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Research Article

Can Emotional Intelligence, Self-Regulation and Cognitive Styles of College Students Predict Job Placement?

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Abstract

The present study aims to explore whether emotional intelligence, self-regulation and cognitive style (i.e., rational style and intuitive style) can predict job placement. A sample of 371 participants were considered for analysis which consisted of 303 engineering students (81.6 %) and 68 management students (18.4%) in those 176 were males (47.4%) and 195 were females (52.6%) with Mean age = 21.29 and *SD* = 0.95 selected from Salem and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu state in India. The biserial correlation analysis showed that emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style and intuitive style have significant positive correlations with job placement. Further, binary logistic regression showed emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style, and intuitive style are significant predictors of job placement. The mediation analysis showed a significant indirect effect of emotional intelligence on job placement through rational style and self-regulation. Further, the direct effect of emotional intelligence on job placement in the presence of rational style and self-regulation was also found significant. This study has practical implications for colleges, organizations, employment counsellors and job placement trainers who are seeking to improve aspirant's placement outcomes. Moreover, the study adds theoretical value to the existing literature.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; Self-regulation; Rational style; Intuitive style; Job placement.

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The transition from a structured educational environment to a dynamic workplace can be exhilarating as well as daunting for many undergraduate students as it involves a new set of challenges and opportunities. This movement is critical and it is necessary to be equipped with employability skills to fit into the ever-changing world of the labour market. Job placement refers to the process of connecting individuals seeking employment opportunities with those organizations or companies by matching the skillsets of the individuals with the skill requirements of the organizations. Nowadays, educational institutions facilitate the job placement process by connecting their students to the respective recruiting organizations. This process is carried out during the on-campus recruitment. On-campus recruitment is when an educational institution brings companies to interview and hire their students during their final year of under or post-graduation. The placement training has been provided to the students by the colleges themselves based on the skill requirements of the organizations. This training enhances techinal, analytical, interpersonal and interview skills of the students.

Securing a job is based on the individual's effort to learn the skillsets necessary to present themselves as potential candidates for a job interview. Because, there are psychological difference between those securing a job and those who are not. Deciu (2021) claimes that various psychological factors play a significant part in the job placement and recruitment of suitable candidates, it's a process that involves the interaction of human beings.

Caldwell and Burger (1998) highlighted that the job search and interview process were influenced by personality factors such as openness, conscientiousness (Stremersch et al., 2021) and extraversion. Proactiveness (Brown et al., 2006), social support (Hendricks, 2014) and extra-curricular activities (Chia, 2005) were more likely to play a crucial role in undergraduate students' interpersonal communication, leadership skills, creative thinking and self-promotion and have a direct effect on the employability of graduating college students. The job placement was further influenced by career related social support (Xiong et al., 2025), networking behaviour (Le & Lin 2023) and personality (Brown et al., 2006; Van den He et al., 2020). Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in interview and job placement among undergraduate students (Chia, 2005).

Emotional Intelligence

The ability-based model of emotional intelligence is an expansion of information processing theories of intelligence (Salovey & Mayer 1990), adaptive cognitive abilities can be categorized into three groups. The first category involves the expression and appraisal of one's own and others' emotions. The second category pertains to the regulation of emotions, both one's own and those of others. The third category focuses on the utilization of emotions, which includes skills such as flexible planning and motivation. Research indicates that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to have stronger social, familial, and interpersonal relationships (Agu & Nwankwo, 2019). They are also perceived more positively by others, achieve better academically, succeed more in their professional lives, and experience greater psychological well-being (Mayer et al., 2008). Instead, it involves the ability to manage negative emotions like anger, impulsivity, and anxiety (Sunil & Rooprai, 2009). Emotional intelligence also encompasses understanding others' feelings, self-awareness, sensitivity, perseverance in the face of frustration, and self-motivation (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

According to Chia (2005) emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in the interview and job placement for undergraduate students. The job-placed students tend to have a higher level of emotional intelligence than job-unplaced college students (Singh 2014). Individuals who exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence, particularly in empathy, mood regulation, and self-presentation, gain a competitive edge during job assessments and interviews (Volkodav, 2017). Additionally, possessing positive affective traits enhances job seekers' prospects (Burger & Caldwell, 2000; Pelt et al., 2018). Control over intrapersonal emotions and self-motivation are crucial qualities for individuals learning new employability skills. Contemporary recruiters increasingly recognize the importance of emotional intelligence alongside technical competencies and academic qualifications in hiring decisions (Livingston, 2017). Emotional intelligence fosters the ability to learn new skills, communicate effectively with colleagues, understand differing perspectives, and respond adeptly. Strong interpersonal skills facilitate positive social relationships and bolster teamwork, and collaboration, crucial for workplace success (Lima & Quevedo-Silva, 2020).

Emotional intelligence enhances essential competencies such as communication, adaptability, teamwork (Brown et al., 2017) and stress management (Ramesar et al., 2009). These skills are increasingly prioritized by employers during recruitment processes. Candidates with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to navigate interviews, group discussions, and workplace interactions (Singh, 2014), thereby improving their chances of securing employment. Thus, examining the role of emotional intelligence in job placement provides valuable insights into the personal attributes that contribute to career

success. Further, self-regulation and emotional intelligence show a significant positive correlation with one another (Siregar et al., 2018; Sadri & Janani, 2015).

Self-regulation

According to APA, self-regulation denotes the ability to regulate one's behaviour through self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement in pursuit of a goal. It represents a self-regulated process that transforms individuals' mental capabilities into task-oriented skills, aiding in the management, organization, and transformation of their thoughts into actionable skills (Zimmerman, 2001). Individuals with strong self-regulatory skills can effectively control, manage, organize, and direct their behaviour to accomplish tasks as needed (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012). The dimensions of self-regulation examined in this study include goal attainment (the process of maintaining progress toward personal goals), goal setting (the capacity to plan and establish clear objectives for career success), proactiveness (the ability to take proactive steps to learn from experiences, rectify mistakes, and actively seek opportunities for change), mindfulness (the skill of sustaining mindful awareness and determination to achieve goals), and adjustment (the process of adapting based on experiences and errors to overcome challenges encountered in pursuit of goals (Chen & Lin, 2018).

Self-regulatory skills enhance job seeker's and graduate's feelings of efficacy, leading to increased motivation, effort, and perseverance (Mrazek et al., 2018). Moreover, self-regulation plays a pivotal role in goal pursuit and skill acquisition for job placement. Goal-oriented job seekers maintain higher levels of job search intensity (Veiga & Turban, 2014), while perseverance and consistent efforts positively impact learning and job search progress (Liu et al., 2014). Past studies have demonstrated self-regulation's mediating role between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions (Nawaz et al., 2020). Individuals with well-developed self-regulatory skills demonstrate greater emotional control (Koole et al., 2011), task persistence and goal achievement (Zusho & Edwards, 2011) which are critical for job placement in dynamic job market. Furthermore, these individuals tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation (Werner & Milyavskaya, 2019), resilience (Nota et al., 2004) and adaptability (Merino Tejedor et al., 2016), traits that are highly valued by employers during recruitment and selection processes. Cognitive styles are positively correlated with self-regulation (Das, 2015) and emotional intelligence (Margret & Lavanya 2017; Korkman & Tekel 2020).

Cognitive Styles

Cognitive styles are understood as enduring attitudes, preferences, or ingrained strategies that influence how individuals typically perceive, recall, reason, and solve problems

(Messick, 1984). It encompasses the individual difference in how people learn, think, perceive, interpret, organize, solve problems, and interact with others and it primarily focuses on the form rather than the content of activities (Witkin et al., 1977). Within behavioural and medical sciences, there's been extensive discussion regarding a dual perspective on information processing. One viewpoint suggests that individuals are logical, goal-oriented thinkers with analytical behaviour, while the other viewpoint proposes that people are intuitive, subjective, and non-logical (Taggart & Valenzi, 1990). Each individual tends to have a preference for processing information, leaning towards either a rational or intuitive style, and some individuals may utilize both styles (Torrance et al., 1984). The human information processing metaphor (Taggart & Valenzi, 1990) has been deemed suitable for analyzing students' cognitive styles. It delineates three rational styles - planning, analysis, and control - alongside three intuitive styles - insight, sharing, and vision (Taggart & Valenzi, 1990). These two information processing styles are integral to decision-making and reasoning among students and can significantly impact their job placement. Cognitive style plays a crucial role in learning specific skills that are highly relevant for securing employment.

Preferences for different cognitive styles, especially rational or intuitive can have varying effects on job placement outcomes due to the differing demands of recruitment processes and workplace expectations. Individuals with a rational cognitive style, who favour analytical thinking, logical reasoning, and structured problem-solving (Akinci & Sadler,2013), may be better equipped to navigate formal selection processes such as aptitude tests, structured interviews, and case-based assessments commonly used in recruitment (Newell, 2005). Their methodical approach aligns with employers' expectations for task planning, evidence-based decision-making, and goal-oriented performance, making them appear more competent and prepared. In contrast, individuals who prefer an intuitive cognitive style rely on affective cues, instinct, and rapid judgment (Shiloh et al., 2002). This style can be advantageous in roles or situations that require creativity, quick decision-making under uncertainty, or interpersonal sensitivity (Akinci & Sadler., 2013). However, during structured placement processes especially in technical or managerial roles intuitive thinking may not be as easily demonstrated or valued by recruiters, potentially diminishing its impact on placement success. Therefore, the effect of a preferred cognitive style on job placement is likely context-dependent, influenced by both the nature of the recruitment process and the alignment between the individual’s cognitive strengths and the expectations of the job role.

Recruitment and job interviews involve intricate interactions laden with emotion and cognition (Deciu, 2021). These interactions typically occur through face-to-face interviews, behaviour-based assessments, and situational judgment tests. Exploring the relationship

between cognitive styles and emotional intelligence could shed light on how thought processes and emotions intersect. Individuals with heightened emotional awareness can effectively utilize this information for problem-solving, potentially making them more adaptable in complex problem-solving tasks and interpersonal situations (Austin et al., 2005).

Securing the right job necessitates adept emotional control, goal-oriented behaviour, and cognitive adaptability (Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). Emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and cognitive styles could significantly influence an individual's ability to adapt to their goals and secure job placement. While existing literature has established the interconnectedness between these constructs and job placement, further inquiry can provide deeper insights.

Significance of the study

The study intends to shed light on the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and cognitive styles (i.e., rational style and intuitive style) with job placement among college students. Past literature established the influence of emotional intelligence on job placement (Chia, 2005; Singh, 2014) but failed to discuss the influence of self-regulation and cognitive style on the job placement of college students. In addition to that, how cognitive styles and self-regulation serially mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and job placement remains unknown. Based on the theoretical argumentation presented above, we propose that:

H1. a-d. Job placement will be related to (a) emotional intelligence (b) self-regulation (c) rational style and (d) intuitive style

H2. a-b. The relationship between emotional intelligence and job placement will be serially mediated through (a) self-regulation (b) cognitive styles

H3. a-d. Job placement of college students will be predicted by (a) emotional intelligence (b) self-regulation (c) rational style and (d) intuitive style

Proposed research model

The aforementioned literature indicates emotional intelligence, self-regulation, cognitive styles and job placement are interconnected. The effect of emotional intelligence on job placement will be strengthened and serially mediated through self-regulation and cognitive styles. Both rational and intuitive cognitive styles are expected to positively influence job placement outcome due to their distinct yet complementary contributions to the recruitment process. Rational thinking facilitates systematic analysis, problem-solving, and structured decision-making (Epstein et al., 1996), which are essential in aptitude tests, technical interviews, and role alignment. In contrast, intuitive thinking enhances adaptability, creativity and social acuity (Shiloh et al., 2002; Epstein et al., 1996) supporting performance in unstructured or interpersonal contexts such as behavioral interviews and networking. As

modern placement processes increasingly demand both cognitive styles and interpersonal competence, the ability to engage either or both thinking styles enhances a candidate's overall employability.

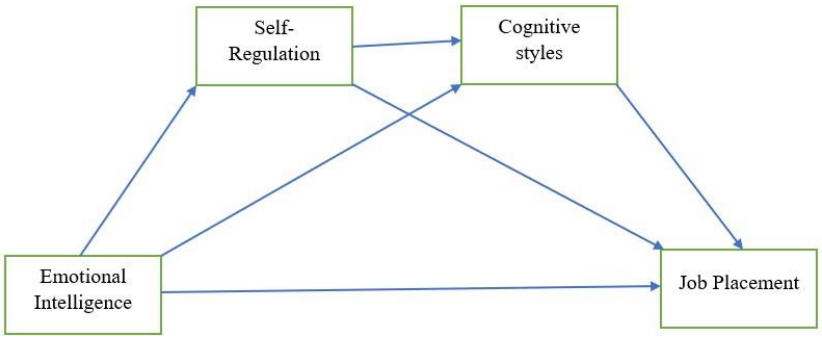

Figure 1: *Model of self-regulation and cognitive style serially mediating the relationship between emotional intelligence and job placement*

Methods

Participants and Study Design

A descriptive survey was conducted to study whether emotional intelligence, self-regulation and cognitive style predict job placement among college students. The sample consisted of 315 engineering students (81.0 %) and 74 management students (19.0%) total 389 participants which includes 186 males (47.8%) and 203 females (52.2%). The samples age ranged from 20 - 23 years with a Mean age = 21.24 and SD = 0.93 selected from Salem and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu state in India.

Procedure

The researchers approached seven colleges in the Erode and Salem districts of Tamil Nadu state in India, and only three colleges permitted to data collection. After receiving permission from the college authorities, the participants were selected based on their campus placement status (i.e., job-placed and job-unplaced) and detailed the nature of the study with informed consent. English is the medium of instruction in all these colleges. A researcher was also present to assist the students and clarify their doubts while filling out the questionnaire. The data was collected from the interested participants through the paper-based method.

Tools used

1. **Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale:** The short version of the emotional intelligence scale developed by Davies et al., (2010) was utilized to measure the overall emotional

intelligence of the participants. The scale consists of 10 items (e.g., I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them) and includes five dimensions: appraisal of one's own emotions, appraisal of other's emotions, regulation of one's own emotions, regulation of other's emotions, and utilization of emotion. Responses are measured on a five-point Likert scale.The score of the item ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) and the total score ranges from 10 to 50. The Cronbach alpha value is .86.

2. **Short Self-Regulation Scale (SSRQ-22):** The short version of the self-regulation scale developed by Chen and Lin (2018) was utilized to measure the overall self-regulation of the participants. The scale comprises 22 items distributed across five dimensions: goal attainment, goal setting, proactiveness, mindfulness, and adjustment. There are 12 positive items (i.e., I set goals for myself and keep track of my progress) with a score of item ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) and 10 items were reverse scored (i.e., I have a hard time setting goals for myself) with a score ranged from 5 (Strongly Disagree) to 1 (Strongly Agree) and the total score ranged from 22 to 110. The Cronbach alpha value is 0.82.

3. **Personal Style Inventory (PSI):** The scale was developed by Taggart and Taggart (1993) to measure the cognitive style of participants. The scale consists of a total of 30 items with two dimensions of cognitive styles such as rational style (i.e., planning, analysis, control) and intuitive style (i.e., vision, insight, and sharing). There are 15 items for rational style (i.e., I feel that a prescribed, step-by-step method is best for solving problems) and 15 items for intuitive style (i.e., When solving problems, I rely on hunches and first impressions rather than accepted approaches) with a score of item ranges from 1 (Never) to 6 (Always) and the total score ranges from 30 to 180. The Cronbach alpha value is 0.87.

Job placement

The job placement status was assessed using a dichotomous statement Job-placed / Job-unplaced from final year college students.

Ethics

The Declaration of Helsinki was followed when conducting the study. All participants have provided their written consent to participate in this study and were assured of the confidentiality of their data.

Results

Data Analysis

The study intended to assess the influence of self-regulation, cognitive styles (i.e., rational and intuitive styles) and emotional intelligence on job placement. The data was collected and analyzed to remove the missing values and outliers. During the process, responses of 18 participants were removed out of 389 responses as their score exhibited abnormal distance. In total 371 data were considered for final analysis which consists of 303 engineering students (81.6 %) and 68 management students (18.4%) in those 176 were males (47.4%) and 195 were females (52.6%) aged between 20 - 23 years with Mean age = 21.29 and SD = 0.95. To account for potential confounding factors influencing job placement, several control variables were included in the study based on data analysis. Specifically, academic performance was controlled by including only participants with a minimum CGPA of 6.5 on a 10-point scale. Additionally, the field of study was restricted to students enrolled in MBA or engineering programs, and participants were required to have attended at least three job interviews to be eligible for inclusion in the analysis.

Table 1.

Testing for Normality of Data

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional intelligence	-0.77	0.59
Self - regulation	-0.84	0.41
Rational style	-0.75	0.83
Intuitive style	-0.91	0.62

Table 1 shows that the data was tested for normality and found that the Skewness and Kurtosis values ranged between -2 and + 2 which indicates that the present study data was normally distributed for all three tools, hence parametric tests were adapted for analysis. The SPSS version 25 (statistical package for social science) was used for the analyses. Biserial correlation is used to assess the correlation between emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style, and intuitive style with job placement. Along with that binary logistic regression was used to examine the influence of emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style, and intuitive style on job placement of undergraduate engineering students. The Model 6 of Hayes Process Macro v4.1 (Hayes, 2022) for SPSS was used for mediation analysis and the model was tested by applying the bootstrapping technique. The percentile bootstrap estimation with 5000 resamples was used for the mediation analysis with the 95%

confidence interval and both direct and indirect effects are significant if the zero is not included between the lower limit and upper limit of confidence interval.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables

Variables	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Job placement
Emotional intelligence	371	40.10	4.99	.66*
Self-regulation	371	80.41	15.09	.58*
Rational style	371	62.99	13.87	.47*
Intuitive style	371	66.18	12.14	.26*

* $p < .05$.

Table 2 shows the biserial correlation of emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style, and intuitive style with job placement. Job placement shows a significant positive correlation with emotional intelligence (r_b= .66), self-regulation (r_b = .58), rational style (r_b = .47), and intuitive style (r_b = .26). Hence, the hypothesis (H1) was verified.

Table 3.

Mediating Role of Self-Regulation and Cognitive Styles on the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Job Placement

Direct effect (Emotional Intelligence → Job Placement)	Relationship	Indirect effect	Confidence Interval		t-statistics
			Lower bound	Upper bound	
0.13 (0.00)	Emotional Intelligence → Self-Regulation→ Rational style → Job Placement	0.15	0.11	0.26	4.16

The mediation analysis was conducted using Model 6 of Hayes Process Macro v4.1 (Hayes, 2022) for SPSS. The indirect effect of emotional intelligence on job placement through self-regulation and rational style was positive and significant (*b* = 0.15, *se* = 0.03, *p* < .00), zero is not included between the lower limit and upper limit of the confidence interval, which supports H2. In addition to that, the direct effect of emotional intelligence on job placement in the presence of the mediator was also found significant (*b* = 0.13, *se* = 0.04, *p* < .00). The emotional intelligence retains a direct influence on job placement outcomes independent of the mediators. This partial mediation implies that additional mechanisms beyond those included in the current model may contribute to the predictive role of emotional intelligence in employability. The mediation summary is presented in Table 3 and the path diagram is shown in Fig 2.

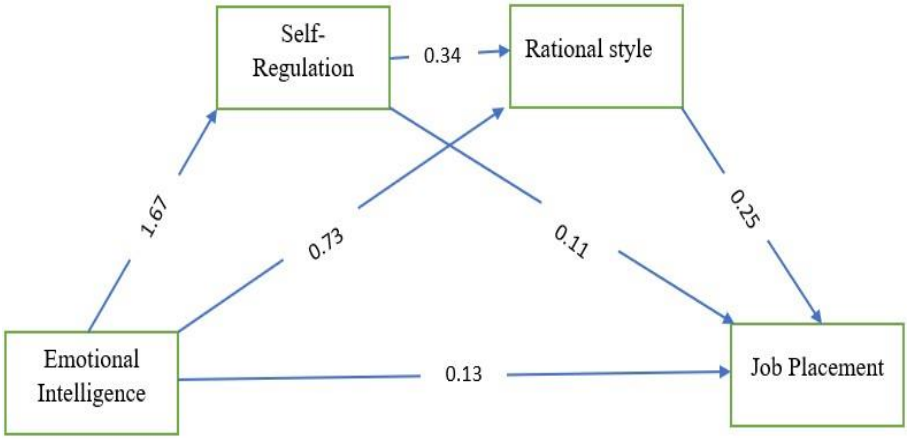

Figure 2: *Path diagram of self-regulation and rational style as a mediating variable on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job placement.*

Table 4

Influence of Emotional Intelligence, Self- Regulation, and Cognitive Styles on Job Placement

Variables	*B*	*S.E.*	Wald	*p*	Exp(B)	95% Confidence interval Lower limit	Upper limit
Emotional intelligence	0.19	0.05	13.00	.00*	1.21	1.09	1.35
Self-regulation	0.13	0.02	41.89	.00*	1.17	1.07	1.16
Rational style	0.14	0.02	28.97	.00*	1.13	1.09	1.22
Intuitive style	0.13	0.03	14.86	.00*	1.07	1.00	1.11

Note. * $p < .05$, B = Coefficient for the Constant, S.E. = Standard Error, Exp(B)= Odds Ratio

Binary logistic regression analysis shows the influence of emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style and intuitive styles on job placement as shown in Table 4. The Omnibus test of the model coefficient yielded a $\chi^2(4) = 203.77$ $p < .001$. The -2 Log likelihood value of 160.648, a Cox and Snell R^2 value of 0.434, and Nagelkerke R^2 value of 0.617. These R^2 values show that the model can explain 61% of the variance in the outcome. The Hosmer and Lemeshow Goodness of Fit Test ($\chi^2(8) = 13.710$, $p = .10$) showed model fitness with the data. The study model more accurately predicted the job-placed students (90.8%) than the job un-placed students (82.5%) and the overall model predicted (87.3) of cases across groups.

Based on the provided statistical analysis, it appears that emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style, and intuitive style are all significant predictors in the model. The Wald Chi-square test allows us to determine a coefficient's significance to the model (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2021). Emotional intelligence has a coefficient of 0.19, with a standard error of 0.05. The Wald statistic is 13.00, with a p-value of .00, indicating that emotional intelligence significantly predicts job placement. The odds ratio (Exp(B)) is 1.21, suggests

that for each one-unit increase in emotional intelligence, the odds of job placement increases by 21% approximately. The 95% confidence interval for the odds ratio ranges from 1.09 to 1.35 which supports hypothesis H3 (a).

Self-regulation has a coefficient of 0.13, with a standard error of 0.02. The Wald statistic is 41.89, with a p-value of 0.00, indicating that self-regulation significantly predicts job placement. The odds ratio (Exp(B)) is 1.17, suggests that for each one-unit increase in self-regulation, the odds of job placement increases by 17% approximately. The 95% confidence interval for the odds ratio ranges from 1.07 to 1.16 which supports hypothesis H3 (b).

Rational style has a coefficient of 0.14, with a standard error of 0.02. The Wald statistic is 28.97, with a p-value of .00, indicating that rational style significantly predicts job placement. The odds ratio (Exp(B)) is 1.13, suggests that for each one-unit increase in rational style, the odds of job placement increases by 13%approximately. The 95% confidence interval for the odds ratio ranges from 1.09 to 1.22 which supports hypothesis H3 (c).

Intuitive style has a coefficient of 0.13, with a standard error of 0.03. The Wald statistic is 14.86, with a p-value of .00, indicating that intuitive style significantly predicts job placement. The odds ratio (Exp(B)) is 1.07, suggests that for each one-unit increase in intuitive style, the odds of job placement increases by 7% approximately. The 95% confidence interval for the odds ratio ranges from 1.00 to 1.11. Overall, these results indicate that emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style, and intuitive style are all important factors in predicting job placement. Higher scores in these variables are associated with an increase in job placement which supports hypothesis H3 (d).

Discussion

The present study provides a better understanding of the correlation between emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style and intuitive style with job placement among college students. Findings showed a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style and intuitive style with job placement as shown in Table 1. Emotional intelligence facilitates performance in job interviews, interpersonal relationships (Engelberg & Sjoberg, 2005), problem solving (Hasnah et al., 2018) and decision making (Baba & Siddiq 2017) and enables us to manage our own emotions better in complex situations. The individual with a higher level of emotional intelligence performs better in job interviews and receives better job offers (Chia, 2005) which supports the result of the present finding.

Regulation of one's own behaviour is crucial for goal setting and attainment (Stremersch et al., 2021). Getting placed in a company needs certain employability skills and learning those

necessary skills is vital for job placement. Individuals regulating one's behaviour keep themselves on track during the process of skill training which eventually leads to job placement. Self-regulation correlated with job placement (Dillahunt et al., 2021) which supports the result of the present study. Both rational and intuitive style of cognition shows a significant relationship with job placement as shown in Table 1. The positive correlation of both styles with job placement suggests that cognitive flexibility (i.e.,) the ability to draw on both cognitive styles depending on situational demands may be an important asset for employability. This has practical implications for career development programs, which should aim to foster not only analytical skills but also intuitive insight to prepare students for diverse workplace challenges.

The mediation model provides a better understanding of how the rational style of cognition and self-regulation serially mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and job placement as shown in Table 2. High emotional intelligent students show better self-regulatory skills (Siregar et al., 2018) which increases the chance of job placement. The student who has a high level of emotional intelligence and self-regulatory behaviour tends to understand their emotions better and motivate themselves towards a goal even while facing adverse situations. These skills keep them on track while learning the employability skills which are necessary for job placement. Further, the rational style related to emotional intelligence (Margret & Lavanya, 2017) shows that planning, analysis and control dimensions of the rational style of cognition influence the emotional intelligence of the students. Cognitive abilities such as the rational way of thinking, logical reasoning and analytical way of problem solving are highly related to emotional intelligence and simultaneously influence job placement of college students. In addition, Das (2015) indicates that self-regulation influences the rational style of cognition, a finding that aligns with the results presented in the current study. Self-regulation involves goal-oriented behaviour such as setting out a goal, planning, analysing and having control over the process. These skills are part of a rational style of processing information and decision making. The model shows that individuals with higher emotional intelligence not only exhibit better self-regulation but also tend to possess logical thinking and analytical skills which is positively related to the job placement. The intuitive style of cognition was deliberately excluded from the present model due to its attenuating effect on the indirect pathways between emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style and job placement. While intuitive style has been recognized as a valid cognitive process in certain decision-making contexts, its inclusion in this model diminished the strength and clarity of the indirect effects observed.

The major finding of the study suggests that self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and rational and intuitive style of cognition are significant predictors of job placement as shown in

Table 3. An increase in the level of emotional intelligence and self-regulation could simultaneously improve the placement outcome of college students. The students possessing high self-regulatory skills and emotional intelligence (Zadel, 2006) can be easily trainable, they do better in job interviews (Fox & Spector, 2000) compared with their peers, present themselves more optimistically (Kumcagiz, 2011; Glassie & Schutte, 2024) and exhibit better interpersonal skills than others. As a result, they look more appealing to recruiters and have a greater likelihood of job placement.

Implications

The study results represent that emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style and intuitive style are potential predictors of job placement. These findings are of considerably important to colleges, organizations, academic faculty and placement trainers.

Theoretical implications

The study provides a broad comprehension of the influence of emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style and intuitive style on job placement of college students. The present research follows and emphasizes the limitations and suggestions provided by past studies (Chia 2005; Deciu, 2021). This study also innovates by including the components of cognitive styles (rational style and intuitive style) influencing job placement of college students which remains unexplored so far. Studies conducted in the recent past shows the relationship between job placement and emotional intelligence but they have failed to explore the mediating factor that could contribute to that relationship. Finally, the study concludes that emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style and intuitive style all are potential predictors of job placement which contributes to the existing literature on job placement of college students.

Practical implications

The results presented in this study have several practical implications for colleges, organizations, employment counsellors and job placement trainers. First, colleges should design academic curricula that aim to improve the psychological aspects of college students that could contribute to job placement. Second, placement trainers could provide intervention programs for improving the level of emotional intelligence and self-regulation for college students for better job placement. The psychological training and intervention programs help the job-seeking candidates to prepare for the job interview, and effectively handle stress during the interview process (Liu et al., 2014). Rapid changes in the job market brings new challenges to job seekers and it is critical to stay updated with the latest trends and needs of industry. Further, job placement training should ensure the job seeker's competencies and

employability skills required for the respective job positions. Finally, recruiters could consider this outcome for screening and hiring the best fit candidates for their organizations.

Limitations and future directions

The study has a few methodological limitations. First, the study is quantitative in nature and data was collected only once during the research process. Second, a self- report questionnaire was used for data collection there is the chance that participants may have overrated their abilities. Third, restrictions in generalization of results to a larger population exist due to the small sample size and in addition to that data obtained only from a particular district in the state. Fourth, only engineering and management students have participated, so it's difficult to generalize the results to other streams of studies. Future research in job placement could focus on socioeconomic factors, personal factors, larger sample size and various academic related factors of college students. And, also longitudinal and cross-cultural studies can further give better clarity about study variables. For further in-depth understanding, a qualitative study could be carried out to identify other potential variables that contribute to the job placement of college students. Finally, it would be interesting if further research was carried out with other psychological variables along with organizational recuritement need analysis that could predict job placement.

Conclusion

The study provides valuable insights into the influence of emotional intelligence, cognitive styles (i.e., rational and intuitive style) and self-regulation on job placement of college students. The positive relationship between emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational and intuitive style with job placement suggests a potential connection between these factors. Further, the study indicates that emotional intelligence indirectly influences job placement through the mediating effect of self-regulation and rational style. In addition to that major finding, the study also reveals that emotional intelligence, self-regulation, rational style and intuitive style acts as a predictor of job placement among college students.

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