CHAPTER FOUR

OBJECTIVES AND FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES

This chapter provides the objectives of the study and formulation of hypotheses for the present study. The purpose of the study is presented in the first section followed by formulation of hypotheses. In the last section, the conceptual model is presented along with a brief narrative about the proposed hypotheses represented in the model.

4.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are based on the research gaps identified and presented in the previous chapter. The conceptual model is further developed based on the review of past literature which acts as a framework for the present study.

Based on the research gaps recognized in the previous section, the following three research objectives have been formulated:

1. To examine whether supervisor’s support behavior has an effect on new recruit’s feedback seeking behavior through psychological empowerment.

2. To examine whether new recruit’s feedback seeking behavior has an effect on new recruit’s outcomes in terms of intention to quit, job satisfaction and affective commitment through new recruit’s adjustment.

3. To examine whether organizational socialization tactics have an effect on new recruit’s adjustment in the organization.
4.2 Hypotheses Development

4.2.1 Supervisor’s supportive behavior, new recruit’s psychological empowerment and new recruit’s feedback seeking behavior

In an organization, for a new recruit, supervisors and coworkers are the primary sources of information. Although there is an advantage to seek feedback from experienced peers, still new recruits are likely to prefer supervisors as they are a reliable source of information (Falcione & Wilson, 1988). It is because supervisors typically delegate responsibility, assign tasks to new recruits and supervisors are also responsible for evaluating and rewarding the performance. Morrison, 1993, argued that new recruits collect information on role demands, technical information, and performance feedback mostly by directly asking the supervisors. Bauer and Green, 1998, examined the role of a manager in the process of socialization of new recruits in the organization and suggested that supervisor’s behavior influences the feedback seeking behavior and adjustment of new recruits in the organization. Supervisors can transform the new recruits from outsiders to insiders of the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This transition process is defined as socialization. Further, for socialization, it is important that new recruits acquire information regarding the task, social knowledge, and behaviors accepted in the organization. This information seeking or feedback seeking behavior, acts as a tool for the socialization of new recruits in the organization and supervisor’s support behavior has a positive impact on feedback seeking among newly hired employees.

The supervisor is mainly responsible for empowering new recruits. A wide range of concepts are included under the term “empowerment” (Herrenkohl, Judson & Heffner, 1999), among which the most profoundly used concept is a redistribution of authority and power in the organization (Block, 1993). So how is psychological empowerment created? Conger and Kanungo, 1988, stated that psychological empowerment is entirely dependent on the creation of
circumstances under which a high level of motivation is developed among the employees for task accomplishment based on the feeling of self-efficacy. Based on the reviews of different approaches of psychological empowerment, Menon, 2001, has defined it in three main dimensions as the power of perceived control, perceived competence, and goal internalization. Perceived personal control includes control over the decision at work, information and outcomes. Information is needed to maintain a particular behavior in order to achieve desired outcomes. Here, feedback becomes the valuable and crucial type of information for the new recruit (Ashford & Cummings, 1985). Hence, proper feedback about one's outcome and performance at work are critical in order to experience control and to use one's control possibilities (Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008).

Alicke and Sedikides, 2009, state that feedback message can either boost or hurt the individual’s feelings of self-worth. Thus, it is claimed that perceived competence (self-evaluation of the individual of his/her own worth) has an impact on feedback-seeking behavior. Here, the self-concept (perceived competence and self-esteem) plays a similar role in the feedback-seeking process. VandeWalle and Cummings, 1997, have proposed that the expectancy value of feedback seeking behavior for learning goal oriented individual is more than the self-presentation cost of feedback-seeking behavior due to their positive beliefs about their ability of development. Hence, the individual with a learning goal orientation always has a desire to develop their skills, for the achievement of such development; feedback has a high expectancy value. Thus, an individual with learning goal orientation is likely to be motivated to seek feedback.

In an organizational situation, what role can a supervisor play in creating psychological empowerment for an employee? Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian and Wilk, 2001, stated that the psychological empowerment of an employee in the organization is achieved by creating
empowering working conditions through consistent managerial efforts. The concept is not about only conveying the employees that they are now empowered, but to make them feel that they are actually empowered through behavior. Thus, the supervisor’s behavior is an important way out to promote psychological empowerment of employees (Hancer & George, 2003). Some of the research evidence suggests that the employees who perceive high supportive behavior from their supervisors report greater empowerment than employees who perceive low supportive behavior (Spreitzer, 1996).

The empowered employees are likely to believe that they are capable of successfully performing the given task. They also believe that their action can influence the outcome of operational activities. Here, feedback becomes a valuable tool to link action with the desired outcome (Spreitzer, 1996). Thus, psychologically empowered employees are likely to seek feedback on their performance as well as information to execute the given task. Hence, we hypothesize that:

**H1:** Psychological empowerment will mediate the relationship between Supervisor’s support and new recruit’s feedback-seeking behavior.

**H1a:** Supervisor’s support will have a positive effect on psychological empowerment.

**H1b:** Psychological empowerment will have a positive effect on new recruit’s feedback-seeking behavior.

**H1c:** Supervisor’s support will have a positive effect new recruit’s feedback-seeking behavior.
4.2.2 Organizational socialization tactics and new recruit adjustment

A model of socialization presented by Saks and Ashforth, 1997a, provides socialization tactics as one of the antecedents of new recruit's adjustment. Socialization tactics are defined as an information spreading approach of organization which reduces the uncertainty new recruits go through during organizational entry period and promotes the adjustment in new roles (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). The meta-analysis by Saks, Uggerslev and Fassina, 2007, claimed that organizational socialization tactics have strong influence on new recruit’s adjustment in the organization. Whereas, Perrot et al., 2014, provided clear evidence that organization socialization tactics significantly improve the new recruit’s adjustment in the organization.

The socialization tactics include mentoring, company-sponsored recreational and social events, and training (Chatman, 1991). Mentoring which comes under the social aspect of socialization tactics provided by the organization leads to enhanced social acceptance (Baranik, 2010). Whereas, company-sponsored recreational events such as staff induction which is a part of content aspect of socialization tactics provide communication of fixed timetables and stages of progress in the work which is linked to new recruits role clarity (Antonacopoulou & Güttel, 2010). The context based socialization tactics which include the company designed training program prepares newly hired employees for their job roles and makes them feel confident to perform (Jones, 1986). Hence, we hypothesize that organizational socialization tactics as a holistic construct will have positive impact on the adjustment of newly hired employee. Thus, the hypothesis:

**H2:** Organizational socialization tactics will have a positive effect on new recruit’s adjustment in the organization.
4.2.3 Feedback seeking behavior, new recruit’s adjustment and new recruit's outcomes

Information seeking activity is critical during the newcomer adjustment process (Ashford & Black, 1996). The uncertainty regarding the job and work environment is considered as one of the most prominent hurdles in the adjustment process of newly hired employees (Bauer & Green, 1998). Based on the uncertainty reduction theory the newly hired employees seek information regarding the job-related aspects and social norms in the organization which helps them in the adjustment process (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

Feedback seeking helps employees have better clarity about the way things work in the organization and know what others expect from them. Saks and Ashforth, 1997, stated that new recruit’s feedback seeking behavior positively affects their task mastery and role orientation. The study confirmed that new recruit’s feedback seeking behavior negatively affected their uncertainty and anxiety and promoted their early adjustment in the organization. Thus, feedback seeking helps new recruit to adjust in the organization, which in turn, reduces role ambiguity and uncertainty in work environment. Hence, we hypothesize that:

H3: New recruit’s feedback seeking behavior will have a positive effect on new recruit's adjustment

Furtado, Sobral and Islam, 2015, explained that new recruit’s adjustment in the organization positively affects their job satisfaction. Bauer et al., 2007, stated that role clarity, task mastery and social adjustment are the indicators of new recruit’s adjustment in the organization. The role adjustment (role clarity and task mastery) has positive impact on the job satisfaction of newly hired employees (King et.al, 2005). The meta-analysis conducted by Bauer
et al., 2007, supported the fact that new recruits adjustment in the organization has profound influence on their job satisfaction.

The study conducted by Morrison, 1993, indicated that newly hired employees use feedback seeking behavior as a tool to get clarity about their job profile (role clarity) which can further help them to achieve task mastery. The study also suggested that feedback seeking behavior of newly hired employees has a strong influence on their job satisfaction. The study by Bauer and Green, 1998, has confirmed that job satisfaction of newly hired employees can be well predicted by task adjustment (role clarity and task mastery) and social accommodation (acceptance) in the organization. Thus, based on the past studies it is clear that new recruit’s adjustment and feedback seeking behavior can act as antecedents of their job satisfaction. We hypothesize that all three dimension of new recruit adjustment (role clarity, task mastery and social adjustment) as a holistic construct will positively affect the job satisfaction. Thus, the hypotheses:

H4: New recruit's adjustment will mediate the relationship between new recruit’s feedback seeking behavior and job satisfaction

H4 a: New recruit's adjustment will have a positive effect on job satisfaction

H4 b: New recruit’s feedback seeking behavior will have a positive effect on job satisfaction

The affective commitment of employee refers to the employee’s emotional attachment, identification, and involvement in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The study conducted by Bauer and Green, 1998, highlighted the fact that feedback seeking behavior of newly hired employees helps them to gain more information about the values and goals of the organization which further enhances their involvement in the organization and affective commitment.
New recruit's adjustment facilitates social acceptance in the organization which enhances the emotional attachment as well as involvement in the organization (Bauer et al., 2007). The early adjustment of newly hired employees boosts their commitment towards the organization (Furtado, Sobral & Islam, 2015). Thus, the evidence from the past studies indicates that new recruits who seek feedback and who are well adjusted in the organization are likely to be committed to the organization. Hence, we hypothesize that:

H5: New recruit's adjustment will mediate the relationship between new recruit’s feedback seeking behavior and affective commitment

H5a: New recruit's adjustment will have a positive effect on their affective commitment

H5b. New recruit’s feedback seeking behavior will have a positive effect on their affective commitment

Uncertainty Reduction Theory states that individuals try to reduce uncertainty because they want to create predictable environments (Berger, 1979). But what are the ways by which individual new recruit can reduce uncertainty? As Saks and Ashforth, 1997a, noted, “Uncertainty can be reduced through information made available via various channels of communication, notably social interactions with superiors and peers” (p. 236). As uncertainty decreases, new recruits perform better and are less inclined to leave their organizations (Ashford & Cummings, 1985).

New recruit adjustment is considered as an important part of socialization of newly hired employees in the organization (Bauer et al., 2007). The role adjustment of the newly hired employees is negatively related to their intention to quit (King et.al, 2005). Also, the new recruits who properly understand their role demands, feel they are capable of performing the task and are socially integrated with the organization, are less likely to leave their jobs (Bauer et al., 2007).
Further, Wanous, 1980, has verified the link between uncertainty and early turnover, which indicates that high uncertainty leads to early turnover and vice versa. Thus, a successful new recruits’ adjustment ensures those new recruits are less likely quit the job. Hence, we hypothesize that:

**H6**: New recruit's adjustment will mediate the relationship between new recruit’s feedback seeking behavior and intention to quit.

**H6a**: New recruit's adjustment will have a positive effect on their intention to quit.

**H6b**: New recruit’s feedback seeking behavior will have a positive effect on their intention to quit.

### 4.3. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model proposes paths referring to the relationship between supervisor’s supportive behavior, new recruit’s psychological empowerment, feedback-seeking behavior, organizational socialization tactics, new recruits adjustment, job satisfaction, affective commitment and intention to quit.

The model proposes direct relationships among the variables such as-

- Supervisor’s support behavior will have positive effect on psychological empowerment and new recruit’s feedback-seeking behavior.
- Psychological empowerment will have positive effect on new recruit’s feedback-seeking behavior.
- New recruit’s feedback seeking behavior will have positive impact on new recruit’s adjustment, job satisfaction, affective commitment, whereas negative impact on new recruit’s intention to quit.
• Organizational socialization tactics will have positive impact on new recruit’s adjustment in the organization.

• Lastly, new recruit’s adjustment will have positive impact on job satisfaction, affective commitment, whereas negative impact on new recruit’s intention to quit.

The conceptual model proposes mediating relationships which include-

• Psychological empowerment will mediate the relationship between supervisor’s support and new recruit’s feedback-seeking behavior.

• New recruit's adjustment will mediate the relationship between new recruit’s feedback seeking behavior and new recruit’s outcomes (job satisfaction, affective commitment and intention to quit).

The conceptual model of the study is presented below in figure 4.2.
To sum up, this chapter provides the objective of the study followed by the hypotheses formulation. At the end of the chapter, conceptual model which acts as a framework for the study is presented. The next chapter consists of the research methodology used to test the hypotheses formulated in this chapter. The upcoming Chapter 5 provides information about the measurements of variables present in the conceptual model, the data collection process and statistical tools utilized to analyze the collected data for the present study.

Figure 4.1: The Conceptual Model