CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
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This study expanded the concept of Frontline Employee Adaptability, by explaining the dimensions of adaptability. The relationships between various individual level factors and organizational factors on FLE adaptability behavior were studied. In addition, the impact of frontline employee adaptive behaviors on Job satisfaction and Job Performance was also examined. This chapter discusses the results of the qualitative and quantitative study. Subsequently, the theoretical and methodological contributions of the research are presented, followed by managerial implications, study limitations and directions of future research.

7.1 The Seven Dimensions of FLE Adaptability

The seven dimensions of FLE adaptability unearthed through the qualitative study were a) Interpersonal Adaptability, b) Service offering adaptability, c) Political adaptability, d) Social Adaptability, e) Physical adaptability, f) Group Adaptability and g) Organizational adaptability.

Some dimensions captured in the qualitative study agreed with prior definitions (Burke, Pierce, & Salas, 2006; Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012; O'Connell, McNeely, & Hall, 2008; Pulakos et al., 2000). The previous studies on employee adaptability were performed among military personnel or in industries. No research was conducted on the Frontline employees in power sector. The results of this study largely corroborate the research by Pulakos et al. (2000) and Pulakos et al. (2002) with respect to the multidimensionality of adaptive performance. This research lists some more dimensions like social aspects of adaptability and political aspects of adaptability. This
research brought out service specific dimensions like interpersonal adaptability, service offering adaptability, physical adaptability, organizational adaptability and group adaptability.

Pulakos et al. (2000) explained the importance of physical adaptability by using samples from military setting. However, Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012), disagreed, on the dimension of physical adaptability in non military setting. They called for further investigation, in subsequent studies in different context, occupation and organization. The present study addresses the gaps and contributes to clarify for the first time in non military setting, the dimension of physical adaptability. Thus, opens new areas of research for further classification of services, for which adapting to physical aspects will be a requisite.

In the present study, following sub dimensions were combined into service offering aspect of adaptability such as, a) dealing with uncertain and unpredictable situations, and b) creative problem solving adaptability. This is different from Pulakos et al., (2000, 2002) classification of dimensions. The context of our research is Power Sector, which is an essential service. Therefore, to manufacture the service product, all these factors besides professional and skill variety adaptability are a fundamental requirement. Hence, the results of our research will have a far deeper impact in a service context. Combining various dimensions proposed by Pulakos et al., (2000, 2002), was also attempted by Johnson (2003). They considered a) dealing with uncertain and unexpected work situations and b) handling emergencies and crises as one dimension.

This research also differs with Pulakos et al., (2000, 2002) in considering cultural adaptability. In essential service like power sector, in addition to adapting to
the cultural fabric of the organization, there is a need to adapt to the cultural fabric of the society. An important variable, social consciousness is used in this study to further explain social adaptability. Hence, both these themes are clubbed together to propose the dimension, social aspect of adaptability.

The present study also differs significantly with Pulakos et al., (2000, 2002) on handling work stress dimension. Interpersonal adaptability in the present study was demarcated into verbal, non verbal and emotional adaptability. Therefore, adaptability along emotional dimension will naturally act as shielding factor against work stress. Research by Augusto et al., (2008) in service setting also found that emotional intelligence can be a protective factor against work related stress. Thus, verifying the viewpoints considered in this research.

The present work on frontline employee adaptability further enriched the employee adaptability spectrum by proposing new dimensions. This may be a reflection of systemic contextual differences in power sector in a developing country.

After conceptualizing and defining the new construct of frontline employee adaptability, the next phase was to measure this new construct. The extant literatures were thoroughly reviewed. Since, there were no existing scales available, efforts were made to develop a new scale. The scale development procedure suggested by (Pervan et al., 2009) was used to establish the veracity of the scale. The FLEADAPT scale consisted of 41 items. Despite the increasing research attention paid to the concept of frontline employees, to date, there has been no valid and comprehensive operational measure of FLE adaptability. To our best knowledge, this is the first study to provide a comprehensive, psychometrically sound, and operationally valid measure of a frontline employee’s adaptability.
The last phase of this study explored the antecedents and consequences of the new construct frontline employee adaptability. Individual level and organizational level factors were proposed to be the antecedents of the frontline employee adaptability construct. Job satisfaction and Job performance was considered consequences. The model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling and specific results are discussed in the following sections

7.2 Individual Level Factors and FLE Adaptability

The proposition 1 proposed a positive relationship between individual level factors of employees and frontline employee adaptability. The individual level factors considered in the study were service orientation, tolerance for ambiguity, self efficacy, emotional intelligence and employee spirituality.

7.2.1 Service Orientation and FLE Adaptability

As per Hypothesis 1, the present study found a positive relationship between service orientation and FLE adaptability. Specifically, service orientation was found to be positively related to interpersonal, social and group adaptability. Service orientation is having a desire to meet customer needs and it taps the non technical aspect of performance (Hogan, Hogan, & Busch, 1984).

An FLE has to exhibit behaviours as per the customer needs or situation (Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994). To quote an employee in power sector, where the study was conducted, he was of an opinion that, sometimes a situation is in control of the organization. For example, power outage due to a fault in distribution line. Sometimes situation is not in the control of the organization, e.g. power outage due to load shedding etc, in a power deficit country like India. Such situations call for service
employees to exhibit different interpersonal strategies even though the situation is identical. Hence, service orientation which is contextual and non technical behaviour, may be contributing towards adaptability in interpersonal dimension.

Besides, the power sector being an essential service and catering to the personal needs of the customer, has bare minimum zone of tolerance (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1993). For instance, a power failure will render, in non functional AC, fans, cooking appliance, putrification of food in fridge and even to the extent that there is darkness in the room. In addition, there is an increasing trend of load shedding in India, due to supply - demand gap (Singh, 2006). Moreover, there are issues of brown out and black outs also due to mismanagement of power utilities in India (Sony et al., 2009; Sony & Mariappan, 2012c). Under such circumstances, the frontline employee is the first person, a customer who is deprived of personal needs, gets in touch with. Irrespective of the reason for power failure / problem, some customer may exhibit polite behaviours and some may exhibit violent behaviours towards the frontline employees (Harris & Reynolds, 2003). To handle such customers it definitely calls for using wide variety of strategies (Reynolds & Harris, 2006). To be precise it calls for varying verbal, non verbal and emotional styles while handling a customer. This definitely is a non technical performance demand from frontline employees. The frontline employees who have genuine interests to meet the customer needs will definitely excel in adapting to this dimension.

Electrical power system is an assemblage of parts of various systems and all should work together to make it work (Sony et al., 2009). To get electrical supply from generating station to the power socket in one’s residence, various elements of supply chain from the generation system to local distribution system should work in tandem. A failure of one unit renders the end user in not getting power supply. The passage of the
Indian Electricity Act 2003, envisages of breaking down the power system into generation, transmission and distribution (Thakur et al., 2005). Thus, the various sub systems are managed by different groups with in the organization or external to organization (Sony et al., 2009). Besides, to repair the electrical system requires coordinated efforts of various groups internal or external to the organization. For example, an electrical overhead line snapping near public place will call for coordination among the police, fire personnel or even other customers. Under such circumstances, it is prudent to construe adaptability to the groups within and external to the organization. One of the important components of group or team adaptability is changing behaviours or exhibiting flexibility to adapt within the groups (Leonard, Graham, & Bonacum, 2004). An FLE, who is genuinely interested to serve the customers, will naturally forget the individual or group difference, to work for the welfare of the customers. Various researchers have argued the positive relationship between service orientation and group or team performance (Bak et al., 1994; Boshoff & Allen, 2000; Farrell, Souchon, & Durden, 2001). This study unearths an important academic contribution by proving a vital link between group adaptability and service orientation.

Frontline employees working in power sector calls for handling of customers from diverse background in the society. A customer is a representative of the society. Hence, a frontline employee to deal with the customer requires, being aware of social events, culture, language etc. During festive seasons like the village feast or Zatra or Urs, the demand for the power supply is increased (Min, 2011). This stresses the importance of power supply during social events, that inturn increases the role of frontline employees. A frontline employee who is genuinely interested to meet the demands of customers can be thought of having social consciousness or a genuine
demand to learn about the society. Hence, this research proves a positive relationship between service orientation and Social Adaptability.

The present research does not support a positive relationship between service orientation and service offering adaptability. As service offering adaptability has a component of technical performance and the construct service orientation captures the non technical aspect of performance. This may be the reason why there is no support for a relationship between service orientation and service offering adaptability. An explanation culled out by the researcher while discussing the results with the employees, was that “it is difficult to solve the capacity management / shortage issues even though one is having a genuine desire to meet customer needs”.

The present study does not support a relationship between service orientation and political adaptability. The researcher discussed the results with an employee working in power sector with considerable experience and the culled out explanation is “Political parties want to please their supporters or well wishers and hence no matter how well a FLE tries to meet their needs it will be a great challenge”.

The present study supports no relationship between service orientation and physical adaptability. Upon discussing the results with an employee working in power sector, following explanation emerged “Our heart longs to serve a customer, but it is always not possible, because we too feel hungry and we also wants to be with the family during festivals”. Generalizing the themes of the statements using inductive approach, it can be construed that physical need like hunger etc., are the basic or primary need and service orientation is a higher order need. It is difficult for an employee to forego his physical needs, for higher needs like service orientation. Hence,
these findings in fact, should be an eye opener for organization to look after basic physical needs of employee like fair working hours, working conditions etc.

The present investigation does not support any relationship between service orientation and organization adaptability. The organization and customer needs are sometimes conflicting. A service oriented employee will be oriented to meet the needs of customer. To meet customer needs, organizational rules, policies etc, sometimes has to be sacrificed. This may not be an everyday phenomenon but such situations can occur in a power utility. For such reasons service orientation may not be related to organizational adaptability

7.2.2 Tolerance for Ambiguity and FLE Adaptability

The Hypothesis 2, found a positive relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and FLE adaptability. Specifically, tolerance for ambiguity was found to be positively related to service offering adaptability and physical adaptability. Mac Donald Jr (1970) and Gwinner et al., (2005) defined tolerance for ambiguity, as the general tendency to perceive ambiguous situations as non- threatening.

Service offering adaptability is an ability to produce the desired service. It includes a) professional adaptability b) skill variety adaptability c) creative problem solving adaptability and d) dealing with uncertain and unpredictable situations adaptability to manufacture the service. The needs of customer are ever increasing day by day. In a service context for example in a power sector, the FLE may have to offer solutions which are not always standardised. To quote an example during the qualitative study an FLE disclosed that “Sometimes you go to attend the faults and an uncertain situation crops up, like a difficult terrain or a hostile neighbour of the customer”. The case study conducted Sony and Nandakumar (2012a), also echoed the
similar sentiment. To dig into this phenomenon further, the researcher went with the results of this research to an Electrical Engineer who is working in the said power utility for last 25 years and a possible illuminating verbatim is transcribed.

“Even for trivial faults one cannot always expect to deal with it the same way. A conductor snapping which is a trivial fault all one needs to do is fix it back, by binding the conductor, but even here sometimes problems can crop up like topography or someone objecting to stringing the conductor through their land or someone abusing you because he is without electricity. An employee has to deal with it and offer solutions.”

The central theme that came out with the discussion was the need to devise a customized solution in real time. Before designing a solution, one needs to perceive the situation. The ability to perceive such ambiguous situation as non-threatening will naturally, contribute to an FLE to design better solutions. In other words, this warrants an employee to perceive an ambiguous situation through the lens of positive perception. The positive human perception -performance link has been propounded by researcher like Boff and Lincoln (1988) and Pauhus et al., (1993). This study offers an evidentiary perspective in this respect. For this reason, the study rightly finds a positive relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and service offering adaptability.

The present work supports a positive relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and physical adaptability. Physical adaptability calls for adapting to difficult working conditions or working in unsafe conditions. The tendency to perceive a physically challenging situation as non-threatening may be contributing to positive relationship. A possible explanation offered by an electrical Engineer who has 20 years of experience in distribution systems echoes similar sentiments.
“Working on an electrical system is dangerous. To find fault one needs to make the circuit dead but sometimes there is a chance of electrocution. We cannot put off the entire system because lot of customers will be affected. Hence partially the system is put off and one needs to work on live lines too. A mistake can result in danger for man and materials.”

Employees who perceived such physically challenging situations as non-threatening may be more adaptable. Hence, this research rightly supports a positive relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and Physical adaptability.

The present work, however, does not support a relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and interpersonal adaptability, group adaptability, political adaptability, social adaptability, and organizational adaptability. A possible explanation for no relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and interpersonal adaptability is provided by an expert with more than 20 years of experience in power industry was that the “interpersonal nature of challenges are threatening, however being a technical organization with core service product as electricity, the service offering is more ambiguous and sometimes life threatening for the customer and employee alike. Hence it is natural for employees to give importance to this aspect of service as regards to the perception of ambiguous situation”.

Brandstätter, Voss, and Rothermund (2004), while studying the relation between perception and action regulation, has further posited, that when people cannot avoid the aversive consequences, sensitivity of the perceptual system to danger signals enhances. Though the study was conducted in an experimental setup in psychology literature, this study may be imported for a possible explanation for such behaviours. It
is envisaged that such perception leads an FLE to consider *intelligible perceptible differentia* for various ambiguous situations.

This study also supports no relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and social adaptability. Developing a social orientation is a complex process. It involves subjectively felt obligation that an FLE perceive about the society. The perception forming mechanisms about the society would be a multidimensional process. As such it may be unrelated to tolerance for ambiguity. This may be the contributing factor for the lack of relationship with tolerance for ambiguity.

The work supports no relationship with political adaptability. Dealing with political parties is an ambiguous situation as they have conflicting objectives. Even though the FLE has tolerance for ambiguity it is not converted into a positive relationship because the politician wants to grind their own axe. In other words the politicians have their vested interest.

The present work does not support any relationship with group adaptability. An important factor in adapting with group is to overcome group politics. Such behaviour being survival behaviour directed to optimize gains for ones group. Thus, even though an FLE perceives it as non-threatening, such positive perception will play no role in changing attitudes among members in a group.

The present study does not support relationship with organizational adaptability. The organization rules, policies etc are codified and not ambiguous. The organization under study being a public organization, hence policies are well defined. Therefore, tolerance for ambiguity may not have any influence on organizational adaptability.
7.2.3 Self Efficacy and FLE Adaptability

The Hypothesis 3 found a positive relationship between self efficacy and FLE adaptability. Specifically, self efficacy was found to be positively related to service offering adaptability.

Chen, Gully, and Eden (2001), defines self efficacy as a judgment of one’s ability to execute a particular behaviour pattern, beliefs in one’s capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands. FLE while adapting to service offering dimensions definitely needs a belief in ones capability to manufacture a service as per the demands of customer or requirement of situation. The belief in oneself and its impact on the positive human performance has been propounded by researchers like (Druckman & Bjork, 1994). This research rightly supports a positive relationship between self efficacy and service offering dimensions.

However, this study does not support a relationship of self efficacy between interpersonal, political, social, group, organizational and Physical adaptability. It was reasonable to hypothesize a positive relationship between self efficacy and political adaptability. Because needs of political parties are diverse and FLE who believes in his ability will naturally perform well. Political adaptability is adapting to the requirements of ruling and opposition political parties. It also calls for handling conflicting goals of ruling and opposition. To handle conflicting demands calls for appeasement of both parties. Appeasement is functionally related to vested interest. The political parties ruling and opposition does not want to appease, due to their conflicting objectives. In such cases than there is very little an FLE can do to adapt. Hence, no matter how much one believe in ones self, it cannot replace important skills like the ability to negotiate,
reconciliate etc. with the politicians. Another explanation for the non significant relationship is the link between self efficacy and goal setting. Schunk (1990), suggest a link of self efficacy and goal setting. While handling political parties the goals are indistinct due to its conflicting nature of demands. The indistinct goal breaks the pattern of self efficacy on attainment of goal and hence, contributing to no relation between self efficacy and political adaptability.

In power system FLE has to perform highly interdependent task while working with groups within and external to the organization. Katz-Navon and Erez (2005) stated, that self-efficacy emerged as a meaningful construct that explained individual performance under low task interdependence conditions. However, this study is a high task dependence condition and rightly it does not support a relationship between self efficacy and Group adaptability.

This research finds no relationship between self efficacy and Interpersonal adaptability. The power sector under consideration is power deficit utility and it also suffers from various operational issues. Power being essential services, customers is having narrow zone of tolerance and it is difficult to satisfy a customer who is having no power supply. Such persistent negative feedback which an FLE is subjected to leads to negative self evaluations. As discussed by Gist (1987), it leads to negative self evaluation which may contribute to no relationship between self efficacy and interpersonal adaptability

No relationship is supported between self efficacy and social adaptability. A belief, in ones ability may not always make one a concerned about the society. Social issues are a complex phenomenon where more than one variable is involved and the relationship among them is intertwined. Having a belief system to solve such complex
phenomenon may reduce sensitivity towards such complex events. Besides social consciousness is a complex process, where in FLE feel subjectively felt obligations towards the society. As such a belief in ones ability may sometimes have no relationship, as to how FLE feels about the society.

No relationship is supported between self efficacy and organizational adaptability. FLE may have belief in ones ability to mobilize the resources, to meet given situational demands but adapting organizationally calls a FLE to deal organizational culture, rules, policies, politics etc. The concept of organizational culture is a dynamic model of learning, passing on and changing. Self efficacy may have an impact on the learning process, but the process of passing on and changing may not be related to self efficacy. Thus self efficacy is not related to organizational adaptability.

7.2.4 Emotional Intelligence and FLE Adaptability

The Hypothesis 4 found a positive relationship between emotional Intelligence and FLE adaptability. Specifically, self emotional appraisal is found to be positively related to interpersonal adaptability. Others emotional appraisal is found to be positively related to interpersonal, service offering, social, political and group adaptability. Regulation of emotion is found to be positively related to interpersonal, political and group adaptability. Use of emotion is positively related to interpersonal and political adaptability.

Schutte et al. (2001) conducted seven studies and demonstrated strong positive relations between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations. This study confirms the impact of self emotional appraisal on interpersonal adaptability among the frontline employees. Self emotional appraisal relates to the individual’s ability to understand their deep emotions and be able to express these emotions naturally. Hence,
the FLE who have great ability to understand his/her deep emotions and be able to express emotions will naturally sense and acknowledge their emotions well before most people. This research supports a relationship between self emotional appraisal and interpersonal adaptability. A possible explanation for such relation is offered by Gallese, Eagle, and Migone (2007), in their seminal paper on mirror neurons. Self emotion appraisal may trigger the mirror neurons. This neuron "mirrors" the behaviour of the other, as though the observer were itself acting. Theoret and Pascual-Leone (2002), speculates that mirror neurons contribute to language abilities and Iacoboni et al. (2005), have argued that mirror neuron systems in the human brain help us understand the actions and intentions of other people leading to better interpersonal relations.

Self emotion appraisal is not related to service offering adaptability. The ability to manufacture service has also a component of technical or professional skills. Besides, having varied skills also contributes to it. Thus, having ones emotion apprised may not contribute to technical or professional skills or skill set. Therefore, self emotion appraisal may not be related to service offering adaptability.

Self emotional appraisal is not related to group adaptability. Adapting to groups with in and external to organization warrants an FLE to understand the behaviour of the members in a group. An ability to understand ones emotions may contribute in understanding other group member’s emotions. However, transforming the understanding of emotions, to adaptability may not always be feasible. As group differences occurs due to various reasons.

Self emotion appraisal is not related to political adaptability, as understanding ones emotions, may not enable one to handle the conflicting demands of the political
parties. Self emotion appraisal is not related to organization adaptability, as understanding ones emotions, may not help one to deal with organizational rules, policies etc. Self emotional appraisal is not related to physical adaptability, as being aware of ones emotions, cannot change ones perception towards dangerous work situations. Another explanation would be that awareness of ones emotions will naturally enhance ones perception towards physical needs like discomfort or hunger.

Self emotional appraisal is not related to social adaptability. The feeling for the society is different from appraising self’s emotion. One may feel that one is angry or happy. But to understand the society or to develop consciousness towards it is a complex phenomenon.

Others emotional appraisal relates to people’s ability, to perceive and understand the emotions of those people around them. FLE who are high in this ability will be much more sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others as well as reading their minds. This research supports others emotional appraisal to be positively related to interpersonal, service offering, social, political and group adaptability.

Researchers recognize the inseparability of communications and emotions. The link between cognition, emotion and communication has been the interest of many researchers (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998). Research also suggests that emotions result from appraisal of events, situations, etc. (Wilson & Klaaren, 1992) and therefore, by understanding others emotions, a link between cognition, emotion and communication is set through. This research delineates an important quality in employees, that cognition of others emotion appraisal, to have a positive relationship with interpersonal adaptability. Thus, rightly suggesting the importance of understanding others emotions in order to adapt the verbal, non verbal aspect of adaptability.
Others emotion appraisal is found to be positively related to service offering adaptability. Service offering adaptability is exhibition of multi skills to manufacture a service. It includes skills like handling uncertain or unpredictable or emergency situation, etc. Guy, Newman, and Ganapati (2013), explicates the importance of emotions while handling unpredictable situations and this research corroborates their findings. This research takes the work further by suggesting, that understanding others emotion is positively related to service offering adaptability.

This research also support a relationship between others emotion appraisal and social adaptability. Social adaptability is adapting to various events in the society or having a consciousness or concern for the society. As pointed by Bar-On et al. (2004), there will be a positive relation between emotional intelligence and social skills of individuals. However, this research specifically points out that others emotion appraisal is positively related to social adaptability.

Others emotion appraisal is found to be positively related to political adaptability. Political adaptability is managing the demands of ruling and opposition party. It involves handling conflicts. O'Neil (1996) proposed that emotional intelligence will help in handling conflicts. Morrison (2008), while studying nurses, proposed that emotional intelligence helps nurses to learn how to effectively handle conflict in the work environment. They further stressed that, developing the competencies of emotional intelligence and understanding how to effectively handle conflict is necessary for nurses working in a highly stressful occupation. The present study has relevance here as nurses are also frontline employee (Tucker, 2007). The present study takes the work further, by suggesting that in emotional intelligence, it is others emotion dimension, which is related to handling or managing conflicts. Once an employee
apprise others emotion, it removes the sting from the conflict and this leads to behaviours which leads to solving the problem.

Others emotion appraisal dimension is found to be positively related to group adaptability. Jordan and Troth (2004), has found a positive relationship between employee’s ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among the positive and negative effects of emotion and team performance. This study corroborates Jordan and Troth’s view and takes the research further by suggesting a positive link between others emotion appraisal and group adaptability.

Others emotion appraisal is found to be not related to physical adaptability. Physical adaptability meets lower order needs like physical and safety needs. Therefore, understanding emotions of others may not help to satisfy lower order needs. Others emotion appraisal is also found to be not related to organizational adaptability. Adapting with organizational rules, policies, vision, etc. is a learned behaviour. The employee has to forego his interest and orient to needs of the organization. Understanding others emotions sometimes do not play a major role in learning and therefore, it is not related to organizational adaptability.

Regulation of emotion in self relates to the ability of people to regulate their emotions, which will enable a more rapid recovery from psychological distress. This study found that regulation of emotion in self is positively related to the interpersonal, political and group adaptability.

Previous research have recognized that there will be psychological distress, while handling customers, as they may vary from polite to abusive (Deery, Iverson, & Walsh, 2002). Similar sentiments can be said about the politicians, as they also tend to be at times abusive and threatening (Tongia, 2003). Handling group member has its
own share of emotional labour, as the group members objectives is to maximise their
task domain in respective group or team activity (Amason et al., 1995) leading to
emotional problems (Herman & Dasborough, 2008). If an employees posses the skill
to regulate the emotions in self, it will act as recovery mechanism, from these
psychological distresses. Tugade and Fredrickson (2007) have, also proved a positive
relationship between regulation of ones emotions and resilience from negative
experiences.

This research does not support a positive relationship between regulation of
emotion and social adaptability. Regulating emotion in oneself reduces the impact of
social phenomenon perceived by the individual. Social adaptability is a complex
phenomenon which involves having a consciousness towards the society. Therefore
regulating ones emotion may not have on impact on such social behaviours. This
research also does not support a relationship between regulation of emotion and service
offering adaptability. Service offering adaptability is the ability to manufacture a
desired service. In addition to professional competency, behavioural elements like
handling uncertain and emergency situation and solving problems creatively forms a
part of it. Handling uncertain and emergency situations warrants taking appropriate
rational decision in the face of emergency. Emotions may help in controlling ones
thought pattern. But ability to choose a ratiocinated decision is more of a function of
experience and bounded rationality. Therefore, the emotion component is rather a small
component and hence, it explains a rather surprising finding that regulation of emotion
does not help in handling uncertain and emergency situations.

The present study found no relationship between regulation of emotion and
physical adaptability. No matter how much one regulates the emotions arising due to
physical needs, it is difficult to control and regulate such primary needs. For example if
one is thirsty, no matter how much one tries to regulate it with positive emotion, individuals body needs will overcome it.

This work also found no relationship between regulation of emotion and organizational adaptability. As reiterated earlier organizational adaptability is a learning behaviour and regulating emotions does not contribute much to it.

Use of emotion relates to the ability of individuals to make use of their emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance. Use of emotion is found in this research to be related to Interpersonal and Political adaptability. Previous research has acknowledged that use of emotions leads to better verbal communications (Scherer, 2003), non verbal communications (Motley & Camden, 1988) and emotional communications (Blonder, Bowers, & Heilman, 1991). In lines with the previous research this research, also delineates a positive relationship between Use of emotion by individuals to be positively related to interpersonal adaptability.

As regards to political adaptability it found a positive relationship between use of emotion and political adaptability, a possible explanation would be as Brass (1994) suggested, that political parties in India are divided into ruling and opposition and both criticise each other’s move to gain the power throne. Though an FLE is using emotion to constructively solve their grievance, however, the political objectives in power sector are more powerful (Joseph, 2010). Hence it may sometimes fail to see the desired end result. Besides, an FLE who use emotions by directing them towards constructive activities or solutions will be better equipped to handle such seemingly hopeless situation (Epstein, 1998). By learning to be affective, they will naturally be effective in handling hopeless situations (Bagshaw, 2000).
Use of emotion is found to be not related to service offering adaptability. It may be that the skills required to manufacture a service may not be affected by the emotions. Similarly, use of emotions is not found to be related to social adaptability. The reason could be that, one cannot make use of one's emotion to direct towards constructive activities in a social context. A social phenomenon is a mixture of various complex factors. Use of emotions is found to be not related to group adaptability. There are many elements within a group which are external and internal to the organization. It may be difficult to convince so many elements or group members by using emotions and hence, use of emotions is not related to group adaptability. Future research should confirm the results in a different service setting for further explanation of the concept.

This research does not support any relationship between Emotional intelligence and Physical adaptability. Thus, opening new research theme between physical adaptability and emotional intelligence. There is dearth of literatures on the effect of emotional Intelligence on physical activities. In sporting literature there can be a relationship between emotional intelligence and physical performance, however, there is inconsistency in relationship between emotional intelligence and sporting performance. Researchers like Zizzi, Deaner, and Hirschhorn (2003), support a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and sporting performance. Where as research by Lane et al., (2009), offers partial support between emotional intelligence and sporting performance. While, recent study by Stough, et al., (2009) supports negative relationships between emotional intelligence and sporting performance. Hence, this study opens the research lid in the domain of management studies, suggesting no relationship between physical nature of adaptability and emotional intelligence, there by warranting further investigation.
Further the present research does not support any relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational aspect of adaptability. Organizational adaptability being adapting to organizational policies, values, rules etc. The organization under study was catering to the essential needs of customers. India being a welfare state, there exist a regulatory mechanism to monitor the organization polices, goals, value etc in the Power Sector. Hence, FLE who participated in this study may not perceive any unethical dilemma wherein there is a clash between their and organizational values. In the absence of any such unethical value clashes as suggested by Harris (1990) there would very less pressure on FLE as regards in this dimension. Therefore, this may offer some explanation for no relationship emotional intelligence and organizational adaptability in this research.

A possible explanation for the study on positive relationship between emotional intelligence and FLE adaptability is given by a Sub Division head of power utility with 20 years of experience is that “Our employees have to deal with variety of people. We cater service to all sections of society. Some are Educated, uneducated, drunkard, miscreants, well mannered etc. Almost every day there is abuse of our employees, even some are manhandled. Under such circumstances we want someone who is balanced in his mind. Someone who does not frown and fret rather sees this as an opportunity. If he / she is emotional than it is difficult to survive”

7.2.5 Employee Spirituality and FLE Adaptability

The Hypothesis 5 found a positive relationship between Employee spirituality and FLE adaptability. Specifically, meaningful work was positively related to interpersonal, service offering, group and social adaptability. Compassion was
positively related to interpersonal and social adaptability. Mindfulness was positively related to service offering, group and organizational adaptability.

Petchsawang and Duchon (2009), defined meaningful work as one’s experience that his/her work is a significant and meaningful part to his/her life. Finding meaning in ones work has been described as a source of intrinsic work motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Rubin and Rubin (1992) stated that people who are intrinsically motivated exhibit better interpersonal communication. Interpersonal adaptability is FLE exhibiting interpersonal behaviour as per the requirement of customer or situation. Therefore, this research rightly supports a positive relationship between meaningful work and interpersonal adaptability. Besides, Wrzesniewski, Dutton, and Debebe (2003), presented a model of interpersonal sense making and described how this process contributes to the meaning that employees make of their work. They further described, that cues employees receive from others in the course of their jobs speak directly to the value ascribed by others to the job, role, and employee.

They also assert that these cues are crucial inputs in a dynamic process through which employees make meaning of their own jobs, roles, and selves at work. They further described the process through which interpersonal cues and the acts of others form the meaning of work. Interpersonal sense making at work as a route to work meaning contributes to theories of job attitudes and meaning of work. This elaborates the role of relational cues and interpretive processes in the creation of job, role and self-meaning. An FLE who interacts with customers or other stake holders will derive interpersonal cues about the Job at hand and such interaction leads to finding meaning at work. This research substantiates the importance of interpersonal relationships in finding meaning at work.
Meaningful work implies a sociological concern for the role of work in a society; in terms of the norms, values and traditions of work in the day-to-day life of people (Chalofsky, 2003). Such a concern for society about the role of work, leads an FLE to adapt to the social adaptability, in terms of developing a concern or social consciousness.

Working in groups within or external to the organization is a cause of great stress for employees as teamwork enhances the need for managerial control, and is more likely to cause stress (Harley, 2001). Meaningful work is negatively linked to employee stress, in other words more meaningful the work, the lesser the employee stress (Britt, Adler, & Bartone, 2001). FLE trying to adapt to the group dimension, is under immense stress from stakeholders. Hence, finding meaning in work, rightly affects a positive relationship in social and group dimension.

In order to manufacture the desired service, at times, an FLE needs to be creative. Previous research has shown that deriving meaning from work can affect employee creativity (West & Altink, 1996). Similarly, Cummings (1978), while working in self regulating groups, suggests that meaningful work may have positive relations while handling uncertainty. FLE trying to adapt the service offering as per customer needs should be creative and also handle uncertain situations. Hence, an employee who finds meaning in his work will definitely be creative to solve customer problems and also handle uncertain situations. This research rightly propagates that meaningful work affects service offering adaptability.

The present research does not find a relationship between meaningful work and political adaptability. Finding meaning in one’s work might have helped FLE to deal with conflicting objectives of politicians. However, dealing with politician is a power
struggle and FLE is much lower in the power struggle dimension. Therefore, the extraordinary motivation derived from meaningful work is snubbed due to power struggle dimension.

The present work also does not support a relationship between meaningful work and physical adaptability. It proves that no matter how motivated, one is, it is difficult to control the physical needs. The present study also does not support any relationship between meaningful work and organizational adaptability. Finding meaning in work contributes to motivation, felt towards the Job, not towards organization. Hence, such a phenomenon may not directly benefit the organization.

Petchsawang and Duchon (2009), defines compassion as a deep awareness and sympathy for others and a wish to relieve their suffering. Previous research has posited a positive relationship between spirituality and interpersonal skills (Bellingham et al., 1989). However, this research specifically points that the compassion dimension of employee spirituality positively affects interpersonal adaptability. In health care settings Stein-Parbury (2009), discussed the importance of compassion among nurses towards patients. They further stressed that compassion can contribute to verbal interpersonal skills. Wiman and Wikblad (2004) also discussed the importance of compassion while expressing non verbal communication like eye contact, touch, etc. among the nurses. These two studies have a perennial significance, as nurses are also frontline employees (Tucker & Edmondson, 2003). These studies explain the positive relationship among power sector frontline employees and delineate an important aspect that compassion contributes to the interpersonal adaptability aspect of FLE’s.

This study also found a positive relationship between compassion and social adaptability. One of the important sub themes of compassion is sympathy. Compassion
is a deep awareness, sympathy for others and a wish to relieve others suffering. Previous research has explicated significant relationship between sympathy and social skills (Eisenberg et al., 1989; Kitayama & Markus, 2000). Thus, the positive relationship between compassion and social adaptability might be due to sympathy.

This study does not find a positive relationship between compassion and service offering adaptability. No matter how sympathetic an FLE is towards the customer, it may not impact the ability to manufacture the service. This study does not find a positive relationship between compassion and political adaptability as being sympathetic does not help in handling conflicting goals. The present work does not support a positive relationship between compassion and physical adaptability as sympathy does not help to overcome one’s physical needs. The present investigation does not support a positive relationship between compassion and organizational adaptability. Being sympathetic may not actually help in learning and adapting to organizational rules, regulations, policies etc.

Petchsawang and Duchon (2009), defined mindfulness as a state of inner consciousness in which one is aware of one’s thoughts and actions moment by moment. Mindfulness is about a person’s mind being present, not wandering with past, future thoughts or other distractions. Mindfulness is being in the present state and FLE who are mindful will be able to perceive the situation and do the needful keeping the organizational interest in mind. Such ability will be handy to manufacture the desired service requested by the customer, thus, supporting a positive relationship between mindfulness and service offering adaptability.

Mindfulness in this research is found to be positively related to group adaptability. Vago and Silbersweig (2012), while studying the mechanism of
mindfulness suggested that self awareness leads to self regulation. An employee whose mind is in the present moment will naturally act in a manner as per the demand of the group. Since one is aware about the situation in the group and such behaviour is leading to self regulating behaviours. Besides, being mindful helps in team work and leadership (Miles, 1994) which also contributes to group adaptability. Also, there are studies which suggest the mindfulness, helps in stress reduction (Shapiro, Schwartz, & Bonner, 1998), improve moods (Speca et al., 2000), improve relationships (Hayes, 2004), reduce job burnout (Narayanan & Moynihan, 2006) and reduce role conflict (Valentine, Godkin, & Varca, 2010) leading to better relationships with team members within or external to the organization.

Lastly, this study found a positive relationship between mindfulness and organizational adaptability. Organizational adaptability is adapting to the rules, procedures, vision, policies, etc. of the organization. A mindful employee is a learning employee and as Levinthal & Rerup, (2006), suggest mindfulness promotes organization learning. Another prominent research is that mindfulness reduces deviant behaviours in people (Moscardo, 1996). A learning employee and an employee with non deviant behaviour will obviously be contributing to organization adaptability.

The present research does not support relationship between mindfulness with physical adaptability. Physical adaptability is adapting to physical aspects of Job which includes dealing with dangerous working condition. Previous research has confirmed that mindfulness is having positive effect on the safety climate in organization (Hopkins, 2003). However, it is one thing to improve the safety climate and other thing to perceive a dangerous work, like working with electricity or working in physically dangerous situation. Zhu et al., (2014), posit that perceived safety priority as the metric of safety climate. No matter how safe the organizational environment, the perception of
employees towards the dangers of electricity sometimes transcends the safety climate and this may result in physical incapability in spite being mindful. In a five year study by Kumar, Verma, and Singh (2013), put forward that though electricity is integral part of our lives, the employee deaths are increasing due to electricity. They further conjecture that some accidents could have been avoided and some were difficult to avoid. Under such conditions employees perceives electricity as dangerous leading to no relationship between mindfulness and physical adaptability, considering the physical nature of the Job.

The present study does not support a relationship of mindfulness and social adaptability. Social consciousness or awareness is subjectively felt feeling towards the society, which is developed over a period of time and mindfulness is about being in the present moment. Being in the present moment, may not help to develop social feeling which gets builds over a time.

The study also does not support any relationship between employee spirituality and political adaptability. Compassion, mindfulness and meaning full work, in this study does not affect employee adapting to the political dimension. Dealing with legitimate and illegitimate demand of the ruling and the opposition party called, for dealing with employee ethics and unethical behaviours or deviant behaviours. Recent conceptual research by Chawla (2014), suggest a negative relationship between workplace spirituality and deviant behaviours. There is increasing politicisation of power sector, which sometimes makes employees to indulge in deviant behaviour. A point to consider is that, when deviant behaviour is discretionary behaviour, employee spirituality may cause a negative relationship. However, handling political parties who want to grind their own axe, the threats to employee to indulge deviant behaviour make
it survival behaviour. Due to this the negative relationship may be snubbed. However, further research in a different service setting will clarify this relationship.

7.3 Organization Factors and FLE Adaptability

The proposition 2 proposes a relationship between organizational level factors of employees and frontline employee adaptability. The various organizational level factors considered are formalization, centralization, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support and service scape.

7.3.1 Formalization and FLE Adaptability

The Hypothesis 6 found a positive relationship between formalization and FLE adaptability. Specifically, formalization was found to be positively related to service offering, group and organizational adaptability. Oldham and Hackman (1981) and Finlay et al., (1995), defined formalization as the use of well-defined rules and regulations to govern the behaviour of individuals, so that actions within the organization become standardized. In power sector, the frontline employee has to devise the solutions as per customer needs or situations. Formalized procedures will help the FLE to meet needs of customers. Power system in India, is regulated by the framework of the Indian electricity act 2003 (Thakur et al., 2004). Therefore, having a documented formalized structure to solve the problems will help the FLE by reducing ambiguity (Vlaar, Bosch, & Volberda, 2006) and confusion.

The present research also found a positive relationship between formalization and group adaptability. Every group or team wants to optimize the teams or group’s objective. Having a formalized procedure, may lead to a macro level thinking which will benefit the organization. For example when an organization in their standard
operating procedures (SOP) elucidates that no matter how costly the equipments, it should be shared among group members for handling emergencies. Such SOP’s will promote adaptability among groups. Ring and Van de Ven (1994), emphasized that while working on inter-organization support, a formalized structure will create a psychological contract for cooperation. Thus, explaining the positive relationship between formalization and group adaptability.

The present research also found a positive relationship between formalization and organizational adaptability. A formalized organization will be a well-documented organization in terms of its rules, policies, missions, and visions etc. An employee will be at ease in well-documented organization, which has codified rules and regulation for each situation to deal with. Previous researchers have also supported this viewpoint and hypothesized a positive relationship, between formalization and organization commitment (Michaels et al., 1988), reduced role ambiguity and conflicts (Jackson & Schuler, 1985).

The present research found no relationship between formalization and interpersonal adaptability. It is difficult to codify a formalized procedure for interpersonal communication according for each situation. This could be a reason for finding no relationship between formalization and interpersonal adaptability. The study also found no relationship between formalization and social adaptability. Having a codified procedure may have no relationship with an employee adapting with society. The present work also found no relationship between formalization and political adaptability. Having a codified procedure to deal with the situations may not help in dealing with politicians. The needs of politicians are diverse hence having a codified procedure may not help. When the results were presented to an expert from power utility she opines that “In power sector one cannot have rules jotted down for each and
every aspect of day to day operation & maintenance especially while handling people or politicians or society. Because no two situation are alike even though it may appear so. We need to execute technical works in different environment. Even though while offering some services which are standardised like preparing an estimate for a new connection, we need to prepare estimate as per customer needs however it is impossible to codify these instructions when it comes to soft skills. Besides sometimes having written rules which are static creates problems for employees who deal with customer. It also has advantages like written rules can help to handle employees in organization.” The theoretical viewpoints from extant research and practical viewpoints match to explain the relation of formalization to FLE adaptability.

7.3.2 Centralization and FLE Adaptability

The Hypothesis 7 found a positive relationship between Centralization and FLE adaptability. Specifically, Centralization was found to be positively related to political, group and social adaptability. John (1984) and Kelley et al. (1996) defined the degree of centralization in an organization, is determined by the hierarchical level of the organization, which is granted the decision-making authority. Higher the centralization, higher the hierarchy of decision making levels and lower the freedom for decision making for the FLE. The objective of lower centralization or decentralization was employee empowerment (Love et al., 2002). The positive impact of centralization on social adaptability was rather surprising result. In other words, limited the decision making power of FLE higher impact on the social adaptability. Social adaptability is defined as an FLE consciousness or competency to adapt to the society. It includes adapting to local culture, language and social consciousness. Social adaptability is a set of formal/ informal values and norms and subjectively-felt obligations that FLE perceive about the society, which are instrumental in shaping the FLE adaptability in
the organization. When the result was shown to an expert with more than 25 years of experience in power utility, remarked that “During any village Zatra (festivals), we get applications for many temporary connections. Sometimes it is not possible to release all connections due to technical constraints. We understand that the customer wants to set up a stall sometimes for his living or sometimes even for religious reasons, but we can’t help as I can’t do anything about it. This has led me feel about the society.”

Another expert, when shown the result from commercial section remarked “While releasing connection for lower income group consumers we have this problem. LIG consumers are poor and they have bare minimum facilities to take electricity supply. Sometimes we go out the way and do the wiring job to give them electricity supply, as if we go back, they process is a tedious one”

The phenomenon under study is having a sociological dimension, hence in order to explain this phenomenon, it is necessary to import some research from sociological literatures. While discussing learned helplessness construct Rabowet al.(1983), opined that learned helplessness is a construct, that was believed to arise when prior learning in an unsolvable situation undermined motivation for future responses in a similar situation. A parallel view of this inability to control one’s surroundings comes out of a social learning construct called locus of control. Generally, the more control a person perceives to have in any given situation, the less threatening the situation or task will appear.

A frontline employee, who has little freedom to decide the course of action in his job from his previous interaction with the organization hierarchy, would perceive a situation to be beyond his control. Kuhl (1984) proposed a link between the learned helplessness and rational attribution approaches to human motivation. There are many
studies which proposed the link between human motivation and social development or social concern (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Hence, this research proposes a relationship between centralization and social adaptability which can be explained through a process model of learned helplessness – human motivation – social motivation link.

Both the explanation offered by the practising managers in power sector and evidence from extant theory offers explanation for the rather surprising result. However, future research should examine this phenomenon under different social or cultural context. Besides, investigating its possible moderating and mediating actors for better understanding of this phenomenon.

The present research found a positive relationship between centralization and political adaptability. The higher the level of decision making, ranks or authority, the political pressure will be divided on all those ranks. Thus, the onus on frontline employee will be lesser. Therefore, to handle conflicting demands of politicians the FLE will be better equipped. Previous research has confirmed to manage contradictions one of the best ways forward is Centralization (Cameron et al., 1991).

This research also found a positive relationship between centralization and group adaptability. Higher the level of decision making ranks the effect of group politics will be less (Ferris et al., 1996). Besides, there would be efficient distribution of resources in a centralized organization (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002). Therefore, there will be less chance of group conflicts, thereby promoting group adaptability. In addition, when the level of decision making is high, the chances of within group conflicts will be less. This is because the within group conflicts are neither taken to the superiors or they are solved within themselves as they perceive the superiors has less
power to settle the matter.

The present research also found no relationship between centralization and interpersonal adaptability. Lower decision making authority among the FLE’s will result in engaging the customers to meet the needs. Because it is the sole responsibility of FLE to meet the customer needs. Lack of engagement may make an FLE insensitive to the needs of the customers. E.g. if there is a power failure and a customer approaches the FLE. The FLE may tell him the reason bluntly and if customer is not satisfied he may direct him to superior without any further clarifications.

The present research also found no relationship between centralization and service offering adaptability. Handling uncertain and unpredictable situations is an important component to manufacture a service. Centralization may have no impact on the manner a FLE deals with an uncertain situation. Besides, decentralization may reduce communication cost but it may not impact the professional competence or skill variety requirements of the FLE’s.

The present study also found no relationship between centralization and physical adaptability. Lack of employee empowerment means less tolerance towards factors of physical needs. As reiterated earlier decentralization will reduce communication costs but it may have no relationship with ability of FLE to work for long working hours or for instance working on odd days.

The present study found no relationship between centralization and organizational adaptability. The level of decision structure in an organization may not help an FLE to adapt to organizational rules, regulations, policies etc. Adapting to organization rules etc is a learning behaviour and centralization or decentralization may not have an impact on the learning behaviour.
7.3.3 Perceived Organizational Support and FLE Adaptability

The Hypothesis 8 found that perceived organizational support were positively related to service offering adaptability, political adaptability, group adaptability and organizational adaptability. DeConinck and Johnson (2009) defined perceived organization support as the extent to which employees perceive that their contributions are valued by their organization and that the organization cares about their well-being. In power sector as reiterated earlier, services are sometimes to be tailored as per the customer needs. This calls for FLE to exhibit behaviours which are beneficial to the organization. Shore and Wayne (1993) advocated that perceived organizational support positively supports behaviours which are beneficial for the organization. Hence, an FLE who perceives that, his organization will support him will be better able to vary the service in this dimension. Thus, the present study found a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and service offering adaptability.

Dealing with politicians, calls for handling their legitimate and illegitimate demands. Hence, an organization which supports an FLE to handle such conflicts will better adapt in this dimension explaining the positive relationship found between perceived organizational support and Political adaptability. Perceived organizational support is known to positively impact attitudinal and behavioural measures of employee behaviours (Eisenberger et al., 1990). When organization supports FLE, naturally there will be better coordination between the groups either internal or external to the organization. Because employees would want, welfare of the organizations they love to work. Thus, explaining the positive relationship between perceived organizational support and group adaptability. Lastly, every FLE would love to work in an organization that would support them and previous research has brought out that perceived organizational support leads to organizational commitment (Eisenberger et
Therefore, explaining the positive relationship found between perceived organizational support and organizational adaptability in this study. This study extends to investigate the trend further by specifically suggesting a link between perceived organization support and organization adaptability. An expert from distribution remarked that “Our organization supports employees. Handling public is a risky business, there is nothing like having an organization which supports you. Sometimes politicians or customers threatens us regarding transfer etc. During such times it is wonderful to have an organization that does not pay heed to such miscreants and rather investigate the matter unbiased. It is a boon to work in such organization”

The present study does not find a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and interpersonal adaptability. Managing emotions forms an important aspect in varying the service along interpersonal dimension. Emotions management is individual personality trait and organization support may not be futile to cultivate such competency. The present research proves that no matter, how an organization supports an individual there is no impact along this dimension.

The present study also found no relationship between perceived organizational support and physical adaptability. Physical adaptability is meeting basic needs of employee. An organization may be supporting its employees or valuing their contribution however it cannot be a substitute for basic employee facilities.

The present work found no relationship between organizational support and social adaptability. A supporting organization may not invoke a feeling or concern about the society. It can only help in developing the feelings of the employee towards an organization. Depending upon the orientation of the organization, in social aspect, the employees may try to invoke such feelings. But it is in the hands of employee to
feel a subjectively felt obligation about the society. If the behaviour is organizational enforced one then there is a high chance that the feelings are not his true feelings. The employee is not exhibiting true feelings rather feigning the feelings. The employee not exhibiting true feelings contributes to no relationship between perceived organization support and social adaptability.

7.3.4 Perceived Supervisor Support and FLE Adaptability

The Hypothesis 9 found that perceived supervisor support to be positively related to service offering adaptability, political adaptability, group adaptability and organizational adaptability. DeConinck and Johnson (2009) defined perceived supervisor support as the extent to which the supervisor values the employee’s contributions. In power sector as reiterated earlier, services are sometimes to be tailored as per customer needs or situations. Occasionally, an FLE need to find unconventional solutions to problems. An employee whose immediate supervisor is supportive of innovation and creativity will naturally search for innovative, unconventional and cost effective solutions. Amabile et al., (2004) suggested that subordinates will be more creative when the superiors support them. Hence, an FLE who perceives that his supervisor will support him will be better able to vary the service along this dimension and be adaptable along this dimension.

Dealing with politicians calls for handling their legitimate and illegitimate demands. For this reason, a supervisor which supports an FLE to handle such conflicts will better adapt along political dimension. If the supervisor does not support the employee even if he is on the right path than it will be very difficult for the employee. Because one side there would be politician who is mounting pressure on him and other side there would be his supervisor directing him to do that illegal act.
When supervisor supports FLE naturally, there will be better coordination between the groups either internal or external to the organization. Also, supervisor being at a level above the FLE can cast his power distance role and try to solve the group problems if any with ease. Thus, explaining the positive relationship in the perceived supervisor support and group adaptability. Lastly every FLE would love to work with a supervisor who would support them because for an FLE, the supervisor is the organization. Such behaviours are support systems for the FLE and hence they will naturally adapt to the organization.

Similar sentiments was echoed by Eisenberger, et al., (2002), where they studied and ascertained the influence of perceived supervisor support on employee retention in the organization. An employee from power utility commented that “A supportive supervisor can make your life easy. Imagine during a protest where a group of people are protesting against the organization or accusing an employee. Under such circumstances it is always better to have a supervisor who supports you if you are correct.”

This study found no relationship between perceived supervisor support and interpersonal adaptability. In power sector, there is a lot of emotional abuse of employees. This warrants an FLE to manage his emotions during a service encounter. No matter how supporting a supervisor the onus is on the FLE to manage his emotions. A support system can help offline but in real time in a service encounter, it is the employee who has to perform. This finding explains the importance of FLE emotion management to explain why the relationship is not supported between perceived supervisor support and interpersonal adaptability.

The present study found no relationship perceived supervisor support and social
adaptability. A supervisor can encourage an FLE with carrot and stick behaviour to invoke a concern for the employee. Unless an FLE subjectively invokes the feeling or concern for the society it may not be a futile exercise. Because he may fake his feelings and being not a true representative of his behaviour and it will not sustainable.

The present work found no relationship between perceived supervisor support and physical adaptability. Safety and physical needs are quiet important for an FLE. It is one thing for a supervisor to support an FLE and other thing to provide basic needs like fair working hours, safety tools etc. Most of the time, the supervisor is just an employee and he is not having any say to provide facilities etc. This explains the lack of significant findings.

7.3.5 Servicescape and FLE Adaptability

The Hypothesis 10 found a positive relationship between perceived service scape and FLE adaptability. Specifically perceived convenience of service scape was found to impact physical adaptability. Safety of service scape was found to be positively related to physical adaptability. Pleasantness of service scape was positively related to interpersonal and physical adaptability.

Conceptually, convenience is similar to the concept of functionality discussed in the service scape literature. Convenience in a workplace means supplies and equipments are readily available. This will definitely reduce the physical exertion, besides, availability of supplies like spares in a technical organization are vital. If it conveniently located sorting, searching etc is avoided. Another dimension to ponder is when the service scape is convenient, it reduce the stress of the employees. In earlier research, convenience was found to reduce job stress and increase job satisfaction in a health care setting (Parish et al., 2008) and our research extends the work in power
sector by finding a positive relationship between convenience and physical adaptability.

Convenient access to the supplies and equipment etc may not help an FLE to speak well or interact with the customers. The verbal, non-verbal and emotional skills may not influenced by the convenience of supplies. But definitely this may give that extra time in a service encounter as time to sort or time to search etc will be less. For this reason, the present research rightly supports no relationship between convenience and interpersonal adaptability.

A convenient access to equipment etc may not help to handle unpredictable and uncertain situation, creativity or professional skills of employees. In fact these are skills which are pertaining to individuals and hence external factor like convenience can be of little help explaining the insignificant relationship between convenience and service offering adaptability.

This study also found no relationship between convenience and social adaptability. Convenience of service scape relied on access to equipment etc and this may not help an FLE to feel subjectively about the society. In other words convenience may make an FLE comfortable, but may not invoke a feeling to adapt socially.

This study also found no relationship between convenience and political adaptability. Adapting to political dimension warrants an FLE to solve conflicting goals of ruling and opposition parties. Convenience can make an employee happy or comfortable but may not help him to solve conflicting goals.

This study also found no relationship between convenience and organizational adaptability. Convenience of supplies or equipment may make an employee comfortable because of ease in sorting, searching etc. This may also lead to ease in
working. However, transforming this degree of ease to behaviours will enable one to learn organizational rules, policies etc is knotty.

Convenience of equipment or supplies will enable an FLE or his group members to be at ease. However, group friction is sometimes due to power struggle or departmental politics and hence being at ease may not necessarily help in adapting to group members.

Commenting on the results of this research, a maintenance engineer from the power utility remarked that “convenience of work place in terms of tools, materials etc is an important aspect of Job. We have lots of maintenance parts and properly storing and retrieving them can reduce a lot of down time. Besides meticulous planning of spares supply is also vital for a technical organization. An employee cannot give an excuse to the customer that there is no meter with the organization or service connection wire is in shortage”

This study found that perceived safety in an organization is positively related to physical adaptability. Safety is the degree of hazard present in a workplace. Dealing with electricity is an inherently unsafe Job. In power sector, a single mal-operation can result in death of employee or severe damage to man and materials (Kumar et al., 2013). Under such consideration, the present study rightly found a relationship between safety and physical adaptability. One would always like to work in a safe organization however; this research did not support a positive relationship between safety and organizational adaptability. A possible explanation would be that previous research like Michael, et al., (2005) suggests that employee outcomes differ based on perceptions of management's commitment to safety. Perception may change based on prevalent socio economic conditions in the country. Self perceived job insecurity is
explained by nation-specific characteristics (Erlinghagen, 2008). May be the amount of unemployment prevalent in the country can explain that employees without paying attention to safety work to gain employment, however, this does not mean they agree with organizational rules, policies etc.

The study founds no relationship between perceived safety and interpersonal adaptability. Dealing interpersonally is emotionally taxing, but it is certainly not dangerous. So FLE may not perceive it as a threat to safety. Therefore, the relationship is not supported.

The present study finds no relationship between perceived safety and service offering adaptability. In order to manufacture a service it calls for dealing with the electricity, which is generally perceived as dangerous. However, a well trained professional competent person will perceive a minimal danger while manufacturing a service. Such a phenomenon is different from physical adaptability wherein one needs to deal with controllable and uncontrollable dangers of electricity. FLE competency will snub ones perception towards danger while manufacturing a service.

The work found no relationship between perceived safety and organizational adaptability. Though safety is an important aspect in an organization or power industry in general, however, it may be not the only reason one is motivated to adapt to rules, policies etc of the organization.

The present study found no relationship between perceived safety and group adaptability, as group politics or objectives, transcends one need for safety. The relationship between perceived safety and political adaptability is also not supported. Handling conflicting objectives of politicians sometimes calls for unsafe behaviours. However, the professional competency will make such unsafe behaviour being
perceived as being safe and hence it supports no relationships.

This study found no relationship between safety and social adaptability. Safe working environment may not necessarily invoke behaviours which are directed towards the society. The feelings towards society are subjectively felt obligations and hence this research rightly finds no relationship.

As regards to the safety an employee remarked that “Safe organization makes us confident in the organization. It means the organization should follow all the safety standards for electrical systems. We would be happy to work in safe organizations as our life is protected” The practical viewpoint corroborates the extant knowledge base, which will help in explaining the impact of servicescape on FLE adaptability.

Pleasantness of servicescape positively supports a relationship between physical and Interpersonal Adaptability. Employees working in a pleasant environment will naturally adapt well, as they will find little difficulty in adapting to the physical nature of the job. This research confirmed in power sector, the impact of service scapes on employees, as propounded by the seminal work of Bitner, (1992). Pleasant service scape promotes a healthy environment of interpersonal interaction of FLE’s with other stake holders. Various researchers have suggested that pleasant service scape promotes increasing approach behaviours and reduces avoidance behaviours (Ezeh & Harris, 2007), improved shopping experience (Yuksel, 2007) and satisfaction (Lin & Mattila, 2010) for customers. When an FLE interacts with the customers during service encounter in a pleasant service scape and he feels positive emotions which will naturally depict in their interaction with customers.

Pleasantness of service scape does not support a positive relationship with organizational adaptability. Adapting to rules, policies, culture warrants to be aligned
with values of the organization. It is thing to be physically comfortable and another thing to be organizationally comfortable.

Pleasantness of service scape does not support a positive relationship with service offering adaptability. Though pleasant service scape may not necessarily boost creativity, else, the affluent would have been most creative. Pleasantness of service scape has no impact on other dimension of service offering like professional competency or skill variety adaptability.

Pleasantness of service scape does not support a positive relationship with social adaptability. Concern for society is a subjectively felt feeling and hence pleasantness of service scape may not have an impact on it.

Pleasantness of service scape does not support a positive relationship with group’s adaptability as group differences are due to various factors like group politics, power distance etc. Handing political parties call for dealing with conflicting objectives and hence this research found pleasantness of service scape is not related to Political adaptability.

7.4 FLE Adaptability and Job Satisfaction

The Hypothesis 11 found a positive relationship between all the seven dimensions of FLE adaptability and Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is operationalized in this study, as collection of feelings that an individual holds towards his or her job. A positive adaptability –Job satisfaction link has been suggested by various researchers e.g. in adapting to change (Cullen et al., 2013), adaptive selling (Park & Holloway, 2003) and career adaptability ((Hirschi, 2009). An adaptable frontline employee will adapt along interpersonal, service offering, political, social, group, physical and
organizational dimensions as per the demands of stakeholders, environment or new situations. Such satisfying work behaviour will lead to positive feelings towards his job. Positive feelings towards the job will make an FLE more satisfied with the job. Thus, explaining the positive relationship found between FLE adaptability and job performance.

7.5 FLE Adaptability and Job Performance

The Hypothesis 12 found a positive relationship with all seven dimensions of FLE adaptability and job performance. Job Performance was operationalized in general, as behaviors that are relevant to organizational goals and that are under the control of individual employees (Babin & Boles, 1996; Ellinger et al., 2008). A positive adaptability–job performance link has been suggested by various researchers e.g. in adapting as a role flexibility (Pulakos et al., 2002), task and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). An adaptable frontline employee will adapt along interpersonal, service offering, political, social, group, physical and organizational dimensions according to the demands of stakeholders, environment or new situations. These behaviours individually or in combination would try to satisfy the organizational goals. The FLE adaptability behaviour is naturally under the control of the FLE. These purposeful, in role, organizationally desired and contextual behaviours will lead to better performance of job. Although some aspects of FLE adaptability behaviour may look similar to routine technical performance, but adaptation may involve doing the same job, to a greater degree or in a substantially different way. An FLE exhibiting such behaviours which will influence organizational goals leading to job performance.
7.6 Job satisfaction – Job Performance

The hypothesis 13 put forward a positive relationship between Job satisfaction and Job performance. The hypothesis 13a put forward a relationship between Job satisfaction and Job performance. The hypothesis 13b put forward a relationship between Job performance and Job satisfaction. The hypothesis 13c predicts a bidirectional relationship. This study does not support a significant relationship between Job satisfaction and Job performance or vice versa or bidirectional relationship. An adaptable employee would exhibit Job Satisfaction and Job performance. The lack of link suggests that FLE adaptability impacts Job satisfaction and Job performance equally. Therefore, the causal relationship among the construct Job satisfaction and Job performance is not established. This result further stresses the one-dimensional relationship between FLE adaptability and Job outcomes. As Job Satisfaction or Job performance does not mediate the relationship with FLE adaptability.

Several researchers have gone so far as to argue that job satisfaction fails to predict job performance. This is because extant job satisfaction measures reflect more cognitive evaluation than affective tone (Brief & Roberson, 1989; Organ & Near, 1985). Brief and Roberson (1989) concluded that many of the most widely used job satisfaction measures differed dramatically in the degree to which they captured affect. Organ (1988) suggested that the failure to find a relationship between job satisfaction and performance is due to the narrow means often used to define job performance. The assumption that job performance and job satisfaction are related is an intuitive appeal. But in reality there is no strong relationship between them (Iaffaldano and Muchinsky, 1985). These explain the insignificant relationship between Job satisfaction and Job
performance. Further research should explore this relationship to unearth the possible mediating or moderating relationships.

7.7 Testing for Mediation

The hypothesis H14 found that FLE Adaptability mediates the relationship between antecedent’s factors a) organization and b) individual related factors and consequences c) Job Satisfaction and d) Job Performance. Direct model, partially mediating model and completely mediating model was tested. The completely mediating model was found to be best fitting the data. Hence, this study suggests that FLE adaptability mediates the relationship between antecedents and consequences.

7.8 Methodological Contributions

FLEADAPT Scale version 1.0 a 41 item scale for measuring adaptive behavior among frontline employees was developed for this study. The final scale consisting of seven dimensions were worded such that it could be used in a variety of service settings. The Flesch-Kincaid grade level of the final scale was 7.8 suggesting reading ease of 8th grade. Also, the scale was not context specific. Scale development analyses performed on the scale proves it to be internally consistent. The convergent and discriminant validity of the scale with related constructs proves that this construct is unique.

This scale can be used by academic researchers in furthering knowledge on FLE employee adaptive behaviors. Practitioners interested in learning more about their frontline employees' can use it from recruitment to training. Although the scale appears to hold promise, validation in other contexts will be necessary to fully understand its usefulness. In applied settings, it may be especially interesting to use this scale to track the evolution of frontline employee adaptive behavior over time. This could be done to
measure the effectiveness of new recruiting practices or training activities designed to improve employee adaptability.

7.9 Academic Implication

Study of the construct of individual employee performance has been renewed since the early 2000s on account of changes in workplace expectations. Multidimensional models were proposed that, among other things, recognized the importance of employee adaptiveness. It is observed that firm fail in service delivery, because they must rely upon front-line employees to both manufacture and deliver the service, often in real time with no time for inspection of quality prior to delivery (Patterson et al., 2009). Therefore, it is being increasingly established that to time after time deliver excellent customer service, frontline employees in any organization must be adaptable to the changing customer demands, any new situation or environment etc. The present study adds to the employee adaptability literature by investigating the frontline employee adaptability as perceived by the FLE.

This study also proposed a FLE adaptability Matrix which provided a new way to classify services, to understand the adaptability among frontline employees. In order, to measure frontline adaptability no scale from existing literatures was helpful to measure the proposed dimensions. This dissertation extends this gap and developed a self reported 41 items FLEADAPT scale which will measure FLE adaptability along the seven proposed seven dimensions. The scale developed to measure frontline employee adaptability can be used by academician to further understand the adaptability spectrum of FLE’s.

The research further explores the possible antecedents and consequences of frontline employee adaptability. This study substantiate the relationships between
individual related factor like service orientation, tolerance to ambiguity, self efficacy, emotional intelligence and employee spirituality on frontline employee adaptability.

Also organisational related factors like formalization, centralization, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support and perceived service scape are also studied as antecedents of frontline adaptability.

This is the first study to carry out simultaneous influence of organizational and individual related factor on frontline employee adaptability. Thus, catering the research call by (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012; Gwinner et al., 2005) to investigate factors that contribute to employee adaptability. The consequences of frontline employee adaptability are studied. Job outcomes like Job satisfaction and Job performance were studied. Thus, offering new insights on the research gamut of frontline employee adaptability.

7.10 Managerial Implications

Service firms like power utilities are dependent upon the front-line service employee to perform the important task. These boundary-spanning positions are particularly critical to the firm because from the customers' point of view, these employees are the firm (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990). Paradoxically, these FLE’s are often the lowest paid, least valued members in the organization. Frontline employees will enter the organization with varying levels of adaptive behavior potential. Therefore, the subsequent sections draw upon the research findings to suggest tactics in a) recruitment b) training c) performance appraisal and management and d) organizational operations. These findings may help service managers to consider for increasing adaptive behavior among front-line service personnel.
7.10.1 Recruitment

The classical manner of recruitment in a power utility is based on the technical skills of the employees. The present study has emphasized that, in addition to the technical skills, an FLE needs to be adaptable along interpersonal adaptability, service offering adaptability, political adaptability, group adaptability, physical adaptability, social adaptability and organizational adaptability.

The present study, has found that FLE adaptability leads to Job performance. Thus, this result should be an eye opener for the organizations to consider the adaptive behavior of the employees. The first step towards this process should begin with detail job description in terms of the aforesaid dimensions. The present study, has found that there exists an individual level difference to FLE adaptability. Hence, the power utilities seeking to increase the number of prospective adaptive employee applicants, might consider careful wording of job announcements or descriptions. Special care should be taken to emphasize the need for interpersonal, service offering, social, political, group, physical and organizational adaptive behavior capabilities. Schneider (1987) reviewed literature from the vocational psychology to propose that individuals will be attracted to employment opportunities that reflect their own interests and personalities. Following this conjectural viewpoint, highlighting the adaptive requirements of the job explicitly along the aforesaid dimensions, may cause non-adaptive job applicants to self-select out of the application process. Though such a viewpoint may not be practical where unemployment is prevalent. However, the explicit declaration may help at least in creating awareness about what is expected from the prospective employees. Such statements may force prospective employees to either self select out or at least proactively train themselves in these dimensions. So by the
time they are ready to be selected for the organization, they are skilled in these dimensions.

With the enactment of The Electricity Act, 2003 it is easier for private players to engage in transmission and distribution business. One of the best ways to attract well performing employees from rival utilities is to have good recruitment policies like realistic job preview (Earnest et al., 2011). Realistic job preview used in the selection process, is designed to give job applicants a true understanding of all aspects of the job for which they are applying (Breaugh, 2010). Often, this will involve applicants "shadowing" a current frontline employee for some period of time. During this interaction, frontline employees can emphasize on the adaptive aspects of their position along the seven dimensions of adaptability. Realistic job previews have been suggested, to be a successful technique in reducing turnover through the clarification of job expectations (Landis, Earnest, & Allen, 2013). As with the phrasing of job position announcements, realistic job previews will give probable employee's a chance to self-select out of the selection process, if they feel that the job (especially the seven adaptive dimensions of frontline employee adaptability) is not consistent with their skills or interests.

Another technique for recruitment would be testing the candidates along the adaptability dimensions. In this regard FLEADAPT scale 1.0 may be used and the prospective employee may be ranked on each dimensions. Also overall rank for the total adaptability score may be used. In case of tie the candidates with low variability of scores among the sub dimensions of FLE adaptability may be preferred.

A further approach that employers of power utility might use in selection is the use of role playing exercises (Barreteau, Le Page, & D'Aquino, 2003). Role playing
activities could be developed to simulate actual job situations. The seven dimensions of frontline employee adaptability could be used to create these actual job situations. For example, one could simulate a violent crowd behavior and note down the responses of prospective employees in handling the situations. A care to be taken while designing role playing exercises is equal weight may be given to all the dimensions of frontline employee adaptability.

In order to directly help in recruitment process, Gerber et al. (1995) suggested, use of various scales to measure employee predisposition. The individual level antecedent’s factors like service orientation, self efficacy, tolerance for ambiguity, emotional intelligence and employee spirituality may be used on the prospective employees. Higher scoring on these scales can be used in two ways. One way these scores can be used for direct recruitment, as this research has proved the significant impact on FLE adaptability. The second way would be to corroborate the scores of FLE adaptability scales to ascertain the right candidate when there is tie in FLE adaptability scores.

A multi skilled employee with varied skill sets, in addition to professional competency has been found in this research as sub dimensions of FLE Adaptability. Recruitment testing written examination should be designed in this aspect too. A cursory adaptation of conceptual themes of service offering adaptability will serve as a guide post to design such questionnaires. Abilities like solving problems creatively and handling uncertain situations should also find a place in the recruitment examination. Skills like negotiation and reconciliation which were considered till now for higher positions in an organization, should also find a place for recruitment of the FLE’s. The present study has emphasized its importance while handling politicians or influential customers.
7.10.2 Training

Another method for increasing adaptability among the frontline employee is through the organizations training activities. Both new employees and current employees may benefit from adaptability training. The training may look into the various facets of the adaptability dimensions proposed in the study. For training purposes it is advised to use our adaptability scale along with organizations data to find out the weakest dimension of the employee. Take for instance say Interpersonal dimension is the weakest link, then the training in charge has to look into is the sub theme of interpersonal dimension i.e. verbal, non verbal and emotional adaptability and then understand in which area an employee requires training and accordingly train the employee. A training designed, keeping individual employee needs in mind, will be more effective in promoting adaptability among employees.

Another approach to train FLE in adaptability would be to train them in antecedent’s factors. For instance this research has found that emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with political adaptability and to improve political adaptability among the frontline employees, it is advised to train employees in emotional intelligence specifically, in the dimensions of other’s emotion appraisal, use of emotions and regulation of emotions.

During training of new employees adequate care should be taken to cover all the dimensions of adaptability. This research has proved that all the dimensions are significant for frontline employee adaptability. Usually power utilities being a technical organization, it is imperative to hypothesize that it would be satisfied with training employees in the technical aspect. However, this research finds seven aspects of adaptability significantly impacting job performance and Job satisfaction. One of the
important dimensions of adaptability which organization till today have neglected is social aspect of adaptability or social consciousness. This research has proved that social aspect of adaptability has significant relationship between Job satisfaction and Job performance. Hence this calls for training employees in social consciousness. An antecedent which was found to significantly impact social adaptability dimension is employee spirituality. The dimension of compassion, mindfulness and meaningful work has found a significant impact on social adaptability. This calls for an organization to take this important result in mind while designing their training programs.

During adaptive training sessions, the link between frontline employee’s adaptive behaviors and rewards could be discussed. A key component of the expectancy theory of motivation is the degree to which frontline employee’s associate a direct relationship between the attainment of a given level of performance and the receipt of valued rewards. Firms can strengthen this relationship during training sessions by carefully explaining how adaptability will be evaluated and rewarded by the organization to drive in an important point to the employees. This will also serve to reinforce the importance that management practices on adapting to meet individual customer needs or situations or a new event. Research has found positive relationships between employee's perceptions of management's service commitment and employee’s perception of service quality (Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe, & Avci, 2003). Besides, once the rewards are known or management’s commitments to service quality are known, then self efficacy of employees may be reinforced to achieving this goal. Previous research has found a positive link between self efficacy and goal choice (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984).

Although beyond the scope of this study, the retention of adaptive employees is a related issue that firms may need to consider. Trained frontline employees will be
very attractive to the competing firms. Retention strategies, such as promoting from within, may be needed to keep the most adaptive frontline employees from being recruited away to other competing firms.

7.10.3 Performance Appraisal & Management

Individual frontline employee performance appraisals assess task performance as well as contributions toward the accomplishment of broader organizational goals. But, it is not unusual for human resource managers to articulate disappointment with current systems of appraisal (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012; Pulakos & O’Leary, 2011) that may not do well in assessing the extent to which employees will be effective in adapting to a changing or dynamic workplace. Organizations stand to benefit by becoming more agile through by developing their entire workforce to be anticipatory, creative, and broadly adaptive (Goldman, Nagel, & Preiss, 1995; Shafer et al., 2001). The frontline employee adaptability construct thus, meets the needs of human resource managers who are looked upon to ensure the whole workforce profile is in line with the macro level needs of the business, and line managers who must conduct timely relevant appraisal of their immediate subordinates. In line with the discussion, the contents of our scale could be used within the context of an overall performance management system in companies faced with complex, uncertain, and tumultuous situations. Indeed, with petite changes in wording, the scale could be adapted as needed for self-assessment or for use by an immediate supervisor in evaluating his/her subordinates. As with any performance evaluation tool, when the adaptability scale is used to evaluate others, only individuals with multiple direct opportunities to observe the other’s performance should be completing the assessments.
Organizations looking for greater flexibility or agility could also use the scale as a diagnostic tool. For example, it could be used to help assess individual competencies, informing the design of specific programs for job content, training, and personnel support. Finally, depending on the needs of managers, the scale could also be used to inform internal selection/placement decisions.

7.10.4 Organizational Operations

Several organizational operation strategies can be considered to promote adaptiveness among the frontline employees. While interpersonal adaptiveness will largely fall on the individual employee. Our research suggests that interpersonal dimensions of adaptability are significantly related to organizational related factors like servicescape. Specifically in servicescape it is found that convenience and pleasantness of workplace is impacting interpersonal adaptability. This calls for an organization to design an organization with these parameters in mind.

As regards to the service offering adaptability is largely dependent upon the actions of management. In order to exhibit adaptability in this dimension the, employees must be provided with alternative service options, or at least the means for their development. Kelley et al. (1996), discretion constructs speak to this issue. They suggested that employees selecting from company developed "lists" of alternatives are exercising routine discretion. While those that develop the means for accomplishing the service task are exercising creative discretion. However, even if the firm does not formally specify alternatives which are routine discretion, they must provide the resources for the development of creative discretion. Firms interested in encouraging service offering adaptive behavior might carefully consider the resources, they provide the front-line employee.
An additional vital aspect of the research is the impact of perceived supervisor support by employees on service offering, political, group and organizational adaptability. These calls for organization make their supervisors aware of the impact they are going to make if they support their subordinates. However, a blanket advice cannot be given to supervisors to support all activities of their subordinates in their transactions with customers or other stakeholders as the issue of malafide or bona fide intentions should be left to the best discretion of the supervisors.

The service facility is typically the most tangible part of the inseparable service experience not only for customers but also for providers. And while customers come and go, many providers spend their work in the same facility. The concept of “place” involves a broader set of issues in the marketing mix for inseparable services. It not only is where customers obtain the service, but also where employees perform it. For service workers performing intense work while immersed in a specific place, the design of that place can be especially important. This research proves the impact of service scape on frontline employee adaptability. Specifically, convenience is related to physical adaptability. Safety is related to physical adaptability and pleasantness is related to interpersonal and physical adaptability.

The effective marketing of labor-intensive services requires human resources practices that attract and retain the caliber of people needed to implement the marketing strategy and that prepare, enable, and encourage them to do it well. Our research shows the salient role the facility plays in contributing to these requirements in the context of frontline employee adaptability. The design of service facilities cannot simply be delegated to architects, designers, and facility planners; this is a central marketing and human resources issue.
An organization’s service facilities reflect its values and are instrumental in the execution of its strategy. Without words, a building communicates to the people who use it. The building may communicate modernity and progressiveness or the opposite; it may communicate management’s concern for the well-being of the staff or a lack of concern; it may communicate that management is “in touch” with needs in the organization or that it is “out of touch.”

Safety is an inherent part of the organization like power utilities it is even more important and this research impacts the perceived safety of facility on the physical adaptability. This calls for an organization to design facilities or infrastructures which are safe for the employees. In power substations etc utmost stress may be given to safe design of facilities. The facilities include from transmission or distribution network to touch or contact points.

Facilities design research can include observing staff members as they work in existing facilities and inquiring about design features that enable or inhibit them and about what is missing that they need. Formal facility assessment and preference surveys also can be helpful, as can take selected staff members on site visits to evaluate other newer facilities.

Though not directly connected with this research in power sector it is likely that adapting to meet individual customer needs or situations will take more time than standardized customer encounters (Bowen & Lawler, 1992). Power utilities encouraging adaptive behavior among the frontline employees must be careful to balance efficiency concerns with customization goals.
7.11 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This section describes limitations associated with the study and provides suggestions for future research. The limitations discuss issues involving analysis, context, construct selection, and construct operationalization. Future research issues revolve around exploring antecedent interrelationships, including organizational level construct, experimental and longitudinal study designs, testing the model in other contexts, and cultures.

7.11.1 Limitations

As with most research, this dissertation is subject to some limitations. First the limitations of qualitative research are expounded. Given our exploratory qualitative approach and small sample size, these findings should be interpreted with caution until they have been replicated in a variety of settings and with multiple methodologies. It is important to note that interview data, open ended discussions and group discussions are a subjective reflection of frontline employee’s perspectives and experiences, rather than objective accounts of reality. Although this methodology was appropriate for understanding frontline employees lived in experience of adaptability. Future researches will benefit from multi-method approaches to data collection that examine variations in frontline employee adaptability perceptions from individuals at various organizational levels and across service industries. Interesting avenues for future research include longitudinal analyses of frontline employee’s perception of adaptability.

Participants in this study were drawn from power sector organizations located in Western India. This may delimit generalizations. Substantial research needs to be carried out in order to fully develop a complete understanding of this important FLE
adaptability construct. Further, studies conducted in other settings in the same industry could improve the generalizability of the results.

The finding is based on data gathered from a developing country power utility in Western India and hence need to be viewed from the immediate socio-cultural milieu. It is highly likely that frontline adaptability has social & cultural constructions. They may vary across social schemas and cultures. Future research should explore these issues.

Now as regards to the quantitative study to our best knowledge, this is the first study to provide a comprehensive, psychometrically sound, and operationally valid measure of a frontline employee’s adaptability envisaged in this research. Although this study has provided relevant and interesting insights into the understanding of FLE Adaptability, it is important to recognize its limitations. First, data in this study were obtained from firms in Western India. Although it can be said that the two samples represent a cross-section of a large number of businesses, it would be useful to obtain a broader and wider sampling frame from other countries. Since respondents’ perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour are influenced by their cultures, it would be useful to test whether the existing FLE Adaptability scale can be generalized to situations in other countries. The replication of this study on a wider scale with different national cultures is essential for the further generalization of the findings.

Another limitation relates to the cross-sectional nature of the survey data collected for this study. Specifically, survey responses allow for correlational rather than causal inferences to be made. Thus, the directional flow of the path model tested in Chapter six is based on theoretical support However, the theoretical grounding is solid and no overt reasons exist for speculating that the causal direction should be reversed.
7.11.2 Future Research

In addition to the antecedent side of the model, other customer outcome constructs might be explored. Future research might explore this construct along with other consumer outcomes. A dyadic study may be very show some interesting relationships may exist between adaptive behaviors and customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth behavior, customer perceptions of relationship strength, and sales volume etc. Further, along the lines of the consumer, it would be interesting to examine customers' preferences for adaptive behavior. That is, is it possible to identify specific situations, customer characteristics, or service contexts that impact the desirability of adaptive encounters?

Adaptability was a measured as a self reported measure. Though this study accounted for common method bias and social desirable responding, future studies may measure adaptability from multiple sources. The present scale is used as first order CFA, future research could model the same as a second order CFA. In doing so one may compare four models between first and second order factors. Reflective – reflective, formative- formative, formative – reflective and reflective formative models to find the best model. Another aspect to study would be to explore the longitudinal data to explore impact of over antecedents and consequences over a period of time. This will be interesting to explain the nature and formation of adaptability behaviors.

Future research might also examine frontline employee adaptability in an experimental setting. Specifically, employee adaptive behavior would function as the dependent variable. The antecedents could be individual level and organizational level. The result would be a multi-level experimental design. It is also important to test the conceptual framework developed in this study in other service and cultural context.
Such studies will compare and contrast the dimensions of frontline adaptability along various dimensions.

Another important area of study would be to use virtual reality to test the adaptability of frontline employees. The virtual reality could be designed using themes uncovered in this study and one could capture the performance of prospective or current employees along these dimensions. Such studies may develop an alternative to self report measures.

7.12 Conclusion

This dissertation conceptualized and developed a seven dimensions of frontline employee adaptability based on qualitative study using grounded theory. Subsequently, FLEADAPT scale was developed in this study to measure frontline adaptability based on the seven dimensions. Further, a model of antecedents and consequences of frontline employee adaptability was developed based on literatures of services marketing, salesperson, psychology, individual difference, organizational and power sector literatures. The model, focussed on the seven dimensional conceptualization of frontline employee adaptive behaviour, identified individual antecedents theorized to influence adaptive behaviour and suggested consequences thought to be impacted by adaptive behaviour. The model was tested in a field setting in power sector in Western India using survey responses from Frontline Employees. Hypothesized relationships were tested using Structural Equation Modelling and the results are discussed. The findings contribute to our understanding of the nature of adaptive behaviour, the individual variables influencing it, organizational variables influencing it and its impact on Job satisfaction and Job performance.