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Role of Perceived Accuracy and Organisation Support on the Perceptions of Behavior Change of Indian it Professionals in Context of Multi-Source Feedback

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ABSTRACT

Multisource feedback in organizations have evolved from an innovative nice to have technique to a must have tool for integration into the overall performance and human resource management strategy. The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of perceived accuracy of feedback and perceived organization support on the employee's perception of change in behaviour since receiving 360 degree feedback. The study was conducted in IT Organizations in Delhi & NCR Region, India. The findings of the study support that perception of accuracy of feedback and organization support accounted for variance in the perceived change in behaviour of employees since receiving multisource feedback. It was found that higher the perceived accuracy of feedback and organization support, the higher was the positive change in behaviour experienced by employees such as improvement in interpersonal skills; leadership skills; self-awareness and work performance. They were inclined to engage in developmental activities to improve their behaviour in the interest of the organization.

Keywords: Behaviour change, IT Organisations, multi-source feedback, organization support, perceived accuracy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over a period of time Human Resource Management has assumed the role of a strategic partner in the organisational success. It comprises of various traditions that range from employee's well being to the development of workplace relationships. Latham and Wexley (1994) in their influential discussion on Human Resource Management identified selection, appraisal, training and motivation as the four key systems necessary for ensuring the proper management of an organisation's human resources. Out of these four they argue performance appraisal to be the most important because it is "the pre-requisite for establishing the other three". Performance management as a distinct and vital subject for academic study and research

arguably began in the late 1980s (Johnson & Kaplan, 1987; Lynch & Cross, 1991; Eccles, 1991; Kaplan & Norton, 1992; EFQM, 1999; Thorpe, 2004).

The objective of Performance Management System (PMS) entails not just appraising but developing employees to take up challenging roles and to coach them to assume responsibilities and accomplish such tasks that would leverage the competitive advantage and success of organizations.

As per the study conducted by Bernthal (1996) on Performance Management Practices, PMS comprises of four dimensions namely performance planning, feedback and coaching, performance review and outcome. Out of these four dimensions, one of the most challenging tasks over the years has been providing feedback to employees. Feedback has always been significant and throughout history people have provided inputs on the behavior and productivity of employees. However the purpose, dimension, source and the process of providing feedback has undergone a sea change over a period of time and feedback has been linked with significant human resource strategies and personnel decisions. Hopen.D., (2004) in his article on Consequences and changing behaviors contend that concepts of Performance Management are based on behavioral psychology. He says that performance management systems are based on “ABC model” (Antecedents, Behaviour and Consequences) and have proven to be effective for changing individual and group behaviors when it is properly implemented.

The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of perceived accuracy of feedback and perceived organization support on the employee’s perception of changes in behavior since receiving 360 degree feedback in context of IT Organisations. The paper discusses the significance of accuracy and organization support and its role in the behavioral changes experienced by IT professionals when feedback comes from multiple sources. Supervisor’s rating had been a common phenomenon where the supervisor provided rating to an individual on various performance dimensions and was often referred to as downward feedback. This common source of feedback had been pervasive throughout history. However a comprehensive feedback mechanism embraces feedback from multiple sources.

Hoffman (1995, p-82) explains that “360 degree feedback is an approach that gathers behavioral observations from many layers within the organization & includes self assessment. It can be viewed as a boundary less appraisal extending feedback input from the traditional top down approach to include direct reports, colleagues and also the customers”. Tornow & London (1998) argue that the need for managers to adjust to ever-changing business environments is a primary reason why 360 degree feedback has become popular in the past decade. Rating sources from both inside and outside the organisation can provide key information which enables the organisation to be adaptive.

Waldman et al. (1998) enumerate other possible reasons for the increased adoption of 360 degree feedback processes. First, he says that it is assumed that the provision of feedback to managers about how they are viewed by subordinates, peers, superiors and customers should prompt positive change in behaviour and performance. Second, it is assumed that the implementation of 360 degree feedback process will lead to increasing levels of trust and communication throughout the organisation, fewer grievances and greater customer satisfaction.

Companies using 360 degree assessments see their systems as having a superior impact on workplace behavior compared to “supervisor only” feedback. The system is better at improving communication between superior and worker, for example, in developing self awareness, and in improving overall job performance (Bohl, 1996). It is widely recommended for the planning of individual development (Hazucha, Hezlett, & Schneider, 1993; Tornow, 1993a) and as input data for performance (London & Beatty, 1993).

Hurley, S., (1998) reflected that 360 degree feedback system as a performance management tool can have a variety of positive effects on organizations such as increased self awareness and increased productivity especially in the organizations which employ team based structure. It is a technique which can be successfully applied to team based environments *e.g* IT Companies.

This study was conducted in IT organizations in Delhi and NCR since managing performance in a knowledge intensive industry like IT Industry where organizations compete on the basis of intellectual capital , performance is a key indicator of organizational success .In today's competitive environment an employee is not only required to meet the expectations of his supervisor but he needs to be competitive enough both technically and behaviorally to satisfy the subordinates , supervisors, often multiple supervisors if an employee is matrixed to various projects , peers , internal and external customers. PMS in IT organisations is online and even more complex and demanding. Therefore it becomes imperative for organisations to closely monitor the system with employee participation at every level and at periodic intervals.

When feedback comes from multiple sources, each assessing a different attribute of an employee's performance and behaviour, such a comprehensive feedback calls for the necessity to gain an understanding of employee's satisfaction from the accuracy of feedback coming from multiple sources, the organization support received by them for developmental activities and its impact on their behavior.

This study is based on the insights taken from the research on post feedback development perceptions conducted by Mc Carthy & Garavan (2006). Based on the review of extensive literature, following concepts have been studied in this undertaken research:

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Accuracy of Feedback from Multiple Sources

It refers to the appropriateness and accuracy of feedback as perceived by employees. Feedback plays a significant role in steering a positive or negative change in employees. According to Dunnette (1993), accuracy in context of multi-source feedback requires constant research. Lee & Akhtar, (1996) observed that perceived fairness and accuracy of performance evaluation had significant positive effects on employee's willingness to use performance feedback. Atwater et al, (1998) suggested that considering both self ratings and other's ratings were relevant in explaining the outcome of managerial effectiveness thus again providing relevant context to the literature on significance of multi-source appraisals. Providing feedback will not suffice, it is the perception of employee's pertaining to feedback which would be instrumental in steering a positive change in their performance and behavior. If employees perceive that the raters had sufficient opportunity to observe the recipient and are providing honest and relevant feedback, it is then only that they would take an initiative to improve their performance and behavior. The theory of planned behavior suggests that the attitude towards behavior is a significant predictor of desirable behavior. Accuracy of feedback to a great extent can influence the intentions of employees towards utility of feedback (Ilgen et al., 1979; Maurer & Palmer, 1999; Ryan et al., 2000). Facticeau et al. (1998) also asserted that understanding participant's reaction to feedback is significant as the attitude toward feedback will influence intentions to use the feedback. Brett & Atwater (2001) also affirmed that perceptions of accuracy are positively related to

perceptions of feedback usefulness. In the context of this study, perceived accuracy of feedback is believed to act as an attitude that affects post-feedback behavior perceptions. Accuracy has been identified as an integral part of rater credibility by many researchers (Ilgen et al, 1979; Albright & Levy , 1995; Fecteau et al, 1998). The scope of accuracy for this research study is the extent to which employees felt that the feedback reflected a true picture for their future development and that the raters had sufficient knowledge to provide a true measure of feedback (McCarthy & Garavan, 2006).

2.2. Organizational Support

Organizational support refers to the assistance provided by the organization to bridge the gap between an employee's current performance and behavior and the expected performance and behavior. It refers to the assistance provided by the organization to enable its employees to improvise their skills and fill the gap as identified in the 360 degree feedback process. Multi-source feedback raises the stake for a manager and the process places pressure on employee's self concept and goals as it includes significant others other than supervisor ratings (London & Beatty,1993). Therefore understanding the perceptions of perceived Organization Support is important. Review of relevant literature supports the belief that organization support is critical for improved performance and behavioral change in employees. Eisenberger et al. (1986) propose that employees generate perceptions about the extent to which the organization cares about their well-being and values their contribution, which they label as perceived organizational support (POS). The provision of organizational support to an employee is likely to generate feelings of goodwill towards the organization, strengthening the bond between employer and employee, which in turn increases the feeling of obligation to repay the organization through the norm of reciprocity. Newman, Thanacoody & Hui, (2012) found that perceived organization support had a positive relationship with organizational commitment and therefore a negative relationship with turnover intentions. Many multisource feedback studies have also discussed the role of perceived organizational support for developmental change and feedback effectiveness (Lynch et al ,1999; Maurer & Tarulli ,1996). Maurer & Palmer (1999) also emphasize the role of developmental resources and organizational support in enhancing employee engagement in developmental activities, actual behaviour and performance enhancement. Moideenkutty et al, (2001) indicated in his study that perceived organization support mediated the relationship between perceived situational factors and affective commitment of employees. Maurer et al. (2002) also supported that perceptions of organizational support significantly influenced engagement in post feedback managerial development. According to Armstrong (2007) , in the recent days , the popularity of 360- degree feedback is undeniable. Yet the perceived benefits will help the personal development of employees only in the right organizational climate and dimension. When this method is utilized in the wrong environment, the results can be detrimental. Therefore team based structures such as in IT industry, an organization needs to constantly monitor an employee's performance and behavior, pre-assessment and post-assessment and support him with all the necessary resources required including training and counseling sessions to technically and morally assist him in the achievement of both individual and organisation goals. (Lawler ,1994; Hedge & Teachout , 2000) contend that success or failure in performance management depends on organisational philosophies, and the attitudes and skills of those responsible for its implementation and administration, together with the acceptance, commitment and ownership of appraisers and appraisees.

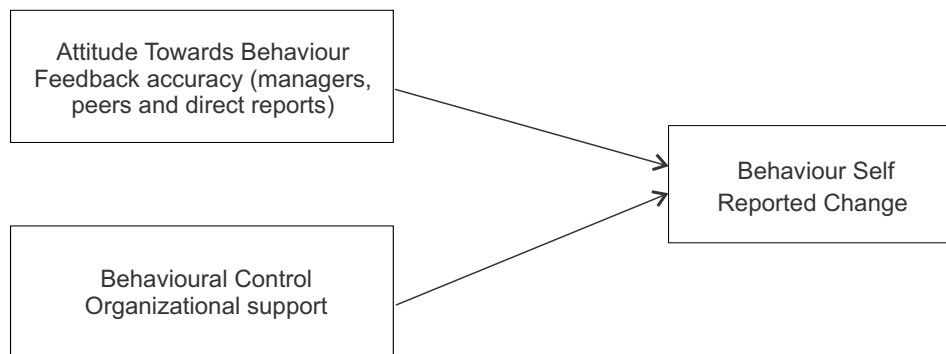
Since research has supported that perceived organisation support is likely to generate positive feelings towards organisation, it was considered relevant to see its impact on the perceived change in behaviour of employees since receiving 360 degree feedback from supervisors, peers and direct reports.

2.3. Dependent Variable: Behaviour change since receiving 360 degree feedback

Obtaining information on an individual's performance from multiple sources enhances the credibility of the information and therefore presumably the individual's motivation to change his behavior (Hellervik, Hazucha, & Schneider, 1992). Practitioners and Researchers have agreed that when managers compare composite ratings of their work-related behaviors from their co-workers with self perceptions on the same behaviors, they are forced into a cognitive process of reflection that ultimately results in greater levels of awareness of their own actions and the consequences those actions have on others across various levels in and out of the organisation (Church et al ,1995; Church &Waclawski ,1996 ; London & Wohlers , 1991; Tornow, 1993; Yammarino & Atwater, 1993). Atwater & Brett (2006) provide evidence that the impact of multi-source feedback programs extends beyond improvements in leader's behaviors and may relate to important changes in the employee attitudes. Newbold (2008) also argued that 360 degree assessments are widely accepted as a robust process for collecting feedback on perceptions of behavior in the workplace and are utilized by almost all Fortune 500 companies.

Since research has supported that employee's behaviour positively changed since receiving 360 degree feedback, it was considered relevant to explore employee's perceptions with respect to any behavioral change experienced by them since receiving 360 degree feedback. Behavioral Change for the purpose of this study implies seeking self reported behavior change as experienced by employees since receiving 360 degree feedback. Self reported change was used as a measure since in IT Companies an employee is matrixed to different projects working under different team heads. In this case validation of data from the same rater would have been a limitation and hence self reported change is used as a measure.

Figure 1 shows the research model for exploring the relationship between the above mentioned variables.



Adapted from : Mc Carthy and Garavan (2006)

Figure 1: Impact of Perceived accuracy of Feedback and Organization Support on Employee's Perception of change in the behavior since receiving 360 Degree Feedback

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research includes testing hypotheses and establishing linkages between variables under study. The conceptual framework and development of questionnaire is based on extensive literature review. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect data as this technique allows for the selection of subjects who are more likely to provide the right information for the study (Osuala, 2005). A survey based method was used. The questionnaire was adapted from the scale used by McCarthy and Garavan (2006). Pilot test was conducted consisting of 50 employees from three organizations under study. After the pilot survey results and discussion with various industry experts, academic experts, users of the survey and practitioners in this field, certain modifications were made before arriving at the final questionnaire. Perceived accuracy of feedback from multiple sources comprised of 9 items with a cronbach alpha of .868, Perceived Organisation support comprised of 5 items with a cronbach alpha of .830 and Perceived change in behavior since receiving 360 degree feedback comprised of 4 items with a cronbach alpha of .784. In all there were 18 items with a cronbach alpha of .896 and hence the questionnaire was found to be reliable to proceed further with the analysis part.

The scope of the study was confined to IT organisations in Delhi and NCR. The organizations under study had a well established PMS and were also using 360 Degree Feedback as a part of their developmental initiative. The questionnaire was administered to employees who had completed at-least two years of service with the current organisation to make sure that they had undergone at-least one appraisal cycle in the organization. Also out of five organizations three of them used 360 degree feedback for only middle level and senior level employees while two of them used 360 Degree Feedback for all employees at all levels so care was taken to include only those employees who fall in the ambit of 360 degree feedback mechanism. 250 completely filled questionnaires were incorporated for the purpose of analysis.

Software package SPSS 16 version was used for the analysis of data. The statistical analysis was both descriptive and inferential and included univariate and multivariate techniques.

The sample characteristics of employees are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Sample characteristics of Employee's perception Survey (N = 250)

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Background</i>	<i>Response Categories</i>			
1.	Gender	Female	Male		
	N	112	138		
	% age	44.8	55.2		
2.	Age	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40
	N	24	123	82	21
	% age	9.6	49.2	32.8	8.4
3.	Qualification	Graduation	Post Graduation		
	N	130	120		
	% age	52	48		

S.No	Background	Response Categories				
		2-5	6-9	10-13	14 & above	
4.	Organizational Experience	N	120	102	26	2
		% age	48	40.8	10.4	.8
5.	Total Experience	N	40	149	55	6
		% age	16	59.6	22	2.4
6.	Managerial Level	Junior Management	Middle Management	Senior Management		
		N	30	136	84	
		% age	12	54.4	33.6	

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Mean and Standard deviation of the variables under study *i.e* Perceived accuracy of feedback from multiple sources, Perceived Organization Support, Perceived change in behaviour since receiving 360 degree feedback are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Accuracy of feedback, Perceived organization support and Perceived change in behaviour since receiving 360 degree feedback (Range 1-5)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Perceived feedback accuracy	3.42	.638	250
Perceived Organization Support	3.36	.706	250
Perceived Behavior change	3.61	.629	250

The mean scores on **Perceived Accuracy of feedback from multiple sources** (Table 2) showed a mean value of 3.42 and a standard deviation of .638. The mean score of most of the items ranged from 3.29 to 3.64. The mean score for perceived accuracy of feedback for managers ranged from 3.30 to 3.64, for subordinates it ranged from 3.29 to 3.42 and for peers it ranged from 3.36 to 3.58 suggesting that employee's perceived relatively higher accuracy of feedback when it came from managers followed by peers and subordinates. Organizations should make the system more transparent and instill trust amongst employees to enhance acceptability of feedback from multiple sources.

The mean scores on **Perceived Organization Support** (Table 2) reflected a mean value of 3.36 and a standard deviation of .706. The mean score of most of the items ranged from 3.10 to 3.54. The mean score on item regarding, top management is visible and active in supporting the process of 360 degree feedback was 3.10 with only 34% agreeing that top management was visible and active in supporting the 360 degree feedback process. Organizations should understand that the successful implementation of any process

depends on the support extended by top management. Unless and until there is active participation by top management its significance cannot be permeated at lower levels of the management. Similarly, the mean score on item regarding organization provides the necessary information for providing feedback was 3.25 with only 33% employees agreeing that organization provides necessary information for providing feedback. Organisations should improve on this parameter and provide the employees with necessary and relevant information to gather relevant responses both from rater as well as ratees. The purpose of gathering feedback will be diluted if the raters do not have adequate information to provide relevant feedback. Feedback provides relevant information both to the organisation as well as employees and therefore organisations should understand that this process is executed with seriousness and is given due importance.

The mean scores on **Perceived behaviour change since receiving 360 degree feedback**(Table 2) was 3.61 and standard deviation of .629 for perceptions of behaviour change. The mean score on most of the items ranged from 3.38 to 3.79. The mean score on item pertaining to, I have improved my work performance since receiving 360 Degree Feedback was 3.38 with 42.4% employees agreeing that they have improved their work performance since receiving 360 degree feedback. The mean score on item pertaining to, my self- awareness has increased since receiving 360 degree feedback was 3.61 with 47% employees consenting that their self awareness has improved since receiving feedback from multiple sources. The mean score on item pertaining to, My interactive and interpersonal skills have improved since receiving 360 degree feedback was 3.79 with 41% employees agreeing that their interactive and interpersonal skills have improved since receiving 360 degree feedback. Also the mean score on item pertaining to, my leadership skills have improved since receiving 360 degree feedback was 3.64 with 36% employees agreeing that they have experienced an improvement in their leadership skills since receiving multiple source feedback.

4.2. Multiple Regression

In order to assess the degree of relationship between perceived accuracy of feedback from multiple sources, perceived organization support (predictor variables) and perception of change in behaviour since receiving 360 degree feedback (criterion variable) , multiple regression analysis was used. Multiple Regression was carried out on the average scores of the three variables under study for all organizations to see the degree of relationship between predictor and criterion variables under study for all organizations together. The following are the predictor and criterion variables to meet the aforesaid objectives of this research:

4.2.1. Predictor Variables

1. Perceived Accuracy of feedback from multiple sources
2. Perceived Organization Support

4.2.2. Criterion Variable

Perceived change in behaviour since receiving 360 degree feedback.

Hierarchical Regression using a block method was used to determine the strength of relationship between the attitude towards behaviour variable i.e feedback accuracy from managers, peers and subordinates and behavioural control variable i.e organization support and self reported change. First employee's perception about the accuracy of feedback was entered into the model and in the next step employee's perception about organization support was entered into the model to assess their impact on the perception of behaviour change since receiving 360 degree feedback (dependent variable).

The results of the hierarchical regression are shown in table 3.

Table 3
Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis predicting Perceived change in behaviour since receiving 360 degree feedback

<i>Step No.</i>	<i>Predictor Variables Entered</i>	<i>Standardized Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1.	Perceived Feedback Accuracy	.474	8.47	.000	.225	.221	71.79	.000
2.	Perceived Feedback Accuracy	.333	5.42	.000				
	Perceived Organization Support	.290	4.72	.000	.289	.283	50.14	.000

Dependent Variable: Perceived Behaviour change, *Independent Variables:* Perceived Feedback Accuracy and Perceived Organization Support. Significant at 0.05 level.

As shown in table 3, variability in perceived behaviour change since receiving 360 degree feedback was explained by two predictor variables, perceived accuracy of feedback from multiple sources and perceived organization support. In step one when perceptions of accuracy of feedback was entered as the predictor variable, the R Square value which shows the explanatory power of the independent variables accounted for 22.5% variance in the dependent variable i.e perceived change in behaviour since receiving 360 degree feedback. 22.5 %variation in perceived change in behaviour for the sample of 250 employees is explained by perceived accuracy of feedback. F ratio was also found to be significant, $F = 71.79; p < 0.05$. The Adjusted R Square which adjusts for the number of independent variables in the equation and for the number of cases in the sample (to reflect model's goodness of fit) is 22.1%. The Beta coefficient of .474 at step I of the hierarchal regression (table 3) indicated that for one unit increase in this predictor variable, mean vale of perceived change in behaviour was likely to increase significantly by .474 units. Therefore it can be inferred that if the employees perceived the feedback given to them from multiple sources is accurate, they are likely to initiate behavioural changes and their perceptions of behavioural change would enhance. Research has also suggested that employee's attitude towards behaviour can lead to behavioural changes. If employees perceive the feedback to be relevant and coming from relevant sources, they are likely to take the inputs from multiple sources seriously and will engage in activities which would improve their performance as well as behaviour. Similarly in the second step when perceived organization support entered the regression equation in addition to perceived accuracy of feedback from multiple sources, R Square value came out to be 28.9% reflecting a 28.9 % variance in perceived change in behaviour and accounted for a 6.4 % increase in the predictive variability of the criterion variable. The F ratio was also significant, $F = 50.14; p < 0.05$ which again implies that employees perception about the support extended by the organization for developmental activities in a set up where feedback is gathered on various parameters by various sources is likely to affect their engagement in developmental activities to modify their performance and

behaviour as required by the organization inferring that if employee's perceived that the organization assist and supports them and engages in activities for the well being of employee's they are likely to indulge in working out on the areas which require improvement in the interest of the organization. The above results signify that both perceived accuracy of feedback and perceived organization support positively impact perceived change in behavioursince receiving 360 degree feedback. Hence the hypothesis and the research model is supported. Although the predictive power of these variables may seem to be low, this can be accounted to other variables such as cynicism, locus of control, self efficacy, personal factors and other organizational variables which affect the perceptions of employees but do not fall in the ambit of the scope of study.

5. CONCLUSION

The study aimed at understanding the relationship between perceived accuracy of feedback, perceived organization support (predictor variables) and perceived change in behaviour since receiving 360 degree feedback (criterion variable). Hierarchical Regression using block method was used to understand the degree of relationship between the predictor variables and criterion variable. It was found that both perceived accuracy of feedback and perceived organization support accounted for variance in the perceived change in behaviour since receiving multisource feedback. Therefore it can be concluded that higher the perceived accuracy of feedback from multiple sources and perceived organization support, the higher would be the perceived change in behaviour since receiving 360 degree feedback and employees would be more inclined to engage in developmental activities to improve their behaviour in the interest of the organization.

6. IMPLICATIONS

The present study attempts to provide empirical evidence of the linkage between employee's perceived accuracy of feedback, perceived organization support and perceived change in behavior since receiving 360 degree feedback. Employees will engage in post feedback developmental activities when they perceive that the feedback is accurate and comes from relevant sources. Similarly as quoted in this paper, researchers have supported that positive perceptions of organization support will lead to enhanced organizational commitment and effort on the part of employees to actively participate in activities which would bring positive changes in their performance and behaviour as expected by the organizations.

This study empirically justifies that feedback from multiple sources can lead to positive behavioural changes in employees. It was demonstrated by the findings of the study that employees experienced behavioural changes such as improvement in interpersonal skills; leadership skills; self -awareness and work performance on account of perceived accuracy of feedback and perceived organization support. The finding is significant for the organizations that employees will act upon the feedback and will initiate behavioral change only if they perceived the multiple source feedback as relevant and accurate and also when they experienced that organization is also committed towards their development.

Another interesting feature which emerged out of the study is that employee's perceived accuracy of feedback was higher for managers followed by peers and subordinates. Therefore organizations should adequately train the raters and take measures to ensure that the ratings by peers and subordinates have clarity in providing ratings and also confidentiality of raters is ensured to prevent inflation of ratings.

7. LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the study are enlisted below:

1. Since the research objective was such that the employees should fall in the ambit of 360 degree feedback mechanism and should have undergone at least one appraisal cycle, purposive sampling could not be ruled out and probabilistic sampling could not be used and therefore external validity of results is limited.
2. Another limitation in this study is the self-reported nature of behavioural change since in IT Companies an employee may be matrixed to different projects under the supervision of different heads at the same time or at different times. In that case validating data from the same rater would have been difficult.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESERACH

The present study assessed the impact of perceived accuracy of feedback and perceived organizational support on perceived change in behaviour since receiving 360 DF. The study can be extended by studying the impact of other variables such as employee's self monitoring, cynicism, self efficacy, perceived fairness, perceived organization justice on behaviour change.

Also the present study initially took the purpose for which 360 degree feedback is used as a variable to study its impact on perceived behaviour change but it was dropped since all the organizations under study used 360 DF only for developmental purposes and the same was confirmed by pilot test. Further research can be done by assessing the impact of the purpose for which 360 DF is used on behaviour change since receiving 360 DF by comparing the organizations which use this tool for administrative purposes with the ones which use it for developmental purposes.

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