

Research Methodology

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives an overview of the research methodology adopted for the study including the development of the measures, research purpose, strategy and approach, followed by the explanation of the measures used for the study, the sampling technique used and details of the data collection. Finally, a brief account of the tools used for statistical analysis of the data is discussed.

3.1 Research Purpose

The research purpose is descriptive in nature. The study is descriptive as it describes the variables and examines the factors influencing career choice of management students and the dimensions of employer attractiveness they consider important when choosing an organization to work for.

3.2 Research Strategy

A survey strategy is used for the study. Hypotheses framed through review of literature are tested through primary data collected through structured questionnaires, adopted from previous studies after testing for reliability. Data collected is analyzed using statistical tools for describing the relationship among the study variables.

3.3 Research Approach

The research adopts quantitative approach since hypotheses are deduced through review of literature and tested through data collected using a questionnaire.

3.4 Measures of the Study

The questionnaire consists of five parts. The first part is related to information about the demographic characteristics of respondents namely age, gender, undergraduate degree, area of specialization, marital status and work experience. The second part measures the factors that influence the Career Choice of the respondents. The third part measures the Protean Career Orientation of the students. Section four measures the Employer Attractiveness and has 25 items. Respondents are asked to what extent they agree with the statements relating to the company they choose to work for. Section five

measures Job Pursuit Intention or the extent they agree with the statements relating to the intention to actively pursue a job with the company they aspire to work for after completion of their course. The responses to second, third, fourth and fifth section were collected on a seven point Likert scale.

3.4.1 Factors influencing Career Choice

To measure the factors influencing Career choice the 14-item scale developed by Ozbilgin *et al.* (2004) is adopted. Sample items are measured on a scale ranging from 1 = not important, through 7 = extremely important. To identify a small number of factors that explain most of the variance observed in this large number of manifest variables, that is 14 items, Factor Analysis is done. The results are discussed in Chapter 4

3.4.2 Protean Career Orientation

Protean career Orientation is measured using the 14-item scale developed by Briscoe *et al.* (2006). Protean career attitudes (self-direction in career management and values-driven predispositions) are measured using the 8-item scale (sample item: “I am responsible for my success or failure in my career”) and 6-item scale respectively (sample item: “I navigate my own career based on my personal priorities, as opposed to my employer’s priorities). Seven-point Likert scale is used to measure the responses where 1 = to an extremely small extent, and 7 = to an extremely large extent.

3.4.3 Employer Attractiveness

Literature shows two approaches to measure employer attractiveness. The first approach measures organisational attractiveness using scales that rate a few items representing perceived attractiveness of respondents towards organisations. Of this the earliest measure of organization choice was given by Vroom (1966), who used a single-item to measure of how attractive each hypothetical organization was to the prospective job seeker. The other research by Singh (1973) also measures organisational choice using a single item assessing likelihood of accepting a job with the company (i.e., “How much would you like to accept this job?”). Fisher, Ilgen, and Hoyer (1979) are the first to assess organization attraction using more than a single item. They measure organisational attraction using the four items: (1) “I am very interested in pursuing my application with

this company if offered one,” (2) “I would be very willing to accept a job with this company if offered one,” (3) “I would really like to work for this company,” and (4) “I feel I know enough about this company to no longer be interested in it”. This study served as the basis for measures used in many ensuing studies of organizational choice (e.g., Harris and Fink, 1987; Turban and Dougherty, 1992; Turban and Keon, 1993; Honeycutt and Rosen, 1997; Turban *et al.*, 1998; Yüce and Highhouse, 1998; Highhouse *et al.*, 1999). The study includes measures assessing company attractiveness (i.e., Items 3 and 4) and measures assessing organisation pursuit intentions (i.e., Items 1 and 2). The organizational attraction measure that is used in the Fisher *et al.* (1979) study is interesting as these items are combinations of items measuring respondents’ intentions to pursue job with the organisation and organisational attractiveness; and few other studies also use similar measures (Schwoerer and Rosen, 1989; Rynes and Connerley, 1993; Williams and Bauer, 1994).

Another set of studies use items assessing perceptions of a company’s prestige (e.g., Turban and Greening, 1996; Highhouse, Beadle, Gallo and Miller, 1998; Turban *et al.*, 1998). These items have been designed to assess the degree to which organizations are perceived as being well regarded. Prestige measures are typically employed in addition to organizational attraction measures (e.g., “This company has a reputation as being an excellent employer”) and reputable (e.g., “I would find this company a prestigious place to work”). Turban and Greening (1997) and Albinger and Freeman (2000) use scales from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good) along with a “Cannot Judge” option for each organisation identified or included in their study. These measures include items like “For me, this would be a good place to work”; “This organisation is attractive to me as a place for employment”; “A job in the Company is very appealing to me”. Van Hove and Leivens (2007) in their study measure perceived attractiveness of the organization as an employer using a five-item scale from Turban and Keon (1993). Sample item is “I would like to work for this company”. Gomes and Neves (2011) adopt five items from Bauer and Aiman-Smith (1996), Fisher *et al.* (1979) and Turban and Keon (1993) to measure organizational attractiveness. These items were also used by Aiman-Smith *et al.* (2001) and Highhouse *et al.* (2003). Items include: “This would be a good company to work for”; “A job at this company is very appealing to me”.

Thus, enough studies are available that measure organisational attractiveness in a similar way (for e.g. Harris and Fink, 1987; Taylor and Bergmann, 1987; Macan and Dipboye, 1988; Turban and Dougherty, 1992; Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, and Stoffey, 1993; Turban, 2001; Turban *et al.*, 2001; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Roberson *et al.*, 2005; Cropanzano *et al.*, 2005; Chapman *et al.*, 2005; Slaughter and Greguras, 2009, Nadler *et al.*, 2010; Kim and Park, 2011; Lin *et al.*, 2012; Park *et al.*, 2012).

The second approach focuses on measuring employer attractiveness as a concept with dimensions or factors drawn from marketing literature (For example Berthon *et al.*, 2005; Tüzüner and Yuksel, 2009; Arachchige and Robertson, 2011; Alniacık and Alniacık, 2012; Pingle and Sharma, 2013). Highhouse *et al.* (2003) in their study establish three components of organizational attraction (i.e., attractiveness, intentions, and prestige) and confirm that the three elements of organizational attraction can be reliably distinguished. They also examine the relative impact of the three components on organizational-pursuit behaviour (i.e., request for additional information from the company). Berthon *et al.* (2005) identify five dimensions of employer attractiveness – ‘Development Value’, ‘Social value’, ‘Interest value’, ‘Application value’ and ‘Economic value’. Alniacik and Alniacik (2012) in their study adopt the dimensions of Employer Attractiveness given by Berthon *et al.* (2005) and examine their perceived importance level among employed and job seeking un-employed college students.

The five factor structure proposed by Berthon *et al.* (2005) is similar to and an extension of the three dimensions proposed by Ambler and Barrow (1996), namely ‘Psychological benefits’ reflected by the ‘Social value’ and ‘Interest value’, ‘functional benefits’ as described by the ‘Development value’ and ‘Application value’ and ‘Economic benefits’ as captured by the ‘Economic value’. This is related to studies on relationship between preferred work values (classified as intrinsic and extrinsic) and job and organisational characteristics (Konrad *et al.*, 2000; Hess and Jepsen, 2009). Lyons *et al.* (2006, p. 607) define work values as “generalized beliefs about the desirability of certain attributes of work (e.g., pay, autonomy, working conditions), and work-related outcomes (e.g., accomplishment, fulfilment, prestige)”.

Finally, for the present study the 25 item scale of Employer Attractiveness (EmpAt) developed by Berthon *et al.* (2005) is used to measure Employer Attractiveness. The 25 item scale is grouped into 5 dimensions namely Developmental Value - measuring the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides career enhancing experience, recognition and self-worth; Interest Value – measuring the extent to which an individual is attracted to interesting, creative, novel work practices; Social Value – measuring the extent to which an individual is attracted to a organisation that provides good collegial relationship and team atmosphere; Economic Value measuring the extent to which an individual is attracted to employer that provides compensation package, benefits and promotional opportunities and Application Value considering the extent to which an individual is attracted to an organisation that provides an environment that is humanitarian and gives an opportunity to apply what has been learnt (Berthon *et al.*, 2005).

Respondents are asked to rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree.

3.4.4 Job Pursuit Intention

Gomes and Neves (2011) in their study measure intention to apply to a job vacancy by adapting four items from Taylor and Bergman (1987) and Roberson *et al.* (2005). Items include, “If I were searching for a job, I would apply to this organization”. Catanzaro *et al.* (2010) measure Job pursuit intention using a scale adapted from the Aiman-Smith, Bauer and Cable’s (2001) measure of six questions with Likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 7 – strongly agree. Sample questions are, “I would accept a job offer from this company after graduating”; “would attempt to gain an interview with this company after graduating”; “I would actively pursue obtaining a position with this company after graduating”. Wang (2013) adopts measure Job Pursuit Intention using scale adopted from the studies of Chu and Lu (2007) and Dodds *et al.* (1991). The 4 – items scale is measured on a 5 – point scale and include statements like “The likelihood that I would apply for the firm’s job is high”, “My willingness to apply for the firm’s job is very high”. Similarly, Tsai *et al.* (2013) and Wang (2012, 2013) also adopt the same scale for their studies.

To measure Job Pursuit Intention, the present study uses the 5-item scale, adopted from Highhouse *et al.* (2003) and includes items like “I would accept a job offer from this company”; “I would make this company one of my first choice as an employer”; “If this company invited me for a job interview, I would go”; “I would accept a job offer from this company”. These items are selected and adapted from previous research (e.g., Rynes and Miller, 1983; Schwoerer and Rosen, 1989; Ployhart and Ryan, 1998).

3.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study is conducted during July – August 2013. A sample of 100 respondents from five business schools i.e. 20 respondents from each institute are asked to fill the questionnaire. The reliability of the instruments is ensured through Cronbach’s alpha. The constructs are found to be reliable and adopted for the study since all the constructs had Cronbach Alpha value above 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). The values are as indicated in table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Reliability of the Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Protean Career Orientation	0.886
Employer Attractiveness	0.921
Employer Attractiveness - Development Value	0.742
Employer Attractiveness - Social Value	0.721
Employer Attractiveness - Interest Value	0.806
Employer Attractiveness - Economic Value	0.789
Employer Attractiveness - Application Value	0.706
Job Pursuit Intention	0.801

3.6 Sampling and Target Population

As per the AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) Process Handbook 2013-14, in India there are 3844 AICTE approved institutes, offering management education (PGDM and MBA). Coimbatore is a popular destination for pursuing

management education among students from the surrounding areas and Kerala as a substantially large number of Business schools of around 67 institutes of the 391 AICTE approved institutes in Tamil Nadu are present in Coimbatore. Therefore, the study is based on the MBA student population in Coimbatore to understand the Gen Y management students' career choice factors, career orientation, and expectations from employers.

The study adopts simple random sampling. Respondents are students in their final year of Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from 22 business schools of Coimbatore chosen through lottery method from 67 AICTE approved institutes offering post graduation in Business Administration in Coimbatore. From each of these institutes, 50% of the students interested in pursuing a job after completion of their course are asked to fill the questionnaire. The response rate is 92 per cent as of the 525 questionnaires distributed, 496 are returned; of which 483 have complete information and is usable. All the respondents are less than 35 years of age, hence belong to Gen Y. Therefore, the sample size of the study is 483 respondents.

3.7 Data Collection

Both secondary and primary data is collected for the study. Primary data is collected through survey method using the questionnaire during October 2013 – January 2014. All the measures are adopted from previous studies and the reliability of the constructs is ensured. Questionnaires are distributed to respondents personally. The respondents are contacted after seeking permission from the concerned authority at the institutes. Before administering the questionnaire, the purpose of collecting data and importance of the study are explained to the students. Doubts are clarified and adequate time is given to fill the questionnaire.

Secondary data is collected from journals, books, survey reports, newspapers and business magazines.

3.8 Statistical Analysis

The data are analysed and hypotheses tested applying appropriate statistical tools like descriptive statistics, Chi-Square test, ANOVA, Factor Analysis, Correlation Analysis, Multiple regression, t –test and Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least

Square (SEM-PLS) Analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-18) and Visual PLS (2.1) have been used to execute the statistical analyses.

- Descriptive statistics and Percentage Analysis are done to map the demographic profile of the respondents
- Descriptive Statistics is carried out to examine the Protean Career Orientation among Gen Y management Students and to explore the perceived level of importance of the dimensions of Employer Attractiveness by management Students and to examine the most highly rated Career Choice factor.
- Chi-square test is performed to examine significance of relationship between the nominal variables - gender, Protean Career orientation (categorized into 2 groups – high Protean Career orientation and low Protean career orientation), specialization and undergraduate discipline.
- Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is performed to compare means of Protean Career orientation between UG discipline and specialization groups, and to compare means of dimensions of Employer Attractiveness between respondents groups of Undergraduate discipline and Specialization.
- Factor Analysis is conducted to identify the factors that influence the Career Choice of Gen Y management students.
- Correlation Analysis is done to find the association among the study variables
- Multiple Regression is performed to study the effects of individual items of factors of Career Choice and Protean Career Orientation on Employer Attractiveness; and the effects of the 25 items constituting Employer Attractiveness dimensions on Job Pursuit intention
- Visual PLS is used to examine the effects of the constructs - factors of Career Choice and Protean Career Orientation on Employer Attractiveness; and the effects of the five dimensions of Employer Attractiveness on Job Pursuit intention
- T- test is carried out to examine significant gender differences in factors influencing Career Choice, Protean Career Orientation and perceived level of importance of the dimensions of Employer Attractiveness.

3.9 Chapter Summary

To summarize, the study is descriptive in nature and adopts a survey strategy. The study adopts quantitative research approach. Measures used for the study are derived from literature review and the survey questionnaire is developed from standard questionnaire after testing the reliability using Cronbach alpha in the current research context. The study adopts simple random sampling and through survey method primary data is collected during October 2013 – January 2014. The study uses statistical tools like descriptive statistics, Chi-Square test, Factor Analysis, Correlation Analysis, Multiple regression, t-test, ANOVA and Structural Equation Modelling - Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) Analysis. These are carried out using software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-18) and Visual PLS (2.1).