ORGANIZAITONAL ASSIMILATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION NETWORK AMONG NEW STUDENTS' ADJUSTMENT: FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION ARTS; RANGSIT UNIVERSITY

By

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Abstract

Organizational Assimilation scholars emphasized the importance of interpersonal adjustment for assimilating new organizational members. However, the role of communication in the way of organizational assimilation process is rarely to be researched. The main objective of this research was to examine the relationship of organizational communication network and organizational assimilation process of new students, who registered in academic year 2011, in Faculty of Communication Arts; Rangsit University. A sample was 267 new students responding to questionnaires through the quantitative method. Correlations and regressions were used for initial examination for the hypotheses, and LISREL was used to test the hypothesized relationship

presently. Additionally, LISTEL confirmatory factor analysis procedure was used to examine correspondence between factors.

The results revealed that communication network, uncertainty reduction, and assimilation are related phenomenon. It also demonstrated that communication network is related to the new students' performance.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A new family moves into a neighborhood, a new boy comes to a faculty or playground, a new student come to faculty, or a new professor joins an academic department of a college or university. These are all examples of a very common, natural phenomenon--the newcomer joining an already existing group or organization.

By being born into a family, most people enter the world as newcomers to an existing group. In his/her lifetime, an individual joins dozens of groups and organizations for purposes of work or play or worship. Within the hundreds of organizations and groups which are found in every society, when growth occurs or when members are lost through attrition, new members must be inducted.

The period of early membership is one of the most critical phases of university life for a new student. During this time, new student are faced with many unknown factors about the organization. The new student must determine what their new faculty and university or faculty is like and whether they fit in. Both new student and faculty take action to reduce the amount of uncertainty encountered during the entry phrase of assimilation. In communication terms, one

question relevant to this situation concerns how the members of an existing group or faculty react to the entry of a new student. Similarly, it is important to consider how the new student goes about the study of accommodating and acclimatizing him/herself to the members of the group he/she has just joined. Aspects of a faculty's climate can leave a new student with feelings of uncertainty and apprehension as the new student strives to adapt to his/her new environment.

In recent years, researchers have identified and investigated organizations as cultures whose members share common values, rules, norms, beliefs, myths, and symbols (e.g, Kennedy & Berger 1994; Cawyer, & Friedrich, 1998; Bullis, 1999; Kramer & Miller, 1999). The "university or organization as culture" view is but one of the perspectives which emphasizes the importance of understanding the means by which new students become aware of an integrated into the faculty and university's culture; that is, how new students are assimilated into the faculty, including the colleague groups.

The assimilation process in general is one of the most researched areas in contemporary social science (e.g., Bullis, 1993; Cawyer & Friedrich, 1998; Schein, 1985, 1971; Van Maanen, 1975, 1978; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Wanous; 1980). It is possible that the interest in assimilation stems from the fact that descriptions of the process depict assimilation as "an anxiety-ridden situation" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In other words, a primary motivation underlying research concerning assimilation might rest in a desire, on the part of scholars, to lessen the shock associated with the status of "newcomer."

Organizational assimilation is the process through which newcomers learn the behaviors, attitudes, skills and so forth that are necessary to fulfill new roles and function effectively within an organization (Fisher, 1986; Van Maanen, 1978; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This conceptualization portrays assimilation as an internal learning process through which newcomers are psychologically and behaviorally "molded" for organizational benefit, leaving little understanding of the nature of communication within this process. By focusing on the outcomes of individual behaviors as they relate to organizational effectiveness, the process is constructed as fixed and permanent (Bullis, 1993). Additionally, this approach to conceptualizing assimilation construes the newcomer as "a passive recipient of the organization's assimilation attempts" (Giddens, 1989; Louis, 1980).

Communication is the vehicle through which assimilation occurs. New students use the information provided by veterans to interpret events experienced in the situation (Louis, 1980). Insiders provide stories and memorable messages (Brown, 1985) which play a role in a new student's integration into the new culture. In sum, organizational communication is an important channel for educating new students about the organization and faculty's culture.

Only limited attention has been paid to the manner in which information is shared during assimilation. Theorists stress the importance of information transmission (e.g. Louis, 1980; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), but researchers have not followed suit. Unfortunately, little has changed since Louis (1980) noted, "no one has yet adequately described how the role-related content of

assimilation is conveyed in the traditional organizational settings" (p. 232). Traditionally, assimilation has been characterized as the outcome of information transfer between experienced insiders and new members (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). During assimilation, new members learn which behaviors are appropriate and desirable and which are not (Van Maanen, 1977).

Understanding the role of communication in the assimilation process among new students and student veterans in the faculty is particular important. Accordingly, this study will examine the role of communication network in the assimilation process. Inclusion into the informal communication network enhances the individual's transformation from new students to insiders because organizational communication network provides the new students with access to needed information and allows for transmission of faculty culture, study content, experience, and faculty activity while they are studying in the faculty. Communication networks in the faculty are the mean by which faculty regulation, faculty belies, faculty activities, and expectations of students are shared and kept alive. Studying assimilation and communication in communication networks is thus one means to focus specifically on information transmission among new students and student veterans in faculty.

Apparently, research on new student assimilation in the faculty is important for several reasons. For one, assimilation is desirable from the student's perspective. Assimilation can have a strong and lasting impact on desirable faculty attitudes and behavior (Bauer & Green, 1994). Additionally, assimilation can

positively impact retention variables, such as intent to remain and turnover (Black & Ashford, 1995). In fact, it has been proposed that a lack of assimilation programs for newcomers might explain why (at least within the context of Western organizations) most turnovers occur within the first several months of employment (Kennedy & Berger, 1994; Young & Lundberg, 1996). In addition, assimilation is the mechanism by which organizational culture is transmitted (Louis, 1990). Assimilation can also be desirable from the newcomer's perspective. Successful assimilation can have a strong and lasting impact on desirable career outcome, including level of income and promotions (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994). If assimilation is successful, newcomers are transformed into knowledgeable, skillful contributors who reproduce organizational structure through action and thereby ensure the survival of the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Furthermore, assimilation is associated with anxiety reduction (Saks & Ashforth, 1997), reduced work conflict (Tannebaum & Yukl, 1992), and increased self-efficacy (Bauer & Green, 1994). As a result of its obvious importance to both individual and organizational outcomes, the topic of newcomer assimilation has received attention within organizational communication research.

Rationale and Problem Statement

When new students begin their study at university, they must learn what their particular university or faculty expects from them as they assume new roles. The process through which individuals come to learn new organizational roles by acquiring needed skills and social knowledge is termed "organizational

assimilation". An important component of assimilation is "the fashion in which an individual is taught and learns what behaviors and perspectives are customary and desirable within the work setting as well as what ones are not" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211-212).

Assimilation in the faculty can occur in a variety of ways: faculties might intentionally use formal tactics to assimilate new students, or new students might informally pick up many of the cues that influence their adjustment to the faculty by, for example, watching or talking with faculty mates and other persons in the faculty. It is important to note that the assimilation process can occur by chance and, moreover, understand that individuals can be assimilated in ways that do not benefit to the setting. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) pointed out that sometimes individuals make adjustments during the course of their initial assimilation period that ultimately prove to be dysfunctional for them and/or dysfunctional for the larger organization.

Faculty must address the issue of what new students can do to influence the development of new students' values, beliefs, and behaviors. In university settings, this is most critical in relation to new students at the beginning of their study because entry into a university or faculty initiates an important developmental stage in a new student's ultimate adjustment to the university and faculty (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) and because, as new students begin to replace experienced ones, the future of their studys will be in their hands.

A variety of challenges face any new student to a faculty and university. Those challenges include making sense of the patterns of behavior that have become the norm within the faculty and discovering one's own position/role within those patterns of behavior.

Objectives of Study

The present study is designed to examine the relationship between a new student's organizational communication network in the faculty and various assimilation outcomes. The researcher assumes that assimilation is a "sense-making" process whereby new students enter the faculty and encounter problematic or inexplicable events, which they try to interpret and explain. While the past experiences, personality characteristics, and a variety of other factors aid the sense-making process, the researcher argues that communication with other systems members plays the major role in helping the new students make sense of, or reduce uncertainty about, the new environment. Uncertainty reduction theory (Berger, 1979; Berger & Bradac, 1982) provides the theoretical underpinning for the research, and suggests a means for clarifying the relationship between organizational communication network and assimilation outcomes.

Definition of Terms

Newcomer :	For the purposes of this study, "newcomer" refers to those new full-time students who study in Faculty of Communication Arts (Thai program); Rangsit University in academic year 2010.
Organizational Assimilation :	The process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, attitudes, study content, expected behaviors in faculty and classroom, and social knowledge essential for assuming a faculty/student role and for participating as a member of faculty. That is the definition that has been adopted for this research.

Significance of the Study

Theories of organizational assimilation abound in the literature, but studies designed to empirically verify those theories are relatively rare. Moreover, many of the existing theories do not appear to be based on observation and description of actual processes that take place in specific organizations, and do not frequently appear in the academic setting. Thus, the intent of this study is to enrich the general literature on student's assimilation by adding to the base of knowledge about newcomer perspectives concerning the assimilation process and perceptions of factors that influence study in faculty within faculty and university.

This research makes two important contributions to the literature. First, this research advances a relatively new line of research on uncertainty reduction. Uncertainty reduction theory was introduced into the organizational literature more than twenty years ago (Berger, 1979; Berger & Bradac, 1982). Since that time, empirical research adopting a uncertainty perspective has produced issues affecting study in each faculty and study their performance (Barley, 1986). On the whole, research within this theoretical perspective remains relatively sparse.

Secondly, the integration of new students into each faculty, including in each department has been treated in a narrow and simplistic manner in past research. The bias of previous work has been to focus on faculty actions and the attempts made by a student groups to mold new students into prescribed

organizational roles. The present study contributes to a more complex view of assimilation by highlighting the reciprocal relationship between the new student and his/her colleagues, including his/her teacher. The investigation of the relationship between the new student and existing faculty members, and the impact of the new student on the faculty process serves to emphasize the extent to which individuals remain empowered even in the face of norms and practices (Giddens, 1984).

Chapter Summary

A number of full-time new students at Faculty of Communication Arts; Rangsit University (RSU) have increased in recent years. Faculty of Communication Arts is thus faced with the task of helping their new students adapt to the realities of the extant faculty structure within the faculty, including the competing forces of stability and change at the faculty level, increasing communication and interaction among new students and their colleagues, and communicating desirable values, beliefs, and behaviors to new students. Effective assimilation and communication within such an environment requires both a commitment to the basic university mission, faculty mission, and knowledge of appropriate interaction during study periods. The assimilation of new students, to be sound, must include processes that are targeted at achieving these results.

The purpose of this study of the assimilation of new student at Faculty of Communication Arts; Rangsit University in academic year 2010 is to examine the relationship between a new student's communication network and various assimilation outcomes during faculty periods.

Chapter two will illuminate the theoretical underpinnings of the study through a review of current literature in the areas of organizational assimilation. Uncertainty reduction theory is discussed as a theoretic perspective for analyzing assimilation, and organizational communication networkis discussed as a means for new students to reduce uncertainty in the faculty and progress through the

assimilation process. That is followed, in Chapter Three, by a description of the specific methods used in the study. Chapter Four presents the study's findings, along with interpretation and analysis of those findings. Finally, the study's conclusions and a general discussion are offered in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on organizational assimilation can be divided into three areas: the overall process of assimilation, the mechanisms for assimilation, and the outcomes of the assimilation process. In this chapter, the literature pertaining to each area is reviewed.

The Organizational Assimilation

In order to become full members of organizations, individuals must learn to carry out their job functions effectively and must adapt to the social setting in which they find themselves (Van Maanen, 1977). "Organizational assimilation" is the term applied to the process through which individuals adapt to requirements and expectations for membership in an organization. Although the assimilation process is most often associated with that period when an individual first enters an organization, assimilation actually continues throughout the individual's career (Katz, 1982; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Even within the same organization, members are "resocialized" (Katz, 1982, p. 96) each time they shift from one role, position or department to another (Feldman & Brett, 1983).

The assimilation process is one of the most researched issues in contemporary social science and has been used to describe individuals' assimilation in organizations (e.g., Bullis, 1993; Schein, 1971; Van Maanen, 1978; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Wanous, 1980). Assimilation has been linked both to employee and to organizational success (Bullis, 1993). The concept of assimilation has been used to describe the preparation and transformation of educators (e.g., Bullis, 1991; Bullis & Bach, 1989). It is possible that our interest in assimilation is revealed in descriptions of the process as "anxiety-ridden" (Jones, 1983). In other words, assimilation research has the intention of lessening the reality shock associated with university membership.

The concept of assimilation has been defined in a variety of ways. According to Feldman's assimilation definition (1981), it can be applied to this research that assimilation is the process by which students are transformed from organization outsiders to participating and effective members". The general definition of assimilation proposed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) describes assimilation as "the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume a setting role" (p. 211). Early theories of assimilation commonly, but erroneously, construed the new student as a passive recipient of the university's assimilation attempts (Louis, 1980). Other definitions have emphasized the development of values, beliefs, and behaviors; for example, Bullis (1993) noted that assimilation processes are viewed as central to role taking, new individual acculturation, individual attitudes and behaviors, and the shaping

of new individual ' identities. Schein (1985) specified the components of learning for new individual:

> The concept refers to the process by which a new member learns the value system, the norms, and the required behavior patterns of the society, organization, or group which he is entering. [Organizational assimilation] does not include all learning. It includes only the learning of those values, norms, and behavior patterns which, from the organization's point of view or group's point of view, is necessary for any new member to learn. This learning is defined as the price of membership. (p. 54)

Schein's definition, then, focuses on the content of learning, whereas Feldman, Van Maanen and Schein, and Bullis emphasize organizational membership and competency development. A useful definition of organizational assimilation that encompasses all three views was proposed by Louis (1980): "assimilation is the process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organizational member" (p. 226).

Louis (1980) characterized new individual assimilation experiences as "reality shock." The individual experiences uncertainty and stress, and finds it difficult to understand the organization's mission and structure, and his/her own role in that mission/structure. The stressful and uncertain nature of entry motivates

the new individual to reduce the stress (Berlew & Hall, 1966). In response, the individual engages in a process of "sense-making" to cope with the new situation (Louis, 1980).

The assimilation process, a phrase used to describe what others consider assimilation (e.g., Bullis, 1999; Clair, 1999; Turner, 1999), involves the integration of the individual into the faculty's cultural reality (Jablin, 1987). Through the descriptions of the assimilation stage model, additional clarity is achieved while simultaneously revealing more questions that need to be addressed. For example, during the final stage, the new student attempts to become an accepted, participating member of the faculty by learning new attitudes and behaviors or modifying existing ones to be consistent with the faculty's expectations. This definition raises several communication related questions. How do new student discursively attempt to become members of faculty or faculty? Are all attempts successful? How definitions of are accepted, participating students and faculty participation constructed through faculty and student discourse? Are faculty expectations consistent, rational, and always conducive to successful assimilation? As assimilation is an ongoing process for a student as positions or study change, at what point should a researcher (or a university) attempt to gauge the success of that process? Bullis (1993) argued that most assimilation research examines new individual transformation as it benefits the corporate discursive system, thereby constructing an assumption that assimilation is a process to be facilitated for faculty gain. Until researchers articulate such assumptions embedded in the assimilation process, the concept of assimilation will remain abstract and will contain contradictory elements.

A recent series of articles (Bullis, 1999; Clair, 1999; Kramer & Miller, 1999; Miller & Kramer, 1999; Turner; 1999) critically examined the assumptions associated with organizational assimilation, while revealing various fundamental disagreements within extant research. These disagreements centered on several core assumptions made by researchers, including differences in their use of key terminology (e.g., assimilation, assimilation, and individualization). The struggle of communication scholars to conceptualize assimilation is necessary as any form of scholarship must develop its ideological identity through exploring similarities and differences from a variety of disciplinary perspectives (Anderson, 1996). These disagreements further highlight the importance of a both/and approach to studying assimilation as restriction to one conceptualization or set of assumptions leaves alternative voices or issues unacknowledged (Bullis, 1999). To consider future conceptualizations of assimilation, we must continue to explore while simultaneously reconsidering past conceptualizations (Bullis, 1993). As Bullis and Stout (2000) argued, "we need to criticize traditional work in order to define its limits and domain so that we see alternatives" (p.48).

The literature on assimilation is rich with speculative description and theoretical models, but is somewhat less developed in the area of empirical research (Fisher, 1986). Much of the research adopts a symbolic interactionist viewpoint. Blumer (1969) identified three assumptions of symbolic interactionism. Those assumptions are that "human beings create their own meanings for things and behave toward those things based on their created meaning, that meanings

arise out of social interactions with other people, and that meanings are dealt with and modified by the person through an interpretive process" (p. 2). In other words, people react to events or the actions of others based on the meanings they ascribe to those events or actions. In relation to study faculty, the symbolic integrationist perspective suggests that individual academic members, not the faculty as a whole, will create their own understanding of what is functional or dysfunctional in a given role, and that understanding will vary from one person to another (Reichers, 1987; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Adopting this perspective, researchers often analyze the impact of variables such as the stages through which new students theoretically must pass or the tactics used by faculty during the process of individual adjustment to the faculty.

Assimilation is typically viewed as proceeding through a series of stages or phases (Bullis, 1993; Jablin, 1982; Van Maanen, 1975, 1978). The most general model (that of Frederic Jablin) recognizes three phases: anticipatory assimilation, encounter, and metamorphosis.

Assimilation begins before organizational entry, in a stage entitled "anticipatory assimilation" (Merton, 1957). Individuals are prepared for organizational positions through interaction with family and friends, involvement with educational institutions, and engagement with the structure (Van Maanen, 1978). Information is gained and perceptions are further shaped through pre-entry contact with the faculty (information-gathering interviews and reading faculty-relevant materials). Prior to entry, new student anticipate their study experiences

(Louis, 1980) and develop expectations of study life. These expectations are often unrealistic and inflated and make assimilation a difficult process, even inhibiting successful integration (Jablin, 1982, 1984; Wanous, 1980).

The second stage of assimilation is the encounter stage when the individual enters the faculty. During this stage, new student beliefs and expectations are challenged, and new students try to "make sense" of the setting. The final stage, "metamorphosis," represents an adaptive phase where new student engage in new learning and "adjust to their new environment" (Van Maanen, 1978).

While assimilation is ongoing, the most significant influences on assimilation are likely to occur during the early weeks and months of study, when the student is thought to be most susceptible to influence and change. The new student encounters a multitude of "surprises" (Louis, 1980), experiences anxiety, ambiguity, and stress (Gomersall & Myers, 1966), and is motivated to make sense of the new environment (Louis, 1980) and learn faculty norms and values.

New students put more effort into activities such as seeking help from others, mastering the faculty activity, learning the amount of study required, and becoming an accepted member of the faculty during the first four weeks than during later weeks (Graen, et al., 1973). Over time, we assume the student finds interpreting faculty situations easier because he or she has more history with and knowledge of the faculty.

In sum, while theorists have developed a fairly clear and intuitively sensible description of the phases of academic entry, the literature suffers from a number of limitations. First, the literature has emphasized the "changing to" process. Louis (1980) argued that adoption of a new role involves "letting go" of an old role. The process of letting go is likely to significantly affect the ease with which a student can move from the old role to the new role. Hence, a student's former faculty role should be taken into account when examining his or her adjustment to a new faculty role.

Second, the influence of the faculty on the individual is emphasized in the literature while the reciprocal impact of the individual on the faculty is not typically considered. The contributions both parties make in shaping and influencing each other are overlooked. When theorists and researchers do consider the student's perspective, the student's influence on the faculty is discussed as "individualization," a separate process by which the student attempts to influence or change the faculty so as to better fulfill his or her own needs. Separating the process of mutual influence into assimilation and individualization is problematic in two ways. First, research on infant assimilation provides evidence disputing the accuracy of a one-sided approach to assimilation. A great deal of experimental evidence exists supporting the claim that influence between child and caregiver is mutual rather than one-sided. As such, we need to view assimilation as a mutual process whereby partners shape and influence each other (Goslin, 1969).

In addition, examination of assimilation and individualization as separate processes tends to result in a view of the faculty as a powerful entity that is too great to be affected by a single individual. Faculties consist of interdependent individuals who are connected by communication networks, and who influence one another reciprocally. As researchers, we need to recognize that the new student enters a faculty consisting of groups of individuals who share common beliefs, values, and norms. While a group might have a more profound effect on the individual than the individual will have on the group, assimilation can and does involve reciprocal influence.

In terms of new student, most researchers view "new individual" as a temporary role that a member assumes upon entry into an organizational setting, an implicit label that influences both a member's sense of organizational self and his or her behavioral expectations for self and others. New student often play the role of passive learner, quietly observing and mimicking the behaviors and attitudes of more seasoned members until they are confident that their actions fit with social norms. A new student in this research was defined as a student with less than three months tenure within the specified faculty setting. This time line allows the new student to acquire both general information as well as finer, more intricate information about the faculty, group, and activity.

By way of summary, assimilation is the term used to describe the process of becoming a member of a faculty and faculty. Research concerning assimilation emphasizes the developmental stages of the assimilation process

(Jablin, 1987; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), and the events that occur which integrate new student into academic. Attention is turned now to the content or substance of assimilation and the role of the new student in the assimilation process.

Mechanism for Assimilation Process

Typologies identify the general strategies and tactics for assimilation, such as training programs and apprenticeships (e.g., Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Wanous, 1980). While these typologies suggest research directions or practical assimilation programs, they do little to clarify and elaborate on how specific assimilation strategies influence new students.

Further, researchers have not adequately addressed the influence of early study experiences in university on the new student's attitudes and behaviors. Analyses of initial study expectations as they influence satisfaction, performance, and tenure are helpful (Schneider, 1972, 1975), but insufficient. For example, researchers have suggested that turnover results form unmet expectations. High expectations which are likely to go unmet may be inevitable among new students, and other factors may have a greater influence on turnover.

To better understand turnover among recent new students, researchers have examined the study preview as it influence study behavior. These researchers assumed that "realistic" study previews (accurate information, including stressful,

or difficult aspect of the study) could reduce inflated expectations to a more realistic level and thereby enhance assimilation and reduce voluntary turnover (e.g., Wanous, 1973; Zaharia & Bauneister, 1981). Once again, however, the influence of particular study experiences on turnover is not examined. Our research efforts may be better aimed toward identifying and examining the specific experiences, which affect the new student's attitudes and behaviors, and the means by which new students make sense of and negotiate their new roles to establish mutually acceptable study situations.

More recently, a few researchers have in fact investigated specific means for assimilation. For example, Stohl (1983) asked students to identify messages which had a significant impact on their university faculty experience, and concluded that employees did receive memorable messages which enhanced their sense-making. Stohl's work is highly exploratory and limited, relying on retrospective accounts of single messages within a faculty. Also, the research is static in nature: there is no analysis of how messages move through the faculty. Still, Stohl's work emphasizes the need to focus research efforts on the role of communication (network linkages as well as message content and context) in the assimilation process.

Among similar lines, (Brown, 1985) examined the influence of stories and storytelling on the assimilation of new students. Brown concluded that stories served to express student's knowledge, understanding, and commitment to the faculty (p. 38), and noted that story from changed as the student's tenure

progresses, supporting the notion that students gain information about and understanding of the faculty over time. Unfortunately, Brown's exploratory research is not tied to any theoretical perspective, and Brown is somewhat vague about her interviewing methodology.

An exploratory study by Jablin (1984) concerned the relationship among new individuals' perceptions of the communication climates of their last works, expectations for the climate of the new work, and current attitudes and turnover. Among many interesting results was the finding new individual are communication deprived and wait for others to provide information rather that to request information from colleagues. Jablin's study enhances our understanding of communication and assimilation, but suffers from many limitations. The research is not tied to a particular theory, and time periods seem to have been randomly associated with stages of assimilation. For example, the encounter phase is associated with the third week of employment and the metamorphosis phase with the sixth through the twenty-four week; yet, no rationale is provided for selecting these time periods.

Finally, Louis (1983) found that interactions with peers, supervisor, and senior students were the key means for becoming assimilated. This study is exciting in its emphasis on communication, but is limited in that the researchers do not look especially at the communication network of new students.

In sum, most of the research on assimilation practices focuses on the generic aspects of the process (Louis, 1980). With few exceptions, previous researchers have not systematically examined how the faculty and/or faculty culture and expectations for performance are passed on the new student (Van Masnen & Schein, 1979). The more research which does focus on specific assimilating activities typically is limited in scope, but emphasizes the role of communication in the assimilation process.

Outcomes of the Assimilation Process

The outcomes associated with the assimilation process have captured the most attention of researchers. A focus on outcomes is appropriate, but the studies frequently lack adequate operational definitions. For example, Evan (1983) conceptualized successful assimilation in terms of the formation of peer group bonds, but used turnover as an indirect measure of successful assimilation. The use of turnover as a single measure of assimilation is problematic because a wide variety of variables other than assimilation can influence turnover.

Similarly, Jablin's (1984) exploratory study focused on the relationships among previous work experience, expectations about the communication system and environment, and voluntary withdrawal. Jablin's study is far more comprehensive and sophisticated than Evan's, but the reliance on turnover as a measure of effective assimilation is still limiting.

Mulford (1978) attempted to use a more comprehensive and direct measure of successful assimilation. Subjects were asked five questions about the amount and quality of study orientation, the understanding about the study, and the amount of training still needed to perform the faculty.

Feldman (1981) offered a more through view of assimilation outcomes by identifying three behavioral and three affective outcomes by which progress through organizational assimilation could be measured. The behavioral outcomes represent individual behaviors for essential for organizational effectiveness. The individual (1) will carry out assignment reliably, (2) will remain with the organization, and (3) will innovate and cooperate to achieve organizational objectives. The affect outcomes are general satisfaction, motivation, and work involvement. Grean and Ginburgh (1997) also examined wider range outcome variables in their study of organizational assimilation: satisfaction, motivating potential, performance, and resignations.

In short, the current research is consistent about specifying and measuring a comprehensive set of variables associated with the outcomes of the assimilation process. The absence of a common and comprehensive measure of assimilation outcomes is a concern because it hinders the development of a cumulative body of knowledge about the assimilation process.

In this study, an integrated and refined operational definition is used to provide a more complete measure of the outcomes of the assimilation process. The five assimilation outcomes selected for this research are consistent with both the conceptualizations of assimilation and previous research outcomes. In addition, a multivariate measure allows analysis of both attitudinal and perceptual criteria to assess assimilation outcomes. The variables chosen to reflect the outcomes of the assimilation process are:

1. Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a positive or pleasurable affective response to one's study experiences or relationships. To provide a holistic assessment of the degree to which a student is satisfied or happy with his or her study in faculty, satisfaction is examined in terms of specifics aspects of the faculty: (a) satisfaction with teacher, (b) satisfaction with colleagues, (c) satisfaction with activities in faculty, and (d) satisfaction with faculty outcomes. The four indicators of faculty satisfaction will be used to represent the individual's general level of faculty satisfaction.

2. Faculty Commitment

Faculty commitment represents an attitude toward the faculty that links the student to the faculty. While faculty commitment has been defined in a number of ways, the most comprehensive and popular definition is strength of the

student's identification with and involvement in a particular faculty. Commitment involves a willingness to exert energy for the faculty, desire to continue studying in the faculty, and an acceptance of the goals and values of the faculty.

3. Faculty motivation

Faculty motivation is the degree to which a student is self-motivated to study in faculty well. Internally motivated students reward themselves successful performance and feel personally satisfied when they perform well.

4. Faculty Performance

This represents the degree to which the teacher perceives the new student to understand role expectations and carry out role assignments proficiently.

5. Anticipated Turnover

Turnover has been used as an indirect measure of assimilation (e.g., Evan, 1983; Jablin, 1984). In absence of actual turnover data, intentions represent the best determinants of actual behaviors (Fishbein, 1987). Intention to stay with and intention to leave the faculty (or faculty) are thus considered the best indicators of turnover (Hom, Katerberg, & Hulin, 1979).

To conclude, the five variables identified are consistent with the conceptual definition of assimilation, and represent a comprehensive yet manageable measure of the concept.

Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Although the theories have important differences, all assume interpersonal relationships develop when participants are able to predict and explain each other's behavior (Parks & Adelman, 1983). The desire of individuals to gain control over their social environment and to make that environment more predictable is assumed at some level by each of these theories. Uncertainty reduction theory makes the assumption most explicit, and is the most general of the theories. Uncertainty reduction theory has been applied to initial interaction (e.g., Berger & Calabrese, 1975) and to the ongoing development and escalation of relationship. Finally, Parks & Adelman (1983) recently extended the theory beyond its dyadic origins to the broader networks level.

Berger and Calabrese (1975) proposed uncertainty reduction theory as a communication approach to the study of interpersonal relationship development. According to the theory, communication is the vehicle for making predictions and reduces uncertainty. Individuals seek to understand the behavior of themselves and others so they rely on communication to gain knowledge. Over time, the process of exchanging information and reducing uncertainty can facilitate the development of interpersonal relationships. Communication provides the information necessary

for reducing uncertainty and making the communication behavior of others both predictable and explainable.

Uncertainty reduction theory provides a useful framework for understanding faculty assimilation. The beginning of the student /faculty relationship is characterized by uncertainty. Berger & Calabrese (1975) proposed seven anxioms for Uncertainty Reduction Theory in order to specifically explain the initial entry stage of interpersonal interaction between strangers.

AXIOM 1: Given the high level of uncertainty present at the onset of the entry phase, as the amount of verbal communication between strangers increases, the level of uncertainty for each interactant in the relationship will decrease. As uncertainty is further reduced, the amount of verbal communication will increase (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, pp. 101-102).

When people interact for the first time, they usually ask numerous questions during the first few minutes (Berger, 1973; Calabrese, 1975; Kellerman & Berger, 1984). "Initial questions are generally concerned with background or biographic information; later questions are concerned with opinions, preferences, and interests" (Kellerman & Berger, 1984). As more is known about each other, the two interactants can discuss more topics. This conversational style is very different in organizational communication.

AXIOM 2: As nonverbal affiliative expressiveness increases, uncertainty levels will decrease in an initial interaction situation. In addition, decreases in uncertainty level will cause increases in nonverbal affiliative expressiveness (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, pp. 103).

Mehrabian (1971) supports the link between uncertainty reduction and nonverbal expressiveness by describing significant positive correlation between variables of total statements per minutes, amount of eye contact, positive verbal content, head and arm gestures per minutes, and pleasant vocal expressions. Affiliative behavior (showing positive nonverbal) increases liking in both veterans and newcomers. One explanation for this might be that when a person feels more comfortable with another, he or she will display more positive nonverbal behaviors. Reducing uncertainty might relate to these increased feelings of comfort.

AXIOM 3: High level of uncertainty cause increases in information seeking behavior. As uncertainty levels decline, information-seeking behavior decreases (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, pp. 103).

During the first moments of interaction, information-seeking behavior involves asking for and giving biographical and demographic information. If similarities exist, the participants might discuss more intimate issues (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). In addition, "similarities and dissimilarities in background characteristics might lead to the development of predictions of similarity or

dissimilarity on more crucial attitudinal issues" (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 103).

AXIOM 4: High levels of uncertainty in a relationship cause decreases in the intimacy level of communication content. Low levels of uncertainty produce high levels of intimacy (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 103).

Alman & Taylor (1973) suggested that as an interpersonal relationship becomes more rewarding and less costly, persons will become more intimate. Berger (1973) described that the highest amount of demographic (less intimate) information is exchanged during the first minute of interaction. Then, demographic information decreases as attitudinal (more intimate) information increases.

AXIOM 5: High levels of uncertainty produce high rates of reciprocity. Low levels of uncertainty produce low reciprocity rates (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 105).

Berger & Calabrese (1975) expect persons with mutual uncertainty to ask for and receive information at the same exchange rate. "In this way, no more interactant in the system would be able to gain information power over the other" (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 105).

AXIOM 6: Similarities between persons reduce uncertainty, while dissimilarities produce increases in uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 106).

If similarities exist, the participants might discuss mire intimate issues and develop predictions of similarity on attitudinal issues (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 106). Therefore, participants reduce uncertainty.

AXIOM 7: Increases in uncertainty level produce decreases in liking; decreases in uncertainty level produce increases in liking (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 107).

For example, in a study of applicants who received second interviews, Tengler & Jablin (1983) found an increase in positive relationships between openness of interviewer questions and duration of applicant response. In other word, the interview resembled more of a conversation because of a more balanced exchange of information. When an applicant receives a second interview, the probability of getting the job increase. For interviewers, as more is known about an applicant, the level of liking might increase as well as the possibility of hiring the applicant. For applicants, as more is known about the interviewer, the level of trust might increase as well as the possibility of accepting the job offer.

In addition, uncertainty reduction theory also provides a useful framework for understanding organizational assimilation. The beginning of the individual/organizational relationship is characterized by uncertainty. Gomersal & Myers (1996) reported that new employees experienced tension which was a function of the "unpredictable and sometimes threatening" entry experience. Entering a new organization or a new culture is difficult because understanding the setting is problematic (Louis, 1980b; Mangam, 1982; Miller & Steinberg, 1979; Schein, 1979; Wheeler, 1990). Newcomers need to attain knowledge in order to reduce uncertainty and make sense of the new situation. The question then arise: "Reduce uncertainty about what?"

In contrast to the general notion of uncertainty discussed by Berger and Calabrese (1975), Lester (1993) argued that the uncertainty an organizational newcomer experiences regards two very specific domains: evaluative uncertainty and behavioral uncertainty. First, the new recruit attempts to predict his or her likely success or failure in the new position. Lester (1993) claimed that the new recruit attempts to reduce "evaluative uncertainty" about the probability of succeeding or failing in the new role. Following Lester, the variable of interest in my interest is evaluative confidence, or the extent to which a newcomer feels confident or certain of success. The converse of evaluative confidence is either the prediction of failure or a high level of uncertainty regarding one's failure in the organization.

To increase evaluative confidence, the newcomer must learn which behaviors are rewards and which are punished in the organization. Hence, the newcomer also attempts to reduce behavioral uncertainty and enhance behavioral certainty; that is, to determine which actions in which situations will be considered appropriate and worthy of reward by other members of the organization, and which behaviors will go unrewarded or punished. The notion of behavioral certainty is meant to be broad enough to include certainty about such issues as acceptable dress, how to address one's superiors, and how to perform one's tasks most efficiently.

Lester's conceptualization is a useful start, but two additional domains of uncertainty can be identified. The third domain of uncertainty regards the work environment. New recruits seek to reduce environmental uncertainty by becoming more familiar with the work place. To reduce environmental uncertainty, the new recruit must gain knowledge about the physical plant, where the lunchroom is located, how to get to the rest rooms, where one can park his or her car, where office supplies can be obtained. The recruit also may make changes in his or her own office/work place, thereby establishing a "territory." The newcomer seeks to understand the environment and establish some control over the environment. In so doing, the newcomer may feel more confident of his or her success. As such, environmental certainty is also expected to influence evaluative uncertainty.

Finally, a fourth domain of uncertainty is labeled behavioral confidence. While it is important for a newcomer to be able to predict which behaviors will be highly valued by other organizational members, it is also critical for the newcomer to feel confident that the behavior is one he or she can master. The newcomer needs to perceive that he or she can control outcomes by successfully performing required tasks. In short, the newcomer must feel skilled in and competent to perform those behaviors, which are highly valued, if he or she is to predict a successful tenure in the organization, such that behavioral confidence is also presumed to affect evaluative uncertainty.

Berger & Calabrese, (1975) assumed uncertainty reduction was a function of the overall amount of communication exchanged. I adopt the notion that both amount and content of information reduce uncertainty. Newcomers appear to be "information deprived": they do not have sufficient information regarding the job and the organization (Jablin, 1984). Any information may therefore be welcomed by the newcomer. Redundant information can emphasize or reaffirm previously received information. Inconsistent information, while confusing, may serve as additional data to sift through and judge. Certainly, too much information may at times create information overload for the newcomer, but the evidence to date suggests that newcomers are more likely to be deprived of information than overloaded with information.

In addition, content of information may serve to reduce uncertainty. Job-related communication can provide the newcomer with information about role responsibilities and requirements. Non-job-related communication may provide the newcomer with insights regarding organizational norms or individual idiosyncrasies. In sum, both amount and content of communication can reduce uncertainty for the newcomer. I do not assume uncertainty will be or should be eliminated entirely. Rather, I assume that uncertainty needs to be reduced for the newcomer to be integrated into the organization. Theorists have argued that a certain amount of uncertainty or equivocality is necessary if individuals and organizations are to remain adaptive (Farace, Taylor, & Stwart, 1987).

Overall, uncertainty reduction theory suggests that when individuals, groups, or organizations experience uncertainty, they are motivated or driven to seek information to reduce uncertainty (Deci, 1975). Uncertainty reduction theory has primarily been used to examine initial interactions (e.g., Gudykunst & Nishida, 1984), although significant research in organizational communication gas built on this theoretical framework (e.g., Kramer, 1993; Miller & Jablin, 1991).

Communication Network

Communication plays an essential role in faculty membership. Directions for acting appropriately within the culture must somehow be imparted to faculty members. Communication networks – the patterns of interaction that occur in the faculty – provide the means by which information passes from

member to member. Networks are the vehicles by which the faculty-s culture is shared and kept alive. Network allow for coordination, negotiation, and control among individuals (Fearace, Monge, & Russell, 1997).

Organizational communication network or interaction with others influences an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. McLaughlin and Cheatman (1997) found that isolation or participation in the communication network affected student morale, and Thurman (1979) found network structure to affect an individual's ability to garner support and wield power.

Given to effect of organizational communication network on attitudes and behaviors, and the influence of communication and uncertainty, organizational communication network is expected to influence assimilation outcomes for the new students. Certainly, the assimilation of new students occurs at least in part through interaction or organizational network.

Communication network is defined in this research as "the extent to which people establish and maintain direct and/or indirect communication contacts with others in their faculty". Organizational communication network has been conceptualized and operationalized in numerous ways, including the dispersion of an individual's communication links (Lester, 1981), the centrality of an individual's links, and the interconnectedness of groups and system members (Mitchell, 1999). Three indicators of organizational communication network will

be examined in this study: perceived connectedness, frequency of communication with teacher, and degree of network multiplicity.

Perceived Connectedness

Perceived Connectedness is the degree to which a new student communicates with other individuals in the faculty unit about study and non-study-related matters. Connectedness provides a direct measure of the new student's involvement in the faculty unit network and provides information about the number of sources from which the new student can gain information, ideas, and perceptions of the studying faculty.

In addition, particular attention should be paid to the new student's communication interaction with his or her colleagues and teachers. The interpersonal exchange between the new student and his or her teacher affects the role definition of the new student (Graen, 1976), influences the new student's response to the new environment (Graen, Orris, Johnson, 1973), and affects the colleague's attitudes and behaviors, including propensity to leave (Graen & Ginburgh, 1977).

In sum, the teacher appears to be the one individual who can most significantly affect the new student's attitudes toward and perceptions of the study and faculty.

Frequently of Communication with Teacher

Frequently of communication with teacher provides a measure of the new student's interaction with the teacher.

Degree of Network Multiplexity

Degree of network multiplexity or the extent to which the new student and his or her friend are linked by multiple content areas (Rogers & Kincaid, 1999). Farace at al (1997) defined three content networks: production, maintenance, and innovation. Based on this distinction, a new student may communicate with different friend about study-related concerns (production), social or non-study-related concerns (maintenance), or new ideas (innovation). Networks of study-related and non-study-related communication will be examined in this study. The faculty relationships of new students are likely to be characterized by high uncertainty, and discussion of innovation is most likely to occur in stable multiplex relationships in which uncertainty has been reduced (Albrecht & Ropp, 1984). Hence, the innovation network is not considered pertinent to this research. Multiplex networks are considered stronger and more stable than uniplex networks (Mitchell, 1999), and are thus likely to influence assimilation.

To reiterate, communication network is expected to affect uncertainty reduction and influence assimilation. Communication with other faculty members, particularly the teacher, provides a means by which the new students can reduce uncertainty and as such, is expected to affect the new student's view of the studying faculty and his or her role in it.

Based on the integration of the three literatures (assimilation, interpersonal relationship development, and communication network) and specifies the influence of organizational network on uncertainty reduction and assimilation outcomes, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Organizational network

- Organizational communication network and Access to Information

Organizational communication network provides the new students with a means for acquiring and sharing information. The information of concern can fall into one of two domains: information, which is relevant to faculty and/or the faculty, and information that concerns performance feedback. Faculty/faculty-relevant information may relate to the faculty and include a wide range of issues from benefits to faculty norms to rules to goals to history; or relate to how studies are performed and what studies are preferred, recommended, and required. Performance feedback is information regarding the new student's general standing

and performance in the faculty/faculty. It reflects how others perceive the new student to be doing on the study.

Network integration – connectedness in particular – provides the new students with opportunities to interact with other students and gain an understanding of the faculty environment. New students usually seek to master the study and become accepted faculty members, so they seek information on faculty policies, activities, norms, and rules. Communicating with student veteran allows new student to check perceptions and get information about other students, the faculty, the department, and the faculty. In addition, insiders serves as "sounding boards" for new students (Louis, 1980), and provide "local meanings" for events, facilitating the sense-making process (Louis, 1980).

Connectedness to student veterans also facilitates role learning for the new student. Network participants (compared to isolated) have greater access to information which can guide actions (Louis, 1980), and have more opportunities to learn about, clarify, and negotiate the role (Van Maanen, 1978). Integration into the network provides a means for learning the skills and norms associated with appropriate faculty behavior.

Further, connectedness may provide information about the new student's performance. New students generally seek to clarify their roles, evaluate their progress, and get feedback regarding their performance (Feldman, 1976).

Student veteran can observe the new student's behaviors and "show them the ropes" (Irwin, 1970).

Finally, the new student who becomes strongly connected is likely to encounter similar information from more than one source (Farace et al., 1978). Acquisition of information from multiple sources is important in at least two ways. First, redundancy of information provides the opportunity to verify information and increase the perceived reliability of information. Second, information, which emanates from multiple sources, is likely to have a greater impact on individual. For example, Saltiel and Woefel (1975) found that the equality of information received influenced an individual's attitudes and beliefs. In addition, Albrecht (1979) found that key communicators had more information about the study and faculty and saw themselves as more central to the faculty. In sum, by being connected to a larger number of faculty, the new student is afforded greater opportunity to gain information and receive feedback, so that:

H1: The greater the perceived connetedness, the greater the amount of faculty/study-relevant information attained by the new student.

H2: The greater the perceived connetedness, the greater the amount of performance feedback received by the new student.

Frequency of communication with the teacher also influences information acquisition. The teacher my be considered a key communicator in that he or she is in a position to receive information through formally sanctioned channels as well as informal channels, and so has access to a wider variety of information. Frequent communication with the teacher can provide the new student with more opportunities to question the teacher, clarify concerns, and become better acquainted with the faculty/faculty culture, and hence, to progress through the assimilation stages identified previously.

In addition, the teacher typically assigns activities, so he or she can make expectations of the new student clear. As the formal authority, the teacher is in a position to resolve work ambiguity for the new student by negotiating, redefining, or clarifying the role of the new student.

The new student's teacher is also charged with conducting the formal performance evaluation and assigning faculty rewards. The teacher is thus providing performance feedback. Individuals are especially likely to learn from interactions with those who can reward or punish behaviors (Brim, 1977). It is hypothesized, therefore:

H3: The greater the frequency of communication with the teacher, the greater the amount of faculty/study-relevant information attained by the new student.

H4: The greater the frequency of communication with the teacher, the greater the amount of performance feedback received by the new student.

Network multiplexity also facilitates information exchange in that more varied information is exchanged in the multiplex network. New students and student veterans who share both formal and informal information have more information on which to base predictions of one another, such that levels of trust may increase (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984). Trust and openness between the new student and his or her peers and teacher may facilitate information exchange.

Network multiplexity also suggests that the new student can gain information formally or informally and in varied contexts. The nature and tone of an interaction setting may influence the nature of information exchanged. For example, a student may feel more comfortable discussing a study issue in an informal, social context as part of social conversation than he or she would feel in the more formal environment.

Finally, information shared across multiplex networks has relevance for both study and friendship roles (Mitchell, 1989). For instance, information shared about study-related matters reflects on the non-study or friend relationship. Hence, information shared in multiplex networks may be seen as more candid and more reliable. There:

H5: The greater the degree of network multiplexity, the greater the amount of faculty/study-relevant information attained by the new student.

H6: The greater the degree of network multiplexity, the greater the amount of performance feedback received by the new student.

The Reduction of Uncertainty

The researcher asserted that new students seek to reduce uncertainty about their new roles and environments. In formation acquisition is one means for new students to reduce uncertainty about the environment, the required behaviors, and about their performance. Certainty and confidence in these three domains should then enhance the new student's certainty of success.

- Information Acquisition and Uncertainty Reduction

One important concern for the new student is gaining control over the physical environment, or reducing environment uncertainty. Clearly, walking around can acquaint the new student with the environment simply, but observations do not always provide sufficient clues for reducing environment uncertainty. Faculty/task-relevant information provides a framework for making sense of clues gathered through observation so the new student is better able to

reduce equivocally (Mangam, 1981). Faculty/study relevant information can also reduce environment uncertainty more directly. Therefore:

H7: The greater the amount of faculty/study-relevant information acquired by the new student, the greater the environmental certainty reported by the new student.

New students also attempt to reduce behavioral uncertainty; that is, they strive to identify those behaviors, which are most likely to be reinforced and preferred by peers and teachers. They try to determine which behaviors will lead to successful study completion, to know what appropriate cloth is, what interaction styles are preferred, what faculty norms are, and so on. Information from other friends aids the new student in making inferences and predictions regarding expected and preferred behaviors. Teachers and colleagues provide information, which can help the new student determine what behaviors will constitute suitable performance. Therefore, information is proposed to have the major impact on behavioral certainty, such that:

H8: The greater the amount of faculty/study-relevant information acquired by the new student, the greater the behavioral certainty reported by the new students.

H9: The greater the amount of performance feedback received by the new student, the greater the behavioral certainty reported by the new student.

As suggested earlier, this relationship may not be strictly linear. At some level, information may in fact produce overload or serve as "disinformation" (Parks, 1992). Extream amounts of information and feedback may serve to create—rather than reduce—behavioral uncertainty. However, current research indicates that new students simply are not overloaded with information. Jablin (1984) reported that new individuals were more likely to be "information deprived," and therefore, a linear hypothesis may still be appropriate in this case.

Performance feedback is expected to enhance behavioral confidence, also. The new student needs to know what behaviors will be rewarded in the faculty/faculty, but must also believe he or she is capable of adequately performing those behaviors. Feedback from others in the faculty is an important indicator of one' capability. Whether the feedback is formal or informal, it can enhance the new student's sense of performing according to acceptable standards. Therefore:

H10: The greater the amount of performance feedback received by the new student, the greater the behavioral confidence reported by the new student.

Uncertainty Reduction and Assimilation Outcomes

Evaluation confidence or the prediction of success is likely to be related to the assimilation outcomes defined and discussed above. First, confidence that one can succeed in the new role should affect internal study motivation. Students who feel they are successfully completing studies and doing well are likely to feel good and to continue to want to perform well (Moch, 1990). It follows, that:

H11: Increases in evaluative confidence will be positively related to increases in internal study motivation

In addition, internal study motivation and evaluative confidence are expected to relate positively to study performance as evaluated by the teacher. Those new students who feel confident of their ability to succeed and who are motivated to perform well are likely to be perceived by teachers as more effective performers. Hence, it is:

H12: Increases in evaluative confidence will be positively related to increases in study performance.

H13: There will be a positive relationship between internal study motivation and study performance.

To conclude, the above hypotheses provide an overview of the assimilation process as experienced by the new student. It expands considerably on previous approaches to assimilation by integrating three diverse perspectives (assimilation, interpersonal relationship development, and organizational communication network) and by emphasizing the influence of organizational communication network and information on uncertainty reduction and assimilation outcomes. It suggests that a casual sequence for the assimilation process and statistical tests will examine it accordingly. Analysis of this relationship as a casual process will provide the most rigorous test of the assimilation process as proposed. As indicated in the literature reviews of assimilation, so past research explicitly supporting these aspects is scarce. Therefore, it might best be viewed as a preliminary explication of the assimilation process.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study takes advantage of my present employment situation. This employment situation provides me with a wealth of background knowledge regarding the organization being studied and its culture. My present situation also provides me with sufficient information to be able to ascertain that this organization will be a suitable research site for the investigation of the issues of concern. The present chapter provides an overview of the research setting relevant to the study and an overview of the methods of data collection that will be utilized. The variables are defined and the measurement instruments are discussed.

Research Setting

Data will be collected from Faculty of Communication Arts students in Thai program at Rangsit University. In order to study the multitude of factors that could influence new student assimilation in faculty, it was decided that the research site needed to meet the following criteria:

1. the presence of a number of new faculty hired in recent years;

2. new students from a wide variety of backgrounds/experiences;

3. an established program of tactics specifically designed to socialize new students to faculty expectations.

In addition to these criteria, the researcher search a department that could serve as a model of excellence based on objective criteria. Marshall and Rossman (1989) noted that the research site is where (1) entry is possible; (2) there is a high probability that a rich mix of many of the processes, people, programs, interactions, and/or structures that may be a part of the research question will be present; (3) the researcher can devise an appropriate role to maintain continuity of presence for as long as necessary; and (4) data of the study are reasonably assured by avoiding poor sampling decision. (p. 54)

Accessibility and receptivity of personnel at the site in addition to a rich, varied environment are therefore just as important as are manifestations of the phenomena which form the focus of the study.

Population, Samples, and Sampling Method

Full-time new students who studied at Faculty of Communication Arts no more than 3 months in academic year 2010 were invited to participate. The

three-month criterion was applied because it allowed for the inclusion of students who will be still in the early stages of social assimilation while also meeting requirement set by the participating faculty. The amount of new students from eight departments in Faculty of Communication Arts was approximately 800 students.

According to identification the sample size, the researcher calculated through Taro Yamane formula with value of error at 5%. The result of new students as samples is 267 students.

The selection of new students proceeded by the method of simple random sampling. The researcher selected new students by selecting the 267 labels of all new students' names from total of 800 names. Then, the result was a sample of 267 new students.

Therefore, 267 new students participated in the study. As defined in Chapter One, a newcomer was a student who, at the time of this research, had been registered with the Faculty of Communication Arts; Rangsit university for less than 3 months at the time of the first mentoring program and activities in academic year 2010, who had not been previously registered by the university, and who did not attend the university as a part-time or an exchange student. The newcomers in this research were permanent, full-time students. They were "permanent" students in the sense that, even though they did not yet hold tenure, they had studied with a

reasonable expectation of being studies for the future. For the purposes of this research, a veteran was defined as an existing student who had been studied with the Faculty of Communication Arts; Rangsit university for at least one year on a continuous, permanent, and full-time basis.

Data Collection Procedures

Data is collected at three points in time. New students will responded to the time 1 survey during the third or fourth week of study, the time 2 survey during the sixth through eighth weeks of study, and the time 3 survey during the ninth through twelfth weeks of study. Data is collected over a fourteen-day period for each wave.

Data collection procedures are identical for each collection. The researcher will deliver questionnaire packages to each recently student. The package will include a cover letter, the survey questionnaires, and an envelope for returning the completed surveys.

Performance evaluation data is also be collected for each new student. At data collection time 2 and time 3, the researcher will distribute performance survey packages to the teachers, who will be informed of the study. Packages contained a cover letter, performance evaluation questionnaires, and the envelopes

for returning the surveys. The teacher rated the new student's performance and will return the survey directly to the researcher or to a designed location.

Data were collected with new students. New students responded to the survey during the fourth week to sixth week of study in the faculty and university. Performance evaluation data were collected for each new student. At data collection, the researcher distributed performance survey packages to the teachers, who were informed of the study. Packages contained a cover letter, performance evaluation questionnaires, and the envelopes for returning the surveys. The teacher assigned to the new student, and will return the survey directly to the researcher or to a designed location.

Scale Reliabilities

Alpha reliabilities were computed to assess the internal consistency of each scale at each data collection wave. The reliabilities generally exceed the preferred reliabilities of .80, and in every case but one, exceed .70.

Test-retest reliabilities were also computed to assess the stability of each scale over time. Test-retest reliabilities are generally considered acceptable. Scale administrations were approximately four weeks apart. The four week interval is greater than the more standard ten to fourteen-day interval, and with greater periods of time between administrations, we are more likely to observe actual

change. For example, over a period of few weeks, teachers may purposely spend more time with some new students such that time spent communicating is not consistent.

Preliminary Analysis

The statistical procedures of LISREL are based on assumptions about the distributions of the variables used in the analysis. Exploratory data analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which statistical assumptions were met. In addition, hypothesized relationships were explored using correlations and regressions.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis and preliminary analysis involved computing descriptive statistics and reliabilities for the computed indicators. The distributions of the computed scales were examined to assess their normality. Simple regressions were used to investigate the proposed relationships between the variables. Correlations and regressions were used for initial examination of the hypotheses.

The casual model was first examined at each point in time using LISREL (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1984). LISREL allows the user to analyze casual

models with multiple indicators of latent variables (such as three indicators of network involvement) and to analyze models with reciprocal causation. Independent regressions could be used to estimate coefficients, but the estimates might be biased (Fink, 1980). In addition, the use of LISREL is more powerful than path analysis and is based on less restrictive assumptions (Pedhazur, 1982). LISREL allows us to test the entire casual model (all posited interrelationships) simultaneously as a system (Fink, 1980). LISREL offers the additional benefit of providing multiple indicators of fit for the model, including a chi-square test, and an adjusted goodness of fit index.

The LISREL analysis of the casual model was used to determine of the proposed model was consistent with the data, thereby lending support to the model. The model was considered in terms of the probability of the chi-square value, the ratio of the chi-square value to the degrees of freedom, goodness of fit indices, and in terms of other indicators of adequate fit (to be discussed more fully later in the chapter).

Results of the analysis of the casual model led to additional analysis of the data. Confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL was conducted to simplify the model and examine associations between the factors. The in-depth details of each information are as follow.

- **Communication Network**

Involvement in study and non-study-related communication networks were measured following the formats which suggested by Farace et al (1977) and Richards (1975). Respondents received alphabetical lists of current faculty members (including nicknames and department). These lists were kept as accurate and up-to-date as possible for each wave of data collection. Subjects were asked to review the lists, wrote on the questionnaire the names of those people with whom they have talked in the last two weeks, and then to respond to two questions with regard to each name: (1) In the last two weeks, how many hours, to the nearest quarter hour, have you communicated with this person about study-related matters? And (2) In the last two weeks, how many hours, to the nearest quarter hour, have you communicated with this persons about non-study-related matters? Communication is defined as contact which occurred either face-to-face or over the phone, during study hours or outside of study hours, regardless of who initiated the contact.

- **Perceived connectedness**

Perceived connectedness is defined as the degree to which a new student perceives that he or she communicates with others in the class about either study or non-study-related natters, and reflects the frequently of communication the new student has with veteran students. Connectedness were calculated as a

ratio between (1) the total communications frequently reported across both networks, and (2) the total number of possible linkages across both networks at the maximum frequency of communication. The following formula will be used, adapted from both Parks (1977) and Ray (1983):

$$P = \frac{F}{(N-1)M}$$

P = perceived connectedness

F = sum of observed frequencies of communication

N = network size

M = maximum frequency of communication

Scores range from 0 to 1, and larger score reflects a greater degree of connectedness.

- **Frequency of communication**

Frequency of communication with colleagues and faculty members reflects the degree to which a new student perceives that he or she communicates with the unit members. The variables will be calculated as the sum of study and non-study communication reported with the teachers divided by the total number of faculty members. A larger score reflects greater frequency.

- **Network Multiplexity**

Network multiplexity reflects the new student's integration into both the study and non-study-related network. Multiplexity was calculated as the total number of multiplex links divides by the number of such links possible, so that scores range from 0 to 1. A large score indicates a greater degree of mulitplexity.

- **Faculty/university-Relevant Information**

Faculty/university-relevant information is defined as information about the faculty/university, class and the individual's study in the class. The extent to which new students receive information about such topics as faculty/class activities, or class quiz, and class decision making were measured with a modified version of the "Receiving information for Others" subscale of the ICA Communication Audit (Goldhaber & Rogers, 1979). Recent criticisms of the ICA Communication Audit typically focus on the appropriateness of conducting the Audit for research purposes. However, the particular subscales of the ICA Audit are reliable and valid and have been used in numerous research projects, including recent research on communication and social assimilation (Jablin, 1984). Analysis of the "Receiving Information" scale has indicated it is highly reliable (Porter, 1979).

For this research, the scale was modified by dropping one item, adding one item, and changing the response format. Respondents were indicated the amount of information received about various topics on a scale of 0 (no information) to 100 (complete information). The modified response format was chosen because ratio scales offer a more precise measure of communication, which is especially valuable when studying the communication process over time. Responses to the thirteen items were averaged to produce a summary score (range equals 0 to 100).

- **Performance Feedback**

Performance feedback is defined as the degree to which the new student receives information about his or her study performance. Feedback for both faculty members and classmates were measured with an eight-item scale adapted from scales by Van de Ven and Ferry (1980). Goldhaber and Rogers (1979), and O' Reilly and Anderson (1980). Sample items include, "I receive information about how well I am doing my work," and " I often receive useful suggestions for feedback or feedback from my classmate on my work."

Respondents indicated their agreement with each item on seven-point Likert scales. Responses to two items were reversed and all items were summed to provide the measure of performance feedback. Score could range from 7 to 49, and higher scores indicate greater amounts of perceived feedback.

- **Environment Certainty**

This variable reflects the degree to which the new student is familiar with the class environment. For items, including "I know my way around this faculty/class," and "I know where to go when I need information," will develop to measure environmental certainty.

Participants expressed their agreement to the four items on seven-points Likert-type scales. Two items scored and the items were be summed. The potential range of score will be 4 to 28, and larger scores reflect greater environmental uncertainty.

- **Behavioral Certainty**

Behavioral certainty is the extent to which new students are certain of the behaviors others consider appropriate and expect them to enact. No measures of behavioral certainty exist, so to measure the construct, eight items were adapted from items on the Organizational Assessment Inventory (OAI: Ven de Ven & Ferry, 1980). Items focus on the extent to which subjects understand expectations, recognize the amount and quality of study to be done, and so on. Subjects responded on seven-point Likert-type scales. Three items were reverse-scored and

item response then summed. Scores could range from 8 to 56, and a larger score respondents a greater degree of certainty.

- **Behavioral Confidence**

The extent to which the new student feels confident of his or her ability to master valued behaviors were measured by a five-item scale develops for this study. Items on the scale include: "I have the skills necessary to do this work," and "I feel confident that I can follow the assigned rules and procedures for this work." Responses were made on the seven-point Likert scale, and were summed to result in an overall measure of behavioral confidence. The possible range of scores will be 5 to 35, and larger scores represent greater confidence.

- **Evaluate Confidence**

The evaluative confidence scale measured the extent to which the new student feels confident of success. No measures of evaluative confidence existed, so six items were developed specifically for this research. Four items, such as, "I am confident I will succeed in this class/faculty,: and "I am not sure I can make it in this class," were answered on the seven-point Likert-type scale. These items were reversed, and added to the fourth item. Two additional items asked respondents to first estimate the probability they succeeded in the faculty and then to provide a confidence rating of the success estimate. The probability estimate

was multiplied by the success estimate, and the resulting product was receded onto a seven-point scale. This value was added to the sum of the responses to the four Likert-type items to result in the overall measure of evaluative confidence, which could range from 5 to 35. A larger score reflects a greater degree of confidence.

- **Study Motivation**

The study motivation scale measures the degree to which the student is self-motivated to do the study. Four items from the OAI (Van de Ven & Ferry, 1980) and three item from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (MOAO: Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1983) were used to measure study motivation. Both OAI and the MOAQ have been widely used, and the authors of each provide evidence of acceptable reliability and validity.

The seven items assessed respondents' internal motivation to work; for example, "Doing my work well gives me a good feeling," and "I feel a great sense of accomplishment when I do this work well." Subjects will indicate their agreement with the items on seven-pointLikert-type scales. One item was reverse and then all items were summed, such that the potential scale range was 7 to 49. A larger score reflects greater motivation.

- **Study Performance**

To assess the degree to which new students understand and carry out study assignment, the new student's study performance was evaluated by a faculty member at time 2 and time 3. Faculty members rated each new student on six performance criteria: quality of work, quantity of work, knowledge of study or work, dependability, skill in dealing with people, and overall performance. Faculty members evaluated the new student's current level of performance and estimated the new student's level of performance six months in the future using a scale which range from 0 to 100 where 0 reflect "totally unacceptable performance" and 100 reflect performance which meet "all standards of excellence." The dual rating system was employed to encourage teachers to rate the new student's actual performance at the time of the evaluation rather than to inflate the rating to reflect anticipated improvements to performance aster a few months on the study. Teachers' responses to the six items averaged to produce a summary score reflective of the new student's performance, Scores could range from 0 to100, and a higher score reflects better performance.

CAHPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

The organizational assimilation of newcomers to an organization can usefully be viewed both from the organization's and from the newcomer's perspectives. This study was designed to produce a portrait of both sides of the new students' assimilation process at Faculty of Communication Arts; Rangsit University. The data presented pertain to the hypotheses concerning communicative network and interaction, including successful social assimilation. It was aimed at exploring the communication network, interactive processes and successful outcomes that new students associated with their transition into membership.

This chapter is divided into sections on the basis of different themes. The data analysis is previewed and the results of the descriptive, preliminary, and the main analyses are reported.

Description of the Sample

267 newly students from Faculty of Communication Arts; Rangsit University in academic year 2010 were invited to participate in the research. Analysis of demographic data indicates that the average respondent was nineteen years old (M = 19.14, SD = 6.98), female 82 percent), and Thai (100 percent).

Table 1: Alpha Reliabilities for Indicators at Each Wave

Indicator	Time 1(N)
Organization/Task Relevant Information	.78(57)
Performance Feedback	.81(62)
Perceived Psychological Support	.93(85)
Environmental Certainty	.77(66)
Behavioral Certainty	.86(65)
Behavioral Confidence	.76(66)
Satisfaction with Supervisor	.88(62)
Satisfaction with Co-Workers	.87(63)
Satisfaction with Management	.85(63)
Satisfaction with Organizational Outcomes	.90(62)
Performance Feedback	.72(66)
Perceived Psychological Support	.84(66)
Environmental Certainty	.72(66)

Examination of Distributions

First, the frequency distribution of each scale was examined to ensure that data were normally distributed and that the mean provided an adequate measure of central tendency. Skewness was identified as the primary indicator of a normal distribution, and, as a rule of thumb, a value between plus or minus two was deemed acceptable. Kurtosis was also examined and a value between plus or minus three was deemed acceptable. As evidenced in table 2, all the perceptual and attitudinal scales met the criteria for normality. Table 3 indicates that the performance evaluation scores also were distributed normally.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistic for Attitudinal and Perceptual Measures

Indicator	Time	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Organization/Task Relevant Information	1	57.86	16.29	.199	-.460
	2	56.42	16.94	.381	-.740
	3	58.57	17.67	-.041	-.115
Performance Feedback	1	33.14	7.23	.079	.040
	2	31.97	8.79	-.099	-.238
	3	31.86	8.63	-.134	.040
Perceived Psychological Support	1	49.61	11.50	-1.142	1.967
	2	49.86	11.16	-.582	.746
	3	49.73	12.39	-.905	1.545

Indicator	Time	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Environmental Certainty	1	16.39	5.14	-.141	-.111
	2	18.29	4.12	.362	-.417
	3	19.36	4.60	-.206	-.059
Behavioral Certainty	1	35.32	7.33	-.632	.122
	2	34.96	7.46	-.005	-.352
	3	36.58	7.66	-.463	-.219
Behavioral Confidence	1	27.86	4.40	-.610	.936
	2	28.12	4.01	-.415	-.315
	3	27.88	4.03	.183	-.794
Satisfaction with Supervisor	1	42.05	7.51	-.411	-.250
	2	39.86	9.87	-.306	-.541
	3	39.58	10.78	-.487	-.176
Satisfaction with Co-Workers	1	15.03	3.65	-.876	1.118
	2	14.50	3.87	-.530	-.179
	3	14.20	3.97	-.687	.546
Satisfaction with Management	1	13.30	3.44	.097	-.080
	2	12.64	3.49	-.087	.036
	3	12.26	3.82	-.003	-.108
Satisfaction with Organizational Outcomes	1	62.96	10.47	-.446	.925
	2	59.36	13.09	.145	.548
	3	58.99	13.70	.070	-.600

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the New Student's Performance Evaluation

Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
75.66	13.51	- .404	- .603

The distributions of the network involvement indicators were also examined. Subjects indicated their organizational communication network by noting how many hours during the prior two weeks they had spent communicating with each person in their faculty. Examination of a random sample of individual network links indicated that the values were widely dispersed and positively skewed. Tukey (1977) argues that amount data should be re-expressed or transformed when the ratio of the largest value to the smallest value is very large (100 or more0, as was the case in these data. A logarithmic re-expression transforms the data such that "equal diffrences in logs correspond to equal ratios of raw values" (Tukey, 1977, p. 59), and the shapes of the distribution becomes more normal or symmetric so that the mean adequately represents the center of the distribution (bauer & Fink, 1984). In the light of the very large ratio of smallest to largest in these data (in minutes, 0 to 8400), transformation of the raw network data was deemed necessary.

To identify the transformation which seemed to mostly adequately normalize the data; three randomly selected network variables were each

transformed nine times. The formula discussed in chapter 3 was still used to calculate perceived connectedness, except that transformed values of the frequencies were used rather than raw values. Table 4 provides descriptive statistics which indicate that computed connectedness scores were normally distributed. To enhance interpretation of the numbers, the transformed connectedness scores were multiplied by ten. A larger score reflects a greater degree of connectedness.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Connectedness

Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
.133	.079	.817	.537

Frequency of communication was calculated by first summing the raw network values and dividing by the number of teachers. The resulting scores were skewed, but a logarithmic transformation effectively normalized the data. Larger scores reflect greater frequency of communication with the teachers.

Network multiplexity scores were not influenced by the data transformations because multiplexity was calculated as the number of multiplex links divided by the number of such links possible. These data were normally distributed, but scores were multiplied by ten to enhance interpretation of the number (see table 5).

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Multiplexity

Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1.66	1.51	1.150	1.912

Analysis of Residuals

The second phase of exploratory data analysis involved examination of residuals. The general linear model assumes that errors of residuals are random. Large degrees of hetero-scedasticity and non-nomality can affect the results of analyses based on the general linear model (Bauer & Fink, 1984). Hence, normality and homo-scedasticity should be assessed to determine if the assumptions are satisfied.

Analysis of residuals is recommended as an effective means for detecting deviations from linearity (Bauer & Fink, 1984). Computation of vicariate regressions for each hypothesized relationship at each point in time yielded over 100 residual plots. The plots were examined, and generally revealed that residuals were randomly distributed around zero, and that no distinct patterns of variation were evident. Two variables were exceptions, however, intent to leave. The residuals plots involving these variables were sometimes hetero-scedastic. To

correct the problem, the intent to leave variable was re-expressed using a square root transformation which reduced the skewness and kurtosis of the variables, and eliminate the hetero-scedasticity noted in the residual plots. A sample transformation of the intent to leave variable reduced the skewness and kurtosis but did not correct for hetero-scedasticity. Therefore, intent to leave neither was nor transformed and results for this variable should be interpreted cautiously.

Overall, the preliminary analysis indicated that the indicators were normally distributed and that assumptions of the general linear model were met.

Preliminary Analysis of Hypothesized Relationship

The hypothesized relationships were first examined using Pearson product- moment correlations and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis. This step of the analysis allowed examination of specific relationships between individual indicators rather than between factors. In the more comprehensive LISREL analysis, some of these specific relationships were not tested directly. Initial analysis of the correlation indicated that satisfaction with other students was very highly correlated (greater than 085) with perceived psychological support at each data collection time. Satisfaction with other students was only one of four elements of the larger construct of study satisfaction and was not directly incorporated into any hypotheses, so it was dropped from future analysis to avoid the problems associated with high multi-collonearity.

Network involvement and organization/study-relevant information

Hypotheses 1, 3, and 5 each predicted that network involvement (perceived connectedness, frequency of communication with teachers, and multiplexity, respectively) would be positively related to the amount of organization/study-relevant information attained by the newcomer. The correlation coefficient between connectedness and organization/study-relevant information (H1) was significant. Frequency of communication with teacher was correlated in the proposed direction with amount of organization/study-relevant information (H2). Finally, network multiplexity and attainment of organization/study-relevant information (H3) were significantly correlated.

Multiple regression was used to assess the influence of the network variables on amount of organization/study-relevant information attained. Analysis of the correlation matrices indicated, however, that connectedness and multiplexity were highly correlated (greater than .90). Multi-collinearity between independent variables can reduce the reliability of the relative importance suggested by the partial regression coefficients. For this preliminary exploration of relationships, then, connectedness was chosen to represent the underlying dimension, and only connectedness and frequency of communication with teacher were entered into the regressions predicting amount of organization/study-relevant information attained.

The regression coefficients for connectedness were not significant. The coefficients for frequency of communication with teacher were significant.

Network involvement and performance feedback

Hypotheses 2, 4, and 6 predicted that the network involvement variables would be positively related to the amount of performance feedback received by the newcomer. Correlations between connectedness and performance feedback (H2) were in the proposed direction and were significant. The correlation between frequency of communication with teacher and performance feedback (H4) was significant at each point in time. Finally, multiplexity and frequency of communication (H6) were significantly correlated at all points in time.

Additionally, connectedness and frequency of communication with the teacher were entered in a regression predicting performance feedback. The regression coefficients for connectedness were not significant. Coefficients for frequency of communication with teacher were significant.

Information acquisition and uncertainty reduction

Hypothesis 7 predicted that increase in organization/study-relevant information would lead to increase in environment certainty for the newcomer. Regression coefficients at each point in time were significant and moderate.

In hypotheses 8 and 9, organization/study-relevant information and performance feedback were predicted to relate positively to amount of behavioral certainty reported by the newcomer. Relevant information and behavioral certainty were significantly correlated at each point in time. Correlations between performance feedback and behavioral certainty were also high and significant. When entered into the regression analysis, feedback was a significant predictor of behavioral certainty at each point in time.

Hypothesis 10 posited that greater amounts of performance feedback would be associated with greater amounts of behavioral confidence.

Evaluate confidence and assimilation outcomes

Hypothesis 11 predicted that increases in evaluative confidence would be positively related to increases in internal network motivation. The regression coefficient was significant.

For hypothesis 12, the proposed relationship between evaluative confidence and study performance was not supported by the data. It proposed relationship between evaluative confidence and each element of study satisfaction was supported by the data. Evaluative confidence was positively related to

satisfaction with teacher, to satisfaction with management, and to satisfaction with organization outcomes.

Study motivation and study performance

Hypothesis 13 posited that internal study motivation and study performance would be positively related. No support for the hypothesis was found.

Overall, the preliminary analyses indicate that the data support several of the hypothesized relationships. However, correlation coefficients and regression analyses are not sufficient for examine. Estimates obtained using regression may be biased because all of the interrelationships among the variables are not considered. It emphasized the importance of incorporating and correcting for measurement errors in order to adequately test and hypothesized model. Structural equation modeling allows all relations to be estimated simultaneously, and thus allows for a more thorough analysis of the proposed relationships.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION, AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present research project expanded on previous approaches to the study of organizational assimilation by integrating the three diverse perspectives of assimilation, interpersonal relationship development, and communication network integration. The primary goal was to examine the role of communication network involvement in the organizational assimilation process. Uncertainty reduction theory provided theoretic framework. Hypotheses were based on the notion that the newcomer's integration into existing communication networks would provide the newcomer with access to information, feedback, and support which would help reduce uncertainty regarding a number of domains, and that reduced uncertainty would be associated with a variety of outcomes commonly associated with effective assimilation.

Pragmatic Implication of the Research

Becoming integrated into a new setting is a difficult task for many newcomers.

Organizations and individuals alike can benefit from effective organizational programs. What, then, are the implications of the present research for assimilation practices?

First, while the research did not focus on the specific content or particular source of information, the significant links between network involvement and both information acquisition and organization attachment across both time periods indicates that day-to-day interactions with friends and teachers are important for effective assimilation. Hence, we can look at some suggestions for teacher, the faculty group members, and the newcomers. The suggestions are made tentatively because they are based on a single study of students in university, and the findings of the study may hot hold for other students in other settings.

Teachers might be well advised to set aside time to work with the new students. New students apparently do experience a great deal of uncertainty so that they need to be shown the facility, introduced to others, and given information which will make expectations and standards of performance clear. A strong link was noted between information acquisition and attachment, so

the teacher who makes him/herself available to provide information, feedback, and support may facilitate assimilation.

In addition, links were found between network involvement and information acquisition, attachment, and performance, suggesting that colleagues play a part in shaping the new student's attitudes and behaviors. Teachers might stress to veterans the important role experienced students can play in integrating newcomers, and incorporate students into the assimilation process in formal as well as in formal ways. For example, formally establishing buddy relationships between newcomer and one or two well-informed veterans might facilitate learning, uncertainty reduction, and improved performance. Inclusion in informal events might communicate support and assurance to the newcomer, offer opportunities to reinforce the newcomer's decision, and provide the newcomer with context-specific information. Veterans might thus be encouraged to "look out" for new students and be sure they are included in activities and discussion.

Finally, the newcomer who wants to become well-integrated might be advised to seek out information and new relationships with veterans. It seems that interacting with veteran members of the faculty group is the means by which performance expectations, feedback, and organization-relevant information are obtained. Since network integration was associated with the study performance in the early weeks of registration, involvement may be a valuable "tool" for learning how the study is done in the new university.

The notion that organizational communication network is an important means for assimilating the newcomer seems intuitively obvious, yet, I suspect that few faculties and universities make use of communication network as an organizational assimilating strategy. The present study suggests that actively involving newcomers in communication networks can facilitate assimilation, and might well be an effective strategy. However, a few cautions are in order. First, intense efforts involve the newcomer in the organizational communication network and provide the newcomer with the context-specific information may stifle creativity and innovation. Newcomers are in a position to see new ways of doing things precisely because they don't have history with the organization. Second, communication network in a organizational network of disgruntled or incompetent veterans may backfire in that newcomers may themselves become dissatisfied or may learn poor study habits. Finally, engaging veterans in the assimilation process may place a significant strain on those veterans. Involving a newcomer in interactions or serving as a buddy consumes valuable time, and may cause stress for the veteran ao that he or she may unwilling or unable to provide support and encouragement. Organizational communication network seems to play a significant role in the assimilation process of newcomers, but should not be viewed as panacea.

Directions for Future Research

The direction for future research on organizational assimilation and communication are many. First, researchers interested in communication network and organizational assimilation should make every attempt to survey all members of the work group so network structure can be assessed. Some veterans and subgroups are likely to have a greater influence on the newcomer than others, and the newcomers who are not integrated into cliques may have difficulty obtaining certain kinds of information or certain skills and secrets. A network study of the entire organization might help determine from whom newcomers get the most information or with whom newcomers spend the most time. It would be useful to explore the role upper management, personal staff, and employees beyond the immediate work group have in assimilating the newcomer.

In addition, longitudinal research is needed. Only by studying assimilation over time will we be able to observe patterns of change and verify the hypothesized stages of assimilation. Longitudinal research would allow us to explore changes in the importance of various assimilating agents over time. The change noted in the association between communication network and performance suggests that different activities, strategies, and people may facilitate assimilation at different times. Longitudinal studies are necessary for extending theory and for developing practical assimilation programs.

Researchers studying organizational assimilation have not paid a sufficient amount of attention to the role of communication -- organizational structure, in particular – in the assimilation process. A focus on communication is essential if we are to gain a better understanding of the means by which newcomers become aware of and integrated into the organizational culture. The study reported here in lays a foundation for future research exploring the influence of communication network in the assimilation process.

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APPENDIX

Code Number : _____

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE

I am interested in knowing who in your faculty you communicate with. Your communication may be face to face, and it may be during university hours. It does not matter whether the other person contacts you or you contact thme, or it it is a short or long talk. Your conversation may be about things related directly to your study/faculty.

Attached is a list of the names of those students who are registered in the same faculty as you. Please read through the list and, on the attached page, write down the names of any students you have communicated with in the last two weeks. Please do your best to identify those people with whom you have spoken.

Then, for each name you have listed, estimate how mnay hours (to the nearest quarter hour) you communicated with this person about study and faculty related topics.

NAME

TOPIC: