

Organizational Socialization & Work Related Attitudes in India's Uncertainty Culture

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Job hopping has become the mantra for the Millennials. In today's dynamic times, managing people turnover is as critical as business turnover. Previous studies indicate that socialization efforts in organizations are one of the important antecedents of work related attitudes like organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational identification and intent to leave. This study aims at examining the impact of organizational socialization on work-related attitudes which may differ depending on employee's need to reduce uncertainty. The results indicate that the socialization practices are reasonably well entrenched in India. Socialization has a weak correlation with organizational commitment, organizational identification, job satisfaction or intention to leave. Thus Western theories cannot be extrapolated to Indian situation because of differences in culture.

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Introduction

In recent times, the world has been witness to increased mobility of people especially the Millennials who keep switching jobs and even careers, with great frequency. In fact, job hopping has become the mantra for this Millennials who are ambitious, technology oriented, confident and risk takers, do not hesitate to explore new opportunities be it anywhere in the world. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the average worker today stays at each of his or her job for 4.4 years, but the expected tenure of the workforce's youngest employee is about half that (Meister, 2012). Researchers observe that the Millennials as compared to previous generations think that job hopping can lead to greater job fulfillment. Sinha (2005) believes that many individuals, in order to earn quick money in a short span of time, change jobs. Therefore, today, management finds it intriguing how to hold on to its flock. These sentiments are echoed by others who feel that companies cannot hold on to people, especially of the frontline sales force, and believe that this trend will continue to rise as the market matures (Pathak & Tripathi, 2010).

As firms disperse their assets and operations across the globe their competitiveness becomes increasingly dependent on their ability to motivate a diverse labor force and the development of positive work-related attitudes in a multinational context (Gelade et al., 2008). The competitive edge for any organization is its 'people' and in today's dynamic times, managing people turnover is as critical as the business turnover. Many reasons are cited by researchers and corporates that trigger the exodus of the employees. A 2012 survey by Net Impact found that 88 percent of workers considered "positive culture" important or essential to their dream job, and 86 percent said the same for work they found "interesting." Thus, it is important to understand the factors that affect the work-related attitudes and behaviors such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational identification and intention to leave in different cultural contexts. Previous studies indicate that socialization efforts in organization are one of the important antecedents of these attitudes (Bauer et al., 2007; Ashforth & Saks, 1996).

Conceptual Framework

Organizational socialization, is defined as the process that facilitates an individual to learn the culture of the new organization, its beliefs, values, orientations, behaviors, skills and so forth-necessary to help them in adapting to the new setting and also help them in performing their new roles and functions effectively with in a new organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The socialization process is mostly based on the

uncertainty reduction theory which posits that newcomers desire to increase the predictability of interactions between themselves and others within the new organization (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Kim et al. (2005:235) recently stated that "the major reason firms use socialization tactics is to reduce some of the uncertainties of a new environment by providing information that guides employees' behaviors". Louis (1980) in his study found that there is growing disillusionment among new members of organizations leading to their early exits and turnovers which have been traced to inadequacies in approaches to organizational entry.

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Institutionalized socialization tactics which strictly structured the socialization program, can affect a variety of constructs that reflect newcomer adjustment because broadening the knowledge of new hires about the work setting reduces the uncertainty and anxiety in the early stage of employment (Bauer et al, 2007; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Jones, 1986). The relationship between organizational socialization and organizational commitment which is defined as a psychological link between the employee and his/ her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996), has been examined in a number of previous

studies. Jones (1986) found that the more institutionalized the form of socialization was, the greater was expressed organizational commitment. Allen & Meyer (1990) and Ashforth & Saks (1996) tested the relationship in a longitudinal research and provide support to Jones (1986)'s findings.

Previous studies also showed that, institutionalized socialization tactics which help employees overcome their anxiety, confusion and concern about their roles related positively with their job satisfaction and negatively with their intention to quit (Jones, 1986; Ashforth & Saks, 1996). Ashforth & Saks (1996) also indicate that institutionalized socialization tactics also positively related with organizational identification which is quite different from the other attitudes defined as binding self-conception with the perceived identity of the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). It is known that conceptions of self are learned by interpreting the responses of others in situated social interactions (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Also socialization may affect identification indirectly by helping internalization of values, beliefs and shared understandings (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Thus it may be expected that institutionalized socialization tactics which provide structured social interactions and internalization of organizational culture for newcomers may increase their organizational identification. Based on this body of work we hypothesize that:

H1: Institutionalized socialization tactics will be positively related to (a) orga-

nizational affective commitment (b) organizational normative commitment, (c) job satisfaction, and (d) organizational identification and relatively related to (e) intention to quit.

Moderating Effect of Uncertainty Avoidance

A culture is shared values, assumptions and beliefs held by a group of members, which influence the attitudes and behavior of the group members. The present study uses House's (2007) GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) study that built upon the findings of Hofstede (1980), Schwartz (1994), Smith & Peterson (1995), and Inglehart (1997) to understand the influence of national culture on norms, values, beliefs, and practices of the Indian employees. House's study identified nine dimensions that could influence business cultures. They include: (1) Power Distance, (2) Uncertainty Avoidance, (3) Humane Orientation, (4) Collectivism I (Institutional), (5) Collectivism II (In-Group), (6) Assertiveness, (7) Gender Egalitarianism, (8) Future Orientation, and (9) Performance Orientation (Hoppe, 2007).

In this study it is assumed that the impact of organizational socialization on work-related attitudes may differ among employees due to uncertainty avoidance culture. Uncertainty avoidance is defined as the extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events (House, 2007). The tendency to avoid

uncertainty in organizations varies along with the tendency to avoid ambiguities in society at large, which is a major component of national culture. Hofstede conceptualized uncertainty avoidance with three components: rule orientation, employment stability and stress. People in such cultures look for structure in their organizations, institutions and relationships, which makes events clearly interpretable and predictable (Hofstede, 2001). Rules and rituals are the ways in which organizations reduce the internal uncertainty caused by the unpredictability of their members' and stakeholder's behavior. As Perrow (1972:29) mentioned, rules stem from past adjustments and seek to stabilize the present and future. Rituals also help to reduce uncertainty by keeping people together and try to control future. Thus people in high uncertainty avoiding culture have greater need for culture, rules, group norms and rituals to reduce ambiguity. They tend to attach themselves to the dominant cultural group and comply with its expectations (Hofstede, 1980; 2001).

Rules stem from past adjustments and seek to stabilize the present and future.

Hofstede also claims that since individuals high in uncertainty avoidance seek greater career stability, formal rules, and avoid risk. They have longer job tenure and fewer intentions of leaving their organizations. Chew and Putti (1995) found that individuals high on uncertainty avoidance tend to have long tenure in their organizations. These individuals deal

with their uncertainty by becoming committed to organizational goals and values and continuing in their relationship with the organization because of the potential loss in leaving (Clugston et al., 2000). Recently, Backer and Carson, (2011) suggested that individuals high in uncertainty avoidance attach themselves to their work group/organization and proactively adapt to the future environment to reduce uncertainty while individuals with the lowest uncertainty avoidance have neither the need to attach or adapt. These findings support our contention that employee's uncertainty avoidance tendency moderates the influence of institutionalized socialization programs on employee's organizational commitment. It is argued that since employees high in uncertainty avoidance have greater tendency to rules, loyalty and emotional attachment to work and organization, institutionalized socialization programs may have stronger effect on their desire to stay with the organization based on a sense of duty/ obligation or emotional attachment than employees low in uncertainty avoidance.

H2(a): The effects of institutionalized socialization tactics on affective organizational commitment will be low in nations low on uncertainty avoidance tendency.

H2(b): The effects of institutionalized socialization tactics on normative organizational commitment will be low for nations that are low on uncertainty avoidance tendency.

In the early stage of the employment the newcomers, faced with an ambig-

ous, uncertain situation, experience a “reality shock,” on entering the new situation. As a result of the anxiety or stress generated by this unknown or unusual situation, the newcomers’ prime concern is to clarify the rules of the game and expectations of others. Organizations’ socialization practices control the shock of newcomers and reduce uncertainty by defining the organizational context (Jones, 1986). Particularly with institutionalized socialization tactics; new employees go through common learning experiences design to produce standardized responses to situations, provide explicit information concerning the sequences of activities or experiences they will go through in their organizations. Also these tactics provide new employees knowledge of time tables associated with their learning process and experienced organizational members act as role model (mentor) for them in this process (Jones, 1986). Therefore institutionalized socialization tactics create an interpretable and predictable environment for the newcomers.

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Thus, we argue that to have high job satisfaction, employees from nations with high uncertainty avoidance may have greater need to institutionalized socialization programs when they enter the new organization. This way they can gather the structured information about the rules, results and rewards of their behaviors in

the organization and meet the predictable and interpretable environment that they desired. We expect that organizational socialization impact on job satisfaction will be stronger for employees from nations with high uncertainty avoidance tendency than the employees from nations with low uncertainty avoidance tendency

H2(c): The effects of institutionalized socialization tactics on job satisfaction will be low for nations having low uncertainty avoidance tendency.

Employees in high uncertainty avoidance try to control their present environment through strong identification with their group (Baker & Carson, 2011). This identification with the organization can be explained by social identity theory which suggests that individuals will classify themselves social categories on the basis of various factors, such as the organization they work. This classification helps order to the environment and provides them with the comfort of belonging to a group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). In countries with high uncertainty avoidance, individuals see their culture and race as superior and desire to maintain traditions. When members feel threatened by uncertain situations, they handle this anxiety by identification with his group so that the environment will be more predictable (Baker & Carson, 2011). Thus we expect that since institutionalized socialization provides more predictable environment, it may be a more important predictor of organizational identification for employees from nations with high uncertainty avoidance tendency than the employees from nations with low uncertainty avoidance tendency.

H2(d): The effects of institutionalized socialization tactics on organizational identification will be low with nations having low uncertainty avoidance tendency.

As mentioned before, the employees from nations with high uncertainty avoidance tendency show more loyalty to their organizations, have more tenure and have low intention to quit than employees from nations with low uncertainty avoidance tendency. Because the stress caused by uncertainty makes them seek greater stability in the organization and avoid risks, they show longer tenure in their firm (Clugston et al., 2000; Hofstede, 2001). When individual's values condition his/her desire to remain in the firm, the influence of other factors may have over such an employee's attitude decreases in importance. However, when the employees have low uncertainty avoidance values, the uncertainty situations do not cause him any anxiety so that his intention to remain in the firm would be determined to a greater extent by other factors (García-Cabrera & García-Soto, 2011). With this rationale, we expect that when employees have high uncertainty avoidance tendency, rather than other factors, institutionalized socialization tactics, which decreases the stress caused by uncertainty, will be an important factor that affects the employee's intention to remain in the firm.

H2 (e): The effects of institutionalized socialization tactics on intention to quit will be stronger for employees from nations with low uncertainty avoidance tendency.

Rationale for the Study

Two latest meta-analytic review (Saks et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 2007) on socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment mentioned that in the past 20 years , there has been little attempt to go beyond the basic socialization approach (Van Maanen& Schein, 1979; Jones, 1986) other than the addition of adjustment outcomes such as job performance and perceived job (PJ) fit and perceived organization (PO) fit (Ashforth& Saks, 1996; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Kim et al., 2005) and indicated that focusing on the direct relationship between socialization tactics and newcomer attitudes has led to limited theoretical advancement in understanding of socialization tactics. To date, very few researches considered the socialization tactics and its outcomes from an interactionist perspective. It is suggested that more attention should be given to moderator variables to explain the effect of socialization tactics on outcomes (Saks et al., 2007). There is a need to explore these topics in the Indian context since this study assumes that the importance of organizational socialization may be different in different cultural contexts. Thus far, the researchers who have tried to find out if the North American behavioral theories are relevant in different cultural contexts reported that uncritical adaptation of HRM practices evolved in the Western cultural values may not be effective in other socio-cultural environments (Ayca et al., 2000). The recent phenomenon of globalization and integration of different cultures demands for comparative cultural studies to explain effectiveness of different HRM practices in different cultural contexts.

But the literature survey indicates that organizational socialization and its consequences have not been studied in a cross-cultural context and there is hardly any research to be found that analyses the moderating effect of the cultural values influence the organizational socialization tactics on the attitudes and behaviors of the employee. Hence this study aims at examining how the impact of organizational socialization on work-related attitudes may differ depending on employee's need to reduce uncertainty. The findings of the study may make contribution to organizational psychology and human resource management literature and give insight to practitioners about how organization's socialization practices may differ in consequences between employees from nations with high and low uncertainty avoidance tendencies

Research Design

An exploratory research study was undertaken to examine the impact of socialization tactics on various work related attitudes in the Indian cultural context which is characterized as low on uncertainty avoidance tendency.

Participants & Data Collection

The study have focused on employees working in different industries: banks, IT and ITes, automobile, consulting, financial institutions etc from India in order to understand how uncertainty avoidance tendency moderates the effect of institutionalized socialization tactics on work related attitudes. The data was collected from white collar employees

working in 41 private organizations located in major cities in India. The survey produced 140 usable responses. The demographic characteristics of the Indian sample are as follows: gender (male: 70 percent, female: 30 percent), age (Mean: 27, SD: 5.9, 20-29 years: 87.1 percent, 30-39 years: 5.7 percent, 40-52 years: 7.2 percent). The sample held at least a bachelor's degree. The majority of the sample tenure was less than 3 years (78%). The original survey form consists of two main parts: (1) items to assess institutionalized socialization tactics and (2) items to assess work-related attitudes.

Measures

Self-report measures for constructs that are examined - institutionalized socialization tactics and work-related attitudes: organizational commitment, organizational identification, job satisfaction and intention to quit- are available in literature. However, before using these measures, constructs were assessed taking into account the country specific characteristics. All construct items have been kept except one item belonging to normative commitment. All the items in the survey questionnaire used a five-point Likert response scale (from 1, not at all to 5, strongly agree). However, pre-testing of scales was performed for the Indian national version. Description on measures of each variable is provided below.

Institutionalized Socialization Tactics: To measure the socialization tactics that individuals experienced at their organizations, the socialization scale devel-

oped by Jones (1986) and reduced by Cable & Parsons (2001) was used. This scale consists of 2 items from each of the six socialization tactics that loaded on three socialization factors- content, context and social aspect. Using a 5-point Likert scale with higher scores indicates the perception of greater institutionalized socialization.

Organizational Commitment: The affective and normative organizational commitment subscales adapted from Meyer et al. (1996) were used to measure individuals' commitment. The pilot study analyses revealed that one item of the scale may have been interpreted differently in the Indian context; this item was dropped. The 5-question affective and 6-question normative commitment sub-dimensions' internal consistency were reported as ($\alpha = 0,69$ and $\alpha = 0,76$) respectively and confirmatory factor analysis results ($\chi^2/df = 1.84$, GFI = 0,85, CFI = 0,91, TLI = 0,89, RMSEA = 0,06) showed adequate fit in the Indian context.

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is assessed as the employees' general judgment for their work as well. For the measurement of job satisfaction, the Michigan Organizational Values Scale consisting of 3 questions designed by Cammann et al. (1979) was used. The internal consistency was reported as ($\alpha = 0,77$).

Organizational Identification: Mael & Ashforth's (1992) six-item scale was used in order to assess the organizational identification of individuals. The internal consistency was reported as ($\alpha = 0.88$) and Confirmatory factor

analysis results ($\chi^2 (9) : 39,98^{***}$, $\chi^2/df = 4,4$ GFI = 0,97 AGFI = 0,92 CFI = 0,97 SRMSR = 0,03 RMSEA = 0,09) revealed that one factor model showed adequate fit in the Indian context.

Intention to Leave: The scale adopted from Meyer et al. (1993) and Moore (2000) was used to measure the intention to leave. The scale is composed of 5 questions and consolidates under a single factor. The internal consistency of the scale was reported as ($\alpha = 0,74$) and Confirmatory factor analysis results ($\chi^2/df = 7,8$ GFI = 0,95 AGFI = 0,86 CFI = 0,93 RMSR = 0,04 RMSEA = 0,10) showed adequate fit.

Results

For analysis, descriptive statistics and correlations have been calculated using SPSS version 22. In descriptive statistics both the measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion have been calculated. Table 1 and Table 2 are for descriptive statistics. Table 3 and Table 4 show correlations. In the case of correlations the Pearson Coefficient has been calculated at a significance level of 0.05 (2 tailed).

Socialization Score with a mean of 3.496 and median score of 3.5 on a 1 to 5 point scale means the organizations represented by employees surveyed have strong socialization practices.

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With mean as a measure of central tendency, organizational identification scores are higher as compared to the scores for socialization, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and intention to leave.

Table 1 Measures of Central Tendency (N = 140)

Measures of Central Tendency	Socialization	Organizational Commitment	Organizational Identification	Job Satisfaction	Intention To Leave
Mean	3.496	3.156	3.746	3.671	3.097
Median	3.500	3.091	4.000	4.000	3.200

Table 2 Measures of Dispersion (N=140)

Measures of Dispersion	Socialization	Organizational Commitment	Organizational Identification	Job Satisfaction	Intention To Leave
Standard Deviation	0.560	0.519	0.759	0.997	1.081
Inter-quartile Range	0.750	0.841	0.833	0.667	1.850

When it comes to standard deviation, the highest dispersion of data is seen in intention to leave followed by job satisfaction and organizational identification. When we negate the effect of outliers and use Inter-quartile range, the highest dispersion of scores is in case of intention to leave, followed by organizational commitment and organizational identification.

Further, analysis was done to find how the socialization scores, organizational identification scores, organizational commitment scores, job satisfaction scores and intention to leave scores were related to each other. Table 3 gives a summary of these correlations.

Table 3 Correlation with Socialization (N = 140)

Items	Pearson Correlation Value
Socialization and Organizational Commitment	0.440
Socialization and Organizational Identification	0.237
Socialization and Job Satisfaction	0.447
Socialization and Intention To Leave	0.363

There is weak correlation between socialization and each of the four constructs namely organizational commitment, organizational identification, job satisfaction and intention to leave. It is to be noted that all these correlation values are significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed).

From Table 4 we can also infer that the correlations between organizational commitment and job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intention to leave, job satisfaction and intention to leave are strong. Rest of the correlation values are small. All the correlation values are significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed).

Table 4 Correlation (N = 140)

Items	Pearson Correlation Value
Organizational Commitment and Organizational Identification	0.591
Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction	0.703
Organizational Commitment and Intention To Leave	0.791
Organizational Identification and Job Satisfaction	0.532
Organizational Identification and Intention to Leave	0.516
Job Satisfaction and Intention To Leave	0.773

Discussion

As the results indicate Indians appear to have a high tolerance for uncertainty thus have low values of uncertainty avoidance. However, they do have a high future orientation. Both high tolerance for uncertainty and high future orientation are based on the general long-term and “hereafter” approach. The analysis of the descriptive statistics indicate that the majority of the employees from various Industries find the culture in their respective organizations very conducive that helps them in adapting to the new setting and also in performing their new roles and functions effectively. They admit to have gone through a set of training experiences designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of job related skills. Further, the results also reveal that the new sets of employees are extensively involved with other new recruits in common, job related activities and they are put through the same set of learning experiences. The employees perceive that the steps in the career ladder

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are clearly specified in their specific organizations and they are communicated well in time how their career will progress within the fixed timetable of events. Also, the results unravel that the new employees are not expected to perform their normal job responsibilities until they are thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods. More so, their colleagues make all effort to help them adjust to the organizational culture. It can be also inferred from the results that the employees from the IT sector in India strongly identify with their respective organizations and they have strong commitment towards their respective organizations. The employees feel a personal responsibility to continue working for their organizations as the organizations have a great deal of personal meaning for them. They identify so much with their respective organizations if someone criticizes their organizations they take it as their personal insult. They are concerned about the reputation \brand of the organization. In fact, they will be happy spending the rest of their career with the organization. The results also confirm the hypothesis that employees working for companies where they are in tune with its culture are generally happy working there and are thus, satisfied with their jobs. As they like their

jobs their intent to leave the company also gets weaker. They would like to work for this particular company at least for next few years more.

However, despite the employees giving high score to institutional socialization with respect to their organizations, the low correlation score shows no significant relationship between the institutional socialization and the work related attitudes in the Indian context. The results clearly indicate that the high Institutionalized socialization programs bear no or at the most minimal impact on the employees loyalty towards their respective organizations. The positive socialization tactics may create an interpretable and predictable environment for the newcomers, but it does not get translated into the employees' job satisfaction or strong identification with the organization. Further, the poor correlation value does not show any strong relationship between the socialization and the employees' intent to leave. That the companies may provide a stable, strong environment does not deter the Indian employees' from seeking new employment. Thus the low influence of high and positive socialization effect on employees' organizational commitment, job satisfaction, or organization identification could be attributed to the fact that the Indian employees' who are used to the culture of uncertainty at their workplace are not strongly

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affected by the predictable environment as provided by the company. The culture of uncertainty does not cause them stress or anxiety as they have subconsciously accepted that the clarification of expectations is inevitably an imperfect process in the Indian set up. More so, they are used to be left to their own devices to learn about the norms, job roles, and culture of an organization by just observing their seniors perform. They are aware what a superior wants and how well a subordinate understands it is rarely in perfect balance. They are ready for any kind of eventuality or unforeseen events at their workplace and do not have any expectation to get any kind of support or clarification from their respective bosses. This perhaps explains why a positive culture that promotes rules, group norms and rituals to reduce ambiguity is not their priority or a factor that will bind them to their organizations. However, the results of correlation among the various work attitudes indicate that employees who are positively committed towards their organizations are generally found to be satisfied with their jobs. Also, the correlation results reveal that the Indian employees who are loyal to their organizations are also emotionally involved with their respective organizations. They identify their success with the success of their organizations. Thus, they feel obliged and reluctant to leave their organizations. They strongly feel that their value and personality fit exactly with the values and personalities of their respective organizations. So, at no point of time in their career, they think of quitting their organizations.

Conclusion

Socialization practices are reasonably well entrenched in India. Most of the employees rated their organizations high on socialization. Western theories cannot be extrapolated to Indian population because of differences in culture. In the Indian context, socialization has a weak correlation with organizational commitment, organizational identification, job satisfaction or intention to leave.

India being a low uncertainty avoidance country, institutionalized socialization practices have a marginal effect on organizational commitment, organizational identification, job satisfaction or intention to leave. Further terms like organizational commitment, organizational identification, job satisfaction, intention to leave are strongly related to each other in the Indian context.

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