

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIALISATION  
FOLLOWING ENTRY INTO AN ORGANISATION**

by

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## ABSTRAK

Masa tempoh penyesuaian yang diperlukan untuk seseorang pekerja baru untuk mencapai tahap kecekapan yang diperlukan adalah penting untuk majikan mahupun pekerja sendiri. Dalam projek penyelidikan ini, data mengenai 91 orang jurutera yang bertugas di 3 buah syarikat pengeluaran yang berlainan diperolehi. Dengan analisa korelasi dan regresi langkah-demi-langkah, didapati bahawa ciri-ciri pekerjaan, sokongan rakan sekerja, sokongan penyelia dan kejelasan peranan mendatangkan pengaruh yang besar dalam proses membolehkan jurutera-jurutera baru menyesuaikan diri kepada suasana pekerjaan dan memberikan sumbangan kepada syarikat. Secara purata, seseorang jurutera baru mengambil masa kira-kira 6 bulan untuk menyesuaikan diri untuk mencapai tahap kecekapan yang diperlukan.

Dalam penyelidikan ini, didapati bahawa ukuran angkubah-angkubah yang dipertimbangkan, iaitu sokongan rakan sekerja, tekanan masa, kejelasan peranan, ciri-ciri pekerjaan, taktik-taktik sosialisasi secara bersiri atau disjunktif, taktik-taktik sosialisasi secara formal atau tidak formal dan sokongan penyelia, adalah lebih kurang sama sahaja di antara syarikat-syarikat yang dikaji, sungguhpun syarikat-syarikat ini berkecimpung dalam jenis-jenis industri yang berlainan, malahan berasal dari negara Amerika Syarikat dan Jepun yang jauh berbeza dari segi kebudayaan. Ini disebabkan syarikat-syarikat di Malaysia dijawati terutamanya oleh penduduk tempatan. Justeru itu, syarikat tersebut adalah sama dari segi kebudayaan dan gaya pengurusanannya. Namun begitu, pengaruh angkubah-angkubah terhadap sosialisasi berbeza dari sebuah syarikat ke sebuah syarikat yang lain disebabkan perbezaan struktur organisasi antara syarikat-syarikat tersebut.

Adalah dicadangkan kepada pengurus-pengurus agar menekankan pentingnya ciri-ciri pekerjaan, sokongan penyelia, sokongan rakan sekerja dan kejelasan peranan dalam mereka-bentuk program-program sosialisasi untuk jurutera-jurutera baru.

Dengan demikian, jurutera-jurutera baru akan menguasai kerjanya dan mencapai tahap kecekapan yang diperlukan dengan masa yang secepat mungkin.

## ABSTRACT

The time required by a new engineer to become proficient at his or her job is important to both the employee and employer. In this study, data were gathered from 91 engineers who were working in three different manufacturing companies. By correlation analysis and step-wise regression analysis, it was found that Job Characteristics ( Motivating Potential Score), coworker support, supervisory support and role clarity contributed significantly in enabling new engineers to adapt themselves to their work setting and start to contribute to the company. On the average, a new engineer took about 6 months of socialization to become proficient at his or her job.

It was found that the level of independent variables explored , namely coworker support, time pressure, role clarity, job characteristics ( motivating potential score ), serial vs. disjunctive type of socialization tactics, formal vs. informal type of socialization tactics and supervisory support, were approximately the same among the three companies, even though they were in different type of industries and were from different countries of origin, namely was United States and Japan. This is because they were mostly staffed by locals and therefore the culture and style of management was homogenous. However, the impact of each of the independent variables on new engineer's socialization varied from one organisation to another in accordance with the organisation structure.

It was proposed that managers must emphasize on job characteristics, supervisory support, coworker support and role clarity in designing socialization programmes for new engineers to enable them to achieve the required level of proficiency at work as soon as possible after the employment started.



## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The purpose of a profit-making organisation is to maximise both its short-term and long term profits so that it will continue to survive and prosper. The organisation maximises its profits by converting its input to output by adding values to the input more effectively and efficiently than its competitors. Operating in a business scene characterised by increasing competitive intensity in most industries and increasing complexity of most organisations, it is even more imperative nowadays that a company must persistently fortify its strengths and reducing its weaknesses so that it will be able to maintain its relative effectiveness and efficiency vis-a-vis its competitors. With its strengths, the company would be able to capitalise on any opportunities and protect itself from any threats presented by the environment.

An organisation's resources constitute its strengths and weaknesses. Resources include human resources (the experiences, capabilities, knowledge, skills, and judgement of all the organisation's employees), organisational resources (the firm's systems and processes, including its strategies, structure, culture, purchasing/material management, production/operations, financial base, research and development, marketing, information system, and control systems), and physical resources (plant and equipment, geographic locations, access to raw materials, distribution network, and technology). In an optimal setting, all three types of resources work together to give an organisation a sustained competitive advantage. Sustained competitive advantage refers to valuable strategies that cannot be fully duplicated by the organisation's competitors and that result in high financial returns over a lengthy period of time. Although all three forms of resources are of great importance to an organisation, greater emphasis is always placed on an organisation's human

resources. This is because even the most superb organisational and physical resources are useless without a superior work force. Therefore, the organisation attempts to integrate or socialize its new members in order to have a superior work force. When individuals join an organisation, they enter an unknown world filled with new experiences, challenges, and potential threats. This initial period is important for both the individual and the organisation, because considerable turnover (voluntary and involuntary) occurs during this matching period. Some employees discover that they simply cannot, or do not wish to, handle their assigned jobs to the level of expectations placed upon them. For a variety of reasons they discover, somewhat too late, that a mistake has been made and choose to leave. Others who learn to cope, to adapt, even to enjoy their new positions, and they decide to remain and some even become excellent performers on their jobs.

## 1.2 DEFINITION

According to Steers and Black (1994), socialization may be defined as a concerted attempt by one's colleagues and the organisations to exert subtle pressures - overt or covert - to shape one into the desired kind of employees.

According to Luthans (1992), socialization is a process through which a individual learns the values, norms, and behaviour patterns which, from the organisation's and work group's points of view, and it is necessary for any new organisational members to learn.

According to Ivancevich and Matteson (1990), socialisation is a process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviours, and social knowledge essential for assuming an organisational role and for participating as an organisation member.

In brief, organisational socialization is a process through which an individual become adapted to the organisational setting and become an insider instead of an outsider.

In this study, the term "new engineers" refers to engineers who have just started their employment with a company. They could be fresh graduates or engineers who previously work in some other companies. "First jobbers" refers to engineers who are fresh graduates when joining their current company , and "job changers" were engineers who had been working in some other organisations before joining their current company.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES**

Organisational socialization has been an area of study for many scholars. Time to proficiency (Pinder and Schroeder, 1987), new employees' coping strategies (Feldman and Brett, 1983), role outcomes (Jones, 1986), stress and adjustment process of newcomers, behavioural commitment (Iverson and Roy, 1994), organisational commitment (Buchanan, 1974), were explored as the outcome of organisational socialisation process versus a range of independent variables which include social support, role clarity, socialization tactics and intrinsic motivation. The objective of this study is to find out :

- 1) The duration of time needed by an engineer to become proficient at his job after joining a manufacturing organisation,
- 2) Which factors have significant impact on the outcome of socialization - time to proficiency after organisational entry, and
- 3) How do the outcome and its dependent variables vary from one organisation to another according to the type of industries the country where the head-quarters are located.

### **1.4 IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ON SOCIALIZATION**

The speed and effectiveness of socialization determine employee loyalty, commitment, productivity, and turnover. The basic stability and effectiveness of organisations therefore depend upon their ability to socialize new members. Without

adequate degree of socialization, employees would diffuse their work efforts, often in conflicting directions, because of disagreements over the major purpose and values of the organisation.

For new employees, accepting a post in an organisation could mean disruption in patterns and routines, both on the job and in their personal lives. This can produce anxiety and stress. Therefore, it is important for newcomers to be able to reach acceptable standards of job performance as soon as possible.

For an organisation, the speed at which newcomers become effective and proficient at their new jobs is important because in most cases, the total inducements an organisation provides will exceed the total contributions a newcomer makes for some time during the entry period of adjustment. The longer the time required for a person to adjust and become proficient, the greater the cost of socialization.

## **1.5 PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The purposes of this research are :

- 1) To establish a standard for new engineers in Malaysia based on the mean of time to proficiency reported by respondents,
- 2) To provide guidelines for engineering supervisors, managers and senior engineers to design socialization programmes for new engineers based upon independent variables.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIALIZATION

Organisational socialization is the process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviours, and social knowledge essential for assuming an organisational role and for participating as an organisational member. Regardless of an individual's previous socialization experiences, each role change involves socialisation into the new role and setting.

"Reality shock " is a phrase used to characterize what newcomers often experience in entering unfamiliar organisational settings. At that particular moment of entry, all surroundings, that is the entire organisationally-based physical and social world, are changed. There is no gradual exposure and no real way to confront the situation a little at a time. Rather, the newcomer's senses are simultaneously inundated with many unfamiliar cues. It may not be clear to the newcomer just what constitutes a cue, let alone what the cues refer to, which cues require response, or how to interpret and select responses to them.

In taking a new role, the newcomer is typically given some time in which to " get up to speed " , that is, to master the basics of the job and to perform at or above some minimum level. In addition, the newcomer must also learn the organisation culture.

#### 2.2 CONTENT OF SOCIALIZATION

Two basic kinds of content can be distinguished in socialisation (Louis, 1980). The first is role related learning, and the second is a more general appreciation of the culture of an organisation.

In order to perform adequately in a new role, an individual needs ability, motivation, and an understanding of what others expect. Ideally, during

socialization, the newcomer's role-relevant abilities are identified, others' expectation are conveyed and negotiated, and incentives and sanctions are clarified, with the aim of enhancing motivation to perform. Essential elements of any role a newcomer assumes are knowledge base, strategy and mission. The newcomer must also understand critical organisational values in order to identify essential role behaviours, those that must be performed to avoid risk of expulsion.

In learning the culture, newcomers develop a definition of the situation which is a scheme for interpreting everyday events in the setting. Newcomers need situation- or culture-specific interpretation schemes in order to make sense of happenings in the setting and to respond with meaningful and appropriate actions.

### **2.3 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS**

Pinder and Schroeder (1987) conducted a study on factors which may possibly related to how easily and how quickly employees become proficient in new jobs after job transfers. Data was collected from a sample of 603 employees, mostly managers, who worked for companies in which internal transfers were common. The dependent variable was time to proficiency following job transfers. Promotion, change in function, job difficulty, job complexity, job similarity, skill requirements, role clarity, cooperation, time pressure, supervisory support, coworkers' support and frequency of previous transfers were independent variables. The authors found that subjective factors, such as levels of perceived support and perceived differences between new and old jobs, were more critical predictors of self-reported time to proficiency than more objective measures like frequency of previous transfer experiences, changes in function, or changes in hierarchical level. This study did provide a model of socialization for experienced employees undergoing internal job changes.

Feldman and Brett (1983) conducted a study on differences in coping strategies used by new hires and job changers when they crossed the boundary of organisations. The data was collected on a sample of 80 people working in a corporation. The result

of the analysis showed that job changers tried harder to control and change their job situations than did new hires, who seek out more social support and more assistance from others. However, there was no systematic differences between job changers and new hires in the degree of palliative coping. When these two studies are matched together, the interesting question left unanswered is, "What are the factors which may predict a new hire's speed of adjustment during socialization after the new hire has joined an organisation?"

A great deal of literature and studies can be found on the subject of employee socialization and adaptation, employee commitment, performance and so forth. Although the literature does not provide a direct answer to the question asked, it does provide valuable clues to help develop a hypothetical model for investigation.

A number of authors concentrated on social support as an important variable contributing towards organisational socialization. Fisher (1985) conducted a study that focused on the role played by social support on the job from coworkers and supervisor in facilitating newcomer adjustment and in mitigating the effects of unmet-expectations stress. The study investigated the interrelationships of stress, social support, and outcomes at work, using a sample of newly graduated nurses in their first six months on full-time hospital jobs. Social support from coworkers and supervisors was found to have important main effects in reducing the level of un-met-expectations stress and facilitating positive outcomes among newcomers. Based on this finding, it advocated that social support should be made available to new employees by providing opportunities for substantial contact with the superior and more experienced peers.

Kram and Isabella (1985) investigated peer relationships and its function as substitute for mentor relationship in the process of career development. The study was conducted on employees from a large manufacturing company through interviews. As a result of the study, a continuum of peer relationships (information peer, collegial peer and special peer) was delineated and the developmental functions

provided by those relationships were outlined. The conclusion of the study stressed that peer relationships had the potential to offer almost all individuals some means for growth and support at any time in their careers.

Another study which found that social support is an important factor affecting organisation was conducted by Iverson and Roy (1994). They conducted a test on a causal model of behavioural commitment by studying on a sample of blue-collar employees from a manufacturing firm in Australia. The finding reveals that the variables, rank ordered in terms of importance for their total causal effects on the decision process of employee to stay or leave an organisation is as follows : job search, job satisfaction, job security, attitudinal commitment, union participation, environmental opportunities, physical conditions, job hazards, met expectations, equity, family responsibility, centralization, supervisory support, and work group cohesion.

There were also studies conducted in Malaysia which showed the importance of social support in organisations. Lunjew, Rahim M. Sail and Abu Daud Silong (1995) investigated factors associated with employee participation and its relationships with performance and job satisfaction. Variables included were individual demographical variables, job abilities, personality traits, motivation to participate, perceived task attributes, perceived superior attributes, work pressure, pace of change, level of job participation, job satisfaction and performance. Data was collected from 250 trainers working in eight Malaysian public sector training institutions through questionnaires. It was found that a combination of superior's supportive nature, superior's degree of authoritarianism, need for independence and work pressure could explain almost 47 per cent in the variation of trainers' participation in decision-making in their organisations. Level of employee participation will contribute towards job satisfaction and job performance. Hence, Porter and Lawler's expectancy model is suitable as a framework for studying employee participation in Malaysia .



In addition to social support, role clarity has also been given attention. Buchanan (1974) conducted a study on factors contributing towards building organisational commitment and how the effects of these factors vary with organisational tenure. The variables included in this study were role clarity, peer group cohesion, group attitude towards organisation, expectation realization, first year job challenge, work commitment norms, personal importance, self-image reinforcement, fear for failure and organisational dependability. The data was collected through questionnaires distributed to business and government managers. It was found that the combined effects of personal importance, first-year group attitudes toward organisation, organisational dependability, organisational commitment norms, first-year job challenge and current group attitudes toward organisation and peer group cohesion explained 68 % of the variation in organisational commitment. Significance of variables varies in accordance with organisational tenure. It also suggested that additional research efforts were needed to study how commitment was maintained at mature career stages.

Another research which studied the impacts of role clarity was conducted by Netemeyer, Burton and Johnston (1995). They conducted a test to study the relationship among role perception variables, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover. The purpose was to find the most appropriate model that best describes the relationship among these variables. The authors found that role conflict, role ambiguity contributed to role overload, tension, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intention to leave and turnover.

In addition to social support and role clarity, job characteristic may also have important impacts on employees, hence organisations. Johns, Jia Lin Xie and Yongqing Fang (1992) conducted a study on the mediating and moderating effects specified by the Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model. Data was collected from 300 lower level managers through questionnaire. The variables included in this study were skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy,

feedback, meaningfulness, responsibility, knowledge of result, general satisfaction, internal motivation, growth satisfaction, turnover cognition and self-rated performance, personal characteristics, context satisfaction and instrumentality. The results provided good support for the basic Job Characteristics Model, especially for the mediating role of the psychological states. It also showed that personal characteristics, context satisfaction and instrumentality did impose moderating effects on the model.

In the job characteristic model which has just been cited, intrinsic motivation is deemed an important variable driving an employee's performance. This was again supported by Arnold (1985) who investigated the relation between task performance, perceived competence and attributed causes of performance as determinants of intrinsic motivation. The study was conducted upon volunteer subjects who engaged in a task that was highly intrinsically motivating under three conditions: no pay, fixed reward, and performance-contingent reward. The findings indicated that extrinsic rewards had no effect on either behavioural or self-reported measures of intrinsic motivation, or upon two intervening variables, perceived competence and attributions. Level of task performance was significantly related to perceived competence and attributions, which were in turn significantly related to measures of intrinsic motivation. Locus of control was significantly related to external attribution of the causes of task performance.

Job characteristic model is not alone in claiming the importance of task performance feedback. Lee, Ashford, Walsh and Mowday (1992) investigated the effect of commitment propensity on the development of subsequent organisational commitment and voluntary turnover. It was a 4-year, longitudinal study conducted on new cadets entering the United States Air Force Academy. It was found out that initial commitment, measured at the time of entry, predicted voluntary turnover across a 4-year period. And, it was also found that perceptions of the utility of

organisational and task feedback were positively correlated to organisational commitment.

Socialization tactics was an important variable contributing towards organisational socialisation. Jones (1986) investigated the relationship between the socialization tactics employed by organisations and a series of role and personal outcomes. He also examined the effects of self-efficacy on role orientation. The study tried to answer two questions: 1) How the information provided by organisations through their socialization practices may influence the way newcomers adjust to the organisation, and 2) Whether newcomers' level of self-efficacy may moderate the effects of these socialization practices on their subsequent role orientations. Data was collected from MBA graduates through 2 questionnaires. They completed the first after they had accepted jobs but before they joined their organisation; they completed the second one approximately five months after joining. It was discovered that institutionalized tactics lead to custodial role orientations, and individualized tactics to innovative role orientations. The results also suggest that self-efficacy moderates this learning process, especially that socialisation tactics produce a stronger custodial role orientation when newcomers possess low levels of self-efficacy.

Meyer, Bobacel and Allen (1991) conducted a longitudinal study on the influence of prospective and retrospective rationality in the development of organisational commitment during the first year of employment. The sample consisted of university graduates who had just accepted full-time permanent employment with a number of different organisations. The variables explored in the study were volition, irrevocability, importance of decision, job scope, confirmation of expectation and investment in the job. The findings were more consistent with a prospective than a retrospective-rationality view of development of commitment. The best predictors of affective commitment were the job quality and decision-quality variables. Continuance commitment correlated most strongly with the pre- and post-entry measures of perceived alternatives. Hence, the authors is advocated that

organisations can be instrumental in the development of affective commitment in their employees by providing job-seekers with accurate information and provide new hires with quality work experiences.

Apart from the organisational factors, Taylor and Giannantonio (1993) stated that organisational staffing activities are driven by the nature of the business strategy that the organisation is pursuing. Business strategies can be classified as prospector strategy, defender strategy, analyzer strategy and reactor strategy. These strategies affects the human resource management activities that the organisation needs to engage in to attract, develop and retain individuals with the appropriate skill mix. Therefore, organisational socialization process is also affected by the nature of the business which the company is in. This idea was supported by Marchington's (1990) findings. In his longitudinal study carried out upon 4 multi-plant private sector organisations; it was found that market conditions will facilitate the adoption of a resource-based style of management or aggressive employee relation approach depending on its degree of competition. In addition to the nature of business and market condition which will affect the style of management which will in turn affect the organisational process, the cultural background of an organisational may also be of some degree of significance. Culpan and Kucukenioglu (1993) conducted a comparison study on US and Japanese Management Styles and unit effectiveness. Data were collected through mail questionnaires from managers from American and Japanese manufacturing firms. The variables included in this study were supervision style, decision-making, communication pattern, interdepartmental relations, paternalistic orientation, control mechanism and perceived unit effectiveness. It was found that the managerial styles in the U.S. and Japan differed to each other in all six managerial dimensions. The authors suggested that the differential application of managerial dimensions can be offered as an explanation for differential unit effectiveness. With this, one question which is worthy of being asked is whether the outcome of socialization in Japanese and American companies in Malaysia are

different as they may be different in the six managerial dimensions as a result of influence from the headquarters, and whether socialization process varies according to the types of industries.

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

From the literature research, several important variables that may affect the outcomes of an organisational socialisation are :

- 1) Supervisor-subordinate relationship
- 2) Coworker or peer relationship
- 3) Job characteristics
- 4) Role clarity
- 5) Role conflict
- 6) Job stress
- 7) Socialization tactics

The outcome of socialization are always viewed as following variables :

- 1) Time to proficiency at new job
- 2) Employee commitment to the organisation
- 3) Rate of turnover
- 4) Job satisfaction
- 5) Job performance
- 6) Role-outcome

To meet the objective of this study by answering the questions asked , a theoretical framework was drafted as shown in Fig. 1 which is basically a replication of the study by Pinder and Schroeder (1987). However, such variables as Job Characteristics and socialization tactics were added to the model as it was found to have significant impacts on employees by Johns ,Jia Ling Xie and Yongqing Fang (1992) . Frequency of previous transfer, perceived differences between new and old jobs and changes in hierarchical levels were variables explored in Pinder and

Schroeder's study (1987) but omitted in this research because they were irrelevant to majority of the respondents who were first jobbers.

## 2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

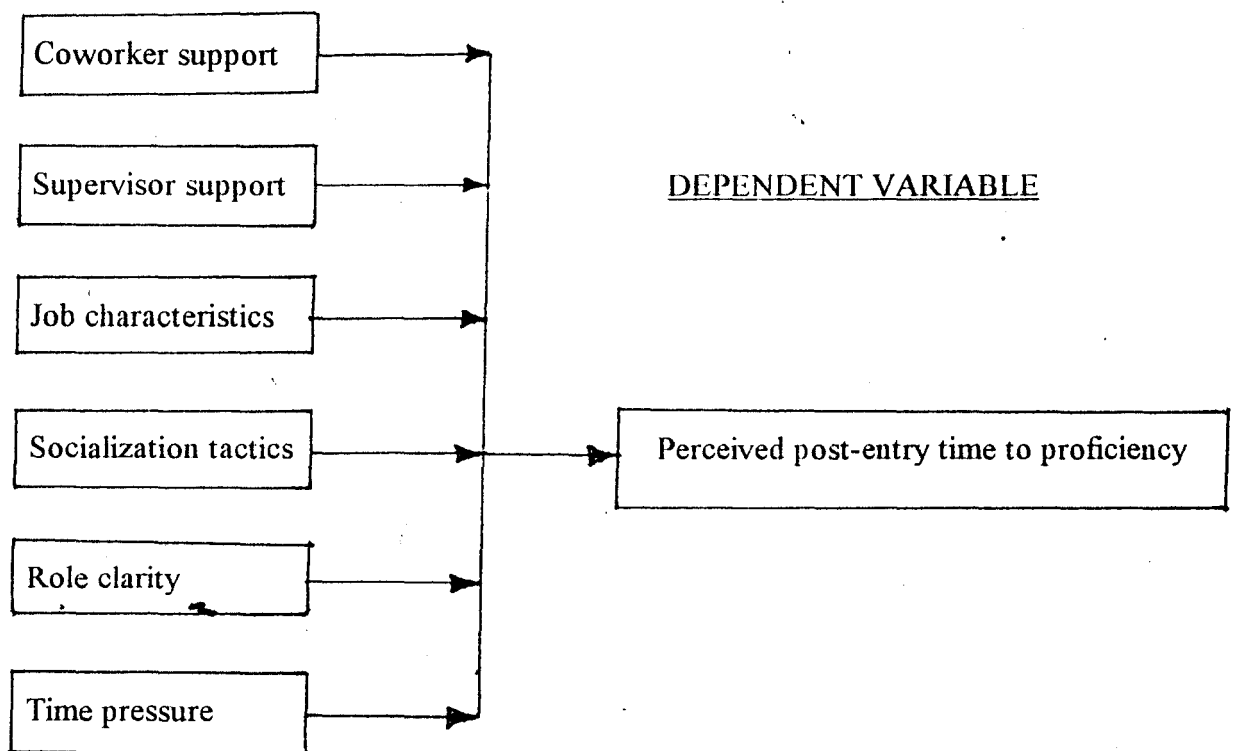


Fig 1. Theoretical framework

### 2.5.1 Coworker Support and Supervisory Support.

Coworker support and supervisory support found to had significant contribution to employees' socialisation process by Pinder and Schroeder (1987), Feldman and Brett (1983), Fisher (1985), Iverson and Roy (1994), Kram and Isabella (1985) and Lunjew, Rahim M. Sail and Abu Daud Silong (1995). They found that coworker support and supervisory support were able to reduce level of un-met expectation

stress and facilitating positive outcomes among newcomers. In addition, coworker support and supervisory support would enhance employees' participating in decision-making in their organization and hence resulted in higher level of job satisfaction and performance and lower rate of turnover. Therefore, higher level of coworker and supervisory support may result in shorter duration of time to proficiency.

### 2.5.2 Job Characteristics

The study conducted by Johns, Jia Lin Xie and Yongqing Fang (1992) provided support for the Job Characteristics Model.

According to job characteristic model, the core job dimensions will activate critical psychological states which will combine to influence an employee's internal motivation and satisfaction with the work.

An employee's motivation and satisfaction are influenced by three psychological states, which are 1) *experienced meaningfulness of the work* - employees must feel that the work is important, worthwhile and valuable, 2) *experienced responsibility for work outcomes* - employees must feel personally responsible and accountable for the results of the work they perform, and 3) *knowledge of results* - employees must receive regular feedback concerning the quality of their performance. The model postulates that internal rewards are obtained by an individual when he *learns* (knowledge of results) that he *personally* (experienced responsibility) has performed well on a task that he *cares* about (experienced meaningfulness). The more these three psychological states are present on a job, the more satisfied individuals will feel when they perform well. These internal rewards act as incentives for individuals to continue their efforts to perform; they hold forth the promise of additional intrinsic rewards. When individuals fail to perform well, positive reinforcement is not forthcoming, and they may be motivated to try harder on subsequent tasks in order to regain the intrinsic rewards.

These three psychological states are in turns influenced by the 5 core job dimensions (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback ) which are measured by Motivating Potential Score ( MPS ). Therefore, the higher the MPS , the higher the internal motivation an employee will have. The higher the internal motivation, the more effective their learning process will be (Singer, 1990 ) . Organizational socialization is but a process of role learning and general appreciation of organizational culture. With jobs which provide more internal reward in the form of intrinsic motivation, a new employee will be able to get himself or herself adapted faster. Therefore, higher score of MPS may associate with shorter time to proficiency.

### 2.5.3 Socialization Tactics

The two dimensions of socialization tactics explored in this study were serial versus disjunctive and formal versus informal type of socialization. The study on the effects of socialisation tactics on socialisation outcomes were conducted by Jones (1986).

In serial type of socialisation, a newcomer has a chance to learn from the experiences of predecessors of the job. In disjunctive type of socialisation, a newcomer do not have this kind of opportunity. Serial type of socialisation may enable a newcomer to acquire the necessary knowledge for the job faster than disjunctive type of socialisation. However, disjunctive type of socialisation may need the newcomer to use more of his self-learning abilities and creativity for his new job.

In formal type of socialisation, a newcomer is given a complete course of training before he or she is given the full responsibility for the job, with the intention to optimize the newcomer's learning process. In informal type of socialisation, a newcomer is given on-the-job training. That is to say, the responsibility for the job is given as the newcomer is still in the learning process to master the new job.



As such, it was believed that serial and formal type of socialisation would contribute to shorten a newcomer's time to proficiency.

#### **2.5.4 Role Clarity**

Role clarity is the extent to which an employee understands the rights and obligations that he or she has for doing the job. An employee with a higher level of role clarity may experience higher level of job satisfaction, more fully utilize his intellectual skills, knowledge and leadership skills, and thus leading to higher level of job performance (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1990). As a result, higher level of role clarity may shorten a newcomer's time to proficiency.

#### **2.5.5 Time Pressure**

Feldman and Brett (1983) found that job changers experienced more time pressure than new hires did. According to Steers and Black (1994), a certain amount of stress is needed to act as a stimulus for the individual to improve his job performance. Therefore, time pressure may shorten a newcomer's time to proficiency.

The hypothesis formed are :

##### Hypothesis A :

Perceived time to proficiency of new engineers is negatively correlated with coworker support, superior support, job characteristics, socialization tactics, role clarity and time pressure experienced during the first year of employment.

##### Hypothesis B :

Perceived time to proficiency of new engineers is the same among companies studied.

Hypothesis C :

New engineers experience varying level of coworker support, supervisory support, socialization tactics, role clarity , time pressure among these organisations, and their job characteristics are significantly different among these organisations.

## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 DESIGN OF QUESTIONNAIRE

To select a model for this study, the works of previous researchers were reviewed with special attention given to Pinder and Schroeder (1987), Iverson and Roy (1994), Johns, Jia Lin Xie and Yongquing Fang (1992) and Jones (1986).

The instruments for measuring perceived time to proficiency, coworker support, supervisor support, role clarity and time pressure were adopted from Pinder and Schroeder's study (1987). The instrument for measuring socialization tactics was adopted from Jones' study (1986). The instrument for measuring job characteristics is adopted from what is used by Johns, Jia Lin Xie and Yongquing Fang (1992) in their study, which was actually the Job Diagnostic Survey designed by Hackman and Oldham for measuring Motivating Potential Score.

The questionnaire designed for this study is as shown in Appendix A. This questionnaire can be divided into three sections according to the function of the questions :

- a) Section One : Question 1 to 8 measure the background of the respondent.
- b) Section Two : Question 9 to 14 measure the perceived post-entry time to proficiency.
- c) Section Three : Question 14 to 18 and 25 measure coworker support.
- d) Section Four : Question 19 to 21 measure time pressure.
- e) Section Five : Question 22 to 24 measure role clarity.
- f) Section Six : Question 25 to 26 measure socialization tactics , that is how serial or disjunctive it is.
- f) Section Seven : Question 27 to 31 measure job characteristics in terms of Motivating Potential Score.

g) Section Eight : Question 32 to 35 measure socialization tactics , that is how formal the process is.

h) Section Nine : Question 36 to 40 measure supervisory support.

Likert-type scale was used to tap the answers for all the questions except for Section One and the first three questions in Section Two. The original plan was to convert the scores for all questions in Section One into standard scores by the mean and standard deviation of the whole sample, and the sum of the standard score of the six questions is the measurement for perceived post-entry time to proficiency. The sum of the scores of all the questions in each section was the measurement of the variable which that particular section represents.

### **3.2 PILOT STUDY**

The developed instrument was pilot tested on a sample of five designated end users. The questionnaires were administered personally, questions regarding the factors and items answered, and the comments and responses of respondents recorded. Based on the responses and comments of the respondents in the pilot study, modifications were made to enable the respondents to understand the questions better while answering them.

For example, in Question 9, the definition of effectiveness was added upon request from some respondents of the pilot study.

### **3.3 THE SAMPLE**

The target population for this study was all the engineers working in the following organisations :

- a) An American subsidiary in Malaysia which engages in semiconductor industry,
- b) A Japanese subsidiary in Malaysia which engaged in semiconductor industry, and
- c) A Japanese subsidiary which engaged in audio industry.

### **3.4 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

One voluntary agent was appointed in each of the organisation mentioned. Each of these agents was given 200 copies of questionnaire. These agents later appointed an agent in each department of their company to distribute the questionnaires to enginners working in those departments. The questionnaire were distributed and collected through this "network" in 5 weeks (because of the interruption of long period of public holidays).

Respondents, their companies and departments were assured of their anonymity.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data were analyzed with the aid of Statgraphic. Firstly, inter-item correlation was carried out to ensure that the items were valid. Items which did not have significant correlation with other items in the group were removed. Secondly, correlation among all the variables were carried to study the association among the dependent variables and independent variables. Thirdly, step-wise regression analysis was carried out to find out to what extent the independent variables can be explained mathematically by the independent variables. Fourthly, the variation of each dependent and independent variables among the three organisations studied were tested by one-way-analysis-of variance.

## Chapter 4

### RESULT AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 SAMPLE PROFILE

Three hundred copies of questionnaires were distributed to engineers working in three companies : a Japanese semiconductor company, the Japanese audio company and the American semiconductor company. Only ninety one copies of completed questionnaires were returned. The number of participants were very even among the three companies. Majority of the participants were male (about 70%) and all of them had tertiary qualification (a minimum of diploma). Almost all of them were at their beginning stage of their career with the companies with an average tenure of 28.9 months. At the time they joined the company, about 86 % of them were still single and about 70 % of them were first-jobbers.

TABLE 4.1. Sample Profile

| Company                              | Age<br>(Year )          | Marital<br>status                               | Tenure<br>( Month)       | Qualification  | Sex                                      | First job/<br>Job changer                  | Sample size |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--|--|-------------|
| Japanese<br>Semiconductor<br>Company | mean = 27.4<br>sd = 2.3 | 2 married<br>(6.7 %)<br>28 single<br>(93.3 %)   | mean = 28.4<br>sd = 17.6 | Master = 6<br>(20 %)<br>Degree = 24<br>(80 %)                                | F = 2<br>(6.7 %)<br>M = 28<br>(93.3 %)   | FJ = 17<br>(56.7 %)<br>JC = 13<br>(43.3 %) | 30          |
| Japanese<br>Audio<br>Company         | mean = 28.2<br>sd = 3.2 | 7 married<br>(22.6 %)<br>24 single<br>(77.4 %)  | mean = 33.4<br>sd = 18.8 | Master = 2<br>(6.5 %)<br>Degree = 22<br>(71.0 %)<br>Diploma = 7<br>(22.5 %)  | F = 3<br>(9.7 %)<br>M = 28<br>(90.3 %)   | FJ = 23<br>(74.2 %)<br>JC = 8<br>(23.3 %)  | 31          |
| American<br>Semiconductor<br>Company | mean = 26.5<br>sd = 1.6 | 4 married<br>(13.3 %)<br>26 single<br>(86.7 %)  | mean = 24.7<br>sd = 13.8 | Master = 2<br>(6.7 %)<br>Degree = 28<br>(93.3 %)                             | F = 6<br>(25.0 %)<br>M = 24<br>(75.0 %)  | FJ = 23<br>(76.7 %)<br>JC = 7<br>(23.3 %)  | 30          |
| Overall                              | mean = 27.4<br>sd = 2.5 | 13 married<br>(14.3 %)<br>78 single<br>(85.7 %) | mean = 28.9<br>sd = 17.0 | Master = 10<br>(11.0 %)<br>Degree = 73<br>(81.3 %)<br>Diploma = 7<br>(7.7 %) | F = 11<br>(12.1 %)<br>M = 80<br>(87.9 %) | FJ = 63<br>(69.2 %)<br>JC = 28<br>(30.8 %) | 91          |

sd - standard deviation  
M - male  
F - female

FJ - first jobber  
JC - job changer

## 4.2 TIME TO PROFICIENCY

Five questions were used to measure time to proficiency after joining the company. These were question 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. Three of them recorded the responses by way of actual time taken to proficiency in months and the other two recorded responses on 7-point Likert type scale. Since the two groups were different, two measurements of time to proficiency constituted the dependent variables.

To be able to get single scores, the items in each group were correlated. For the first group of three items ( DV1 ), the inter-item correlations are given below :

Item 9 and 10 :  $r = 0.533$  ;  $N = 91$

Item 9 and 11 :  $r = 0.746$  ;  $N = 91$

Item 10 and 11 :  $r = 0.702$  ;  $N = 91$

At  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the correlation is significant if  $r$  is greater than 0.205. Since all the values of coefficients were statistically significant, their responses were added to get a single score of DV1. The score ranged from 0 to 36.

To get a single score on second group ( DV2 ), question 12 and 13 were correlated. The degree of relationship was found to be significant (  $r = 0.752$  ). Since  $r$  is greater than 0.205, the correlation is significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Responses on each of these two items were added to get a single score which ranged from 2 to 14.

## 4.3 INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

For the purpose of this study, 7 factors contributing to time to proficiency were explored. The measurements of these factors are presented below :

### 4.3.1 Coworker Support.

Five questions were presented to measure coworker support. These were question 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18. To be able to get a single score, these items were inter-correlated. The values of coefficients are shown in Appendix B. The data in Appendix B indicate that all five items by and large correlated significantly.

Therefore, their scores were added to get a single score of coworker support, which ranged from 5 to 35.

#### **4.3.2 Time Pressure**

Three questions were presented to measure time pressure. These were question 19, 20 and 21. To be able to get a single score, these items were inter-correlated. The values of coefficient are shown in Appendix B. The data in Appendix B indicates that item 19 and 20 correlates significantly among themselves but item 21 did not correlate with item 19 and 20. Therefore, item 21 was removed from this group and the responses on item 19 and 20 were added to get a single score. The score ranged from 2 to 14.

#### **4.3.3 Role Clarity**

Three questions were presented to measure role clarity. These were question 22, 23 and 24. To be able to get a single score, these items were inter-correlated. The values of coefficients are shown in Appendix B. The data in Appendix B indicate that item 22 and 24 correlated significantly among themselves. Item 22 did not correlate with item 23. Therefore, item 23 were removed from this group and responses on item 22 and 24 were added to get a single score. The score ranged from 2 to 14.

#### **4.3.4 Socialization Tactic - Serial Versus Disjunctive.**

Two questions were presented to measure serial versus disjunctive socialization tactic. These were question 25 and 26. To be able to get a single score, these items were inter-correlated. The values of coefficients are shown in Appendix B. The data in Appendix B indicates that item 25 and 26 were significantly correlated among themselves. Therefore, the responses on these two items were added to get a single score. The score ranged from 2 to 14.