

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

Mohammed Farhan^{1*}

ABSTRACT

This systematic review examines the relationship between resilience, self-esteem, and career outcomes among assistant professor job seekers in Psychology at Indian state universities, with specific focus on job expectations, career adaptability, stress and burnout, and job search duration. A comprehensive literature search across multiple databases retrieved 219 unique peer-reviewed academic journal articles. After systematic screening and relevance assessment, 30 papers were analyzed in depth. The review reveals a critical evidence gap: no studies directly examined assistant professor job seekers in Psychology at Indian state universities with the specified outcomes. However, available evidence from related populations—including Indian college students, Ph.D. scholars, and early-career academics—demonstrates that resilience and self-esteem are significant predictors of career adaptability, stress management, and career optimism. Resilience shows consistent positive correlations with self-esteem, psychological well-being, and adaptive coping strategies. Self-esteem components (self-liking and self-competence) differentially predict career adaptability and optimism. The review identifies substantial methodological limitations, including predominance of cross-sectional designs, convenience sampling, and lack of longitudinal data on job search outcomes. These findings underscore an urgent need for targeted research on Psychology faculty job seekers in the Indian state university context.

Keywords: *Resilience, Self-Esteem, Assistant Professor, Job Seekers, Psychology, Indian State Universities, Systematic Review*

The academic labour market in India has undergone substantial transformation over recent decades, marked by intensified competition for assistant professor positions, particularly within Psychology departments in state universities. Individuals seeking academic employment in this context encounter a constellation of stressors, including prolonged job search durations, uncertainty regarding career trajectories, financial constraints, and the cumulative psychological impact of repeated rejection. A systematic understanding of the psychological resources that facilitate effective navigation of these challenges is therefore essential, not only for enhancing individual well-being but also for informing institutional human resource strategies.

¹MSc. Psychology

*Corresponding Author

Received: April 5, 2026; Revision Received: May 13, 2026; Accepted: May 17, 2026

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

Within this framework, resilience—conceptualized as the capacity to adapt positively in the face of adversity—and self-esteem—defined as an individual’s overall evaluation of self-worth and competence—have emerged as critical determinants of career-related outcomes across diverse populations. Despite their recognized importance, the specific influence of these constructs among assistant professor job seekers in Psychology within Indian state universities remains insufficiently examined. The present systematic review seeks to synthesize existing empirical evidence on the interrelationships between resilience, self-esteem, and four key career-related outcomes: job expectations, career adaptability, stress and burnout, and job search duration. Accordingly, the review is guided by the following research inquiries: the nature of the association between resilience and self-esteem among academic job seekers in the Indian context; the predictive role of these constructs in shaping career adaptability within populations analogous to assistant professor candidates; the extent to which resilience and self-esteem contribute to the management of stress and burnout during academic job searches; and their potential influence on job expectations and the duration of job search processes among doctoral scholars and early-career academics.

Resilience, within career-related contexts, is best understood as a dynamic and context-sensitive process involving sustained positive adaptation to significant adversity. It enables individuals to maintain goal-directed behaviour, recover from setbacks, and recalibrate strategies in response to evolving circumstances. Empirical research, including studies conducted in the Indian context, frequently operationalizes resilience using the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale, which conceptualizes the construct as multidimensional, encompassing personal competence, trust in one’s instincts, positive acceptance of change, perceived control, and spiritual influences (Herbert, Manjula, & Philip, 2017). Theoretical perspectives on career resilience suggest that individuals with higher resilience demonstrate greater persistence in job search activities, sustain optimism despite repeated setbacks, and exhibit adaptive flexibility in response to labour market conditions. In the context of academic employment, resilience may serve as a protective factor mitigating the adverse psychological effects associated with prolonged uncertainty and recurrent application rejections.

Self-esteem, as a central component of psychological functioning, comprises two interrelated yet distinct dimensions: self-liking, which reflects the affective appraisal of one’s intrinsic worth, and self-competence, which denotes the cognitive evaluation of one’s abilities and efficacy. These dimensions may exert differential effects on career-related outcomes. Specifically, self-competence is theoretically associated with enhanced career optimism, proactive goal-setting, and effective problem-solving, whereas self-liking is more closely aligned with overall psychological adjustment and sustained motivation (Kalafat, 2019). In the context of academic job seeking, self-esteem shapes how individuals interpret evaluative feedback, maintain engagement during extended job searches, and approach negotiation processes. Lower levels of self-esteem have been linked to increased vulnerability to depressive symptoms and diminished career exploration behaviours, whereas higher self-esteem is associated with more adaptive and proactive career strategies.

Career adaptability constitutes another critical construct, referring to an individual’s readiness and psychosocial resources for managing current and anticipated career-related tasks, transitions, and disruptions. It encompasses four primary dimensions: concern, reflecting future-oriented planning; control, indicating a sense of agency and responsibility in career decision-making; curiosity, denoting the exploration of potential career pathways; and

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

confidence, representing self-efficacy in achieving career goals. This construct is particularly salient for assistant professor job seekers, who must navigate complex and often opaque recruitment processes, adjust to diverse institutional expectations, and manage transitional phases within their academic trajectories.

The structural and institutional characteristics of the Indian higher education system, particularly within state universities, introduce additional layers of complexity to the academic job search process. These institutions frequently operate under resource constraints, are characterized by bureaucratic recruitment procedures, and exhibit considerable regional variation in academic norms and expectations. Within Psychology departments, the availability of positions is often limited, recruitment cycles may be irregular, and eligibility criteria frequently include specific requirements such as National Eligibility Test (NET) or State Eligibility Test (SET) qualifications. Such contextual factors are likely to shape the lived experience of job seekers and may moderate the relationships between psychological resources, such as resilience and self-esteem, and key career outcomes.

METHODS

Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across three major databases: SciSpace, Google Scholar, and PubMed. Search terms included combinations of: "resilience," "self-esteem," "career adaptability," "job search," "stress," "burnout," "assistant professor," "Ph.D. scholars," "academic job seekers," "India," "state universities," and "Psychology." The search was limited to peer-reviewed academic journal articles published through March 2026.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The selection of studies for this review was guided by clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure methodological rigor and relevance to the research objectives. Eligible studies were required to be published in peer-reviewed academic journals, thereby ensuring a baseline level of scholarly quality and credibility. Furthermore, studies were included if they empirically examined resilience and/or self-esteem in relation to career-related outcomes. Particular emphasis was placed on populations that are conceptually aligned with academic job seekers, including university students, doctoral scholars, and early-career academics. Although studies conducted within India or involving Indian populations were prioritized to enhance contextual relevance, research from comparable settings was also considered where appropriate. Additionally, included studies were required to measure at least one of the predefined outcome variables, namely job expectations, career adaptability, stress or burnout, or job search duration.

Conversely, several categories of studies were excluded to maintain the empirical and contextual integrity of the review. Non-peer-reviewed sources, including dissertations, conference abstracts, and institutional reports, were omitted to ensure consistency in academic quality. Studies not available in the English language were excluded due to practical constraints related to accessibility and interpretation. Research lacking clear relevance to career development or academic employment contexts was also excluded, as it did not align with the core focus of the review. Finally, purely theoretical or conceptual papers without empirical data were not considered, given the review's emphasis on synthesizing evidence-based findings.

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

Study Selection and Data Extraction

The initial search retrieved 219 unique papers. These were screened based on title and abstract relevance. Papers were then assessed for full-text eligibility and relevance to the review objectives. The top 30 most relevant papers were selected for in-depth analysis based on relevance scoring that considered: (1) measurement of resilience and/or self-esteem, (2) examination of career-related outcomes, (3) Indian context or population, (4) focus on academic or student populations, and (5) methodological rigor.

Data extracted from each study included: study design, sample characteristics, measures used, key findings related to resilience and self-esteem, statistical relationships reported, and study limitations. Three enrichment columns were systematically generated to support synthesis: Study Design and Sample Characteristics, Key Findings on Resilience Self-Esteem and Career Outcomes, and Study Limitations and Contextual Constraints.

Quality Assessment

Study quality was assessed based on sample size adequacy, use of validated measures, statistical rigor, and generalizability of findings. The majority of included studies employed cross-sectional survey designs with convenience samples, limiting causal inference. No randomized controlled trials or longitudinal studies specifically addressing the target population were identified.

Characteristics of Included Studies

Geographic and Institutional Distribution

Among the 30 papers analyzed, only a subset were conducted in India with Indian populations. The most relevant Indian study examined 200 engineering students from colleges in Bengaluru. Other studies included Indian university students in Kolkata (Dey et al., 2025), research students in Kerala, Ph.D. scholars at Nagpur University, and social science doctoral scholars across Indian institutions. Several studies were conducted in Turkey (Kalafat, 2019; Boyaci, 2019), Taiwan (Tien, 2019), and other international contexts, limiting direct applicability to the Indian state university system.

Notably, no studies specifically examined assistant professor job seekers in Psychology at Indian state universities. The closest relevant populations were Ph.D. scholars and early-career academics, though these studies rarely specified discipline or institution type.

Sample Characteristics

Sample sizes ranged from 177 to 301 participants in the most relevant studies. The majority of studies sampled undergraduate or graduate students rather than job seekers. Gender distribution varied, with some studies showing female predominance (e.g., 78% female in Kalafat 2019) and others more balanced. Age ranges typically spanned 21-30 years, appropriate for late-stage doctoral students and early-career job seekers.

Disciplines represented included engineering, education, general university students (Rahman et al., 2024), and research students in science and technology (Dey, 2025). The absence of Psychology-specific samples is a critical limitation for this review.

Instruments

The assessment of key constructs across the included studies was conducted using a range of standardized and psychometrically validated instruments, thereby enhancing the reliability

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

and comparability of findings. Resilience was most frequently measured using the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), a widely employed instrument that conceptualizes resilience as a multidimensional construct encompassing adaptability, persistence, and coping capacity. In addition, several studies utilized the Brief Resilience Scale, which focuses specifically on the ability to recover from stress, as well as various resilience subscales embedded within broader psychological assessment tools.

Self-esteem was predominantly assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a globally recognized measure of overall self-worth. Some studies further differentiated the construct by employing the Self-Liking/Self-Competence Scale, which captures both affective and cognitive dimensions of self-esteem. In other instances, self-esteem was operationalized through specific subscales within comprehensive psychological instruments, allowing for its examination alongside related constructs.

Career-related outcomes were evaluated using multiple domain-specific measures. Career adaptability and future orientation were commonly assessed through instruments such as the Career Futures Inventory and the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale, both of which capture individuals' preparedness and psychosocial resources for managing career development tasks. Job search processes were often examined using job search self-efficacy scales, which reflect individuals' confidence in their ability to perform job-seeking activities effectively. Additionally, psychological well-being outcomes were measured and established burnout assessment tools and stress scales, including the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS), which provide a comprehensive evaluation of emotional distress.

The utilization of these validated and standardized instruments across studies facilitates meaningful comparison and synthesis of findings. However, it is important to note that while many of these measures have demonstrated robust psychometric properties in diverse contexts, the extent to which they have undergone systematic cultural adaptation and validation within India remains inconsistently reported. This limitation has implications for the generalizability and contextual sensitivity of the findings within the Indian academic environment.

Study Designs

All included studies employed quantitative cross-sectional survey designs. No longitudinal studies tracking job seekers from Ph.D. completion through job placement were identified. The absence of prospective designs limits conclusions about temporal relationships and causal pathways between resilience, self-esteem, and career outcomes.

Key Findings

Resilience and Self-Esteem Relationships

The most robust finding across studies is the positive correlation between resilience and self-esteem. Herbert et al. (2017) found significant positive correlations between resilience and self-esteem among Indian engineering students in Bengaluru. This relationship was embedded within a broader network of psychosocial resources, including positive affect, conscientiousness, secure attachment, problem-solving coping, and social support.

Dey et al. (2025) examined university students in Kolkata and found that emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and resilience all positively correlated with life satisfaction, with resilience emerging as the strongest predictor, explaining 34% of variance in life satisfaction.

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

This suggests that resilience may be a more powerful predictor of well-being outcomes than self-esteem alone, though both contribute to positive adaptation.

Fernández-Castillo et al. (2022) studied teaching students and found that self-esteem and resilience evolved together across academic progress, suggesting a developmental relationship between these constructs. However, this study was conducted in a non-Indian context, limiting generalizability.

Career Adaptability

Career adaptability emerged as a critical outcome influenced by both resilience and self-esteem. Kalafat (2019) found that psychological resilience, self-liking, and self-competence significantly predicted career adaptability ($R^2=.273$, $p<0.05$) among senior college students and exam preparation teachers, specifically: Self-competence: $\beta=.304$, $p=.002$, Self-liking: $\beta=.198$, $p=.018$ and Resilience: $\beta=.194$, $p=.009$

Interestingly, these same variables did not significantly predict career optimism ($R^2=.057$), suggesting that self-esteem and resilience enhance adaptive capacity but may not directly increase optimistic expectations about career futures (Kalafat, 2019).

Rahman et al. (2024) examined non-cognitive factors in Indonesian university students and found that self-esteem exerted a direct positive effect on career adaptability (standardized coefficient = 0.435). Social support and work values influenced career adaptability largely through their effects on self-esteem, with total effects of 0.591 for social support and 0.230 for work values. This mediation model suggests that self-esteem serves as a critical pathway through which external resources translate into career adaptability.

Kvasková et al. (2023) investigated the moderating roles of parental and peer support on the self-esteem–career adaptability relationship. While this study was not India-specific, it highlights that social support systems may amplify or buffer the effects of self-esteem on career outcomes—a consideration relevant for assistant professor job seekers who may rely on academic mentors and peer networks.

Matijaš et al. (2021) examined the relationship between career adaptability and job-search self-efficacy among graduates, finding that career adaptability predicted job-search self-efficacy, which in turn influenced job search behaviors. This suggests a sequential pathway: resilience/self-esteem → career adaptability → job-search self-efficacy → job search behaviors.

Stress and Burnout

The relationship between resilience, self-esteem, and stress/burnout is well-documented in student populations, though evidence specific to assistant professor job seekers is limited.

Herbert et al. (2017) found that Indian engineering students experienced high stress, particularly in relational domains. Resilience was positively correlated with psychological well-being and adaptive coping strategies (problem-solving, social support), suggesting that resilient individuals employ more effective stress management strategies. The study identified positive affect, conscientiousness, and dismissive attachment as predictors of resilience, indicating that personality factors and emotional regulation contribute to resilient responses to stress (Herbert, Manjula, & Philip, 2017).

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

Aswathy's study on research students in science and technology institutions in Thiruvananthapuram assessed burnout prevalence. While specific statistical relationships were not detailed in available metadata, the study noted associations between depression, low self-esteem, and hopelessness, and highlighted job expectations and extrinsic effort as stress factors. This suggests that unrealistic job expectations combined with low self-esteem may increase vulnerability to burnout among research students.

Prasad et al. (2017) examined causes of stress among Ph.D. research scholars at Nagpur University. While this study did not directly measure resilience or self-esteem, it documented stress sources relevant to the academic job search context, including financial pressures, uncertain career prospects, and institutional bureaucracy.

Sihag et al. (2022) investigated organizational resilience and employee performance in Indian higher education institutions, finding that perceived organizational support mediated this relationship. This organizational-level finding suggests that institutional support systems may enhance individual resilience and buffer against stress, a consideration for state universities seeking to support early-career faculty.

Job Expectations and Job Search Duration

This review identified a critical evidence gap regarding job expectations and job search duration. No studies directly measured job search duration among assistant professor applicants in India. Similarly, systematic examination of how resilience and self-esteem shape job expectations in this population is lacking.

Tien (2019) studied Southeast Asian students in Taiwan and found that resilience positively related to job search self-efficacy ($\beta=.51, p<.01$) and job search intentions ($\beta=.04, p<.01$). Job search self-efficacy strongly predicted job search intentions ($\beta=.47, p<.01$). Resilience indirectly explained 23.9% of variance in job search intentions via job search self-efficacy as a mediator. While this study examined job search intentions rather than actual duration, it suggests that resilience may facilitate more active and persistent job search behaviors through enhanced self-efficacy.

Kannan et al. (2024) examined attrition among Indian social science doctoral scholars, identifying factors that lead students to abandon doctoral programs. While not directly addressing job search, this study highlights the challenges faced by Indian doctoral students, including financial constraints, lack of mentorship, and uncertain career prospects—factors that likely extend into the post-Ph.D. job search period.

The absence of longitudinal studies tracking job seekers from application through placement represents a major limitation. Without such data, it is impossible to determine whether resilience and self-esteem predict shorter job search durations, better job matches, or more realistic job expectations.

Evidence Gaps and Limitations

A major limitation of this review lies in the absence of studies directly examining assistant professor job seekers in Psychology within state universities in India. The available evidence is derived from populations that are only partially comparable, including undergraduate and postgraduate students, individuals from non-Psychology disciplines such as engineering, samples drawn from private or central universities, and international contexts such as Turkey,

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

Taiwan, and Indonesia. This heterogeneity raises concerns regarding the generalizability of findings, as assistant professor candidates encounter distinct stressors, including publication requirements, teaching demonstrations, and eligibility criteria such as NET/SET qualifications, which are not typically experienced by student populations or individuals in other academic domains.

Methodologically, the evidence base is constrained by several limitations. All included studies employed cross-sectional designs, thereby precluding causal inferences regarding the relationship between resilience, self-esteem, and career outcomes. It remains unclear whether these psychological resources predict improved career outcomes or are themselves shaped by positive career experiences. Additionally, the widespread use of convenience sampling from single institutions limits representativeness, particularly given the substantial variability among state universities in India in terms of resources, institutional culture, and recruitment practices. The reliance on self-report measures further introduces the risk of social desirability bias and common method variance. Moreover, none of the studies incorporated objective indicators of career outcomes, such as actual job search duration, number of applications submitted, interview success rates, or job offer characteristics.

Measurement-related gaps are also evident. Although resilience and self-esteem were assessed using validated scales, career-related outcomes were often measured by generic instruments that lack specificity to academic job-seeking contexts. For instance, career adaptability measures typically assess general readiness for career transitions rather than concrete job search behaviours, while stress scales capture overall psychological distress without isolating job-search-specific stressors. Furthermore, no studies provided quantitative assessments of job expectations, such as anticipated salary, preferred institutional settings, or acceptable commuting conditions.

Finally, the broader contextual dimensions of the Indian academic labour market remain insufficiently explored. Factors such as reservation policies and their psychological implications, regional disparities in hiring practices across state universities, the influence of academic networks and professional recommendations, financial strain during extended job searches, and gender-based differences in job search experiences may all play a moderating role in shaping the relationship between psychological resources and career outcomes. However, these variables have not been systematically examined within the existing literature, thereby limiting the contextual depth and applicability of current evidence.

DISCUSSION

Synthesis of Evidence

Despite the absence of studies directly addressing the target population, available evidence from related populations provides a foundation for understanding the potential role of resilience and self-esteem among assistant professor job seekers in Psychology at Indian state universities.

Resilience and self-esteem are interconnected psychological resources that jointly contribute to adaptive career development. The positive correlation between these constructs suggests that interventions targeting one may benefit the other. For assistant professor job seekers, cultivating both resilience (capacity to bounce back from rejection) and self-esteem (confidence in one's competence) may be essential for navigating prolonged job searches.

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

Career adaptability emerges as a key mediating mechanism through which resilience and self-esteem influence career outcomes. Job seekers with higher career adaptability demonstrate greater flexibility in exploring diverse opportunities, adjusting application strategies, and managing transitions. The finding that self-competence (but not self-liking) predicts career optimism, suggests that cognitive self-evaluations of ability may be more important than affective self-worth for maintaining positive career expectations.

Stress management and burnout prevention are critical concerns for job seekers facing extended searches. Resilience is associated with adaptive coping strategies (problem-solving, social support seeking) that buffer against stress. However, the absence of longitudinal data on burnout trajectories during job searches limits conclusions about protective factors.

Job search behaviors and outcomes remain underexplored. The indirect evidence that resilience enhances job search self-efficacy and intentions suggests a potential pathway, but actual job search duration, application success rates, and job quality outcomes have not been studied in the Indian academic context.

Theoretical Implications

The findings support a resource-based model of career development in which psychological resources (resilience, self-esteem) enable adaptive responses (career adaptability, effective coping) that facilitate positive outcomes (job placement, well-being). This model aligns with the Conservation of Resources theory, which posits that individuals with greater resource reserves are better equipped to invest in goal-directed activities and recover from setbacks.

The differential effects of self-esteem components (self-competence vs. self-liking) on career outcomes. Kalafat, S. (2019) suggests that domain-specific self-evaluations may be more predictive than global self-worth. For assistant professor job seekers, confidence in one's teaching and research abilities (self-competence) may be more relevant than general self-liking.

The mediation of social support effects through self-esteem (Rahman et al., 2024) highlights the importance of social-cognitive pathways in career development. Supportive academic mentors and peer networks may enhance self-esteem, which in turn promotes career adaptability. This suggests that institutional interventions should target both individual psychological resources and social support systems.

Practical Implications

The findings of this review carry several important practical implications for multiple stakeholders within the academic ecosystem in India. For individual job seekers, strengthening psychological resources is essential for navigating the challenges of prolonged academic job searches. Resilience may be enhanced through cognitive reframing strategies that interpret rejection as a developmental opportunity rather than a personal failure. Concurrently, the cultivation of self-competence through targeted skill development—such as engagement in teaching training, research productivity, and publication—can reinforce confidence and employability. The role of social support is equally critical, with mentorship, peer networks, and professional communities serving as protective factors against psychological distress. Furthermore, fostering career adaptability through openness to diverse institutional contexts and geographic mobility, alongside the adoption of problem-focused coping strategies, may improve both psychological well-being and career outcomes.

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

At the institutional level, doctoral programs and universities have a significant role in supporting early-career academics. Integrating structured career development initiatives and resilience training into doctoral curricula can better prepare candidates for the realities of the academic labour market. Mentorship programs that emphasize realistic job expectations and effective application strategies are particularly valuable. In addition, the establishment of peer support systems and the provision of workshops addressing stress management and burnout prevention can mitigate the psychological burden associated with extended job searches. Facilitating networking opportunities with faculty members across state universities may further enhance access to career-relevant information and opportunities.

For state universities, there is a need to acknowledge the psychological impact of prolonged and often opaque recruitment processes. Greater transparency in hiring procedures and timelines can reduce uncertainty and associated stress among applicants. Providing constructive feedback to unsuccessful candidates may also support learning and future improvement. Moreover, the implementation of organizational support mechanisms for newly appointed assistant professors could ease the transition into academic roles and reduce early-career stress.

Limitations of This Review

This systematic review is constrained by the limitations of the available evidence base. The absence of studies on the target population means that conclusions are necessarily tentative and based on extrapolation from related populations. The predominance of cross-sectional designs limits causal inference. The reliance on self-report measures introduces potential bias. The lack of longitudinal data on job search outcomes prevents assessment of predictive validity.

Additionally, this review focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, potentially excluding relevant dissertations, reports, or grey literature. The search was limited to English-language publications, possibly missing relevant studies in regional Indian languages.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should prioritize the development of a more robust and contextually grounded evidence base. Longitudinal investigations tracking doctoral graduates through the transition to academic employment are particularly needed to establish temporal and causal relationships. Such studies should incorporate repeated measures of resilience, self-esteem, career adaptability, and psychological distress, alongside objective indicators such as job search duration, application success rates, and employment outcomes. There is also a critical need for context-specific research examining the structural and institutional dynamics of state universities in India, including recruitment processes, regional variations, and the influence of qualifications, policies, and professional networks.

Intervention-based research represents another important avenue, particularly in designing and evaluating programs aimed at enhancing resilience, self-esteem, and career adaptability among doctoral students and job seekers. Complementing quantitative approaches with qualitative inquiry through mixed-methods designs would provide deeper insight into lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and meaning-making processes during academic job searches. Methodological improvements should include the use of culturally validated instruments, representative sampling across institutions and regions, and the incorporation of objective outcome measures. Furthermore, future studies should account for potential

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

confounding variables and examine moderating and mediating factors such as gender, socioeconomic background, and social support.

Finally, there is a need for theoretical advancement through the development of culturally sensitive models of career resilience that reflect the unique socio-cultural and institutional context of India. Integrating indigenous psychological perspectives with established Western frameworks may yield more comprehensive and contextually relevant explanations. Particular attention should be given to the influence of collectivist values, family expectations, and broader social structures, including caste, gender, and regional identities, in shaping career development processes within the Indian academic landscape.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review sought to synthesize evidence on resilience and self-esteem among assistant professor job seekers in Psychology at Indian state universities, focusing on job expectations, career adaptability, stress and burnout, and job search duration. The review reveals a critical evidence gap: no studies have directly examined this population with these specific outcomes.

Available evidence from related populations—Indian college students, Ph.D. scholars, and early-career academics—demonstrates that resilience and self-esteem are positively correlated and serve as important psychological resources for career development. Resilience and self-esteem (particularly self-competence) predict career adaptability, which appears to be a key mechanism for navigating career transitions. Resilience is associated with adaptive stress-coping strategies and psychological well-being, while low self-esteem is linked to depression and burnout risk.

However, the absence of studies on actual job search behaviors and outcomes among assistant professor applicants in Psychology at Indian state universities represents a major limitation. The predominance of cross-sectional designs, convenience samples, and self-report measures further constrains conclusions. Contextual factors unique to the Indian academic job market—including state university hiring practices, NET/SET requirements, reservation policies, and regional variations—remain underexplored.

The field urgently needs longitudinal, context-specific research that tracks Psychology Ph.D. scholars through the job search process, measures both psychological resources and objective outcomes, and accounts for the unique challenges of the Indian state university system. Such research would provide an evidence base for developing targeted interventions to support job seekers' resilience, self-esteem, and career success.

Despite these limitations, the available evidence suggests that resilience and self-esteem are modifiable psychological resources that can be cultivated through targeted interventions. Doctoral programs, universities, and individual job seekers can benefit from strategies that enhance these resources, promote career adaptability, and provide social support during the challenging transition from Ph.D. completion to faculty employment.

REFERENCES

Aswathy, S. Prevalence of Burnout among research students in Science and technology institutions in Thiruvananthapuram.

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

- Bibi, A., Saleem, A., & Khalid, M. A. (2017). Self-esteem, Resilience, and Social Trust as Mediators in the Relationship between Optimism and Job Satisfaction: A Preliminary Analysis of Data from European Social Survey. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*.
- Boyaci, A. (2019). The Role of Self-Esteem in Predicting Pedagogical Formation Students' Career Adaptabilities. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*. <https://doi.org/10.33200/IJCER.555624>
- Chaudhary, S., Nanda, N., & Chauhan, S. (2023). Do narcissism and resilience personality traits ignite university students' desirability and entrepreneurial intentions? Moderation of pursuit of excellence and risk. *International Journal of Educational Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijem-02-2023-0048>
- Corey, S. (2019). Career Learning and Adaptability among Professional Immigrants in the Context of Retraining.
- Dalal, A. K. (2011). Indigenisation of psychology in India. *Psychology Teaching Review*.
- Dewi, N. P. M. S., & Suardana, I. B. R. (2024). Pengaruh Self-Efficacy dan Self-Esteem Terhadap Job Satisfaction dengan Career Development sebagai Variabel Moderasi. *EKOMA : Jurnal Ekonomi, Manajemen, Akuntansi*. <https://doi.org/10.56799/ekoma.v3i6.4707>
- Dey, S., Dey, S., & Dey, S. (2025) Dey, S., Dey, S., & Dey, S. (2025). Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem, And Resilience as Predictors of Satisfaction with Life: A Study on University Students in Kolkata. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*. <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i05.56155>
- Farooq, S., Naz, S., & Khalil, S. (2024). Self-Esteem, Resilience, And Mental Well-Being Among Students. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuvey.v30i5.4647>
- Fernández-Castillo, E., Molerio-Pérez, O., Echemendia-Tocabens, B., & González-Hernández, J. (2022). Self-Esteem and Resilience in Students of Teaching: Evolution Associated with Academic Progress. *Education Research International*. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/4854332>
- Ferrari, L., Nota, L., & Soresi, S. (2017). Career Adaptability and Career Resilience: The Roadmap to Work Inclusion for Individuals Experiencing Disability. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66954-0_24
- Harikrishnan, U., Sabu, K. M., & Rajesh, R. Resilience, psychological distress, and self-esteem among undergraduate students in Kollam District, Kerala.
- Herbert, R., Manjula, M., & Philip, M. (2017). Stress-coping and factors contributing to resilience in college students: An exploratory study from India. *Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology*.
- Jain, M., & Purohit, P. Self-esteem: A gender based comparison and the causal factors reducing it among Indian youth.
- Kalafat, S. (2019). Psychological Resilience and Self-Esteem Related Components on Career Adaptation and Career Optimism. <https://doi.org/10.19148/IJHBS.500795>
- Kannan, S., Geetha, S., & Panchanatham, N. (2024). Attrition Among Indian Social Science Doctoral Scholars. *Advances in educational marketing, administration, and leadership book series*. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-6040-8.ch011>
- Kvasková, L., Almenara, C. A., & Ježek, S. (2023). Self-esteem and career adaptability: Moderating roles of parental and peer support. *Career Development Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12319>
- Matijaš, M., Seršić, D. M., & Vulić, M. (2021). The Relationship Between Career Adaptability and Job-Search Self-Efficacy of Graduates: The Bifactor Approach. *Journal of Career Assessment*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727211002281>

Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review

- Mehrotra, S., Tripathi, R., & Banu, H. A correlational study of protective factors, resilience and self-esteem in premedical dropouts.
- Nel, P. (2007). Factors influencing persistence of aspiring chartered accountants: a fortigenic approach.
- Prasad, S. V. S., & Rao, P. S. (2017). Causes of Stress among PhD Research Scholars with Reference to Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University: An Empirical Analysis. *International Review of Management and Business Research*.
- Rafie, M. A. M., Noor, N. M., & Yusof, R. (2023). Transforming Higher Education: A conceptual model for fostering career adaptability and mitigating turnover intention among Early Career Academicians (ECA). <https://doi.org/10.21834/e-bpj.v8isi15.5089>
- Rahman, A., Marsidin, S., Sabandi, A., & Jama, J. (2024) Career Adaptability: Analysis of Non-Cognitive Factors in University Students. *Konselor*. <https://doi.org/10.24036/0202413126-0-86>
- Sharma, P., Kong, T. T. C., & Kingshott, R. P. J. (2023). Emotional intelligence and career success: does resilience matter? *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/joe.22196>
- Sihag, V., Rijdsdijk, S. A., & Sharma, R. R. K. (2022). Organizational resilience and employee performance: the mediation of perceived organizational support in the Indian HEIs. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijppm-07-2021-0387>
- Singh, R., Sinha, D., & Sinha, J. B. P. (1988). Psychology in india: a survey of doctoral students. *International Journal of Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207598808247784>
- Solmon, L. C., & Ochsner, N. L. (1979). PhDs in Nonacademic Careers: Are There Good Jobs? Robots or Reinsmen: Job Opportunities and Professional Standing for Collegiate Administrators in the 1980s. *Current Issues in Higher Education, No. 7, 1979*
- Teelken, C., Dany, F., & Louvel, S. (2024). Reimagining Doctorate Holders' Motivations to Make Career Transitions: Exploring Post-PhD Career Prospects Within and Outside Academia. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80262-685-820241006>
- Tien, H. L. S. (2019). Investigating Resilience, Job Search Self-Efficacy and Intentions from Integrating Theory of Planned Behavior and Social Cognitive Model of Self-Career Management. *International journal of psychology and behavioral sciences*.

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Farhan, M. (2026). Resilience and Self-Esteem among Assistant Professor Job Seekers in Psychology at Indian State Universities: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Social Impact*, 11(2), 243-255. DIP: 18.02.023/20261102, DOI: 10.25215/2455/1102023