



Organizational socialization tactics and newcomer proactive behaviors: An integrative study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational socialization tactics, newcomers' self-efficacy, proactive behaviors, and socialization outcomes. Based on a sample of 140 co-op university students who completed surveys at the end of their work term, the results indicated that newcomers' self-efficacy and institutionalized socialization tactics were positively related to newcomer proactive behaviors. The results also indicated that newcomer proactive behaviors partially mediated the relationship between their self-efficacy and organizational socialization tactics with a number of proximal and distal socialization outcomes. Furthermore, feedback-seeking and information-seeking moderated the relationship between socialization tactics and several socialization outcomes. Institutionalized socialization tactics were more strongly related to socialization outcomes for newcomers who engaged in less feedback-seeking and information-seeking behavior. These results support an interactionist approach to organizational socialization in which newcomers' self-efficacy, proactive behavior, and organizational socialization tactics all contribute to newcomers' adjustment and socialization.

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1. Introduction

When individuals join organizations, they must learn to understand and make sense of their new surroundings (Louis, 1980). The method by which this sense-making occurs is known as organizational socialization. Organizational socialization is the process by which individuals acquire the attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and skills required to participate and function effectively as a member of an organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The manner in which organizations socialize their newcomers is important because it affects the success of socialization and newcomers' adjustment (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a).

One approach to studying organizational socialization involves examining the tactics employed by organizations to structure newcomers' socialization experience (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This approach regards individuals as passive, reactive agents and in isolation may not fully capture the dynamics of the socialization process. More recently, an alternative approach to understanding socialization has emerged in which individuals are viewed as active agents in the socialization process (Morrison, 1993a, 1993b). This approach focuses on self-initiated or proactive behaviors on the part of newcomers in order to navigate the ambiguity inherent in occupying a new organizational role (e.g., Ashford, 1986). A third approach considers the interaction of individual and organizational factors or what is known as the interactionist perspective. The interactionist perspective seeks to integrate the individual and organizational perspectives by examining how they interact to influence socialization outcomes (Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000).

The interactionist perspective, however, has not received much empirical attention (Griffin et al., 2000). According to Bauer, Morrison, and Callister (1998), most studies have failed to adopt an interactionist perspective of organizational socialization and instead have focused on either the effects of contextual factors or newcomers' attributes or behaviors.

The purpose of this study was to integrate the individual and organizational perspectives in accordance with the interactionist perspective. In particular, we examine the effects of self-efficacy and organizational socialization tactics on newcomer proactivity as well as the mediating and moderating effects of proactivity. Our basic proposition is that the extent to which newcomers can engage in proactive tactics is a function of their self-efficacy and the socialization tactics employed by their organization.

1. Organizational socialization tactics

The most popular typology of organizational socialization is that developed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) who proposed a theoretical explanation for how specific socialization tactics produce different role orientations. Their typology consists of six bipolar tactics. The tactic of *collective* (vs. *individual*) socialization refers to whether newcomers go through common learning experiences, designed to produce uniform responses to situations, or idiosyncratic experiences that permit a variety of responses. *Formal* (vs. *informal*) socialization refers to whether newcomers are isolated from other organizational members while they learn their roles, or whether they become part of work groups immediately upon occupying their new positions and learn on-the-job. *Sequential* (vs. *random*) socialization refers to whether newcomers receive clear guidelines regarding the sequence of activities

and experiences they will encounter or an ambiguous sequence. *Fixed (vs. variable)* socialization pertains to whether newcomers receive detailed knowledge of the timetables associated with completing each stage in the socialization process, or no such information about completion of a stage of learning. *Serial (vs. disjunctive)* socialization refers to whether veteran organizational members act as role models for newcomers, or whether newcomers are required to make sense of their experiences on their own. Finally, *investiture (vs. divestiture)* involves either confirming and reinforcing newcomers' self-identities and providing social support or stripping them away through negative communication and rebuilding them in the form the organization desires.

In the first empirical study on socialization tactics, Jones (1986) classified the tactics as being either *institutionalized* (consisting of collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture) or *individualized* (consisting of individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture). While institutionalized socialization reflects a more structured and formalized socialization process, individualized socialization tends to reflect an absence of structure such that newcomers are socialized more by default than design (Ashforth, Saks, & Lee, 1997).

Although numerous studies have found that socialization tactics are related to newcomers' adjustment (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Jones, 1986; Kim, Cable, & Kim, 2005), only a few studies have examined the mechanisms that underlie the effects of socialization tactics. Mignerey, Rubin, and Gorden (1995) found that institutionalized socialization tactics were positively related to information–feedback seeking behaviors. Saks and Ashforth (1997b) and Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002) found that information acquisition mediated the relationship between socialization tactics and outcomes. In the present study, we extend this area of research by investigating the extent to which organizational socialization tactics influence newcomers' proactive behaviors.

2. Newcomer proactive behaviors

When individuals occupy new organizational positions, they may engage proactively in behaviors or tactics that foster and hasten their adjustment. Proactive behavior can be defined as changing the status quo by taking initiative in order to improve existing circumstances, or to create new ones (Crant, 2000). Proactive behaviors such as feedback-seeking and information-seeking enable newcomers to learn about their abilities, better understand the work environment and specific tasks, and adjust their behavior in order to improve their socialization and career success (Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

However, despite the growing interest in newcomers' proactive behavior, little research has examined the factors that predict newcomer's proactivity. Although there is some evidence that individual differences are important (Ashford & Black, 1996; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), few studies have examined how the organizational context might also influence newcomers' propensity to engage in proactive tactics.

In the present study, we extend the literature on newcomer proactivity in several ways. First, we consider an individual difference variable that has been found to be important for newcomers' socialization but has not been included in previous research on newcomer proactivity–self-efficacy. Second, we provide one of the first tests of the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and newcomer proactive behaviors.

2.1. Newcomer self-efficacy and proactivity

Self-efficacy refers to individuals' judgments regarding their capability to successfully perform specific tasks and behaviors (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy has been found to be negatively related to newcomer's entry anxiety and positively related to job attitudes and behaviors (Saks, 1994, 1995). Because individuals with stronger self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to organize and execute courses of action required to attain desired outcomes (Bandura, 1986), we expected newcomers with higher self-efficacy to be more likely to engage in proactive behaviors. Therefore, our first hypothesis is the following:

Hypothesis 1. Newcomers' self-efficacy is positively related to proactive behaviors.

2.2. Socialization tactics and newcomer proactivity

Griffin et al. (2000) proposed a model in which they argued that organizational socialization tactics affect the likelihood that newcomers will engage in proactive tactics. However, whether institutionalized or individualized tactics will be related to proactive behavior is not entirely clear (Griffin et al., 2000). In fact, newcomers might be more or less proactive when socialization is either institutionalized or individualized.

On the one hand, because institutionalized socialization tactics provide a formal and structured setting in which newcomers can communicate and interact with senior co-workers and receive positive social support, it should be much easier for them to engage in proactive behaviors such as information-seeking, feedback-seeking, relationship building, networking, and so on. In other words, institutionalized socialization tactics make it relatively easy if not inviting for newcomers to be proactive.

On the other hand, because individualized socialization tactics result in an ambiguous and unstructured socialization experience in which expectations and role requirements are unclear, newcomers need to be proactive in order to reduce the inherent ambiguity and uncertainty. In other words, individualized socialization almost forces newcomers to be proactive in order to acquire the necessary information that can lower their uncertainty and allow them to make sense of their surroundings. As noted by Griffin et al. (2000), proactive tactics are more necessary in an individualized socialization environment.

Thus, arguments can be advanced to explain why institutionalized and individualized tactics might each promote proactive behavior. Therefore, we propose and test the following competing hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a. Institutionalized socialization tactics will be related to newcomer proactive behaviors.

Hypothesis 2b. Individualized socialization tactics will be related to newcomer proactive behaviors.

3. Socialization outcomes

Previous studies have found that self-efficacy, socialization tactics, and newcomer proactive tactics are independently related to socialization outcomes (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Saks, 1995). For example, newcomers with higher self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to execute courses of action that lead to desired out-

comes. They are more likely to exert the effort required to overcome obstacles and to cope with entry anxiety and uncertainty (Saks, 1994, 1995). As a result, they are more likely to be successful in their socialization and adjustment. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3. Newcomers' self-efficacy is positively related to (a) task mastery, (b) role clarity, (c) social integration, (d) person–job fit, (e) person–organization fit, (f) job satisfaction, (g) organizational commitment, and (h) intent to return.

Institutionalized socialization tactics as well as proactive behaviors are also expected to result in positive socialization outcomes because they provide newcomers with information to guide their behavior and reduce entry uncertainty, and also lead to the formation of relationships and social networks. Therefore, we expected institutionalized socialization tactics and proactive behaviors to result in more positive socialization outcomes and hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4. Institutionalized socialization tactics will be positively related to (a) task mastery, (b) role clarity, (c) social integration, (d) person–job fit, (e) person–organization fit, (f) job satisfaction, (g) organizational commitment, and (h) intent to return.

Hypothesis 5. Newcomer proactive behaviors are positively related to (a) task mastery, (b) role clarity, (c) social integration, (d) person–job fit, (e) person–organization fit, (f) job satisfaction, (g) organizational commitment, and (h) intent to return.

Further, given that we expected self-efficacy and organizational socialization tactics to lead to newcomer proactive behaviors and socialization outcomes, and proactive behaviors to also result in socialization outcomes, it follows that proactivity might mediate the relationships between self-efficacy and socialization tactics with the outcomes. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 6. Newcomer proactive behaviors will mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and socialization tactics with (a) task mastery, (b) role clarity, (c) social integration, (d) person–job fit, (e) person–organization fit, (f) job satisfaction, (g) organizational commitment, and (h) intent to return.

Finally, Griffin et al. (2000) proposed that organizational socialization tactics and newcomer proactive behaviors interact to influence socialization outcomes. In the only study to investigate such interaction effects, Kim et al. (2005) found that institutionalized socialization tactics were more strongly related to PO fit perceptions for newcomers' who engaged in positive framing and when newcomers did not engage in relationship building. One limitation of their study, however, is that the only outcome variable was PO fit perceptions. In the present study, we extend their findings to a wider array of proximal and distal socialization outcomes.

As suggested by Kim et al. (2005), we expect proactive tactics to have a replacement effect for institutionalized socialization tactics. In other words, if newcomers obtain information and positive social support through their own proactive efforts, then they preempt the beneficial effects of institutionalized socialization tactics. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 7. Proactive behaviors moderate the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes. Institutionalized socialization tactics are positively related to socialization outcomes for newcomers who do not engage in proactive behaviors but not for newcomers who engage in proactive behaviors.

4. Method

4.1. Participants

Participants were 140 undergraduate university students enrolled in a cooperative management program (co-op) at a large Canadian University who were completing a 4-month full-time work term. Sixty-six percent were males and the average age was 21.1 years. Respondents had an average of 3 years and 2 months of part-time work experience and 1 year of full-time work experience.

4.2. Procedure

Towards the end of the four-month co-op work terms in fall, 2004 and winter, 2005, all students completing a co-op placement were e-mailed and asked to visit a website where they would find an on-line survey that asked about their work-term experiences. We surveyed participants after four months to allow for enough time to have elapsed for socialization outcomes to manifest themselves (i.e., for a sense of commitment to develop), but soon enough after starting the job for participants to clearly recall their socialization experiences (Ashforth & Saks, 1996).

Students were informed that those who completed the survey would be entered into a draw for cash prizes. Follow-up emails were sent to non-respondents two-weeks after each initial message. Of the 113 students who were on a co-op placement in fall 2004, 58 completed the survey, and of the 147 students who were on a placement in winter 2005, 82 completed the survey. The total of 140 responses represents an overall response rate of 54 percent.

4.3. Measures

4.3.1. Organizational socialization tactics

Organizational socialization tactics were measured using the 30-item measure developed by Jones (1986). Participants provided responses on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores on the scale represent institutionalized socialization and lower scores represent individualized socialization.

Because previous studies have examined socialization tactics as a single factor (Ashforth, Saks, & Lee, 1998; Kim et al., 2005), three factors (Cable & Parsons, 2001), and six factors (Ashforth & Saks, 1996), we conducted a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFA's) using structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques to assess the fit of a one-factor model, a three-factor correlated model, and a six-factor correlated model. A comparison of fit statistics for the three socialization tactics models suggested that the one-factor model provided an acceptable fit with the data ($\chi^2 = 654.91$ (385), $p < .001$; CFI = .76; RMSEA = .07) and provided a significantly better fit to the data than a three-factor model ($\chi^2 = 845.08$ (400), $p < .001$; CFI = .61; RMSEA = .09) and a six-factor model ($\chi^2 = 833.54$ (389), $p < .001$; CFI = .62; RMSEA = .09). Although the one-factor model did not demonstrate a high degree of fit with the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999), the fit statistics are in line with results obtained in previous research (Ashforth et al., 1997). We therefore collapsed the socialization tactics into a single factor ($\alpha = .84$).

4.3.2. Self-efficacy

Previous studies have used a variety of measures of self-efficacy that have either been of a general nature (Jones, 1986) or job-specific (i.e., accounting, Saks, 1994, 1995). Because self-efficacy is task-specific, we designed a 12-item socialization specific self-efficacy scale. Participants were asked to indicate their confidence in the task, role, work group, and organizational domains of the job (Feldman, 1981; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) using a 10-point scale with anchors (1) not at all confident, to (10) totally confident. Sample items for each domain are as follows: “Handle routine work-related problems” (task); “Handle the demands and expectations of my role in the organization” (role); “Be accepted by my co-workers and my workgroup” (group); and “Function according to the organization’s values and norms” (organizational). The results of a CFA indicated that a one-factor model fit the data very well ($\chi^2 = 87.45$ (44), $p < .001$; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .08; $\alpha = .91$).

4.3.3. Newcomer proactive behaviors

The proactive behaviors include feedback-seeking, information-seeking, general socializing, boss relationship building, networking, and job change negotiation. The *feedback-seeking* measure was developed by Ashford and Black (1996) and consists of four items assessing the extent to which participants seek feedback after assignments and solicit critiques from their boss and co-workers ($\alpha = .83$). *Information-seeking* was measured using the 8-item scale developed by Major and Kozlowski (1997) which assesses how often in a typical week individuals seek out information about a variety of work-related topics ($\alpha = .83$). *General socializing* was assessed using the 3-item scale employed by Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) that asks respondents to indicate the extent to which they engage in activities such as attending company social gatherings and trying to socialize to get to know co-workers ($\alpha = .81$). *Boss relationship building* and *networking* were both measured using 3-item scales developed by Ashford and Black (1996) that assess the extent to which newcomers are motivated to try to build relationships with their bosses and co-workers, respectively ($\alpha = .85$ and $.89$). The 4-item *job change negotiation* measure developed by Ashford and Black (1996) was used to assess the extent to which newcomers tried to modify their job demands ($\alpha = .85$). Responses to all measures, except information-seeking, were provided on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (to no extent) to 5 (to a great extent). The anchors for the 5-point information-seeking scale were 1 (very infrequently) and 5 (very frequently).

We conducted a CFA to assess the factor structure of the six proactive behavior scales. The results revealed that a six-factor correlated model fit the data very well ($\chi^2 = 400.93$ (257), $p < .001$; CFI = .92; RMSEA = .06). Given the high degree of fit, we retained the six-factor model for our analyses.

4.3.4. Socialization outcomes

Task mastery was measured using an adaptation of the scale developed by Morrison (1993b). Two items were modified because they sounded similar to self-efficacy ($\alpha = .65$). *Role clarity* was assessed using Ashford’s (1986) uncertainty scale ($\alpha = .73$). *Social integration* was measured using a 5-item scale developed by Morrison (1993b) ($\alpha = .76$). *Person–job* and *person–organization fit* were measured by two 4-item scales developed by Saks and Ashforth (2002) ($\alpha = .83$ and $.86$). *Job satisfaction* was measured by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh’s (1983) 3-item scale ($\alpha = .89$). *Organizational commitment* was measured by Allen and Meyer’s (1990) 8-item affective commitment scale ($\alpha = .81$).

Intent to return was assessed using a 3-item scale specifically developed for this study and co-op students. Participants were asked to indicate whether they would return to the company for another co-op placement, if they would accept a full-time job at the company, and if they would want to work at the company again ($\alpha = .87$). For all scales except organizational commitment and intent to return, responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For organizational commitment and intent to return, responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly).

5. Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the study variables.

5.1. Self-efficacy and socialization tactics predicting newcomer proactivity

To test the relationships predicting newcomer proactive behaviors (Hypotheses 1, 2a, and 2b), each of the proactive tactics was regressed on self-efficacy and the socialization tactics. Self-efficacy and the socialization tactics explained a significant amount of the variance in feedback-seeking ($R^2 = .19, p < .001$), general socializing ($R^2 = .27, p < .001$), networking ($R^2 = .10, p < .001$), boss relationship building ($R^2 = .17, p < .001$), and information-seeking ($R^2 = .12, p < .001$), but not job change negotiation ($R^2 = .03, n.s.$). Furthermore, both self-efficacy and the socialization tactics were significant and positive predictors of feedback-seeking ($\beta = .21, p < .01$ and $\beta = .34, p < .001$), information-seeking ($\beta = .17, p < .05$ and $\beta = .27, p < .001$), general socializing ($\beta = .38, p < .001$ and $\beta = .30, p < .001$), and boss relationship building ($\beta = .31, p < .001$ and $\beta = .23, p < .01$). For networking, only self-efficacy was significant ($\beta = .30, p < .001$).

5.2. Prediction of socialization outcomes

To test the relationships predicting the socialization outcomes (Hypotheses 3–5), we first regressed the socialization outcomes on self-efficacy and the socialization tactics and then again on the proactive behaviors. This is consistent with the temporal ordering of our mediation model in which self-efficacy and socialization tactics predict proactivity, and proactivity mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and socialization tactics with the outcomes.

As shown in Table 2, self-efficacy and the socialization tactics explained significant variance in task mastery ($R^2 = .28, p < .001$), role clarity ($R^2 = .38, p < .001$), social integration ($R^2 = .21, p < .001$), PJ fit perceptions ($R^2 = .25, p < .001$), PO fit perceptions ($R^2 = .27, p < .001$), job satisfaction ($R^2 = .23, p < .001$), organizational commitment ($R^2 = .16, p < .001$), and intent to return ($R^2 = .13, p < .001$). Furthermore, both self-efficacy and socialization tactics were significant and positive predictors of social integration, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, PJ fit perceptions, and PO fit perceptions. However, only self-efficacy predicted task mastery and only the socialization tactics predicted role clarity and intent to return.

The proactive behaviors also explained a significant amount of the variance in role clarity ($R^2 = .20, p < .001$), social integration ($R^2 = .31, p < .001$), PJ fit perceptions ($R^2 = .23,$

Table 1
Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations of study variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
1. Organizational socialization tactics ^a	4.32	.75	(.84)																
2. Self-efficacy	8.28	1.17	.19*	(.91)															
3. Feedback-seeking	3.56	.89	.38***	.28***	(.83)														
4. General socializing	3.84	.91	.37***	.43***	.28***	(.81)													
5. Networking	3.33	1.05	.13	.32***	.18*	.51***	(.89)												
6. Job change negotiation	2.57	.95	.17*	.06	.36***	.34***	.33***	(.85)											
7. Boss relationship building	3.64	.85	.29***	.35***	.51***	.46***	.45***	.31***	(.85)										
8. Information-seeking	3.70	.69	.30***	.22**	.45***	.38***	.16	.30***	.40***	(.83)									
9. Task mastery	3.78	.66	.04	.53***	.20*	.12	.16	.17*	.22**	.04	(.65)								
10. Role clarity	3.23	.84	.61***	.22**	.41***	.21**	.13	.20*	.36***	.23**	.33***	(.73)							
11. Social integration	3.91	.71	.35***	.36***	.47***	.41***	.29***	.24**	.38***	.29***	.25**	.39***	(.76)						
12. Job satisfaction	4.10	.91	.39***	.34***	.39***	.38***	.25**	.14	.40***	.22**	.34***	.48***	.65***	(.89)					
13. Commitment	4.50	1.12	.31***	.29***	.38***	.36***	.30***	.19*	.45***	.12	.25**	.47***	.41***	.61***	(.81)				
14. Intent to return	5.27	1.66	.34***	.18*	.25**	.22**	.07	−.03	.24**	.20*	.04	.37***	.16	.51***	.59***	(.87)			
15. Person–job fit	3.51	.80	.42***	.34***	.37***	.29***	.19*	.04	.37***	.19*	.17*	.46***	.34***	.57***	.53***	.49***	(.83)		
16. Person–organization fit	3.65	.79	.44***	.35***	.35***	.48***	.25***	.13	.46***	.14	.23**	.41***	.41***	.64***	.73***	.57***	.52***	(.86)	

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Reliabilities are in parentheses.

^a Higher scores indicate institutionalized socialization tactics.

Table 2

Multiple regression analyses for self-efficacy and organizational socialization tactics predicting socialization outcomes and proactive behaviors predicting socialization outcomes

Predictors	Task mastery	Role clarity	Social integration	PJ fit	PO fit	Job satisfaction	Commitment	Intent to return
Self-efficacy	.54***	.11	.31***	.27***	.28***	.27***	.24**	.12
Organizational socialization tactics	-.06	.59***	.29***	.37***	.39***	.34***	.27***	.32***
R^2	.28	.38	.21	.25	.27	.23	.16	.13
F	27.11***	41.80***	18.18***	22.40***	24.90***	19.76***	12.66***	10.40***
Feedback-seeking	.13	.29**	.37***	.30**	.22*	.27**	.25**	.18
General socializing	.00	.07	.25**	.19*	.42***	.24**	.20*	.19
Networking	.06	-.05	.08	.02	-.07	.03	.06	-.06
Job change negotiation	.09	.04	-.02	-.19*	-.10	-.10	-.02	-.20*
Boss relationship building	.14	.19	.05	.20*	.30***	.18	.28**	.12
Information-seeking	-.12	-.01	.01	-.05	-.20*	-.04	-.19*	.07
R^2	.08	.20	.31	.23	.36	.26	.29	.14
F	1.9	5.56***	9.97***	6.45***	12.35***	7.47***	8.95***	3.42**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Values in table are standardized β coefficients.

$p < .001$), PO fit perceptions ($R^2 = .36$, $p < .001$), job satisfaction ($R^2 = .26$, $p < .001$), organizational commitment ($R^2 = .29$, $p < .001$), and intent to return ($R^2 = .14$, $p < .01$) but not in task mastery ($R^2 = .08$, n.s.).

Hypothesis 6 predicted that newcomer proactive behaviors would mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and socialization tactics with the outcomes. To test for mediation, several conditions must hold. First, the independent variables (self-efficacy and socialization tactics) must be related to the mediating variable (proactive behaviors). As indicated above, self-efficacy and the socialization tactics explained significant variance in all of the proactive behaviors except for job change negotiation. Second, the independent variables (self-efficacy and socialization tactics) must be related to the dependent variables (socialization outcomes). As indicated above, self-efficacy and the socialization tactics explained significant variance in all of the outcomes. Third, the mediating variable (proactive behaviors) must also be related to the dependent variables (socialization outcomes) which was the case except for task mastery. Finally, the variance explained by the independent variables (self-efficacy and socialization tactics) in the dependent variables (socialization outcomes) must be lower when the mediating variable (proactive behaviors) is controlled (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

To test for this final condition, the socialization outcomes were regressed on self-efficacy and the socialization tactics with the proactive behaviors controlled. Given the criteria for mediation described above, job change negotiation was eliminated from the analyses because it was not predicted by self-efficacy and the socialization tactics, and task mastery was excluded because it was not predicted by the proactive behaviors.

With the proactive behaviors held constant, the incremental variance explained by self-efficacy and the socialization tactics was as follows: role clarity ($R^{2\text{change}} = .25$, $p < .001$), social integration ($R^{2\text{change}} = .03$, n.s.), PJ fit perceptions ($R^{2\text{change}} = .10$, $p < .001$), PO fit perceptions ($R^{2\text{change}} = .06$, $p < .001$), job satisfaction ($R^{2\text{change}} = .06$, $p < .01$), organizational

commitment ($R^{2\text{change}} = .02$, n.s.), and intent to return ($R^{2\text{change}} = .06$, $p < .05$). Thus, for social integration and organizational commitment, the amount of variance explained by self-efficacy and the socialization tactics became non-significant thereby providing evidence of full mediation. For all of the other outcomes, the amount of variance explained by self-efficacy and the socialization tactics was reduced and still significant providing evidence of partial mediation. Furthermore, self-efficacy remained a significant predictor of PJ fit perceptions and the socialization tactics remained a significant predictor of role clarity, job satisfaction, intent to return, PJ fit perceptions, and PO fit perceptions.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that the relationship between socialization tactics and socialization outcomes will be moderated by newcomer proactivity such that institutionalized socialization tactics would be more strongly related to the outcomes for less proactive newcomers. To test this hypothesis, we created interaction terms between socialization tactics and each proactive behavior. We then conducted Moderated Multiple Regression analyses for each proactive behavior in which the outcomes were regressed on socialization tactics and the proactive behavior in Step 1 and the interaction term in Step 2.

Given the number of outcome variables and analyses involved and the potential to capitalize on chance, we looked for instances where there was more than one significant interaction for each proactive behavior. The results indicated that most of the interaction terms were not significant except for those for feedback-seeking and information-seeking. In both cases, there were three significant interactions. For feedback-seeking, the interaction term explained a significant amount of incremental variance in social integration ($R^{2\text{change}} = .04$, $p < .01$), job satisfaction ($R^{2\text{change}} = .02$, $p < .05$), and PO fit perceptions ($R^{2\text{change}} = .04$, $p < .01$). For information-seeking, the interaction term explained significant incremental variance in job satisfaction ($R^{2\text{change}} = .04$, $p < .01$), intent to return ($R^{2\text{change}} = .02$, $p < .05$), and PO fit perceptions ($R^{2\text{change}} = .03$, $p < .05$).

To determine the nature of these interactions, we calculated correlations between socialization tactics and the outcomes for newcomers who were high and low on feedback-seeking and information-seeking. For newcomers who were low on feedback-seeking, the correlation was higher for social integration ($r = .51$, $p < .001$ vs. $-.03$, n.s.), job satisfaction ($r = .48$, $p < .001$ vs. $.19$, n.s.), and PO fit perceptions ($r = .58$, $p < .001$ vs. $.24$, $p < .001$). For newcomers who were low on information-seeking, the correlation was higher for job satisfaction ($r = .50$, $p < .001$ vs. $.18$, n.s.), intent to return ($r = .40$, $p < .001$ vs. $.20$, n.s.), and PO fit perceptions ($r = .56$, $p < .001$ vs. $.30$, $p < .001$). Thus, with the exception of PO fit perceptions, the correlations between socialization tactics and the outcomes were non-significant for highly proactive newcomers. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that institutionalized socialization tactics are more strongly related to socialization outcomes for newcomers who are less proactive.

6. Discussion

Although organizational socialization involves actions by organizations and newcomers, most studies have focused on either the organization's perspective or the newcomer's perspective (Bauer et al., 1998). This study is one of the first to integrate these two perspectives by simultaneously investigating the relationships between newcomers' self-efficacy, proactivity, and organizational socialization tactics.

The results extend the socialization literature in several respects. First, we found that socialization tactics predict a number of newcomer proactive behaviors. While we reasoned

that either institutionalized or individualized socialization tactics could be related to newcomer proactivity, the results support a relationship for institutionalized socialization tactics. In other words, newcomers are more likely to engage in proactive behaviors when their socialization is structured and formalized. When socialization is more individualized, newcomers are less likely to seek feedback and information, build relationships, and socialize.

Second, the results of this study extend previous findings on the role of individual differences in newcomer proactivity (Ashford & Black, 1996; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). This is the first study to show that newcomers' with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage in proactive behaviors. In fact, the results indicated that self-efficacy was positively related to feedback-seeking, information-seeking, general socializing, boss relationship building, and networking independent of organizational socialization tactics. This is an important finding because it suggests that self-efficacy is an important predictor of newcomer proactivity even when organizational socialization tactics are taken into account.

A third contribution is the finding that newcomer proactivity partially mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and socialization tactics with a number of socialization outcomes. Although we found some support for full mediation (i.e., social integration and organizational commitment), for most of the socialization outcomes we found evidence of partial mediation. This finding suggests that self-efficacy and socialization tactics operate through other processes in addition to newcomer proactivity in producing socialization outcomes. It also suggests that the successful socialization of newcomers is a function of individual differences (i.e., self-efficacy), organizational socialization tactics, and newcomer proactivity.

A final contribution of this study is the finding that feedback-seeking and information-seeking moderated the relationship between socialization tactics and several socialization outcomes. These results extend those of Kim et al. (2005) who also found moderating effects but only for PO fit perceptions. Our results extend their findings to other socialization outcomes in addition to PO fit perceptions (social integration, job satisfaction, and intent to return). Similar to Kim et al.'s (2005) results for boss relationship building, we found that the relationship between institutionalized socialization tactics and socialization outcomes was much stronger for newcomers who engaged in less feedback-seeking and information-seeking.

In combination, these results suggest an interesting paradox: newcomers are most likely to be proactive when their socialization is institutionalized; however, institutionalized socialization is most likely to result in positive socialization outcomes when newcomers are least proactive.

7. Implications for research and practice

One area for future research is to investigate potential interactions in the prediction of newcomer proactivity. Although we found main effects for self-efficacy and socialization tactics, it is possible that personality variables such as proactive personality moderate the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and newcomer proactivity.

Another area in need of research is on process variables that link socialization tactics and self-efficacy to socialization outcomes. For example, organizational socialization

tactics probably operate through a number of mechanisms besides newcomer proactivity such as knowledge acquisition as well as emotions (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b).

A final area worth considering is interventions to train newcomers to be proactive. The results of this study and others suggest that training newcomers to be proactive can be beneficial to newcomers and organizations especially when socialization is individualized. Therefore, research is needed on the potential effects of interventions that train newcomers' to be proactive.

Given that the participants of this study were co-op students whose employers might want to hire them for future employment, the findings of this study provide some guidance on what organizations might do to improve the likelihood that good students will return for subsequent work terms and accept a full-time job offer when they graduate. For example, organizations need to consider the effects of their socialization practices on newcomers' ability to engage in proactive behaviors. If organizations want newcomers to play an active role in their own socialization and to facilitate their own adjustment, then they need to provide newcomers with social and interpersonal opportunities to interact and communicate with other members of the organization. They might also consider training newcomers to be proactive.

8. Study limitations

One of the limitations of this study is the cross-sectional design and self-report data. As a result, the relationships might be due to common method bias. While we cannot completely rule this out, there are a number of reasons that lessen this concern. For example, the scales used to measure socialization tactics and proactive behaviors were all existing scales with good reliability and multiple items. Further, the measures possessed a variety of scale anchors and values (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). The socialization tactics were written in as objective a way as possible to reduce their social desirability and the role of common method variance (Jones, 1986). In addition, a major focus of this study was the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and newcomer proactive behaviors. Given that these scales differ in terms of organizational events versus newcomers' actions, it is not likely that the relationships are simply due to method bias. That being said, future studies with larger samples and longitudinal data are needed to support and generalize our findings.

A second limitation is that the results might represent a consistency effect (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). Newcomers who performed well on their internship might have been more likely to see positive connections between their socialization experiences and socialization outcomes.¹ To assess this possibility, we obtained performance data from a sub-sample of the respondents from the co-op office ($N = 54$) and correlated it with the outcome variables. The single item supervisor rating of newcomer's overall job performance was not significantly correlated with any of the outcomes in the study. Thus, it does not appear that newcomers' internship performance explains the relationships reported in this study.

A final limitation is that because the participants of this study were university co-op students, the findings might not generalize to full-time or experienced newcomers who might

¹ We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

be more savvy and hence more likely to be proactive even when their socialization is individualized. However, the results should be generalizable to other student interns whose work-term socialization experiences can have important consequences for their career progress and future career opportunities (Lubbers, Loughlin, & Zweig, 2005).

In conclusion, the results of this study support an interactionist approach to organizational socialization in which newcomer self-efficacy and organizational socialization tactics predict newcomer proactivity, and newcomer proactivity mediates and moderates the effects of organizational socialization tactics on socialization outcomes.

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