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**Assessing the behavioral outcome of perceived employability: A call on  
integrative research on career satisfaction, productive and  
counterproductive work behaviors**

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## Summary of PhD thesis

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**Thesis title:** Assessing the behavioral outcome of perceived employability: A call on integrative research on career satisfaction, productive and counterproductive work behavior

### **Abstract:**

Perceived employability (PE) is advanced as a security mechanism in today's dynamic labor market and as a personal resource with overall beneficial outcomes. There is quite some work done in realm of occupational health research with overall conclusion that PE promotes well-being. However, existing literature in other streams on specific behavior is far more fragmented, though there are obvious links with employability in the career literature (e.g., PE should promote individuals' career) and performance literature (e.g., employable workers are thought to be high achievers). In this thesis, I aimed to summarize what is known and what is still to be explored in PE mainly with behavioral context. However, the thesis is divided into three studies. The first study directed to synthesize three literature streams (occupational health, career and performance) with respect to PE and work behaviors. According to multi-stage selection criteria, twenty nine peer-reviewed articles were retrieved from the three main databases (Web of sciences, Scopus, and Business source complete) and two conference proceedings (Academy of Management and European Association of Organization and Work Psychology). The nexus between PE and behavior analyzed in light of behavioral theories (such as human capital, social exchange and norm of reciprocity) and to understand the depth of the existing literature different angles of all twenty-nine studies were examined. Noteworthy gaps were identified on the basis of collected studies and future research suggestion related to methodology, sample industries and in light of rapidly increasing temporary employment were made.

The second study was conducted in the vein of intense competition among applicants in dynamic labor market. The competitive job market building pressure for stakeholders (academicians, employers and policymakers) to better understand the factors that influence graduates' smooth

entry and the successful transition in the labor market. Beyond job-specific technical skills that most of graduates rarely develop during their educational path, PE of graduates is mainly related with the emotional and social competencies (ESCs) they bring into the workplace. However, empirical evidence on the relationship between ESCs and PE is limited to few skills, such as emotional self-awareness, and studies have been mainly conducted on samples of unemployed adults or employed individuals. Moreover, the relationship between ESCs and perceived employability can increase our understanding of factors that influence graduate's career satisfaction, as a subjective dimension of career success. With the aim to contribute to the debate on the antecedents and consequences of graduate's employability, I collected three years' time-lagged data of a sample of Italian graduates. Data analysis through partial least square-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) unravels the relationships between ESCs, perceived employability and career satisfaction. The second study contributes to the employability literature in two ways. First, it provides insights on those emotional and social competencies that nurture perceived employability in graduates. Moreover, it offers evidence of a full mediation effect played by perceived employability for the relationship between ESCs and career satisfaction. The second study concludes with guidelines to build and equip graduates with the essential competencies that are valued and required in the labor market.

The third study investigates the theoretical linkages and behavioral implications of PE to respond the recent call of research that PE may have negative behavioral implications. However, I investigated the previous claimed that PE works as personal resource with overall positive outcomes. Three main questions were addressed: i) Does PE have positive effects on productive behavior such as in-role and extra-role? ii) Does PE entail a dark side such as destructive behavior? iii) Does PE have the same function in developing economies as it does in developed economies? The third question responds to the lacunae related to the asymmetry of the dataset and replication of existing results in developing economies. Data was collected from 230 white-collar employees (62 managers and 168 non-managers) from four large companies operating in Pakistan, and analyzed through PLS-SEM. On the positive side, results show that PE is positively associated with organizational citizenship behavior- individual (OCBI), whereas, there is a positive relationship between PE and counterproductive work behavior-individual (CWBI) and counterproductive work behavior organization (CWBO). The present research raises serious concerns from the employers' perspective given the prime importance of highly employable

workers during the attraction, selection and retention process. Overall this thesis is a droplet for the future researchers with some interesting findings of PE and open a new research avenue by challenging the existing positive approach to PE. While it serves the strong micro (individual) and macro (organization) level implications: because organizations starving to hire and retain employable workers to remain competitive.

Student's Signature

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# **Impact of perceived employability on work behavior: An interdisciplinary review with future research directions\*\*\***

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## **Abstract**

Employability gained noticeable researchers' attention as security mechanism with positive outcomes due to increasing unemployment in dynamic labor market. However, debate on employability on work behaviors (career, in-role and extra-role) is fragmented in different streams (career, occupational health research and performance). The aim is to summarize what is known and what is still to be explored mainly to understand the nexus between PE and behavior. Twenty-nine peer-reviewed articles filtered out with a multi-staged criteria from three databases (Web of Sciences, Scopus and EBSCO) with particular focus on work behaviors. Connect between PE and behavior was rationalized under several theories (social exchange theory, human capital theory). Future research were drawn keeping in view of the methods, design and dataset used in early studies. The present study contributes in literature into two folds. First, to summarizing all the studies touching the notion of perceived employability including self-perceived employability and similar concepts (perceived) ease of movement affecting work-related behavior(s) either directly or indirectly to give the comprehensive picture of research. Furthermore, this review helps to present and future research to understand that what has been achieved in this domain and what could be fruitful with respect to current dynamic labor market. Second, this study tries to illuminate some interesting line of research (as initial path) to drag the attention of future researchers on this important topic particularly organizational behavior researcher to revive the debate in mainstream.

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## **Introduction**

Perceived Employability (PE hereafter), a personal resource assists individual to control the surrounding environment (Berntson, 2008; De Cuyper et al., 2014; Hobfoll et al., 2003). Employability is amalgamation of two words “employment” and “ability”, measures the individual’s ability to get employment (Vanhercke et al., 2014). Although the employability concept has been initially premeditated in an objective manner (Worth, 2002) in which researchers have started taking the interest in PE (Berntson et al., 2007).

Employability is not only important for the employed but also vital for those who are currently not part of the labor market but looking for job or entering in labor market (McArdle et al., 2007). Scholars defined employability as “the employee’s chance of finding alternative employment, either on the internal or the external labour market” (Forrier et al., 2003, p. 106; Wittekind et al., 2010). The concept of employability is often framed in terms of employee perceptions that how easily (s)he could find new employment (Rothwell et al., 2007). However, PE is the result of individual factors (e.g., training, education) and contextual features (e.g., the general economy) (Berntson et al., 2006).

Employability at micro level provides competitive advantage and organizations tend to recruit employable workers as they possess ample stock of knowledge and skills required to promote performance (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011). It is generally argue high employable behave more productive and contributes to organization effectiveness (De Cuyper, Van der Heijden, et al., 2011). Employees’ behavior has always been prime concern for organizations and researchers because productive behavior (such as in-role and extra role) helps to achieve the performance goals (Organ, 1988; Smith et al., 1983). In-role behavior, refers to fulfilling the employees’ core and formal role activities (Morrison, 1994), and organization citizenship behavior (hereafter OCB) that

refers “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988, p.4). Conceptual and empirical work in OCB highlighted two broad classification i) OCB-Organization in which organization get benefits in general (e.g. getting prior leave notice, suggestion for improvement of organization productivity) (Williams et al., 1991) ii) OCB-Individual, where employees spontaneously help others (e.g. during the absence of other employees help others) (Organ et al., 1995). Contrary, organizations develop a set of rules and policies to reduce or control the counterproductive (negative) behavior such as bullying, theft or incivility (Spector, Fox, & Domagalski, 2006) due to its destructive nature. Similar with OCBs’ dimensions, literature classifies counterproductive work behavior (hereafter CWB) into two categories: one in which the organization is targeted (CWB-O) and the other in which the member of the organization is targeted (CWB-I) (Robinson et al., 1995), and other studies define CWB-I and CWB-O as interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance (See, Berry et al., 2007; Robinson et al., 1995). For example, Spector, Fox, Penney, et al., (2006) identified different forms of individual CWB; sabotage, abuse, withdrawal and production deviance. Behaviors that are not align with organization’s goals cost billions of dollar every year (Bennett et al., 2000; Murphy, 1993). Thus PE is advantageous for both individuals (Vanhercke et al., 2014) and organizations (Heijde et al., 2006).

Keeping in view of the importance of behavior and employability, researchers so far made a strong case about PE as a personal resource that gives a sense of control (De Cuyper et al., 2012) (Fugate et al., 2008). Having control over difficult situation is vital aspect to cope with negative emotions and avoid destructive behavior (Spector, Fox, & Domagalski, 2006). For example, employable individuals feel they can easily secure employment elsewhere, are less dependent upon a single

employer and do not need to retaliate against the organization or its employees (Rodríguez et al., 2001).

During the last decade PE gained significant attention of researchers (Forrier et al., 2003; Fugate et al., 2004) but surprisingly debate in behavioral literature is rare and fragmented. Surprisingly the debate on employability and behavior is prostrate and lean to occupational health and career literature. By looking the PE literature with the connotation of behavior, it seems that literature on employability influenced by occupational health and career researchers (Berntson, 2008; Berntson et al., 2007; De Cuyper et al., 2010; De Cuyper, De Witte, et al., 2011; De Cuyper et al., 2015; De Vos et al., 2011; Nauta et al., 2009; Onyishi et al., 2015; Vanhercke et al., 2016). The fragmentation in literature on PE with mixed arguments hindering to conceptualize behavioral outcomes of PE. For instance, health researchers indicated highly employable contributes to organizations' effectiveness (De Cuyper, Van der Heijden, et al., 2011) and on contrary career researchers found, high employable may not helpful for organizations (Kang et al., 2012). Therefore, present study aims to summarize what is known and what could be explored further to contribute the current debate on employability and organizational success (De Cuyper, Van der Heijden, et al., 2011).

Fragmentation in different domains dwindling the crucial role of PE and a summarized work is indispensable due to decisive role of employability and behavior employability within organization. An exhaustive insight is crucial to understand the recent evolved but blurred version of PE in behavioral context for three key reasons (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers, De Cuyper, Forrier, Vander Elst, & De Witte, 2016): First, to underline the nexus between PE and behavior due to its important at micro level (individual career) and meso level (performance trough positive behavior) (Berntson, 2008). Second, to understand the reciprocal connect between PE with

behavior in organizational environment. Third, in the light of theories and recent debate, to understand PE is overall positive as indicated in literature or it could contains any dark side (De Cuyper, Notelaers, et al., 2009; Philippaers et al., 2016).

The purpose of this study is to fill the proposed gap in empirical work of Bernston (2008) that implication of PE on individuals' work behaviors is a promising line of research and help to understand the work behaviors (p. 57). Lastly, present study (as review approach) contributes to shift the policy debate (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011) to the more individualized behavior within organization keeping in view of the frequent variations and escalating unpredictability of labor market where behavior is vital aspect of organizational point of view. Therefore, this study provides an exhaustive summary of already explored relationships in scattered literature to extend the behavioral debate. However, it encompasses the aspect of micro level PE and aligns with the psycho-social approach, person-centered construct (Fugate et al., 2004; Vanhercke et al., 2014) and highlights the behavioral aspect that has not explored much in literature (Fugate et al., 2008). The paper is organized as follows, the next section introduces the literature background in the light of different theories including the conceptual understanding and then I describe methodology underpinning the study. Next, I present the results devoting attention to the explored relationship in literature with reference to PE with particular focus on work behavior. Then, I suggest future avenues of research in the light of theories, and previous studies. Finally, conclusion is drawn based on analysis and in the light of previous studies.

### **Establishing link between behavior and perceived employability**

Predominant organizations' concern of productivity and employees largely focus on careers' aspirations stress researchers to understand the relationship between employability and work

behavior. Rapid technological change and uncertain economic situation during the last two decades gained researchers' attention to rarely studied concepts of PE due to its utmost significance at individual and organizational level (Forrier et al., 2003). Surprisingly debate in behavioral literature is rare and fragmented despite the fact that assertive and proactive behavior of employable workforce alive organizations in dynamic market (Fugate et al., 2004).

The individuals' (re)act based on available information and this (re)action becomes stronger if information relevant to their employment (Berzonsky, 1992). Therefore, PE strengthens individuals' belief that they can obtain new job as and when it deems necessary. Different models in the organizational literature demonstrate that interaction between the individual and situation affect human behavior (Endler et al., 1976; Spector, Fox, & Domagalski, 2006). Perception of being employable guides individuals how to (re)act at workplace and role of PE gets stronger from a behavioral perspective particularly in austere time and changing economies (Berntson, 2008). For instance, during high unemployment in job market changes behavior of low employable worker. However, it has been established that PE gives a sense of security (Berntson, 2008; De Cuyper et al., 2012) and control in difficult job situations (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). PE refers to the appraisal of one's possibility about how easily (s)he could find or retain employment (De Cuyper, Mauno, et al., 2011) that lead employees to behave productive as well as counterproductive. The nexus between PE and work behavior is not new and can be traced from earlier work of March et al. (1958) in which PE potentially predicts turnover (a behavior where individual leaves organization) which later addressed and validated (De Cuyper, Mauno, et al., 2011). Likewise, Larson et al. (1985) discussed PE affects attendance (absenteeism) because employees with lower PE attend office to cover the risk of job loss while higher PE causes absenteeism. However, career researchers validated the behavioral findings that individuals with

PE are more likely to engage in job search behavior (Onyishi et al., 2015). The recent studies highlighted that employable workers are more prone to positive work behavior such as task-performance, OCB and helping others (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2017; Philippaers et al., 2016). While these positive behaviors are critical to organizational performance and effectiveness (Organ, 1988). Work behaviors are entangled with the notion of employability. For instance, employees adopt voluntary learning behavior to gain updated knowledge and skills to remain competitive (Kim et al., 2015). However, a meta-analysis indicates that performance impel feelings of being more employable (McEvoy et al., 1987).

### **PE-behavior Regulatory Process**

The nexus between PE and behavior can be understood by knowing the employability features and what constitutes behavior. Fugate et al., (2004) presented employability with dispositional and person-centered approach as psycho-social construct. Likewise, four major factors (personal, organizational, work-related and contextual) that constitute work behaviors directly affect employability (Lau et al., 2003). The organizational policies always emphasis to increase the performance by endorsing employees' positive behavior. For instance, in-role performance and OCBs serve as performance indicators and behavioral cues to the organizational success (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Organ (1997) updated the earlier definition of OCB is “performance that supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place” (p. 95). Employable workers contribute to organizational goals by helping others as they possess extended pool of skills (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2017). However, organizations have unnerving response to counterproductive behavior.

Internal dispositions and external factors create coherence between the constitution of PE and human behavior (Berntson et al., 2006; Marcus et al., 2004). Review of different theories make

easy to understand the process and connect between PE and work behaviors (task-performance, OCBs and CWBs). To get more clarity in the nexus of PE and work behaviors, I merged the person-situation quadrant used by Marcus et al. (2004) for general counterproductive behavior. Three reasons to use this quadrant for OCBs and CWBs: First, both type of behaviors belongs to same gamut with two extreme poles. Second, both (productive and counterproductive) behaviors share similar antecedents (Dalal, 2005). Third, it covers wide array of both individual (disposition) and external factors (situation) that drive or force to adopt new or alter in existing behave.

### **Triggers (Situation – Motivation)**

Employability replaces the old concept of job security and introduces new psychological contracts where employees expect work experience and development opportunities instead of job security. People join labor market to meet his financial obligations or/and career aspirations or/and recognition. (Non)fulfillment of (financial/career) goals lead to productive or CWB. Social exchange theory, psychological contract and norm of reciprocity enable to understand the relationship between PE and behavior (Cropanzano et al., 2005). Exchange consists on bidirectional transaction that involve mutual and complementary arrangement based on give and take. For the basic understanding, employee performs certain duties and gets pay in return. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) highlight the social exchange process creates self-reinforcing cycle, “process begins when one participant makes a ‘move,’ and if the other reciprocates, new rounds of exchange initiate.” This paper argues that employable workers are in better position to reciprocate and behave positive exchange orientation where employable workers are high and track obligation. A further argument is, in case of unfair treatment employable workers reciprocate with negative behavior. Contrary, in exchange relationship, low employable workers less likely to

care if exchanges are not reciprocate according to their requirements hence they less likely to (re)act (Cropanzano et al., 2005, p. 877-878). Fair treatment at workplace cause positive behavior at workplace and vice versa. Behavior of employable workers is important for the organization because they possess extra-job resources. Therefore, high employable are more concerned in exchange because they bring updated knowledge and know-how in organization and if they see they are not treated fairly then they are more likely to engage in CWB with revenge motives. For instance, De Cuyper et al., (2014) found a positive relationship between PE and CWB-O and CWB-I in job insecurity.

### **Opportunity (Situation–Control)**

Marcus et al. (2004) conceptualized opportunities as actual or perception of situation that facilitates (or inhibits) the exertion of productive or CWB by enhancing (or restricting) access to desired outcomes or by making the positive or negative consequences for the organization. Workers appraise financial crisis, high unemployment, mergers or acquisitions as negative and threatening but perception of being employable provides control over such situation. Consistent with the stress theory of Lazarus (1991) and the stressor and emotion model of Spector and Fox (2001), events and stressful situations that are not happened (like economic downturn, job loss or role overload) could produce negative behavior at workplace. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) theorized, threat of job loss anticipates to loss or harm that has not been taken place yet (p. 32). The perception of being employable gives a feeling of control in stressful situation (like job loss and extra workload). Hockey's control model (1993) indicates that employees use performance-protection strategy to cope the stressor (e.g. workload, and deadlines). Employable individuals are considered high achievers and in better position to use performance-protection strategy to cope



stressful situation (De Cuyper et al., 2014). The basic assumption is that individual with PE feel that they have control over career, and in the case of job loss or career aspirations, they can easily find job elsewhere (Iverson et al., 2000) and project a positive behavior (OCB) at workplace (De Cuyper et al., 2014).

The continuous demand of maximize performance exert pressure on employees to get maximize performance. Stressor-emotion model (Spector et al., 2005) indicates that stressor in work environment (like exceed the job demand), induce negative emotions that leads employees to engage in CWB (like aggression). To counter the stress, high employable (through human and social capital) in better position to overcome work stressor and perform well. Extending the Job Demand-Resource model and stress theory (Lazarus et al., 1984), high employable (through human and social capital) in better position to cope with work stress and behave accordingly.

### **Internal Control (Person–Control)**

Marcus et al. (2004) indicated individuals' disposition contribute in organization through positive behavior. They further discussed that high self-esteem is the protective factor against CWBs. McArdle et al. (2007) proposes that high employability act as buffers and prevent lower self-esteem during the unemployment. The reason is high employable are more proactive and adaptable and their updated knowledge and skills remain open the career opportunities. They maintain positive self-esteem even they are unemployed (McArdle et al., 2007). One of the core assumptions of conservation resource theory (Hobfoll, 1989) is that individuals aim to preserve resources in hand and they invest in resources to build a greater pool of resources. This resource pool helps individuals to replace the one resource with others (as substitute) when one resource lost. In contemplation of resource substitution, where replacement or substitution of highly valued

resource is less or even partial, the outcome would be more negative (see more, Hobfoll, 2001). PE works the same for individuals, where one perceives that s/he can easily get the job (based on the existing pool of resources), feel less vulnerable, and maintain OCB. De Cuyper et al., (2012) argued in the similar way and explored a negative relationship between perceived external employability and job insecurity. This study argues that the protection and acquiring of resources (like participation in trainings, education) gives a feeling of gain that promote a positive feelings and behavior. For example, De Cuyper et al., (2014) highlighted employable individuals build resources by invest in their pool of skills by participating in trainings and helping others to build a social capital to use in future for getting job. Fugate et al., (2004) highlighted that employable individuals are more proactive to change and perform better in organizations. Similar reasoning is provided with resource based view that employability (as resource) enables organizations to achieve or at least maintain the competitive position (De Cuyper, Van der Heijden, et al., 2011, p. 1489).

### **Propensity (Person–Motivation)**

The fourth quadrant of behavior refers individuals' disposition that drive them to engage in CWB to achieve their desired outcomes or try to become prominent in organization. Marcus et al. (2004) conceptualized such individuals look for power and low poles. Recent study discussed two important features of PE: investment and power (De Cuyper et al., 2014). This study argues these features are the stronger driver to lead employees' productive and destructive behave at workplace. In addition to this, I extend both features as resource investment and resource power. Resource investment is continuous phase where employees build their knowledge and skills to become more employable and achieve their career aspirations. This resource accumulation engages into more

productive behavior such as in-role performance and OCB. Likewise, with these resources employable workers feel relatively power than counterparts. Here I am not referring the hierarchal power but the power in the form of having resources (e.g. human capital) compared with other co-workers and such power potentially leads to bullying (create target and perpetrator) (Samnani et al., 2012). For example, employable workers could take longer or additional breaks. Additionally, they feel they can secure job elsewhere then they could less care about organizational norms. This CWB not only diminishes the performance but also promote workplace deviance ranging from group politics or bullying to lashing out the co-workers for personal gain.

### **PE and Behavior of Temporary vs Permanent Employees**

Beard and Edwards (1995) highlighted five important job's key features (control, job insecurity, psychological contract, social comparison, predictability) that are a major disadvantaged for temporary employees in comparison with permanent employees. This study argues that these five job features are crucial to positive organizational behavior or the same could turn behavior in negative way. Temporary employees could easily be overcome this disadvantage through employability. De Cuyper, Notelaers, De Witte (2009) explained that temporary workers aware of contract expires and look for alternative and in all this PE gives control. An important aspect, social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) suggests that employees evaluate what they are getting from the organization in comparison to referent others (Feldman & Turnley, 2004; Thorsteinson, 2003). Temporary workers may compare their situation negatively to the situation of permanent workers. This may result in a sense of relative deprivation, particularly among temporary workers who feel employable. Temporary workers who are employable may feel that they do not get what they deserve: they bring in new knowledge and skills, and yet they are not rewarded accordingly.

This may trigger negative responses, for example in the form of reduce loyalty (De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, et al., 2008; De Cuyper, Notelaers, et al., 2009). Furthermore, it may create a sense of discrimination that leads to CWB (Konovsky et al., 1991). Ample research highlights that psychological contracts of temporary workers are narrower in terms of number of inducements and quality of content as compared to permanent workers (Chambel et al., 2006; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2002; De Cuyper et al., 2007; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2008; De Cuyper, Rigotti, et al., 2008; Guest, 2004; Millward et al., 1999; Millward et al., 1998; Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau et al., 2000; Van Dyne et al., 1998) but highly employable workers are high to reciprocate (Cropanzano et al., 2005) and fair rewards induce productive behavior. Therefore, present study argues that with fairness in rewards (such as career, financial or recognition) organizations can turn negative behaviors into productive of highly employable temporary workers.

## **Methods**

This review provides an exhaustive summary by scrutinizing the relevant literature of last twenty years (1997-2017). In last two decades employability became greater concern for employees and labor market changed employment relationships drastically changed in last two decades. To get the insight of literature on PE and work related behaviors, the author limited the review to non-invited peer-reviewed journal articles (empirical), omitting books, book chapters and other non-refereed publications because articles have highest impact in any field due to its validated knowledge (Podsakoff et al., 2005). Three electronic databases were consulted: Scopus, Business source complete (EBSCO) and Web of Science. To search in the relevant literature, initially the author used several keywords: employability, perceived employability, ease of movement, perceived alternatives along with behavior, behavior, career behavior, helping others, in-role

performance, task performance, OCB (including individual and organizational directed). An overlapping concept of PE is “continuance commitment” studied in 90s refers, employees’ perception of cost associated with leaving the organization (Meyer et al., 1990, p. 33) but later employability researchers made a clear distinction between PE and continuance commitment (see more, De Cuyper, Van der Heijden, et al., 2011, p. 1488). Hence not included keyword of continuance commitment in search due to distinction made by employability researchers. Likewise, turnover and turnover intention were not included in this study due to several reasons: Sackett and DeVore (2001) discussed that intention to leave or leaving job for career advancement are counterproductive, even though these behaviors are contrary to organization’s interests, yet do not come under the negative connotation e.g. wrongdoing as these are not immoral, illegal or even deviant acts (p. 147). Another reason is that much of the employability literature has already discussed turnover from career perspective which I believe that changing job due to career is one’s right and organizations address through retention policies that is beyond the scope of this study. In case of temporary workers, turnover is vague because employees understand fixed-term contract and temporary nature. For example, De Cuyper and De Witte (2008) highlighted that turnover is more or less expected in case of temporary workers and considered not good criteria to measure contentment (p. 91). After consulting databases, a manually search was conducted of last three conference proceedings of Academy of Management and European association of work and organizational psychology by knowing the fact that PE is a concept that is dominant in occupational health psychology and far less established in organizational behavior and career literature. In order to get more comprehensive results, the author added filter, “title, authors’ supplied keywords, and abstract” (Keupp et al., 2012). In total 1029 studies were retrieved from different streams of literature. However, according to the scope of this present study (PE and work

related behaviors), the search was restricted in the subject area of social sciences included business, management, psychology, behavior, education, health (not included handicap studies) and excluded medicine, linguistic, criminology, immigrants and other fields due to scope of study. At the end 328 studies were retrieved.

*Inclusion Criteria:* After getting the studies, four points inclusion criteria were set: i) the paper discussed (self-perceived) employability or (perceived) ease of movement or perceived alternative in the behavioral domain, ii) the study must be in peer-reviewed journals or in AOM or EAWOP conference proceedings iii) published abstract at least in English language to understand the contribution iv) studied workplace behavior or performance. Studies missing any of the inclusion criterion were discarded. To increase the validity, the author manually inspected all the 328 studies' titles, keywords, abstract and full-length articles to refine the results.

## **Findings**

One of the main objectives of this study to understand the employability-behavior nexus and the involved process with the validated evidence in literature. A total of total twenty nine studies in the realm of workplace behaviors found which discussed the construct of PE, self-perceived employability or (perceived) ease of movement as major construct either as predictor, mediator/moderator/intervening and outcome. To get fair understanding and discussion, work behaviors divided into three broad forms 1) Career related behaviors (e.g., job search, impression management, learning behavior, and personal initiative) 2) positive work behavior (e.g., in-role performance and OCB) (Organ, 1988; Organ et al., 1995) 3) negative behavior (e.g., bullying, counterproductive behavior, and incivility) (Gruys, 1999; Sackett et al., 2001). The level of analysis was micro level PE and work behaviors at interpersonal and organizational level. Table 1 shows name of journals and conference proceedings of selected studies.

<b>Table 1: Available contribution of Journals &amp; Conferences</b>	
<b>Name of Journal / Conference</b>	<b>Number of studies published</b>
Academy of Management Annual meeting	1
Asian Academy of Management	1
Career Development International	4
Economic and Industrial Democracy	2
Employee Relations	1
Eupean Association of Work and Organizational Psychology congress	2
Group & organization management	1
International Journal of Stress Management	1
Journal of Career Development	1
Journal of Managerial Psychology	1
Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology	1
Journal of Organizational Behavior	1
Journal of vocational behavior	3
Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology	1
Personnel Review	2
The International Journal of Human Resource Management,	3
The Spanish journal of psychology	1
Work & Stress	1
10th European Conference of the International Labour and Employment Relations Association (ILERA)	1

Further table 2 shows the sample, data collection industry and region, main unit of analysis including theoretical framework used in earlier studies. Table 3 highlights the methods used and findings.

Starting from trigger (situation-motivation) and in view of the dynamic labor market and challenging job demand, a multi-group sample study found that employable workers engage job crafting (Brenninkmeijer et al., 2015). Workers strategize and adopt those behavior that directly benefit their careers. Therefore, career development is motivation that triggers positive behavior. Brenninkmeijer discussed that job crafting is mechanism for individuals to meet their career aspirations. In addition, employable workers more inclined to accumulate structural and social job resources. An update knowledge and pool of skills provide not only a sense of employability but less stressed during austere time. Employable individuals are Kim et al. (2015) conducted a study on employees of an acquired dairy company and highlighted that employees adopt voluntary learning behavior to update their knowledge and expertise. Likewise, extended job resources also deals with challenging job demands. Recent study highlighted that employable individuals are more prone to knowledge collecting behavior (Shamsudin et al., 2016).

Employees adopt resource accumulation behaviors to deal with challenging situations and to pursue career aspirations. However, skilled employees' job search behavior is alarming for employers. A number of factors regulate connect between PE-job search and similarly intensity of job search. For instance, (un)fair treatment and available opportunities within organization impel employees to engage in job search behavior. Conducive job market is another push factor of job search behavior. While saturated job market or a particular profession/job field may reduce the job search behavior even for employable workers because employees feel that job search efforts will go futile once he got job. Onyishi et al. (2015) conducted a study in Nigerian context where



unemployment is high and no welfare system exist. They highlighted that once an individual succeeds to get a job in saturated, he perceive his attempt to further job may not get fruitful outcome. Such factors (such as unemployment with no social protection and financial obligations) hinder job search behavior and these circumstances determine employees positive and negative. Existing studies have no conclusive results in this regard. For instance, Berntson et al. (2010) found employees with higher PE not only strongly react to job insecurity but they reduce their loyalty and voice behavior. Moreover, employable workers hold stronger exit behavior that shows less involvement in organization even in high job insecurity.

Studies mainly concerned career related behaviors (job search, self-management, voluntary learning behavior, personal initiative, loyalty and impression management). While little research devoted PE and positive and negative behaviors (task performance, OCB, and CWB) (Akkermans et al., 2017; De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2017; Philippaers et al., 2016). However, the results of these studies are not conclusive despite the fact that these are conducted in European context where employees operate in similar labor market (Philippaers et al., 2017). One possible reason could be that debate on PE and work behaviors is emerging and researchers are researchers are trying to understand the associated behavioral constructs with PE. For instance, Philippaers et al. (2016) hypothesized that employable workers bring creativity in organizations (employability→creativity) but results showed the reverse relationship (creativity→employability). Likewise, studies conceptualized the relationship between PE and CWB under social exchange theory (Philippaers et al., 2017) and psychological contract (De Cuyper et al., 2014) but so far has no any or strong evidence that PE has positively association with CWB. However, it seems that researchers have general consensus that PE positively boost performance as employable workers possess all the required job resources.

**Table No. 2**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Sample / Unit of Analysis</b>	<b>Data collected from (industry and region)</b>	<b>Variables Discussed</b>	<b>Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>Type of Behavior investigated</b>
(Yizhong et al., 2017)	Chinese university graduating students	University, China	PE (I*), Job search self-efficacy, attitude (D***), subjective norms (D), intention and job search intensity (D)	Theory of planned behavior	Job search (intention and intensity)
(Philippaers et al., 2017)	458 Dutch speaking HR managers of several organizations stationed in Belgium. Main unit of analysis was work group	Four private sector organizations (i.e., one bank and one medical, one HR and one technical services supplier) with more than 250 employees.	Perceived external employability (I), Affective Org. Commitment (Me), Affective workgroup commitment (Me), Tasks performance (D), Helping behavior (D), Counterproductive Beh. (D)	Social Exchange theory Lawler's Affect Theory of Social Exchange	Tasks performance Helping behavior Counterproductive Behavior
(De Vos et al., 2017)	2137 Professional & Managerial level employees	(Not specified industry), Belgium	Perceived occupational expertise (I), Perceived internal employability (Me), Perceived external employability (Me), Age group (Mo), Job search (D)		Job search behavior Tested with perceived internal and external employability
(Makkonen, 2016)	23 Western SIE working in local Chinese organization	Local Chinese organizations, China	Research question: how and why Self-initiated Expatriates use career self-management behaviour?	King's framework of career self-management behaviour	Self-management behavior
(De Battisti, Gilardi, Guglielmetti, & Siletti, 2016)	136 unemployed individuals	Italy	Perceived employability (I), Work attributed psy-distress Job search strategy (Me), Length of unemployment (Mo), Re-employment (D)	Self-regulatory theory and social cognitive career theory	Job search 1. Focused JS strategy 2. Haphazard JS strategy

(Bozionelos et al., 2016)	207 pairs (subordinate-line manager)	IT industry, Greece, Poland, Italy	Mentoring receipt (I), Employability (Me), Objective Career Success (D), Subjective Career Success (D), Performance (D)	Social Exchange Theory	Performance
(Shamsudin, Al-Badi, Bachkirov, & Alshuaibi, 2016)	129 managerial & professional/technical	Not specified, Oman	Perceived job security(I), Perceived promotional opportunities (I), Employability (I), Knowledge sharing behavior (D)	Social exchange theory	Knowledge sharing behavior divided further in 1. Knowledge donating 2. Knowledge collecting
(Onyishi et al., 2015)	245-University students	University, Nigeria	Core-Self Evaluation (I*), Perceived employability, and job search behavior (D***)	Coping view point (Stress theory)	Job search behavior (preparatory job search and active job search)
(Giorgi et al., 2015)	Employees individuals	Different industries (Luxury fashion, construction, public administration), workers, Italy	General health, job demands, nonemployability as perceived low employability, fear of economic crisis, workplace bullying, job satisfaction	Stress appraisal theory	Workplace bullying Psychological distress behavior
(Kim et al., 2015)	Employed individuals after acquisition	Different department of dairy industry, South Korea	Employee's self-concept (I), Voluntary Learning Behavior(I), Perceived Employability (D)	Self-concept and human capital theory	voluntary learning behavior
(Brenninkmeijer & Hekkert-Koning, 2015)	383 employees from Dutch consultancy organization for recruitment, assessment and coaching	Pharmacy, medical devices, food and health care and focuses on higher educated professionals, The Netherlands	Promotion Focus(I), Prevention focus(I), Crafting (structural & social resources, challenging & hindering demands) (Me), Work engagement (D), Perceived employability (D)	Job demand resource model	Job crafting (type of proactive behavior)

(De Cuyper et al., 2014)	Employed individuals including white and blue collar at various level	Not specified, Romania	Perceived Employability(I), Felt job insecurity, In role Performance(D), Helping behavior(D), CWB-Organizational(D), CWB-Interpersonal(D)		In-role performance, Helping behavior, CWB-Interpersonal, CWB-Organizational
(Van den Broeck et al., 2014)	workers (full time and part time)	HR organization, Belgium	Perceived value support (intrinsic and extrinsic work value), Perceived employability (Internal qualitative and quantitative, Extrinsic quantitative and qualitative PE)	Self-determination theory	Values as behavior
(Kirves, Kinnunen, & De Cuyper, 2014)	Employed individuals	University (teachers, researchers, administrative staff), Finland	Perceived mobility(I), Optimism(I), Perceived Employability(D)	Human Capital theory	Optimism
(Bourguignon, Noël, & Schmidt, 2013)	Employed individuals	Retail Bank (non-unionized workers), France	Perceived Employability(I), Voice (D), Perceived social Support (Mo)	EVL Model	Voice
(Kang et al., 2012)	Employed individuals	Banking & Financial institutions, Korea	Job Insecurity (I), Perceived Employability (Mo), Impression Management (D), Extra-role behavior (D)		Impression Management, Extra-role behavior

(Peiró, Sora, & Caballer, 2012)	Employed individuals	Municipalities, Spain	Perceived Employability (I), Job insecurity (Me), Work involvement (D), Career enhancing strategies (D)	The Flexible Firm Model, Human Capital Theory and person-job fit model	Career Enhancing Strategies in behavioral term to increase and enhance career opportunities
(Chen & Lim, 2012)	179 retrenched professionals, managers, executives, and technicians (PMETs) who are actively seeking fulltime reemployment	PMET database, Singapore	Psychological Capital as antecedent of Perceived Employability (I), Seeking Employment Assistance (as problem focused solving) (Me), Seeking Financial Assistance (Symptom focused solving) (Me), Preparatory job search (D), Active job search (D)	Psychological capital view point	Job search 1. Preparatory job search 2. Active job search
(De Cuyper, Van der Heijden, et al., 2011)	463 employed individuals from seven organizations	Manufacturing, and production and six smaller retail organizations, department stores, or shops), Belgium	Perceived Employability (I), Psychological Contracts (I), Job satisfaction (D), Life Satisfaction (D), Self-rated performance (D), Turnover intention	Social exchange theories, Resource-based view and Psychological contract,	Performance
(De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011)	551 employed individuals	Human resource services provider and schools, Belgium	Self-rated employability (I), Affective Organizational Commitment(D), Performance (D)	Social exchange theory	Performance

(Berntson, Näswall, & Sverke, 2010)	725 White-collar employed individuals	Different departments (including administrative staff at one large manufacturing firm, one accounting firm, one administrative section of a municipality and all the teachers employed by that municipality), Sweden	Job insecurity (I), Perceived employability (Mo), Exit (D), Voice (D), Neglect (D), Loyalty (D)	Exit, voice, loyalty and neglect framework	Exit, Voice, Neglect, Loyalty
(De Cuyper & De Witte, 2010)	Employed individuals	Universities (including employees, teachers, and administrative staff), Belgium	Contract type (I), Impression Management (Me), Perceived employability (D)		Impression Management
(De Cuyper, Baillien, et al., 2009)	693 Employed and Unemployed workers	Textile industry and financial services. Belgium	Job Insecurity (I), Perceived Employability (Mo), Targets' reports of workplace bullying (D), Preparators' reports of workplace bullying (D)	Job-Demand resource model	Workplace bullying
(Gamboa, Gracia, Ripoll, & Peiró, 2009)	Employed individuals in transition phase	Not specified, Spain	Perceived Employability (I), Personal initiatives (Mo), Job satisfaction (D)	Job-fit theory	Personal Initiatives
(De Vos & Soens, 2008)	289 employees	Not specified, Belgium	Protean Career (I), Career Insight (Me), Career Self-Management Behavior (Me), Perceived Employability (D), Career Satisfaction (D)	Psychological Contract (in the introductory part to develop arguments)	Career insight Career self-management (both as predictor)

(McArdle et al., 2007)	416 unemployed	Australia	In first study: Employability with 3 Psycho-social dimensions 1. Adaptability 2. Career Identity 3. Human & Social Capital In second study: Employability as person-centre approach (I), Self-esteem (D), Job search (D)	Stress theory, Regulatory focus theory	Job search
(Akkermans et al., 2017)	469 participants and one year later 127 again participated	Not specified, Netherlands	HR practices (training & development, employee communication practices) (I), Perceived Internal Employability (Me), Commitment (D), CWB (D)	Social Exchange theory and Conservation of Resources theory	Counterproductive work behavior
(Philippaers, Camps, & De Cuyper, 2015)	(Study 1) 131 employees with experimental scenario (Study 2) 603 employees from 9 public sector org.	Not specified but mostly all white collar, Belgium	Perceived employability (I), Power (Me), Perceived (in)justice (Mo), Tasks performance (D), OCBI (D), OCBO (D), CWBI (D), CWBO (D)	Organizational Justice	Task performance OCBI OCBO CWBI CWBO
(Philippaers, De Cuyper, & Forrier, 2014)	459 employees from 4 large private-sector organizations	private-sector organizations, Belgium	Perceived employability (I), Organizational commitment (Me), Team commitment (Me), In-role performance (D), Helping behavior (D), CWB (D)	Principle of compatibility	In-role performance Helping other CWB

Referring to the exhaustive summary (table 2), this study included the behavior related constructs into two major contexts i.e. a) individualized context (career advancement) such as personal initiatives, job search, impression management, and learning behavior b) organizational context (individual behavior to organization) such as in-role performance, OCB, and bullying.

In table 3, I listed all the major findings and the methods used in earlier conducted studies. The potential limitation of earlier studies is using cross-sectional dataset. Also majority of studies conducted in European context and the results cannot be replicate in other Asian and African context due to different features of labor market, economic growth and cultural differences. An in depth look of findings on earlier studies also revealed that mostly studies are conducted in job insecurity context, that is itself indicator the researchers' shift to individuals career. However, this job insecurity context cannot be the same because in European economies, employees hold social protections. While not every developing country offer social protection and mostly people in developing countries are forced to serve in private sector where social protection is not guaranteed. Another aspect concern the regulation in job market, skill level and structural differences among different regions make the existing findings more contextual than generic.

### **Discussion and Future research**

This review contributes in literature in two folds. First, to summarizing all the studies touching the notion of perceived employability including self-perceived employability and similar concepts (perceived) ease of movement affecting work-related behavior(s) either directly or indirectly to give the comprehensive picture of research. Furthermore, this review helps to present and future research to understand that what has been achieved in this domain and what could be fruitful with respect to current dynamic labor market. Second, this study tries to illuminate some interesting



**Table 3**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Findings</b>
(Yizhong et al., 2017)	A six-wave anonymous questionnaire survey was conducted on a stratified sample of Chinese university graduating students who were not preparing for further study. Descriptive statistics and confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were used. Data was analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).	PE has a positive and significant effect on job search self-efficacy, attitude, intention and intensity. But the correlation between perceived employability and subjective norms was not significant. Moreover, job search intention mediated the effects of attitude and subjective norm on intensity, but it did not mediate the relationship between job search efficacy and intensity.
(Philippaers et al., 2017)	Two-wave data was collected with a time-lag of 6 months (time 1, T1: spring 2013; time 2, T2: autumn 2013). All employees with a personal e-mail address were invited to complete our online survey (N = 1,658). Authors used SEM in the R-environment for data analysis.	No support was found on assuming a positive cross-lagged effects from perceived external employability on task and helping behaviour and a negative cross-lagged effect on CWB. In sum, the results show a positive path from PEE, via both affective organizational and workgroup commitment, to performance (i.e., helping and reduced counterproductivity) over a 6-month follow-up period. Perceived external employability at baseline did not show a significant direct effect on performance. The cross-lagged relationships from perceived external employability to task, helping and CWB were not significant.
(De Vos et al., 2017)	The data was collected from 289 employees and path model was analyzed through SEM.	Career insight was positively associated with perceived employability but career self-management behaviors were not significantly related to perceived employability.
(Makkonen, 2016)	Research question was drawn on the King's framework of career self-management behavior. 23 Western self-initiated expatriate (SIE) working in local Chinese organization were interviewed through purposive sampling. Candidates were contacted through different sources like their professional network on LinkedIn. Qualitatively data were analyzed through nVivo.	Position behavior is an “employability maintenance approach to maintain employability in between jobs or to deal with challenging labor market fluctuations”. SIE adopt positioning behavior to enhance the perception of control and coping to fit-in that also increase the employability. The idea behind the positioning behavior is to easy access the labor market and such behavior typically adopt to improve the cultural understanding linguistic capabilities and external local networks. Author further finds that once SIEs enter in labor market or if they revise their career expectations or adjust their personal lives, they focus on career self-management

		<p>behavior. Author further found that contextual conditions and organization cultural may cause frustration for employees and their career expectations.</p>
(De Battisti et al., 2016)	<p>Two-wave data was collected in June 2011 from a state agency that bridge between the unemployed and the businesses, specifically the sending out of professional resumes (called ‘matching actions’). In Italy, these agencies provide services (unemployment benefits assistance, labour market information, job search support programmes, and training and education programmes) to graduate students and job seekers (employed and unemployed). Given the aims of the paper, the unit of analysis is the activity of mediation carried out by the agency between the unemployed and the businesses, specifically the sending out of professional resumes (called ‘matching actions’).</p>	<p>The results found a positive correlation exist between PE and focused job search strategy. Conversely no signification association found between PE and haphazard job search strategy. Surprisingly, relationship between PE and work-attributed psychological distress was not significant. PE effect on job search rather relying on single job. This study did not find any direct impact of PE on reemployment. However, PE and focus job search indicate that unemployed individual with PE has more likelihood or reemployment. Further this study shows that PE as an antecedent of job search strategy and psychological distress.</p>
(Bozionelos et al., 2016)	<p>Data was collected from 207 pairs (subordinate-line manager) and further analyzed via SEM.</p>	<p>Employability was positively related to job performance. Further mediation relationship of employability between mentoring and job performance was supported. This study finds that employability acts as intervening factor in the relationship between mentoring and performance. Researchers further found that employability and performance gains more temporally proximal than career success, but they are also arguably of more relevance and importance to a variety of stakeholders.</p>
(Shamsudin et al., 2016)	<p>Data was collected through pen-pencil survey approach in which trained undergraduate students helped author. Regression tool was used to assess the correlation.</p>	<p>Authors found positive role of employability and security in predicting knowledge collecting behavior. Not supported employability and knowledge donating behavior due to knowledge sharing behavior in sample refers to knowledge collecting behavior. When employees in sample share knowledge they engage in learning from other and not in teaching others.</p>
(Onyishi et al., 2015)	<p>302 questionnaires were distributed among university students in hostels and classrooms. 278 received and 254 used for final analysis. Data was</p>	<p>PE was positively associated with only the preparatory job search but not active job search. The relationship between employability and job search is stronger for</p>

	<p>further analyzed through hierarchal multiple regression.</p>	<p>those who are employed than those who are unemployed. This implies that for those who are unemployed, PE is a very critical factor in preparatory job search but less for those who are employed. Individuals who see themselves as highly employable are more likely to prepare adequately for job search but not yet actively engage in the job search activities, especially for those who are unemployed. Those who see themselves as employable tend to stop at the preparatory job search stage and do not bother to actively search for a job.</p>
(Giorgi et al., 2015)	<p>Through stratified sample, 3 Italian companies were invited to participate in a stress assessment not only for research purposes but also to provide assistance in fulfilling their obligations on this issue by providing them with a risk assessment report. Data analysis conducted through Pearson's correlation, hierarchal regression and dominance analysis.</p>	<p>Lower employability higher impact on psychological distress. Employability buffers stress particularly in threatening situation. Non-employability workers experience job insecurity and psychological distress. In this situation they are easily target of bullying.</p>
(Kim et al., 2015)	<p>Data was collected from 301 employees in dairy company in South Korea. Questionnaire was used to collect data after 8 months on acquisition of the firm. Employees in the firm had guaranteed job security. Data was analyzed through SEM</p>	<p>This study directly captures individuals' self-directed learning. Second, this study showed that employee self-concepts and their self-directed learning behaviors were complementary in predicting perceived employability. The positive connection between organizational based self-esteem and perceived employability became stronger under high voluntary learning behavior. However, the same was not true for connections between role breath self-efficacy and perceived employability.</p>
(Brenninkmeijer & Hekkert-Koning, 2015)	<p>Data was collected through from a Dutch consultancy helps businesses to provide manpower in different industries (pharmacy, medical devices, food and health care and focuses on higher educated professionals).</p>	<p>Employability was positively associated with craft structural resources, crafting social resources but not with crafting challenging demands. Employability was negatively associated with crafting hindering demands. Authors highlighted crafting job resources is effective mechanism for employees their engagement and employability, whereas crafting hindering job demands may have unfavorable effects on these outcomes.</p>
(De Cuyper et al., 2014)	<p>Two different form of questionnaires (pen-pencil and online) were distributed among employees</p>	<p>No significant relationship found between PE and both in-role performance and helping behavior in the</p>

	<p>working in Romania during 2012 through snowball sampling. The reason for snowball sampling to improve the respondents' commitment due to 60-90minutes long questionnaire.</p>	<p>condition of high felt job insecurity. Results reveals that PE related positively to malfunctioning, both CWB-O and CWB-I, and that felt job insecurity related positively to CWB-O but not CWB-I.</p>
<p>(Van den Broeck et al., 2014)</p>	<p>246 respondents from a large HR organization voluntary participated in a study on motivation and well-being at work. The workers completed an electronic questionnaire sent to their email address at work. SEM was used to perform the analysis using maximum likelihood method.</p>	<p>Perceived organization's intrinsic value support associated positively with internal lateral and upward PE, in line with Hypothesis 1. As expected, perceived organization's extrinsic value support related negatively to internal lateral and internal upward PE. However, they were unrelated to external lateral and external upward PE. Thus, hypothesis 2 was partially supported.</p>
<p>(Kirves et al., 2014)</p>	<p>Cross-sectional sample was drawn from a larger research project in two multidisciplinary Finnish universities in autumn 2008 (Time 1, n = 1379) and one year later, in autumn 2009 (Time 2, n = 803). Responses were collected from temporary and permanent universities' workers. Analysis of T1 data through moderated hierarchal regression while T2 data analyzed through SEM.</p>	<p>Optimism was positively related to PE at both times. Perceived mobility was positively associated with PE only at Time 1. Perceived mobility was more strongly and positively associated with PE among permanent workers both in the cross-sectional and in the longitudinal sample. Optimism was positively and equally strongly associated with PE among permanent and temporary workers in both data sets. Therefore, seemed to need optimism as much as temporary workers to maintain their level of PE. The interaction effect between optimism and perceived mobility was not statistically significant in the total sample, probably because further analyses revealed that this interaction was significant among permanent but not among temporary workers. Among permanent workers, optimism was positively related to PE even more strongly under the condition of low perceived mobility: despite the low perceived opportunities to move to another city for a new job, optimistic workers had the same level of PE as workers with high perceived mobility. By contrast, among temporary workers optimism enhanced PE despite the level of perceived mobility.</p>
<p>(Bourguignon et al., 2013)</p>	<p>Data collected from employees French retail bank through survey due to specific employment</p>	<p>External employability does not appear to be significantly associated with any voice behavior. It</p>

relation, traditionally organized as a strong internal labor market. The survey has been directly distributed by unions to all the 20,000 employees of the firm. Statistical analyses have been conducted in two steps: OLS regressions and hierarchical regression.

appears clearly that internal employability is fostering direct voice but negatively to representative voice. Interaction effects show that employability can be considered as a securing resource for workers to voice directly. Indeed, the correlation between direct voice and internal employability is all the more positive and significant than social support is low.

(Kang et al., 2012)

Cross-sectional data of Korean white-collar employees working banks and financial institutions were the respondents. Financial sector was chosen because of the global financial crisis, banks mergers, restructuring in Korea. Data was collected from employees and direct supervisor of 7 banks by contacting with HR directors. Employees was requested to fill questionnaire on employability and job insecurity while supervisor completed response of impression management and extra role behavior. Data was analyzed through SEM and regression analysis and interaction effect was used.

This study conducted in Korean specific job insecurity financial institutes' context. The results of this study indicates that employable workers are more likely to withhold extra-role behaviors when the level of job insecurity is high. PE did not moderate the relationship between job insecurity and impression management. During the interaction between job insecurity and employability, authors find a significant negative association with extra-role behavior, suggesting that job insecurity is more likely to trigger reduced extra-role behaviors when employees perceive themselves as employable. This result suggests that employable individuals who feel insecure tend to decrease their general involvement in the organization since they believe they have the option of finding another organization that in better ways fulfils their needs. This study did not find the moderated role of PE in job insecurity and impression management.

(Peiró et al., 2012)

3000 Spanish young employees who had joined the work force in the last 5 years. Data extracted from a research project developed by the Valencian Centre for Economic Research, within the framework of the "Observatory on youth's Labor Insertion". study was carried out in 2008 and it was carried out in several regions of Spain through a stratified two-stage sampling process. first stage involved the provinces, and the second stage the municipalities. Next, 1200 interviews were carried out in the Valencian Community.

This study tested the indirect relationship between PE and Career enhancing strategy as behavior through job insecurity. Results showed no significant relationship through job insecurity between PE and career enhancing. However, authors stressed that PE and career enhancing strategy could have direct relationship.

(Chen & Lim, 2012)

Database of Professional, managerial and technical, executives and technicians (PMET) was consulted

PE is positively and significantly related to both seeking employment assistance and seeking financial assistance.

and randomly sent an email invitation to participate in this study to 600 PMETs. The email invitation consisted of a brief introduction to the study as well as an HTML link to the online survey. Data was analyzed through structural equation modeling.

Results suggested that seeking employment assistance significantly mediated the relationship between perceived employability and preparatory job search whereas seeking financial assistance did not. Perceived employability, in turn, predicts preparatory and active job search.

(De Cuyper, Van der Heijden, et al., 2011)

Questionnaire were distributed among during the spring of 2004 in divisions from seven Belgian organizations from two sectors. The sample comprised largely on blue collar workers (65.2%) and remaining were white collar. While 33.8% sample help temporary contract (fixed-term) while remaining were on permanent contract.

Results showed that compared with less employable workers high employable workers rated their performance quality to be higher; yet, they thought more about leaving the organization.

(De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011)

Data was collected from 551 workers from nine Belgian organizations in two sectors: one large organization providing human resource services with headquarters in Belgium and eight organizations from the educational sector, in particular high schools from the same district. The sectors were selected based on expected differences in SRE. SEM was used to analyze the data through AMOS.

This study set-off the paradox in which they rely on the assumption that employability has positive effects for the organization in terms of performance, but also negative effects in terms of withdrawal, for example in the form of reduced affective organizational commitment. This study divided employability into four quadrants (internal quality, internal quantity, external quality and external quality). The relationships between the four types of SRE and performance were non-significant in the original models (Models 1 to 3). Instead, the four types of SRE associated with affective organizational commitment as summarized above, and affective organizational commitment associated with performance.

(Berntson et al., 2010)

While-collar workers were invited to participate in this study from the 4 Swedish service sector organizations. Pre-stamped envelopes were provided to respondents. Total 725 questionnaire were taken for final analysis after listwise deletion of missing data.

Findings indicate that individuals who experience higher employability tend to show stronger reactions to job insecurity in terms of higher intention to exit, less voice and lower levels of loyalty than those individuals reporting low levels of employability. This study finds when it comes to employee voice, job insecurity was associated with lower voice. The most notable finding of the present study, however, was that employability moderated the effects of job insecurity on exit, voice and loyalty. Employees who feel employable they have stronger turnover intentions as compare to those who are

(De Cuyper & De Witte, 2010)

Pen-pencil survey of 693 workers collected from two Belgian organizations from the textile industry (N189) and financial services (N505) in 2007. Data were collected in 2007 by means of paper-and-pencil questionnaires. After listwise deletion, this resulted in a total sample size of 671 respondents. The organizations were chosen based on expected variation in job insecurity and employability and on possibilities for generalization as well as on their relevance for our particular research question.

(De Cuyper, Baillien, et al., 2009)

a subsample of 1319 young people, taken from a general sample of 2512, 16 to 30 years old residents in the Valencian Community, and in the cities of Madrid and Barcelona (Spain), and was obtained in 1999 by the Observatory of Young People's Transition into the Labour Market in the Valencian Community (Bancaja-IVIE). The term worker is used on condition that the participants were doing some kind of paid work, for at least an hour during the week before the survey. Data from the study was gathered from a survey which was conducted at the

(Gamboa et al., 2009)

less employability. This study further explores that less employable workers has a similar degree of loyalty irrespective of their level of job insecurity. However, those who perceived themselves as employable evidenced a stronger negative relation between job insecurity and loyalty.

The interaction between job insecurity and perceived employability did not contribute to explaining variance in targets' reports of workplace bullying. Highly employable workers' reactions to job insecurity may not lead other workers to see them as safe, legitimate, or easy targets, also because employability carries the idea of empowerment. Similarly, highly employable workers may not feel the need to lash out at co-workers, because they have more constructive ways to cope with job insecurity. weak relationship between employability and targets' reports. In contrast, the interaction between job insecurity and employability contributed to explaining variance in perpetrators' reports of workplace bullying. relationship between job insecurity and perpetrators' reports of workplace bullying was stronger under the condition of high rather than low perceived employability. The correlation between employability and perpetrators' reports of workplace bullying was positive instead of negative, but this correlation was only marginally significant.

The interaction between employability and personal initiative tells that people with high employability obtain jobs that fit their level of education, their experience and in firms of their preference because they have the initiative to look for them in an appropriate way, as well as the ability to bring about positive changes in important aspects of their work.

same time as a face to face interview lasting approximately 25 minutes, with all data being obtained by means of self-report. Following two attempts at being contacted, the people who did not answer were replaced by a substitute of the same age and gender, chosen randomly. moderated hierarchical regression analysis.

- (De Vos & Soens, 2008) Authors contacted employed individuals from Belgium and distributed questionnaires. Data of 289 employees were collected and analyzed through SEM. Career insight was positively associated with perceived employability but career self-management behaviors were not significantly related to perceived employability.
- (McArdle et al., 2007) Two survey studies conducted: first study was conducted with 416 unemployed and second study conducted with 126 in which 39 gained employment and 87 remained unemployed. SEM was conducted to analyze the data. In the first study, overall, 20% of the variance in self-esteem and 42% of the variance in job search was explained by employability. In the second study, with person-center dimension of employability the variance was 7% in self-esteem and 39% in the job search. However, networking did not contribute significantly to employability in study 2.
- (Akkermans et al., 2017) Data was collected in two waves. In first wave 469 participated and in second wave later 127 participated. SEM used for the data analysis. This paper used two sample, in which sample 1 indicated that both training & development and employee communication practices enhanced internal PE, which subsequently related positively to commitment and negatively related to CWB. Results from sample 2 showed that communication practices related positively to commitment and CWB via external PE, and positively to commitment and negatively to CWB via internal PE.
- (Philippaers et al., 2015) Two dataset were used to record the responses. From both samples, authors administered online surveys. For sample 1, online vignette approach with experimental scenario was used. In study 2, online questionnaire were used. In first study, PE and power positively related (marginally supported). No support in power (upon justice) and task performance, OCB and CWB. PE to job performance via power: i) positive upon high perceived justice, ii) negative upon low perceived justice. No support for the moderation. In second study, PE and power positive but marginally supported. Partial support in relationship between power (upon justice) and task performance, OCB and CWB. Got partial support in mediation-moderation hypothesis.



(Philippaers et al., 2014)

Two waves online surveys were administered with 6 months intervals and distributed among workers of four large private-sector industry. Structural model for cross lagged relationship.

No support was found between PE and in-role performance, helping behavior and CWB. PE has positive association with organizational and team commitment. No support found in mediation of organizational and team commitment between PE in-role performance. However, mediation of team commitment found between PE and helping behavior. While, PE and CWB result negative via organizational and team commitment path.

line of research (as initial path) to drag the attention of future researchers on this important topic particularly organizational behavior researcher to revive the debate in mainstream. This review also motivates existing and future researchers to think in other dimensions to reduce the CWB and increase the productive behavior by using perceived employability in individual as well as organizational sphere.

Surprisingly mainstream literature does not provide such insights related to employability. A plausible reason that employability didn't gain researchers attention on imperative employability nexus with behavior at core due to its significance in term of career (Hogan et al., 2013). Another reason is, due to prevalent job insecurity in the dynamic labor market and increasing unemployment cause negative health consequences, employability literature occupied by health researchers (De Battisti et al., 2016; De Cuyper, Baillien, et al., 2009; De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, et al., 2008). This study appraises important aspects of employability particularly with behavior that require researchers' attention. A large vacuum still exists to understand, for example, highly temporary workers are disadvantaged as discussed by (Beard et al., 1995) and they might behave in similar way as low employable workers do in the situation of excess workload, and economic crisis. Before answering this question on temporary workers, future researchers should keep in mind the division among temporary workers: voluntary and involuntary because the behavior of (involuntary and voluntary) employees could be different to organizations. The debate in literature particularly on voluntary and involuntary temporary employment as well as the seasonal worker has been widely covered in the European and US context due to significant acceptability of such employment but their behavior and nexus with employability in other non-regulated or more volatile economies could be interesting to study. Because managing temporary employment is becoming important issue almost for economy because in today's dynamic market the ratio of

temporary workers is rapidly increasing (e.g. more than 30% in Europe). Behavioral studies on temporary employees might exist in literature but their nexus between employability is important from organizational perspective particularly in view of rapidly growing number of temporary workers and crucial employability factor. Further, this study argues that the behavior of temporary employees vary according to the nature and type of contract (on call, fixed-term, independent contractor, voluntary or involuntary). For example, Goudswaard, Kraan, and Dhondt (2000) discussed that getting future employment with current employer is an important factor to change the employees' response. Hence this review encourages future work in the domain of temporary employment to expand the debate to better understanding the behavior of employable workers.

The most important factor found in this review is the asymmetry of dataset in literature on this topic. Mostly studies on (perceived) employability consist on European and US data while researchers neglected developing countries (Ngo et al., 2017). I argue that not all the capable individuals get the right job in developing countries due to saturated job market and high unemployment. Also individuals working in developing economies mostly serve in private sector and don't get any social protection from the government. In a rough estimate of developing countries, nine out of ten workers serve in private sector (Fields, 2011, p. 4). Having perception of being employable in such situation, where almost 90% of the individuals depend on private job in stiff competition could be an interesting and strong line of research. It is also suggested in one of our sample studies that findings of PE and work behavior (bullying) must be replicating in other settings to get the better picture of perceived employability and work behavior (De Cuyper, Baillien, et al., 2009, p. 221). Another study in our sample with Nigerian dataset showed quite interesting findings that employable workers once got job do not actively engage in job search

behavior (Onyishi et al., 2015). An interesting line of research could be to investigate the nexus of PE-behavior in developing or under-developed economies because difference in job market, macro economy policy and regulations, social welfare system which mostly developing countries do not have and financial obligation have drastic effect not only social but also work behaviors. In table 2, I tried to capture the maximum information from literature about the industry and country in which study took place. It gives more innovative approach to future researchers about selecting sample and industry according to their economies. However, this study encourages to examine employable workers' behavior from those industries where continuous pressure on employees to maintain their employability and employers emphasis on productivity could be interesting avenue to research. For example, such as in IT and telecom industry technology changes rapidly and employees need to update their knowledge and skills to keep their position competitive in internal/external labor market. Table 3 captures the methods and design used in earlier studies guide future researchers to use appropriate method and design. For instance, mostly studies relied on cross-sectional data where causal inferences are difficult to draw and it could be a possible reason that so far no conclusive result exists in literature. However, longitudinal design with 2-3 waves dataset should use to understand work behaviors and it helps to avoid biases associated with cross-sectional dataset. Another important factor to note is measures used in literature. Mostly researchers relied on self-reported measures which are not adequate to measure performance, productive and counterproductive work behavior. Such measures should use with caution to avoid social desirability and common method variance. However, future researchers should carefully use measures to examine work behavior. Particularly in-role performance, productive and counterproductive behaviors because sometimes it's difficult for employees to recall any negative event or they could highly rate their performance.

This review discussed (perceived) employability in person-centered approach (Fugate et al., 2008) and by looking behavior and PE literature, I found studies on behavior (e.g. bullying) are rare or inconclusive in both (employability and behavior) domain (e.g. De Cuyper, Baillien, et al., 2009; Samnani et al., 2012 p. 587). So far, literature portrayed employability as overall positive. Wittekind, Raeder, and Grote (2010) concluded that individuals having PE take stressful situation as less threatening and experience less strain but recent study of De Cuyper et al., (2014) showed dark side of PE. Therefore, it is interesting avenue to see under which circumstances employable individuals engage into bullying and incivility. As in a recent study of Giorgi et al., (2015), mergers/acquisition could create situation for bullying. Another rationale of this avenue is due importance of situation-behavior aspect that gives aggregate level of analysis (Sackett et al., 2001).

### **Limitations**

The present study provides literature insight but also consists on some limitations. This review covers the concept of PE at the individual level. According to the scope of study, to capture the comprehensive picture and insight of literature, three main databases were consulted that cover most of the peer-review journals and studies were included available from 1997 till 2017. However, there is a body of research which was not consulted because this study mainly considered for sample, published articles and did not include books, book chapters, non-refereed articles, and thesis that could give more insight. During the data analysis, no statistical technique were used and largely relied on databases, existing findings and manual reading. While taking well-being as a subjective construct, author did not include in our search (as keyword) or main results due to different conceptualization of well-being. Also well-being is considered a personality feature such as introvert and extrovert as discussed by Cartwright & Cooper (2014, p. 34).

## **Concluding remarks**

The purpose of this review to highlight the behavioral implications that are not only limited to individuals but also for the organizations to achieve the organizational goals effectively through employable humans. It is also an attempt to grab the attention of organization behavior and human resource management researchers to address this topic and related organizational issues such as retention of highly employable people that could engage more actively in productive behavior. This review descrambles noteworthy relationships exist in literature on the behavioral path that were scattered or rarely discussed in the main stream of organizational behavior. Also this review suggests many important links are yet to be explored. After reviewing the literature, I conclude that PE is a double edges sword, one edge contributes and increases the productivity of the organizations and the other edge could harm the organization through bullying, incivility and other counterproductive behavior. Author hopes that present review would help to improve the future research and set the tone according to the contemporary labor market.

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**Graduate perceived employability: leveraging on emotional and social competencies to attain career satisfaction\*\*\***

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**Abstract**

Intense competition among applicants in a dynamic labour market builds pressure for stakeholders (academicians, employers and policymakers) to better understand the factors that influence graduates' smooth entry and successful transition in the labour market. Beyond job-specific technical skills that graduates rarely develop during their educational path, perceived employability of graduates is mainly related to the emotional and social competencies (ESCs) they bring to the workplace. However, empirical evidence on the relationship between ESCs and perceived employability is limited to a few skills, such as emotional self-awareness, and studies have been mainly conducted on samples of unemployed adults or employed individuals. Moreover, the relationship between ESCs and perceived employability can increase our understanding of those factors that influence graduates' career satisfaction as a subjective dimension of career success. With the aim of contributing to the debate on the antecedents and consequences of graduates' employability, our study has collected three years' time-lagged data on a sample of Italian graduates. Data analysis through partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) unravels the relationships between ESCs, perceived employability and career satisfaction. The paper contributes to the employability literature in two ways. First, it provides insights into those emotional and social competencies that nurture perceived employability in graduates. Moreover, it offers evidence of a full mediation effect played by perceived employability in the relationship between ESCs and career satisfaction. The study concludes with guidelines to build and equip graduates with the essential competencies that are valued and required in the labour market.

**Keywords:** perceived employability, emotional and social competencies, career satisfaction, graduates, higher education

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## **Introduction**

Graduate employability has become a heated issue among stakeholders (governments, employers and academics) concerned with the relationship between higher education and the labour market (Rothwell et al., 2009). Employability is a complex psycho-social construct (Fugate et al., 2004, 2008) which can be influenced by internal and external factors. In this study, we focus on its internal, subjective dimension, namely graduates' employability perception that has been conceived as "the perceived ability to attain sustainable employment appropriate to one's qualification level" (Rothwell et al., 2008, p. 2). Perceived employability represents a person-centred concept that responds to recent changes in the labour market in which responsibility for career management and development has shifted from employers to employees (Gubler et al., 2014; Hall, 2002). It captures a student's belief in his/her success in seeking a particular type of work. Since graduates cannot rely on prior working experience to formulate this belief, an understanding of those factors that may increase the self-perception of being employable becomes critical.

As highlighted by prior studies, employability depends on the optimal use of personal competences (Süß et al., 2013); "these competences refer to an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to adequately perform various tasks and carry responsibilities within a job, and to their adaptability to changes in the internal and external labour market" (De Vos et al., 2011, p. 439). Competencies are elements of human capital broadly classified into two categories: i) behavioural competencies (generic/transferable); and ii) job-specific competencies (technical expertise in a particular field) (Cardy et al., 2006). Beyond job-specific technical skills, which graduates rarely develop during their educational journey, the employability of graduates is mainly related to the behavioural competencies or soft skills they bring to the workplace (Finch et al.,

2013). Behavioural competency is defined as “a set of related but different behaviours organized around an underlying construct called intent” (Boyatzis et al., 2009, p. 750), that “lead to or cause effective or superior performance” (Boyatzis, 1982, p. 23). According to this definition, a competency is manifested by a set of behaviours which are driven by motives and are instrumental in attaining work and life outcomes. The theoretical framework of behavioural competencies is one of the major models of emotional intelligence (Ashkanasy et al., 2005; Cherniss, 2010; McEnrue et al., 2006; Walter et al., 2011). Literature has distinguished between the ability to recognize, understand and manage one’s own (emotional intelligence competencies) and others’ emotions (social intelligence competencies). Prior research has shown the impact of emotional and social competencies (ESCs) on work performance across a wide range of roles—for instance, in terms of financial performance (Boyatzis, 2006; McClelland, 1998) service quality (Beigi et al., 2011), project performance (Zhang et al., 2013) and customer satisfaction (Williams, 2008).

A primary assumption in the literature is that competencies lead to employability (De Vos et al., 2011). However, empirical evidence on the relationship between ESCs and perceived employability is limited to emotional self-awareness, and studies have been mainly conducted on samples of unemployed individuals and employed adults (Hodzic et al., 2015), while little attention has been devoted to graduate students. To the best of our knowledge, only one study investigated the impact of graduates’ ESCs on perceived employability (Dacre Pool et al., 2013), but it considered only one dimension of emotional competencies, namely emotional self-efficacy, neglecting other relevant emotional and social skills such as the ability to be open to change, to perceive opportunities in the workplace and to manage relationships (Fugate et al., 2004). Moreover, in comparison with employed adults, the ESC profile that enhances graduates’ self-perception as employable could present some peculiarities due to the different requirements and



the responsibilities that characterize entry level jobs. Another limitation in the literature is related to the fact that studies often conceive employability skills, such as behavioural competencies, as part of the employability concept without conceptualizing the two constructs as distinct (Fugate et al., 2004). Addressing this gap, the paper aims to contribute to the identification of those emotional and social competencies that are more relevant to graduates' perceived employability.

Moreover, the relationship between ESCs and perceived employability can increase our understanding of those factors that influence graduate students' successful transition into the labour market. Indeed, despite the increasing participation rate in post-secondary education, not all graduates obtain jobs that fully meet their career aspirations (Finch et al., 2013). De Vos et al. (2011) discussed career satisfaction as a crucial outcome of competencies and employability. Career satisfaction is the most relevant and widely used indicator of career success (Eby et al., 2003; Heslin, 2005) and can be defined as an individual's personal achievement with the feeling of doing one's best (Hall, 1996). Individuals create a pool of competencies as career capital and put themselves in a position to best achieve career satisfaction (Sturges et al., 2003). One of the main challenges for individuals in today's highly competitive labour market is to develop valuable competencies, maintain employability and attain career satisfaction. Lack of employability skills hinders the achievement of career goals and satisfaction, which in turn leads to negative health, with social and psychological consequences (De Cuyper et al., 2008). Despite the growing consensus on the theoretical claims that behavioural competencies foster individuals' self-perception as employable in the labour market, which translates into a more proactive job search to meet their career aspirations, there is no empirical proof for this association. The purpose of the present paper is to unravel the relationships among ESCs, perceived employability and career satisfaction.

Therefore, to fill the existing lacunae in the literature, the present study tackles the following research questions: Do ESCs contribute to perceived employability? Does perceived employability positively lead to career satisfaction? Does perceived employability mediate the relationship between ESCs and career satisfaction?

The present paper adds to the debate on perceived employability's predictors and outcomes, providing an integrated picture of the relationship among graduate employability, ESCs and career satisfaction. Firstly, it extends the limited theoretical and empirical evidence on individual competencies and perceived employability, considering the concepts of employability and employability skills (which are often blurred in the literature) as distinct dimensions, and identifying those emotional and social competencies that enhance the employability self-perception in graduates. Secondly, by testing career satisfaction in relation to perceived employability, this study addresses the theoretical claim that employability strengthens career success (Forrier et al., 2003; Hall, 2002; Heijde et al., 2006). Finally, this study sheds new light on the mediating role of perceived employability.

The paper is organized as follows. The next section introduces the theoretical background bridging employability, competency-based and career literatures. Afterwards, the methodology, the sample and the data collection techniques are illustrated in detail. Next, we present the data analysis and the findings. Then we discuss the results and suggest future research directions in the light of current findings. Finally, conclusions and implications are drawn.

## **Theoretical background and hypotheses development**

### **ESCs and perceived employability**

A recent study pointed out that a correlation exists between competencies, salary and time invested in education (Rospigliosi et al., 2014). Graduates invest time, financial and intellectual

resources to gain adequate knowledge and competencies, and in return they feel more employable. Academics and employers are paying increasing attention to employability competencies, pointing out the role of soft skills in facilitating graduates' entry into the labour market (Collet et al., 2015; Dacre Pool et al., 2007; Finch et al., 2013; Hoover et al., 2010). Contrary to discipline-specific knowledge that is typically content-specific, soft skills or behavioural competencies are presumed to be employable in a wide range of working contexts. Some empirical evidence highlights the importance of soft skills for entry-level success in the job and confirms that acquiring the right set of behavioural competencies during the education stage can greatly enhance the chances of a student's success during the recruiting and selection process (Dabke, 2015; Robles, 2012). In this regard, a study with a sample of undergraduate students revealed that emotional competences were directly linked with interview success (Nelis et al., 2011). The value ascribed to ESCs by employers is pointed out by Cherniss (2000), who stated that US industry spends more than 50 billion dollars each year on employees' training to build ESCs. In today's dynamic labour market, organizations are reluctant to build skills at the company's expense and it is becoming the individual's responsibility to become more employable to enter or remain in the labour market (Clarke, 1997; Forrier et al., 2003).

Literature has often conceived individual competencies as a fundamental dimension of employability (Fugate et al., 2004), not clearly distinguishing between the two constructs. Due to the prime importance of ESCs in the labour market (for both employer and employee), researchers have highlighted the need for further empirical investigation of emotional and social competencies as predictors of graduate-perceived employability (Dacre Pool et al., 2013; Lowden et al., 2011).

Emotional competencies refer to the ability to recognize, understand and manage emotional information about oneself (Boyatzis et al., 2009; Emmerling et al., 2012). Abraham (2004)

theorized that all the dimensions of emotional competencies influence performance. Employees with higher emotional competencies use certain behaviours in the workplace that allow them to gather better information and make better decisions. This ultimately results in better integration in the work environment and higher performance on the job (Kim et al., 2009). With higher emotional competencies, individuals perform better in the workplace and at the same time the employee may gain confidence to become more employable. In the case of graduate students, who lack or present a limited prior working experience, they cannot derive their confidence in being employable from their performance achieved through emotional skills. Employability literature has provided only scant empirical evidence on emotional competencies as predictors of graduate-perceived employability, focusing on only one dimension, namely emotional self-efficacy (Dacre Pool et al., 2013). According to this study, individuals who are more confident in their abilities may believe themselves to have a greater chance of finding a job after graduation or of finding a new job that better meets their career aspirations. Moreover, we argue that the ability to be aware of one's own values and beliefs, as well as of one's own strengths and weaknesses, helps graduates to formulate a reflection on the professional objectives they want to achieve. Indeed, awareness about how the desired job should be coherent with the student's values and personal strengths may enhance in graduates the confidence to better orient their job search and to perform successful job interviews.

However, emotional competencies encompass not only self-awareness but also the abilities to manage emotions about oneself. To date, literature has only mentioned these emotional competencies as relevant to the employability concept: it has not provided empirical evidence of this relationship. In the contemporary dynamic labour market, where everyone feels pressure either to find a new job or to survive in the existing job, the ability to adapt flexibly to new challenges, readily metabolize change and think promptly when facing new information or situations is crucial

for succeeding in job search competition. As shown in prior studies, highly employable individuals are able to meet rapidly changing job requirements and more easily adapt to new situations (Heijde et al., 2006; Van Dam, 2004). Seeking a job is characterized by uncertain situations that depend not only on personal factors but also on external conditions. Therefore, adaptability and openness to new experiences may favour the belief in realizing one's career opportunities (Fugate et al., 2004). Also, a positive outlook—namely, the capacity to read a momentary failure as an opportunity rather than a threat and to have confidence about the future (Boyatzis et al., 2015)—may support students in persisting in the pursuit of desired outcomes and goals, and consequently increase their belief in finding a job coherent with their desire. Achievement orientation, an emotional competency that enables individuals to set challenging and measurable goals, may spur students to define realistic career goals and pathways for achieving them in light of labour market conditions. In so doing, emotional competencies nurture students' perception of having successful chances to identify and realize job opportunities. Similarly, the ability to cope with stressful or difficult situations, as in the case of transition from the educational to the work environment, and the challenges that characterize the first approach to job seeking, may lead graduates to perceive themselves as more attractive and competitive in the labour market.

Therefore, we posit that:

*H1: Emotional competencies positively relate to graduate-perceived employability.*

Social competencies encompass the abilities to understand other people's concerns, feelings and emotional states, to build and maintain positive relationships, and to behave appropriately in social relations (Boyatzis et al., 2007, 2015). Social competences allow individuals to get along with others, which is important from an individual perspective and valued by an employer (Brotheridge et al., 2008). The ability to understand others—namely empathy—contributes to

nurturing an individual's confidence to interact with others in formal and professional contexts (Davis, 1994). Thus, empathy may enable students to better comprehend the employers' perspectives and consequently enhance their confidence in being employable. A study based on a sample of hospitality students shows that being able to cooperate, manage teams, handle conflicts and motivate others are competencies that enhance students' opportunities of being employed (Spowart, 2011). Social competencies are essential for interaction with colleagues and supervisors; thus students who demonstrate these competencies are in a position to be more attractive to employers. Moreover, social competencies provide an opportunity to get along with others, which helps to build social capital that can be used to become more employable in the labour market (De Cuyper et al., 2014). In the last years, the traditional career approach, characterized by a full-time permanent job with a single employer, has been progressively replaced by a contemporary career model which emphasizes inter-organizational mobility and temporary contractual arrangements (Hall, 2004; Sammarra et al., 2013). Consequently, developing and maintaining relationships with different professional communities enables individuals to get access to salient information for new career opportunities (Adler et al., 2002; Burt, 2009; Granovetter, 1995), as well as other important resources such as reputation, offering a competitive advantage to individuals (Gerli et al., 2015).

Therefore, we hypothesize that:

*H2: Social competencies positively relate to graduate-perceived employability.*

### **Perceived employability and career satisfaction**

Perceived employability provides the self-reliance and confidence to get a new job and/or change the existing one according to an individual's aspirations (Ngo et al., 2017), and may have

a direct impact on career satisfaction, which is the subjective dimension of career success (De Vos et al., 2011; Heslin, 2005).

Career satisfaction refers to the “feeling of pride and personal accomplishment that comes from knowing that one has done one’s personal best” (Hall, 1996, p. 193). Not much research has been conducted on career satisfaction and its potential relationship with perceived employability (Dacre Pool et al., 2013; De Vos et al., 2011). A possible reason is related to the fact that scholars have considered career satisfaction and employability as related career outcome concepts (De Vos et al., 2008), even though other research has demonstrated that they are distinct concepts (Dacre Pool et al., 2013; De Vos et al., 2011).

De Cuyper et al. (2008) pointed out that perceived employability advances the feeling of having more control over one’s career. Therefore, graduates who believe they have a good chances of identifying and realizing job opportunities successfully may better chase their career goals. Perceived employability changes students’ opinion about their chances of gaining employment and can be a predictor of graduates’ career satisfaction. In line with human capital theory, we argue that graduates invest time, money and intellectual resources to advance their competencies and employability to begin their professional career. Students with higher perceived employability may consider several professional opportunities instead of limiting their choice to the first job offers received. Consequently, graduates may pursue their career goals in line with their aspirations and attain a higher level of satisfaction from their career attainments.

Therefore, we posit that:

*H3: Graduate-perceived employability positively affects career satisfaction.*

### **The mediating effect of perceived employability**

Competency literature maintains that using emotional and social competencies in one's early career leads a person to greater striving and, if successful, to greater satisfaction (Amdurer et al., 2014). Achieving career goals through ESCs is one of the major sources of career satisfaction, and the high quality social relationships associated with ESCs may help to build a support system (Riggio et al., 1991, 1993). In this regard, Rode et al. (2008) stated that individuals with higher emotional intelligence may show a greater ability to adapt to new environments and build strong bonds with others, which should help them acquire the necessary support in career advancement in the workplace. However, they did not find support for the hypothesized relationship. In another study, Amdurer et al. (2014) investigated the impact of ESCs on career satisfaction in a longitudinal study on a sample of MBA graduates, but they found only partial support for their arguments. Based on this evidence and on previous discussion, we posit that emotional and social competences bring graduates to a more satisfying career indirectly through an increasing feeling of perceived employability.

Prior studies have indicated that employable individuals work through the optimal use of ESCs to achieve their career goals (Coetzee et al., 2011; Schreuder et al., 2011). In the case of graduates, emotional competencies enable them to be aware of their abilities and career aspirations, to be more open to new experiences, and to be resilient to failures and ready to react to changed circumstances, thus increasing their belief of having more chances of employment in the labour market (Heijde et al., 2006). Such a proactive and positive approach towards job seeking may lead graduates to choose the first entry job that better meets their career aspirations. This higher control over career may in turn lead to greater satisfaction (Seibert et al., 2001).



Social competencies are highly valued by employers, especially for graduate profiles. For instance, Rasool et al. (2012) indicated that interpersonal skills, teamwork and empathy are required skills for graduates to interact in the workplace. Not only are social competencies essential components of the job requirements, but they are also desirable for students, as demonstrated by a study which showed that graduates listed organizational awareness, developing others and influence as desirable competencies to enter in the labour market (Coll & Zegwaard, 2006). Therefore, social competencies strengthen the perception among graduates of being employable. The belief in having the chance to identify job opportunities that enable students to exploit their full potential in terms of relational skills may spur them to orient their search in the labour market towards jobs that meet the desired requirements, with consequent greater accomplishments and satisfaction.

Thus, we hypothesize that:

*H4:* Graduate-perceived employability mediates the relationship between emotional competencies and career satisfaction.

*H5:* Graduate-perceived employability mediates the relationship between social intelligence and career satisfaction.

Figure 1 shows the proposed model and the hypothesized relationship with ESCs, employability and career satisfaction.

## **Method**

### *Sample and data collection*

We collected time-lagged data (2013 to 2016) on graduate students who participated in the didactic activities delivered by an academic centre in a public university in Italy. This centre is in

charge of conducting research, training and consulting activities in the area concerning the development and assessment of soft skills. The mission of the centre is to improve performance and employability through the development of participants' emotional and social competency portfolio. Graduate students from different disciplinary areas (economics and management, humanities, languages and sciences) participated in two programmes, which can be undertaken separately and independently:

- *Emotional Competencies and Individual Development*, a 30 academic hours and six CFU (university credits for learning) course for students enrolled in the first and second years of all Master's degree courses at the university. The credits given at the end of the activities can be inserted as an elective or as surplus university credits in a student's study plan. Due to the interactive teaching method, the course has a limited number of participants (maximum 50 students per academic year). Therefore, students who express the intention to enrol in the course have to apply.
- *Competency Labs*, a cycle of four interactive seminars (for a total of 15 academic hours) aimed at guiding the participants in a process of awareness of their behavioural competencies. Participation in all the seminars and involvement in the activities entails the provision of three extracurricular credits, which are inserted in the student's study plan and in the final list of exams taken by each student. During an academic year, the centre organizes four cycles of *Competency Labs*. For each laboratory, a maximum of 40 students are admitted through an on line enrolment system.

From 2013 to 2016, a total of 424 graduates attended the above didactic programmes. ESC profiles were collected during the delivery of the didactic activities through a 360 degree assessment in order to mitigate distortions and biases usually ascribed to self-rating. Indeed,

aggregated scores of several external raters result in a more accurate representation of the actual individual's behaviour (Hensel et al., 2010). As shown in prior studies, standard deviations of self-ratings are, on average, 0.3 higher than ratings provided by other raters and are consistent over time (Nilsen et al., 1993). Different types of personal and professional acquaintances of students participated in this survey through a multi-rater assessment to validate the ESCs. In the performance management literature, studies with multi-rater evaluation pointed out that the number of external raters should be between three and ten (Hensel et al., 2010). Only one student presented two external raters and we decided to maintain that response in the sample. One respondent had been assessed by one external rater and for this reason was discarded.

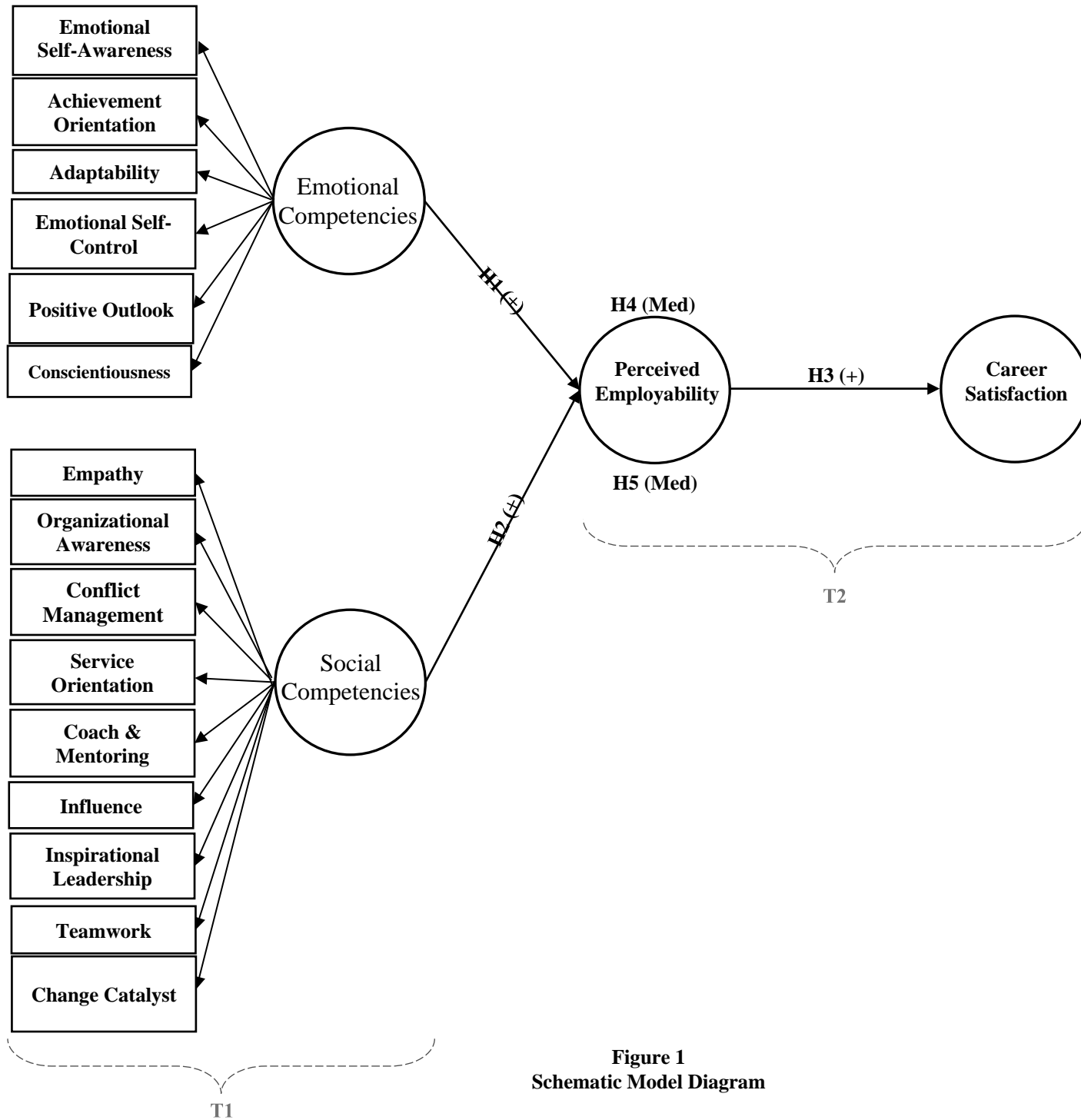
In 2016, we administered a survey to gather data from the same students on their career satisfaction and perceived employability. At the end of the survey, we received a total of 140 questionnaires (a response rate of 33 per cent). Fifty-four responses out of 140 were dropped, since five respondents completed only one part of the questionnaire and 49 graduates did not complete the questionnaire on employability and career satisfaction. Indeed, we introduced a filter question to select only those graduates who had experienced a prior working activity that enabled them to assess their career satisfaction. Specifically, we asked students to indicate if they had already started a working experience coherent with their education or idea of future career. If students positively answered this question—indicating the year in which they started their work experience—they were directed to the subsequent questions on career satisfaction. Therefore, we used 86 students and their related 677 external raters as our final sample.

We addressed the potential non-response bias to provide assurance that the group of respondents did not differ from the group of non-respondents by comparing certain key attributes, namely age, gender, field of study and final grade for Bachelor's degree (Lindner et al., 2001; Miller et al.,

1983). No significant differences were obtained by comparing the average age ( $p$ -value = 0.269), nor by comparing the proportion of females and males in the two groups ( $p$ -value = 0.910). The proportion of students coming from the four different disciplinary fields was not significantly different between the group of respondents and non-respondents ( $p$ -value = 0.557). The null hypothesis of an equal mean of final grade for the Bachelor's degree was accepted ( $p$ -value = 0.145).

### *Measures and data analysis*

Emotional and social competencies have been measured using the emotional and social competency inventory university version (ESCI-U) (Boyatzis, 2009; Boyatzis et al., 2007, Boyatzis, 2009; Boyatzis et al., 2015). Through the ESCI-U, external evaluators were asked to assess the frequency with which each student demonstrated a set of behaviours that correspond to twelve emotional and social competencies. We integrated this model with three additional competencies (conscientiousness, service orientation and change catalyst) taken from the previous emotional competency inventory (Boyatzis et al., 2004) for exploratory reasons. Hence, the final questionnaire consisted of 69 items (behavioural indicators) corresponding to 15 competencies: six emotional competencies (emotional self-awareness, achievement orientation, adaptability, emotional self-control, positive outlook and conscientiousness) and nine social competencies (empathy, organizational awareness, service orientation, conflict management, coach and mentor, influence, inspirational leadership, teamwork and change catalyst). Table 1 reports a detailed description of the emotional and social competencies included in our model. Prior research has shown that ESCI-U satisfies appropriate psychometric standards of reliability as well as convergent and discriminant validity in different cultural contexts (Boyatzis et al., 2015; Boyatzis et al., 2000; Boyatzis et al., 2004; Emmerling et al., 2012; Padilla-Meléndez et al., 2014).



**Figure 1**  
Schematic Model Diagram

**Table 1. Emotional, social and cognitive competencies included in the study**

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**Emotional Competencies**

*Emotional self-awareness:* capacity to be in tune with your inner self and being able to evaluate the impact of emotions on your actions and work performance, always keeping in mind the guiding values.

*Achievement orientation:* capacity to ask yourself for high quality standards to try to constantly improve your results, setting challenging and measurable goals, calculating risks and acquiring and transmitting continuously new ways to improve.

*Adaptability:* capacity to manage different needs without being distracted or wasting energy, adapting flexibly to new challenges, readily metabolizing change, thinking promptly when facing new information or situations.

*Emotional self-control:* capacity to dominate emotions and impulses, even in situations of stress or difficulty.

*Positive outlook:* capacity to read a momentary failure as an opportunity rather than a threat, perceiving others in a positive way and having confidence in future and change.

*Conscientiousness:* capacity to be punctual and accurate in carrying out your activities.

**Social Competencies**

*Empathy:* capacity to sense others' emotions, to listen carefully and see things from the point of view of the interlocutor and understand people from different backgrounds, education and culture.

*Organizational awareness:* capacity to locate and decipher social networks and power relations, being able to understand the "political" balance in any organization and guiding values and unspoken rules that govern the behavior of its members.

*Service orientation:* capacity to focus mainly on the satisfaction that you provide to others, showing to be helpful and adapting your services or products to their needs.

*Conflict management:* capacity to induce the parties to speak frankly, understanding different points of view and picking out a common ideal everyone can identify with, standing above the parties, recognizing feelings and positions and redirecting energy towards a common goal.

*Developing others:* capacity to cultivate the skills of others caring about their development, being able to provide timely and constructive feedback voluntarily placing yourself as a coach.

*Influence:* capacity to turn to a partner in a persuasive way, procuring the support of key people and building a network of support for an activity, being able to turn to others in a convincing and compelling way.

*Inspirational leadership:* capacity to lead others triggering phenomena involving emotional resonance, instilling a sense of pride and inspiring people through a compelling vision, bringing out their best aspects.

*Teamwork:* capacity to be respectful, collaborative and available to the group, inducing others to engage actively and enthusiastically in the common cause, reinforcing the team spirit and encouraging the participation of all.

*Change catalyst:* capacity to recognize when a change is necessary, defending the need to change even when facing obstacles and finding practical solutions for its adoption. Personally leading the change.

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Source: Boyatzis and Goleman 2007; Boyatzis, Gaskin and Wei 2015

Perceived employability has been assessed through four items adapted from De Cuyper et al. (2014) measured on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The sample items were: i) I am confident that I could quickly get another job; ii) I could easily find another job if I wanted to; iii) I am optimistic that I would find another job if I looked for one; iv) I will easily find another job if I lose this job. Earlier studies found this scale reliable (e.g. De Cuyper et al., 2014:  $\alpha = 0.85$ ); in this study, this scale presented a Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.939$ .

Career satisfaction has been measured adopting the scale proposed by Heslin (2005), who used a slightly modified version of the widely used career satisfaction scale developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990) and demonstrated as having high internal inconsistency. Graduates were asked to evaluate on a seven-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) how satisfied they are with (a) "the overall success they have achieved in their career," (b) "the income they have attained," (c) "the advancement they have attained," (d) "the skill development they have attained," (e) "the autonomy they have attained," and (f) "the intellectual stimulation they have attained." Participants answered these six items both relative to their career aspirations and relative to their career peers. The adoption of self-referent and other-referent criteria makes it possible to obtain a more comprehensive measure of career satisfaction, as demonstrated by prior studies (Renee Barnett et al., 2007; Rothwell et al., 2009; Spurk et al., 2014). In this study, this scale presented a good reliability with Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.935$ .

*Control variables.* To increase the reliability and the robustness of the results, we controlled several variables (Atinc et al., 2012). Prior research found that gender affects career satisfaction (Hofmans et al., 2008). In our study, gender was measured as a dichotomous variable (dummy coding 1 = male, 0 = female) as an option for further multi-group analysis. Likewise, age may have an association with perceived employability and career satisfaction (Van der Heijden et al., 2009).

It is possible that older people can present higher perceived employability and career success due to their experience gained in employment. De Vos et al. (2017) pointed out that perceived employability varies among different age groups: for example, they found that older people have lower perceived employability than younger ones. On the other hand, in some economies, younger applicants are considered more attractive and they perceive themselves as more employable (Ahmed et al., 2012; De Vos et al., 2017). We measured age as a continuous variable. To increase the validity of inferences and reduce biases, we also controlled for the disciplinary area of graduates. In the globalization era and the rapidly changing labour market, not every field of study may have equal employment opportunities. However, we divided disciplinary area into two dichotomous groups (science/economic and humanities/linguistics) to minimize the effect. Likewise, we controlled the prior working experience (number of years) as continuous because experience in the relevant field of study increases the pool of competencies and perceived employability, and brings more career satisfaction. We believe graduates who participated in didactic activities in the early years of our study (e.g. 2013) could have more opportunities to gain early employment which could determine a higher career satisfaction in comparison to those students who attended classes in 2016.

#### *Data analysis*

We used PLS-SEM through SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2015) to test the relationships among ESCs. PLS-SEM is different from ordinary least squares regression because it hypothesizes that the variables under investigation may not be observed variables (i.e. total scores) in regression, while path models assume that measured variables are valid and reliable (Rigdon, 2016). Our model is a multi-stage model since it includes indicators (dimensions of ESCs), second order latent constructs (ESCs), and then employability (mediator) and career satisfaction (independent variable).



Therefore, we used composite correlation and reliability for constructs since it is better than a factor-based approach (Richter et al., 2015; Rigdon, 2016). Composite latent variable scores (PLS-SEM) used for the further analysis overcome the limitations of factor-based SEMs because they mimic the results of factor-based models (Bentler et al., 2014; Dijkstra et al., 2015; Rigdon, 2016). However, our sample was adequate to conduct PLS-SEM (Gefen et al., 2000, Gefen et al., 2011) and to capture accurate results of emotional and social competencies (Boyatzis et al., 2009). To test the mediation of perceived employability between ESCs and career satisfaction, we used the mediation technique indicated by Hair et al. (2014). Another rationale for using the PLS-SEM is that it generates the latent variable scores that maximize the model's explanation and minimize the residuals of ordinary least squares (Richter et al., 2015). For the external raters' responses, we found some missing values (six per cent); therefore we carefully analysed the missing data pattern using SPSS. The external raters' data were missing at random (MAR); therefore a multiple imputation method was used to treat the missing data (Allison, 2002; Dong et al., 2013; Tabachnick et al., 2012).

## **Results**

The average age of the sample was 25 years and 8 months. Likewise, graduates of different disciplinary areas participated in our study, with science 62 graduates and the remaining 24 graduates from a humanities educational background. The average coherent experience was around two years and five months with a minimum of two months and a maximum of 13 years. The sample comprised with 70.9 per cent female and 29.1 per cent male graduates.

To avoid self-reported biases, we checked the variance between self-raters' response in two steps. In the first step, the authors thoroughly scanned all the data manually and then through digital charts (to check the response patterns and outliers). Later, we conducted an interclass

correlation analysis<sup>1</sup> in SPSS just to check the variance between self-assessment vs. external raters' assessment. For the measurement reliability and validity, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted in SmartPLS (Table 2). The cut-off score of CFA is 0.60 (Hair et al., 2013, p. 115), though some researchers argue it should not be less 0.70 (Chin et al., 2003). During CFA, we retained those factors with a value of 0.60 for further analysis to see the fullest impact with all the indicators.

The Cronbach's alpha value of each construct is above 0.60, as recommended (Hair et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 1991), and confirms the internal consistency (Table 3). The composite reliability scores are also above the cut-off score of 0.70 (Chin et al., 1995; Gefen et al., 2000). Researchers believe that composite reliability is a more rigorous estimate of reliability (Chin et al., 1995). The average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct was above 0.5 (Bagozzi et al., 1988) and so establishes convergent validity (see Table 3).

To assess the discriminant validity, we used the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), an alternative approach to the examination of cross-loadings<sup>2</sup> and Fornell-Larcker<sup>3</sup> criteria, based on the multi-trait multimethod matrix (for more, see Henseler et al., 2015). Henseler and colleagues argue that the cut-off value of HTMT must be below 0.9 (see Table 4).

In the next step, the hypotheses generated from this study were tested by examining the structural model through SmartPLS software. Initially, we tested the estimated model with all fifteen emotional and social competencies included. Due to the lower predictability of social competencies in perceived employability with all ESCs (Figure 2), we tested an alternative model

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<sup>1</sup> Inter-correlation was checked first indicator-wise and later dimension-wise. Please ask the corresponding author for details if required.

<sup>2</sup> Cross-loading results were the same as HTMT. Please ask the corresponding author for details if required.

<sup>3</sup> We also tested the Fornell-Larcker and results are significant. Please ask the corresponding author for details of the Fornell-Larcker results if required.

with reduced ESCs that had higher predictability in view of the graduate sample (Murtaugh, 2009; Reis et al., 2000). To test the hypotheses, we used a bootstrapping method on a 5,000 subsample randomly drawn (with replacements) from the original set of data (Efron et al., 1994; Hair et al., 2017). Using such a large subsample in bootstrapping ensures the robustness of validity and stability of results (for more about bootstrapping, see Davison et al., 1997). After bootstrapping, the structural model indicated the strength of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable through estimates of the path coefficients (see Figure 3).

Both emotional and social competencies belong to the emotional intelligence stream; therefore multicollinearity among variables were tested through the variance inflation factor (VIF). The VIF value of each construct should be less than 5 to avoid a multicollinearity issue; in ideal conditions, the VIF must be less than 3 (Hair et al., 2014). We found no issue of multicollinearity in the model: the VIF of all constructs was less than 3 (Table 5).

Results (Table 6) show a positive and significant relationship between emotional competencies and perceived employability (t-value = 2.029,  $\beta$  = 0.227, p-value = 0.043). Therefore, we found support for hypothesis 1. The relationship between social competencies and perceived employability is positive (t-value = 1.973,  $\beta$  = 0.214, p-value = 0.048): thus we found support for our second hypothesis. Further results established a positive and strong association between employability and career satisfaction (t-value = 3.641,  $\beta$  = 0.457 p-value = 0.000), therefore supporting hypothesis 3. We used the mediation technique set out by Hair et al. (2014) and results indicate that perceived employability mediates the relationship between emotional competencies and career satisfaction (t-value = 1.632,  $\beta$  = 0.104, p-value = 0.102). Likewise, perceived employability plays a mediation role between social competencies and career satisfaction (t-value = 1.646,  $\beta$  = 0.098, p-value = 0.10). Therefore, we found support for hypotheses 4 and 5.

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**Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis Emotional competencies**

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	Emotional Self Awareness	Achiev. Orient.	Adapt.	Emotional Self-Control	Positive Outlook
A.1.c	0.849				
A.1.e	0.765				
B.1.a		0.672			
B.1.b		0.798			
B.1.c		0.812			
B.1.d		0.841			
B.2.a			0.812		
B.2.b			0.875		
B.2.c			0.736		
B.2.d			0.781		
B.2.e			0.759		
B.3.a				0.895	
B.3.e				0.897	
B.4.a					0.900
B.4.b					0.684
B.4.c					0.896
B.4.d					0.802
B.4.e					0.779

	Social competencies				Perceived Employability	Career Satisfaction
	Empathy	Conflict Mgt.	Develop. Others	Team Work		
C.1.d	1.000					
D.1.a		0.897				
D.1.d		0.885				
D.2.a			0.901			
D.2.b			0.913			
D.5.c				0.9		
D.5.d.				0.877		
D.5.e				0.919		
Q23.1					0.943	
Q23.2					0.925	
Q23.3					0.866	
Q23.4					0.937	
Q8.1						0.789
Q8.2						0.713
Q8.3						0.785
Q8.4						0.692
Q8.5						0.761
Q8.6						0.602
Q9.1						0.851
Q9.2						0.715
Q9.3						0.874
Q9.4						0.777
Q9.5						0.825
Q9.6						0.741

**Table 3: Composite reliability, internal consistency and convergent validity**

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Emotional Self-Awareness	0.473	0.484	0.79	0.653
Achievement Orientation	0.789	0.811	0.863	0.614
Adaptability	0.853	0.86	0.895	0.631
Positive outlook	0.872	0.895	0.908	0.666
Emotional Self-control	0.755	0.755	0.891	0.803
Empathy	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Conflict Mgt.	0.74	0.741	0.885	0.793
Developing others	0.785	0.787	0.903	0.823
Teamwork	0.881	0.885	0.926	0.808
Emotional Competencies	0.875	0.904	0.896	0.359
Social Competencies	0.807	0.836	0.856	0.44
Perceived Employability	0.939	0.969	0.956	0.843
Career Satisfaction	0.935	0.944	0.943	0.583

Figure 2: Path Coefficients

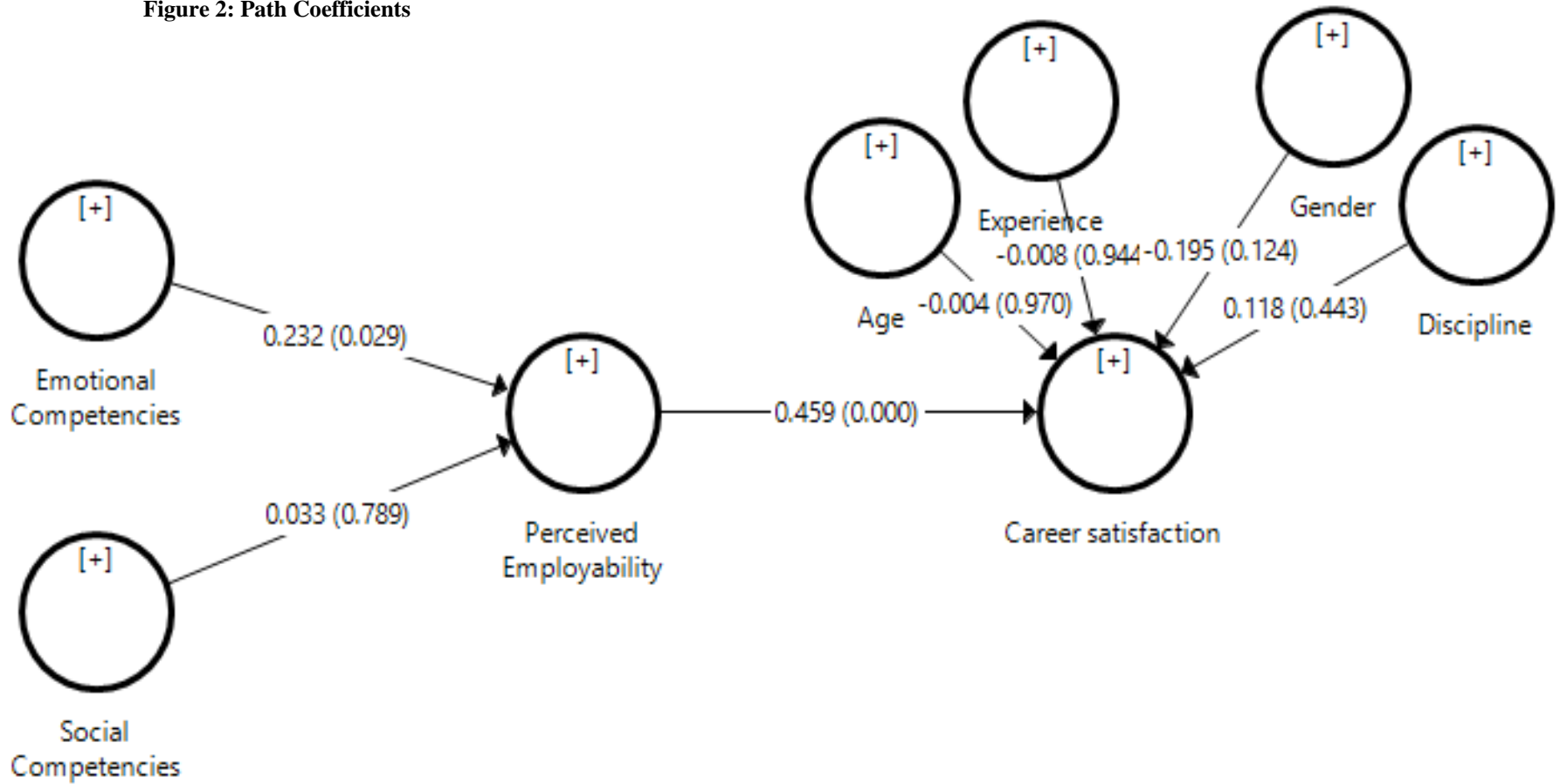
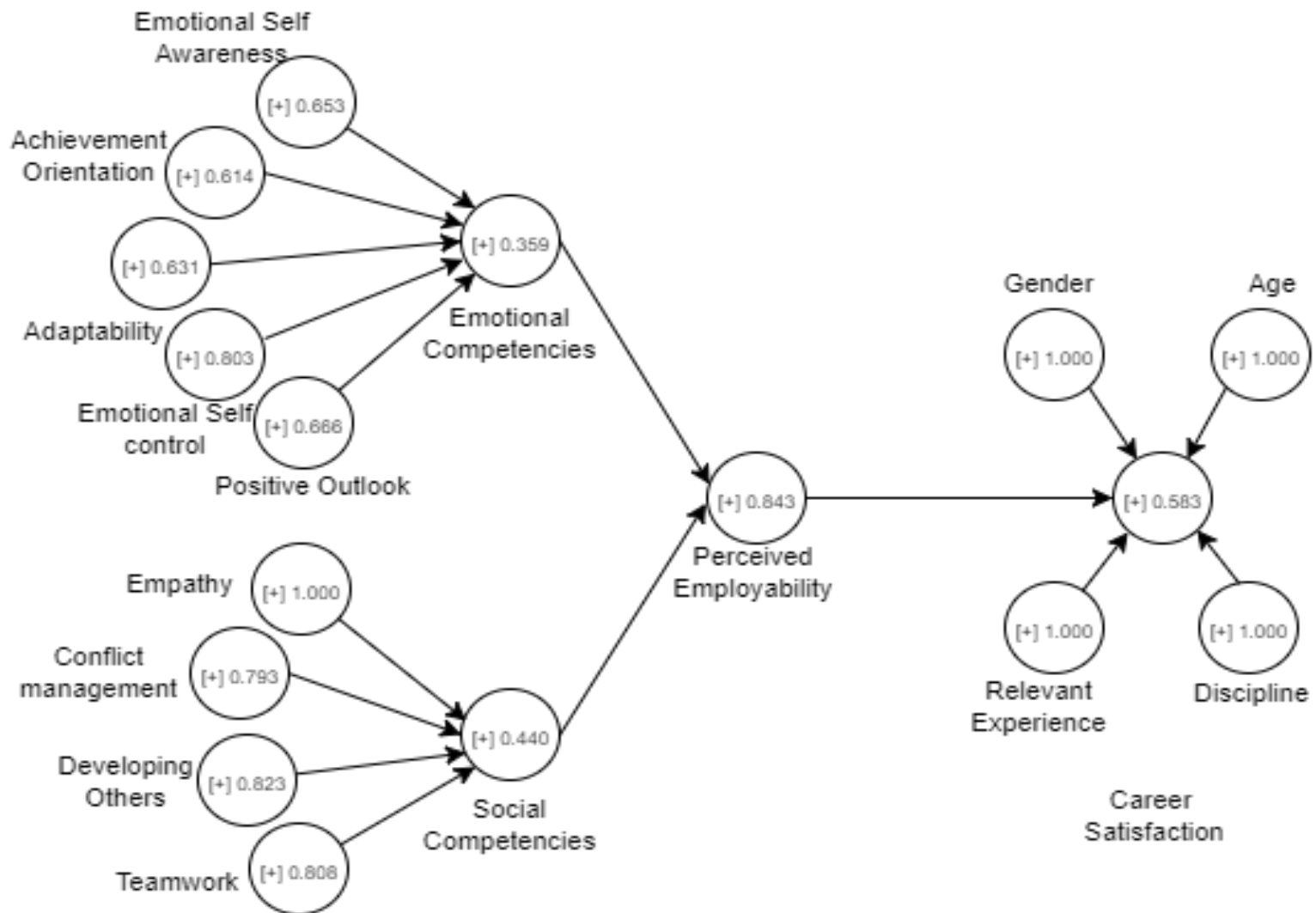


Figure 3: Path Coefficients





**Table 4. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)\* ratio of correlation**

	ESA	AO	Adapt.	PO	ESC	Emp.	Con. Mgt.	Dev. Oth.	Team-work	PE	CS	Age	Disc.	Gender	Relevant Exp.
Emotional Self-Awareness															
Achievement Orientation	0.345														
Adaptability	0.130	0.666													
Positive outlook	0.227	0.528	0.426												
Emotional Self-control	0.187	0.487	0.674	0.691											
Empathy	0.395	0.383	0.273	0.359	0.426										
Conflict Mgt.	0.138	0.320	0.265	0.290	0.263	0.336									
Developing others	0.530	0.413	0.177	0.578	0.542	0.321	0.400								
Teamwork	0.237	0.224	0.245	0.189	0.119	0.086	0.481	0.525							
Perceived Employ.	0.182	0.226	0.072	0.469	0.172	0.099	0.208	0.295	0.272						
Career Satisfaction	0.145	0.229	0.131	0.241	0.252	0.107	0.139	0.157	0.130	0.444					
Age	0.090	0.097	0.096	0.045	0.098	0.027	0.076	0.092	0.104	0.030	0.103				
Discipline	0.259	0.064	0.120	0.086	0.114	0.276	0.034	0.009	0.079	0.241	0.178	0.041			
Gender	0.339	0.140	0.114	0.026	0.064	0.224	0.160	0.075	0.094	0.113	0.148	0.101	0.284		
Relevant Experience	0.096	0.121	0.066	0.071	0.097	0.045	0.144	0.020	0.058	0.151	0.063	0.473	0.142	0.039	

\*All values less than 0.90. To establish the discriminant validity<sup>4</sup> between two reflective constructs, HTMT value must be below 0.90.

<sup>4</sup> Cross-loading has the same results and available with corresponding author.

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**Table 5. Variance Inflation Factor\***

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	Emotional Competencies	Social Competencies	Perceived Employability	Career Satisfaction
Emotional Self-Awareness	1.066			
Achievement Orientation	1.708			
Adaptability	1.812			
Positive outlook	1.650			
Emotional Self-control	1.794			
Empathy		1.161		
Conflict Management		1.289		
Developing others		1.359		
Teamwork		1.387		
Emotional Competencies			1.195	
Social Competencies			1.195	
Perceived Employability				1.104
Age				1.330
Discipline				1.196
Gender				1.101
Relevant Experience				1.399

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\* Value less than 5.00 show low correlation among variables and no multicollinearity. Under ideal conditions VIF must be less than 3.00.

Table 7 shows the adjusted R-squared score (confidence interval bias corrected) of employability (0.137) and career satisfaction (0.253) that helps to understand the amount of explained variance of employability and career satisfaction in the presence of ESCs (Hair et al., 2014, p. 93). The final model (with nine ESCs) improved the predictability and  $r^2$  from 0.064 → 0.137.

All the control variables were insignificant in the model (Table 6). PLS researchers indicated that inclusion of control variables significantly reduces the effect, irrespective of significance (Hair et al., 2013).

## **Discussion**

This study integrates and expands prior literature on perceived employability by adopting the competency-based and career perspectives. The purpose of the study is to shed light on the antecedents and outcomes of perceived employability with specific regard to graduate entry in the labour market.

The results obtained support the hypotheses proposed. In the first place, we found empirical evidence of the role of emotional and social competencies as potential predictors of graduates' belief in their employability. Concerning emotional competencies, findings are in line with previous research that investigated the impact of emotional self-awareness (as part of emotional competencies) on perceived employability (Dacre Pool et al., 2013). Being in tune with yourself, knowing your values, preferences, resources and limits, understanding your own emotions and their effects, help graduates to better define the future career objectives that best meet their desires and personal strengths, enhancing the confidence of having successful opportunities to get such a

job. Emotional self-awareness is also based on the desire to receive feedback and new perspectives on yourself. This is particularly relevant for graduates during their transition to the labour market, since they are motivated towards continuous learning and self-development, leading to a higher perception of the value they can bring to the workplace. Therefore, self-awareness represents a pivotal aspect of employability because it helps to organize job search activity in more structured way (McArdle et al., 2007).

Our final model revealed that the complexity of tasks regulates the magnitude of ESCs according to the position level (such as entry-level, middle or top level) within organizations (Rodriguez et al., 2002; Watkin, 2000). Earlier researchers have suggested a distinct set of ESCs for high-performance individuals in different industries categorized according to the nature of the tasks (i.e. technical and engineering, healthcare, executive level leadership, client and sales management, engineering and technical) (Spencer et al., 1993). Compared to previous studies, our research encompasses different dimensions of ESCs. Besides emotional self-awareness, other emotional competencies (adaptability, achievement orientation, positive outlook and emotional self-control) demonstrated their important role in enhancing graduate-perceived employability.

Adaptability has been conceived in the literature as the fundamental dimension of the perceived employability construct (Fugate et al., 2004), but to date no empirical evidence has been provided to test this relationship. In the current dynamic labour market, adaptability is highly valued by employers that operate in environments characterized by continuous change due to, for instance, technological advances or market globalization, or unpredictable events (Beltrán-Martín et al., 2013). The willingness to react to changes or unexpected events, adopting the most appropriate behaviours for a specific situation, represents a relevant competency for graduates, considering the change they experience during the transition from the academic context to the work environment.

**Table 6. Results from structural equation modelling: Total, direct and indirect effects**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Achievement Orientation→Career Satisfaction	0.031	0.034	0.019	1.617	0.106
Achievement Orientation→Emotional Competencies	0.303	0.299	0.035	8.709	0.000
Achievement Orientation→Perceived Employability	0.069	0.072	0.034	2.036	0.042
Adaptability → Career Satisfaction	0.029	0.03	0.015	1.900	0.057
Adaptability → Emotional Competencies	0.281	0.271	0.042	6.739	0.000
Adaptability → Perceived Employability	0.064	0.063	0.027	2.324	0.020
Age → Career Satisfaction	-0.004	-0.027	0.115	0.032	0.975
Conflict Mgt. → Career Satisfaction	0.029	0.03	0.018	1.589	0.112
Conflict Mgt. → Perceived Employability	0.063	0.064	0.034	1.863	0.063
Conflict Mgt. → Social Competencies	0.295	0.289	0.04	7.398	0.000
Developing others → Career Satisfaction	0.034	0.035	0.022	1.559	0.119
Developing others → Perceived Employability	0.074	0.074	0.039	1.917	0.055
Developing others → Social Competencies	0.345	0.337	0.043	8.025	0.000
Discipline → Career Satisfaction	0.118	0.102	0.155	0.762	0.446
<b>Emotional Competencies → Career Satisfaction</b>	<b>0.104</b>	<b>0.115</b>	<b>0.064</b>	<b>1.632</b>	<b>0.103*</b>
<b>Emotional Competencies → Perceived Employability</b>	<b>0.227</b>	<b>0.241</b>	<b>0.112</b>	<b>2.029</b>	<b>0.043**</b>
Emotional Self-Awareness → Career Satisfaction	0.002	0.004	0.004	0.565	0.572
Emotional Self-Awareness → Emotional Competencies	0.021	0.031	0.023	0.909	0.363
Emotional Self-Awareness → Perceived Employability	0.005	0.007	0.007	0.683	0.494
Emotional Self-control → Career Satisfaction	0.019	0.021	0.012	1.661	0.097
Emotional Self-control → Emotional Competencies	0.184	0.181	0.027	6.917	0.000
Emotional Self-control → Perceived Employability	0.042	0.043	0.021	2.038	0.042
Empathy → Career Satisfaction	0.009	0.009	0.006	1.485	0.138
Empathy → Perceived Employability	0.02	0.018	0.012	1.682	0.093
Empathy → Social Competencies	0.092	0.089	0.037	2.484	0.013
Gender → Career Satisfaction	-0.195	-0.185	0.128	1.524	0.127
<b>Perceived Employability → Career Satisfaction</b>	<b>0.457</b>	<b>0.475</b>	<b>0.126</b>	<b>3.641</b>	<b>0.000***</b>
Positive outlook → Career Satisfaction	0.051	0.058	0.035	1.441	0.150
Positive outlook → Emotional Competencies	0.493	0.494	0.058	8.496	0.000
Positive outlook → Perceived Employability	0.112	0.122	0.064	1.738	0.082
Relevant Exp. → Career Satisfaction	-0.008	0.000	0.124	0.067	0.946
<b>Social Competencies → Career Satisfaction</b>	<b>0.098</b>	<b>0.104</b>	<b>0.061</b>	<b>1.619</b>	<b>0.105*</b>
<b>Social Competencies → Perceived Employability</b>	<b>0.214</b>	<b>0.219</b>	<b>0.109</b>	<b>1.973</b>	<b>0.048**</b>
Teamwork → Career Satisfaction	0.059	0.062	0.038	1.562	0.118
Teamwork → Perceived Employability	0.129	0.132	0.069	1.875	0.061
Teamwork → Social Competencies	0.600	0.598	0.059	10.09	0.000

\*\*\*p&lt;0.000, \*\*p&lt;0.05, \*p&lt;0.10

Achievement orientation expresses the concern to set and pursue challenging goals, to seek out opportunities and take action on them. During the job search process, this competency helps students to define realistic career goals and the pathway towards their attainment, and to demonstrate proactive behaviour in selecting and applying for jobs. Positive outlook enables students to formulate positive expectations about the future despite the possible negative labour market conditions, and signifies the capacity to see the positive side of difficult situations that they may encounter during their job search. Lastly, emotional self-control helps graduates to deal calmly with stressful or difficult moments that they may face during the transition to the labour market and to strive towards their goals despite feeling negative emotions, in so doing favouring students' perception of themselves as employable. Only conscientiousness seems to make a minimal contribution to enhancing students' confidence in getting a job. This can be explained by the fact that the capacity to be punctual and concern for order and accuracy in carrying out activities can be a better predictor of job performance than of the ability to easily find a job.

As regards social competences, empathy, conflict management, developing others and teamwork demonstrated a positive influence on perceived employability. These competencies are considered core employability skills for getting a new job in the labour market (Blom et al., 2011; Jackson, 2012; Overtom, 2000). Empathy is the ability to listen to and understand accurately others' thoughts, feelings and concerns, even reading non-verbal cues: for new graduates approaching the work environment, the willingness to take the employer's perspective and relate well to people, such as supervisors and colleagues, from diverse backgrounds strengthens their perception of successfully performing at job interviews and better integrating themselves into the new organizational context.

<b>Table 7: R Squares Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected</b>					
	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Bias	2.5%	97.5%
Career Satisfaction	0.253	0.321	0.068	0.095	0.332
Perceived Employability	0.137	0.169	0.032	0.014	0.280

Developing others is demonstrated when an individual cares about others and their development, providing on-going coaching and mentoring. In the contemporary dynamic labour market, characterized by rapid technological changes and evolution of knowledge in the different disciplinary fields, graduates represent to firms the opportunity to enter specific knowledge domains and to expand the organizational capabilities in dedicated areas of interest. Firms can access graduates' human capital only if students demonstrate the capacity to transfer their knowledge and skills to the organizational context. Therefore, graduates who care about others' learning and who are keener to devote time for their development, perceive themselves as more attractive.

Teamwork is about working co-operatively with others, building team spirit and identity, soliciting others' participation and promoting a friendly climate in groups. This competency is one of the most valued soft skills in the workplace. Firms are progressively looking for individuals who can contribute to several functional areas, work effectively with different colleagues in projects and cooperatively achieve common goals. Similarly, conflict management—the ability to handle difficult individuals or tense situations with diplomacy and tact—is often required when individuals work in teams and share responsibility with others. Students who demonstrate these social competencies show a higher perception of their chance of realizing job opportunities.

Our results indicate that leadership, influence, organizational awareness, service orientation and change catalyst make a minimal contribution to predict graduates' perceived employability. We still maintain that all ESCs—even those with minimal effect in our model—are important, because these competencies could be desirable for all positions for outstanding effectiveness, but new entrants take time to adjust when joining the corporate world (Barrick et al., 1991). Likewise, organizational awareness is the ability to identify and decipher the flows of emotions and power relations, helping to understand the political realities in a group. Indeed, it is important at all levels, but generally this competency is exercised among managers and executives (Goleman, 2001). The same considerations can be extended to inspirational leadership and change catalyst that require a deep knowledge of the organizational context in which an individual operates to take on the role of leader in a group or to promote change. The role of service orientation and its influence on perceived employability may require further investigation. The ability to persuade others with convincing and compelling arguments may impact on students' belief in presenting themselves in a competitive way in the marketplace, increasing their chances of getting a job. On the other hand, service orientation—namely, the concern to help others and adapting one's behaviours to others' needs—represents a skill valued by employers and graduates more for some specific industrial settings, such as the service sector (Spowart, 2011).

Our findings show that perceived employability is a relevant predictor of career satisfaction in graduates, confirming earlier findings in literature (Dacre Pool et al., 2013; De Vos et al., 2011). Perception of being employable provides a sense of control over one's career, wherein one can find the job that better meets the personal career aspirations and desires. Lastly, the paper provides new insights into the role of perceived employability as a mediator between ESCs and career satisfaction. Our results emphasize that emotional and social competencies positively influence



the subjective dimension of career success in graduates, but only indirectly through perceived employability. Graduates with a greater ESC profile perceive themselves as more employable and this leads to experience greater satisfaction with their career goals.

### **Theoretical, practical and policy implications**

This study extends human capital theory in the realm of graduate employability (Berntson et al., 2006). Literature defines human capital as divided into two categories: tangible (i.e. degree and experience) and intangible (satisfaction from career) (Becker, 1994; McGuirk et al., 2015). This study extends the intangible dimension of human capital, showing that graduates with high levels of behavioural competency hold higher self-perceived employability that provides more control over their career—a positive indicator for individuals, society and the knowledge economy as whole (Schultz, 1961). Human capital theory seeks to explain the gains of education and training (Aliaga, 2001), and the present study explains the return on investment—i.e. investing in ESCs leads to graduate employability and career satisfaction. To render the contribution to employability and career literature, this study pointed out the ESCs as predictors of employability. In line with previous studies, this study reiterates the importance of ESCs and contributes to the career literature by highlighting that employable workers possess higher career satisfaction (Dacre Pool et al., 2013).

This study suggests that higher education institutions (HEIs) should invest in dedicated structures and didactic programmes to equip students with the skills required to increase their employability in the labour market (Tymon, 2013). HEIs' role directly impacts on every level in the economy: it connects graduates with the labour market (micro level), provides organizations with an efficient workforce (meso), and creates the knowledge economy through qualified humans

(macro). Therefore, investment in creating the advanced learning environment to keep graduates and employees more competitive in internal and external labour markets is crucial (Boyatzis et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2009). It is important to increase awareness that ESCs enhance the human potential of graduates, which can be translated into higher employability and effective performance (Abraham, 2004). ESCs provide career choices during and after the education and, importantly, equip graduates to take decisions about their career (Jackson et al., 2017).

This study suggests that policy-makers and curriculum designers include specified ESC training to create the knowledge-driven economy (Brown et al., 2003). Developing and incorporating ESCs in existing behaviour is a process of refining the existing skills to respond effectively in different situations. For example, self-awareness sharpens the sense to clearly understand one's strengths and possible limitations, to arrive at more conclusive decisions in one's personal and professional life (Abraham, 2004; Salovey et al., 1990). Educators' role is also crucial in developing competencies: therefore they should focus on particular competencies, helping to uplift students' potential. From the organizations' standpoint, employers should foster such a positive work environment where they can nurture ESCs in new graduates. Lastly, students—being aware of the relevance of soft skills—should take the initiative and invest their time in different learning activities to develop their emotional and social competencies and become more employable and competitive in the labour market.

### **Limitations and future research**

Our paper has some limitations that should be addressed in future research. Firstly, our sample size meets the requirement of PLS-SEM (Barclay et al., 1995; Gefen et al., 2000, 2011; Hair et al., 2014) but still we feel the sample size brings statistical constraints and its collection only from one

region of Italy could be a potential limitation for generalizability. Future research with a larger sample from multiple regions could bring more insight and generalizability. Secondly, we used a two-step approach: separate estimation of the first- and second-order models might cause interpretational confounding due to not taking the complete nomological network into account (Wilson et al., 2007). Future research on competencies as a second-order variable can also use a hybrid approach to deal with interpretational confounding (for more, see Becker et al., 2012).

Moreover, our study is based on three years' time-lagged data for which ESCs have been gathered during the Master's degree program, whereas perceived employment and career satisfaction have been collected only at one point in time. Further studies should investigate the possession of ESCs before graduation and tackle perceived employability and career satisfaction at different points in time after graduation and students' entry in the labour market. In our research, we did not address the issue of ESCs' development and the impact on the analysed career variables. A longitudinal study should investigate how academic programmes devoted to the development of soft skills may have an impact on the composition of the ESC profile of graduates and how this intervention influences students' perceived employability and career success.

Furthermore, the ESCI-U version does not include a social skill often mentioned as a relevant component of perceived employability (Fugate et al., 2004), namely networking, the ability to build, maintain and use personal relationships to get things done (Ferris et al., 2005). This social competency may positively influence graduate-perceived employability since, through networking, individuals can access information about job opportunities, gaining reputation and social support that can enhance the belief in being successful in getting a job.

Besides networking, future studies should consider integrating the competency model with other soft skills that are considered valuable in the workplace, such as cognitive competencies, the ability

to analyse information and situations, including analytical thinking, system thinking, pattern recognition, problem solving and critical thinking. Prior evidence has shown that employers and graduates place great importance on such skills (Coll et al., 2006; The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015). A promising area of investigation is to continue this line of research, analysing if cognitive skills contribute along with ESCs to the formulation of cognitive schemas that direct, regulate and sustain behaviour towards the attainment of the desired career goals.

## **Conclusion**

The present study finds notable relationships between behavioural competencies as human capital elements and employability and career satisfaction. By using a behavioural approach, we explored whether individuals with ESCs have a higher likelihood of self-perceived employability and career satisfaction. We conclude that all stakeholders should realize the importance of emotional and social competencies, perceived employability and career satisfaction, and work on the collective obligation to reduce the existing gap in the labour market at entry-level, particularly policy-makers, higher education institutes and students. This could lead us to a way to create a knowledge-driven economy and career success.

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# **Is employability a double edged sword? Assessing the behavioral outcomes of perceived employability\*\*\***

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## **Abstract**

Employability has been studied in different disciplines (e.g. occupational health and career) and has been seen as a personal resource with overall positive outcomes. The present research investigates the behavioral implications of (perceived) employability and responds to the recent assumption in the relevant research that perceived employability (PE) may have negative behavioral implications. We have addressed three main questions i) Does PE have positive effects on productive behavior such as in-role and extra-role? ii) Does PE entail a dark side such as destructive behavior? iii) Does PE have the same function in developing economies as it does in developed economies? The third question responds to the lacunae related to the asymmetry of the dataset and replication of existing results in developing economies. Data was collected from 230 white-collar employees (62 managers and 168 non-managers) from four multinational companies operating in Pakistan, and analyzed through PLS-SEM. On the positive side, results show that PE is positively associated with organizational citizenship behavior- individual (OCBI), whereas, there is a positive relationship between PE and counterproductive work behavior-individual (CWBI) and counterproductive work behavior organization (CWBO). The present research raises serious concerns from the employers' perspective given the prime importance of highly employable workers during the attraction, selection and retention process. The present research may be a droplet in organizational behavior literature but could also open a new research avenue by challenging the existing positive approach to PE.

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## Introduction

In the aftermath of recent economic developments such as globalization, the economic crisis and the implementation of change programs in a range of organizations, researchers have expressed concerns regarding the competitive advantages for organizations (Short & Harris, 2014) and the growing feelings of job insecurity among the workforce (Baillien & De Witte, 2009). In order to respond to companies' competitive advantage, a workforce development strategy is crucial to remain competitive in the market (Barney, 1995; Short & Harris, 2014) and can be gained through high-performance work practices (Boxall & Macky, 2009; Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006). As for individual job insecurity, the concept of 'employability' has been advanced as the new security mechanism for employees in these turbulent times (De Cuyper, Mäkikangas, Kinnunen, Mauno, & Witte, 2012). Scholars have defined employability as "*the employee's chance of finding alternative employment, either on the internal or the external labour market*" (Forrier & Sels, 2003, p. 106). The concept of employability is often framed in terms of the employee's perception (perceived employability) that how easily he/ she may find new employment (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). (Perceived) employability is the result of individual factors (e.g., training, education) and contextual features (e.g., the general economy) (Berntson, Sverke, & Marklund, 2006). While perceived employability research is quickly progressing, we have identified three gaps in the literature to date.

First, employability has been studied in different disciplines. One example contains occupational health researchers who generally advance (perceived) employability as a resource with overall beneficial effects for the employee's well-being (Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, Witte, & Alarco, 2008; Kirves, De Cuyper, Kinnunen, & Nätti, 2011; Silla, De Cuyper, Gracia, Peiró, & De Witte, 2009; Vanhercke, De Cuyper, & De Witte, 2016). Another example is related to career

scholars who have linked employability to career success (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2010; Feldman & Turnley, 2004). Despite a multidisciplinary approach in employability research to date, comparatively few scholars have studied perceived employability from the perspective of work behaviors (i.e. from the specific perspective of organizational behavior scholars); both productive and counterproductive behavior in particular (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers, De Cuyper, Forrier, Vander Elst, & De Witte, 2016). This is perhaps surprising as work behavior is a central concern of organizations. Indeed, organizations wish to increase productive behavior, such as in-role performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), amongst their staff (Organ, 1988; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). They additionally aim to reduce counterproductive work behaviors (CWB), such as theft and incivility or bullying (Spector et al., 2006). CWB is considered to be destructive in nature and against organizational interests.

Second, perceived employability has mainly been operationalized in developed countries. Recent studies have highlighted that little to no evidence related to employability is available in the literature from developing or emerging economies (Imam, De Cuyper, & Baillien, 2016; Ngo et al., 2017). In fact, it reveals asymmetry and provides a one-sided picture of developed economies. Researchers are neglecting the important part (developing/emerging economies) in literature, as developing economies and labor markets are highly volatile (Fields, 2011). Some studies have disclosed that existing findings of perceived employability are difficult to replicate in economies other than developed (De Cuyper, Baillien, & De Witte, 2009; Imam et al., 2016; Ngo et al., 2017). They further argue that not all capable individuals get the right job in developing countries due to the saturated job market. Moreover, individuals working in developing economies are mainly employed in the private sector, thus they are not entitled to any social benefits from the government. In a rough estimate of developing countries, nine out of ten workers serve in the

private sector (Fields, 2011, p. 4). The perception of being employable in such situations, where almost 90% of individuals depend on jobs in the private sector and stiff competition, is a potentially interesting and strong line of research (Imam et al., 2016; Ngo et al., 2017). While one may readily encounter research on the relationship between employability and workers' behavior within the confines of Europe and the USA (De Cuyper et al., 2009; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Guest, 2004; Kalleberg, 2000; Kalleberg, Reskin, & Hudson, 2000), there is a significant deficit of the Asian perspective in PE literature (Ngo et al., 2017).

Third, up to now, the literature has portrayed PE as having an overall positive behavior outcome (De Cuyper et al., 2014). According to Wittekind, Raeder, and Grote (2010), individuals with PE regard stressful situations as being less threatening and experience less strain, however recent studies have pointed to a dark side of PE as well where employable individuals' behavior are not likely to be in line with organizational goals (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2016). Furthermore, they refer to the fact that highly employable workers feel relatively powerful over other co-workers, hence enabling them to negotiate more successfully (Vanhercke et al., 2016). This relative power may encourage them to pay less attention to the norms and engage in CWB as a way of protesting against organizational unfairness so that they can demand/negotiate what they may not actually deserve. Therefore, the present study responds to the gaps in the research on employability and organizational behavior literature and is a first attempt at questioning the positive side of PE (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Imam et al., 2016; Philippaers et al., 2016). Overall, this study answers the key behavioral questions regarding PE, i) Does PE have positive effects on productive behaviors such as in-role and extra-role? ii) Does PE entail a dark side such as CWB? iii) Does PE work as positively in developing economies as it does in developed economies?



The present study contributes to the literature in various ways: First, it investigates the behavioral implications of PE which are currently in the early stages of debate and have rarely been studied in the literature. Second, it examines the positive notion of PE from a behavioral perspective and confirms rare findings within the context of developing economies (De Cuyper et al., 2009; De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2016). Third, it challenges the current positive impression of PE and explores its dark side (Philippaers et al., 2016). Fourth, it draws on evidence from developing economies in order to more fully grasp the dynamics of PE in economies beyond the scope of Europe (Ngo et al., 2017).

The paper is organized as follows: the next section introduces the background literature and then the methods and the measures used during data collection. We then go on to present a data analysis and findings by explaining the relationship between PE and (productive/destructive) work behaviors, followed by a discussion of the results and future research directions in light of our findings. Finally, a conclusion and implications are drawn.

## **Literature Review**

### **Perceived Employability and Productive Work Behavior**

The concept of perceived employability has a long history, but has regained attention in the last decade in the context of changing employment relationships and increasing job insecurity (Finn, 2000; Forrier & Sels, 2003). Perceived employability concerns “the worker’s perception of his or her possibilities to achieve a new job (Berntson & Marklund, 2007; Berntson et al., 2006, p. 225)”.

We believe perceptions of employability are related to work behavior: indeed, perceptions are strong drivers for human behavior as it is the perception of a situation or reality, rather than the situation or reality itself, which affects feelings, thoughts and – subsequently - behavior (James &

Sells, 1981; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Parks, Kidder, & Gallagher, 1998). Accordingly, the mere perception of being (or not being) employable affects how employees behave in their organizational settings. For example, workers who perceive themselves as employable are less likely to perceive flexibility as threatening and they may perform well in times of change. On the other hand, less employable workers may choose to stay in a job they do not desire, however they may behave in a negative way to signal discontentment. Employability is not only advantageous for employees but also for companies due to the fact that highly employable workers have organizational commitment (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011) and are high performers (De Cuyper et al., 2012; Grip, Loo, & Sanders, 2004). Overall, we believe perceived employability has a positive influence on work behavior (in-role and extra-role) and it may also abet destructive behavior. Employees' work behaviors can be described in two ways: productive behavior and counterproductive work behavior (CWB). First, productive behavior is defined as “an employee’s behavior that contributes positively to the goals and objectives of the organization” (Jex & Britt, 2008, p. 96). Employers expect high level of productivity from all workers after a period of acclimatization to the organizational environment. Many different forms of productive behavior have been discussed in the literature, such as in-role and extra-role behavior (Jex & Britt, 2008). We define in-role behavior (IRB) as core-tasks and responsibilities to meet the formal job requirements (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Extra-role behavior, also referred to as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB): a discretionary behavior “not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988). OCB is a two dimensional construct, geared towards a specific individual (OCBI) and the organization (OCBO). As explained by Williams and Anderson (1991), OCBO positive behavior directly benefits the organizational goals (i.e. advance

leave notices, attendance at work above the norm). OCBI, refers to a specific individual (another employee) who benefits from different tasks but contributes indirectly to the overall goals of the organization(i.e. helping others who have heavy workloads or who have been absent, taking a personal interest in other employees) (see more, Williams & Anderson, 1991). Both behaviors (in-role and extra-role) contribute directly to the achievement of organizations' strategic and operational goals (De Cuyper et al., 2014) and are important in order to evaluate employees' performance (Williams & Anderson, 1991). IRB is distinct from OCB and is explicitly linked to the formal reward system (Organ, 1997).

In line with the findings of occupational health researchers and career scholars who have detected the positive consequences of employability in terms of wellbeing and career success (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2010; Vanhercke et al., 2016), we believe that perceived employability is likely to contribute to positive behavior and thus IRB, OCBI and OCBO. We have two theoretical justifications for the relationship between employability and performance: first, we believe that employable workers generally have a stock of skills and updated knowledge that are critical to perform well. This is in line with the human capital theory (Becker, 1993): investments in human capital generally lead to revenues in the form of increased productivity. Highly employable workers are high achievers, therefore, organizations invest in them by attracting, recruiting and retaining (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2016) and offer competitive wages that generally lead to revenues in the form of increased productivity. Likewise, employees invest their time and money (in education and training) to fulfill their formal job requirements and to get a substantial return (wages and reward) on that investment. Second, employable workers are high in exchange and obligation fulfillment (Cropanzano, 2005); therefore, the primary focus of employable workers is to invest in their job resources so as to perform the core organizational tasks

in order to fulfill the formal job requirements. The exchange of job resources to complete the formal job requirement for wages is related to performance building blocks (Bonner & Sprinkle, 2002). In the light of social exchange theory and norms of reciprocity, we theorized that employable workers target core tasks to meet the formal job requirements because (un)fulfilling core job tasks directly effect on formal performance and rewards (Organ, 1995). Also successful accomplishment of tasks in job description smoothen the way to get recommendation/appreciation letters and promotions in future which send a positive signal across (internal/external) labor market (Philippaers et al., 2016). However, primarily focus of employable workers to fulfill their formal assigned tasks.

Therefore, we posed our first hypothesis as follows:

*H1: Perceived employability will be positively associated with in-role performance.*

Possession of greater job resources (i.e. human capital and skills) increases the likelihood of OCB (Vanhercke et al., 2016; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). In light of the conservation resource theory, researchers have indicated that highly employable workers invest their human capital resources to build their social capital (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989; Philippaers et al., 2016), thus, PE enables employees to help others through the various job resources. Investing resources to build further resources strengthens the employee's position in the current organization for promotion and increases existing competencies for future employers. OCB individually directed behavior (OCBI) is invaluable in the achievement of organizational goals when a resourceful employee helps another employee. OCBI also aids the supervisor to meet the departmental goals that largely benefit the organization (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000). In fact, by helping others, employable workers

build their resource caravans that help workers at turbulent times (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989, 2011). We believe OCBI is a prominent feature of PE (Philippaers et al., 2016) and helps employees to build further job resources (as a return) by investing existing resources.

Therefore, we pose our second hypothesis as follows:

*H2: Perceived employability will be positively associated with individually directed organization citizenship behavior (OCBI).*

OCBO is another dimension of extra-role work behavior where employee helps organization informally (e.g. suggestions to improve team/department productivity or serve leave notices well in advance). Such behaviors are not formal part of job description but desirable due to its alignment with organizational goals (Aryee et al., 2002; Williams & Anderson, 1991). We believe employable workers take this opportunity to comply with informal rules and demonstrate their sense of responsibility as an obligation for two reasons. First, they possess extended job resources and such extra-role behavior makes their role stronger at workplace because organizations value any such behavior that (in)directly contribute to the organizational success. For example, Philippaers et al. (2016) conceptualized that high employable workers invest in workplace creativity which helps employers to sustain in the market. High employable workers perform better under stress and take initiatives (generate new ideas and bring creativity to the workplace) that directly contribute to the organization's success (Berntson & Marklund, 2007). Second, such behaviors equally beneficial for them to develop their human and social capital. Researchers have further highlighted that the highly employable are proactive (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004) and seek information and opportunities to improve things (Crant, 2000; Kim, Hon, & Crant, 2009). A robust clarity regarding the relationship and mechanism between PE and extra-role behavior is

embedded in social exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976). Employable workers feel that the organization is meeting their expectations and, in return, they reciprocate with maximum positive behavior to benefit the organization.

Therefore, third hypothesis concerns that

*H3: Perceived employability will be positively associated with organization directed organization citizenship behavior (OCBO).*

### **Perceived Employability and Counterproductive Work Behavior**

Counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB) is considered to be “any intentional behavior on the part of an organization member viewed by the organization as contrary to its legitimate interests” (Sackett & DeVore, 2001). The focus of this definition is based on the behavior itself rather than on the results or consequences of the behavior (e.g., the harm which is done). Gruys (1999) summarized 87 different types of CWB appearing in the scientific literature such as theft, property destruction, inappropriate verbal and physical actions, misuse of information, time and resources, and unsafe behavior. Like OCB, CWB has two levels: interpersonal, with other employees (CWBI) and the organization (CWBO).

The present study responds to the gap in the research regarding the dark side of PE and challenges the current idea that PE is predominantly positive (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2016). We highlight three main features which contribute to the dark side of PE. First, the higher bargaining/negotiation power employees receive as a result of their competencies, skills and know-how (employability). Employable workers possess extended job resources that provide relative power over others and they may demand/negotiate what they do not deserve (Imam et al., 2016). Second, employable workers have better control over their careers which allows them to engage

in norm-violation. Highly employable workers believe they can secure a job elsewhere and have more control over the employment relationship (De Witte, 2005; Vanhercke et al., 2016). Third, job insecurity, a potential threat for all workers including the employable, and a prevalent phenomenon in today's contemporary labor market. Job insecurity decreases the productive behavior and escalates CWB in the workplace (De Witte & De Cuyper, 2015). Employees see job insecurity as the employer's breach of the psychological contract which, in turn, weakens positive behavior and inflates destructive behavior. For example, to reduce frustration during stressful situations (job insecurity), where employees cannot place direct responsibility on the employer, employable workers vent their frustration on other employees. They do not fear being called to account for their behavior (De Cuyper et al., 2014). In an empirical study, De Cuyper et al. (2009) found that employees who perceive themselves as employable are more likely to engage in bullying. Thus, in the light of above, we believe given the sense of control of employable workers over their careers and their feelings of more (bargaining/negotiation) power, due to their extended stock of skills and competencies, they are more likely to engage in CWB (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Vanhercke et al., 2016).

In addition to above, prevailing factor of job insecurity in almost every economy adds fuel to instigate employable workers to show their discontentment through CWBI. For employable workers, it is easier to vent frustration on other employees, particularly at an individual level (e.g. acting rudely towards others, publicly embarrassing others in the workplace) for two paradoxical reasons. First, their strong position in organization due to the skills sets they possess, it is difficult for the organizations to remove such employee. Second, they know that in the worst case scenario they can find job elsewhere drive to less care of norms.

Therefore, our fourth hypothesis is that

H4: *Perceived employability will be positively associated with individually directed counterproductive work behavior (CWBI).*

Organizations' primary aim to attract and retain the highly employable to increase overall organizational performance and competitiveness while researchers indicated that PE increases turnover intentions which lead to actual turnover (Acikgoz, Sumer, & Sumer, 2016; De Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnunen, & Mäkikangas, 2011; Sverke et al., 2010). Consistent with the previous argument, from a behavioral stance, we conceptualize the argument of Larson and Fukami (1985), that PE is a predictor of absenteeism due to power (being employable and ease of movement in the labor market).

We believe that perceived employability is positively associated with CWBO for two reasons. First, the power aspect among employable workers (discussed earlier) may potentially threaten the organization range from bullying to group politics (for personal gain). Here we are not particularly referring to the hierarchal power but rather power in the form of having resources (e.g. human and social capital) compared with other co-workers. We argue that such power potentially lead to bullying (creation of a target and perpetrator) (Samnani & Singh, 2012).

Second, employees with PE consider themselves to be high performers and they are likely to leave the job when they do not fulfill their career or financial goals (Sverke et al., 2010; Vanhercke et al., 2016). However, employers retain high performers due to the rapidly changing market and intense competition which puts highly employable workers in a better position to negotiate with their employers. This increase in the bargaining power of employable workers gives them greater freedom to act according to their own wishes (Sverke et al., 2010). It could stimulate self-interest with unintended negative outcomes for employers (e.g. bullying or group politics). Another similar



argument is that high PE reduces the employee's commitment, while employees with lower PE compel to invest in (skills) resources that will strengthen the employment relationship (Philippaers et al., 2016).

During an economic downturn or saturated job market where job insecurity is high, employable workers may go beyond CWBI to express their depression and frustration through CWBO (taking longer/additional breaks, using drugs in the workplace). We conceptualize that job insecurity and a saturated job market limit the movement of employable workers and cause stress. According to De Witte and De Cuyper (2015), job insecurity amplifies the feeling of powerlessness and reduces control which pushes employable workers to engage in direct destructive behavior towards the organization. For example, scholars suggest stress (during job insecurity) could be a major contributor to negative behavior, as employable individuals take more risks by engaging in bullying behavior (De Cuyper et al., 2009).

In light with the above arguments, our fifth hypothesis is,

*H5: Perceived employability will be positively associated with organization directed counterproductive work behavior (CWBO).*

## **Methodology**

### **The setting**

Recent studies highlighted that studies on PE mainly conducted in European and US context while neglecting data from other countries, particularly Asian countries (Ngo et al., 2017). PE rarely studied in developing economies and behavioral context (Onyishi et al., 2015) but upto our best knowledge no validated study exist in literature to understand the nexus between PE and positive and negative behavior.. Researchers have also argued that current PE findings are difficult to replicate beyond the developed economies (De Cuyper et al., 2009). Therefore, in order to fill these

lacunae, we collected a dataset from South-Asia (Pakistan) to test the relationship between perceived employability and in-role and extra-role behavior.

Total four telecom companies operates in Pakistan include one state-owned and remaining are multinationals. While total nine large fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) in which one is national and rest were multinationals. Seven multinational companies and one large national FMCG (4 Telecom, 4 FMCG) were contacted to participate in this project given the similarity in HR policies and practices that established in a short interview with HR personnel. We selected two vibrant sectors (Telecom and FMCG) for three reasons. First, we targeted organizations in which the maximum number of employees were receiving competitive salaries (to reciprocate at least task performance) and training (to equip with updated skills). These organizations were investing in recruitment and selection procedures to hire highly employable workers. This reduces the justice perception that main cause of revenge motives and CWB (Philippers et al., 2016). Second, the size of the companies were larger and their widespread business operations help to understand and generalize the results. Third, these two sectors are highly influential and competitive in the labor market with opportunities at all three levels (entry, middle and top management) (Shahzad, Sarmad, Abbas, & Khan, 2011) and it covers the labor market features required to gauge perceived employability (Berntson et al., 2006). Four companies (1 Telecom and 3 FMCG including national FMCG) participated in this project. A survey was administered and a total of 900 questionnaires were distributed through the HR department among white collar workers (managers and non-managers). Participation in this project was voluntary, therefore, anonymity of personal information was assured before participation and the sole academic purpose of this study was communicated.

A total of 254 questionnaires were received with a response rate of 28.2%. 24 responses were lacking information on important variables and incomplete. After discarding gibberish responses, the response rate was 25.55% with total of 230 responses (managers=62 and non-managers=168) from 10 different units were finally taken for further analysis. To counter the non-response bias and make sure the sample was representative of the population, we asked the HR department of each organization (part of this project) for the average age, in brackets, of workers and their qualification at entry (non-managers) and middle level management (managers) (Lindner, Murphy, & Briers, 2001; Miller & Smith, 1983). No discrepancy was found in age or qualification while comparing the sample. The bracket shared by all four companies reported a mean age of 26-35 years and an undergraduate degree as the minimum qualification among target sample. Our sample largely comprised the same age bracket (n=154) and everyone held at least an undergraduate degree.

## **Measures**

*Perceived employability:* 4-items were adapted from De Cuyper et al. (2014) already widely used in other employability studies (Cuyper et al., 2008; Guest, Isaksson, & De Witte, 2010). The sample items are: i) I am confident that I could quickly get another job. ii) I could easily find another job, if I wanted to. To record the responses, we used a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

*In-role performance:* A 4-item scale adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991) to measure in-role performance. The sample item is i) I fulfill responsibilities specified in my job description. Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale; 1-Never, 2-Rarely, on less than 10% of the occasions when I could have, 3-Occasionally, on around 30% of the occasions when I could have,

4-Sometimes, on around 50% of the occasions when I could have, 5-Frequently, on around 70% of the occasions when I could have, 6-Usually, on around 90% of the occasions when I could have, 7-Always.

*Organization Citizenship Behavior:* A 14-item scale of OCB was adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991) in which 7-items were OCBI. The sample item is, i) I help others who have a heavy workload. 4 items were used to measure OCBO. The sample item is, i) I look after and protect organizational property. The responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale as used for in-role performance. 3 items were reverse questions to counter the self-evaluation biases.

Earlier studies have established the validity and reliability of in-role performance, OCBO and OCBI measures in various contexts (Blakely, Andrews, & Fuller, 2003; Kwan, Liu, & Yim, 2011; López Bohle, Bal, Jansen, Leiva, & Alonso, 2016; Mayer & Gavin, 2005).

*Counterproductive Work Behavior:* A 19-item comprehensive scale to measure workplace deviance adapted from Bennett and Robinson (2000). 7 items were used to measure CWBI. The sample items are, i) I have made fun of someone at work ii) I have said something hurtful to someone at work. In order to measure the CWBO, 12-items were used and sample items are, i) I intentionally worked slower than I could have worked, ii) taking property (including stationary items) from work without permission. To record the response, a 7-point Likert scale was used ranging from, 1-Never, 2-Rarely, on less than 10% of the occasions when I could have, 3-Occasionally, on around 30% of the occasions when I could have, 4-Sometimes, on around 50% of the occasions when I could have, 5-Frequently, on around 70% of the occasions when I could have, 6-Usually, on around 90% of the occasions when I could have, 7-Always/Daily.

Both measures of destructive behaviors (CWBI and CWBO) are reliable, valid and widely used in employability, human resource management and work behavior literature (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Miles, Borman, Spector, & Fox, 2002).

A complete list of questions used in this study can be seen in the appendix at the end of this paper.

*Control Variables:* To increase the reliability and robust result, we controlled several variables (Atinc, Simmering, & Kroll, 2012). Gender was used to control and coded as a dummy variable in the dataset (0=female, 1=male). Likewise, age also had a positive association and moderated the relationship with perceived employability (Van der Heijden, de Lange, Demerouti, & Van der Heijde, 2009). Continuous construct of age was taken as control to minimize the age effect. Controlling age is also important because in some economies, younger applicants are considered more attractive and perceive high employability (Ahmed, Andersson, & Hammarstedt, 2012). We controlled industry (FMCG=3 and telecom=1) and the ten units from where we collected data. Likewise, position level (managers=62 and non-managers=168) was coded as a dummy variable and controlled. Most importantly, we controlled industry, units and position level due to the labor market effect, given that the job market for certain industry, positions and units are highly demanded in the labor market (Berntson et al., 2006).

## **Data Analysis**

To test the proposed hypotheses, data was analyzed through PLS-SEM in SmartPLS (Richter, Cepeda, Roldán, & Ringle, 2015). PLS-SEM is different from ordinary least square regression as it hypothesizes that the variable(s) under investigation may not be observed variables (i.e., total scores) in regression while path models assume measured variables are valid and reliable (Rigdon,

2016). ). Therefore, we used composite correlation and reliability for our constructs since they are more effective than a factor based approach (Richter et al., 2015; Rigdon, 2016). The sample size was adequate to perform the PLS-SEM (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000; Gefen, Straub, & Rigdon, 2011). PLS-SEM through SmartPLS provides latent variable scores in composite (PLS-SEM) and further analyses overcome by mimicking the results of factor-based models (Bentler & Huang, 2014; Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015). Another reason for analyzing data through PLS-SEM is that it generates the latent variable scores that maximize the model's explanation and minimize the residuals of ordinary least square (Richter et al., 2015).

## **Results**

The proposed model has reflective indicators and evaluating the indicators reliability is first step. Generally an acceptable cut-off value of reliable indicator is 0.60 (Hair et al., 1998 p. 115), however some researchers argue that it should not fall below 0.70 (Chin et al., 2003). We retained all indicators above 0.60 for further analysis (see table 1). In the next step, assessment of constructs' internal consistency and reliability, which in PLS-SEM is evaluated by using Joreskog (1969) composite reliability  $P_c$ . The values between 0.60 to 0.70 are considered "acceptable" in exploratory research, whereas values between 0.70 to 0.95 are considered "satisfactory to good" (Hair et al., 2016). In this study, the composite reliability is above than 0.80 in every construct resulting into establishment of internal consistency of data as depicted in table 2. While some PLS researchers suggested "rho\_A" as appropriate indicator for composite reliability which is also mentioned in table 2 and confirms the results of  $P_c$  (Dijkstra et al., 2015a).

**Table 1: Constructs' indicator reliability**

	PE	Task Perf.	OCBO	OCBI	CWBO	CWBI
PE_01	0.876					
PE_02	0.861					
PE_03	0.802					
PE_04	0.909					
TP_05		0.680				
TP_06		0.714				
TP_07		0.762				
TP_08		0.917				
OCBO_09			0.667			
OCBO_10			0.809			
OCBO_11			0.789			
OCBO_12			0.611			
OCBI_13				0.626		
OCBI_14				0.693		
OCBI_15				0.597		
OCBI_16				0.738		
OCBI_17				0.716		
OCBI_18				0.765		
OCBI_19				0.728		
CWBO_20					0.749	
CWBO_21					0.826	
CWBO_22					0.688	
CWBO_23					0.851	
CWBO_24					0.818	
CWBO_25					0.853	
CWBO_26					0.900	
CWBO_27					0.874	
CWBO_28					0.859	
CWBO_29					0.825	
CWBO_30					0.855	
CWBO_31					0.891	
CWBI_32						0.823
CWBI_33						0.866
CWBI_34						0.902
CWBI_35						0.873
CWBI_36						0.940
CWBI_37						0.915
CWBI_38						0.864

**Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity**

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CWBI	0.955	1.04	0.961	0.781
CWBO	0.961	0.977	0.965	0.696
OCBI	0.845	0.832	0.868	0.486
OCBO	0.724	0.776	0.813	0.524
PE	0.889	0.961	0.921	0.745
Task_perf	0.822	1.154	0.855	0.599



In third step, the convergent validity of the reflectively measured constructs was examined, where the extent to which a construct converges in its indicators by items' variance was examined. The convergent validity was assessed by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all items associated with the construct (Hair et al., 2017). The AVE was calculated as the mean of the squared loadings for all indicators associated with a construct with a minimum value of 0.50 or above value to explain over 50% of the variance of its items (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Table 2 shows that all values of AVEs are above the standard criteria of 0.50 except the OCBI which has value of slightly below the threshold (0.486). Likewise, the overall internal consistency of each construct were measured through Cronbach's alpha and all the constructs have value above the threshold 0.70 (Hair et al., 2014).

In next step, we empirically tested that how much distinct one construct is from another in the path model through discriminant validity. Fornell et al. (1981) criterion is one of the conservative criterion and recommended measure for the discriminant validity, which compares each construct's AVE with the squared inter-construct correlation with all other constructs in the structural model. The guideline of Fornell and Larcker is that a construct should not shared variance with any other construct that is greater than its AVE value. Table 3 represents the values of discriminant validity according to the Fornell and Larcker guidelines and all constructs establish discriminant validity. An alternative approach to the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the examination of cross-loadings<sup>5</sup> is heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), based on the multi-trait-multimethod matrix (Henseler et al., 2015). We tested the discriminant validity with HTMT criterion and values were under prescribed limit (see table 4).

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<sup>5</sup> Cross-loading showed the similar results and established discriminant validity. Table may be asked from the corresponding author.

**Table 3. Fornell-Larker Criterion**

	Age	CWBI	CWBO	OCBI	OCBO	PE	Position	Task_perf
Age								
CWBI	-0.027	0.884						
CWBO	-0.040	0.888	0.834					
OCBI	0.128	0.115	0.092	0.697				
OCBO	0.041	-0.157	-0.182	0.458	0.724			
Perceived Employability	-0.019	0.139	0.131	0.153	0.116	0.863		
Position	-0.164	0.021	0.092	-0.022	-0.117	-0.106	1	
Task Performance	-0.039	-0.181	-0.271	0.343	0.385	0.113	-0.087	0.774

**Table 4. Constructs' discriminant Validity through HTMT Ratio**

	Age	CWBI	CWBO	OCBI	OCBO	PE	Position	Task_perf
Age								
CWBI	0.039							
CWBO	0.050	0.926						
OCBI	0.113	0.098	0.112					
OCBO	0.098	0.202	0.261	0.544				
PE	0.025	0.113	0.117	0.14	0.135			
Position	0.164	0.036	0.084	0.09	0.119	0.122		
Task_perf	0.059	0.247	0.358	0.49	0.565	0.112	0.071	

**Table 5. Collinearity Statistics (VIF\*)**

	Task_perf	CWBI	CWBO	OCBI	OCBO
Age	1.029	1.029	1.029	1.029	1.029
PE	1.013	1.013	1.013	1.013	1.013
Position	1.040	1.040	1.040	1.040	1.040

*Conservative value described less than 5.00 and other researchers agree the value should be below 10<sup>6</sup>.*

Due to an apparent proximity of behavioral variables used in the hypothesized model, we then went on to check the multicollinearity through the variance inflation factor (VIF). The VIF cut-off value should be below 5.00 (Hair et al., 2014). The highest VIF in our model was 1.22, hence no multicollinearity was observed in the model (see table 5).

For the model evaluation, we used standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Researchers have introduced the SRMR as a goodness of fit measure for PLS-SEM that can be used to avoid model misspecification (Henseler et al., 2014; Hu et al., 1999). The SRMR explains the difference between the observed and the implied correlation matrix of the model. Thus, it enables an assessment of the average magnitude of the discrepancies between observed and expected correlations as an absolute measure of the (model) fit criterion. A value below 0.08 (in conservative version) or 0.10 is considered a good fit (see Hu & Bentler, 1999). The hypothesized model's SRMR= 0.074 represents goodness of fit and it remained the same after bootstrapping.

The hypotheses generated from this study were then tested by examining the structural model through SmartPLS software. The structural model indicates the strength of the relationship

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<sup>6</sup> For detail reasoning on VIF rule 5 and 10 (see more about VIF O'brien (2007))

between independent and dependent variables through estimates of the path coefficients and t-value, including control variables (see figure 1) and the R-square value (variance explained by the independent variable).

In the next step the bootstrapping method was used and 5000 subsamples were randomly drawn (with replacement) from the original set of data to test the hypotheses. Using such a large subsample in bootstrapping ensures the stability of results.

Results showed that there was a positive but insignificant relationship between PE and in-role or task performance (t-value=0.633,  $\beta$ =0.103, p-value=0.384). Hypothesis 1 was not supported. While the relationship between PE and OCBI was positive and significant (t-value=2.125,  $\beta$ =0.157, p-value=0.03), supported second hypothesis. The result did not support our third hypothesis about the positive association between PE and OCBO (t-value=0.981,  $\beta$ =0.106, p-value=0.327). The fourth and fifth hypotheses were related to the dark side of PE. Results showed that a positive association existed between PE and CWBI (t-value= 2.1,  $\beta$ =0.142, p-value=0.03). Hypothesis 4 received supported. Likewise, PE and CWBO was positively and significantly associated (t-value= 2.152,  $\beta$ =0.142 p-value=0.03), therefore, supported hypothesis 5 (see figure 2). Table 6 shows the full results including the values of control variables.

Age and position level were used as controls during the analysis to increase the strength of the hypotheses. The larger sample (n=154) in our dataset comprised individuals aged between 26 to 35 years. Age was found to positively impact PE→OCBI (t-value=1.53,  $\beta$ = 0.134). Likewise, position level was also controlled to reduce the effect of managers and non-managers. The negative effect of position level was detected PE→OCBO (t-value=1.238,  $\beta$ =-0.102) and positive effect on PE→CWBO (t-value=1.632,  $\beta$ =0.104).

## Further Analysis

We used deleted indicator approach to investigate the cause which led to insignificant results of our two hypotheses (cite article: Reporting Structural Equation Modeling and Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results: A Review (2006) p. 327). We tested a modified model and deleted two indicators with highest p-value or lowest t-value among all in earlier tested model from task performance and OCBO. The results for PE → Task performance (t-value=1.682,  $\beta$ =-0.121, p-value=0.09) and PE → OCBO (t-value=1.684,  $\beta$ =-0.141, p-value=0.09) were marginally significant after bootstrapping while the whole model remained the same<sup>7</sup> (see figure 3). We avoided the single-indicator approach in model because it does not allow to freely estimate the error variance, as the construct contains just one empirical entity (the variance of the indicator).

## Discussion

The present study reveals a broader picture of the significant behavioral outcomes of PE (particularly important from employers' perspective) as previous studies in the behavioral domain are either uncommon or muddled in terms of clarity (Philippaers et al., 2016). Our results related to PE → task performance and PE → OCBO were not significantly related. A further probe into this relationship has unveiled that employable workers care those core-tasks that are expected from them and most probably not focus other core-tasks mention in job description. One plausible reason is employable individuals has potential to craft their job according to demand (Brenninkmeijer et al., 2015) and expand their job boundaries with the aim to overcome task requirements (Wrzesniewski et al., 2001). We have two theoretical arguments; first, in line with the conservation resource theory, employable workers accumulate further resources (such as human and social capital) to utilize for future situations (Hobfoll, 1989; Shaffer et al., 2011).

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<sup>7</sup> Model was remain good fit with SRMR=0.066. Remaining results didn't differ from the estimated model's results.

**Table 6. Total Effect and Confidence interval bias corrected**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P-values	Bias	2.5%	97.5%
PE → Task Per.	0.103	0.089	0.119	0.870	0.384 <sup>ns</sup>	-0.014	-0.196	0.286
PE → OCBI	0.157	0.169	0.074	2.125	0.034*	0.011	-0.126	0.256
PE → OCBO	0.106	0.123	0.108	0.981	0.327 <sup>ns</sup>	0.017	-0.223	0.252
PE → CWBI	0.142	0.14	0.068	2.100	0.036*	-0.002	-0.093	0.226
PE → CWBO	0.142	0.148	0.066	2.152	0.031*	0.006	-0.143	0.223
<i>Control Variables</i>								
Age → Task Per.	-0.051	-0.066	0.080	0.633	0.527	-0.015	-0.187	0.126
Age → OCBI	0.134	0.132	0.088	1.530	0.126	-0.002	-0.113	0.263
Age → OCBO	0.026	0.008	0.109	0.239	0.811	-0.018	-0.210	0.197
Age → CWBI	-0.019	-0.021	0.081	0.231	0.817	-0.002	-0.166	0.146
Age → CWBO	-0.020	-0.021	0.084	0.235	0.814	-0.001	-0.180	0.141
Position → Task Per.	-0.084	-0.082	0.095	0.886	0.376	0.002	-0.208	0.182
Position → OCBI	0.017	0.023	0.104	0.163	0.871	0.006	-0.201	0.214
Position → OCBO	-0.102	-0.097	0.082	1.238	0.216	0.005	-0.227	0.102
Position → CWBI	0.033	0.032	0.074	0.451	0.652	-0.001	-0.125	0.153
Position → CWBO	0.104	0.105	0.064	1.623	0.105	0.002	-0.060	0.202

\*<0.01 to 0.05, ns = not significant

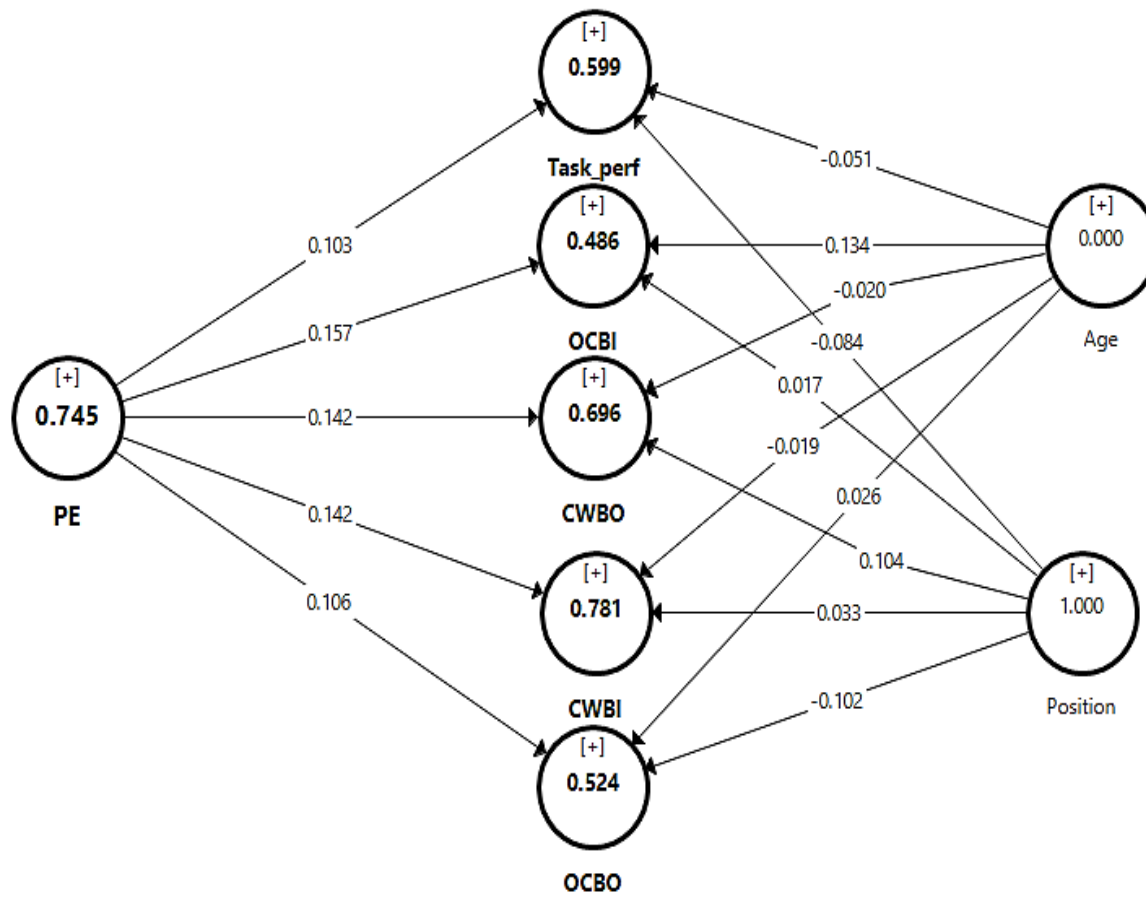


Figure 1: Structural model with AVE and strength of relationship without bootstrapping



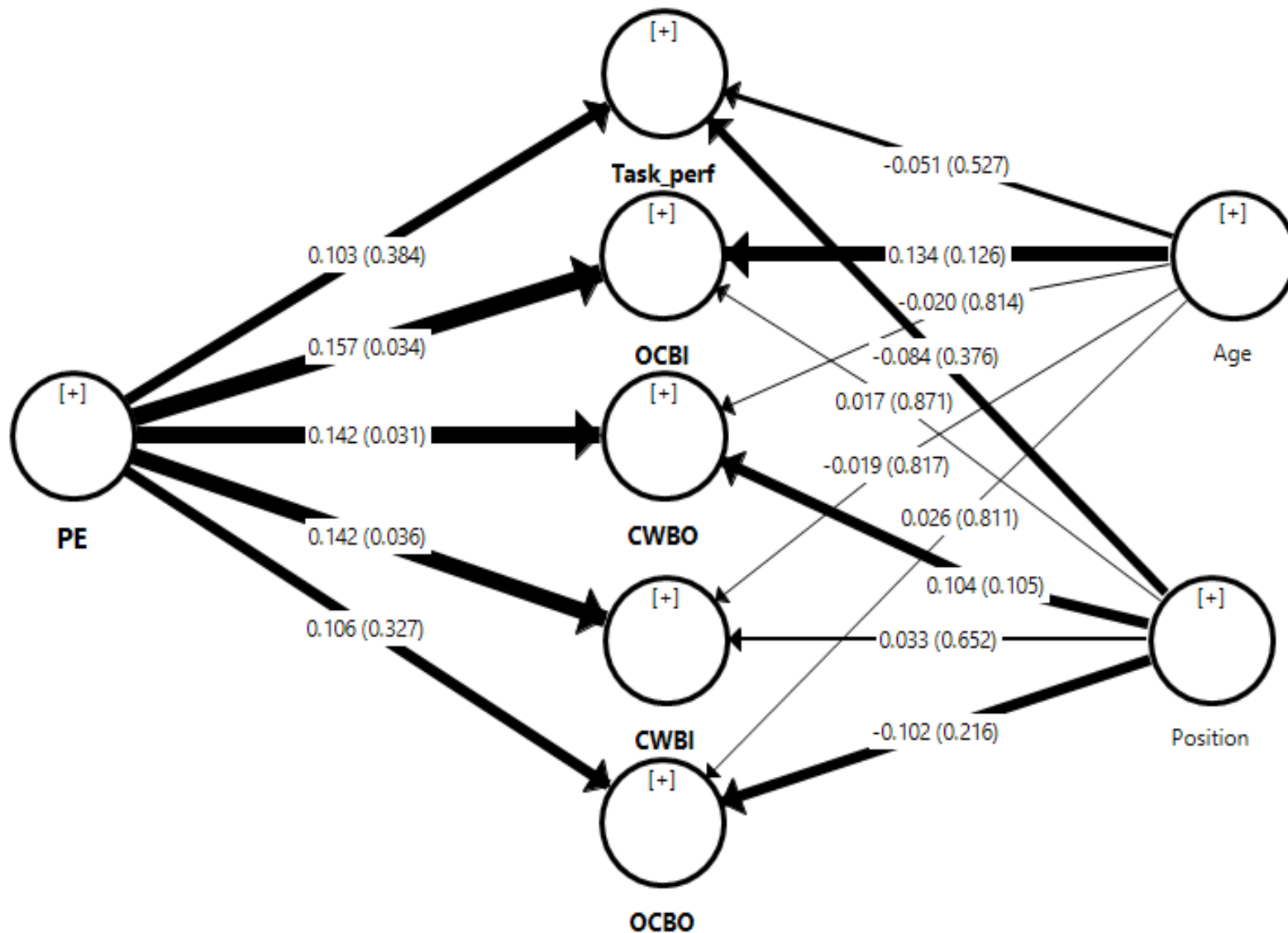


Figure 2: Structural model after bootstrapping and strength of relationship

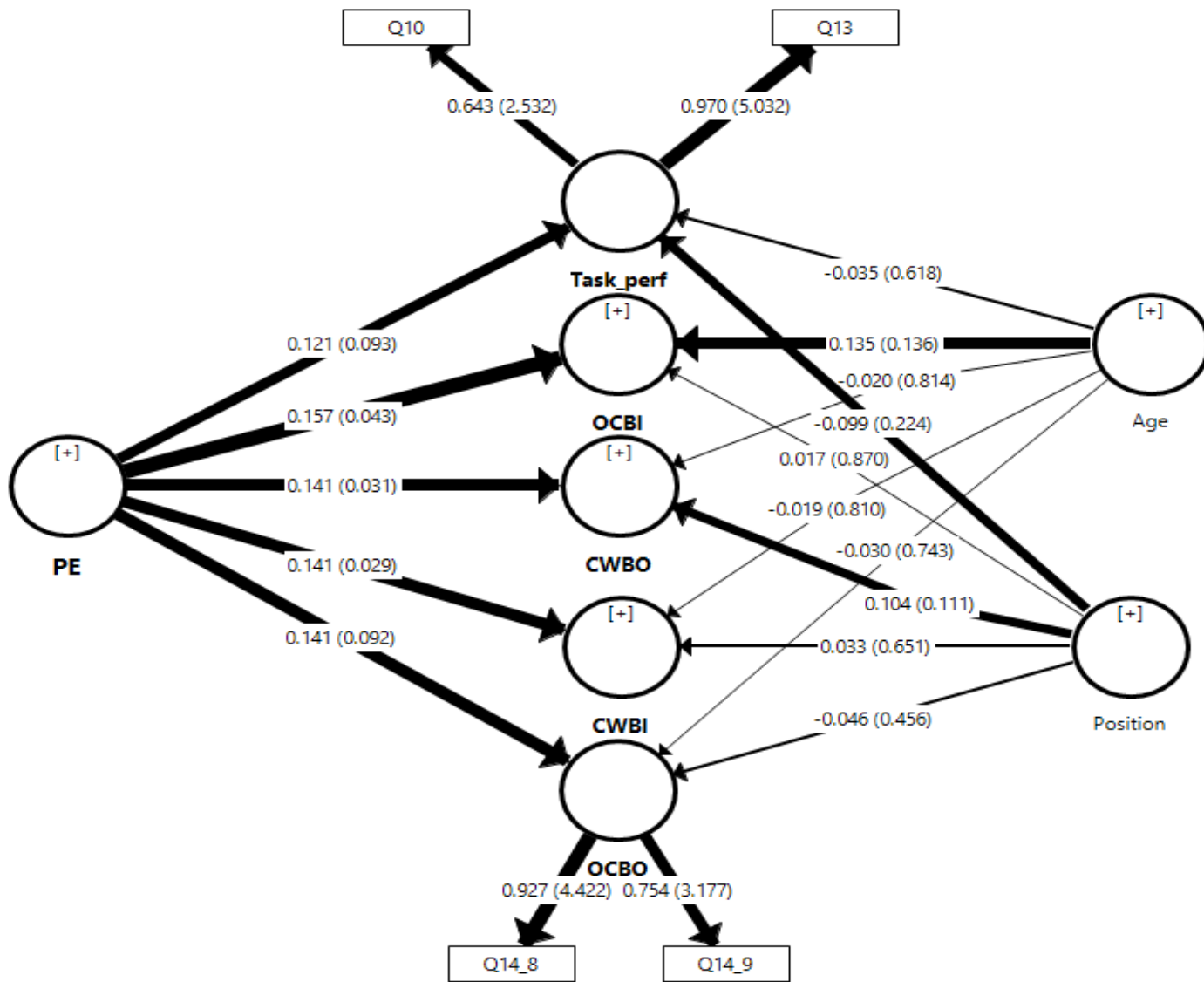


Figure 3: Modified structural model after deleted indicator bootstrapping and strength of relationship

They already possess rich job resources that help them to craft their jobs and expand job boundaries. Second, from a human capital view (Becker, 1993), employable workers invest their skills at workplace for new learning to get a number of benefits (such as promotion) that may outweigh the investment (Shamsudin et al., 2016).

The third hypothesis results were similar with first hypothesis, where all indicators were not significantly associated with OCBO. Further investigation has disclosed that PE was significantly related to OCBO with two indicators (attendance above the norm and advance leave notice). Based on these results, and in light of previous studies conducted in developed countries, we infer that it could be a potential outcome of culture. For example, previous studies have pointed to PE being positively influenced by task performance and helping behavior in Romanian context (De Cuyper et al., 2014) but the same relationship found no association in the Belgian context (Philippaers et al., 2016). The South-Asian context is distinct from the structural and cultural terms of the West which helps to understand the behavior of employable workers in developing countries like Pakistan. In contrast with earlier studies conducted in developed countries, the present study demonstrates that workers with PE are more concerned to fulfill the expected tasks and focus on job aesthetics to stand out among other workers, such as maintaining attendance above the norm. We uphold that workers in Pakistan may be more prone to using impression management behavior, due to high job insecurity and intense competition in the labor market. Hofstede (1984) identified the Pakistani society as collectivist with a high power distance. We share this opinion as power distance is one of the core characteristics of the organizational systems which influence the choice of impression management strategies (Khilji et al., 2010). Furthermore, as outlined by Khilji and colleagues, an organization is governed by managerial principles designed, inter alia, to enhance the power position of management. It creates norms, calling on the individual to show obedience

and loyalty to superiors. In this study, we have pinpointed the organizational gaps in Pakistan's organizations due to the power distance. Despite the rapid economic growth and significant transformation underway in Pakistan's work environment (e.g. structural change and adoption of modern management practices), traditional formalities and a pattern of dependence on elders and peers are still deeply ingrained in society (Khilji, 2004), thus rendering a replication of PE results, particularly behavioral outcomes, difficult in other societies. These findings contribute to the literature and address the researchers' concern about the implications of PE and how it is experienced by employable workers in developing economy with no social protection and high job insecurity (Silla et al., 2009). The replication of these results might be possible among countries with a similar culture to Pakistan (characterized by high power distance and job insecurity with no social support), however it would be interesting to investigate further with structural and cultural norms.

Most importantly, the present study (fourth and fifth hypotheses) uncovers the dark side of PE for the first time and responds to the recent calls of research (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2016). It should be stressed that PE provides a sense of power, due to the extended job resources employees may use power to vent frustration, ranging from lashing out at a co-worker to damaging the organization's property. Career control and a better bargaining/negotiation position through PE may be a potential cause of caring less about the norms and of the likelihood of engaging in destructive behavior (organization politics and bullying) (De Cuyper et al., 2009).

As far as the labor market and availability of jobs are concerned, Pakistan's economy has a limited supply of jobs with a high availability of skilled workers (Labour Force Survey, 2015). Our results provide mainly two behavioral implications; first, due to limited economic opportunities, workers, including the highly employable, maintain strategic behavior to survive in the labor market until a

new opportunity arises. Studies also suggest that the encompassing nature of the socioeconomic and political milieu leads to more similarity in strategic behaviors across sub-cultural and cultural groups (Pandey, 1986). Second, due to limited opportunities, they are more likely to engage in destructive behaviors and vent their frustration in the workplace through CWBI and CWBO. Economies such as Pakistan where job opportunities are low and supply of manpower is high and structural such as labor laws are not properly implemented send signal to existing employees a feeling of job insecurity. According to De Cuyper et al. (2014), felt job insecurity is one of the key reasons behind the involvement of employable workers in malfunctioning and norm-violation. The present study validates the mechanism discussed by De Cuyper et al. (2014) behind the malfunctioning and destructive behavior of workers with PE. In light of the social exchange process, destructive behavior may be a reaction of employable workers as a sign of discontent (see more, De Cuyper et al., 2014).

The present study contributes in various ways to the literature: First, it investigates and strengthens the behavioral outcomes of PE which are at an initial level of debate or have rarely been studied in the literature to date. Second, it examines the positive notion of PE from a behavioral perspective. Overall, the present study supports the positive performance of employable workers within organization, particularly OCBI, which has been understudied in previous research (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2016). Third, most importantly, it challenges the overall positive impression of PE and explores the dark side of PE where employable workers have a higher likelihood of engaging in destructive behavior. It is the first study that validates the theoretical arguments regarding the dark side of PE and answers the recently raised question in literature, mainly whether PE entails a dark side such as destructive behavior (Philippaers et al., 2016). Fourth, we analyzed the overall (positive and destructive) behavioral outcomes of PE in a

context of developing countries (South-Asian), thus providing further insight and reducing the asymmetry. The results in different contexts, where high job insecurity and no social support exist, serve to shed light upon PE in economies other than Europe and the US (Ngo et al., 2017). All four points significantly and equally contribute to the literature, however by uncovering the dark side of PE, provides a new direction and motivation for future researchers. Furthermore, this study aids in taking the debate on (positive and negative) behavioral outcomes of PE to the next level, which is something that has been lacking in the behavioral stream.

### **Practical and Policy Implications**

Employable workers have always been considered key players and prime assets for organizations due to their high productivity skills. Therefore, organizations spend resources for their retention. In response to the recent call of research, the present study finds that PE is a double-edged sword that has not only positive but also negative behavioral outcomes. Our results indicate that employees with PE generally focus on expected tasks meaning that sometimes supervisors compromise on formal job descriptions or focus on a limited portion of formally assigned duties. Therefore, employees may limit their efforts to expected duties or key tasks focusing on their supervisor's order. This practice encourages employees to use impression management behavior that hinders the core-responsibilities of job description. De Cuyper et al. (2010) have emphasized that employees use impression management to convince the existing employer of their value in the organization. Therefore, significant weightage of core-tasks in performance appraisal could impel employees to fulfill the formal job requirements.

The present study suggests that not only a code of conduct but also a fair reward policy and performance appraisal may potentially help to decrease destructive behavior. On the macro level,

a strong economic policy with fair job opportunities helps employable workers to meet their financial and career aspirations. To promote positive behavior in the workplace and in society, a fair reward policy and healthy economic steps in the labor market bring benefits for both organizations and employees (such as incorporate employability as part of social policy). Additionally, scholars have identified that high employable workers have stronger reaction to job insecurity with a higher intention to leave, and are less loyal and participative in organizations (Sverke et al., 2010). Therefore, organizations operating in developing economies where the job market is saturated should take extra measures. For example, their retention policy must align with a code of conduct to counter the destructive behaviors of employable workers. Moreover, researchers further highlighted that employees with lower PE are more loyal and committed to employers (Philippaers et al., 2016). While drafting training policy, professionals should not ignore the employees with lower PE as less employable workers invest their remaining resources in order to obtain other resources that will ultimately improve their relationship with their existing employer. A customized training module must address the needs of employees with lower PE as they could also be regarded as a backup of highly employable workers upon leaving.

### **Limitations and Future Research Direction**

As is the case with all research, the present study also has some limitations and the results should be interpreted with caution. First, the sample size and its collection from one country could be a potential limitation for generalizability in other economies. Cases like Pakistan exist in other countries (e.g. India, Taiwan) where collectivist societies with a high power distance and developing economies may be observed. Our assertion is that in such power distances and collective societies, employees may be prone to impression management. Future researchers

should test impression management behavior as a mediator to better understanding the behavioral mechanism of employees with PE. We tested positive and destructive behavior in broad terms (IRB, OCBI/O and CWBI/O). In today's economy where organizations encourage creative and innovative behavior, it would be an interesting line of research to test other positive behaviors (e.g. creativity and innovative behavior) that how much creativity and innovation employable workers bring at workplace? Our sample size meets the requirements of PLS-SEM (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995; Gefen et al., 2000; Gefen et al., 2011; Joseph F. Hair et al., 2014) however we used subjective self-reported measures to understand work behaviors therefore, consistency motif or effect and social desirability could possibly exist (see more, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). We encourage future researchers to investigate the nexus between PE and behavior with diary method and longitudinal design. An objective measure of in-role and extra-role behavior (with supervisor's response or peer-ratings) with a larger sample size from multiple regions or cross cultural investigation may offer more insight and generalizability.

Previous studies suggested that employees with PE have other job opportunities that preempt to norm-violation even if their psychological contract violates because they can find job elsewhere (De Cuyper et al., 2014). However, this study demonstrates that employable workers may engage in destructive behavior due to saturated job market or limited opportunities in internal/external market. Employable may engage incivility (CWBI or CWBO) to vent their frustration cause by either labor market or unfair treatment within organization. From a policy making perspective, it is important to understand which position level engages more with productive or counterproductive work behavior. Our small sample of managers in the dataset put statistical constraints on the multi-group analysis therefore, drawing inferences according to the position level (managers vs. non-managers) is difficult. It would be an interesting line of research to



understand the work behaviors of employable workers according to the position levels. This is the first study to respond to the call of research on the dark side of PE and to challenge the overall positive side of PE. Therefore, further investigation is important to understand the nexus between PE and work behaviors due to well-established behavioral link with productivity and organizational effectiveness.

### **Conclusion**

Organizations invest in human capital that leads to a return in the form of higher productivity and to counter employees' destructive behavior. The present study unveils the behavioral outcomes of PE and challenges the current overall positive impression of PE. We observed that PE is not entirely positive but also has negative consequences for organizations. Although the debate on the dark side of PE, is still at early phase, the present study validates the researchers concerns regarding the negative behavioral outcomes of PE. Indeed, employable workers possess extra job resources that could be beneficial to meet the strategic organizational goals, but on the other hand they could also be remorseless. In the light of the present study's findings, we conclude that PE is a double-edged sword and organizations need to treat employable workers carefully.

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## Appendix

### *In-role / Task Performance*

**7-points scale;** 1-Never, 2-Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances when I could have, 3-Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have, 4-Sometimes, in about 50% of the chances when I could have 5-Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have 6-Usually, in about 90% of the chances I could have, 7-Every time

1. I adequately complete assigned duties.
2. I fulfill responsibilities specified in my job description.
3. I perform tasks that are expected of me.
4. I meet formal performance requirements of the job.

In-role / task performance and organizational citizenship behavior measure of Williams and Anderson (1991) that has also used in recent study (López Bohle, Bal, Jansen, Leiva, & Alonso, 2016).

### **Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

1. I help others who have been absent. (OCBI)
2. I helps others who have heavy workloads. (OCBI)
3. I assist supervisor with his/her work (when not asked). (OCBI)
4. I takes time to listen to co-workers' problems and worries. (OCBI)
5. I go out of way to help new employees. (OCBI)
6. I take a personal interest in other employees. (OCBI)
7. I pass along information to co-workers. (OCBI)
8. I attendance at work is above the norm. (OCBO)
9. I give advance notice when unable to come to work. (OCBO)
10. I take undeserved work breaks. (R)
11. I great deal of time spent with personal phone conversations. (R)
12. I complain about insignificant things at work. (R)
13. I conserve and protects organizational property. (OCBO)
14. I adheres to informal rules devised to maintain order. (OCBO)

### **Perceived Employability**

Measures adapted from De Cuyper et al. (2014) and has already been used in other employability studies (Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, Witte, & Alarco, 2008; Guest, Isaksson, & De Witte, 2010).

**7-points scale 1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)**

1. I am confident that I could quickly get another job.
2. I could easily find another job, if I wanted to.
3. I am optimistic that I would find another job, if I looked for one.
4. I will easily find another job if I lose this job.

### **Counterproductive work behavior (19-items)**

**7-points scale;** 1-Never, 2-Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances when I could have, 3-Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have, 4-Sometimes, in about 50% of the



chances when I could have 5-Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have 6-Usually, in about 90% of the chances I could have, 7-Every time / Daily

Workplace deviance measure of Bennett and Robinson (2000) has widely used in employability, human resource management and work behavior literature (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Miles, Borman, Spector, & Fox, 2002).

How much you engaged in the following acts:

1. intentionally worked slower than you could have worked
2. taking property (including stationary items) from work without permission
3. spend too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working
4. falsified a receipt to get reimbursed for money that you have spent on business expense
5. taken an additional or longer breaks than is acceptable at your workplace
6. come in late to work without permission
7. littered your work environment
8. neglected to follow your boss instructions
9. discussed company's confidential information with an unauthorized person
10. used of cigarette or other drugs on the job
11. put little effort into your work
12. dragged out work into overtime
13. made fun of someone at work (CWBI)
14. said something hurtful at someone at work (CWBI)
15. played a mean prank at someone at work (CWBI)
16. made ethnic, religious or racial remark at work (CWBI)
17. cursed at someone at work (CWBI)
18. act rudely toward someone at work (CWBI)
19. publicly embarrassed someone at work (CWBI)

## **Overall discussion**

This dissertation addresses the importance of PE in meso and micro perspective. The first study helps to understand the depth of literature and summarize three streams of literature (occupational health, career and performance) from work behavioural standpoint. Surprisingly, we found that not much studies available in literature that address the employees' behaviour in organizational paradigm. However, the first study is line with the suggested gap of Bernston (2008) that implication of PE on individuals' work behaviors is a promising line of research and help to understand the work behaviors (p. 57). We used a theoretical (review) approach to understand the employability impact on micro level and highlighted the individualized behavior within organization keeping in view of the frequent variations and escalating unpredictability of labor market where behavior is vital aspect of organizational point of view. Therefore, this study provides an exhaustive summary of already explored relationships in scattered literature to extend the behavioral debate. However, it encompasses the aspect of micro level PE and aligns with the psycho-social approach, person-centered construct (Fugate et al., 2004; Vanhercke et al., 2014) and highlights the behavioral aspects that has not explored much in literature (Fugate et al., 2008). In first study, we identified the important areas where further work is needed to improve the employees' behaviour while earlier studies focused employability as policy debate (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011). The third study validates the three important points derived from first study and current literature. First, it investigates the behavioral implications of PE which are currently in the early stages of debate and have rarely been studied in the literature. Second, it examines the positive notion of PE from a behavioral perspective and confirms rare findings within the context of developing economies (De Cuyper et al., 2009; De Cuyper et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2016). Third, it challenges the current positive impression of PE and explores its dark side (Philippaers et

al., 2016). Additionally, it draws on evidence from developing economies in order to more fully grasp the dynamics of PE in economies beyond the scope of Europe (Ngo et al., 2017) as PE has largely been addressed in western context and replication of existing findings may not be suitable (Ngo et al., 2017; De Cuyper et al., 2009) due to difference in social protection and labour market regulations (Fields, 2011).

The second study touches the notion of graduates' perceived employability and respond the recent call of literature. Overall the second study adds to the debate on perceived employability's predictors and outcomes, providing an integrated picture of the relationship among graduate employability, ESCs and career satisfaction. Firstly, it extends the limited theoretical and empirical evidence on individual competencies and perceived employability, considering the concepts of employability and employability skills (which are often blurred in the literature) as distinct dimensions, and identifying those emotional and social competencies that enhance the employability self-perception in graduates. Secondly, by testing career satisfaction in relation to perceived employability, this study addresses the theoretical claim that employability strengthens career success (Forrier et al., 2003; Hall, 2002; Heijde et al., 2006). Finally, third study sheds new light on the mediating role of perceived employability.

From the theoretical standpoint, this dissertation extends majorly the human capital theory (Becker, 1964) by pointing out that individuals invest their resource such as time, money and intellectual abilities to get return such as financial and social recognition. From the graduates' perspective, we highlighted that emotional and social competencies are key factors as investment and in return they get better career prospects and satisfaction through employability. In the organizational perspective, we highlighted that organizations invest in human and in return they expect high performance and productivity. While performance is directly linked with behavior.

Organizations take employable workers as key resource while studies in this dissertation highlighted that employability is not overall positive but also have negative behavioral consequences.

### **Overall Thesis Conclusion**

This dissertation emphasizes the role of employability in the realm of behavior with the aims to highlight and understand the concept and debate of perceived employability in literature (study 1), to stress the importance of perceived employability at the entry level by illuminating behavioral competencies as predictors and career satisfaction as an outcome of graduate employability (study 2). Whereas study 3 indicates the two aspects of perceived employability: First, the positive behavioral outcomes such as in-role and extra-role behavior. Second, the dark side of employability that employable workers may negatively behave at workplace.

All the three studies equally contribute to the theory. For instance, first and third study mainly extend the social exchange theory and norm of reciprocity that employable workers are high in exchange relationship. They reciprocate with positive behavior that directly contribute directly to organizational productivity. At the same time, in case of unfair treatment, compel employees reciprocate with destructive behavior with revenge motives and/or to vent frustration. Second paper extends the human capital theory by highlighting behavioral competencies, employability and career satisfaction as human capital elements. The study found that employees invest their time and money to update their knowledge and skills that develop perception of being employable and in return employees receive career satisfaction. The findings and identified components are aligned with the core assumption of human capital (investment-return).

Furthermore, this thesis advanced the concept of perceived employability from the policy and managerial view point. It discussed the behavior of employable workers in-depth that is building

block to explore further aspects. Second overall thesis provides guidance on all three levels (individual, organizational and national). For individuals, it motivates to invest in behavioral competencies to strengthen their position in the labor market and stay competitive. For organizations, it helps to identify why employable behave in a positive and negative way and how such behaviors can be countered. Additionally, it illuminates the role of career satisfaction that is important for productivity and employees to stay with the organization. In this way, organizations could take necessary steps by helping employees in their employability through trainings and educational opportunities. For the policy makers this thesis provides important guidelines, particularly for higher education institutes to incorporate the behavioral competencies keeping in view of the dynamic labor market and rapidly changing technology. Further, employability should be a part of national social policy because the employable workforce is a critical factor to shape the knowledge driven economy.

Concluding all three studies conducted with different research designs and samples, a society win is possible with employability on all three levels: micro (individuals must equip themselves with updated knowledge and skills to remain competitive in labour market and fulfill their career aspirations), meso (first, educational institutions and policy makers should play their roles in full spirit to develop the necessary competencies required in job market. Second, organizations should carefully deal with the employable individuals because they may behavior negatively which can cause loss); macro (knowledge driven economy is key to success of every nation which cannot be achieved without employable humans). Indeed, this dissertation helps individuals, organizations and national policymakers but there are still many aspects related to employability needed to reveal.