

## *Review of Literature*

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## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

High quality human resources provide organisations a substantial competitive advantage (Van Hoyer *et al.*, 2013). To hire superior workforce, firms must first attract right applicants, without whom they will not be able to compete in a changing economy. As organisations realize the importance of attracting quality applicants for competitive advantage, they are expending more resources towards recruitment efforts (Leonard, 1999) as attracting and retaining skilled workforce is the biggest challenge they face. With increasing demand for skills, the competition for skilled workers is predicted to rise which in turn makes the 'war for talent' – a phrase first coined by Mckinsey and Co. in 1998 relevant even today (Chambers *et al.*, 1998; Ng and Burke, 2006). According to the global Price Water Coopers (PwC) survey 2014 as many as 63 per cent of the CEOs surveyed say that availability of key skills is the biggest business threat to their organisation's growth (The Economic Times, July 20, 2014). Evidence shows that as a result of shortage of workers with right skills, organizations compete with each other to attract quality applicants (Perez *et al.*, 2014). The cost of a 'bad hire' to an organisation is five times the bad hire's annual salary and hence companies should focus on hiring the right talent (The New Indian Express, May 25, 2015). An appropriate match between the organisation and individuals is critical to the well-being and productivity of both. Ong (2011) in a study state that an important step in recruitment is to increase a firm's attractiveness. Firms that attract more number of qualified applicants have a larger pool of applicants to select from leading to greater utility for firm recruitment activities and a stronger organisational competitive advantage in the future (Williamson *et al.*, 2003). Moreover, organizations spend a great deal of money and efforts in the recruitment process and therefore, for the process to be effective, they should attract the right applicants (Backhaus, 2004).

The other challenge organisations face is retaining skilled workforce. At present, workforce composition is rapidly changing with multiple generations working together and the younger generation set to dominate the workplace. HR experts face the challenge

of managing not only a diverse workforce but also engaging a younger generation known as Millennials or Gen Y, born between 1980 and 2000, most of them in their 20s and 30s. This is because their expectations, aspirations and work values differ considerably from the other generations (Strauss and Howe, 1991; Conger, 1998). These talented, technology-savvy members of Gen Y do not believe in staying with the same organisation and would not mind changing organisations if their expectations are not met. Hence, Jurkiewicz (2000) emphasized that empirical research on exactly what new graduates want from jobs is essential to employers to retain skilled young employees.

Students are an important source of recruitment for skilled jobs such as that of managers, professionals and technical workers (Rynes *et al.*, 1997; Ng and Burke, 2006). A considerable majority of Gen Y individuals are still pursuing their education and poised to pursue employment after completion of their course. Organisations looking to fill vacancies also target students who are about to complete their course. Organisations are always developing strategies to attract the best talent from the target potential hires so as to maximize the effectiveness of recruitment initiatives. It is also a fact that students select the organisations they want to work for, based on the working conditions, growth opportunities, compensation and benefits, and flexibility that employers provide (Ng and Burke, 2006). Empirical evidence establishes that job seekers initial application decisions are influenced by their impressions of the firm's attractiveness as an employer and organizational attractiveness (Rynes, 1991; Barber, 1998; Highhouse *et al.*, 1999; Turban, 2001). Despite the importance of attracting and retaining Gen Y management students, very limited research has investigated factors related to these students' impressions of a firm's attractiveness as an employer.

Consulting firms and independent agencies have been trying to throw light in understanding Gen Y. Survey by Price Water Coopers (PwC) (2013) *Next Gen: A Global Generational Study* provides both qualitative and quantitative insight into the mindset of Millennials. The study reveals that work/life balance is one of the most significant drivers of employee retention and a primary reason this generation of employees may choose a non-traditional professional career track. The Business today and People Strong survey 2013 study "Best Companies to Work for, India 2012-13" findings report career and growth prospects, compensation and benefits, work-life balance, ethics and stability as

the most important factors to employees that make an organisation a fantastic place to work in. Thus, it is evident that the knowledge about what Gen Y look for in the organisations they choose to work will be valuable to employers. A better understating of what drives Gen Y to pursue a job with an organisation will enable organisations to ensure they meet the expectations of this young cohort.

Management education world over is much sought after and in India too it is a popular career choice (Agarwala, 2008). Employers consistently pay MBA graduates almost double the average starting salary offered to undergraduate school students (Murray, 2009), and MBA graduates. According to survey reports by non-profit, independent organisations, research bodies and media on current trends related to career and recruitment from the perspective of students, employees and employers, MBA students have a distinct advantage over others in the job market and there is an increasing demand for MBA graduates. The Graduate Management Admission Council's (GMAC) *mba.com Prospective Students' Survey 2015* notes that even as business school portfolios of masters programs continues to diversify, the MBA continues to be the degree most often considered by prospective students. Majority of the students pursue graduate management education to increase job opportunities. MBA graduates believe that management education gives them a competitive advantage in the job market. According to the survey report, *The Annual Corporate Recruiters Survey* by Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) in conjunction with European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) and the MBA Career Services and Employer Alliance (MBA CSEA) conducted during February and March 2014, more companies report plan to hire graduates of MBA and specialized business master's programs around the world. The report also states that the companies in Asia-Pacific experience robust growth and plan for market expansion in 2014, creating higher demand for MBAs and master-level candidates. The 2015 survey by GMAC reports that 84% employers plan to hire B-School graduates in 2015 compared to 74 % in 2014 of which 59% plan to increase the number of new MBA hires. 75% of Asia-Pacific firms plan to hire MBA graduates up from 69% last year. Ng and Burke (2006) state that business schools have traditionally been a training ground for management education and supplies managers to organisations

and a substantial number of managerial position recruitment takes place on-campus. Therefore, it is important to examine the factors that attract Gen Y MBA graduates so that the organisation can focus on developing suitable recruitment and retention strategies.

In recent years, however, there has been a decline in number of young individuals opting for a course in management. Tier 2 and tier 3 business schools are the hardest hit. With no more than 50% of the seats occupied in the tier 3 business schools and 80-85% in tier 2 business schools, these institutes are struggling for survival (Indian MBA Education, 2012). In the recent years, rising tuition fees and poor placement resulting in decelerating return on investment in the recent years have put a lot of pressure on business schools to fulfil the career expectations of students (Management education in India, 2013). The graduate business schools operate in a competitive environment. They are expected to facilitate placement in the companies enabling great career results (Pfeffer and Fong, 2004). Therefore, business schools have to convey information about their programs in ways that demonstrate how they will deliver value to students personally, professionally, and financially. Graduate business schools can deliver on this value proposition only by gaining knowledge of the outcomes that candidates envision from attending a graduate business program. When considering the business graduates in India, many factors shape their career choice decision e.g. developmental opportunities, pay and benefits associated with the career, relationship, environmental factors, education and skills etc. A knowledge of the factors that influence Gen Y individuals' choice of management as a career will enable business schools to fulfil the career aspirations of these young individuals by matching them with right organisations through placement initiatives; and to provide vocational guidance.

There is a changing pattern of vocational behaviour as a result of changes in the business environment with regards to technology and globalisation (Cooper and Burke, 2002; Kuchinke and Park, 2012). Further, there are changes in the traditional organizational structures, employer-employee relationships, and the work context resulting in changes in how individuals enact their career (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). Employees are self-directed in managing their career and no longer depend on organisations. The younger generation is said to exhibit Protean career orientation as they are self-directed in

managing their career (King, 2003; Sargent and Domberger; 2007). There is no data on the career orientation of Gen Y students in India. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the career orientation of Gen Y management students.

Both the individual and the organization make decisions about one another based on their needs, expectations, and preferences. Based on this fact, Rynes (1991) gave the individual difference hypothesis which suggested that different firms reach out to applicant groups with different characteristics (e.g. expectation, ability, motivation). There is evidence that the relative importance of organisational attributes is associated with individual differences such as race, age and gender (Rynes, Heneman and Schwab, 1980). Ng and Burke (2006) in their study argue that different job and organisational attributes will be attractive to applicants with different characteristics. Tüzüner and Yuksel (2009) in their paper set out to determine the components of employer attractiveness from the perspective of potential employees that is final year business administration students. The study finds that potential employees with different demographic characteristics are clustered in different segments in relation to their employer attractiveness dimensions. Taylor (2005) in a research on university students finds respondents' disciplinary background, and to a smaller extent, work experiences to significantly affect respondents' preferences for organisations and work attributes. Combs *et al.* (2012) find evidence that ethnical identity is more strongly related to the competence and growth aspect of job attribute preferences than status and independence.

Another aspect that organisations are focusing is on gender diversity. With more and more women entering the workforce organisations realize that women are an important part of the workforce and contribute immensely to organisational success. Thus, organizations aiming to attract women workforce may benefit by considering the aspects of work that would appeal to women. As the competition for talent becomes fiercer, organizations are realizing the importance of attracting women but are not very successful in their efforts to retain highly educated women (Cabrera, 2009). Though the number of women entering the workforce is increasing, there are strikingly a very less number of women at the top of the corporate ladder (Cabrera, 2009). It has been reported that more than half of all graduate degrees are now awarded to women, but 98 percent of CEOs at Fortune 500 companies are men (Cabrera, 2009). A total of two-thirds of highly

qualified women either leave work for good, or reject corporate careers in favour of a less conventional career path (Hewlett, 2007; Cabrera, 2009). Cabrera (2009) observes that today, organizations can no longer afford such great losses of talent and must take initiatives to attract and retain women talent.

Thus, there exists a gap in literature especially in India about career aspirations, expectations and career orientation of Gen Y management students; hence the study aims to bridge the gap by throwing light on the career choice factors and career orientation of Gen Y management students. The study also examines the preferred of dimensions employer attractiveness and its impact on job pursuit intention of Gen Y management students of India.

The subsequent part of the chapter discusses the literature reviews on the concepts pertaining to the present study and the relationship among the study variables–

- Gen Y Workforce
- Career Choice Factors
- Protean Career Orientation
- Employer Attractiveness
- Career Choice, Protean Career Orientation and Employer Attractiveness
- Job Pursuit Intention
- Employer Attractiveness and Job Pursuit Intention

## **2.1 The Generation Y Workforce**

Organisations today not only face the challenges of operating in a highly globalised environment but also managing a diverse workforce. In addition to larger cultural and national diversity, firms now manage employees with a greater generational diversity (Beechler and Woodward, 2009). Today, in many workplaces, three, and sometimes four, generations work together — from ‘Traditionalists’ and ‘Baby Boomers’ to Generations ‘X’ and ‘Y’(Smola and Sutton, 2002; Beechler and Woodward, 2009). Due to better sanitation and health care availability people are living longer and therefore, people working past their retirement age alongside the new entrants is common.

Managing this multigenerational workforce is referred to as one of the key challenges for managers today (Smola and Sutton, 2002; Sujansky, 2004), especially the latest entrants – Gen Y or Millennials born between 1977 – 1997 (Meister and Willyerd, 2010).

A generational cohort is defined as “individuals born in the same time period who are influenced by a particular set of historical and cultural conditions” (Beck, 2001, p. 37). Few other studies describe generational cohorts as a group of people who became adults during the same time period and shared “significant life events at critical developmental stages” (Strauss and Howe, 1991; Smola and Sutton, 2002). Therefore, individuals born during the same time period share common experiences which in turn influences the attitudes, behaviors, and work styles (Strauss and Howe, 1991; Conger, 1998; Valentine and Powers, 2013). These experiences results in each generational group having a unique pattern of behaviour based on their shared experiences (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Beck, 2001; Smola and Sutton, 2002; Westerman and Yamamura, 2007; Hess and Jepsen, 2009) that distinguishes one generation from the other (Smola and Sutton, 2002; Patterson, 2007). The people of the same generation are united through shared common values, and majority of them also experience the world in similar ways (Smola and Sutton, 2002; Patterson, 2007; Fernandez, 2009).

It is very important to understand what these Gen Y individuals look for in an organisation they wish to pursue employment (Loughlin and Barling, 2001; Smola and Sutton, 2002) for organisations need to attract and retain them. This is because Gen Y individuals represent the workforce of the future as they are the latest entrants to the workforce and set to outnumber other generations and make up a large part of the labour pool (Smola and Sutton, 2002). This generation workforce are technologically savvy which makes them highly desirable in today’s job markets (Ng and Burke, 2006) and a target of competition for firms (Ng and Burke, 2006). As the Millennial generation or Gen Y has different values and expectations than their predecessors, there is lot of attention towards research on Millennials and their expectations (Pew Research Center, 2010) and studies available have focused on the characteristics, aspirations and expectations of this cohort to better understand and channelize their talent for organisational advantage.



Scholars differ in the age range of this generation and the boundaries given vary. Past literature defines the beginning of Generation Y as early as 1977 and as late as 1981 and ending as early as 1994 and as late as 2002 (Hagevik, 1999; Karefalk, Petterssen and Zhu 2007; Erickson 2008). Smola and Sutton (2002) define Generation Y as born between 1980 to 1994 and in PwC study it is given that Gen Y individuals are those born between 1980 and 1995 and currently under 35 years of age (PwC, 2013). Some of the scholars also note the year range of Gen Y as they follow Gen X, as ranging from 1978 to 2000 (Greene, 2003; Leo, 2003; Sujansky, 2004; Howe and Strauss, 2004; Patterson, 2007; Vejar, 2008). This study considers Gen Y-ers born between 1980 and 2000, falling in the age range of 20 - 35 years.

It may be unsuitable to make generalization about individuals in a generational cohort, but it is understood that each generation is unique as they share common influential experiences (Fernandez, 2009) and tends to develop a collective personality that influences the way members lead their lives, their attitudes, desires and expectations towards work and organizations (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Smola and Sutton, 2002; Weston, 2006). According to Twenge (2006) and Ng *et al.* (2010) Gen Y individuals have experienced extraordinary changes in socioeconomic characteristics, rapid technological advances and an increasingly globalized and connected world. Their experiences are very different from the experiences of previous generations (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002; Smola and Sutton, 2002). Apart from these external influencers which shaped their general values and work values, Millennials have also been influenced by internal family dynamics as the Baby Boomer parents have been noted to giving Millennials lot of positive reinforcement and attention. Furthermore, parents, and in some cases society at large, have moved toward rewarding children for participation, rather than performance—leading some to refer to this generation as “trophy kids” (Aslop, 2008). Together, both the environmental and internal household dynamics influenced Millennials to have a set of work values that are somewhat different from previous generations (Twenge, 2006; Ng *et al.*, 2010; Twenge *et al.*, 2010).

Literature exploring the characteristics of Gen Y suggests that they are trustworthy, supportive of social causes (Furlow, 2011; Valentine and Power, 2013). They are entrepreneurial thinkers; who love challenging work and are creative in

expression with clear direction; they seek managerial support but do not prefer micromanagement as they value autonomy in accomplishing their tasks in their own way, at their own pace (Martin 2005; Meier and Crocker, 2010). Members of Generation Y are said to be more tolerant, and better travelled than many of their parents. In addition, members of Generation Y have been described as individualistic, well-educated, technologically savvy, sophisticated, mature, and structured (Syrett and Lammiman, 2003). They are group-oriented and better at working in teams than previous generations (Buanhe and Kovary, 2003; Martin, 2005; Spiro, 2006; Meier and Crocker, 2010) but they also have a strong sense of identity (Pesquera, 2005; Peterson, 2004). Even though some suggest that Gen Y are disloyal to their employers (Kovarik, 2008), it is likely that their expectations are not being met and therefore they do not mind changing organisations that is likely to value their worth. Compared to the previous generations, this cohort is characterized by materialistic, and consumer culture (Hanzaee and Aghasibeig, 2010). Literature has reported strong evidence of the significance of remuneration and compensation to Gen Y individuals (Rolfe, 2001; Smola and Sutton, 2002; Hess and Jepsen, 2009).

To conclude Gen Y represents the newest and one of the largest cohort entering the workforce. There is enough agreement that Gen Y members come with different work attributes from employees who preceded them. The TeamLease India Labor Report of 2009 estimates that by 2025, 300 million people will enter the labor force by 2025, of which 25 percent of the world's skilled workers will be Indians. India is experiencing a youth bulge with nearly two-thirds of Indians are under 35 and half are under 25. India's large youth population is often called "demographic dividend". By 2020, India will be the youngest country in the world, with a median age of 29 years (The New York Times, 2014).

This large segment of workforce has the potential to become the highly productive workforce in the world. They are technology savvy, collaborative, unconventional, are flexible and possess multitasking skills. Gen Y values opportunities to learn, prefers exciting and fun workplaces, is ambitious and prioritises work-life balance. They are ambitious and are job hoppers and would not hesitate to change organisations if their

expectations are not met. Therefore, the challenge for managers today is to develop an understanding of the characteristics and expectations of these young individuals to prevent losing them and utilizing them in the interest of the organization.

## **2.2 Career Choice Factors**

Individuals usually choose to pursue a course because it will enable them to attain their desired career and be successful. A growing number of young people aspire to attain a degree in management education, as a popular notion surrounding the MBA degree is that it will enhance their employability and help fast track their careers (Hay and Hodgkinson, 2006; Mihail and Elefterie, 2006; Agarwala, 2008; Malik and Khera, 2014). Also a degree in MBA is believed to improve salary and hierarchical position (Carnall, 1992; Baruch and Peiperl, 2000; Calvillo, 2010). Arthur *et al.* (1989, p. 8) define career as “evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time”. In India an increasing number of students choose to pursue management education as it is believed that Business Schools offer one of the most well paid careers. They also believe that the jobs they obtain will provide them opportunities for career advancement and significant levels of pay. It is therefore essential to understand the factors that influence these young individuals’ choice of management as a career.

Studies that examine the factors that influence students’ career choice identify a number of varied factors (Ginzberg, 1951; Super, 1957; O’Connor and Kinnane, 1961; Paolillo and Estes, 1982; Felton *et al.*, 1994; Ng, Burke and Fiksenbaum, 2008; Malach-Pines and Kaspi-Baruch, 2008; Anwer, Nas and Raza, 2013). The earliest widely used classification in career choice studies is the three-dimensional framework by Carpenter and Foster (1977) and Beyon *et al.* (1998). The three factors are:

- (1) intrinsic (interest in the job, personally satisfying work);
- (2) extrinsic (availability of jobs, well paying occupations); and
- (3) interpersonal (influence of parents and significant others).

Another classification is by Chuene *et al.* (1999) and Yong (1995) who categorised factors influencing career choice into the three areas – 1) altruistic reasons: having career purpose as serving and finding meaning in improving society and helping others

2) intrinsic reasons: pursuing a career for personal satisfaction and because of interest in the subject and career itself 3) extrinsic reasons: pursuing a career for external or objective gains pertaining to societal or job market trends like security, money and incentives.

Literature reveals a number of studies on individual's career choice in specific occupational groups. Paolillo and Estes (1982) compares career-choice factors of accountants with those of other professionals and reveals distinctive differences in career-choice and motivating factors among the four professions accountants, attorneys, engineers, and physicians. Auyeung and Sands (1997) investigate the relative influence of career-choice factors on accounting students from different cultural backgrounds. Results indicate that the factors: parental influence, peer influence, teacher influence and association with others in the field, have greater impact on career choices for Hong Kong and Taiwanese students, whereas Australian students tended to be more influenced by aptitude for subject matter. Sherrill (2004) examines the Career choices and factors influencing students to enter dual degree MD/MBA programs offered by medical schools. According to the results the most influential factors that influence these students' decisions to enter the MD/MBA program are career opportunities, opportunity for innovation, opportunity to make a difference in medicine, own skills and abilities, opportunities to lead in medicine, and one's career interests. Another interesting cross-cultural study by Myburgh (2005) examines the career choices of Asian, black and white students to identify the factors motivating Accountancy students to become chartered accountants (CAs). Factors such as decision time-frame of career choice, socio-economic background, students' perceptions of the benefits/constraints of the CA profession, and other job-related factors, are analysed. According to the results, students attributed their career choice to their school accounting performance.

Gokuladas (2010) in a study proposes that compared to extrinsic and interpersonal reasons, intrinsic reasons will be more influential in deciding engineering students' career choices in India. The findings of the study reveal that majority of engineering students are influenced by intrinsic reasons while selecting their first career-choice. Study by Goffnet *et al.* (2013) investigates the impact of extrinsic (e.g., salary, career location, career security) and intrinsic (e.g., advancement opportunity, leadership opportunity, challenging work) Career Choice Factors on Career Satisfaction among supply chain

management employees and finds that people who placed more value on careers that provide leadership opportunities, significant responsibility and future earnings potential and place less value on how respected they think the profession is, are more likely to be satisfied with a career in logistics. They also conclude that respondents place maximum importance on a mix of extrinsic and intrinsic factors when selecting Logistics as their specialization. The five most important criteria are job security, demand for logistics/ SCM skills, opportunities for advancement, leadership opportunities and perceived future earnings.

There are studies that examine career choice factors among MBA students; though the number is less (Ozbilgin *et al.*, 2005; Agarwala, 2008; Ng, Burke and Fiskerbaum, 2008; Pines and Baruch, 2008). With regards career choices of educated workers such as those with MBA degrees assume special importance as early careers can especially have lasting influence on their future and job choice decisions (Higgins, 2001). Cem Tanova, Mine Karataş-Özkan, Gözde İnal, (2008) in their study identifies the reasons of MBA students' career choice and explores the contextual and gender related aspects of their career choice. Their findings reveal differences in the influence of cultural values and gender on career choice and development of MBA students. Study by Malach-Pines and Kaspi-Baruch (2008) addresses the influence of culture and gender on the choice of management career among MBA students in 7 countries. The paper examines five theories – two that focuses on culture and career choice, Hofstede's (1991) and Schneider's ASA model (1987), and three theories focusing on the influence of gender (Evolutionary theory, Social Role theory and Social Construction theory). Findings show large cross-cultural difference and small gender difference in the aspirations associated with career choice in management. This finding supports Hofstede's (1991) research and social construction theory that predicts large cultural differences but does not support Schneider's ASA model that predicts no cross cultural differences. Also the findings support to a limited extent the social role theory that predicts both gender and cross-cultural differences and to a very small extent supports the evolutionary theory which predicts large and universal gender differences.

The study by Vigoda-Gadot and Grimland (2008) explores beyond culture and gender the values shared by MBA students at the start of their education. They report individual values to have a significant effect on the important decisions people take in

their life like that of a choice of a career. Ng, Burke and Fiksenbaum, (2008) in their research investigate the role of values, family and non-family influences on career choice and career goals of US MBA students. Very few gender differences are observed in the study. Findings also reveal that neither family nor non-family influences predict career outcomes which are indicative of the independent nature of US students. Similar study has been done in India by Tanuja Agarwala (2008). The study explores the importance of different individuals in the family and in work in making a career choice in management. The study also focuses on the relationship of cultural values of individualism versus collectivism. Findings report father as the most important individual influencing the career choice of Indian management students and the predominant cultural value is collectivism.

Study by Kulkarni and Nithyanand (2013) examines why social influence is a key factor in job choice decisions of graduating MBA students and reports that parents and peers influence the job choice decisions of these relatively young job seekers. They find that respondents are influenced by the social pressures on job choice decisions. Respondents indicate only two reasons why social influence may impact their own job choice decisions. The first and more predominant reason is pressure from their families on account of the family's expectations of jobs and expected compensation based on media or other sources, or the family's insistence on clearing educational loans. The second reason is proving one's worth to their peer groups. In a study by Anwer, Nas and Raza (2013) explore the factors that influence the full time working students to join MBA programs in the evening classes in the private universities of Islamabad - Pakistan. The results reveal high influence of motives like career growth and higher salaries among the respondents to opt MBA in different private universities of Islamabad.

Previous studies in the area of career choice that examines gender differences give mixed results. Herzberg *et al.* (1957) establish that men place more importance on job content or intrinsic factors than females. Studies by Bartol (1974), and Bartol and Manhardt (1979) report similar results. Subsequent studies report less employment related gender differences (Barber, 1998, Agarwala, 2008; Gokuladas, 2010). The findings of a study by Malach-Pines and Kaspi-Baruch (2008) show very small gender differences in the study variables and that while women derive a greater sense of meaning

from their work, their expectations for an MBA to increase their salary and opportunity for a promotion are similar to men's. Ng, Burke and Fiskensbaum (2008) also note that with few exceptions men and women appear to have similar patterns in the factors affecting their career choice.

Over the last twenty years increasing participation of women in labour-force has raised new issues for research on careers (Valcour and Tolbert, 2003; Domenico and Jones, 2006). More and more women have entered to what were once exclusively male career paths (Blau *et al.*, 2002). Thus, investigation of gender differences in career paths is important (Valcour and Tolbert, 2003) to induct more women into workplace by understanding their preferences and then filling the skill gap.

### **Gen Y and Career Choice**

In India rarely the career “choice” of MBA students and the factors influencing this choice been studied (Agarwala, 2008). Moreover, there are hardly any studies that examine the career choice factors of Gen Y individuals though most of the literature reviewed studies the career choice of young students. The recent studies of less than a decade on students may be considered as career choice studies pertaining to individuals belonging to Gen Y as most of them are likely to be between the age range of 20-35 years (Sherrill, 2004; Ozbilgin *et al.*, 2005; Myburgh, 2005; Pines and Baruch, 2008; Ng *et al.*, 2008; Tanova *et al.*, 2008; Vigoda-Gadot and Grimland, 2008; Agarwala, 2008; Gokuladas, 2010; Goffnet *et al.*, 2013). These studies though do not specifically relate the respondents as Gen Y or Millennials. Today, with changing nature of work and business environment it remains unclear whether students pursue a business education for career advancement and the expectations of a large salary, or for the sake of the knowledge and competencies in pursuit of a management career as a profession (Ng *et al.*, 2008). Studies also report that apart from socio-cultural influences, economic, and political changes affect the career choices of young people. With changes in market economy, the university students who put self-interest before societal interests are likely to rate money and power as the primary motivators in finding a job (Bai, 1998). On the other hand findings of Agarwala's (2008) study report “Skills, competencies and abilities” as the most important deciding factor for choosing a career among MBA students.

From the available literature it is understood that the young individuals choose a career based on their skills and education, career outcome motives like benefits associated with specific career. These can be benefits like pay and salary, promotion opportunities, opportunities to learn and get trained etc. then external factors like socio – cultural, political, and economic or market factors are also likely to influence the career choice of Gen Y members. It is therefore worth exploring the factors that influence Gen Y individuals to consider MBA as a career choice.

### **2.3 Protean Career Orientation**

Career is “an individual’s work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of organizations that form a unique pattern over the individual’s life span” (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009, p. 1543). The definition identifies both mobility such as between levels, jobs, employers, occupations, and industries, as well as the perceptions of the individual of the career events, career alternatives, and outcomes of how one defines career success (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). In simple terms career can be seen as a life journey (Baruch, 2006). In the past organisations had been characterised as having rigid hierarchical structure and operating within a stable environment (Bozbura and Arslanbaz, 2012). Further, careers had been predictable, linear and secure with organisations taking care of the responsibility of employee career management (Bozbura and Arslanbaz, 2012).

Today, increasing global competition, technological advances, escalating rates of changes in product and process technologies have lead organizations also to respond to a rapidly changing marketplace. The result is weakening role of organized labour, organizational restructuring, down-sizing, outsourcing, and lessening of the hierarchical levels (Cooper and Burke, 2002; Kuchinke and Park, 2012). They do not remain with a single employer for their lifetime as the idea of lifetime employment with a single organisation no longer holds. The traditional employee-employer contract where employees exchanged loyalty and commitment for job security and lifetime employment, has been replaced by transactional relationship (Rousseau, 1989; Frenandez and Enache, 2008) and less loyalty from both sides (Hall, 2002). Together with these, changes in the workforce diversity have altered traditional organizational structures, employer-employee relationships, and the work context, creating changes in how individuals enact their



career (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). Hall (1976) used the term ‘protean’ to describe this career approach that is not dependent on the organisation but proactively managed by the individual. This type of career reflects changes in employment relationships and organizational structures, driven by globalization, competitive pressures, and technological advances (Arthur and Rousseau 1996; Lips-Wiersma and Hall 2007).

The protean career therefore shifts the focus of career management to the individual while the organisation’s role is to provide employees with opportunities for growth and development. As Hall (1996, p. 10) notes, protean career is ‘a contract with oneself, rather than with the organization’. Individuals take responsibility for transforming their career path, in line with their personal aspirations (Grimland *et al.*, 2011). Individuals with protean career orientation take care of their career management; demonstrate greater mobility, a more whole-life perspective and a developmental progression (Hall, 1976; 2002; Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). In addition, Briscoe and Hall (2002) describe individuals with protean career as being 1) values-driven, i.e. making career decisions based on their own values as against the organisation’s values. The person’s internal values guide them in managing their career and attain career success; and being 2) self-directed, playing an independent role in managing their career and being proactive in terms of performance and learning. Further, individuals with protean career orientation will be proactive and independent and will not depend on external standards (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, there is a change in the way individuals approach career with professionals becoming more self-reliant, flexible and mobile. According to Hall and Chandler (2005), the extreme form of this Protean Career perspective would occur when the person’s attitude toward his/her career reveals a sense of calling or awareness of purpose in his/ her work.

Briscoe and Hall (2006) further argue that “the Protean Career Orientation does not imply particular behaviour, such as job mobility, but rather it is a mindset about the career—more specifically an attitude towards the career that reflects freedom, self-direction, and making choices based on one’s personal values” (Briscoe and Hall, 2006, p. 6). Briscoe *et al.* (2006) developed an instrument to measure Protean Career Orientation. They also developed a scale to assess boundaryless mindset. Hall and Chandler (2005) characterized the protean career attitude as freedom, growth, professional commitment and fulfillment, and psychological success through the pursuit

of meaningful work. Therefore, as rightly put by Briscoe and Hall (2006), a Protean Career orientation reflects the extent to which an individual adopts such a perspective to their career. Hall (2002) alleges that the modern career growth involves work challenges, relationships, and lifelong learning— all of which are required for continued career success (Hall 1996). Hall (2002), and Park and Rothwell, (2009) in their study state that Protean career approach is based on continuous learning. Also, the goal of the protean career is subjective career success (Hall, 1976, 2002; Briscoe and Hall, 2006; Grimland *et al.*, 2011; Park and Rothwell, 2009). The aim of the employee in the protean career is therefore to develop the skills and competencies that ensure employability in a changing work context (Briscoe *et al.*, 2005; Hess and Jepsen, 2009).

Few studies on Protean Career orientation are discussed. Protean career has been studied principally with reference to the mid-career stage with the exception of Hall and Mirvis (1995) who examined older workers, and Briscoe *et al.* (2006) who studied undergraduates. Sargent and Domberger (2007) examine both undergraduates with work experience and individuals in the early stage of their career. They investigate the development of the Protean Career orientation in the early career stages of students shaped by their personal values, as well as how the early career experiences influence protean orientation. They find protean career is identifiable in the cohort or adults early in their careers and also observes that preferences for extrinsic success and organisational career management are more characteristic of the traditional career. Sargent and Domberger (2007) also reveal in the study the two personal values pursued in a protean career - work with contribution as the preference for work which made a societal impact, and work-life balance, where a job did not consume an excessive amount of the individual's life.

Reitman and Schner (2003) assess whether managers have achieved the promised path and whether demographic and career factors differ for those on promised versus protean paths. Their survey uses longitudinal data three times over a 13-year period to survey MBA students. Their findings demonstrate that the promised career path still exists for one-third of the MBA students managers on promised paths are to a considerable extent older and worked in larger companies but did not have greater income, managerial level, career satisfaction, company loyalty, or job security than those on protean paths.

Fernandez and Enache (2008) investigate whether protean and boundaryless career attitudes have any kind of impact on employees' affective commitment and report that protean and boundaryless career attitudes are important in predicting affective commitment. Kuchinke and Park (2012) in their study explore and provide critical observations on the concept of the self-directed (protean) career in light of the empirical findings on the changing landscape of work and working in Germany and Korea. They conclude with a call for the careful evaluation of the costs and benefits of self-directed career, and the need for HRD research and theory to address the implications of the changing nature of work. Study by Park and Rothwell (2009) gives an empirical assessment of the individual protean career attitude and investigates the relationships between the protean career attitude and other variables, including organizational learning climate, individual career-enhancing strategy and work orientation. They find creating opportunity career-enhancing strategy influences the protean career attitude and that the organizational learning climate has a significant indirect effect on the protean career attitude. Also, that subjective career success and not objective career success, is the fundamental assumption of the protean career concept.

Hall (2004) in a study traces the link between the protean concept and the context of growing organizational re-structuring, decentralization, and globalization and concludes with a suggestion for examining situations where people are pursuing their "path with a heart" with the intensity of a calling. Enache *et al.* (2008) in their study explore the relationship between boundaryless and protean career attitudes and psychological career success, within today's complex and ever changing organizational context and reveal that the relationship between values-driven inclination of protean career orientation and psychological career success is moderated by the individual's perceived value fit with his or her employing organization. Dries *et al.* (2008) examine whether four different generations (Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y) hold different beliefs about career. They find that majority of participants still having "traditional" careers, although contrary to the belief Generation Y exhibit larger incongruity between career preferences and actual career situation as they show old-fashioned" belief or preference about career. Dries *et al.* (2008) offers a possible explanation to the result that this set of student Generation Y generally is just dreaming about their future career as they have not yet been confronted with career reality today, hence the incongruities.

Apart from these, studies have also explored the role of gender in protean career orientation. There have been mixed findings regarding new career patterns being more prevalent among women. McDonald *et al.* (2005) in their study find that the trend towards protean careers is evident and is more pronounced for women than for men contrary to some other studies where men were more career-oriented than women (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Ng *et al.*, 2008). Gender differences in protean career orientation have received considerable theoretical attention. Sullivan and Baruch (2009) predict important gender as well as generational differences in career attitudes and behaviours and called for further research in the areas. Quite a few researches have established that protean career is more of a characteristic for women (e.g. Eby, 2001; Valcour and Tolbert, 2003; Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). Kim and Jyung (2011) found that individual characteristic variables such as gender, educational background, and voluntary department transfers have high predictive value in explaining protean career attitudes, while organizational factors appear to have little influence.

While some studies report gender differences (Ng, Burke, and Fiksenbaum, 2008) the others report no differences (e.g. Briscoe *et al.*, 2006; Agarwala, 2008; Vigoda-Gadot and Grimland, 2008; Forrier *et al.*, 2009; Volmer and Spurk, 2010). Hall (2004) in a study finds a person's career orientation is unrelated to gender. Segers *et al.* (2008) report no gender differences in self-directedness, but find that women score higher on the values driven dimension than men. Cabrera (2008) studies protean career orientation among women who return to work after a gap and find that majority of them follow a protean career orientation to balance their personal lives. Cabrera reports that in line with a protean orientation, the women were self-directed in managing their careers, rejecting the traditional corporate careers and also exhibit a protean orientation in that their decisions were driven by personal values. Mostly all of the women who change their career orientation did so in order to balance their work and non-work lives. As Cabrera (2008) examined women in their mid-career stages the difficulty of fulfilling both family responsibilities and work demands led these women to follow protean career which allowed them to achieve subjective career success albeit less monetary rewards.

## **Gen Y and Protean Career Orientation**

Devotion to one company is fast becoming an idea of the past with Gen Y (Erickson, 2008; Meier *et al.*, 2010). It has also been reported that Gen Y members associate themselves less with the organization that employs them and more with the type of work which they perform (Lloyd, 2007). Gen Y employees change jobs frequently so are job hoppers and have no issues in changing employers (Hall, 2002; Saxena and Jain, 2012). Apart from them being more likely than previous generations to change jobs frequently the critical components needed to retain them are challenging work, job training, career advancement and work environment (Smith, 2008; Terjesen's and Frey, 2008; Yahoo! HotJobs/ Robert Half International., 2008). They no longer depend on organisations to manage their career and take responsibility of managing their own career. To advance in their careers they may decide to leave organizations and occupations, and make both upward and lateral career moves to gain more skills and experience. Gen Y employees dislike being stuck at one level for a long time and prefer learning and growing. They would like to grow quickly so they prefer a job that recognizes performance and not tenure (Meier *et al.*, 2010). It has also been shown that Gen Y expects all these traits in a job and will also do whatever it takes to find such a job. They have no problem moving on somewhere that will offer them what they want. Cruz (2007) explains that Millennials are inclined to change organizations if they perceive better opportunities offering greater levels of appreciation.

Dries *et al.* (2008) in their studies posit that the younger generation will be protean in their career orientation. Therefore, it may be proposed that Millennials or the Gen Y employees will demonstrate Protean Career approach, though according to Reitman and Schneer (2003) MBA graduates enjoy both self-managed and promised (conventional) career path.

In a study Hess and Jepsen (2009) state that the membership of a particular generational group and career stage exert some influence over how employees perceive their protean career obligations and how employees respond to different levels of Protean Career fulfilment. According to a research by Vigoda-Gadot and Grimland (2008), individuals exhibiting protean careers are influenced by values when making choice of

career. Their findings reveal MBA students having protean view of career. Agarwala (2008) in her study investigated protean versus traditional career orientation of MBA students from India and note that protean career guides the career orientation of these students. The present study therefore examines the extent of protean career orientation among Gen Y management students.

## **2.4 Employer Attractiveness**

‘Employer Attractiveness’ is a closely related concept to ‘employer branding’ (Berthon *et al.*, 2005; Schlager *et al.*, 2011) and has received a lot of attention from scholars in the recent years. ‘Employer Attractiveness’ has been broadly discussed in different areas like vocational behaviour (Soutar and Clarke, 1983), management (Gatewood *et al.*, 1993), applied psychology (Jurgensen, 1978; Collins and Stevens, 2002) and marketing (Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Gilly and Wolfenbarger, 1998; Ambler, 2000; Ewing *et al.*, 2002). It is “the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organisation” (Berthon *et al.*, 2005, pp 156). Accomplishing ‘Best Employer’ status, being ranked as “Best place to work’ or being voted as “Employer of Choice’ by media and rating agencies is what organisations strive for to attract talent in the employment marketplace. Employer attractiveness is the antecedent of employer branding (Berthon *et al.*, 2005); the more attractive an employer, the more is its brand equity. Berthon *et al.* (2005) developed a scale to measure Employer Attractiveness. The scale has five dimensions – Development Value, Interest Value, Economic Value, Social value and Application Value. Yaqub and Khan (2011) in their study of Pakistani students find positive relationship of employer branding and organizational attractiveness and note that respondents have given more importance to friendly and informal culture and show more intentions to join a prestigious employer. Similarly, Wilden *et al.* (2006) mention that employer branding actually reflects the attitude of potential and current employees towards job and organizational attributes which builds the employer brand image.

A favourable employer brand affects recruitment outcomes like job pursuit intentions, organizational attraction, acceptance intention, and job choice (Ong, 2011). In a study, Ong (2011) states that potential applicants’ attraction to organization and acceptance intentions are the consequences of employer branding.

## **Employer Branding**

The concept of employer brand is borrowed from marketing (Tüzüner and Yuksel, 2009) and is of interest to scholars of both Human Resources and Marketing discipline. The application of branding principles to human resource management has been termed “employer branding”. Thorne (2004) credits Simon Barrow for coining the term “employer brand” in 1990. Ambler and Barrow (1996) define employer branding as ‘the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company’. Furthermore, Sullivan (2004) defines employer branding as “a targeted, long term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm”. The employer brand puts forth an image showing the organization as a “good place to work” (Lloyd, 2002; Sullivan, 2004). When building an employer brand companies aim to identify themselves as an employer of current employees, as a potential employer to applicants and as a partner to customers (Harding, 2003). According to Jenner and Taylor (2009), employer branding “represents organisations’ efforts to communicate to internal and external audiences what makes it both desirable and different as an employer”. The term employment brand highlights the unique aspects of the firm’s employment offerings or environment (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). Increasingly, firms are using employer branding to attract the best possible workers. Employer branding, or employer brand management, involves promoting a clear view of what makes a firm different and desirable as an employer both internally and externally (Cable and Turban, 2001; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004), thus enabling the firm to acquire distinctive human capital. According to Ong (2011) employer branding results in employer attractiveness therefore, a study on the dimensions influencing job-seekers attractiveness to organisations will provide organisations the necessary information for initiating strategies to attract superior applicants.

Thus, it is understood that employer attractiveness and employer branding are related concepts. To get a deeper insight on employer attractiveness, two theoretical concepts namely Person-Organisation Fit and Instrumental-Symbolic Framework are given below which explains employer attractiveness.

## Person-Organisation Fit

A set of studies in the area of organisational attractiveness relates to achievement of person - organization fit for organisations aiming to achieve competitive advantage through right employees. Schneider's (1987) attraction- selection- attrition (ASA) model supports this approach (Lievens, Decaestecker, and Coetsier, Geirnaert, 2001). A premise underlying the ASA model is that "people in any organization are unique in that they are the ones attracted to, chosen by, and who choose to remain with an organization" (Schneider *et al.*, 1998). Literature establishes that person-organisation fit affects job choice decision (Cable and Judge, 1996). Schneider's (1987) "attraction-selection-attrition" model states that as people are attracted to different types of organizations, depending on interests, personality and needs (e.g. for achievement, affiliation, power or stability). According to the attraction component of Schneider's model job seekers base their person - organisation fit perceptions on organizations' values, and they make job choice decisions based on these perceptions. As applicants are attracted to organizations whose perceived traits were similar to their own, the impact of organizational and job characteristics is not the same for all applicants (Lievens *et al.*, 2001, p. 581).

Other studies with similar results state that congruence between job applicants' personalities and organizations' attributes affects their job decisions (Burke and Deszca, 1982; Bretz, Ash, and Dreher, 1989; Judge and Bretz, 1992; Turban and Keon, 1993; Cable and Judge, 1994). Cable and Judge (1996) in their study examine the determinants of Person - organisation fit, value congruence and demographic similarity. Value congruence is congruence between job seekers' perceptions of an organization's values and their perceptions of their own values, and demographic similarity is in terms of age, race, gender, socio economic status, etc., between job seekers and organizational recruiters. Another research by Carless (2005) examines the relationship between perceived person-job and person-organization fit and organizational attraction, intentions to accept a job offer, and actual job offer decision. The research findings reveal that perceptions of person-job and person-organisation fit influence organisational attraction. Furthermore, the study suggests that relationship between person-job fit perceptions and intentions to accept a job offer is mediated by organizational attraction. Backhaus (2003) also investigates the importance of person-organisation fit to job seekers and establishes



person-organisation fit as a job search criterion. The study also suggests that not only situational factors but also dispositional factors like the desire to control or personal control influences the assessment of organisational attractiveness. Another article by Vandenaabeele (2008) assesses public service motivation as a possible influence in the attractiveness of government as an employer by embedding it into a person-organization fit framework.

### **Instrumental-Symbolic Framework**

Another set of research on organisational attractiveness draws from the instrumental – symbolic framework of marketing literature that conceptualize brand image as the perceptions related to product related attributes and symbolic benefits as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory (Keller, 1993). Instrumental and symbolic brand attribute refers to the functional and emotional associations that are assigned to a brand by the customers and prospects (Shavitt, 1990; Keller, 1993). Instrumental attributes are known as functional aspects of Employer Brand Attribute (Ong, 2011). Lievens and Highhouse (2003) define instrumental attributes as “objective, concrete and factual attributes that is inherent in a job or organization”. Examples of instrumental attributes are pay, location, opportunities for advancement, career programs. Much traditional recruitment research has found empirical support for the importance of instrumental job and organizational characteristics as determinants of applicants’ attraction to the firms: organizational characteristics (e.g., Turban and Keon, 1993; Bretz and Judge, 1994; Cable and Graham, 2000; Turban, 2001), and job characteristics (e.g., Barber and Roehling, 1993; Turban *et al.*, 1993). Based on instrumental-symbolic framework in marketing literature, research by Lievens and Highhouse (2003) and Lievens *et al.* (2007), state that these instrumental attributes cannot solely explain the variance among the job applicants’ perceptions of the firms as employers. They contend that potential applicants may also associate symbolic meanings with a firm and employ them as the basis of differentiation among the employers.

Symbolic attributes is also known as emotional aspects of the employer brand or employer brand personality. Symbolic attributes refer to subjective, abstract and intangible job and organizational attributes (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003). Examples are

innovativeness, competence, prestige, and excitement. A number of recent studies shed insight into the role of organizational symbolic attributes by describing firms in personality trait terms (e.g., Slaughter, Zickar, Highhouse, and Mohr, 2004; Davies, 2008; Burmann, Schaefer and Maloney, 2008). Slaughter *et al.* (2004) identified a list of organization personality traits with five broad dimensions: boy scout (e.g., honest, attentive to people, family-oriented), innovativeness (e.g., original, creative, unique), dominance (e.g., big, successful, popular), thrift (e.g., simple, low-budget, undersized) and style (e.g., trendy, up-to-date, stylish). They found that applicants are more likely to be attracted to the firm that had personality traits similar to them. Extending the study in the same line Slaughter and Greguras (2009) examine the influence of organisational personality perceptions on individuals' initial attraction to firms. Results of their study indicate that organization personality perceptions account for significant variance in initial organizational attraction. In addition, respondents self-rated Big Five personality characteristics moderated the relationship between dimensions of organization personality perceptions and firm attraction.

Hoye *et al.* (2013) investigates the instrumental-symbolic framework in non-Western collectivistic culture for studying organisations' attraction as an employer. They examine Turkish university students and find that both instrumental and symbolic image dimensions were positively related to organisational attractiveness. Furthermore, organisations were better differentiated from each other on the basis of symbolic image dimensions than on the basis of instrumental dimensions. Thus, the results provide support for the applicability of the instrumental-symbolic framework across different countries, cultures, and organisations.

### **Variables influencing Employer Attractiveness**

Most of the previous literature reveals studies using the term organisational attractiveness (Schneider, 1987; Turban *et al.*, 1998; Barber, 1998; Breaugh and Starke, 2000; Lievens *et al.*, 2001; Tüzüner and Yüksel, 2009; Bandarouk *et al.*, 2012; Sokro, 2012; Pingle and Sharma, 2013) though the terms employer attractiveness and organisational attractiveness mean the same. Organizational attractiveness refers to the degree to which a person favourably perceives an organization as a place to work

(Rynes *et al.*, 1991), or the perceived desirability of working for an organization (Aiman-Smith *et al.*, 2001). Hannon (1996, pp. 490) defines organizational attractiveness as a 'prospective employee's assessment of the company's desirability as an employer'. The present study uses the term 'Employer Attractiveness'.

The main purpose of research on organisational or employer attractiveness is to attract applicants which will ultimately lead to organizational success in hiring right applicants (Williams and Bauer, 1994; Albinger and Freeman, 2000; Carless, 2005). Plenty of literature available focuses on the antecedents or factors impacting organisational attractiveness, an understanding of which will be beneficial to organisations looking to hire superior human resources. Thus the factors that influence Employer attractiveness could be broadly categorized as Job / Organisational Attributes and Organisational Image and Reputation.

### **Job / Organisational Attributes**

Of all the factors studied and reported to be impacting employer attractiveness, the most widely studied is job and organisational attributes/ characteristics (e. g. Turban and Keon, 1993; Turban and Greening, 1996; Hannon, 1996; Turban *et al.*, 1998; Highhouse *et al.*, 2001; Turban, 2001; Turban *et al.*, 2001; Chapman *et al.*, 2005; Marks and Huzzard, 2010; Slaughter and Greguras, 2009; Nadler *et al.*, 2011; Bourhis and Mekkaoui, 2010; Jiang and Iles, 2011; Kim and Park, 2011; Gomes and Neves, 2011; Alniaçık and Alniaçık, 2012). A review of much earlier academic research reveals organisational attributes as a key factor in applicant attraction to organisation (Vroom, 1966; Soelberg, 1967; Glueck, 1974; Bretz, Ash and Dreher, 1989; Rynes, 1991; Turban and Keon, 1993; Turban, Eyring and Campion, 1993; Cable and Judge, 1994; Thomas and Wise, 1999; Albinger and Freeman, 2000).

In a study, Turban and Keon (1993) investigate the moderating effect of personality characteristics of self esteem and need for achievement on MBA students' attraction to organisational characteristics like reward structure, centralization, organisational size and geographical spreading of plants. In their work, Turban *et al.* (1998) develop and test a model of how organization reputation, job and organizational attributes, and recruiter behaviours influence applicant attraction to firms using data from campus and report that

job and organizational attributes positively influence attraction, and organization reputation positively influences applicant perceptions of job and organizational attributes. They adopt 24 items describing job and organisational attributes, some of them are adopted from earlier research of Harris and Fink (1987) and Powell (1984), and they develop the other items. Factor analyses of the items yields five factors, 'Supportive Work Environment', 'Firm Attributes', 'Earnings and Advancement Opportunities', 'Challenging Work' and 'Location'. Thomas and Wise (1999) in a study of MBA students examine the relative importance of various job and organisational characteristics, diversity and recruiter characteristics on assessments of organisational attractiveness. In a similar study, Turban *et al.* (2001) investigate the factors related to firm attractiveness in China. They measure the effects of organisational attributes, type of ownership, supervisor nationality and firm familiarity on firm attractiveness. In addition, they investigate how individual differences moderate the effects of organisational attractiveness on firm attractiveness. In another study, Turban (2001) investigates factors related to firm attractiveness as an employer on college campus. The factors in the study are recruitment activities, organisational attributes, familiarity with firm and social context. Turban (2001) adapts organisational attributes from previous studies and through factors analysis arrives at three factors – "Company image", "Compensation and job security" and "Challenging work". Results of the study indicate that recruitment activities influence firm attractiveness through perceptions of organizational attributes. Additionally, familiarity with the firm and the social context are found to be related to potential applicants' attraction to the firm.

Strand, Levine and Montgomery (1981), studied how people combine and use pay, environment protection, employee development and fair employment policy cues when evaluating the attractiveness of jobs and organisations. Terjesen *et al.* (2007) in their study report that among university students, the five most important organisational attributes are: "training and development of employees" "care about employees as individuals" "clear opportunities for long-term career progression" "variety in daily work" and "dynamic, forward-looking approach to their business". They find the perception of presence of these important attributes significantly linked to the likelihood to apply. Hannon (1996) examines the relationship between organizational characteristics

(company age, number of employees, sales and profits) and organizational attractiveness and finds that except organisational age all the other three variables affect a few students cohorts based on discipline.

A review of literature reveals a number of researches that use 'job attributes' along with 'organisational attributes' when studying organisational attractiveness but only few studies examine them separately. Also, in many studies there is overlap of elements of organisational attributes and job attributes and is not distinguishable (Powell, 1984; Bretz and Judge, 1994; Konrad *et al.*, 2000; Pounder and Merrill, 2001; Trank *et al.*, 2002; Lievens *et al.*, 2005). A set of past theory and research examine job attributes (e.g. location, promotion opportunity, pay level, benefits, security, relation with co-workers and supervisor, and type of work and its relation with organisational attractiveness (e.g., Locke, 1976; Jurgensen, 1978; Powell, 1984; Turban, Eyring, and Campion, 1993; Cable and Judge, 1994; Moy and Lee, 2002).

Powell (1984) in a study examines the effect of job attributes and recruiting practices on organisational attractiveness and on the likelihood of job acceptance by actual job applicants, and reveals that job attributes influence the likelihood of job acceptance by graduating college students. Powell's (1991) study examines the importance of 15 job attributes to graduating students. The 15 attributes can be grouped under 3 categories 1) the job itself – opportunity to learn, opportunity for rapid advancement, opportunities to use one's abilities, responsibility, variety of activities, challenging and interesting work, opportunity to present one's achievements to supervisors. 2) Compensation or Security - Salary, Fringe benefits and Job security. 3) Company or work environment – company location, reputation, Sociable co-workers, training programmes and type of work. Phillips *et al.* (1994) in their research on business graduates conclude that the "opportunity for advancement", "job security", "fringe benefits", "pay" and "training programmes" are most important when choosing prospective employers. Some of the previous literature explores job applicants' attraction to organizations (Holtbrügge and Kreppel (2012) in their study establish compensation and job security as most the important HR practices with regard to employer attractiveness. Khabir (2014) in a study investigates the influence of various factors in making an employer more attractive in the

eyes of prospective employees in Bangladesh. Findings of the study show of the four different components of employer attractiveness, namely, economic value, social value, development value, and interest value measured to determine their respective influence on employer attractiveness, perceived development value, economic value and social value have the most influence, while interest value is found to be statistically insignificant.

Further, research also identifies the attributes like “advancement opportunities” (Turban *et al.*, 2001; Sutherland *et al.*, 2002; Anwer, Nas and Raza, 2014), “Flexibility” (Zedeck, 1977; Corrigall, 2008; Anwer, Nas and Raza, 2014), “Working conditions” (Turban *et al.*, 1993; Corrigall, 2008) as important for graduates in selecting initial jobs. Moy and Lee (2002) in their study examine the attractiveness of nine job attributes (pay, marketability, job security, managerial relationships, working conditions, responsibility given, long-term career prospects, involvement in decision making and fringe benefits) to undergraduate business students and found that long term career prospects, pay and job security were the most highly rated attributes.

Bretz, Ash and Dreher (1989) examine how personality and reward system influence applicants' organizational attractiveness assessments. ‘Pay’ is established as an important job attribute that has a significant influence on job attractiveness (Jurgensen, 1978; Barber, 1991; Gerhart and Milkovich, 1992) and subsequent job choice decisions (Rynes, Schwab, and Heneman, 1983; Rynes, 1987). Cable and Judge (1994) conclude that the greater the value of the compensation package, the more attractive the organisation. Further, Turban and Keon (1993) in their study find that organizations' reward systems and degree of centralization are directly related to their attractiveness. Jurgensen (1978) in a study reports that individuals rank ‘type of work’ and ‘job security’ highest for themselves and ‘pay’ to others. Thomas and Wise (1999) investigate the relative importance of various job, organizational, diversity, and recruiter characteristics on assessments of organizational attractiveness, and the extent to which these organisational assessments differ with applicant race and gender, and find no differences in job and organisational characteristics but gender and race differences are observed in recruiter characteristics. Another set of literature suggests that the ability to have a personal life and maintain balance between work and family life is especially important to young

personnel (Johnson, 1995; Cohen, 2003; Thompson and Aspinwall, 2009). According to Cohen (2002, p. 66), “Companies have to offer more than good pay to attract today’s new generation of workers”. Holtbrügge and Kreppel (2012) analyze how attractive Chinese, Indian, and Russian companies are perceived by potential employees in Germany. The study shows that compensation and job security are most the important HR practices with regard to employer attractiveness. Significant differences among countries and industries are also revealed. These employees are said to highly value organizations that help them achieve work-life balance (Johnson, 1995). Thompson and Aspinwall (2009) examine which particular work/life benefits are most attractive to new graduates mostly under the age of 30 years and their relative influence over job choice. They find that of the four work-life benefits childcare, flexitime, telecommuting, and eldercare benefits, the new entrants value childcare most when choosing a job. They also reveal that child care benefits influence the job choices of women more than they would influence men’s job choices.

In the study by Turban, Eyring and Campion (1993), ‘type of work’ is found to be the most important job attribute and ‘working hours’ the least important. In a study by Grund (2009) individuals are asked to compare their current job with their previous one with respect to eight attributes - type of work, pay, chances of promotion, work load, commuting time, work hour regulations, fringe benefits and job security against. Respondents have to state whether the new job has improvements with regard to each job attribute. Improvements for a certain attribute indicate a particular relevance and high preference for this attribute. It is observed that ‘pay’ and ‘type of work’ are most important to respondents. Further, the study explores differences across subgroup of employees with respect to individual characteristics such as sex and age and differences are observed. Marks and Huzzard (2008) conclude in a study of IT professionals that creative need is an important component of an attractive workplace and also note the importance of extrinsic rewards and work-life balance. They find interest value found to be statistically insignificant.

### **Organisational Image and Reputation**

Previous researchers have successfully linked a company’s image/ reputation with its attractiveness as an employer (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990; Gatewood, Gowan, and

Lautenschlager, 1993; Turban and Keon, 1993; Turban and Greening, 1996; Highhouse *et al.*, 1999; Cable and Graham, 2000; Turban, 2001; Montgomery and Ramus, 2003; Caligiuri *et al.*, 2012; Wang, 2013). In a study, Turban and Greening (1996) indicate that firm's Corporate Social Performance positively relates to their reputation and to attractiveness as employers, implying that a firm's Corporate Social Performance provides a competitive advantage in attracting applicants. Organizations that effectively leverage their organizational images during recruitment may increase their return on human resource expenditures, as new employees whose positive images lead to better fit with the organization are more satisfied with their jobs and stay longer with the organisation (Collins and Stevens, 2001). Other research are also available that suggests that a firm's reputation influences its success in attracting quality applicants (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990; Fombrun, 1996; Cable and Turban, 2001; Gotsi and Wilson, 2001; Turban and Cable; 2003; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Davies *et al.*, 2004; Berthon *et al.*, 2005; Gomes and Neves, 2011).

Moreover, empirical evidence also supports the rationale that job seekers are more likely to pursue jobs at firms with better reputations (Belt and Paolillo, 1982; Gatewood *et al.*, 1993). A study by Acito and Ford (1980) concludes that a company's corporate image leads to perceptions of 'improved career opportunities'. Another related study by Belt and Paolillo (1982) conclude that people are more likely to 'pursue employment' with companies with 'high' image than with those with 'low' image. Evidence has been found that early impressions of an organization's image as an employer are strong predictors of applicants' attraction (Turban, Forret, and Hendrickson, 1998), which in turn is related to applicants' job acceptance decisions (Powell, 1991; Gatewood, Gowan and Lautenschlager 1993; Powell and Goulet, 1996). Collins and Stevens (2001) propose that firms that effectively convey positive organizational images may generate a larger pool of desirable applicants from which to choose. According to Turban and Cable (2003) better firm reputation can provide firms with competitive advantage by attracting high quality applicants. Fombrun (1996, pp. 72) defines corporate reputation 'as a perceptual representation of a firm's overall appeal compared to other leading rivals'. Furthermore, Cable and Turban (2001) define firm reputation as the public evaluation of a firm relative to other firms. Cable and Turban (2003) investigate the effects of firm reputation – an



organisation level characteristic, on the size and quality of the applicant pool and find significant influence. For their study they collect data from MBA students. Collins (2007) in a study concludes that job seekers decision to apply for a job with an organisation is highly related with the awareness of the company's product and its reputation. Results from the study by Cable and Graham (2000) reveal that the type of industry in which a company operates, the opportunities that the company provides for employee development and organizational culture affects job seekers' perceptions about the company's reputation. Caligiuri *et al.* (2012) in a study note that, at the cultural level, collectivism and, at the individual level, need for power and achievement are related to the importance attached to employer reputation as a driver of organisational attractiveness. Wang (2013) establish that a firm's reputation is positively related to job pursuit intention. Thus, it is proposed that job seekers may use firms' reputations as indicative information about working conditions in the organization (Turban and Cable, 2003).

The relationship between firm reputation and attraction is explained through the signalling theory that offers rationales for why job seekers are attracted to apply for a job. The theory emphasizes that since job seekers often do not know a firm in detail, they recall their prior knowledge or experience about the firm's reputation as a signal to influence their job pursuit intention (Rynes, 1991; Breaugh, 1992; Cable and Turban, 2003; Wang, 2013). In a study, Wang (2013) investigates whether corporate reputation and job advancement prospects mediate the relationship between perceived corporate social performance job pursuit intentions. Prior empirical research provides evidence of positive link between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and applicant attraction (Williams and Bauer, 1994; Bauer and Aiman-Smith, 1996; Turban and Greening 1996; Turban and Greening, 1997; Behrend *et al.*, 2009; Kim and Park, 2011; Lin *et al.* 2012; Zhang and Gowan, 2012). It is established that corporate social performance is one of the most critical attributes that attract potential job applicants by serving as a signal of a firm's working environment, business standards, values, and norms (Turban and Greening, 1996). In their study, Zhang and Gowan (2012) examine the relationship between the three CSR domains – economic, legal and ethical, and applicant attraction. They also explore the influence of fit between individual ethical framework and organisational ethical values as demonstrated in organisational CSR activities, during job-choice process. Kim and

Park (2011) investigate whether CSR can be attraction factor for future employees to apply. They examine the influence of CSR on organisational attractiveness among students majoring in public relations by using person-organisation fit and report that students perceive CSR to be an important ethical fit condition of a company. Previous studies also investigate how a firm's image (e.g., social performance reputation) affects job pursuit intention (Turban and Cable, 2003). It is evident that people perceive organisations with more favorable corporate image of involving itself to social welfare and public benefits as being better reputable employers than other firms with weaker corporate social performance and are more likely to seek a job provided by such organisations (Bauer and Aiman-Smith, 1996; Lin *et al.*, 2012). Tsai *et al.* (2013) investigate how socio-environmental consciousness as a key factor moderates the relationship between perceived corporate social performance and job pursuit intention. Their results show that the relationship between ethical citizenship and job pursuit intention is positively moderated by socio-environmental consciousness, and the relationship between philanthropic citizenship and job pursuit intention is also positively moderated by socio-environmental consciousness.

Williams and Bauer (1994) assess the impact of managing diversity policy on undergraduate management students' rating of organisational attraction and find that participants in the managing diversity condition rated organisation more positively than the control group. They also report that contrary to the belief that racial minority groups and women would rate an organisation with diversity management policy higher, they did not rate higher a firm's managing diversity stance. Van Hove and Leivens (2007) examine the influence of informational social influences – word of mouth on organizational attractiveness. Results indicate that positive word of mouth had a strong impact on organizational attractiveness, and negative word of mouth interfered with recruitment advertising effects.

As companies strive to attain the “Best employer” status in the surveys by popular agencies like *Business Today*, *Great Place to Work*, *Forbes etc.*, it is important for employers to know what criteria employees or potential hires look for in an organisation. Employers need to differentiate from other organisations in the employment market place to build a distinct brand as a good employer. With the knowledge of job and organisational factors or attributes attractive to potential applicant groups, firms can

promote the relevant characteristics to these specific target segments (Simola, 2011). This can enable the firms to project themselves more favourably thus helping in attracting and keeping qualified personnel (Phillips *et al.*, 1994). Further, employees would probably be more satisfied with their jobs if employers provided them with things they value. This greater job satisfaction could benefit organizations through greater work productivity (Iaffaldano and Muchinsky, 1985) lower employee absenteeism (Scott and Taylor, 1985) and turnover (Mowday, Peter and Steers, 1982). Today's students will represent the educated workforce of tomorrow (Taylor, 2005). Since organisations incur substantial costs in recruiting and training graduates, recruitment processes that target the actual needs of new graduates will be more effective than one which is based on assumptions. Right employees will be committed to the organisation. In a study on undergraduate business administration students Simola (2011) finds significant relationship between dimensions of commitment to the profession of business, and importance attributed to organisational characteristics. According to Cable and Turban (2001, p. 157), "Employers must measure their existing position in the minds of their target market before developing their recruitment strategy and interventions".

With growing importance to diversity, specifically gender diversity at workplace, organisational understanding of job and organisational attribute preferences of men and women becomes essential. Previous studies identify both similarities and differences between men and women in the importance they ascribe to various organisational attributes. Studies emphasize gender stereotype and that interpersonal relationships, are more important to women including job attributes like "working with people and "opportunities to make friends" (Gilligan, 1982; Maier, 1999; Konradt *et al.*, 2003). The early literature findings state that males place more importance on job content or intrinsic factors than females (Herzberg *et al.*, 1957) and other studies that support the finding also establish that women generally place more importance on extrinsic factors, such as work environment and interpersonal relationships, while men prefer intrinsic or career factors, such as self-expression and long-term career objectives (Bartol, 1974; Bartol and Manhardt, 1979).

Another set of studies report contradictory finding and state that women value intrinsic rewards compared to men, whereas the latter value extrinsic rewards (Geib and

Lueptow, 1996; Tolbert and Moen, 1998). In their study, Tolbert and Moen (1998) observe that gender is a significant predictor of preferences for three job attributes: having a sense of accomplishment, promotion opportunities, and job security. Women were significantly more likely to value jobs that provide a sense of accomplishment and less likely to give priority to having promotion opportunities or job security than men. In one of the interesting studies by Turban *et al.* (1993), they mention that before 1960s, security was most important for men whereas type of work was most important for women which changed during time period 1966-1975 where type of work is most important for men as well. Further, they note that as educational level increases, the importance of type of work also increases and the importance of security decreases. Maier (1999) identifies certain attributes as “feminine” organisational attributes which includes prioritising life-work integration; inclusiveness; core values that emphasize intimacy and care; dialogue as the purpose of communication rather than argument; a connected and relational view of the self and finally, “service” rather than “success” as motivator.

Konrad *et al.* (2000) in their meta-analysis of 31 studies examine gender differences in job attribute preferences among potential applicants in business schools. Findings indicate no significant gender differences for 9 of the 21 job attribute preferences studied. Though the difference is small, the 12 significant gender differences indicate that male participants consider earnings and responsibility to be more important than female respondents, whereas female respondents consider prestige, challenge, task significance, variety, growth, job security, good co-workers, a good supervisor, and the physical work environment to be more important than men. Students show larger gender differences than managers. The findings imply that gender differences in job attribute preferences are not an important determinant of women’s lower status in management. Freeman (2003) investigates whether different organisational characteristics are of differential importance to men and women applicants among UK graduates seeking job. The research reports that female respondents favoured more the organisational attributes characteristic of feminine organisation like “friendly, informal, culture”; “really care about employees as individuals”, and require to work for standard working hours or

rather stress free work environment. The other attributes that are more favoured by women are people -oriented ones like having diverse mix of employees at the workplace and employing people with whom they have things in common.

Terjesen *et al.* (2007) in their study report also note gender differences in the importance of organisational attributes. They note that compared to women, men rate just one attribute as more important: “a very high starting salary”. Thus, it can be stated that men and women ascribe different ideas and consequences to the attributes. The researchers also indicate generational differences in job attribute preferences, suggesting the need for research on the next generation to join the workforce and examine organisation attributes instead of job attributes. Study by Chew and Teo (1993) examine whether the effect of gender on undergraduates' job attribute preference was moderated by ethnicity, age, prior work experience and professional training area. Their study shows that female subjects generally attached more importance to job prestige, relationships on the job, and opportunities to travel and interact on the job. Alniacik and Alniacik (2012) also investigate the differences in perceived importance levels of Employer Attractiveness with regard to gender, age and current employment status. Their findings indicate significant gender differences between perceived levels of importance of Employer Attractiveness but no differences with regard to age and current employment status of respondents.

But studies a little over the past decade and recent ones demonstrate that men and women in their initial years of academic life share a similar pattern of aspirations and goals (Turban *et al.*, 1993; Danziger and Eden, 2007). Turban *et al.* (1993) reports lack of sex effects on job attribute preferences or on the importance of the job attribute in the employment decision and concludes that males and females have similar preferences and similar reasons for accepting or rejecting job offers. Hull and Nelson (2000) attributed gender differences in career differences to the fact that men and women start off with similar preferences regarding their careers, however, these preferences deviate over time due to different experiences. Becker and Moen (1999) find that younger women started out with more similar ideas and high career expectations like men, but life situations like children, moved them off their career path. Hull and Nelson (2000) also attribute gender

differences in career differences to the fact that men and women start off with similar preferences regarding their careers, however, these preferences deviate over time due to different experiences.

Summarizing from the literature reviews, the factors impacting Employer Attractiveness are Job/ Organisational Attributes (location, company size, promotion opportunity, pay level, benefits, security, relation with supervisor and co-workers, and type of work, work culture, financial strength, company size etc.); corporate image reputation related to corporate social responsibility or social performance and individual related factors like demographic characteristics pertaining to gender, age, ethnicity, prior work experience, professional training area, personality type etc. Few studies also report gender related differences in the perceived importance of factors impacting Employer Attractiveness.

## **2.5 Career Choice, Protean Career Orientation and Employer Attractiveness**

In the current dynamic environment, there is an increasing reliance on knowledge –intensive profession and on intellectual capabilities which has resulted in the emergence of concepts that capture the changing nature of careers (Sullivan, 1999). Schneider (1987) in the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) model explains that people are differently attracted to particular types of organisations and careers on the basis of their own interests and values.

Employees are affected by several factors while making their career related decisions (Tunc and Arslanbas, 2012). Tunc and Arslanbas (2012) give the indicators of self career management as high income-salary, independence at work, opportunities for self development, social prestige, entrepreneurship and self actualization. Also, values among young workers seem to be shifting away from those of their predecessors and they seem to demonstrate greater concern for a balanced lifestyle, involving flexible work schedules and respect for non-work activities, than for traditionally defined career success, involving high salaries, prestigious job titles, and intensive work hours.

It is posited that people's beliefs about career and career success reflect the social context in which they have developed as adults (Sturges, 1999). Researchers also posit that the work values of Millennials are based on what they experienced in their formative

years. As young adults, many watched their parents struggle with work-life balance, increasing costs of living and limited leisure time (Twenge, 2006; Twenge *et al.*, 2010). This may have influenced their penchant for work-life balance and leisure time. Zhang and Gowan (2012) in a study finds protean self-directed career orientation to be present to a great extent among young graduates.

Smola and Sutton (2002) explored the perceived differences between generational groups and found that the work values of Generation Xers were significantly different from those of the Baby Boomers and proposed that Generation Y aspires for higher salaries, flexible working arrangements and more benefits than Generation X. Other scholars have described members of Generation Y as individualistic, technologically savvy, well-educated (Meier, Austin and Crocker, 2010; Blain, 2008; Erickson, 2008; Valentine and Powers, 2013), independent, self-reliant (Martin, 2005) sophisticated, mature, and structured (Syrett and Lammiman, 2003). Compared to Gen X or Baby boomers, Gen Y individuals value leisure time more and are willing to give up advancements in their own careers to have more leisure time (Jurkiewicz, 2000; Lancaster and Stillman, 2002; Twenge, Campbell and Freeman, 2012).

Lewis, Smithson, and Kugelberg (2002) in a study among young people in four European countries found that achieving work-life balance was of high importance to the participants. Similar findings were observed by Smola and Sutton (2002) in a study conducted in the USA where young people identified work as an important part of life to a lesser extent than those of the same age a generation earlier. Meier *et al.* (2010) in their research examine the work factors considered important by Gen Y like job responsibility, decision-making freedom, work-related support mechanisms, rules and regulations, travel opportunities/obligations, and the geographical location of the place of employment. Few studies also demonstrate that Millennials rate extrinsic rewards higher than Gen X or Baby Boomers, while rating intrinsic work values lower than all other generations (Jurkiewicz, 2000; Eisner, 2005; Twenge *et al.*, 2010). Ng *et al.* (2010) note from a number of different surveys finding that Millennials consider salary as the most important motivator.

Ozbilgin and Healy (2004) state that this generational shift in values may, however, be limited to Western nations. Similar results are not observed in China where

Chinese were less concerned in choosing an occupation that gave them more leisure as they have grown up seeing their predecessors struggle to make money, today's business students in China want to pursue career success and financial wealth even if it may be at the expense of their personal or family lives (Bu and McKeen, 2001). Ozbilgin and Healy (2004) attribute this to Confucian tradition, which places duty above enjoyment and which sees work as a vital contribution towards the well-being of the family. Scholars realize the importance of the study on generational differences in career perspectives as today the number of members from the Greatest Generation (born prior to 1946) are declining in the workforce and the younger workers (born after 1965) are growing in number, who are much more technically savvy and may be motivated by different factors than previous generations of workers (Greenhaus, Callanan, and DiRenzo, 2008; McDonald and Hite, 2005; Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Sargent and Domberger (2007) report that protean career may be particularly salient to the current generation of graduates as the traditional employment programs are on the decline and unable to accommodate the increasing number of graduates, this cohort is likely to experience the non-traditional careers (King, 2003).

Moreover, there is total lack of research in India on the expectations and perceptions of career success of young management students. A large part of students pursuing MBA in India are Gen Y individuals and it is important to study these MBA students' career orientation and expectations from their potential employers. Agarwala (2008) in a study of Indian management students report that the students demonstrated both Protean and conventional career orientation, but were predominantly Protean. Studies have shown a Protean Career Orientation to be positively related to subjective career success (Agarwala, 2008) while the findings with regard to objective career success (in terms of salary and promotion rate) have been inconsistent (Briscoe, 2004). Hay and Hodgkinson (2006) in their study establish that students with Masters in Business Administration take career success more in terms of external criteria i.e., hierarchy and salary. Extrinsic career success encompasses salary, promotion and hierarchical status (Judge *et al.*, 1995). The relationship between Protean career orientation and subjective career success have been explored by Gerber *et al.* (2009) who studies the indicators job satisfaction and affectional commitment. Volmer and Spurk (2010) in their study explore career



satisfaction and its relationship with career attitudes and also investigate the relationship between objective career success indicators like pay and promotion, and career attitudes.

Most of the studies relating to career orientation are with experienced individuals in their mid-career (Sargent and Domberger, 2007) with some exceptions (e.g. Hall and Mirvis, 1995, examined older employees). Very few studies are available which study protean career among undergraduates and management students in particular e.g. Briscoe *et al.* (2006) studied undergraduates, Sargent and Domberger (2007) explore whether the protean career is identifiable with the cohort of adults in their early career stage. Sargent and Domberger (2007) in their study investigate the development of protean career orientation and what personal values shape protean career orientation in undergraduates with work experience but in their early career stage. They identify two values – preference for work that made contribution or work which made a societal impact, and work-life balance, where a job did not consume too much amount of the individual's life. Sargent and Domberger (2007) conclude that these values are consistent with Hall's (1976, 2002) core protean values of freedom and growth and propose work-life balance as a tangible means of expressing freedom, as achieving a work-life balance allowed participants to pursue interests other than work. These values are what the past research have established that the generation presently entering the workforce as valuing a balanced lifestyle (Zemke *et al.*, 2000; Loughlin and Barling, 2001; Smola and Sutton, 2002; Sturges and Guest, 2004). The study also reinforces Hall's (2004) description of the protean career as related to psychological rather than material success. Sargent and Domberger (2007) also argue that the preferences of protean-oriented graduates of promotion and added responsibilities though linked to extrinsic success may also be viewed alternatively as having a preference for growth and the development of one's professional capabilities. Reitman and Schneer (2003) have established that MBA graduates enjoy both self-managed (protean) and traditional career within an organisation. Thus, after reviewing the literature on Career Choice Factors, Career orientation and Employer attractiveness, it is found that there is a gap in literature that links all the three concepts. This study is hence undertaken to examine the relationship among the three variables. Career Choice factors that influence Gen Y individual's decision to pursue a career will also influence the preferences towards the employer attractiveness dimensions, thus impacting the decision to choose an employer. Further, people choose a career and work

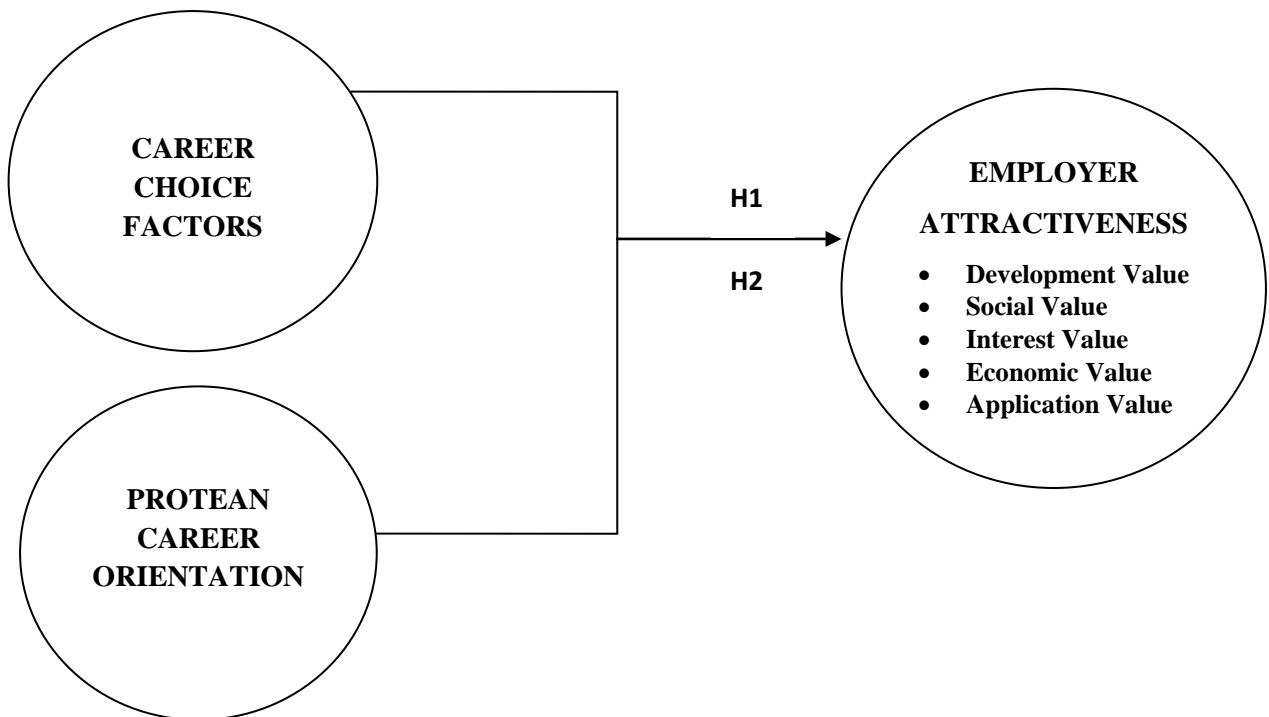
organisation based on their expectations of attaining success in career. Individuals also are likely to choose an employer to work based on their career orientation as people's career orientation influences their attractiveness towards certain values that organisation offer. For example, individuals with Protean Career Orientation will seek to develop their skill and hence likely to value developmental opportunities.

College graduates increasingly represent a significant number of applicants for entry-level business positions (Linden, Brennan and Lane, 1992). In the Indian context there is a dearth of literature on the factors influencing career choice, career orientation and determinants of Employer Attractiveness of the young generation that describes their aspirations and expectations from their employer and workplace. Indian work culture is characterized by as lifelong jobs, experience based career system and job tenure based compensation packages (Sharma, 1984; Budhwar, 2003). India and China face shortages of suitably qualified and skilled employees for both MNCs and local enterprises (Budhwar, 2003; Gupta and Wang, 2007). Therefore it becomes pertinent for organisations to brand their organisation and take measures to become an employer of global choice in order to ensure good supply of appropriate talent from these countries (Schuler and Tarique, 2007; Gokuladas, 2010). According to Meier *et al.* (2010) Generation Y presents a challenge to managers who must train and motivate this next generation of employees so that their strengths become a benefit to the company. Being able to understand new generations as they move into the work force will continue to be a challenge for managers for years to come. To be successful in the future, it will be important for companies and managers to understand these new employees.

Thus, it is evident that there is already abundant literature focusing on applicant attraction strategies and organisational recruitment practices (e.g. Rynes and Barber, 1990; Barber *et al.*, 1994, Rynes *et al.*, 1997; 1999; Heneman and Berkley, 1999) to help organisations compete for talent. But very little literature is available on the factors that influence the career choice and preferences of young management graduates (Agarwala, 2008). In the Indian context hardly any studies have been done on employer branding and Employer/ Organisational Attractiveness, though very few have been noted (Sharma, 2013; Verma and Verma, 2015). An understanding of how job applicants seek out information, investigate, and decide among alternative job opportunities is important

as students represent the workforce of the future, and also because they have work values and expectations different from previous generations (Loughlin and Barling, 2001; Smola and Sutton, 2002). Management students select the organisations they want to work for, based on the kinds of working conditions, opportunities, and flexibility employers can offer. The factors that influence their career choice also shape their preferences for organisations as they try to fulfil their career expectations by choosing to work for organisation that they perceive will meet their expectations. Factors influencing Career Choice of Management students, their Protean Career Orientation and preferred dimensions of Employer Attractiveness all help to understand these young graduates' attitude towards career and work organisation preferences.

Thus, based on the above literature review the study proposes the following framework Figure 2.1. The study investigates the influence of Career Choice Factors and Protean Career Orientation on Employer Attractiveness and on the individual dimensions of Employer Attractiveness – Development Value, Social Value, Interest Value, Economic Value and Application Value.



**Figure 2.1 Theoretical Research Framework - Relationship between the Employer Attractiveness, and Career Choice factors and Protean Career Orientation**

Based on the literature discussion and theoretical framework, the following hypothesis is framed for the study –

**H1:** There is significant relationship between the Employer Attractiveness, and Career Choice factors and Protean Career Orientation

**H2:** There is significant relationship between the dimensions of Employer Attractiveness and Career Choice factors, and Protean Career Orientation

## **2.6 Job Pursuit Intention**

Previous research identifies four organizational attraction outcome variables: job-organizational attraction (Turban and Keon, 1993; Turban and Greening, 1996; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003), job pursuit intention(s) (e.g., Cable and Judge, 1994; Turban *et al.*, 2001), acceptance intentions (e.g., Judge and Bretz, 1992; Cable and Judge, 1996), and actual job choice (Chapman *et al.*, 2005). Intention is measured by acceptance intentions as Chapman *et al.* (2005) found that measuring acceptance intentions is the preeminent proxy variable when actual job choice information is not accessible. According to Highhouse *et al.* (2003), organizational-pursuit behaviour is request for additional information from the company and developed an instrument to measure intentions to pursue. Gatewood *et al.* (1993) define job choice as a series of decisions that an applicant makes, starting with the applicant's evaluation of information obtained from various sources, and leading to the decision to pursue employment with specific organization. The idea of choosing a job thus includes choosing an organization (Kilduff, 1990). Although the link between initial preferences at the job choice stage and final chosen job can be weak, such initial decisions can be important in setting the job choice path (Boswell *et al.*, 2003). Thus, understanding job choices of applicants early in the process is important. Subsequent researches use the term "Job pursuit intention" and it includes all outcome variables that measure a person's desire to submit an application, attend a site visit or second interview, or otherwise indicate an applicant intention to remain in the applicant pool without committing to a job choice (Chapman *et al.*, 2005).

A few literatures that investigate job Pursuit Intention are discussed in this section. Gatewood *et al.* (1993) studies the aspects of corporate image, or the image associated with the name of an organization, and recruitment image (the images

associated with its recruitment message) and finds that they are significant predictors of initial decisions about pursuing job with organizations. Chapman *et al.* (2005) in their meta-analysis of 71 studies examine the relationship between various predictors with job– organization attraction, job pursuit intentions, job acceptance intentions, and job choice. The moderating effects of applicant gender and race are also been examined. Results show that applicant attraction outcomes are predicted by job/ organization characteristics and only gender moderate to a very less extent the relationships. Gomes and Neves (2011) investigate the factors leading to the intention to apply to a job and their results show that perceived organizational attributes and the perceived job characteristic relating to an advertised job vacancy were most important to prospective applicant’s perceptions of organizational attractiveness, which, in turn influences their decision to apply for a job vacancy. Ong (2011) investigates the relationships between functional and emotional aspects of employer brand attribute, followed by how they in turn affect applicants’ attraction to the firms and job acceptance intentions. They observe that potential applicants’ attraction to organization and acceptance intentions are the consequences of employer branding. Tsai *et al.* (2013) examine the relationship between dimensions of corporate social performance (economic citizenship, legal citizenship, ethical citizenship and philanthropic citizenship) and job pursuit intention and the moderating effect of socio-environmental consciousness. They report that only the relationship between ethical citizenship and philanthropic citizenship, and job pursuit intention is positively moderated by socio-environmental consciousness. Wang (2013) in a study hypothesizes that the perceived corporate social performance of job seekers positively affects their job pursuit intention and reveals that a firm’s reputation is positively related to job pursuit intention.

## **2.7 Employer Attractiveness and Job Pursuit Intention**

Attraction to an organisation should lead to job pursuit behaviour. Job pursuit intention refers to “the intention to pursue a job or to remain in the applicant pool” (Chapman *et al.*, 2005, pp. 929; Gomes and Neves, 2011. pp. 685). A study by Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar (2003) and Ong (2011) reveal that the relation of organizational attraction to organization-pursuit behaviour corresponds to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) given by Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975). Besides, Van Hooft, Taris, Born, and Van Der Flier (2004) observe that the TRA provides a valid framework to explain

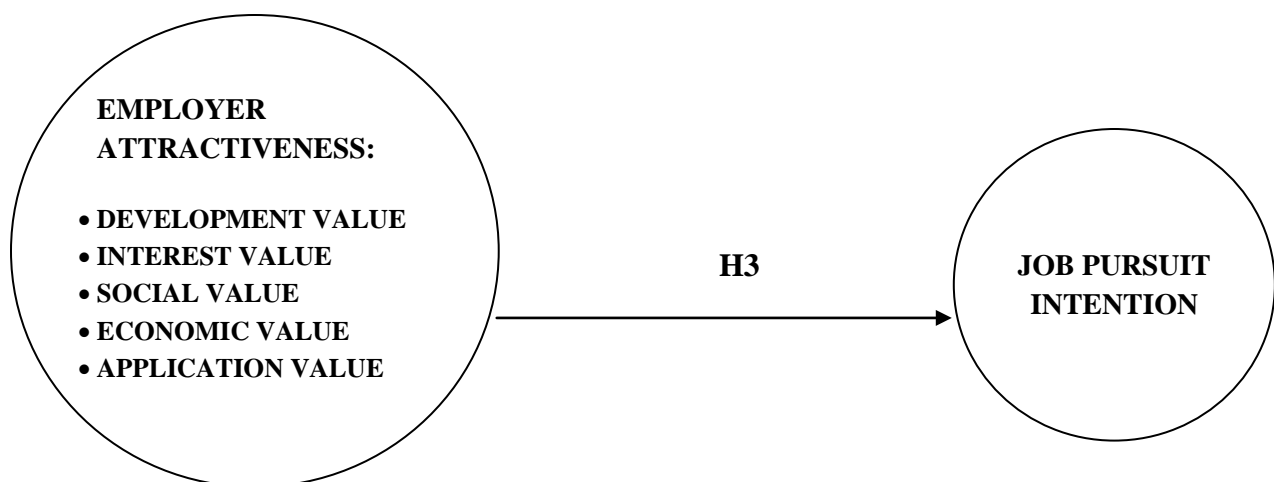
job application decisions. Ong's (2011) study focuses on two outcomes: perceptions of organizational attraction (attitude) and acceptance intentions (intention). Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) suggests that a person's behaviour is determined by his/her intention to perform the behaviour and that this intention is, in turn, a function of his/her attitude towards the behaviour and his/her subjective norm. According to TRA, the determinant of applicants' decision to pursue a firm as a place of employment (behaviour) is the applicants' acceptance intention, if a job offer were forthcoming (intention), which in turn is determined by the applicants' perceptions on organizational attractiveness as an employer (attitude). On a general note, a persons' behavioural intention is a function of his beliefs and attitudes (Gomes and Neves, 2011). Thus, attitudes influence behaviour to the extent that they influence intentions to engage in that behaviour (Highhouse *et al.*, 2003). Employer attractiveness is passive whereas job pursuit intention is active as job pursuit intention is thoughts about a company that specifically implies further action (Highhouse *et al.*, 2003). Job pursuit intentions includes a person's behavior like applying, recommending the organization to others, or visit to the company (Schreurs and Syed, 2010). Thus, people's job pursuit intention towards a particular firm depends on their attraction towards the firm and their perception of the firm as a good place to work which in turn depends on the value the firm provides to its employees and employees' preference of those values.

Earlier literature provides evidence of job acceptance behaviour as the outcome of organisational attractiveness (Rynes and Barber, 1990; Highhouse *et al.*, 2003; Roberson and Collins, 2005; Terjesen, Vinnicombe and Freeman, 2007; Kim and Park, 2011; Gomes and Neves, 2011; Tsai *et al.*, 2013; Wang, 2013). Studies report the relative importance of job characteristics and, organizational characteristics on the decision to 'accept an interview with' or 'join' a company (Zedeck, 1977; Krauz, 1978; Rynes and Lawler, 1983). Rynes, Schwab and Heneman's (1983) study tested the influence of four job characteristics (salary, location, work-type and promotion opportunity) on the decision to seek or pursue an interview with an organisation. The job choice decisions are dependent to a large extent on the perceived attractiveness and importance of the job attributes (Schwab *et al.*, 1987; Moy and Lee, 2002). Job choice model developed by Behling *et al.* (1968) establish that job choice decisions are based on evaluating the

advantages and disadvantages of job attributes like pay and working conditions. Saks *et al.* (1995) and Gomes and Neves (2011) also find that prospective applicants evaluate a job vacancy based on the characteristics of the job and the organizational attributes which in turn results in the intention to apply for a job vacancy. Thus, it can be concluded that the attitude organisational attractiveness is the result of the evaluation of the job and organisational attributes of the firm which leads to the behaviour of job pursuit intention.

Also, people's job pursuit intention toward organizations is highly based on their overall perceptions of organizational reputation (Highhouse *et al.*, 1999). Collins (2007) in a study states that product awareness and recruitment practices have an impact on employer familiarity and reputation, and intention to apply. Previous literature suggests that the topic of job pursuit is particularly important for students close to graduation, because the sample of students has a higher involvement than other different samples (Wehner *et al.*, 2012; Tsai *et al.*, 2013). A large number of previous studies about job pursuit have taken university student samples (e.g., Powell and Goulet, 1996; Turban, 2001; Collins and Stevens, 2002; Allen *et al.*, 2007; Collins, 2007). People's job pursuit intention towards a particular firm is likely to be enhanced if job-seekers view the firm as having good standards, values, and norms they consider crucial (e.g., Chatman, 1989).

Thus, based on the above discussion following the theoretical framework has been formulated -



**Figure 2.2 Theoretical Research Framework - Relationship between Employer Attractiveness and its dimensions, and Job Pursuit Intention**

The following Hypothesis is framed based on the literature and theoretical framework –

**H3:** There is significant relationship between Employer Attractiveness and its dimensions, and Job Pursuit Intention

Furthermore, review of literature also reveals gender differences with respect to the study variables. Extensive studies on gender differences are available which have been discussed in the above sections. For the present study also gender differences with regard to the study variables will be examined. The following hypotheses have been framed to analyse gender differences in the perceived importance of factors influencing Career Choice, Protean Career Orientation and perceived importance of the dimensions of Employer Attractiveness -

**H4:** There is significant difference between male and female respondents in the perceived importance of factors influencing Career Choice

**H5:** There is significant difference between male and female respondents in their Protean Career Orientation

**H6:** There is significant difference between male and female respondents in their perceived importance of dimensions of Employer Attractiveness.

## **2.8 Chapter Summary**

To conclude, literature review reveals lacunae especially in the Indian context about career aspirations, expectations and career orientation of Gen Y management students; hence the study aims to explore the relationship of various factors that influence the career approach of Gen Y management students, right from the time they choose a career in management to the instance they choose an employer to work. The following are the main summated concluding remarks of the literature review on the study variables, Career Choice Factors, Protean Career Orientation, Employer Attractiveness and Job Pursuit Intention.

Gen Y born in between “1980 – 2000” continues to enter the workforce and managing them is a challenge for organisations, as they come with aspirations, expectations, preferences of work attributes and values very different from the previous generations.



This large segment of workforce has the potential to become the highly productive workforce as they are technology savvy, flexible, ambitious, collaborative and unconventional. Gen Y individuals prefer challenging work, look for opportunities to learn, expect exciting and fun work culture, flexi-time and values work-life balance. They do not like hierarchy, and are job hoppers and would not hesitate to change organisations if their expectations are not met. Therefore, the challenge for managers today is to meet the aspirations and expectations of this young workforce to attract and retain them. But it has become imperative for organisations' success to learn how to attract, retain and capture the full value of this new workforce.

Changing business environment brought on by technological advances, globalization, increasing competition, economic and demographic changes have resulted in changes in the way organisations operate. There has been changes in the workplace too due to changing nature of work and workers, outsourcing and restructuring etc. these changes have impacted the way individuals approach career and a modern approach to career has replaced the traditional career of long term contracts between employees and organisations, where employees select an organisation or sector based on their work values and remain loyal to that organisation or sector throughout their careers. The emergent modern approach to career management termed as Protean Career orientation is characterised by decreasing loyalty to organisations, change in employer-employee relationship, taking responsibility of one's career, psychological success, meaningful work, developmental progression and mobility. Millennials or the Gen Y employees, the latest entrants to the workforce are believed to demonstrate this modern career approach and give more importance to psychological success (e.g. developmental opportunity, innovative and positive culture etc.) over objective success (pay, status etc.).

India will have one of the largest populations of Gen Y workforce. Literature also reveals that with India on the growth trajectory demand for skilled workers will increase and also demand for MBA graduates. MBA is a popular course in India and MBA graduates are sought after by corporate.

Therefore, it is worth examining the factors that influence Gen Y's choice of a career in management. Individuals choose a career in management under the influence of

“intrinsic” and “extrinsic” factors. Further, factors influencing career choice are said to influence preferences for job and organisational attributes, referred to as dimensions of Employer Attractiveness in the study. Higher level of perceived importance of Employer Attractiveness dimensions makes the potential employers attractive to these job seekers which in turn influence their intention to pursue a job with the organisation.

Employer Attractiveness is a closely related concept to employer branding and has emerged from studies on employer branding. There are two popular theories or concepts that explain employer attractiveness – Person-Organisation fit and Instrumental – Symbolic framework. Most of the studies that examine Employer Attractiveness have reported job and organisational attributes, and organisational reputation and image as the main influencers of Employer Attractiveness. Previous literature also establishes that Job Pursuit behaviour is the outcome of the attraction to an organisation and provides enough evidence of impact of employer attractiveness on Job Pursuit Intention. A theoretical framework is drawn from literature review that explores the influence of Career Choice factors and Protean Career Orientation on Employer Attractiveness, and examines the relationship of Employer Attractiveness and its dimensions with Job Pursuit Intention. Accordingly hypotheses have been framed to investigate the influence of Career Choice factors and Protean Career orientation on Employer Attractiveness and its dimensions; and the influence of Employer Attractiveness and its dimensions of Job Pursuit Intention.