CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter gives the salient findings, the job search process model of first time job seekers, the implications of the study to the stakeholders and future research directions.

5.1 SALIENT FINDINGS

The following are the salient findings of the study

Reliability, Validity and Factor Structure

- The reliability of SSREI, WCQ, OHQ, ESI and the complete questionnaire is found to be 0.855, 0.822, 0.886, 0.888 and 0.839 respectively.

- Validity of the questionnaire is established through content, face, construct and convergent validities.

- EI is composed of four factors. The four factors identified through CFA are appraisal of emotions, social skills, emotion utilization and optimism / mood regulation.

- The eight coping strategies confirmed using CFA are problem focused coping, wishful thinking, detachment, seeking social support, focus on positive, self blame, tension reduction, and keep to self.
• Uni-dimensional approach is confirmed for psychological wellbeing.

• ESI is composed of nine factors namely pay, other benefits, growth opportunity, image of organisation, proximity/distance, job security, autonomy/independence, self worth and self development.

EI and Coping

• All the four factors of EI predict the problem focused coping strategy employed by a job seeker.

• All the four factors of EI predict the wishful thinking coping strategy employed by a job seeker. All the four factors of EI have a negative association with wishful thinking coping strategy.

• All the four factors of EI predict the detachment coping strategy employed by a job seeker. All the four factors of EI have a negative association with detachment coping strategy.

• All the four factors of EI predict the seeking social support coping strategy employed by a job seeker. All the four factors of EI have relatively equal strength in predicting seeking social support coping strategy.

• All the four factors of EI predict the focus on positive coping strategy employed by a job seeker.

• All the four factors of EI predict the self blame coping strategy employed by a job seeker. All the four factors of EI have a negative association with self blame coping strategy.
• All the four factors of EI predict the tension reduction coping strategy employed by a job seeker. All the four factors of EI have a negative association with tension reduction coping strategy.

• All the four factors of EI predict the keep to self coping strategy employed by a job seeker. All the four factors of EI have a negative association with keep to self coping strategy.

**EI, Coping and Job Search Behaviors**

• All the four factors of EI predict the intensity of job search positively. They do not however explain the source used to collect job information and the amount of job information collected by the job seeker.

• All the eight coping strategies play a significant role only in predicting the intensity of the job search and they do not play a predictive role in the source used to collect job information and the amount of job information collected by the job seeker.

• Coping mediates the relationship between EI and the intensity of job search.

**Job Search Behaviors and Job Search Outcomes**

• The intensity of job search alone predicts the performance in the interview. The amount of job information collected by the job seeker and the source used by the job seeker to collect job information do not predict the performance in the interview.

• The intensity of job search and the source used to collect job information predict the number of job offers a job seeker gets.
The source used to collect job information plays a very minor role when compared to the role played by the intensity of job search. The amount of job information collected by the job seeker does not predict the number of job offers a job seeker gets.

- Intensity of job search alone predicts the number of attempts a job seeker makes to get a job. The amount of job information collected by the job seeker as well as the source used by the job seeker to collect job information do not predict the number of attempts a job seeker makes to get a job. The number of attempts a job seeker makes to get a job is negatively related to the intensity of job search.

**EI, Coping, and Job Search Outcomes**

- All the four factors of EI predict the performance in the interview positively and significantly.
- All the four factors of EI predict the number of job offers a job seeker gets.
- All the four factors of EI predict the number of attempts a job seeker makes to get a job. EI has got a negative relationship with the number of attempts a job seeker makes to get a job.
- The intensity of the job search mediates the relationship between EI and the job search outcomes.
- The coping strategies namely seeking social support, wishful thinking, problem focused coping and detachment predict the performance in the interview, whereas the other coping strategies namely focus on positive, self blame, tension
reduction and keep to self do not play any role in predicting the performance in the interview.

- The coping strategies namely wishful thinking, problem focused coping, keep to self and detachment predict the number of job offers a job seeker gets. The other coping strategies namely focus on positive, self blame, tension reduction and seeking social support do not play any role in predicting the number of job offers a job seeker gets.

- The coping strategies namely wishful thinking, problem focused coping, seeking social support, tension reduction and detachment play a negative role in predicting the number of attempts a job seeker makes to get a job. The other coping strategies namely focus on positive, self blame, and keep to self strategies do not play any role in predicting the number of attempts made to get a job.

- The intensity of the job search does not mediate the relationship between coping strategies and job search outcomes.

- All the three job search outcomes namely performance in the interview, number of job offers a job seeker gets and the number of attempts a job seeker makes to get a job predict ESI. There is a negative relationship between the number of attempts a job seeker makes to get a job and ESI. Performance in the interview predicts ESI more, when compared to the number of job offers a job seeker gets.
EI, Job Search Outcomes and Employment Quality

- All the three job search outcomes namely performance in the interview, number of job offers a job seeker gets and the number of attempts a job seeker makes to get a job predict ESI and the overall satisfaction with the job offer. Performance in the interview predicts ESI and the overall satisfaction with the job offer more when compared to the number of job offers a job seeker gets. The number of attempts a job seeker makes to get a job has a negative relationship with both ESI and the overall satisfaction with the job offer.

- All the four factors of EI predict ESI and the overall satisfaction with the job offer.

- Job search outcomes mediate the relationship between EI and employment quality.

Academic Performance Vs EI

- Academic performance does not where as EI does play a significant role in predicting the intensity of job search.

- Neither EI nor academic performance plays any predictor role in the source used to collect job information and the amount of job information collected.

- Academic performance does not play any role in predicting the performance in the interview. However, EI plays a significant role in predicting the performance in the interview.

- Academic performance does not play any role in predicting the number of job offers a job seeker gets at the end of the job
search process. EI on the other hand plays a significant role in predicting the number of job offers received by the job seeker.

- Both EI and academic performance play a significant role in determining the number of attempts made to get a job.
- Comparatively, EI is a stronger predictor of job search behaviors and job search outcomes.

**Psychological Wellbeing**

- All the four factors of EI moderately predict psychological wellbeing. Out of the four factors, optimism plays a vital role in the prediction.
- Out of the eight coping strategies taken, only three coping strategies have a predictor relationship with psychological wellbeing. Keep to self and tension reduction coping strategies have a negative effect over the psychological wellbeing of a job seeker. Only seeking social support coping strategy has a positive effect over the psychological wellbeing.
- Only EI plays a vital role in predicting the psychological wellbeing and not the coping strategies.
- Psychological wellbeing predicts the intensity of job search moderately. However, it does not predict the source used to collect job information and the amount of job information collected.
- Intensity of job search moderately predicts psychological wellbeing.
- ESI and the overall satisfaction with the job offer moderately predict psychological wellbeing.

- Job search outcomes moderately predict psychological wellbeing of a job seeker.

### 5.1.1 Proposed Model

Based on the research results, a model of job search process for first time job seekers is proposed. The model is shown in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1 Proposed Model: Job Search Process of First Time Job Seekers**
EI predicts the coping strategies adopted by a job seeker during job search process. EI comprises of four factors namely optimism / mood regulation, appraisal of emotion, utilization of emotion, and social skills. Coping strategies comprise of eight different strategies namely problem focused coping, wishful thinking, detachment, seeking social support, focus on positive, self blame, tension reduction and keep to self. Coping strategies as well as EI predict the intensity of job search. In turn, intensity of job search and EI predict job search outcomes. Job search outcomes are performance in the interview, number of job offers received and the number of attempts made to get a job. The job search outcomes as well as EI predict employment quality. Employment quality includes ESI and the overall satisfaction with the job offer.

This model is tested with responses from male respondents alone. The fit indices are shown in Table 5.1.

### Table 5.1 Fit Indices: Proposed Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>$\chi^2$/df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Search Process of First Time Job Seekers</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>0.915</td>
<td>0.909</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TLI, CFI, NFI are greater than 0.90, RMSEA is less than 0.05 and $\chi^2$/df is less than 5, the model can be considered a good fit. The model provides fresh insight into the role of EI and coping strategies on the job search process of first time job seekers. It highlights the need to develop EI as a means to improve a job seeker’s job prospects. Moreover, it also underscores the importance of using appropriate coping strategies during the job search process.
5.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research has implications for various stakeholders. The implications are discussed below.

5.2.1 First Time Job Seekers

Most organizations are applying more stringent measures during the recruitment and selection process which are quite different from the traditional recruitment methods. Stress interview is one such measure which tries to test the job applicants’ stress tolerance. The stress created during the interview process should be handled properly to come out successfully. This could be done only if one has a proper understanding of oneself and knows how to handle others.

First time job seekers commonly have some preconceptions like academic performance alone plays a significant role in determining and shaping one’s career, performance in interviews which are an integral part of any selection process today is not of much consequence, and skills acquired during student life are sufficient for first and subsequent employments, to name a few. These preconceptions need to be changed. Students, in general, are not aware of the need for employability skills (Harvey 2000). EI and coping skills are ‘must possess’ employability skills for any job seeker. Employability skills need constant upgrade. Only then a job seeker can broaden the opportunity for employment. These skills are the key to success in the job search process. Moreover, even for maintaining the job and for career progression these skills are needed.

Most adults fail in their work-life because of problems with adaptability. Adaptability shapes self-extension into the social environment as one connects with society and regulate the vocational behavior to the
changing demands of the organization and the society. Self extension demands proper understanding of the self. This self understanding in turn plays a major role in the wellbeing. EI aids a job seeker in developing coping responses and may well enhance psychological wellbeing.

First time job seekers must learn these skills so that they are able to counter challenges and overcome obstacles in career and life. They should understand the possibility of developing and using EI to build a successful career. Confidence in one’s ability in the job search process generally stems from the ability to handle self as well as the other stakeholders in the process. The resulting success is likely to encourage the individual in subsequent job searches. In sum, job seekers more particularly first time job seekers need to take initiatives to develop their EI and coping skills. Many such workshops are available in India and active participation in a few of these programs perhaps would be beneficial to the first time job seekers.

5.2.2 Teachers

The actual transformation of students into holistic individuals perhaps rests with the teachers. Teachers should take an active part in the improvement of emotional skills besides knowledge that they are expected to impart in the specific field of study. Hence, they must try to develop their own EI. They must have an appreciative knowledge of coping strategies too. Interventions should be designed to encourage teachers to engage in developing emotional awareness and management. Preferably, they must attend a couple of EI and coping workshops to understand how learning of these skills is facilitated. Only then they will be able to impart such training to their students and transform them holistically.
5.2.3 Parents

Several key decisions in career development occur during childhood and adolescence. The typical Indian family sets the stage for the career choices, adjustments, career aspirations, and career pursuits of their children. The role of the parents is to give children a wide variety of experience and exposure to career role models and career related aspirations and aid the children in developing skills to successfully build their career.

A main area in which parents play a role is the development of empathy in children. Involvement of parents in the children’s education should extend from the micro perspective of academic accomplishments to the macro perspective of skill development and at the end into the psychological wellbeing of the children. Parents must understand the role played by EI in the career process. The wellbeing of the children is also enhanced by the development of skills like EI and coping. The parents should play an influential role in the emotional development of their children. They need to focus on creating opportunities for developing empathy and self confidence. Parents should also ensure that their children undergo healthy emotional experiences. As the first stage of learning is set at home, parents play a vital role in influencing the EI and coping skills of their children in the right direction.

5.2.4 Educational Institutes

Educational institutes educate students with the intention to develop their students into industry fit, employable persons. Educators have the prime responsibility of converting the theories and research into practical allocations in the courses (Myers and Tucker 2005). Therefore universities must not only impart knowledge to the students but also hone the competencies required to get a job and be successful in the job.
Universities must produce graduates with the right mix of soft skills and the technical competence to perform well in a changing economy. EI training is one such domain that merits attention today. Rozell et al (2002) have suggested the inclusion of EI training in the core skills taught to students. Students should be provided with early interventions that involve EI skills building. EI training is essential for career success fulfillment.

This study has proved the role of EI over the entire job search process. It is a pointer to the importance that is to be given to EI in molding the personality of first time job seekers. Most Indian educational institutes provide some soft skills training to their students to improve their employment prospects. Given the backdrop of a highly competitive job market, educational institutions must understand their changing roles. The focus today is on holistic development of the students rather than their mere technical competence development. The active and intentional development of EI skills as a normal and integral part of education is therefore underscored.

5.2.5 Policy Makers

Developing emotional wellbeing and emotional engagement are official aims in social policy (Ecclestone 2007). Social policies shape the way individuals construct themselves. Employment is an important area in which policy makers are more concerned about. Government policy to enhance the employability of graduates is part of a wider strategy to extend the skill base of a country.

This study has shown that the EI of a job seeker is linked with the happiness or psychological wellbeing of a job seeker. Concern about emotional wellbeing can well be reflected in the educational policies. An emotionally intelligent society can help the policy makers in mitigating the
problems of unemployment and foster a healthier society. Hence, developing EI of the job seekers and facilitating adoption of more appropriate coping strategies must take the front seat in designing educational policies.

However, proactive steps to develop these skills must necessarily begin in the primary classes itself. This is because formative ages are best suited for moulding personality. Waiting till a student reaches portals of higher education might well be a little too late as it has been proved that over-formalized education damages emotional receptors in the brain (Sutherland 2006). Emotional development is perhaps best addressed with age appropriate interventions that are designed and implemented in a more likeable, informal, yet structured way.

5.2.6 Career Counselors

Interventions invariably create a sense in individuals that they are good enough in handling the problems posed by the job search process. Interventions must be designed to increase the level of confidence which will help job seekers in succeeding in the job search process. Counselors working on career management should look into the development of EI and coping skills of the job seekers as these are proved to play a significant role in different steps of the job search process. EI seems to be a useful framework to help job seekers, especially first time job seekers, to be successful in the job search process.

It is widely believed that academic performance is alone essential for success of a job seeker. Therefore there is a lot of emphasis on performing well in academics, often at the cost of other important and healthy pursuits. The results of this study show that EI plays a more predominant role in getting a job the first time. Hence, EI can be treated as the principal soft skill for career success. As EI is a set of interrelated abilities with a possibility of
being developed at any point of life time, training activities and programs for EI development should be designed and imparted by the career counselors for different career and life stages.

5.2.7 Recruiters

Personality measures are employed more often in the selection process to check the suitability of the candidate for the job as well as for the organization. In India the use of personality tests is fairly limited. With the attrition rates becoming high due to personality-job misfits and pink slips being given for poor performance, the time is perhaps right for recruiters to use personality tests. The EI of the individuals can be tested during personality tests as it is proved to affect the employment quality. After a job seeker enters the organization, this perceived employment quality may undergo a change based on the reality faced. Depending on the gap between the perceived employment quality and the real quality experienced, the performance of an employee is affected. EI affects the perceived employment quality. Therefore, in the induction training programs that are organized by the employers, EI training can be given importance.

5.3 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The following directions for future are given:

Job search is measured by the job intensity and job search effort. In this study these are measured through direct questions. More refined measures can be included for further research. The study has taken only a few variables in each step of the job search process. Inclusion of more variables may lead to more comprehensive results. Further investigations can be carried out with other moderators and mediators. Other possible variables that can be included
are financial commitment, job search clarity, job goals and gender to name a few.

Psychological wellbeing has a causal and reverse causal effect over the coping process. In this study, only the causal effect of coping on the psychological wellbeing has been analyzed. The reverse causal effects may be addressed in future studies.