, relatives, college seniors who work in the organization, referrals from friends, and other known people, and social network group members. Saks and Ashforth (2000) found that when job search behavior involves increased active search, usage of more formal sources, and increased job search intensity often leads to employment.

Studies of source credibility have shown that individuals may choose information because of the trustworthiness of the source rather than the expertise (Giffin 1967). The perception of the job incumbents, on the uncertainty of getting a job, and their level of motivation for getting a job are related to the different information sources. Motivated job incumbents use external information sources and updates more frequently than the information from files and group (O’ Reilly 1982).

Differences in the usage of information source have shown conflicting patterns. In a study by Ports (1993) it has been proved that 18% of 16 – 19 year old job seekers, 22% of 20 – 24 year old job seekers and 26.5% of 45 – 55 and 55- 64 year old job seekers depended on friends and relatives
to gather information about the job. However, Marsden and Campbell (1990) reported a decline in the usage of friends and relatives as age increases. Ioannides and Loury (2004) in their meta analysis of job search behavior, could not find any difference in the source used by men and women. Thus, there are empirical supports for the contention that employment depends on how information is obtained. Yet, research on the differences in the employment based on the information collected has received very less attention (Huffman and Torres 2001).

Emmerling and Cherniss (2003) state that emotions experienced during the career making process in relation to the social relations will have an impact on the career exploration process and especially in the way how information is sought. People high on openness to experience obtain much information when compared to people who are low on openness to experience (McCrae and Costa 1985). High conscientious people have been reported to involve in any task in a more planned and organized way (McCrae and Costa 1985), which suggests that they may involve in a wider information collection process while they search for a job.

Wanberg et al (2000) have found that more successful job seekers use more resources in their job search. Confidence in their search sustains motivation in the face of setbacks and plays a critical role in job search success. They also tend to collect information from more than one source to have a clear understanding of the job. Barber et al (1994) have found that when individuals are unable to find job overtime, they start using more informal sources to gather information to find a job. Usage of informal sources in job search speeds up the process of job search and thereby facilitates getting a job. The job obtained through informal sources also has an effect on the wage (Pellizzari 2010).
2.3.2 Job Search Intensity

Job search intensity refers to the frequency with which job seekers engage in the specific job search activities such as preparing a resume or contacting an employment agency. Job search intensity is usually measured by the time spent on job search and the effort made on job search and there is a positive relationship between job search intensity and finding out a job for the first time job seekers (Kanfer et al 2001).

Job search intensity has been measured by different factors in the job search literature. Barber et al (1994) in their longitudinal study have measured job search intensity by the number of employers contacted, number of hours spent on searching for a job, and the number of information sources used as suggested by Schwab et al (1987). Some studies have used the frequency of job search behaviors mainly measured in terms of time spent on job search (Werbel 2000; Wanberg et al 1999) and some other studies have measured in terms of the perceived investment of emotional energy in the search process (Kanfer et al 2001; Blau 1993). Saks and Ashforth (2000; 1999) have referred job search effort as job search intensity in their studies.

A great deal of research has been carried out on factors related to job search success. Job search intensity and job search efforts are found to be the most significant predictors for job search success (job acquisition) (Kanfer et al 2001). Wanberg et al (1999) also establish that job search intensity lead to reemployment for job losers.

2.3.3 Job Search Effort

Kanfer et al (2001) have defined job search effort as the amount of energy, time, and persistence that a job seeker devotes to his or her job search. Job search effort is differentiated from the job search intensity only by the
nature of the search process. Intensity is more specific in nature and deals with a specific search process but effort is very generic in nature. Blau (1994) in their study on three diverse samples has found that general job search effort is related to the preparatory and active job search behavior.

Many studies have attempted to test the relationship between job search effort and getting a job (Hausdorf 2007; Kanfer et al 2001; Saks and Ashforth 1999; Schmit et al 1993). A few studies which have attempted this (Saks and Ashforth 2002; Wanberg et al 2000; Wanberg et al 1999; Blau 1994) have also shown mixed results. Blau (1993) in his study has found a direct positive relationship between job search effort and employment quality which is measured in terms of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and quit intentions. Saks and Ashforth (2002) have proved that though there is no direct relationship between job search effort and employment quality, the relationship is mediated by the person-organization and person-job fits.

2.3.4 Assertive Job Seeking Behavior

Assertive job seeking is defined as an individual’s ability to identify one’s right and choices during job search and to act on them (Schmit et al 1993). According to Saks (2005), assertive job seeking includes follow up calls about the status of the job application and making calls to arrange meetings with organizational representatives to discuss employment opportunities. Though it is one of the major five factors of job search behavior, few studies have been done on this area (Saks 2005). In the Indian context, follow up calls are not widely in practice and also the job seeker plays a very minor role in arranging for a meeting between the placement officer (one who takes care of the employment activities) of the educational institute and the organizational representatives (people who are involved in the recruitment and selection process in an organization).
2.3.5 Networking Intensity

Wanberg et al (2000) in their study on the predictors and outcomes of network intensity among unemployed job seekers have defined network intensity as the frequency and thoroughness of using networking during job search. They have also found that personality types especially extraversion and conscientiousness is related with higher levels of job search intensity. Networking intensity involves contacting friends, referrals, and relatives in collecting information about job opportunities. Contacts are mainly made by the job seekers to get information and advice on getting a job (Wanberg et al 2000). Wanberg et al (2000) have also found that compared to job search intensity, networking intensity did not predict speed of employment, and job satisfaction. Tziner et al (2004) have taken networking as a measure of job search intensity.

2.4 OUTCOMES OF JOB SEARCH BEHAVIORS

A successful job search is not confined to getting a job, but it also includes the quality of the job and the satisfaction an individual has derived out of the job offer to foster long term employment. This satisfaction derived out of the job will even affect the satisfaction with life. Schwab et al (1987) considered employment status and the quality of employment as the job search outcome. Employment status is the widely used measure of job search outcome (Kanfer et al 2001). Other outcomes include the number of offers and satisfaction with the offers as reported by Kanfer et al (2001).

The outcome of job search is also measured by many criteria like finding a job by a set time, search duration, number of interviews obtained and job offers (Kanfer et al 2001; Brasher and Chen 1999; Schwab et al 1987). Saks (2005) have classified the job search success under three
categories viz job search outcomes, employment outcomes, and employment quality. These are discussed below

2.4.1 Job Search Outcomes

It includes the outcomes that occur during the job search process itself. Job search outcomes include the number of job interviews attended, and the speed with which a job seeker obtains a job (Saks 2005). Saks and Ashforth (2000) in their study have found that active job search was positively related to the number of job interviews. Wanberg et al (2002) in their study have proved that job search intensity was related to the speed of employment which they have measured as the amount of time spent in searching for a job.

2.4.2 Employment Outcomes

Employment outcomes represent the outcomes that are the result of the job search. The most common measure of employment outcome is the employment status (Saks 2005). Saks and Ashforth (2000) in their study have found that active job search was positively related to the employment status. Tay et al (2006) measured interview success by the number of offers an individual obtained. Other variables that are included in this category are Person-Job and Person-Organization fit. Wanberg et al (2002) have found that job search clarity is related to both person – job and person – organization fit.

2.4.2.1 Employment Quality

While looking into the factors of job search outcome, besides number of job offers and finding an employment the quality of employment also has to be taken into account. Employment quality refers to the outcome that occurs once the job seeker joins the organization. It includes job
satisfaction, commitment, and intentions of quitting the job. Intense job
search behavior may result in getting more offers which may result in
allowing a job seeker to choose a more favorable and likeable job among the
many he / she has got. Schwab et al (1987) suggest that quality of
employment is an important employment outcome.

Employment quality has also been assessed by many measures like
higher salary (Werbel 2000; Brasher and Chen 1999), match between
academic degree and job (Saks and Ashforth 2002; Brasher and Chen 1999),
intention to quit (Werbel 2000; Brasher and Chen 1999) and satisfaction
towards the job (Saks and Ashforth 2002; Werbel 2000; Brasher and Chen
1999).

Koen et al (2010) in their study on job search strategies employed
by the person and its impact on the employment as well as the quality of
employment have found that focused and exploratory strategies predicted the
number of job offers an individual gets. Moreover, more exploration reduces
the employment quality. They also found that career confidence positively
predicted the employment quality. An unpublished work by Van Hooft et al
(2002) could not establish a positive relationship between job search behavior
and the satisfaction towards the new job attained.

There are mixed findings on the relationship between job seeking
intensity and the job satisfaction. Certain studies like (Leana and Feldman
1995; Steffy et al 1989) have proved a positive relationship between job
seeking intensity and job satisfaction. However other studies like Saks and
Ashforth 2002; Werbel 2000; Wanberg et al 1999) could not establish any
significant relationship between these two variables.
2.5 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

An independent other variable considered in this study is psychological wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing or subjective wellbeing or happiness has long been considered a central component of good life (Park 2004). Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) plays a vital role in an individual’s life during stressful situations by motivating to engage in exploration and build resources to cope with the stress effectively (Diener and Diener 1995). SWB refers to an individual’s evaluation of the quality of life in general. Diener (1984) has proposed a three related but distinct dimensional structure of SWB namely high positive affect, low negative affect and overall judgment about life. Research has found strong correlations between these dimensions (Diener 1984), and significant convergence has also been reported by Pavot et al (1991). In the literature of positive psychology, the three terms SWB, psychological wellbeing and happiness have been used interchangeably (Park 2004). Happiness is the more popularized construct among the three (Seligman 2002; Myers 1993).

Diener et al (1999) in their seminal work on components of SWB have conceptualized psychological or SWB as a broad construct encompassing four specific and distinct components including (a) pleasant affect or positive wellbeing (e.g., joy, elation, happiness, mental health), (b) unpleasant affect or psychological distress (e.g., guilt, shame, sadness, anxiety, worry, anger), (c) life satisfaction or a global evaluation of one’s life, (d) domain or situation satisfaction (e.g., family, leisure, health). There are large number of measures which contain both positive and negative aspects of wellbeing (Diener et al 1999), and OHQ is one such measure. Ryff (1989) identified six components of SWB namely self acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.
Policy makers, teachers, parents, career counselors, and individuals themselves are concerned about young people’s well being (Glover et al 1998). SWB encapsulates issues relating to young people more comprehensively by including young people’s perspectives, levels of satisfaction along with social behaviors, mental health and focus on an individual’s perspective (Bourke and Geldens 2007). Social and emotional events have an impact over the well being of an individual. SWB is defined as the global sense of satisfaction with life in specific situations (Myers and Diener 1995). SWB can represent the degree to which people in each society are accomplishing the values they hold dear (Diener and Eunkook 2000). Hence, people and their attitude are centric in the concept of SWB. SWB is all about how people look at their life with a positive disposition.

Sandvik et al (2009) have reported the convergence of single and multi item self report measures of SWB. It provides evidence that wellbeing is a unitary construct. Alternate measures of SWB are inter-correlated highly and these measures converge with the theoretical correlates of wellbeing.

2.5.1 Psychological Wellbeing and Job Search

A major concern in the job search literature is the psychological wellbeing (Saks 2005).

Recently there has been an interest in linking adolescent career development with positive youth development, the emerging interdisciplinary study of antecedents and consequences of well-being (Hirschi 2009). Job seekers ability to find suitable employment has implications for their psychological wellbeing (Turner 1995). Verbruggen and Sels (2010) in their longitudinal study on the client’s who attended a career counseling session has proved that career satisfaction is related to their life satisfaction. They proved a positive relationship between career satisfaction and life satisfaction.
They also proved that personality had an influence on career satisfaction as well as life satisfaction through self efficacy. Wanberg et al (2001) have shown in their cross sectional study that unemployed groups tend to have lower levels of psychological wellbeing than employed groups. Wanberg et al (1997) also showed that lower levels of expectations of reemployment were related to mental health.

Korpi (1997) in his study has found that employment status (getting an employment) has got a positive relationship with the SWB and unemployment affects the wellbeing of an individual. Though cross sectional studies have shown the association between employment and psychological wellbeing, it is very difficult to conclude the causal relationship with these type of studies (McKee-Ryan et al 2005). If an unemployed has lower wellbeing when compared to the employed, with this alone it can not be concluded that lower wellbeing is the reason for unemployment. The case could be individuals with higher psychological wellbeing are more likely to find a job and individuals with lower psychological wellbeing are more likely to lose the job (Mastekaasa 1996; Warr et al 1988).

When job seekers are successful in interview and if they attribute this success to their own ability, then the interview success convey positive information about interviewing capabilities to them which makes them feel happy. Self attributions about ones responsibility for getting a job as well as the expectations regarding the job are expected to be relevant to wellbeing during job search. Prussia et al (1993) in their longitudinal study on job loss have found that internal attributions are associated with life satisfaction. If an individual searches a job for a long time, it may affect the psychological wellbeing of the individual negatively. Though coping strategies have been argued to reduce stress during job search and in turn positively strengthen the wellbeing of an individual, recent researches have shown that the relationship
between coping strategies and wellbeing is complex and reciprocal. An individual’s reduced wellbeing may increase a coping response (McKee-Ryan et al 2005).

McKee-Ryan et al (2005) in their meta analysis found that cross sectional studies could establish that unemployed individuals had lower levels of subjective wellbeing than the employed individuals, and that longitudinal studies have reported an increase in the psychological wellbeing as one becomes employed. Out of the 5010 studies taken, only seven studies could establish that wellbeing had an impact on the reemployment process. Studies have also shown that if a happy person does happen to be unemployed, he or she is likely to find a new job more quickly than an unhappy unemployed person (Marks and Fleming 1999). Lucas et al (2004) in a longitudinal study found that people who had low levels of life satisfaction were found to be loosing their job.

There are studies which have looked into the impact of the employment quality on the psychological wellbeing of an individual (Wanberg 1997). On the other hand, the small obstacles faced in the job search process may affect the psychological wellbeing of an individual which may affect the further search process as well as the outcome. Using many longitudinal studies as the basis, the meta-analysis by Boehm and Yubomirsky (2008) hypothesize that happiness often precedes success.

As getting a job and starting the career is an important life event, this job search process could also affect the SWB of an individual. Munoz-Sastre (1999) has observed SWB in the context of employment. He posits that if an individual is not able to find a job then, it affects the wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing is also affected by job loss and unemployment (Dooley 2003). In turn it also precedes the job search behavior. It is well known that job loss and unemployment are associated with negative affect.
which affects the psychological wellbeing of an individual. It also manifests as various symptoms and disorders like psychiatric disorders, distress and depression (Hanisch 1999; Wanberg 1997; 1995). But psychological wellbeing is not an outcome of the job search process alone, and not associated with a specific time and step of the job search process. It is an all pervasive factor which plays an active role throughout the unemployment–job search–reemployment process (Saks 2005). Even in case of the first time job search, the psychological wellbeing or the positive affect can play a significant role in the job search process. This may lead to the search success and in turn it may affect the psychological wellbeing of an individual. Psychological wellbeing is relevant throughout the job search process (Saks 2005), which aids in postulating the causal as well as the reverse causal relationship of psychological wellbeing with job search behavior.

2.6 EI AND JOB SEARCH PROCESS

The career development literature has increasingly focused on the role played by emotions in the career making process (Emmerling and Cherniss 2003). They also say that those who can understand and manage their emotions can predict the negative emotional consequences that might happen because of the poor career choice decision; hence, they wisely avoid unpleasant responsibilities and tasks. Other authors like Kidd (1998) have also expressed the view that emotions are very important in determining career behavior. Cooper (1997) has reported that those who believe in their own emotions and are being guided by their own feelings are more successful in their career. Individuals who have higher levels of EI are highly aware of their emotions and have greater capacity to integrate emotional experience with thoughts and actions. Brown et al (2003) have advocated that people with higher levels of EI will trust their emotions and thereby they can tackle the career related problems more effectively. EI has been proved to be an
integral factor in the career decision making process (Hammond et al 2010; DiFabio and Kenny 2011) and career success (Abraham 2006).

Zeng and Miller (2001) state that EI is the complex and multifaceted ability to be effective in all the critical domains of life, including job success. Job search process is the starting stage of an individual’s career process, on which EI might play a critical role. Rogers et al (2008) in their study on adolescents have proved that more favorable emotional dispositions like emotional stability and extraversion are related to increased career planning and career exploration. DiFabio and Palazzeschi (2008) in their study on Italian interns have proved that lower levels of EI are related to the lack of information in the career decision process.

During job insecurity, EI and especially management of emotions improved career related decision making (Jordan and Ashkanasy 2010). EI mitigates the negative effects of job insecurity. High EI will help an individual to make wiser decisions. As one develops high awareness about oneself, it increases the probability of making wise decisions like which job to aspire for, how to prepare for the interview, even on a set back how to get back to the search with positive outlook and many more. High EI will also help an individual derive satisfaction from their endeavors. As EI involves high social skills, highly emotional intelligent individuals will have better social networks which may possibly allow them to seek support while they face trouble without hesitation. They may make use of social support in collecting information about the job avenues and the job itself.

Rogers and Creed (2011) have used the social cognitive career theory of Lent et al (1994) to investigate the career choice actions which encompassed the two basic actions: career planning and career exploration. It was observed that self efficacy predicted career planning and career exploration in all the grades taken for the study. The study could also
establish relationship between personality and career planning and career exploration.

Individuals with higher emotional stability have reported to have higher interviewing self efficacy than individuals with lower emotional stability (Tay et al 2006). Individuals judge their performance capabilities based on how positively or negatively aroused they feel when confronted with a particular task (Bandura 1997). As job search process is evaluative in nature, during interview process an individual with low EI will have emotional arousal which will affect their performance in the interview. Christiansen et al (2010) in their study have found that EI predicted selection in the interview.

Gottfredson’s theory (2002; 1985; 1981) asserts that after fourteen years of age students begin to adjust their career aspirations to factors of the personal self. They tend to compromise their aspirations according to more realistic factors. Thus, an individual tries to understand him or her in the career exploration process to have a smooth career planning and career development process.

When faced with an evaluative employment interview, applicants who are low in emotional stability experience discomforting physiological and psychological reactions that will detract from their best performance in the interview. Kanfer et al (2001) have reported in their study that emotional stability is related to interview success. There are some studies which have reported that emotion stability is not related to interview success (Tay et al 2006; DeFruyt and Mervielde 1999; Caldwell and Burger 1998). Extroverts are confident in tasks that involve social interaction (Costa and Mccrae 1992). Interview is a social process where the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee has to be handled effectively. The personality of an individual especially the job seekers has an implication over the interview
EI encompasses the social interactions also. Hence, EI has a role in the interview process.

EI is also proved to be very beneficial to the students. Students with high self-knowledge are more likely to make wiser career choices (Gelso and Fretz 2001). Human resource personnel have started using personality tests to a great extent as they believe that the personality tests predict the performance of the employee in the organization (Rynes et al 2002). In a survey by Jenkins (2001) it has been found that every one of the top 100 British companies use personality tests as a part of the hiring process. Beagrie (2005) have estimated two thirds of medium to large organizations use psychological and personality test in the screening of applicants.

Today’s competitive nature of job search process evokes anxiety, frustration and distress among the job seekers (Rynes et al 1991). An important source of anxiety is the interview process as it involves facing new people, understanding people, managing people as well as oneself and at last proving oneself to be worthy of selection. Hence, many a time selection interview has been regarded as a key source of anxiety as it is an evaluative process (Posthuma et al 2002; Heimberg et al 1986). The total process of interview is out of control of the job seeker and the entire process is controlled by the interviewer. The lack of control leads to heightened anxiety during the interview process (Jones and Pinkney 1989).

High levels of anxiety may affect the performance of the individual in the interview which may affect the possibility of the individual to get selected for a job, even though he / she may be intelligent or a good performer in the work. Hence, how the stress created by the interview process is handled by the job seeker plays a major role in determining whether the individual will get the job or not. This anxiety created can also affect the satisfaction the employment gives to an individual.
Anxiety, especially the behavioral anxiety is more associated with the emotionality (Spielberger and Vagg 1995). Emotionality is related to the arousal experienced as a result of job seeking. This kind of anxiety is more related to the job interview as it involves a constant transaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. This emotional arousal and the way how an individual handles this arousal determines the way an individual interacts and performs in the interview process. High levels of anxiety especially the emotionality affect the interview performance (McCarthy and Goffin 2004).

Fox and Spector (2000) in their study have examined the relationship between EI, general intelligence and interview outcomes. The study could prove that the components of EI like empathy, self regulation of mood and self presentation were related to interview performance. The study could also establish relationship between general intelligence, practical intelligence, and positive affect with the work success as well as the job interview performance. They have reported that EI and trait affect are major contributors to interview success. Chia (2005) has shown that individuals high in EI could perform better in the interview. Dunn et al (1996) have showed that conscientiousness is more associated with the number of job offers. Hence, it is posited that EI might have an impact on the number of job offers.

Posthuma et al (2002) reported a meta analysis on the various factors of employment interview process like social, cognitive, and individual difference factors. They have reported that extroverts and conscientious individuals are more successful in job interviews. They also report that interview scores are correlated with the measures of cognitive ability.

Numerous studies have proved high correlation between the big five personality types and EI (Petrides and Furnham 2001; Dawda and Hart 2000; Schutte et al 1998). EI is embedded in the personality framework (Petrides and Furnham 2000). Yet, EI is distinct from these personality traits.
The incremental validity of EI in predicting various life outcomes like life satisfaction while controlling for personality variables has been established (Palmer et al 2002). The discriminant validity of EI by locating distinct EI factor in the factor spaces of personality types (both Big Five and Eysenck Personality models) has been proved in many studies (Petrides et al 2007; Petrides and Furnham 2001). As both the incremental and discriminant validity has been proved, the distinctiveness of EI from personality domain is established. Rode et al (2006) have also proved that EI predicted the individual performance when controlling for personality and mental ability, showing the incremental validity of EI. A study by Akintayo (2010) stresses on the importance of EI in the selection process for guaranteed managerial effectiveness.

Turbulence and unpredictability that prevails in the job market poses a heavy threat on the job search individuals, as there is an intense competition in the labor market to get a job. In a country like India, getting a job is a more competitive process, and hence, EI can play a vital role in the job search process. EI has to be developed so as to aid job seekers to intensely look for the job. Smith (2010) has suggested training as a successful mechanism that can be used to enhance employability in the current scenario. As job search intensity is associated with the greater possibility of job search success or getting a job, training in EI equips an individual in getting a job. EI training may help an individual in the decision making process to overcome the perception of job insecurity also (Peter et al 2008).

2.7 COPING AND JOB SEARCH PROCESS

Given the stressful nature of the job search process, several researchers have posited that job search behaviors are one way that job seekers cope with their anxieties (Wanberg 1997). Traditional perspectives
and practices suggest that stress is a nuisance to the job search process and should be completely eliminated (Vinokur and Schul 2002).

Amundson and Borgen (1987) described unemployment experience as an emotional roller coaster as during the whole process an individual will undergo several emotional encounters like denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance, enthusiasm, stagnation, frustration, and apathy. An individual might start the job search process with high positive outlook and a lot of enthusiasm, as one may have a strong belief of finding a good job. But while facing the reality like not getting selected in the first interview, their positive outlook might take a setback which may affect the further search activities. Positive emotions might also be experienced once they accept the initial failures and restart the search process. Hence, on the whole, job search is a stressful process.

Tolor and Fehon (1987) have found that well adjusted adolescents use more mature coping strategies than poorly adjusted adolescents. Integrative process model of coping with job loss has been proposed by Latack et al (1995). This theory has taken the coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) as the basis for the proposed model. Latack et al (1995) have postulated that coping goals would result in coping strategies which might be proactive strategies or avoidance strategies. These coping strategies are also being determined by the personal factors, which they call as coping resources. These coping resources have been postulated to have direct and indirect effect on the coping strategies adopted by an individual. They define coping goal to be coping with job loss. Coping strategies reflect the cognitive and behavioral activities individuals use to accomplish specific coping goals.
Though the studies by Leana and Feldman (1988), Warr (1987) and DeFrank and Ivancevich (1986) have included coping as one of the variables, their models are job loss specific. During down sizing and job loss, it was found that individuals using problem focused coping methods were found to cope more effectively when compared to individuals who used emotion focused coping methods (Havlovic et al 2009).

DeFrank and Ivancevich (1986) found fifty variables associated with job loss of which coping is one of the variables. Leana and Feldman (1988)’s longitudinal study on the laid-off industrial workers found six different coping strategies being employed by the laid-off workers which is determined by the individual differences and the situational characteristics. Warr (1987) has proposed the famous “vitamin model” which discusses the mental health of employees depending on the psychological factors. This model has coping as one of the five indicators of mental health for job losers.

Coping with the stress created by the job search for the first time job seekers is a purposive action. Individuals attempt to maintain equilibrium in various facets of life (balancing academics and job search, initial rejections in the interviews, social and parental pressures to name a few). One of the major functions of coping is to maintain equilibrium to better handle the demands (Mechanic 1974). Job seeking causes disequilibrium between the existing state and the desired state, which causes an individual to engage in various coping strategies. The coping strategies adopted in turn will have an impact over the entire job search process and the determinants of the disequilibrium (Edwards 1992).

People use a combination of coping strategies in response to a stressful encounter (Folkman and Lazarus 1985). Job seeking social support was positively associated with problem focused coping and negatively associated with emotion focused coping (Wanberg et al 1996). People who
perceive much job insecurity experience more job stress. The impact of job insecurity on job stress is moderated by coping strategies and in particular by religious coping strategy (Safaria 2010). Leana and Feldman (1995) in their study have proved that problem focused coping is unrelated to quality of reemployment.

Theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1985) show that an individual’s intention to perform a given behavior is the immediate determinant of the behavior. Intention is regarded as a summary of motivational factors which indicate how hard an individual wants to try and how much effort he / she wants to exert on initiating and engaging in this behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). For controllable behaviors intentions mediate the effects of cognitive, affective and contextual factors in behavior prediction (Westaby 2005). Hence, the job search behavior is dependant on the coping strategy adopted. Coping strategy may be effective or ineffective; it depends on the individual differences.

Perttila and Stefan (2010) have attempted to study the relationship between people’s information seeking practices and the coping strategies adopted during job search process. Their study has proved that problem focused coping resulted in active information seeking. A study by Kinicki et al (2000) has postulated that coping strategy has an effect over the reemployment quality during job loss situations. They found that emotion focused coping strategies negatively affected the quality of reemployment. Leana and Feldman (1995) in a longitudinal study on laid-off workers report that self blame, problem focused coping and emotion focused coping were predictors of reemployment status. Schwab et al (1987) have found that job search mediates coping process that in turn leads to reemployment. Hence, in
many studies it is proved that coping strategies play a role in the job search process.

2.8 EI AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

Individuals with higher levels of trait EI scores believe that they are in control of their emotions and they could manage their emotions in such a way that it promotes wellbeing and thereby they enjoy higher levels of happiness (Petrides and Furnham 2001). Emotion regulation acts as a mediator in the relationship between stress and life satisfaction (Saklofske et al 2011).

Individuals with higher self esteem, perceived control, locus of control generally have higher levels of psychological wellbeing (Armstrong-Stassen 1994; Aspinwall and Taylor 1992). Brissette et al (2002) have proved that optimism results in reduced anxiety levels and enhanced wellbeing. Optimism also mediates the stress and the response to stress (Scheier et al 1986). SWB has been proved to be strongly correlated with extraversion and neuroticism (Headey and Wearing 1989). Scheier and Carver (1992) have reported that optimists have a better wellbeing than pessimists.

DeNeve and Cooper (1998) carried out a meta-analysis which looked into more than 100 personality traits and their influence on SWB. They could establish that apart from extroverts and neurotics, individuals with high degree of agreeableness and conscientiousness have also shown a positive correlation to SWB. They also found that neuroticism reported to be a strong predictor of negative affect and extraversion reported to be a strong predictor of positive affect. Other personality variables like extraversion and neuroticism also affect the psychological wellbeing (Halamandaris and Power 1999; Costa and McCrae 1985).
In a meta-analysis Scheier and Carver (1992) showed evidences that optimism leads an individual to cope with the stress more adaptively, and thereby optimism affects the psychological wellbeing of an individual positively. Chang et al (1997) have also found support for the argument that optimism influences the psychological wellbeing. In a study by Chang et al (2001) it was found that optimism is related to life satisfaction and was mediated by affectivity. In another study, Chang (1998) could prove that optimism significantly moderated the relationship between stress and psychological wellbeing. Ferguson and Goodwin (2010) in a study on older adults found that optimism predicted psychological wellbeing.

Many personality facets have been found to be associated with happiness in many studies (Furnham and Cheng 2000; 1999; Myers and Diener 1995). In a study on first year undergraduate students of a university Furnham and Petrides (2003) have proved that trait EI predicted happiness. They also found that the prediction of happiness by the Big Five personality factors diminished significantly by the introduction of trait EI. Similar results have been reported by Saklofske et al (2003). Trait EI is conceptually and empirically related to wellbeing (Saklofske et al 2003; Palmer et al 2002; Petrides and Furnham 2001). Furnham and Christoforou (2007) have also found that trait EI predicts happiness.

Seo et al (2004) have found that affect can be considered as a motivator which may affect the behavioral outcome. Hence, positive affect may motivate an individual who is facing stress due to job search by instilling positive thoughts of getting an employment soon. Similarly, negative affect may make an individual to think that there is a low chance of finding a job and worry about negative consequences.

Chamorro-Premuzic et al (2007) have proved that gender predicted happiness with females reporting higher levels of happiness when compared
to males. They also proved that trait EI predicted happiness. Among university students, Judeh (2007) have established a positive relationship between EI and happiness, and they also proved that there was no gender difference in EI levels. EI is observed to be related to life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing (Schutte et al. 2010; Law et al. 2008). Even EI training has resulted in the positive development of psychological wellbeing and employability (Nelis et al. 2011).

2.9 COPING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

Impact of job search on wellbeing could depend on some other contextual factors or moderators. In this regard, Folkman and Maskowitz (2004) argued that an individual’s coping effectiveness manifested in one’s wellbeing may be influenced by the fit between characteristics of the context and various types of coping efforts. Job search is a highly stressful situation as the environmental demands on the personal resources are very high. If an individual feels that the demands upon him/her outweigh the available resources to handle the situation, it results in both physical and psychological distress (Aldwin 2000). Stress is therefore neither a stimulus nor a response, it is the manifestation of an ever changing relationship (Terry 1991; Folkman 1984). Hence, the interaction between the situational demands and the coping strategies will affect the wellbeing of an individual. The amount of perceived stress experienced affects both psychological and physical well being and depends on the appraisal of the situation (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Terry (1991) has reported that problem focused coping strategies result in an enhanced wellbeing and emotion focused coping strategies result in low level of wellbeing as well as an increased level of anxiety. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) posit that an appropriate coping strategy effectively reduces any psychological or physiological distress inflicted by the situation, which directly influences psychological wellbeing.
In coping literature a positive relationship between problem focused coping strategy and wellbeing is generally accepted (Thotis 1995). Coping strategies are associated with positive mental health (Folkman et al 1986). Cooper et al (2001) have proved that a person’s coping behavior improves wellbeing overtime. Scheier and Carver (1989) have reported that problem focused coping has resulted in better level of well being. Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) in their study have found that problem focused coping is positively correlated with better psychological wellbeing.

A recent meta-analysis has shown that job search is related to lower psychological well being of job seekers (Mckee-Ryan et al 2005). Thereby suggesting that job search plays the role of a stressor. It has been suggested that job search can be viewed as one type of stressor during unemployment (Waters 2000; Fielden and Davidson 1999). The job search process has been characterized as demanding and full of obstacles (Vinokur and Schul 2002). Job search process can exhaust an individual’s psychological energy and could lead a job seeker to become desperate (Wanberg 1997). According to Lazarus (1991), high levels of life satisfaction will cause positive appraisal of the stressful situation and thereby aid an individual in coping with the stressful events of life more effectively. Frederickson (2001) in his study has proved that happiness makes an individual to be more open minded and act in a more flexible way.

Coping involves personality characteristics, personal relationships and situational parameters (Pierce et al 1996). Discussions of coping take into account what people do and feel following the occurrence of a stressful event. Coping takes different forms depending on the time of occurrence and the associated demands and resources of an individual. Greenglass (2002) have shown that coping is related to the life satisfaction. Xinghua et al (2011) have proved that coping strategies affects the mental health. Burns (1999) have
proved that avoidance coping is related negatively to the life satisfaction. Uskul and Greenglass (2005) proved that optimism and coping predicted psychological wellbeing. They have also proved that women reported higher levels of life satisfaction when compared to men. Further, gender did not predict psychological wellbeing.

Grossi (2008) found that emotion focused coping is positively related to emotional distress when controlled for age, gender, background, length of unemployment and financial strain. Problem focused coping and cognitive restructuring were negatively associated with emotional distress. Their results have proved that coping strategies play an important role in the mental health of unemployed.

Number of studies have shown that emotion focused coping strategies are more effective when compared to problem focused coping strategies, especially if an individual’s controllability of the negative outcome is low (Harreveld et al 2007). Wood et al (2007) have found that coping predicted wellbeing but it did not mediate significantly the relationship between gratitude and wellbeing. Gloria et al (2005) have proved that coping responses predicted psychological wellbeing in women.

Coping strategies have a role in the mental health of the unemployed. Emotion focused coping is related to emotional distress positively, and problem focused coping is negatively related to emotional distress (Grossi 2008). Avoidance coping is related to higher levels of emotional distress (Patton and Donohue 1998). Kinicki and Latack (1990) have suggested that escape oriented coping strategies are effective in controlling stress symptoms when the unemployed individuals perceive less controllability over the outcome. Lin and Leung (2010) in their longitudinal study have found that perceived negativity of unemployment life affected
coping strategies employed by an individual which in turn affected the mental health of an individual.

There are limited studies which look into the construct of coping and psychological wellbeing (McKee-Ryan et al 2005). As coping strategies represent the repertoire of aids an individual will use in a stressful situation (Lazarus and Folkman 1984), it affects the psychological wellbeing of an individual. They are also of the notion that since coping improves the wellbeing, it can be postulated that coping strategies are relevant to psychological wellbeing during job search process.

2.10 CONCLUSION

Numerous studies have attempted to test the role of individual differences in the job search process, but no study has attempted to test the role of EI in the job search process. Though there are separate studies on EI, coping strategies, job search behavior and psychological wellbeing, no comprehensive study has yet been made. This study attempts to do that in the context of first time job seekers.