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Do Organizational Socialization Tactics Influence Newcomer Embeddedness and Turnover?[†]

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The author proposes that socialization tactics influence newcomer turnover by embedding newcomers more extensively into the organization. Hypotheses are tested with a sample of newcomers in a large financial services organization. Results reveal that socialization tactics enable organizations to actively embed new employees; collective, fixed, and investiture tactics were positively related to on-the-job embeddedness. Results also indicate that on-the-job embeddedness is negatively related to turnover and mediates relationships between some socialization tactics and turnover.

Keywords: *socialization; field theory; embeddedness; turnover; retention*

Organizational turnover is often highest among new employees (Farber, 1994; Griffeth & Hom, 2001). Newcomer turnover is especially problematic for organizations because significant investments have been made in recruitment, selection, and training, with little opportunity for the organization to recoup a significant return on those investments (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003). One of the primary potential drivers of withdrawal among organizational newcomers is inadequate socialization (Feldman, 1988; Fisher, 1986). However, our understanding of the mechanisms by which organizational socialization tactics influence turnover is limited (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003).

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Socialization tactics refer to the methods organizations use to help newcomers adapt to early entry experiences; to reduce uncertainty and anxiety associated with the reality shock of joining a new organization; and to acquire desired or necessary attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In general, successful socialization is the transformation from outsider to participating and effective insider (Feldman, 1976b). Indicators of successful adjustment have included organizational attachment and commitment, job satisfaction, social integration, role clarity, task mastery, values congruence, and fit, among others (e.g., Bauer & Green, 1998; Brett, Feldman, & Weingart, 1990; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). The ways in which organizations manage initial interactions with the job and other organizational members, then, may influence retention (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Jones, 1986).

Considerable research suggests that socialization tactics should be related to turnover. Socialization researchers have proposed that socialization tactics may influence turnover through three primary mechanisms: by influencing important turnover antecedents such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and met expectations (e.g., Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Bauer et al., 1998; Cable & Judge, 1996; Saks & Ashforth, 1997); by influencing newcomers' adjustment to their new jobs and environments (e.g., learning, task mastery, role clarity, and workgroup integration) (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003); and by influencing perceptions of person-organization (P-O) fit and values congruence (e.g., Cable & Parsons, 2001; Cooper-Thomas, van Vianen, & Anderson, 2004). However, very little research demonstrates whether socialization tactics are related to actual turnover behavior, and Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) concluded that the mechanisms by which socialization tactics influence turnover warrant greater attention. Drawing from field theory (Lewin, 1951) and from recent advances in turnover theory that stress the importance of employee embeddedness in understanding voluntary turnover (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, & Erez, 2001), I propose that one mechanism by which socialization tactics influence turnover is by embedding newcomers more extensively into their organizations.

Theory

Field Theory

According to field theory, behavior is a function of the field or life space of the individual, including the person and the psychological environment as it exists for that individual. Understanding individual behavior in organizations requires considering a wide range of determinants as parts of a single interdependent field of physical, psychological, environmental, and social forces. The individual is embedded within this field, and the effects of a given stimulus depend on the nature of this field much as the perceived form, size, and color of an object may vary widely according to the background and the rest of the visual field (Lewin, 1951). Field theory is one of the most practical and influential social psychological theories of the 20th century (Argyris, 1989); it has been applied in the management and organizational literature to

explain change management in complex systems (Burnes, 2004), interpersonal trust (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998), organizational attitudes (Mathieu, 1991), the effects of foci of commitment (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996), and employee retention (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Field theory has several important potential implications for newcomer socialization and turnover. Entering a new job and organization is akin to entering a cognitively unstructured field, which motivates individuals to cognitively map out and find structure in the new field (Lewin, 1951). Socialization researchers have recognized this process, noting that entering a new organization is typically accompanied by some degree of disorientation, reality shock, and a need to make sense of the new environment (Louis, 1980). A transition in one's psychological field into a less structured situation also leaves individuals in a more formative state and more prone to extreme behaviors (Lewin, 1951). Thus, newcomers who struggle to adapt may adopt the somewhat extreme response of leaving the organization when faced with initial failures. This may be particularly true in the encounter or accommodation stage of the socialization process in which the newcomer enters the organization and attempts to make sense of the new environment and his or her place in it (Bauer et al., 1998; Feldman, 1976a).

From this perspective, turnover research on job embeddedness may be particularly important. Embeddedness in this context represents the extent to which an individual becomes enmeshed in a web of different types of forces connecting the person to a job and organization; it has been shown to predict turnover beyond the explanatory power of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived job alternatives (Mitchell et al., 2001). The embeddedness construct views employees as embedded in a field of forces influencing turnover decisions; addresses a variety of forces such as affect, fit, and structural ties; and stresses the importance of relationships. Here, I suggest that embeddedness is a mediator of the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and newcomer turnover. I begin by discussing socialization tactics and turnover and then address the role of embeddedness as a mediator.

Socialization Tactics and Turnover

Newcomers enter organizations with relatively unstructured cognitive maps, experience some degree of disorientation and reality shock, and need to make sense of the new environment and their place in it. Socialization tactics are methods organizations use to help newcomers adapt. Although newcomers also play an active role in their own socialization and sense making by seeking information and feedback (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002; Feldman, 1981; Morrison, 1993a; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), it remains useful to examine organizational practices and newcomer responses to these practices.

Organizations use a wide variety of tactics and techniques to socialize newcomers during the encounter or accommodation stage. Socialization is a multistage process consisting of at least three stages: an anticipatory socialization stage that occurs prior to organizational entry, an encounter or accommodation stage in which the newcomer enters the organization, and an adaptation or role management stage in which the newcomer adapts and settles in (Bauer et al., 1998; Feldman, 1976a; Louis, 1980). Van Maanen and Schein (1979) suggested that the tactics organizations use once newcomers enter the organization could be usefully classified into

six types: collective-individual, formal-informal, sequential-random, fixed-variable, serial-disjunctive, and investiture-divestiture. Research suggests these tactics may be related to turnover. Moreover, tactics that are more collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture have been suggested to enhance newcomer loyalty and reduce turnover (Griffeth & Hom, 2001).

With *collective* socialization tactics, newcomers experience common learning experiences such as with a group or cohort, whereas with individual tactics, each newcomer is exposed to learning experiences individually. Research suggests that newcomers value social learning and opportunities for interaction (Feldman, 1976b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Tactics that are more collective also provide a common message about the organization, roles, and appropriate responses. This common message is expected to reduce uncertainty concerning roles and lead to a greater sense of shared values (Baker & Feldman, 1991; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Feldman, 1994).

Formal tactics segregate newcomers into clearly defined socialization activities such as training classes while they learn their roles, whereas informal tactics involve learning on the job during activities that may not be clearly defined socialization activities. Socialization activities that are more formal also provide a consistent message and signal the importance of adapting to the new environment. Thus, tactics that are more formal are also suggested to lead to shared values and reduced uncertainty (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Feldman, 1994).

Sequential tactics provide specific information to newcomers about the sequence of learning activities and experiences, whereas this sequence is unknown in a random process. Tactics that are more sequential by indicating, for example, the order of specific training events are intended to reduce process uncertainty. Newcomers desire to establish routines and a sense of personal control (Feldman & Brett, 1983); thus, tactics that are more sequential may reduce anxiety and stress associated with adjusting to a new environment.

Fixed tactics provide information to newcomers about the timing associated with completing each socialization stage or step, whereas this timing is unknown in a more variable process. Similar to tactics that are more sequential, tactics that are more fixed by indicating the timing of progression through specific stages of socialization reduce uncertainty and anxiety and may help newcomers develop a sense of control over their new environment.

Serial tactics provide experienced organizational members as role models or mentors, whereas disjunctive tactics do not provide experienced models. Relationships with experienced insiders aid in making sense of the environment and provide resources to turn to for assistance (Louis, 1980). Tactics that are more serial also take advantage of social learning processes to aid newcomers in attaining a sense of competence and task mastery (Bandura, 1991).

Investiture tactics provide newcomers positive social support from experienced organizational members, whereas divestiture tactics provide more negative social feedback until newcomers adapt. An important aspect of newcomer adjustment is gaining a sense of competence and confidence (Feldman, 1976b). Tactics that are more investing in newcomers by providing positive social feedback may be better suited to aiding newcomers develop this sense of competence.

Despite these theoretical arguments, very little research demonstrates whether these tactics are actually related to turnover behavior. Ashforth and Saks (1996) reported that tactics that

are more collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investing were negatively related to turnover intentions. Cable and Parsons (2001) reported that sequential, fixed, serial, and investing tactics were positively related to perceptions of P-O fit and values congruence, and that fit and values congruence were negatively related to turnover, but did not examine the direct relationship between socialization tactics and turnover. Riordan, Weatherly, Vandenberg, and Self (2001) reported that collective and serial tactics were related to turnover intentions and that collective tactics were related to turnover. Given this limited empirical evidence, it is useful to provide additional evidence as to whether these socialization tactics influence turnover behavior.

> *Hypothesis 1:* Socialization tactics that are collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investing will be negatively related to turnover among newcomers.

Embeddedness as a Mediator

More important, I propose that embeddedness plays an important mediating role in understanding how socialization tactics influence turnover. Job embeddedness represents a broad constellation of forces that influence employee retention (Mitchell et al., 2001). Noting that traditional attitude models of turnover consistently but only moderately explain turnover, Mitchell et al. (2001) suggested that employees become tied to their organization through many different types of links, investments, and affective and cognitive appraisals that create a net or web of restraining forces. Individuals with more and more types of restraining forces are more embedded and less likely to voluntarily exit the organization.

Mitchell et al. (2001) describe three components of the construct of embeddedness. One is the extent to which individuals have links or connections to other people and/or activities. The greater the number of these links, the less likely individuals are to make turnover decisions that may require severing or rearranging connections. The second is the extent to which individuals perceive a fit with their organization and environment. The better the fit, the more likely the individual will feel tied to the organization and the less likely the individual is to quit. The third component is the sacrifice of material and/or psychological benefits that would be lost by quitting. The greater the sacrifices associated with leaving, the less likely individuals are to give up those benefits by quitting.

Each of these components (links, fit, and sacrifice) can be associated with both on- and off-the-job components. Thus, Mitchell et al. (2001) developed six dimensions of embeddedness: links to the organization, links to the community, fit with the organization, fit with the community, organization-related sacrifice, and community-related sacrifice. They suggested that together these dimensions form an overall aggregate construct of embeddedness and showed that embeddedness explained significant incremental variance in turnover behavior beyond job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job alternatives, and job search. Mitchell et al. (2001) argued that embeddedness is an aggregate construct, and it would be inappropriate to consider the dimensions separately. Embeddedness represents the combination of several different kinds of forces; individuals with varying profiles of embeddedness may have similar levels of embeddedness that constrain leaving or not. However, Lee, Mitchell, Sablynski,

Burton, and Holtom (2004) suggested that in some cases, it may be useful to consider on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness separately.

Embeddedness may be a particularly useful construct for explaining the role of socialization tactics in influencing turnover among newcomers. As noted, socialization has been conceptually linked with turnover by managing expectations, influencing adjustment to the new job and environment, and influencing perceptions of P-O fit and values congruence. However, Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) concluded that these processes do not adequately explain how socialization tactics influence turnover.

If we view organizational newcomers as entering a new and relatively unstructured psychological field, integrating field theory with previous socialization theory suggests a valuable role for embeddedness for understanding the process of newcomer adaptation. Field theory suggests that an individual entering a new organization will have a relatively unstructured psychological field with respect to the person's job. The newcomer's field will have relatively few restraining forces operating to keep the person in the organization, a relatively large unstructured region consisting of unknowns and uncertainty, and few barriers to moving out of the boundaries of this field (leaving the organization) if a force arises in the direction of leaving (e.g., unmet expectations or conflict with a supervisor). Because of a variety of processes (e.g., job experience, active information seeking by newcomers, socialization efforts by the organization), a more experienced member is likely to have a more structured field. This individual will be more embedded in a field with numerous forces, will have a much smaller region of uncertainty, and would have to overcome more forces to leave the field. I focus here on organization socialization tactics. To the extent that organizations can assist the development of a more structured field through socialization, newcomers will become more embedded and less likely to voluntarily leave, even if confronted with a force in the direction of leaving.

Considering socialization as a method of embedding newcomers more extensively into a psychological field is a useful conceptual contribution. For example, a major purpose of socialization is to encourage newcomers to become and remain participating members and to find their place in the new environment. Louis (1980) called this crossing the inclusionary boundary. Similarly, field theory focuses on how individuals attempt to develop cognitive maps of the environment and the individual's place in it and become embedded in a field of interdependent forces influencing behavior. Drawing from field theory, job embeddedness theory attempts to locate individuals within a network of forces to help understand what might drive or restrain the person from leaving. It may be that socialization tactics enable organizations to begin to embed new employees for the purpose of managing turnover.

Field theory also focuses on understanding a range of interdependent driving and restraining forces that influence behavior. Job embeddedness was thus developed to encompass several different types of forces affecting why individuals stay with organizations. Although research has studied socialization and some of the components of embeddedness (e.g., fit; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004), focusing on the aggregate embeddedness construct incorporates elements of job and organizational affect, nonaffective links and ties, investments and sacrifices, fit perceptions, and even off-the-job elements in a single coherent framework.

Similarly, socialization focuses on how newcomers find their place in organizational information and influence networks and how to help individuals form connections and relation-

ships. Field theory emphasizes that social forces are often some of the most powerful forces influencing behavior, and there is evidence that social context is important in turnover decisions (O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989). Embeddedness focuses explicitly on how individuals become enmeshed in a web of relationships, a perspective that has received limited empirical attention in this context. Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) found that workgroup integration increased commitment among newcomers but did not examine relationships with turnover directly. Focusing on relationships may be critically important for organizational newcomers who may often have very limited ties and relationships with others in the organization upon entry.

Therefore, I propose that part of the mechanism by which socialization tactics influence turnover among newcomers is through embedding newcomers more extensively into a web of forces that can serve to restrain them from voluntarily leaving the organization.

Hypothesis 2: Embeddedness partially mediates the relationships between socialization tactics and turnover among newcomers.

For embeddedness to mediate this relationship, we should plausibly expect socialization tactics to be related to embeddedness and embeddedness to be related to turnover. Socialization tactics may influence embeddedness in terms of links, fit, and sacrifice primarily by creating relationships that act as additional forces in the field, decreasing uncertainty regions of the field, and providing structure to the field in terms of role clarity. Specifically, collective tactics that provide for interaction and social learning should be related to embeddedness because they lead to the development of more links and relationships with others (O'Reilly et al., 1989). These relationships may also lead to friendship ties and other links outside the organization. Furthermore, severing these relationships by leaving the organization may be viewed as a sacrifice. Collective tactics have also been associated with perceptions of fit, shared values, and a sense of community (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

More formal tactics provide a common message to newcomers and stress the importance of organization culture and values. Thus, they may be related to embeddedness primarily because they are associated with greater perceptions of fit (Cable & Parsons, 2001). Formal tactics may also help newcomers adapt more quickly because they are related to reduced uncertainty and anxiety (Ashforth & Saks, 1996), and it may be more of a sacrifice for newcomers to leave a job to which they have already adapted than one to which they have not.

Sequential tactics may be related to embeddedness because they provide newcomers knowledge about how they fit into organizational plans and their place in the organization, and are expected to lead to greater connectedness and fit (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Sequential tactics also help newcomers establish routines and gain an important sense of personal control (Feldman & Brett, 1983), which they might be less willing to sacrifice to start over again in a new role and environment.

An important aspect of the breaking-in stage of socialization is role clarification (Feldman, 1976b). Fixed tactics provide a clear picture of where newcomers are in the process of becoming full-fledged insiders, as well as when and how they will move to the next step. This role clarity provides important knowledge about location in the organizational network (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). To the extent completing steps is associated with status or title dif-

ferences, this process may also ease integration into the surrounding community. Furthermore, as newcomers progress through each stage, they have successfully completed a step that they might have to repeat if they were to enter a new organization, which may lead to leaving being seen as a greater sacrifice.

Serial tactics that provide relationships with experienced insiders can increase the number of links both in and out of the organization. These links should lead newcomers to become more embedded in the organization and the community. Experienced role models also help newcomers make sense of their environment, and newcomers rely heavily on social learning (Louis, 1980; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Research suggests this should lead to a greater sense of community, internalization of organizational values, more developed social networks, and better fit (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Chatman, 1991). Valued relationships would also represent a sacrifice to give up if one were to leave the organization.

Investiture tactics that provide positive social support help newcomers gain an important sense of competence and confidence in performing their jobs (Feldman, 1976b; Feldman & Brett, 1983). Once gained, it would represent a sacrifice to start over again in a new job in a new organization. Research also suggests that positive interactions with insiders are a major determinant of newcomer adjustment and fit (Jones, 1983; Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995). Investiture tactics have been associated with a greater sense of community, internalization of organizational values, and more developed social networks (Chatman, 1991).

> *Hypothesis 3a:* Socialization tactics that are collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investing will be positively related to embeddedness among newcomers.

As noted earlier, Lee et al. (2004) argued that in some cases, it may be valuable to differentiate on-the-job embeddedness from off-the-job embeddedness. There is no reason organizations cannot focus their socialization activities on embedding newcomers in the community, and some of the arguments presented above address this possibility. Cohen (1995) found that organizations can increase employee attachment to the organization by supporting their nonwork interests. Some organizations promote their community cultural and leisure activities in the hopes newcomers will perceive a match with their interests and values and would hesitate to sacrifice those opportunities by moving. Some organizations offer housing assistance to encourage home ownership. Some organizations provide city tours and introductions to local political and community leaders to build local relationships. Nevertheless, it seems likely that most organizations typically focus more of their resources and attention to socializing newcomers into the organization. Organizational socialization tactics may have more direct effects on connections, uncertainty, and structure within the organization than in the community.

> *Hypothesis 3b:* Socialization tactics are more strongly related to on-the-job embeddedness than to off-the-job embeddedness.

Theory and research clearly indicate that embeddedness is negatively related to turnover, even when other major turnover antecedents are included (Mitchell et al., 2001). Individuals who are more embedded in a field of restraining forces are less likely to voluntarily leave. Lee

et al. (2004) posited that in some cases, off-the-job embeddedness may be more strongly related to turnover when other organization variables are included because it likely captures unique variance compared with organization-focused attitude variables. However, there are at least two reasons to question whether off-the-job embeddedness should be more strongly related to turnover. One, this may only be the case when turnover requires geographic relocation and the severing of community ties. Many turnover decisions do not require individuals to leave a community. Two, in some cases, a strong network of relationships within a community may lead to increased likelihood of turnover to the extent it leads to greater awareness of job alternatives and perceptions of ease of finding a new job (March & Simon, 1958). Thus, off-the-job embeddedness should not be expected to be as consistently negatively related to turnover as on-the-job embeddedness.

Hypothesis 4a: Embeddedness is negatively related to turnover.

Hypothesis 4b: On-the-job embeddedness is more strongly negatively related to turnover than off-the-job embeddedness.

Method

Sample

The sample consists of 259 employees (64%) of a large financial services organization who had been employed less than 12 months at the time of the initial data collection. Although there is no consensus regarding the precise length of the socialization and adjustment process, 1 year has traditionally served as the primary time frame for studying socialization (Bauer & Green, 1994; Fisher, 1986), and socialization activities in the 1st year are considered to have the greatest impact and salience (Feldman, 1994). Furthermore, it was important to select a time frame that would enable respondents to recall their socialization experiences while also providing a large enough sample of newcomers to study.

Respondents did not differ from nonrespondents in terms of tenure, sex, or race. Although the respondents are all from one organization, they are located in 82 cities in 18 states and represent 152 different cost centers. Locations are concentrated in the Southeast, with some in the Midwest and a few on the West Coast. In addition, the organization reports no standardized orientation or socialization program but instead allows individual locations and managers to determine their approach to preparing newcomers. Some locations have structured training and orientation programs, whereas others do not. Thus, it is likely that respondents experienced a wide variety of socialization experiences, and in fact, responses to the socialization scales covered the entire range of response anchors.

The sample is 66% female, with an average age of 35 years. The sample consists of primarily Caucasian (80%) college graduates (55%). Respondents represented a variety of departments and job types such as retail (31.4%), mortgage (20.3%), credit administration (9.7%), human resources (7.7%), finance and accounting (7.7%), commercial (7.2%), financial services (6.8%), operations (4.8%), and information technology (4.3%).

Procedures

Participants voluntarily completed an electronically administered survey during work time. Participants were asked to provide their name and employee identification number in order to match their responses with organizational turnover records; thus, the confidential nature of the data was emphasized. Two hundred thirty-two participants provided complete data. Approximately 1 year after the survey administration, turnover data were collected from company records. Ten individuals who had been involuntarily terminated by the organization were not included in the analyses, leaving a final sample of 222. Fifty-five individuals (24.8%) had voluntarily left the organization within 1 year.

Measures

Turnover. Turnover was assessed via organization records 1 year after surveys were administered. The organization coded each termination as voluntary or involuntary on the basis of a supervisor report and an exit interview conducted by a human resource representative. Respondents were coded 0 for stayers and 1 for voluntary leavers.

Socialization tactics. Individual perceptions of socialization tactics were measured with 21 Likert-type items (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) from Jones's (1986) Socialization Tactics Scale. There is some debate in the literature as to whether this scale is best represented by the original six dimensions; whether it is better represented by three dimensions focusing on content, context, and social aspects of socialization (e.g., Cable & Parsons, 2001); or whether a single dimension ranging from institutionalized to individualized is best (Jones, 1986). Therefore, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) comparing a one-factor, a three-factor, and a six-factor model. Both the three-factor model and six-factor model fit significantly better than the one-factor model, and the six-factor model fit significantly better than the three-factor model. Thus, I maintain the six dimensions of socialization tactics: collective-individual ($\alpha = .66$), formal-informal ($\alpha = .73$), investiture-divestiture ($\alpha = .70$), sequential-random ($\alpha = .75$), serial-disjunctive ($\alpha = .77$), and fixed-variable ($\alpha = .72$).

Embeddedness. The six dimensions of embeddedness were measured using items developed by Mitchell et al. (2001). Two items that assessed how long the respondents had been in their job and how long they had been in the organization were not used because of the intentional homogeneity of tenure in the sample and because tenure was used as a control variable. Following Lee et al. (2004), the three organization-focused composites were aggregated to form an on-the-job embeddedness construct ($\alpha = .86$), and the three community-focused composites were aggregated to form an off-the-job embeddedness construct ($\alpha = .77$). CFA results showed that this two-factor model fit significantly better than a one-factor model.

Control Variables

It is plausible to suggest that individuals with an organization a relatively short time may differ from those with the organization close to a year. Therefore, weeks of tenure are used as a control variable in all analyses (mean = 20.92 weeks). Furthermore, although the anticipatory socialization stage is not a focus of this research, the literature suggests that newcomer preentry experiences can influence socialization processes and outcomes. For example, newcomers with previous experience in the same industry should experience less reality shock and have an easier time adjusting (Feldman, 1994; Louis, 1980). Demographic characteristics may also represent life experiences relevant to the socialization process (Bauer et al., 1998). For example, education may be related to skills at the time of hiring, whereas age may be related to career stage (Feldman, 1989). Race has been shown to play a role in network building (Mollica, Gray, & Trevino, 2003). Therefore, I assessed previous industry experience, age, education, race, and sex as potential control variables. Age, education, and sex were unrelated to study variables and so were excluded from further analysis. Previous industry experience and race were related to several socialization tactics and so were included in all analyses.

Results

The means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables are shown in Table 1. All six socialization tactics are significantly positively correlated with on-the-job embeddedness, whereas none are significantly correlated with off-the-job embeddedness. Investiture and serial tactics are significantly negatively correlated with turnover. On-the-job embeddedness is significantly negatively correlated with turnover, whereas off-the-job embeddedness is not.

Table 2 presents the results for socialization tactics predicting turnover. Hierarchical logistic regression is used because logistic regression is more appropriate for dichotomous dependent variables. The first step with the control variables was not significant (R^2 = .02). The second step added the socialization tactics and was significant, with investiture and serial tactics significantly negatively related to turnover (R^2 = .16). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. In Table 2, beta represents log odds and Exp(β) represents odds. Holding the other variables constant, for each one-unit increase in investiture socialization tactics (providing more social support), the odds of quitting go down by an average multiplicative factor of 0.524, sometimes referred to as an odds ratio. For each one-unit increase in serial socialization tactics (providing positive role models), the odds of quitting go down by 0.438. This step corresponds to the first step in Baron and Kenny's (1986) framework for testing mediation.

Table 3 presents the results using ordinary least squares regression for socialization tactics predicting embeddedness, the next step in showing mediation. For on-the-job embeddedness, the control variables in Step 1 were not significant (R^2 = .01). The addition of socialization tactics in Step 2 was significant (R^2 = .28). Collective, investiture, and fixed tactics were positively related to on-the-job embeddedness. For off-the-job embeddedness, the control variables step was not significant (R^2 = .03), although the coefficient for race was significant such that non-White respondents reported lower off-the-job embeddedness. The addition of social-

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Turnover	0.25	0.43											
2. Collective-individual	2.69	1.13	-.08										
3. Formal-informal	2.59	1.08	-.09	.57**									
4. Investiture-divestiture	3.89	0.73	-.12*	.30**	.27**								
5. Sequential-random	2.93	0.81	-.06	.44**	.55**	.39**							
6. Serial-disjunctive	3.33	0.81	-.15*	.44**	.56**	.53**	.60**						
7. Fixed-variable	2.67	0.94	-.07	.38**	.48**	.44**	.66**	.51**					
8. On-the-job embeddedness	3.38	0.58	-.23**	.29**	.20**	.49**	.28**	.31**	.38**				
9. Off-the-job embeddedness	3.62	0.77	-.05	-.04	-.08	.09	.04	.02	.04	.20**			
10. Tenure	20.92	9.02	.10	-.25**	-.14*	-.20**	-.09	-.18**	-.14*	-.04	-.01		
11. Previous experience	0.64	0.48	.02	-.19**	-.09	.01	-.06	-.18**	.06	.07	.10	.02	
12. Race	0.66	0.48	-.01	.10	.09	-.11	.20**	.14*	.05	.01	-.13	.03	.01

Note: N = 222.
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

Table 2
Logistic Regression Results for Socialization Tactics and
Embeddedness Predicting Turnover

	Turnover	
	β	Exp(β)
Tenure	.03	1.026
Race	−.03	0.976
Previous experience	.06	1.057
Step R^2	.02	
Tenure	.01	1.012
Race	−.16	0.850
Previous experience	−.11	0.894
Collective-individual	−.09	0.912
Formal-informal	.13	1.134
Investiture-divestiture	−.65*	0.524
Sequential-random	.46	1.584
Serial-disjunctive	−.83*	0.438
Fixed-variable	.22	1.249
Step R^2	.14*	
Model R^2	.16*	
Tenure	.03	1.025
Race	−.11	0.894
Previous experience	.11	1.115
Collective-individual	.03	1.025
Formal-informal	.11	1.110
Investiture-divestiture	−.48	0.617
Sequential-random	.22	1.245
Serial-disjunctive	−.83*	0.437
Fixed-variable	.49	1.628
On-the-job embeddedness	−.87*	0.418
Off-the-job embeddedness	−.08	0.919
Step R^2	.05*	
Model R^2	.21*	

Note: $N = 222$. R^2 = Nagelkerke R^2, β = beta, Exp(β) = expected change.
*$p < .05$

ization tactics in Step 2 was not significant, and no predictors were significantly related to off-the-job embeddedness ($R^2 = .07$). Thus, Hypothesis 3a was partially supported, and Hypothesis 3b was supported.

The third step in Table 2 presents the full logistic regression results for socialization tactics and embeddedness predicting turnover. Step 3 adds embeddedness and is significant ($R^2 = .21$). In the final step, serial socialization tactics and on-the-job embeddedness are significantly negatively related to turnover. For each one-unit increase in serial tactics, the odds of quitting go down by a factor of 0.437; for each one-unit increase in on-the-job embeddedness,

Table 3
Regression Estimates for Socialization Tactics Predicting Embeddedness

	β	
	On-the-Job Embeddedness	Off-the-Job Embeddedness
Tenure	−.06	−.01
Race	−.02	−.16*
Previous experience	.06	.09
Step R^2	.01	.03
Tenure	.08	.01
Race	.02	−.15
Previous experience	.08	.09
Collective-individual	.22**	−.01
Formal-informal	−.12	−.16
Investiture-divestiture	.38**	.10
Sequential-random	−.08	.09
Serial-disjunctive	.03	.03
Fixed-variable	.21**	.01
Step R^2	.27**	.04
Model R^2	.28**	.07

Note: $N = 222$. β = standardized beta weights.
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

the odds of quitting go down by a factor of 0.418. Off-the-job embeddedness was not significantly related to turnover. Thus, Hypothesis 4a was partially supported, and Hypothesis 4b was supported.

Taken together, these results provide partial support for the mediation hypothesis (Hypothesis 2). On-the-job embeddedness appears to at least partially if not completely mediate the effects of investiture socialization tactics on turnover because the magnitude of the significant direct path from investiture tactics to turnover goes down and is not significantly different from zero once embeddedness is included in the model. Embeddedness does not appear to mediate the relationship between serial tactics and turnover. With embeddedness included in the model, the path remains significant and does not change in magnitude.

Discussion

This study presents a novel way of thinking about socialization tactics as they relate to newcomer adaptation and turnover: helping newcomers structure their psychological field and become embedded in a web of restraining forces. The results also provide a number of contributions to research on newcomer socialization and turnover. The results show that organization socialization tactics that are serial and investing lower the odds of subsequent turnover.

Although frequently discussed, this link between socialization tactics and turnover behavior has rarely been shown empirically. Conceptually, both of these tactics are classified by Jones (1986) as constituting the social aspects of socialization. Thus, these results emphasize the importance of considering the social nature of the newcomer learning and adjustment process, as suggested by Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004).

The results also reveal that on-the-job embeddedness mediated the relationship between investiture socialization tactics and turnover. I posited that embeddedness could help explain the link between socialization tactics and turnover because certain socialization tactics should help newcomers become more embedded in a more structured psychological field by assisting newcomers to develop relationships, to reduce uncertainty, and to find structure in their new environment. Investiture tactics that provide positive social support from experienced organizational members appear to help newcomers develop relationships and a sense of competence with respect to their job and organization. Serial tactics that provide experienced organization members as role models, though, were directly negatively related to turnover and not related to embeddedness.

The results also show that socialization tactics may enable organizations to actively embed new employees in an organization. Collective, fixed, and investiture tactics were positively related to on-the-job embeddedness. This is the first study examining antecedents of Mitchell et al.'s (2001) job embeddedness construct. Collective tactics that provide common learning experiences allow for social interaction among newcomers, again pointing out the importance of social learning processes. This finding is consistent with Ostroff and Kozlowski's (1992) conclusion that social learning from peers is a critical component of the socialization process. The role of fixed tactics that provide specific information about the timing of steps in the socialization process is consistent with Louis's (1980) contention that it is critical to provide newcomers information on the steps of the socialization process, as well as the importance of role clarity (e.g., Feldman, 1976b).

Finally, results also indicate that on-the-job embeddedness was negatively related to turnover. This finding extends the generalizability of embeddedness to organizational newcomers. This is important because the embeddedness of newcomers may be more malleable than that of more experienced organizational members.

Directions for Future Research

In this study, serial tactics that provide experienced organization members as role models and investiture tactics that provide positive feedback from experienced organization members influenced turnover. These findings are consistent with research on the role of positive social support in the turnover process (e.g., Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003). Future research may need to address the role of the organization in providing social support to newcomers during socialization (e.g., perceived organizational support; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Research at higher levels of analysis such as the work group, department, facility, or organization may be valuable for assessing these types of effects. The results are also consistent with Feldman's (1989) contention drawing from social information processing that newcomers will rely on cues from peers, supervisors, and other organization members regardless of the

structure of socialization. Future research could benefit from social network analysis of the information and relationship ties that newcomers form during the socialization process.

In this study, on-the-job embeddedness was associated with several socialization tactics and with turnover, whereas off-the-job embeddedness was not, providing some evidence for the discriminant validity of these two aspects of embeddedness. Although there is no reason organizations could not focus on embedding newcomers in the community, most organizations likely focus their socialization activities on helping newcomers adapt to the job and organization. Future research may need to address the utility of designing socialization efforts around off-the-job embeddedness. However, off-the-job embeddedness was not related to turnover in this study. Future research may also need to address the possibility that off-the-job embeddedness only influences turnover decisions that involve geographic relocation. Research has found that decision factors vary depending on whether job changes involve geographic relocation (Ostroff & Clark, 2001). Community ties, time in community, and spouse community ties may all influence job change decisions involving relocation (Brett, Stroh, & Reilly, 1993; Ostroff & Clark, 2001; Turban, Campion, & Eyring, 1992). Thus, future research may need to consider whether on-the-job embeddedness and off-the-job embeddedness have different relationships with turnover depending on whether relocation is involved.

Future research may also need to address the possible temporal aspects of embeddedness. Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002) suggested studying how socialization unfolds over time. Field theory suggests that newcomers should become more embedded in a more structured field over time. In this study, we were not able to directly assess this possibility. Research that measures newcomer embeddedness upon entry and again at some later point in time would be valuable for testing this assertion. The on-the-job and off-the-job components of embeddedness may also differ in this respect. Perhaps off-the-job embeddedness takes longer to develop and is more relevant for the turnover decisions of longer term employees than for newcomers.

Limitations

A potential limitation of this study is that socialization tactics and embeddedness were measured with the same survey at the same point in time. Thus, relationships among these constructs could be influenced by common method variance. Although common method variance does not always inflate relationships, one might suspect in this case that relationships between socialization tactics and embeddedness might be artificially inflated by having respondents respond to those items on the same survey. However, results showed that socialization tactics related differently to on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness, providing some evidence that responses are not merely the result of common method variance. Also, Harman's one-factor test showed that the first factor accounted for only 24.2% of the covariance among measures (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), suggesting that common method variance is not a severe issue. Furthermore, three out of four hypotheses involve actual turnover as the dependent variable, a behavioral measure assessed 1 year after the survey, which would not be subject to the same monomethod concerns. Finally, the Embeddedness Scale does not use a

single response format. For example, several links components consist of asking respondents to report objective indicators such as the number of work teams one is involved in. People tend to be fairly accurate in reporting objective verifiable responses (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), and this reduces the likelihood that responses are merely the result of common method variance. Still, future research may need to temporally separate the measurement of socialization and embeddedness to more fully understand this process. Future research may also benefit from using multiple sources of data collection.

Another potential limitation is the reliability of the Collective-Individual Scale ($\alpha = .66$). Previous research has also reported issues with the internal consistency of Jones's (1986) Socialization Tactics Scale (Ashforth & Saks, 1996). Future research may need to consider revising this scale. Another measurement issue concerns voluntary turnover. The organization conducted exit interviews and systematically coded terminations as either voluntary or involuntary. However, there is no evidence concerning the validity of the coding scheme. I draw from theory intended to explain voluntary turnover, and these models should be more accurate in predicting voluntary than involuntary quits. Thus, to the extent involuntary turnover was included in the analysis in error, this would serve to attenuate relationships. Future turnover research would benefit from a more fine-grained analysis of the reasons underlying quits.

Future research may also need to incorporate a more comprehensive representation of the input to the socialization process. Several demographic variables were included as controls, but it would be stronger to include more direct measures of newcomer skills and abilities, as well as individual differences such as personality. For example, research suggests that self-monitoring influences the development of social networks (e.g., Mehra, Kilduff, & Bass, 2001), so this trait could play a role in socialization and embeddedness.

Implications for Practice

The six socialization tactics make practical implications rather straightforward. Turnover among new employees is a critical issue for many organizations. Involving experienced organization insiders in the socialization process as role models, mentors, or trainers should directly reduce newcomer turnover. Organizations should not neglect the importance of the social context of socialization. Furthermore, thinking about socialization as a method for embedding newcomers more extensively into the organization is a useful heuristic. Providing newcomers with positive feedback as they adapt, structuring orientation activities so that groups of newcomers experience them together, and providing newcomers clear information about the stages of the socialization process should increase on-the-job embeddedness. On-the-job embeddedness reduces subsequent turnover.

Organizations desiring to measure their socialization tactics may need to consider the debate in the literature regarding the dimensionality of Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) tactics. Jones (1986) considered a three-dimensional structure in which collective-individual and formal-informal tactics represent the context of socialization, sequential-random and fixed-variable represent the content of the socialization process, and serial-disjunctive and investiture-divestiture represent the social aspects of socialization. Jones (1986) further suggested that a single dimension ranging from institutionalized tactics (collective, formal, sequential,

fixed, serial, and investiture) to individualized tactics (individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture) might be most appropriate. Subsequent research has found some support via exploratory factor analysis for the three-factor model (e.g., Cable & Parsons, 2001) but has also argued that collapsing the tactics into a smaller number of dimensions loses conceptual richness (Bauer et al., 1998). The results of this study using confirmatory factor analysis support the six socialization tactics and the idea that it may be premature to collapse the dimensions. The practical implications are also easier to tease out when considering each tactic individually.

Conclusion

Organizations can influence newcomer retention and actively embed newcomers in the organization through the nature of their socialization activities. Organizations need to carefully consider the social context of socialization and the nature of interactions newcomers have with each other and with experienced organizational members. Furthermore, embeddedness is a useful way of thinking about how and why new employees make the transition from outsider to participating insider and become tied to their new organization. Conceptualizing newcomer adaptation in part as a process by which newcomers map out their psychological field and become embedded in a web of restraining forces presents new avenues for future research in the areas of socialization and turnover.

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