

CHAPTER 13

New-Employee Organizational Socialization

Adjusting to New Roles, Colleagues, and Organizations

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The process of socialization is one that occurs throughout the life span as we enter into new phases of our lives, new relationships, and new locations. And, without a doubt, entry into a new job is no exception because it constitutes a major transition each time a person changes organizations to start a new job. In fact, census data indicate that, on average, at least in the United States, this type of new job transition occurs 11.3 times in a person's lifetime (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). It is not surprising, then, that considerable research on organizational behavior and industrial/organizational psychology has been concerned with the specific socialization process that occurs when one enters into a new job or new organization. *Organizational socialization* refers to the "process by which newcomers [to an organization] make the transition from being organizational outsiders to being insiders" (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007, p. 707). In other words, it is the process of learning the ropes within a new organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In practice, this refers to the extent to which newcomers acquire the knowledge, skills, and functional understanding of their new jobs, make connections with others in the organization, and garner insight into the culture, processes, and people in their new organization. Importantly, organizational socialization has been recognized as a joint process wherein organizations encourage newcomers to accept and adapt to aspects of the organizational culture and established way of doing things, while newcomers actively seek information in an effort to understand and facilitate their own adjustment (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998). In other words, it relates to the individual, job, group, and organizational levels of analysis. In this chapter, we review the research on organizational socialization, pointing out important trends and findings, and highlighting the many levels of socialization within organizations.

Why Does Organizational Socialization Matter?

In 1998, Bauer and colleagues pointed to four reasons why organizational socialization is important to organizations: First, they noted that the costs to organizations that fail to socialize employees effectively are great. In particular, they noted that organizations that are unsuccessful at socializing employees can expect to pay the price in the form of high turnover. Turnover occurs for a number of reasons, but for new employees, turnover is often the result of unmet expectations (Wanous, 1980) or poor perceived fit with the job or the organization (Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, & Ahlburg, 2005). Second, effective socialization can lay the groundwork for a committed and productive workforce. Indeed, effective socialization has been related to increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Third, socialization is a key factor in transmitting an organization's cultural norms and values to new employees (Cable & Parsons, 2001) and vice versa (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013). In many ways this is one of the most important aspects of socialization, in that it ensures a common understanding and set of goals among organizational members, and provides employees with important information about expected attitudes and behaviors. Finally, it is also an important vehicle for providing new employees with information regarding relevant organizational politics and power dynamics that enable them to be successful in their new work role.

In today's workplace, these points are perhaps more relevant than ever (Wanberg, 2012). The work context of the 21st century is characterized by turbulent economic times, rapid technological change, and the advent of flexible work schedules that pose many new challenges for organizations in terms of effectively integrating new employees into the organization. For instance, as communications technology continues to evolve, it is ever more commonplace for employees to work from their homes, coffee shops, or remote offices, with little or no direct contact with their colleagues and supervisor (Kossek & Michel, 2011), making the effective integration of employees more challenging. Furthermore, continued economic hardships have changed the context of work such that employees may worry about the security of their position or may enter jobs for which they are overqualified. These factors, coupled with the uncertainty associated with changing jobs or careers, have important implications for not only employee and organizational effectiveness but also employee health and well-being (Probst, 2005). Thus, understanding how organizational socialization practices can effectively build and contribute to cultural norms and values within the organization, facilitate positive adjustment for employees, and transmit expectations for behavior and performance is essential to coping with many of the challenges that face organizations and their employees today.

Socialization and Organizational Fit throughout the Life Course

Work in adult life contributes to one's security and identity and may dramatically affect the individual's physical and psychological well-being. Over the life course, workforce participation may span a period of five or more decades. During this time, individuals develop and mature, learn new job skills, build domains of task knowledge and specific work competencies, and form, modify, and dissolve powerful relational attachments.

—KANFER, CHEN, AND PRICHARD (2008, p. 2)

In the preceding quotation, Kanfer and colleagues point out the importance of work as a source of security and self-concept for individuals throughout their life span. In

other words, it is a major source of individual identity. Although, historically, the organizational literature has placed little emphasis on the effects of aging on work behavior, recent years have seen a surge in interest on the topic (e.g., Avery, McKay, & Wilson, 2007). In large part, this is due to the dramatic demographic changes in the workforce, wherein the population of workers over age 40 is burgeoning and economic factors have contributed to older individuals' postponing retirement and staying employed full-time for longer (Alley & Crimmins, 2007). Simultaneously, young adults are continuing to enter the workforce with their own set of values, skills, and needs. Thus, unlike ever before, the work context is increasingly multigenerational and diverse.

This juxtaposition has made salient the role of age and development as it relates to the work context. Accordingly, organizational research has begun to focus increasingly on the factors that impact work motivation, job attitudes, and employee well-being at various stages of the life course (cf. Chen & Kanfer, 2006; Ng & Feldman, 2010). A corresponding increase in scholarly examination of the meaning of work for individuals (Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003), prosocial impact (Grant, 2008), and the role that work plays in individuals' lives (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997) has brought important questions to the forefront about how work contributes to one's sense of self and appeals to one's changing skills, identities, and needs throughout the life span.

The application of developmental theories to organizational behavior has provided important insights into the role of work in employees' lives (Baltes & Finkelstein, 2011). For instance, socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999) posits that with changes in development throughout the life span of a worker, different values are likely to be more or less salient. As a case in point, younger adults are more likely to strive toward career goals that are in accordance with their need for building social and psychological resources. Conversely, older adults tend to value emotion regulation goals (i.e., goals aimed at maintaining positive emotional experiences), which causes them to focus their efforts on work tasks that bring opportunities for maintaining the valued social networks that are meaningful to them. Similarly, in late career, employees are likely to be less interested in financial attainment and more interested in work that is in alignment with their values and talents, and provides increased autonomy and flexibility (Baltes & Finkelstein, 2011). Other researchers (e.g., Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) have proposed that while challenge is important in one's early career, balance becomes increasingly important midcareer, when employees take on additional familial or other responsibilities outside the work domain. Finally, Mainiero and Sullivan argue that, in one's late career, authenticity (i.e., being true to oneself) becomes increasingly salient for employees. Together these frameworks provide a more nuanced understanding of the importance of the work role in terms of identity, meaning, and providing a sense of integration and competence for employees—needs that Deci and Ryan (1985) suggest are fundamental to individual well-being.

It follows, then, that to the extent that employees derive meaning and information about their own self-identity from their work role, they will look to employment options that reinforce and support those notions of the self (Schneider, 1987). Drawing on this idea, scholarly work examining the role of perceived person–environment fit has provided important information about understanding employee motivation, job attitudes, and performance (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). This line of inquiry has informed our understanding of what attracts employees to a given organization

(Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005), as well as how socialization practices can impact these perceptions and subsequent outcomes. For instance, the attraction–selection–attrition (ASA; Schneider, 1987) model suggests that people will be attracted to other individuals, groups, or organizations that are similar to themselves and reinforce their self-image. Similarly, those individuals who exhibit characteristics congruent with those of the group are more likely to be selected into and accepted by the group. In turn, meta-analytic results support the notion that to the extent that there is perceived fit between a person and his or her environment (e.g., organization, job, team), job attitudes, including commitment to the environment and a willingness to stay, are enhanced (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Although the bulk of organizational socialization research has focused on employees transitioning to new organizations (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011), a life span perspective makes salient the need to expand scholarly attention to include transitions within organizations as employees move throughout occupational roles (e.g., from supervisee to supervisor). Together these insights have relevance for the way organizations approach socialization and other formal practices, especially with regard to facilitating the congruence between employees' needs, values, and identities with organizationally relevant belief and value systems. Moreover, the study of organizational socialization provides a unique context in which to understand better how people make decisions and interpret their environment in relation to their own values, needs, and ideals. Specifically, major transitions in employment (i.e., job changes) represent a highly uncertain period that can bring these aspects of identity to the forefront for employees. Effective integration and adjustment with an organization (i.e., effective socialization) that provides reinforcement of those values can signal to employees their fit with the organization, thereby providing a source of motivation, commitment, and well-being for them.

The Socialization Process

Rather than being a single “thing,” organizational socialization is a process. Figure 13.1 illustrates that the socialization process includes both the influence of insiders and the organization on a new employee, as well as the influence exerted by the new employee on insiders and the organization. This reciprocal process, termed the *interactionist perspective* (Reichers, 1987), is an important point of view that describes both directions of influence. In the following sections we review prevalent theoretical frameworks used to describe and understand the socialization process, as well as relevant empirical literature investigating these assumed relationships.

Organizational Learning and the Reduction of Uncertainty

Klein and Heuser (2008) emphasized learning across organizational levels (i.e., organization, work group, job) as a key component of effective organizational socialization. Accordingly, research aimed at understanding organizational socialization has primarily taken two perspectives with regard to learning: (1) focusing on the factors that facilitate learning (e.g., organizational tactics) during socialization, and (2) assessing what is actually learned by newcomers. As an example of the latter, a scale developed by Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, and Gardner (1994) assesses the extent to which newcomers

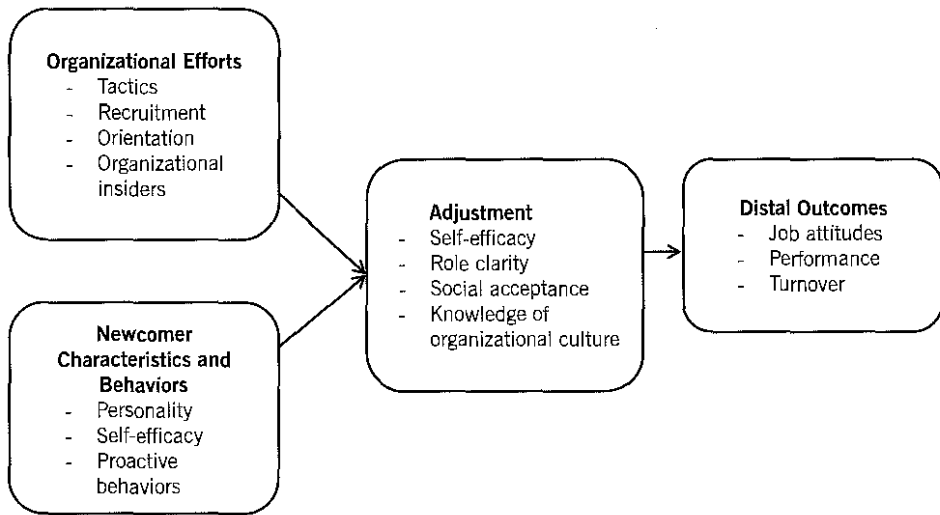


FIGURE 13.1. Antecedents and outcomes of organizational socialization.

have achieved a working knowledge of the organizational history, language, people, and so forth, at different points within the first year of employment. In contrast to cultural knowledge, other scholars have emphasized the role of learning as it pertains to effective reduction of ambiguities related to work tasks, as well as social and behavioral expectations associated with one's new role in an organization.

In the latter case, uncertainty reduction theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) has provided a useful framework for understanding what constitutes effective organizational socialization. Originally developed to explain the psychological processes relevant to strangers meeting for the first time, uncertainty reduction theory has been applied to the introduction of new employees to their employing organization. The theory posits that individuals progress through three phases in the process of figuring out where they stand in a new relationship. Phase 1 is the *entry phase*, in which individuals seek readily available or observable information about the other. This phase is followed by Phase 2, the *personal phase*, in which individuals seek information not readily available (e.g., values, beliefs, or attitudes of the other). Finally, in Phase 3, the *exit phase*, individuals negotiate plans for future interactions (i.e., whether or not the relationship will continue).

In the context of a new employment contract, newcomers may garner readily available information during the recruitment and selection processes (Phase 1); however it is during the socialization process (i.e., Phase 2), once newcomers have come on board, that they are able to realize important aspects of the organizational culture that are not readily available (e.g., social norms, justice climate). In addition, this secondary phase is essential to reduce the inherent stress associated with entering a new job for employees. Particularly, by increasing clarity and perceived competence around work tasks and social relationships, effective socialization can drastically alter the extent to which employees feel able and willing to stay in their new role. Based on the information gathered in this phase, newcomers transfer to the exit phase (i.e., Phase 3) in which they come to a conclusion regarding their willingness to remain with an organization.

Building on this framework, successful adjustment of newcomers can be understood as the extent to which employees perceive clarity in their role (i.e., the extent to which newcomers understand job tasks and task priorities), self-efficacy (i.e., newcomers' beliefs that they are capable and can be effective in their role), and acceptance by insiders (i.e., feeling accepted, liked, and trusted by peers), all of which assess the extent to which the organizational socialization process has enabled newcomers to successfully "learn the ropes" of the new organization. In turn, effective adjustment is related to a host of more distal outcomes relevant for organizations and employees. The following section reviews the literature with regard to important organizational and individual predictors of effective socialization, along with key outcomes both proximal and distal to the socialization process.

Antecedents of Adjustment

Organizational Efforts

Organizational efforts as they relate to the process of organizational socialization refer to those formal or informal efforts by the organization and its members to influence the experience of new employees. These efforts can range from a one-time new-employee orientation to complex and integrated socialization systems that include traditional human resources procedures (i.e., recruitment and selection processes) with formalized training and mentoring programs. The following sections review some of the ways in which organizations exert influence on the experience and adjustment of newcomers.

TACTICS

One of the most frequently discussed and studied aspects of new-employee socialization is that of organizational socialization tactics. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) introduced the concept of *organizational socialization tactics*, which they defined as occurring on six dimensions: (1) collective versus individual socialization (i.e., the extent to which newcomers go through the socialization process as a group with common experiences, or as individuals with unique experiences); (2) formal or informal socialization (i.e., the extent to which newcomers are segregated from current employees while they undergo the socialization process, or are working directly with current employees acquiring information on the job); (3) sequential or random training steps (i.e., the extent to which the process, or sequence, in which new material and tasks are presented to new employees is previously determined and known to new employees); (4) fixed or variable sequencing of training (i.e., the extent to which knowledge of timetables is known to new employees); (5) serial or disjunctive tactics (i.e., the extent to which experienced employees serve as role models to newcomers); and (6) investiture or divestiture (i.e., the extent to which newcomers receive positive or negative support from current organizational members). Subsequent research by Jones (1986) and others has organized these tactics along a continuum of institutionalized (i.e., the combination of collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics) and individualized tactics (i.e., individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, divestiture). Interestingly, newcomers tend to prefer institutionalized tactics—perhaps due to the structure they provide, which helps to decrease uncertainty in the short run (Ashforth & Saks, 1996).

RECRUITMENT

The recruitment process is important in and of itself because it is a primary determinant of whether or not an applicant takes a job (Ployhart, 2006). For example, Walker and colleagues (2013) found that job seekers were influenced by the interactions they had with organizations that served to maintain their interest throughout recruitment. However, the recruitment process is especially important in that it is truly the start of the newcomers' relationship with the organization. What happens during recruitment sets up newcomers' expectations in terms of what organizational life will be like upon entry (Fisher, 1986; Wanous, 1980). To the degree that these expectations are met, socialization should be more effective. For example, Bauer and Green (1994) found that accurate preview information was related to lower role conflict and higher feelings of acceptance by new research scientists working toward their PhDs in the hard sciences. Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) found similar results in a study of newcomers from seven different organizations, in which newcomers' preentry knowledge about the organization was related to task mastery, role clarity, integration with the work group, political knowledge, and lower work withdrawal at a follow-up time point. These findings are consistent with the work on realistic job previews (e.g., Breaugh, 1983), which refers to providing applicants with accurate information about what the job will actually be like (expected work tasks, the social environment, company culture, etc.) during the recruitment phase. Thus, it is clear that what happens during recruitment and the information received by newcomers, along with the accuracy of their expectations, constitute important aspects of the relationship they form with their new organization. This is especially true once the newcomers start work with the organization, and as the comparison between old expectations or beliefs and new experiences becomes more and more salient.

ORIENTATIONS

When a new employee starts a job, one of the first formal activities is the new-employee orientation (NEO). In the past, the NEO was considered the main vehicle for helping newcomers adjust. Only in the recent past have organizations come to think of socialization and *onboarding* (i.e., bringing new employees on board and up to speed in their new work roles) as a long-term process comprising many interrelated and coordinated parts. Nevertheless, NEO remains an important aspect of the socialization process because research indicates that those who attend them tend to be more successfully socialized than those who do not (Klein & Weaver, 2000). Orientations that focus more attention on helping the new employee feel comfortable and welcome, and that provide the basics, such as where to get additional information, are rated as more effective than those that focus on filling out forms and doing basic paperwork (Shepherd, 2013). In addition, according to recent research, orientations that focus on the new employee and what he or she brings to the organization are more effective than more traditional orientations that focus primarily on positive features of the organization itself (Cable et al., 2013). Part of the effectiveness of NEO is that it helps individuals connect to one another. Work on the difference between remote and in-person NEO attendance shows that those attending remotely were reported to be less well socialized (Wesson & Gogus, 2005). Overall, the NEO is an important part of socialization because it occurs so early in the relationship

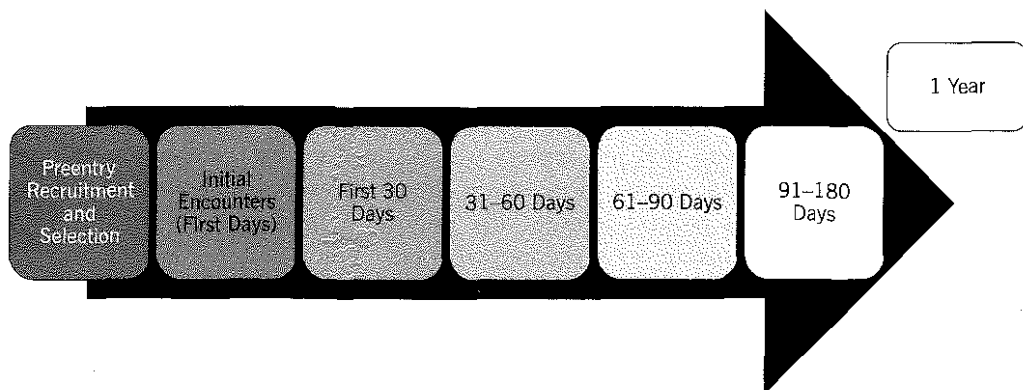


FIGURE 13.2. The socialization process unfolds over a newcomer's first year. Darker gray boxes indicate the more intense socialization time periods, such that pre-entry and the first 30 days tend to be more intense transitions than the period between 180 days and 1-year postentry.

with the organization. However, socialization factors continue to make a difference over the first 90 days and beyond (see Figure 13.2).

ORGANIZATIONAL INSIDERS

A key aspect of newcomer organizational socialization success or failure revolves around organizational insiders (i.e., current organizational members) because socialization does not take place in a vacuum (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Research on relationships with coworkers (Nelson & Quick, 1991; Settoon & Adkins, 1997), leaders (Bauer & Green, 1998; Filstad, 2004; Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995; Payne, Culbertson, Boswell, & Barger, 2008; Sluss & Thompson, 2012), and mentors (Green & Bauer, 1995) has shown that they are important aspects of adjustment and socialization outcomes. For example, Nelson and Quick (1991) found that interactions with supervisors and colleagues were the most helpful aspect of socialization, as well as the most readily available socialization support received, relative to eight other potential sources of support, including formal orientations and training sessions, assigned mentors and other newcomers, and support staff. Korte (2010) conducted a qualitative study highlighting the importance of building relationships with coworkers for successful socialization; results showed that learning about coworkers, earning their respect, and socializing with them helped facilitate better adjustment for new employees. Relatedly, Bauer and Green (1996) found that for new college graduates entering a variety of industries, forming high-quality relationships with their direct leaders was critical to their success. They also found that for newcomers, actively engaging with those tasks delegated to them by their leaders was an important way to build their relationship with them (Bauer & Green, 1996). Similarly, Chen (2005) and Chen and Klimoski (2003) showed the importance of newcomers' communication, understanding, and integration into their team early in their tenure, for facilitating newcomer performance. While there are many positive ways insiders may help newcomers adjust to their new role, job, workgroup, and organization, there are also ways that insiders may derail the success of newcomers. For example, Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Rubstein, and Song (2013) found that newcomers who

were undermined by supervisors as part of their new-employee experience had higher turnover risks. They also found that insider support for newcomers declined after 90 days, which gives further credence to the idea that the first 90 days are critical in a newcomer's adjustment process (Bauer et al., 1998).

SUMMARY

Together the preceding research indicates that organizational efforts are an important category of antecedents to effective organizational socialization. These efforts refer to a variety of methods, including organizational tactics that range from highly institutionalized tactics, characterized by formal and systematic socialization processes, to individualized tactics that rely primarily on one-on-one, on-the-job training and informal means of adjustment. Other efforts include recruitment processes that occur early in the socialization process, before an employee has formally entered the organization, and NEO programs that directly provide newcomers with information about the job and organization, and initial opportunities for networking with other newcomers. Finally, organizational efforts include formal (e.g., mentors) or informal (e.g., work-group members) interactions with current organizational members that can facilitate effective adjustment of new employees by providing information about the job, role, or larger organizational culture.

Newcomer Characteristics and Behaviors

Although organizational efforts are important for effective socialization, newcomers themselves are active participants in the socialization process and play an essential role in their own adjustment to new organizations. According to the interactionist perspective (Reichers, 1987), characteristics and actions taken by newcomers interact with and reciprocally influence the organization and its members. Research examining the role of the newcomer has tended to focus on either key personality factors that relate to increased adjustment behaviors or on uncovering the behaviors themselves in which newcomers engage. The following sections describe specific characteristics of newcomers that have been identified in the research literature as important to adjustment. In addition, newcomer proactive behaviors are discussed in terms of their contribution to successful organizational socialization.

NEWCOMER PERSONALITY

Bauer and Erdogan (2011) noted that, across studies, a proactive personality consistently plays an important role in the experience of newcomers. *Proactive personality*, as discussed by Crant (2000), refers to a stable tendency to take action on one's environment for the purpose of bringing about change and is associated with a high desire for control. Those with proactive personalities are more likely to seek out and identify opportunities for constructive change that make them more successful in their careers in general (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). With regard to the socialization process, newcomers with higher proactive personality are more motivated to learn (Major, Turner, & Fletcher, 2006), and more likely to take initiative and seek out information and opportunities to learn relevant skills, develop relationships with their peers, and engage in other self-initiated behaviors that facilitate their own integration into the new organizational system. For example, in a

sample of 589 employees in the manufacturing, food distribution, health care, and education industries, Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) found that newcomer proactive personality was positively related to increased task mastery, group integration, and political knowledge regarding the organization, which in turn was related to decreased work withdrawal and increased organizational commitment.

Aspects of the five-factor model of personality have also been investigated with respect to newcomer adjustment. Findings indicate that those higher in Extraversion (i.e., social, gregarious, assertive) and Openness to Experience (i.e., curious, intelligent, adventurous) exhibit higher levels of adjustment, in part due to their willingness to engage in important proactive socialization behaviors such as information seeking and building relationships with others (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Investigating this relationship further, Gruman and Saks (2011) found that in a sample of 243 undergraduates, personality factors were related to preference for different socialization tactics, as well as intentions to engage in proactive behavior. More specifically, results showed that those who scored high on Agreeableness preferred more institutionalized socialization tactics and reported increased intentions to engage in relationship building. Those high on Extraversion and proactive personality reported a greater intention to be proactive on the job, specifically, in the form of general socializing and networking behavior with respect to the former, and seeking feedback, building a relationship with their boss, networking, and negotiating job changes with respect to the latter.

Recently, Harrison, Sluss, and Ashforth (2011) found that trait curiosity was related to newcomer socialization and adjustment. They studied both specific (i.e., narrow and direct forms of exploration) and diversive curiosity (i.e., broad and indirect forms of exploration). Specific curiosity was related to information-seeking behaviors, whereas diversive curiosity was related to positive framing (i.e., cognitively reframing events as opportunities and challenges). These results indicate that individual curiosity matters, and that the relationships between curiosity and adjustment indicators are not universal. In other words, how adjustment is affected depends on which facet of curiosity is studied.

NEWCOMER SELF-EFFICACY

Other research has identified additional newcomer characteristics important for effective socialization and adjustment. For example, Gruman, Saks, and Zweig (2006) conducted a longitudinal study examining the role of newcomer *self-efficacy* (defined in the referenced study as the extent to which newcomers felt confident in the tasks, role, work group, and organizational domains of the job), proactive behaviors, and socialization outcomes in a sample of 140 students enrolled in a cooperative management program, in which students alternated between school terms and work terms. Findings revealed that together with socialization tactics, newcomer self-efficacy positively predicted newcomer proactive behaviors, including feedback seeking, information seeking, and general socializing, among others. In turn, these behaviors were positively related to more distal socialization outcomes such as perceptions of fit with the job and organization, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

OTHER NEWCOMER CHARACTERISTICS

Finally, a recent study has suggested a link between employees' attachment style and their propensity to engage in proactive behaviors at work (Wu & Parker, 2012). Among a

sample of Taiwanese students, Wu and Parker showed that relationship anxiety in adulthood moderated the intraindividual relation between *core self-evaluations* (CSEs; i.e., a global judgment about an individual's own worth, ability, and effectiveness across situations) and *future orientation* (i.e., consideration of future events and a propensity to take action relative to those events), and the outcome, proactive behavior, which was assessed monthly. Results showed that for those with low relationship anxiety, the magnitude of the positive relation between CSEs and proactive behavior was enhanced, whereas for those high in relationship anxiety, this relation was weaker. Conversely, students with low relationship anxiety showed a weaker positive relation between future orientation and proactive behavior than those with high relationship anxiety. These authors concluded that for those with high relationship anxiety "behaving proactively might be a good way to approach future goals, but the fragility of their self-concepts does not help them sustain proactive actions" (p. 528). Furthermore, they argued that positive social environments that protect against threats of loss may be functional in promoting proactive behaviors among these employees. These findings are interesting because, whereas the study does not assess proactivity among new employees, one might expect that fears associated with relationships and social interactions might be even more salient for new employees who have yet to establish high-quality relationships in the workplace. Although these findings occur only in a single study, they point to the importance of understanding employee behavior within the larger social context of work, as well as appreciation for human development and experience across the life span.

Newcomer Proactive Behaviors

As indicated earlier, new employee characteristics facilitate adjustment largely through their impact on employee proactive behaviors during organizational socialization (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Building on this notion, Ashford and Black (1996) developed a taxonomy of newcomer proactive behaviors identifying the following as relevant to newcomer adjustment: information seeking, feedback seeking, general socializing, networking, building relationships with one's boss, negotiating job changes, and positive framing. In a test of their model, the authors found that building a relationship with one's boss and positive framing predicted positive job performance. Information seeking, general socializing, and negotiating job changes were related to job satisfaction. In addition, some newcomer proactive behaviors were associated with increased desire for control, indicating that newcomers may use these tactics as a way to exert control over their new environment. The majority of empirical literature investigating proactive behaviors among newcomers has focused on information seeking and feedback seeking (Bauer et al., 2007) because these behaviors are viewed as crucial to the learning and adjustment process necessary for effective socialization.

INFORMATION SEEKING

Unlike those who may passively wait to be engaged in the socialization process, newcomers who actively seek out information about their work role and environment are more likely to garner a better understanding about expected behaviors and interdependencies among work roles; they are more likely to have more interaction with their coworkers and/or supervisor, thereby providing opportunities for additional resources in the form of both information and support from colleagues. Accordingly, Bauer and colleagues

(2007) conducted a meta-analysis in which they tested a model of newcomer adjustment during organizational socialization. They found that newcomers who proactively sought out information about their work role and organization exhibited more positive organizational adjustment in the form of increased role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance. In addition, information seeking was found to positively relate to more distal outcomes of the socialization process, including job performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to remain with the organization.

FEEDBACK SEEKING

Feedback seeking is another way in which newcomers garner information about their new environment. While information seeking can include both active and passive modes of gathering information, feedback seeking represents a truly active attempt to understand how others in the work environment view a newcomer's behavior. In turn, feedback provided by one's supervisor and coworkers is thought to reduce uncertainty associated with the new role, thereby decreasing stress. Accordingly, in a three-wave longitudinal study, Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) found that newcomers who solicited feedback from their supervisors and coworkers were more likely to report higher job satisfaction and less likely to leave their job several months later. They also reported positive relations between making an effort to build relationships at work and feelings of social integration, role clarity, and job satisfaction, and negative relations with intentions to leave their job.

JOB CRAFTING AND IDIOSYNCRATIC DEALS

Other proactive behaviors identified in the organizational literature that are likely to be relevant to the process of organizational socialization include job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and the development of idiosyncratic deals (Rousseau, 2001). *Job crafting* refers to the process of modifying one's work tasks, cognitions, or relationships for the purpose of developing increased meaning and significance in work. Original conceptualizations of job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) were developed to understand better how individuals cope with marginalized work tasks (e.g., a nurse bathing an older adult patient). However, subsequent research has indicated that employees in a range of occupational positions and industries engage in job-crafting behaviors (e.g., Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012). Researchers theorized that how individuals think about and apply meaning to their work impacts their commitment and willingness to engage in the work. Together these concepts recognize the role of newcomers and their own beliefs and cognitions with regard to facilitating not only adjustment to their new role but also the ongoing desire to stay with the organization or within a given role.

Similarly, the development of idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) refers to the process of employees negotiating terms of employment and benefits on behalf of themselves (Rousseau, 2001). Investigations surrounding the development of i-deals have ranged from examining how exceptional employees negotiate flexibility in scheduling to opportunities for professional development, to changes in job tasks and design (Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigl, 2010). From an organizational socialization standpoint, employees who successfully negotiate changes to their employment contracts are more likely to experience increased perceptions of fit with the job, satisfaction, and ultimately

are more likely to stay with the organization, although there remains a significant need for additional empirical work to substantiate these statements.

SUMMARY

A second category of antecedents that are important to effective organizational socialization includes the personality and unique individual differences that newcomers bring to their new work environment, and the self-initiated behaviors in which they engage to facilitate their own adjustment. Research suggests that characteristics such as extraversion and proactive personality are important individual differences that predict which employees are more likely to take initiative and engage in proactive behaviors that assist in the process of adjustment. The primary focus of socialization researchers has been on acts such as information seeking and feedback seeking, in terms of their relations with socialization outcomes; however, new research indicates that other behaviors, such as job crafting and negotiation of i-deals, are important avenues for future investigation.

Outcomes of Adjustment

Proximal/Adjustment Indicators

Adjustment indicators refer to proximal outcomes of the socialization process that signify effective organizational socialization and adjustment to the new work role. These factors are often measured early on in the socialization process (Bauer et al., 1998) and represent the extent to which newcomers feel sure of what is expected of them, confident in their own ability to meet those expectations, and that they have the needed support and social resources to flourish in their new role. For example, Bauer and colleagues (2007) reviewed the socialization literature and found support for their model identifying role clarity, self-efficacy, and acceptance by organizational insiders as important indicators of adjustment for newcomers. Other research includes knowledge of organizational culture as a fourth indicator of adjustment (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). The following reviews each of these adjustment indicators in more detail.

ROLE CLARITY

Role clarity refers to the extent to which one understands his or her role (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Research on work stress has pointed to the detrimental impact that *role stress* (i.e., role ambiguity and role conflict) has on employee performance and well-being (Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008). This finding carries through to less traditional modes of performance as well; role stressors are negatively related to organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g., helping coworkers; Eatough, Chang, Miloslavic, & Johnson, 2011). Furthermore, the stress related to confusion regarding one's role can spill over into the non-work domain and contribute to increased levels of work-family conflict (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). While these findings refer to employees in general, role ambiguity may be particularly problematic for newcomers. For example, empirical findings show that role clarity early on in an employee's tenure is related to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Adkins, 1995; Bauer & Green, 1994). Moreover, role clarity has been shown to be a significant predictor of newcomer behaviors, including higher levels of newcomer performance and reduced turnover (Bauer et al., 2007).

SELF-EFFICACY

As indicated earlier in the chapter, research has identified self-efficacy as an important newcomer characteristic for predicting socialization at work. Other scholars (e.g., Bauer et al., 2007) have conceptualized self-efficacy as an indicator, in and of itself, of effective adjustment. From this latter perspective, self-efficacy can be understood as a proximal outcome of effective socialization practices, and a predictor of more distal attitudes and behaviors. For example, research has indicated the importance of self-efficacy in predicting the extent to which newcomers actively engage in the socialization process, as well as subsequent attitudes and behavior on the job, such as perceptions of fit with the job and organization, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Gruman et al., 2006). In addition to providing newcomers the confidence to engage in proactive socialization behaviors, self-efficacy has implications for motivation to learn during training (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000) and has been found to partially mediate the relations between new employee training and job satisfaction, organization commitment, and intentions to quit. Moreover, from a stress perspective, belief in one's capability can be conceptualized as a psychological resource that moderates the negative impact of stress and may facilitate increased engagement in the work role (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001).

SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

Social acceptance by organizational insiders is a third factor that has been found to be a relevant indicator of effective adjustment during the socialization process (Bauer et al., 2007). *Social acceptance* refers to the extent to which one feels a part of, and integrated into, the social fabric of the environment. Scholarly work by Deci and Ryan (1985) has noted that a sense of relatedness and belonging to the social environment is a fundamental human need that, when satisfied, contributes to increased intrinsic motivation and self-determination. Other research indicates the roles of social support and a sense of belonging in the workplace as important resources that can be leveraged in times of stress (Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). For newcomers, a feeling of being accepted by other organizational insiders may serve as a source of instrumental support to the extent that newcomers are able to access important information that facilitates their own performance and functioning within the group. Moreover, feeling like an accepted member of a group is likely to lead to increased attraction to the group, enhancing perceptions of fit and intentions to stay (Schneider, 1987). Empirical work supporting this assertion indicates that social acceptance is positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to remain with the organization, as well as increased performance (Bauer et al., 2007).

KNOWLEDGE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Finally, knowledge of organizational culture, including an understanding of how an organization functions, is an important part of transitioning from an organizational outsider to an insider. The research in this area considers newcomers who better understand the social and functional systems relevant to an organization to be better adjusted and better prepared to be successful in their work role. A popular socialization scale

by Chao and colleagues (1994) measures six dimensions relevant to the socialization process: performance proficiency, politics, language, people, organizational goals and values, and history. *Performance proficiency* refers to an understanding of the work role and performance-relevant expectations. *Politics* refers to an understanding of the social culture of the work environment, including power structures within the organization. Comprehension of appropriate jargon, slang and other language specific to the organization are key to the *language* dimension. Similar to social acceptance discussed earlier, the *people* dimension refers to the extent to which the newcomer has been able to form meaningful relationships within the work environment. *Organizational goals and values* measures the extent to which the newcomer has been able to garner an understanding of the organization's overarching aims and missions. Finally, *history* refers to understanding of the organization's past traditions, customs, and other culturally relevant experiences and history. Together these dimensions are indicative of effective socialization practices, in that they assess the extent to which newcomers are able to understand, internalize, and participate in the organizational culture.

SUMMARY

Adjustment indicators represent proximal outcomes of the socialization process and include role clarity, self-efficacy, social acceptance, and knowledge of organizational culture. Thus, successful organizational socialization occurs when organizational efforts and individual behaviors effectively address and aid in the development of these indicators.

Distal Outcomes

Distal outcomes are long-term attitudinal and behavioral changes that result from the joint efforts of organizations and newcomers throughout the socialization process. Ultimately, the goal of organizational socialization is to integrate newcomers effectively into the organization, such that they feel competent in their skills, supported by the organization and its members, and committed to high performance and longevity with the organization. Thus, examining distal outcomes of the socialization process provides insight into the effectiveness of various modes of socialization across contexts and time. The primary focus of research in the organizational socialization literature on distal outcomes has been on examining attitudinal outcomes, followed by newcomer behaviors relevant to organizational and individual effectiveness. The following briefly reviews both.

JOB ATTITUDES

Employee job attitudes are important to organizations in terms of their relations with individual performance-related behaviors, as well as important outcomes in and of themselves. Within organizational behavior and industrial/organizational psychology, the most commonly studied job attitudes are job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to leave the organization (i.e., turnover intentions; Schleicher, Hansen, & Fox, 2011), and this trend is reflected in the organizational socialization literature as well (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012). With regard to newcomers, job attitudes are important in that they provide insight into future employee performance and how likely it is that

an employee will stay with the organization. For example, job satisfaction has been positively related to both in-role performance (i.e., performance of assigned job tasks) and extrarole performance (i.e., behaviors that are not formally recognized by the reward systems but support the social and psychological work context; Riketta, 2008). Similarly, organizational commitment is an important predictor of turnover intentions, actual turnover, and job performance (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002).

Research has supported the impact of aspects of the organizational socialization process on job attitudes. For example, Saks, Uggerslev, and Fassina (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of the literature examining organizational socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment; their results indicated that formalized organizational tactics, especially those related to facilitating social and interpersonal adjustment for employees, were significant positive predictors of job attitudes, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and negative predictors of intentions to quit. Moreover, their results support partial mediation in which organizational tactics relate to these distal socialization outcomes through more proximal adjustment indicators (i.e., lower role conflict and role ambiguity) and perceptions of fit with the job and/or organization. Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) examined the role of newcomer proactivity with regard to adjustment outcomes. Their results indicated that new employees who engaged in greater feedback seeking were more satisfied with their jobs. Similarly, those who actively attempted to build relationships with others in their workplace reported higher job satisfaction and lower intentions to turnover. Results of Bauer and colleagues' (2007) meta-analysis provide further support for the relations between both organizational and newcomer socialization tactics and job attitudes. Results showed that both organizational socialization tactics and information seeking are positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to remain with the organization.

EMPLOYEE BEHAVIORS

Also relevant to the socialization process are actual employee behaviors, including job performance and turnover. Results from numerous studies point to the importance of organizational socialization in facilitating increased employee effectiveness on the job and decreased turnover (Bauer et al., 1998). For example, Bauer and colleagues (2007) found support for the relation between newcomer information seeking and job performance. Saks and colleagues (2007) demonstrated significant relations between organizational tactics, namely, those that are categorized as investiture, institutionalized, content, and social (i.e., formalized institutionalized tactics), and newcomer performance. Additionally, feedback seeking, one type of proactive behavior in which newcomers may engage, has been significantly and negatively related to actual turnover behavior (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Significant and positive relations with job performance, and significant negative relations with actual turnover and previously discussed adjustment indicators have been reported in a meta-analysis by Bauer and colleagues. More recent research suggests that organizational socialization processes that appeal to newcomers' sense of identity and unique value may be an important factor in explaining how and under what conditions formal processes facilitate effective adjustment and impact distal outcomes (Cable et al., 2013).

Bauer and Erdogan (2012) discuss other potential outcomes of the socialization process that have been examined less often, or not at all, in the organizational literature

but may have important relations to the organizational socialization process. These possible outcomes include perceptions of job or organizational fit, employee stress and well-being, ethical work behavior, organizational change, work-life conflict, life satisfaction, perceived overqualification, changes in organizational relationships, and leader stress and well-being. Thus, there is substantial room to expand our current understanding of the role of the organizational socialization process and additional organizational- and employee-relevant outcomes.

SUMMARY

Distal outcomes of the socialization process include both employee job attitudes and performance on the job. Job attitudes include organizational commitment and job satisfaction, as well as intentions to stay with or leave the organization, all of which have implications for employee behavior. Behaviors including task performance and helping behaviors at work are commonly assessed and conceptualized as outcomes of effective organizational socialization practices. Other behaviors, such as whether or not employees actually leaves the organization, are considered important outcomes of effective socialization practices.

Future Research Directions

Many opportunities for future research in the area of organizational socialization exist. Research within the field of organizational socialization is rapidly evolving, and researchers continue to face important questions, such as how organizational values and cultural norms are transmitted through electronic means in our changing technological environment. While there has been some preliminary work regarding the role of technology and socialization (e.g., Wesson & Gogus, 2005), we know little about this topic. The degree to which technology helps or hinders the adjustment process for newcomers is a key question that remains to be answered.

Another key question is how an organization ensures high commitment and productivity when employees work from home or remote locations. As telecommuting becomes more and more prevalent, it is important to understand how socialization takes place in remote contexts. It may be that the process simply takes longer, but it may also be the case that the organizational socialization process fundamentally differs depending on the work setting. Similarly, it will be important for future research to understand better the other side of the coin, which is how telecommuting may impact the development of identity and sense of belonging experienced by newcomers. Without further research into this evolving work context, we cannot know which is more likely the case for the millions of remote workers.

Furthermore, how can organizations ensure that they are inclusive, so that older and minority workers feel integrated into the social context of work to the same extent as other employees? It seems that in an aging workforce, factors influencing newcomer adjustment for older and younger workers may vary. Identifying which organizational efforts or newcomer initiatives may result in more successful socialization of newcomers at different stages of their careers and lives is a key research direction. In addition, it is important to examine whether the theories of socialization currently in use continue to

explain the socialization process of these particular newcomers. Similarly, as the composition of the workforce changes to include more cultural and demographic diversity, exploring the predictive validity of current models of socialization will be important.

So little work has been done on stress as an important aspect of socialization as both a process and as an outcome that a key remaining question is how socialization practices can reduce the stress and uncertainty associated with entering a new job. These challenges are increasingly relevant for organizations in today's workplace and in many ways can be addressed by effective organizational socialization. In addition to stress, *well-being* (e.g., overall sense of competence, fit, and certainty that may impact functioning in both work and nonwork domains) of the newcomer is likely to be affected by newcomer socialization process. During the early days of the socialization process, newcomers experience a significant amount of uncertainty and lack of confidence, which likely results in stress and reduces newcomer well-being. Stress may also have crossover effects impacting the newcomer's family members and close others. In other words, the effects of newcomer socialization may go beyond influencing work behavior of the newcomer to affect newcomer and family member well-being. Such effects, if identified, would increase the critical importance of effective management of newcomer socialization from the perspective of newcomers, organizations, and society at large.

Finally, we note the relative lack of attention to the way that organizational socialization is embedded into the larger constellation of socialization throughout the life span. We encourage research that identifies ways in which types of adjustment relate to, and the degree to which they help or hinder, one another. For example, is it possible for newcomers to adjust fully within an organization if they are not fully adjusted in other aspects of their lives? Taking a longer term perspective would also be useful because little research has addressed how organizational socialization in one organization affects adjustment in another organization. Given that this transition occurs so frequently, on average, for individuals, the more we learn about the effect of past transitions on future ones, the more we will be able to help both individuals and organizations identify best practices and contingency and boundary conditions to help aid in organizational socialization success.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have reviewed the organizational literature on newcomer socialization. The process of socialization is a function of organizational efforts such as adopting different approaches toward socializing newcomers, orientation programs, and recruitment techniques employed by the organization, as well as newcomers' effects on this process through their personality traits and proactive behaviors. Indicators of newcomer adjustment and proximal outcomes of the socialization process include role clarity, self-efficacy, social acceptance, and knowledge of the organizational culture. In turn, this adjustment to the new job has implications for job attitudes, performance, and turnover of the newcomer. Taken together, the organizational socialization literature suggests that the early days a newcomer spends at work in the process of learning about their new job and organization matter and constitute an important socialization experience.

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