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THREE COMPETING MODELS OF COMMUNICATION
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Zachary Paul Hart

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THREE COMPETING MODELS OF COMMUNICATION DURING
ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION

By

Zachary Paul Hart

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ABSTRACT

THREE COMPETING MODELS OF COMMUNICATION DURING ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION

By

Zachary Paul Hart

The predominant model in organizational socialization theory and research centers on the organization's use of tactics to structure newcomers' experiences. Despite numerous criticisms and mixed research results, scholars continue to obscure three fundamental features of organizations' role-sending efforts during employee entry: (a) the content of messages accompanying socialization tactics; (b) the influence of informal, unofficial, and at times unsanctioned tactics; and (c) communicative relationships with role-set members. This dissertation reviews research on organizational socialization, identifies communication phenomena associated with formal and informal socialization experiences, and proposes three competing models that seek to explain the role of communication during socialization. The three models were tested through a study of 85 newly hired managers' socialization experiences at a major hotel corporation. Results of this study indicate that a modified mediated model in which socialization experiences determine message content which then impacts socialization outcomes offers the best explanation for the role of communication during organizational socialization. The study, its results, and its implications are also discussed in this dissertation.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Tracy Hart, and my son, Christopher Hart, whose support, love, and understanding made it possible for me to successfully complete my doctorate.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Van Maanen (1978), organizational socialization is “the manner in which the experiences of people learning the ropes of a new organizational position, status, or role are structured for them by others within the organization” (p. 19). Through socialization, employees obtain information about their role responsibilities as well as the history, politics, language, interpersonal relationships, goals, and values of the organization (Chao, O’Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994). Socialization exemplifies *organizational role-sending efforts* (Katz & Kahn, 1978) where the organization attempts to mold newcomers into acceptable and efficient members (Schein, 1968). Consequently, socialization is especially important when individuals begin membership in an organization and acquire a new role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

While scholars have long been interested in socialization experiences from childhood through adulthood (see Brim & Wheeler, 1966), only in the past 15 years have they begun to examine the impact of socialization tactics and content on new organizational hires. For example, Jones (1986) and Ashforth and Saks (1996) examine how institutional or structured socialization experiences impact newcomers’ role orientations, role ambiguity, and organizational commitment. Chao et al. (1994) investigate the relationship of socialization experiences emphasizing the relationship of politics, goals and values, history, performance proficiency, and language of the organization with employee incomes, job satisfaction, career involvement, adaptation, and personal identity.¹

While research on structured socialization experiences and content provides important insights into newcomers' entry experiences, a number of weaknesses in the socialization literature exist. First, researchers to date examine socialization tactics and content separately when they are co-occurring experiences. Second, research almost exclusively focuses on the impact of hierarchically and strategically orchestrated, formal

tactics (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Baker, 1992; Jones, 1986) while failing to examine the effects of informal tactics initiated at the unit and individual level of the organization. As Chao (1997) notes, conceptualizations of informal aspects of socialization lag behind formal conceptualizations although employees experience formal and informal influence attempts. Third, few studies directly examine the communication features of newcomers' socialization experiences despite evidence of its importance (Bullis, 1993; Jablin, 1987; Stohl, 1986).

The failure to directly investigate communication messages and relationships is unfortunate because the purpose of socialization is to inform new employees of organizational and unit procedures, acclimate them to the relationships with supervisors, coworkers, and others, and inculcate the values of the organization. Thus, a more comprehensive understanding of organizational role sending efforts will not be possible until researchers investigate newcomers' formal and informal socialization experiences and their communicative aspects. This dissertation begins with a review of research on newcomer organizational socialization, making a distinction between formal and informal socialization experiences. It then identifies communicative dimensions associated with formal and informal socialization experiences. Next, three competing, communication-centered models are presented and arguments are made which state how each model provides a better explanation of the relationship between newcomers' socialization experiences and traditional work adjustment outcomes than the standard socialization tactic model. Finally, the methodology and results of a study of 85 newly hired managers' socialization experiences at a major hotel corporation are described and discussed.

CHAPTER 1: Literature Review

Organizational socialization research grows from investigations of lifelong socialization processes beginning with infancy and childhood and continuing through adulthood (Brim & Wheeler, 1966). The “formal organization” can be viewed as an agent of adult socialization as most people spend a major portion of their adult lives working within complex, relatively permanent groups purposely designed to perform specific tasks (Goodman, 1985). Formal organizations provide settings in which individuals learn about the formal requirements of their roles as well as potentially differing informal norms and role prescriptions (Goodman, 1985). More experienced members are responsible for educating newcomers about organizational norms and procedures so that the traditions and structures of the organization survive. As Van Maanen and Schein (1979) note,

any organizational culture consists broadly of long-standing rules of thumb, a somewhat special language, an ideology that helps edit a member's everyday experience, shared standards of relevance as to the critical aspects of the work that is being accomplished and a sort of residual category of some rather plain ‘horse sense’ regarding what is appropriate and ‘smart’ behavior within the organization and what is not (p. 210).

Consequently, the ways by which incumbents socialize new hires and what new hires learn from these efforts are of prime importance to organizations.

Theories of organizational socialization suggest that (a) new experiences are purposefully structured by the organization and its agents to ensure that new employees acquire specific information about the organization (through organizationally approved sources), but (b) considerable variability exists in organizations' degree of strategizing and structuring of newcomers' experiences (Brim & Wheeler, 1966; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Further, newcomers' formal socialization experiences differ by their

longevity in the organization or as they move through the various stages of socialization. For example, during the anticipatory socialization stage newcomers' contact with the organization prior to organizational entry creates expectations by which newcomers will evaluate their experiences in the organization (Jablin, 1987). As noted by Feldman (1976), organizations provide prospective employees with information about particular job duties, the work group, promotion and transfer opportunities through selection and placement programs. In the encounter stage, newcomers enter the organization, attempt to make sense of the new environment, and begin to form an organizational identity and self-esteem (Hess, 1993). At this point, orientation and training programs as well as performance evaluation systems become critical to newcomer adaptation and success (Feldman, 1976). In the metamorphosis stage, newcomers transform from outsiders to insiders, are believed to engage in role negotiation, and solidify interpersonal and group memberships (Jablin, 1987).

Organizational socialization efforts primarily focus on transmitting the role expectations of socialization agents to newcomers (i.e., role-sending) (Katz & Kahn, 1978). These role expectations are conveyed in both ambient (pervasive, noncontingent) and discretionary (intentional, selectively transmitted) messages (Jablin, 1987). According to Katz and Kahn (1978), newcomers who conform their behaviors to role expectations engage in role-taking. However, newcomers may differ on the functional value of others' role expectations and perform their roles in keeping with their own needs, abilities, and desires (Jablin, 1987). Thus, the enacted role may differ considerably from the received role (Graen & Scandura, 1987).

The nature of formal and informal role-sending is particularly important in

determining how, what, and when role expectations are sent to newcomers. In this respect, socialization experiences not only determine how newcomers learn about their role, but also what information is intentionally presented to new hires (Chao, 1997; Van Mannen & Schein, 1979).² As presented in Table 1, new hire socialization experiences can be divided into formal and informal distinctions. In keeping with Saks and Ashforth (1997), newcomer formal socialization experiences are characterized by structured and purposeful events that are centered at the organizational level. In contrast, informal socialization experiences are marked by unstructured and random events centered at the work unit level.

The distinction between formal and informal socialization experiences is an important one to make because much of the literature investigates only the impact of formal experiences, but neglects the potentially significant impact of informal experiences. Carnevale and Gainer (1989) point out that informal training is the most popular training method in organizations. Rothwell and Kazanas (1990) estimate that informal training costs represent between three and six times the amount of what is spent on formal training although organizations often do not specifically budget money for “informal” training. Instead, these costs are accumulated through the everyday expense of running the organization as incumbents spend time informally socializing newcomers. In addition, Rothwell and Kazanas (1990) point out that organizations spend billions of dollars on both formal and informal efforts. Finally, Chao (1997) argues that the widespread use of informal experiences as a way to socialize newcomers “necessitates scientific understanding of it and practical applications to improve its effectiveness”(p. 129).

Description of Specific Formal Socialization Experiences

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) describe six sets of “formal” or organizationally orchestrated tactics that socialize new hires toward custodial (acceptance of the role as presented) or innovative (attempt to alter the role as presented) behavioral responses. While several scholars criticize Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) tactics (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Jones, 1986; Laker & Steffy, 1995; Orpen, 1995), most would agree that their typology of tactics centers on the notion that “what people learn about their work roles in organizations is often the direct result of how they learn it” (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979, p. 209). Due to its ability to describe structured entry experiences, its frequent use in theory and research publications, and the absence of competing, theoretical models, Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) tactics constitute the standard model for current organizational socialization research.

Collective versus *individual* socialization tactics distinguish entry processes which put a group of individuals through a common set of experiences from those processes which provide individuals with a unique set of experiences in isolation from others. *Formal* tactics segregate newcomers from incumbents and expose newcomers to experiences and materials designed specifically for them. With *informal* tactics, new hires are not separated from incumbents and do not receive material prepared specifically for them. *Sequential* versus *random* tactics differentiate entry experiences with a discrete and recognizable progression from those where the steps to full membership are ambiguous or unknown. *Fixed* socialization indicates a specific timeframe for completion of a boundary passage while *variable* socialization provides no specific timeframe. In *serial* tactics, new hires can consult with individuals who occupy or previously occupied

the role while new hires cannot readily access information from prior role occupants in *disjunctive* tactics. Finally, *investiture* tactics confirm new hires' personal characteristics while *divestiture* tactics attempt to strip away certain personal characteristics. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) posit that custodial orientations result from an organization's use of collective, formal, sequential, variable, serial, and divestiture tactics while innovation orientations result from the use of individual, informal, random, fixed, disjunctive, and investiture tactics.³

Research on Formal Tactics

As Orpen (1995) notes, socialization research tends to use Jones' (1986) survey instrument by categorizing Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) six tactics into "institutional" versus "individual" socialization tactics. Institutional socialization practices are composed of collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial and divestiture tactics. Individual socialization practices contain individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive and investiture tactics. Predominately consistent with Van Maanen and Schein (1979), Jones (1986) reports that institutional socialization tactics are more likely to result in custodial newcomer role orientations while individual socialization tactics are more likely to result in innovative newcomer role orientations.

Using Jones' (1986) institutional and individual framework, Allen and Meyer (1990) report that institutionalized tactics are associated with new hires' custodial role orientations and individualized tactics are associated with innovative role orientations at both 6 months and 12 months after employment. They also report that institutionalized tactics are associated with higher levels of employee organizational commitment at both the 6 month and 12 month mark. Ashforth and Saks (1996) report that at 4 and 10 months

of employment institutionalized tactics are negatively related to attempted and actual role innovation, role ambiguity, role conflict, stress symptoms, and intentions to quit, but are positively related to job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational identification. Baker and Feldman (1990) find that the “batch” (formal, collective, fixed, sequential, serial tactics) process tactics tend to be associated with greater trust in peers and management, higher levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, mutual influence, internal work motivation, and job involvement, and lower levels of job tension compared to “unit” (divestiture, disjunctive, non-sequential, variable, individual, and informal) tactics.

Examining specific tactics, Black (1992) finds that collective socialization tactics are positively related to role innovation while fixed and serial socialization tactics are negatively related to role innovation, especially among employees with longer tenure at the time of measurement. Orpen (1995) reports that individualized tactics are positively related to career satisfaction while institutionalized tactics are negatively related. Laker and Steffy (1995) find that individualized tactics lead to greater self-management, but a lower level of organizational commitment. In turn, Hart, Miller, and Johnson (1998) report that formal socialization tactics have a negative relationship with role ambiguity and role conflict at the initial point of a socialization effort and 4 months later.

While the above research suggests fairly consistent relationships between socialization tactics and a number of outcomes (e.g., commitment, innovative role orientations), the overall statistical significance of this line of research indicates a conceptual and/or methodological threshold. Specifically, with the exception of Baker (1995), both static and lagged analyses in investigations using socialization tactics only

accounts for approximately 25% of the variance in the outcome variables (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Baker & Feldman, 1990; Black, 1992; Hart et al., 1998; Jones, 1986; Laker and Steffy, 1995; Orpen, 1995; Zarhrly & Tosi, 1989). While this amount of variance accounted for would be pleasing in an exploratory investigation, the apparent upper limit of 25% of the variance in at least nine published studies indicates a limitation to the current conceptual approach and the likelihood of additional socializing influences as well as other antecedents that have yet to be measured. The stagnation at moderate statistical relationships may be due to the focus on distal organizational events (e.g., the fixed nature of progression from outsider to full membership in the organization and workgroup). In contrast, informal or unsanctioned socialization tactics and workgroup relationships are less distal, at times may be quite direct in influence, and may have greater impact on new hires (Chao, 1997; Chatman, 1991; Jablin, 1987; Zurcher, 1983).

In addition, Jones' (1986) conceptualization of socialization tactics as a continuum, ranging from institutionalized to individualized tactic, may explain its limitation in identifying a larger portion of the variance in socialization outcomes. Institutional and individual socialization tactics are hypothesized and often found to have relationships to outcome variables (e.g., Jones, 1986; Laker & Steffy, 1995; Orpen, 1995). Yet, other non-institutional tactics are experienced at the same time as institutional tactics and could similarly impact socialization outcomes. For example, social activities with coworkers may increase organizational commitment. An examination of these additional, informal experiences may more fully account for the impact of socialization.

In sum, research to date suggests that organizationally endorsed socialization

experiences have considerable impact on employees shortly after entry. According to Saks and Ashforth (1997), “most of the effects of socialization processes on newcomers appear to occur relatively rapidly” (p. 257) such as the reduction of role ambiguity, but other outcomes may be affected over a longer period of time (e.g., organizational commitment). These conclusions are consistent with Brett’s (1984) argument that most role transitions are essentially complete by 6 months after entry. Yet, while research on formal socialization tactics provides considerable insight into the structure or context of new hires’ entry experiences, the threshold on the amount of variance accounted for in most studies suggests that researchers need to consider other entry events closer to new hires.

Specific Informal Socialization Experiences

Investigations into socialization suggest that new hires encounter at least five informal tactics through their interactions with supervisors, coworkers and other role-set members: stories, informal initiations/rituals, group orientation/norm reinforcement, social/recreational activities, and trial by fire (see Table 1). Brown (1985) suggests that *stories* by old-timers in the organization help new members make sense of the organizational environment. “They serve as a storehouse of organizational information, supply reasons for organizational events, and promote or suppress motivation in the workplace” (p. 28). For example, cadaver stories as jokes are commonly used as an informal tool for the emotional socialization of medical students (Hafferty, 1988). Just as socialization to a medical vocation transmits more than technical knowledge and skills, socialization also involves shaping newcomers’ feelings about their work. Zurcher (1983) also illustrates the influence that stories from veteran sailors have on new sailors’

expectations about the informal workings of their ship. In essence, stories provide newcomers with information that they are unlikely to obtain through the formal socialization mechanisms.

Informal initiations and rituals are not officially sanctioned by top management, occur at the work unit level, and usher newcomers' passage from outsider to insider. Initiations may include hazing, performing noticeably unpleasant or harsh duties, testing loyalty and compatibility, socializing, and participating in ceremonies (Moreland & Levine, 1989; Zurcher, 1983). Other examples are vacationing together, performing voluntary activities, participating in physical activities (Moreland & Levine, 1989), and old-time sailors telling newcomers to buy a half a dollar's worth of sea-stamps (which do not exist) or getting dunked in the sea water (Zurcher, 1983). Informal initiations and rituals are important to work group members because they maintain the identity of the group and ensure that newcomers will meet the standards of the work unit. Consequently, newcomers must pass through initiations or rituals in order to gain acceptance into the group. In contrast, formal organization-sponsored ceremonies signify the newcomer has passed from outsider to insider.

Orientations to group norms are likely to begin shortly after assignment to the workgroup and are a primary means to exert pressure on newcomers (Moreland & Levine, 1982). Orientations are most effective when the group (a) maximizes newcomer involvement with group members, (b) minimizes newcomer involvement with outgroup members, and (c) reinforces group norms. Informal orientations may also be extremely effective following formal organizational orientation programs. While some orientations may be conducted by the workgroup supervisor and "required" of all newcomers, other

orientations occur one-on-one and are delayed until a newcomer has earned the coworkers' confidence. According to Feldman (1976), newcomers who've earned their coworkers' trust are likely "to receive evaluative and informal information that will help him both in doing his job and in interacting with other organization members" (p. 67).

Social/recreational activities range from socializing at a bar with incumbents after work to participating in a company softball team (Bullis & Bach, 1989). In essence, social /recreational activities facilitate informal communication and relational development between newcomers and incumbents (Bullis & Bach, 1989) and are available to most workers (Louis et al., 1983). While these activities do not contribute to the development of productive employees, they contribute significantly to newcomer job satisfaction (Louis et al., 1983).

Finally, *trial-by-fire* experiences can be described as early, challenging work experiences which allow newcomers to learn how the organization really functions and their job by doing it (McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988). Trial-by-fire includes early unpleasant supervisory encounters, project and task force assignments, starting a project from scratch, fix-it/turn-it-around jobs (including crisis situations), and a leap in scope of assignments (beyond newcomers' training and experience) (McCall et al., 1988). As unplanned and unstructured events, trial-by-fire experiences may signal the neglect of structuring formal socialization experiences or a sink-or-swim philosophy toward new hires. Nonetheless, these experiences seem to be particularly important in the socialization of managers. "Those who recounted them seemed to have gotten from them a head start in the basics - lessons in how things work in an organization as opposed to what they learned in the classroom, and lessons in dealing with people" (McCall et al.,

1988, p. 20).

In sum, informal tactics provide considerable information to newcomers about how things really operate in the organization, send explicit messages regarding the norms of the work unit, and indicate incumbents' acceptance of newcomers into the work unit. Perhaps, just as importantly they emotionally socialize the newcomer to the organization in a way that formal socialization tactics cannot by creating a sense of belonging for newcomers to a workgroup and by "customizing" to some degree newcomers trial period in accordance to the workgroup's assessment of what is required for newcomers to gain acceptance. Together, stories, informal initiations/rituals, group orientation/norm reinforcement, social/recreational activities, and trial-by-fire provide information that supports, contradicts, or fills in the gaps in knowledge obtained through formal socialization. In this way, informal tactics may have a greater influence in shaping newcomers' role orientations toward accepting or rejecting organizational and/or work unit norms than any formal socialization effort (Van Maanen, 1975).

While a greater part of the preceding materials concern the effects of formal socialization experiences, it is apparent that informal socialization experiences also impact newcomers' adjustment to the organization and their role success. The lack of research exploring the relationship between formal and informal entry experiences is unfortunate as formal and informal socialization efforts appear to be concurrent and concomitant influences (Jablin, 1987; Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998). Thus, it is important for scholars to investigate the nature and relationship of formal and informal socialization experiences. Consequently, this dissertation asks the following research questions:

Research Question 1: To what extent do formal and informal socialization tactics characterize the entry experiences of new employees?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between formal and informal socialization experiences?

Communication Dimensions Associated With Socialization Experiences

Scholars should be aware that expanding only the *contexts* in which new hires receive instruction and/or are subject to role pressures may continue the neglect of the *content* of socialization unless they make efforts to assess communication during socialization. The explicit examination of communication messages, the sources of those messages, and the nature of communicative relationships with role set members is essential if researchers are to assess the effectiveness of specific organizational socialization efforts and move beyond current statistical thresholds. While many messages from management during entry may primarily inform employees of customary and desirable norms and behaviors, numerous message efforts are directed at employee adjustment and changes in attitudes and behaviors (Jablin, 1987; Zurcher, 1983).

Calls for investigations of communication during socialization are numerous. For instance, Jablin (1987) identifies the pervasive nature of communication throughout the entire socialization process from anticipatory socialization through organizational exit. He suggests that most interactions between newcomers and their supervisors, coworkers, and other organizational members occur in the form of communication. Stohl (1986) points out that “memorable” messages are one of the most important processes through which individuals “learn requisite organizational orientations” (p. 231). Bullis (1993) calls for corporate discourse and feminism investigations of communication during

socialization. Central to these calls for research is the belief that researchers will better understand what employees learn during entry as well as how they learn it by investigating the communication features of organizational role-learning efforts.

Jablin's (1987) review of the role of communication during socialization and the works of others (Bullis, 1993; Chao et al., 1994; McQuail, 1987; Stanton-Spicer & Darling, 1986) suggest at least three key dimensions of communication to be investigated: message content, message sources, and communication relationships.

Message Content. While instructions, explanations, and lessons are crucial to employee indoctrination and adjustment (Jablin, 1987; Saks & Ashforth, 1997), what new employees learn from socialization efforts is commonly overlooked in research. Chao et al. (1994), Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992), Stohl (1986), and Stanton-Spicer & Darling (1986) offer notable exceptions to this practice. Chao et al. (1994) categorizes socialization messages into six content areas. According to Chao et al. (1994), performance proficiency refers to messages about how to perform the tasks necessary to do the job. "People" refers to messages indicating that the employee has gained acceptance into the work unit (akin to investiture socialization tactics). Political messages provide information about formal and informal work relationships as well as power structures within the organization. Language refers to messages conveying the profession's technical language as well as jargon that is unique to the organization. Messages focusing on organizational goals and values provide "an understanding of the rules or principles that maintain the integrity of the organization" (p. 732). The final content area, history, describes the organization's and work unit's history through messages about the organization's rituals and myths. Chao et al. (1994) find that new

employees who are knowledgeable in the six content areas (presumably because they have been well-socialized) have quicker career advancement than less knowledgeable newcomers.

Other research investigations support Chao et al.'s (1994) classification. In an analysis of memorable messages during organizational socialization, Stohl (1986) finds that the content of messages falls into one of two general categories; role related, which describes the behaviors necessary to do a new job (similar to performance proficiency), or culture-related, which describes the meaning of organizational behavior and values (similar to organizational goals and values, politics, and history). In addition, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) describe four content areas - job-related tasks, work roles, group processes, and organizational attributes - which largely overlap with Chao et al.'s (1994) performance proficiency, history, language, and political content areas.

Finally, research of newcomers' entry experiences reveals that they both receive (Jablin, 1984) and seek out (Miller, 1996; Morrison, 1993; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) job-related information. While Chao et al. (1994) measure the level of knowledge employees possess about each content area, it is unclear if these knowledge levels result from passive information receiving, proactive information seeking, or both. It is important to determine if newcomers possess knowledge about the content area as a result of socialization messages stemming from role-sending efforts or as a result of their proactive information seeking efforts in order to (a) confirm role-taking theories of socialization (Katz & Kahn, 1978) as primarily information receiving versus an information seeking experience and (b) discover if conversations about certain topics such as politics or people are more likely to be initiated by others or sought out.

Consequently, this dissertation asks:

Research Question 3: Which socialization message content is communicated to newcomers primarily as a result of their active information seeking efforts and which socialization message content is communicated to newcomers primarily as a result of passive information receiving from others?

Message Sources. Major sources of information during organizational socialization include the organization (i.e., top management's ambient messages and detailed written materials), supervisors, coworkers, and subordinates (Jablin, 1987). While message sources provide new hires with a range of information, each source is likely to emphasize certain content given their areas of responsibility and expertise. For instance, organizational sources tend to send written, mass media messages during socialization to formally orient the newcomer to the organization and for legal compliance. "For example, recruits may be exposed to an orientation by members of the organization's personnel department in which they receive a wide variety of written publications and an oral briefing on a variety of topics including work rules, insurance, employee service, and the like" (Jablin, 1987, p. 696). Consequently, the impetus for most messages from the organization may be legal rather than persuasive, although some executives use orientations to expound on the organization's vision and values (Fairhurst, in press).

Over half of the messages received by newcomers from supervisors involve job instructions while about a fourth involve job-related information (Katz, 1980).

Supervisors are the primary sources of newcomers' task-related information which is in

keeping with supervisors' responsibility for the performance of their work units, motivation to maximize newcomer performance, their role as the primary evaluators of newcomer performance, and their position as role expert (Jablin, 1987; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Throughout entry, newcomers typically receive messages "directed at setting work-related goals and expectations" Jablin (1987, p. 700) and are fairly positive about these interactions (Jablin, 1984). Newcomers are also likely to identify supervisors as the chief source for determining job requirements and consider them more reliable than coworkers as an information source (Hanser & Muchinsky, 1978).

Coworkers have substantial interests in socializing newcomers and often quickly incorporate them into the workgroup (Moreland & Levine, 1989; Zurcher, 1983). Further, newcomers and coworkers evidence equal patterns of information asking and sharing shortly following newcomers' entry into the organization (Jablin, 1984). Jablin (1987) argues that these interactions between newcomers and their coworkers are likely to serve three functions: (a) a job performance function as newcomers receive information from coworkers about how to do their job and attempt to model the work behaviors and methods of coworkers; (b) an affective-psychological function as coworkers provide messages of emotional support during socialization and indicate the extent to which newcomers are accepted into the work unit; and (c) an informative function as coworkers help newcomers make sense of the work environment and explain the informal networks which exist in the organization (Jablin, 1987).

In short, the organization, supervisors, coworkers and subordinates are likely to be key sources of information for newcomers during organizational socialization. Each

source is likely to provide information in keeping with their areas of responsibility and expertise. Since it is not entirely clear how those areas of expertise may relate to the message content areas, research needs to identify the primary sources of information for each of the message content areas. Thus, this dissertation asks:

Research Question 4: Who (the organization, supervisors, coworkers, or subordinates) are the primary sources of information for each of the socialization message content areas?

While research explores the direction and frequency of newcomer communication with supervisors, coworkers, the organization, and outside sources (see Jablin, 1987), it remains unclear the extent to which that information is presented *consistently* from the sources and which sources are most important to newcomers in obtaining information during socialization. For instance, it is known that newcomers receive inconsistent information during socialization. Role expectations delivered in informal socialization at times differ from those delivered during the formal training of newcomers (Chao, 1997; Zurcher, 1983), but “are always more extensive” (Zurcher, 1983, p. 50). Ondrack (1975) finds that newcomers are more likely to receive consistent cues from old-timers when old-timers are more homogeneous in terms of job-related attitudes and values and that inconsistent information can make socialization difficult as newcomers become more confused. Contradictory role messages are likely to increase newcomers’ role ambiguity and make the performance of job tasks more difficult as they are unsure about the “right” way to do their job. The longer newcomers’ operate in an uncertain environment, the more likely it is that they will experience dissatisfaction with their job and eventually leave the organization (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Thus, this dissertation asks the

following research question:

Research Question 5: To what extent do newcomers receive consistent information from the organization, supervisors, coworkers, and subordinates during organizational socialization?

Communication Relationships. From the very first moments of entry, supervisors and coworkers have a notable impact on newcomers (Chao, 1997; Feldman, 1989; Jablin, 1987). Regardless of organizational and unit socialization efforts, the relational closeness of newcomers to their supervisors and/or coworkers can have a disproportionate influence on the impact of socialization experiences and messages on the outcomes of socialization. Two key indicators of these relationships are leader-member exchange (LMX) and coworker supportiveness.

Clearly, the most important relationship for newcomers is with the supervisor. As Jablin (1987) notes, supervisors have the power to reward or sanction, define job parameters, provide instructions and feedback, and are the preferred target of newcomers' interactions. Given the vital place of the supervisor for newcomers, the supervisor's exchange of personal and positional resources for a subordinate's performance can impact newcomers' access to and interpretation of information (as well as job assignments). Leader-member exchanges (LMX) afford the leader interpersonal influence beyond that which accompanies his or her formal position (Graen & Scandura, 1987). LMX theory proposes that supervisor-subordinate relationships can be classified as high LMX, characterized by high levels of mutual trust and influence, and low LMX, characterized by authoritative relationships where the supervisor only exerts formal power. The sharing of helpful information, coaching, or mentoring may indicate the

beginnings of a high LMX relationship and result in the newcomer's increased access to information.

Interactions with coworkers may serve “an affective-psychological function by providing emotional support against the stresses of the organization's socialization initiatives and uncertainties of the new work setting” (Jablin, 1987, p. 702). The proximity of coworkers and shared experiences enable them to provide emotional support to newcomers during organizational entry (Sias & Jablin, 1995). Coworker supportiveness refers to the friendliness of and the extent to which coworkers pay attention to employee comments and concerns (Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Taylor & Bowers, 1972). Newcomers are likely to find supportive coworkers to be particularly helpful in learning to discern between messages that are ambient versus messages specifically directed towards them and in knowing what role expectations are pivotal or relevant as opposed to peripheral (Schein, 1968).⁵ Thus, this dissertation asks the following research question:

Research Question 6: What is the quality of newcomers' relationships with coworkers and supervisors?

In sum, the content of socialization messages, their sources, and the nature of the communicative relationship greatly impacts newcomers' adjustment to the organization and workgroup and learning of their job tasks. As newcomers chiefly interact with their supervisors and coworkers once initial orientation and training sessions are completed, members of their role set may have far greater influence on new hires than formal socialization tactics. At this point and in the absence of research comparing their individual influence, it may be best to conclude temporarily that formal and informal

socialization experiences, socialization message content, and communication relationships are all significant socialization influences. However, the interplay of these influences, and especially the role of communication, merits examination if we hope to gain a better understanding of socialization.

Outcomes of Organizational Socialization

While numerous outcomes can be linked to socialization experiences and entry-related messages, many studies focus on indicators of role and organizational adjustment (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Baker, 1992; Baker & Feldman, 1990; Jones, 1986; Lake & Steffy, 1995). Specifically, role ambiguity, role innovation, and organizational commitment are believed to be influenced by organizational socialization experiences and messages (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Baker, 1992; Orpen, 1995; Saks and Ashforth, 1997). As socialization efforts are designed to teach newcomers about their role through the transmission of role related information which will facilitate their adjustment into the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), measures of role and organizational adjustment indicate the success of socialization and role sending efforts from both the organization's and newcomer's perspective.

Role Ambiguity. Role ambiguity refers to “the level of uncertainty surrounding expectations about a single role” (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991, p. 191). Newcomers with a high level of role ambiguity do not understand how to perform their role, suggesting a failure in learning from socialization experiences. Role ambiguity contributes to individuals' stress as they begin a new role (Nelson, 1987) and makes their role adjustment more difficult. Role ambiguity also indicates a failure in role-sending efforts as newcomers indicate a lack of understanding about the role expectations that have been

transmitted to them (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Prior research indicates that formal socialization experiences are generally linked to decreases in role ambiguity (e.g., Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Jones, 1986; Zarly & Tosi, 1986). The impact of informal socialization experiences is uncertain as this has not been a focus of study. While research on tactics assumes that certain information has been conveyed, these studies fail to consider explicitly the content of messages received during socialization. It is important to examine the impact of messages since role-related information is likely to have a greater impact on role ambiguity than socialization contexts (e.g. collective tactics) generated by the organization or work unit (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). In addition, the relationships in which messages are communicated are likely to impact the effectiveness of those messages and thus warrant examination.

Role Innovation. Role innovation refers to employee efforts to “redefine the entire role by attacking and attempting to change the mission traditionally associated with the role” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Employees seek to change the way the duties of their role are performed or alter what duties are assigned. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) propose that individuals’ custodial responses (accepting the role as presented) and innovative responses (role innovation) depend on the socialization tactics used by the organization. In addition, innovative responses can be viewed as newcomers’ responses to role sending efforts during organizational socialization as newcomers move to the role making phase of the role episode (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Several studies based on Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) socialization tactics examine the relationship between tactics and attempted or actual role innovation. In general, studies (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Black & Ashforth, 1996;

Mignerey, Rubin, & Gorden, 1995) find that individualized socialization (or the absence of institutional tactics) results in higher levels of attempted or actual role innovation. In other words, newcomers innovate their role when there is not a specific, prepared body of materials for newcomers. Unfortunately, these studies do not provide insight into the nature of information that is or is not transmitted to newcomers, information that directly affects how a newcomer responds to a role. That information and the way in which it is transmitted are likely to impact role innovation.

Organizational Commitment. Organizational commitment commonly is viewed as an indicator of newcomer adjustment to socialization experiences (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Baker, 1992; Jones, 1986; Laker & Steffy, 1995). Commitment can be defined as “an affective attachment to an organization characterized by shared values, a desire to remain in the organization, and a willingness to exert effort on its behalf” (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 849). Jones (1986) argues that “institutional” socialization tactics lead to greater commitment as these tactics provide more information which “present newcomers with less problems in searching for situational consistency” (p. 266). However, it is critical to identify the information content embedded in institutional socialization tactics that facilitates commitment as such research efforts may identify stronger relationships between incumbents’ socialization efforts and their organizational commitment. In addition, examination of informal socialization experiences and communication relationships may also enhance our understanding of this relationship.

Models of Organizational Socialization and Communication

To date, the predominant model of socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) posits that socialization tactics are direct predictors of role outcomes and organizational adjustment. Of particular interest are the outcomes of role ambiguity, role innovation, and organizational commitment as they indicate the success of socialization efforts from both the organization's and newcomer's perspective (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Baker, 1992; Baker & Feldman, 1990; Jones, 1986; Laker & Steffy, 1995).

While formal and informal socialization experiences, socialization message content, and communication relationships contribute to newcomers' level of role ambiguity, role innovation, and organizational commitment, the nature of these relationships are unclear. In particular, the elements of communication pose a dilemma. Where do message content and relationships fit in a socialization model? Or stated more practically, how does communication impact socialization outcomes in conjunction with formal and informal socialization experiences? To explore these issues, this dissertation proposes that these relationships be examined through tests of three competing models of explanation: a direct predictor model, a mediated predictor model, and a moderated predictor model.

Direct Predictor Model. In keeping with the traditional model of socialization, the direct predictor model (Figure 1) argues that socialization experiences, message content, and communication relationships directly contribute to socialization outcomes. This model is consistent with the traditional model (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) that identifies socialization tactics as direct predictors of socialization outcomes. It further builds upon the traditional model by incorporating communication factors as additional,

direct predictors of socialization outcomes. Given that research on formal socialization tactics explains a moderate portion of the variance related to this phenomenon, the direct model allows for a statistical test of how much variance is accounted for by socialization tactics in contrast to socialization content and communication relationships. In essence, this model states that each socializing influence is theoretically important, and analyses will indicate their contribution to each outcome.

Support for the direct model is evident in tests of Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) propositions. Formal socialization experiences have a negative impact on role ambiguity and a positive impact on organizational commitment (e.g., Jones, 1986; Allen & Meyer, 1990). Formal socialization experiences negatively impact role innovation while informal socialization experiences positively impact on role innovation (e.g., Jones, 1986; Ashforth & Saks, 1996). In addition, newcomers receiving information about how to perform their jobs adequately and the organization/unit's jargon will have greater clarity of others' expectations and better knowledge of task accomplishment, reducing role ambiguity (Chao et al, 1994). Performance proficiency and political messages lead to role innovation as they identify the parameters necessary for acceptable role innovation, provide guidelines for acceptable behaviors, and point to key individuals who may be allies or enemies of role innovation (Ashforth and Saks, 1997; Chao et al, 1994).

Attachment to the organization is strengthened by messages indicating acceptance into the workgroup and the awareness of organizational goals and values messages which provide the means for newcomers to judge organizational actions and to organize their own behavior (Chao et al., 1994). In addition, histories of the organization and unit provide an understanding of its past and an appreciation of the present. Finally, a high

LMX relationship and supportive coworker relationships are likely to provide newcomers with in-depth and meaningful information to clarify role expectations, guide changes to the role, and foster organizational commitment (Fairhurst, in press). Thus, this model hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 1: Informal socialization experiences, socialization messages, and communication relationships will lead to reduced role ambiguity as well as increased role innovation and organizational commitment while formal socialization experiences will lead to reduced role ambiguity and role innovation as well as increased organizational commitment.

Unfortunately, the direct predictor model treats socialization tactics, socialization content and communication relationships as separate entities rather than co-occurring phenomena. More importantly, the direct predictor model does not offer a clear explanation of the relationship between socialization tactics, socialization content and communication relationships when they clearly influence and shape each other. Finally, the direct predictor model may not be suited for longitudinal explorations of socialization. For instance, socialization tactics may be most prevalent in the first few weeks of entry while socialization content and relationships have repetitive influences throughout the entry process (Hart et al., 1998). Yet, researchers may measure predictors in the model only once and outcomes several times instead of measuring predictors at multiple times if present research patterns continue (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Saks & Ashforth, 1997).

Mediated Model. As Jablin (1987) and Chao et al. (1994) suggest, socialization experiences (both formal and informal) are more likely to directly impact the

communication processes rather than directly impact socialization outcomes, with the result being that messages received during socialization mediate the relationship between socialization experiences and outcomes. Newcomers are likely to get a better sense of their role, understand acceptable aspects of role innovation, and develop affective bonds more quickly through explicit messages, not context. The mediated model (Figure 2) posits that socialization experiences create the context through which information is communicated to newcomers. Formal and informal socialization experiences determine the content of messages, and the content directly impacts socialization outcomes.

This mediated model is attractive because it explains the relationship between content and tactics and emphasizes socialization as a learning process in which information is communicated to employees. The model also allows researchers to specify content areas associated with particular socialization experiences, increasing our understanding of the socialization process. As proposed in Figure 2, organizations use formal and informal socialization experiences to convey performance proficiency, organizational history, work unit history, people, politics language, and organizational goals and values messages to newcomers. However, newcomers are more likely to receive messages about these content areas when top management, supervisors, coworkers, and subordinates create robust formal and informal socialization contexts for new hires than when few socialization methods are utilized (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

In addition, messages associated with formal and informal socialization experiences are likely to emphasize different message content areas. For example, messages associated with formal socialization experiences are likely to focus on performance

proficiency. Most formal socialization methods are specifically targeted at improving employee performance of job duties and, thus, emphasize performance proficiency messages. Sequential socialization tactics identify the steps the employee needs to achieve in order to acquire a particular organizational role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), formal socialization tactics give newcomers specific experiences designed to improve their performance (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Thus this model hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 2: Formal socialization experiences will emphasize messages about performance proficiency more than messages about people, politics, language, goals and values, and history.

Likewise, informal socialization experiences are key conduits for messages about performance proficiency, acceptance into the organization/unit, politics, and language. Stories inform newcomers about the ways in which a job has been performed and indicate the best or worst way to do a job (Hafferty, 1988). Similarly, informal initiations/rituals, group orientations, and social activities provide forums for role-set members to disclose tips on more efficient task accomplishment (Wexley & Latham, 1991).

Newcomers also are most likely to receive messages about their acceptance into the work unit, or the people content area, as part of the informal socialization process. Informal initiations/rituals specifically tell the newcomer they have now formed successful work unit relationships and are part of the work unit (Zurcher, 1983).

In addition, newcomers are most likely to obtain information about politics through informal socialization experiences. Some researchers argue that work groups informally socialize newcomers as to how things really work in the organization (Chao,

1997; Chao et al., 1994; Zurcher, 1983). While the formal socialization experiences of an employee are likely to teach newcomers about the formal organizational hierarchy and relationships, informal socialization experiences emphasize the informal power structures and motives of members within the organization. Chao (1997) points out that informal socialization can contradict the information obtained during formal socialization and that informal socialization experiences are likely to provide more accurate information about politics than formal socialization experiences.

Finally, newcomers are likely to learn the language of the organization through informal socialization. The work group is the primary place where newcomers will gain knowledge of and use organizational and work unit language on a day-to-day basis. Stories, informal initiations/rituals, group orientation, and social/recreational activities emphasize organization- and group-specific terminology. While formal socialization introduces the organization's terminology, newcomers are likely to acquire a better understanding of the meaning of that language through informal socialization. Chao et al. (1994) argue that newcomers must obtain a base knowledge of organization-specific language in order to understand what other organizational members are communicating to them. In addition, mentors are likely to tell newcomers what the language means and informally tell them how to use it. Thus, this model hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 3: Informal socialization experiences will emphasize messages about performance proficiency, people, politics, and language more than messages about history and organizational goals and values.

In addition to identifying the relationship between socialization experiences, message content, and outcomes, the mediated model also makes it possible to more

clearly examine the relationship between message content and socialization outcomes. For example, as was argued previously, prior research indicates that formal socialization experiences generally result in decreased role ambiguity (e.g., Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Jones, 1986; Zarly & Tosi, 1986), but these studies have not explicitly examined message content during socialization. It is likely that messages about role-related information will have a greater impact on role ambiguity than socialization experiences. In particular, newcomers who receive messages related to performance proficiency and language are likely to experience lower levels of role ambiguity. Newcomers receiving information about how to perform their jobs adequately as the jargon of the organization/unit will have greater clarity of others' expectations and better knowledge of task accomplishment. Thus, this model hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 4: Performance proficiency and language messages will mediate the relationship between formal socialization experiences and reduced role ambiguity.

A similar argument can be made for the impact of message content on role innovation. Again, as was mentioned previously, socialization experiences do have an impact on role innovation, but no study has looked at the impact of specific message content. This model proposes that messages about performance proficiency and politics are likely to have considerable influence on newcomers' propensity to engage in role innovation, especially, as previously noted, several months after their initial organizational entry (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Although individual tactics provide new hires with fewer expectations about role performance, messages about performance proficiency identify role performance parameters necessary for acceptable role

innovation. Messages concerning politics provide guidelines for acceptable behaviors and point to key individuals who may be allies or enemies of role innovation. Thus, this model hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 5: Messages of performance proficiency and politics will mediate the relationships between informal socialization experiences and increased role innovation.

Finally, in keeping with Saks and Ashforth's (1997) argument that certain outcomes are more appropriately measured several months following organizational entry, it is important to consider the cumulative impact of people, organizational goals and values, organizational history, and work unit history messages on their commitment to the organization. For example, people messages provide newcomers with a sense of attachment to the group and/or organization. Organizational goals and values messages convey the means for newcomers to judge organizational actions and to organize their own behavior. In turn, histories of the organization and unit provide an understanding of the firm's past and an appreciation of the present. Together, over time these messages create a basis for commitment to an organization. Thus, this model hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 6: People, organizational goals and values, organizational history, and work unit history messages will mediate the relationship between formal socialization experiences and increased organizational commitment.

While the mediated model enables tests of the relative impact of socialization experiences and messages on outcomes, the model does not consider the role of communication relationships in shaping socialization outcomes. Further, the model suggests that the impact of all socialization tactics is mediated by socialization content

when some tactics such as investiture or trial-by-fire may actually have a direct impact on the outcomes (Hart et al., 1998; McCall et al., 1988). Finally, the mediated model excludes the possibility that certain content such as history and goals have very little direct impact on newcomer role ambiguity or role orientation. As such, the model does not consider that some content messages only have an indirect effect.

Moderated Model. In contrast to the other models, the moderated model (Figure 3) posits that the effectiveness of socialization message content depends on newcomers' relationships with their role set. In keeping with earlier criticisms of the indirect effect of formal and informal socialization experiences, the moderated model suggests that previous socialization tactic-outcome findings are an artifact of communication messages conveyed to new hires. Tactics are less important than what a newcomer knows, which is in turn determined by the quality of the newcomer's relationship with the supervisor and coworkers.

Newcomers who are befriended by incumbents or their supervisor fair considerably better than others who do not have access and are not given insider information on the way the organization really works or the best way to perform a job (Feldman, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Zurcher, 1983). High LMX relationships and coworker supportiveness also create an environment that provides emotional support while newcomers figure out the organization's and job's complexities (Jablin, 1987; Sias & Jablin, 1995; Stohl, 1985). In contrast, new hires who find themselves excluded from task and social networks often become targets for pranks, ridicule, unfavorable assignments, and unpleasant working conditions (Zurcher, 1983). Even in less extreme cases, new hires often struggle to learn the ropes and attain satisfactory task competencies

levels without the help of a cohort (Feldman, 1976). Newcomers are likely to find supportive coworkers and supervisors with whom they have a high LMX relationship to be particularly helpful in sorting through the importance of various messages and in solving dilemmas associated with their organizational roles. Thus this model proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7: LMX and coworker supportiveness will moderate the impact of socialization message content on role ambiguity, role innovation, and organizational commitment such that even lower levels of role ambiguity and even higher levels of role innovation and organizational commitment will result from socialization message content when LMX and coworker supportiveness are high.

While the moderator model may be very attractive to communication researchers and others because it emphasizes the nuances of personal relationships (Fairhurst, in press; Sias & Jablin, 1995), it omits socialization tactics, a major inconsistency with current theory and research findings that strongly support its basis. In addition, the moderator model provides an all-or-nothing approach to role adjustment. Those new hires who are in high LMX relationships and have supportive coworkers will fair well according to the model. Yet, newcomers without these benefits or even in hostile settings are known to adjust to the organization and develop high levels of performance (Zurcher, 1983; Van Maanen, 1975). Finally, the moderator model is problematic because it is not possible to test the fit of the model in comparison to the direct predictor model and the mediating model because of the moderating relationship specified in the model.

Contributions of Examining the Three Models. Examination of the three models makes two contributions to socialization research. One contribution is the suggestion to examine explicitly communication messages and relationships during entry as an equal, if not possibly better, predictor of new hires' role ambiguity, role orientation, and organizational commitment. While Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) model is not without communicative aspects, they are mostly implicit. One result of this implicit approach to communication is the neglect of the impact of role-sending efforts by the organization and role set members in theory and subsequent research. In contrast, this dissertation attempts to identify the benefits of an explicit examination of persuasive, informative, and supportive message sending efforts.

Another contribution of the three models is the offering of several models to explain the unique contribution of socialization experiences and communication. Each model suggests ways to test communication as a central feature of socialization. While we may tell our students that information is the key to learning and communication is the key to transmitting information, it is time to examine these beliefs in the organizational entry setting. The three models can begin to test those beliefs.

CHAPTER 2: Methodology

Participants

Data were collected from 85 full-time newly hired managers of a major hotel corporation during their entry period. According to Brett (1984), the entry period generally ranges from 1 week through 6 months. Other investigations of newcomer socialization experiences report sampling employees from the 3rd week through the 12th month of employment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Bauer & Green, 1994). Consistent with these perspectives, the participants completed an initial survey, which focused primarily on their socialization experiences, during their 3rd through 12th weeks of employment. A second survey, which primarily included measurements of the outcome variables, was completed by the participants six weeks after the return of the first survey. Both surveys were paper and pencil surveys and contained a note guaranteeing confidentiality and an addressed reply envelope in which the completed survey could be inserted, sealed and mailed. A human subjects permission form was included and returned with the first survey.

Access to the hotel corporation new manager database, which included names, work addresses, start dates, and position title, was granted after negotiations with representatives of the corporation's upper management. Upper management representatives reviewed the survey items before giving final approval to sending the surveys to the new managers. The hotel corporation paid for the cost of mailing the surveys as well as the return postage for completed surveys. No other financial compensation was provided to the researcher by the hotel corporation. The researcher agreed to provide a written report of the study's findings for the management

representatives in exchange for access to the hotel corporation new manager database and mailing compensation. The participants were not given a monetary incentive to complete the survey; their participation was completely voluntary.

Initially, 201 managers were solicited. Of that number, 102 managers completed the Time 1 survey, representing a response rate of 50.7%. 85 managers who completed the Time 1 survey also completed the Time 2 survey, representing a response rate of 83.3%. Only those participants who completed both the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys were included in the study.

In terms of demographic characteristics of the study's sample, almost two-thirds of the participants (62.4%, $n=53$) were female while 37.6% ($n=32$) were male. Most of the participants (84.7%, $n=72$) were between the ages of 18-24 years while the remainder (15.3%, $n=13$) were between the ages of 24-35 years. The vast majority of the participants (77.6%, $n=66$) considered themselves of a European-American background while 9.4% ($n=8$) considered themselves of a African-American background, 8.2% ($n=7$) considered themselves of a Hispanic-American background, and 4.7% ($n=4$) considered themselves of a Native-American background. Most of the participants (90.6%, $n=77$) had completed a bachelors degree while 4.7% ($n=4$) had completed a graduate or professional degree and 4.7% ($n=4$) had taken some graduate or professional courses.

While the participants were all employed as managers, they represented a wide variety of specializations within the hotel corporation and worked in one of a number of properties or subsidiaries. The breakdown of specializations was as follows: Twenty percent ($n=17$) were front desk managers; 16.5% ($n=14$) were restaurant managers; 10.6% ($n=9$) were sales managers; 9.4% ($n=8$) were account managers; 8.2% ($n=7$) were

housekeeping managers: 5.9% ($\underline{n}=5$) were event managers: 5.9% ($\underline{n}=5$) were general management trainees: 4.7% ($\underline{n}=4$) were guest care managers: 4.7% ($\underline{n}=4$) were catering managers: 3.5% ($\underline{n}=3$) were operations managers: 3.5% ($\underline{n}=3$) were conference services managers: 1.2% ($\underline{n}=1$); and 5.9% ($\underline{n}=5$) of the participants did not indicate a specific specialization.

Prior to beginning work at their assigned property, all the managers participated in a one week off-site training program, which familiarized them with the general operations and culture of the hotel corporation. Once this training was completed, the managers then began work at a specific hotel site. These hotels represented one of four property types. The first property type included hotels that are designed to accommodate the needs of the average traveler, and 70.6% of the participants ($\underline{n}=60$) were employed in hotels representing this property type. The second included hotels specifically designed to accommodate the needs of the business traveler, and 11.8% of the participants ($\underline{n}=10$) were employed in hotels representing this property type. The third property type included hotels designed for travelers who are planning to stay at a location for a longer period of time or need additional space, and 12.9% of the participants ($\underline{n}=11$) were employed in hotels representing this property type. The fourth included hotels that are designed to meet the needs of travelers who want more luxurious accommodations than the typical traveler, and 4.7% of the participants ($\underline{n}=4$) managers were employed in hotels representing this property type.

Nearly half of the participants (47.1%, $\underline{n}=40$) had been working in their current position for a period of 10-12 weeks. Twenty-three participants (27.1%) had been working in their current position for a period of 4-6 weeks, while 22 participants

(25.9%) had been working in their current position for a period of 7-9 weeks. A large majority of the participants had not worked for the hotel corporation previously (67.1%, $n=57$). Sixteen participants (18.8%) had worked for the hotel corporation for a slightly longer period (5-12 months) than the time they had been in their current position. A smaller number ($n=12$, 14.1%) had worked for the corporation from 1-5 years. None of the participants had worked for the hotel corporation longer than 5 years. Finally, the vast majority of the participants (90.6%, $n=77$) were recent college graduates while just 4.7% ($n=4$) were previous full-time employees of the hotel corporation and another 4.7% ($n=4$) were previously full-time employees at an organization outside of the hotel corporation.

Instruments

Eight Likert-type scale instruments were used to measure the following variables in this study: formal socialization experiences, informal socialization experiences, socialization message content, role ambiguity, role innovation, organizational commitment, leader-member exchange, and coworker supportiveness. Unless otherwise noted, all scales used a 5 point metric ranging from 1 = "to a very little extent" to 5 = "to a very great extent". One nominal measure was used to measure socialization message sources. Additional single-item Likert-type measures asked participants the extent to which they (a) received socialization content messages, (b) sought out socialization content messages, and (c) received consistent information from the message sources.

Confirmatory factor analysis tests of internal and external consistency were applied to each multi-item instrument to determine its dimensionality (Hunter, 1980; Hunter & Gerbing, 1982). Confirmatory factor analysis tests examine the internal and

external validity for each dimension measured by the scales as well as for the scales as a whole. All retained items met the criteria for internal consistency: (a) face validity; (b) primary factor loading of at least .4; (c) less than 5% of the discrepancies between predicted and observed within-scale item correlations were outside the confidence interval range (at $p < .05$); and (d) a nonsignificant sum of squared errors showing no departure from the hypothesized unidimensional model. All retained items also met the criteria for external consistency or parallelism: (a) items load on the factor of interest, and (b) less than 5% of discrepancies between predicted and observed correlations on between-scale items were outside the confidence interval (at $p < .05$). Reliability of each dimension was assessed through Cronbach's alpha. See Table 2 for item descriptions, factor loadings, and reliability of each scale.

Formal Socialization Experiences. Jones' (1986) Socialization Tactics Scale, composed of 30 items, was used to measure the extent to which employees perceive they have experienced collective, formal, sequential, fixed, and investiture socialization tactics (see Table 2). Due to low reliability, the collective ($\alpha = .32$) and formal ($\alpha = .16$) subscales were dropped from the study's analysis. Of the remaining subscales, two out of five items were dropped from the sequential subscale, one out of five items was dropped from the fixed subscale, one out of five items was dropped from the serial subscale, and one out of five items was dropped from the investiture subscale. Subsequent tests of internal and external consistency revealed that any discrepancies between the observed and predicted correlations did not exceed 5%, and the sum of squared errors was nonsignificant for each of the subscales (Sequential: $\chi^2(3) = .05$, $p > .05$, $\alpha = .68$; Fixed: $\chi^2(6) = 2.13$, $p > .05$, $\alpha = .62$; Serial: $\chi^2(6) = .30$, $p > .05$, $\alpha = .70$;

Investiture: $\chi^2(6)=3.23$, $p>.05$. $\alpha = .65$).

Informal Socialization Experiences. An informal socialization tactics instrument, composed of 20 items, was created to measure the extent to which employees experience stories, informal initiations/rituals, group orientation/norm reinforcement, social/recreational activities, and trial by fire tactics identified by Brown (1985), Moreland and Levine (1989), Bullis and Bach (1989), and McCall, Lombardo, and Morrison (1988). Each subscale contained 4 items for each of these tactics (see Table 2). Confirmatory factor analyses of internal and external consistency retained three out of four items for the stories subscale, three out of four items for the initiations/rituals subscale, all four items for the group orientation/norm reinforcement subscale, all four items for the social/recreational activities subscale, and all four items for the trial by fire subscale. These analyses found that the number of discrepancies between the observed and predicted correlation did not exceed 5% and the sum of squared errors was nonsignificant for each subscale (Stories: $\chi^2(3)=.03$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .59$; Initiations/Rituals: $\chi^2(3)=.03$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .82$; Group Orientation/Norm Reinforcement: $\chi^2(6)=1.95$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .56$; Social/Recreational Activities: $\chi^2(6)=.06$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .87$; Trial by Fire: $\chi^2(6)=.03$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .76$).

Socialization Message Content. A 30-item, modified version of Chao et al.'s (1994) Socialization Content Scale was used to assess the extent to which employees report messages about performance proficiency, organizational history, work unit history, people, politics, language, and organizational goals and values being emphasized during organizational entry. For the purposes of this study, the two history subscales were combined into one organizational history subscale, and five items were used to measure

each dimension. In addition, Chao et al.'s (1994) original scale asked if participants possessed knowledge about the content areas, but did not reflect whether messages had been received. Consequently, as reported in Table 2 all items were reworded to better reflect the extent to which information has been emphasized (through a message) about each content area. After dropping one item from the performance proficiency subscale, three items from the organizational history subscale, one item from the people subscale, one item from the politics subscale, two items from the language subscale, and one item from the organizational goals and values subscale, the remaining items were internally and externally consistent and the sum of squared errors was nonsignificant (Performance Proficiency: $\chi^2(6)=.08$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .88$; Organizational History: $\chi^2(1)=.01$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .73$; People: $\chi^2(6)=.07$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .77$; Politics: $\chi^2(6)=.90$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .71$; Language: $\chi^2(3)=.03$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .87$; Organizational Goals and Values: $\chi^2(6)=.12$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .85$).

Role Ambiguity. Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman's (1970) six-item Role Ambiguity Scale was used to assess the extent to which employees are unclear about their role requirements (see Table 2). After two items were dropped, the scale passed the tests for internal and external consistency with a nonsignificant sum of squared errors ($\chi^2(6)=.21$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .60$).

Role Innovation. Jones' (1986) five item Role Orientation Scale was used to measure the extent to which employees engage in role innovation (see Table 2). After three items were dropped, the remaining items met the tests for internal and external consistency with a nonsignificant sum of squared errors ($\chi^2(1)=.01$, $p>.05$, $\alpha = .61$).

Organizational Commitment. A 10 item shortened version of Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian's (1974) Organizational Commitment Scale used by Jones (1986) assessed the extent to which employees are committed and loyal to their organization (see Table 2). After six items were dropped, the scale passed the tests for internal and external consistency with a nonsignificant sum of squared errors ($\chi^2(6)=2.66, p>.05, \alpha = .55$).

Leader-Member Exchange. Schriesheim, Neider, Scandura, & Tepper's (1992) six-item LMX Scale was used to measure the extent to which employees perceive a high quality leader-member exchange relationship (see Table 2). After four items were dropped, the scale passed tests for internal and external consistency with a nonsignificant sum of squared errors ($\chi^2(1)=.00, p>.05, \alpha = .83$).

Coworker Supportiveness. Taylor and Bowers' (1972) four-item Coworker Supportiveness Scale was used to measure the extent to which employees perceive their coworkers to be friendly and approachable (see Table 2). After two items were dropped, the remaining items met tests for internal and external consistency with a nonsignificant sum of squared errors ($\chi^2(1)=.03, p>.05, \alpha = .56$).

Socialization Message Sources. To measure the sources of socialization messages, participants were presented with six descriptions of socialization message content (based on Chao, et al., 1994) and asked to indicate the organization, supervisor, coworkers, or subordinates as the primary source for each message content area (see Table 3 for descriptions of socialization message content). Subsequently, to measure the extent to which Socialization Message Content was obtained as the result of information receiving or information seeking, following the six descriptions of Socialization Message

Content participants were first asked to indicate the extent to which they obtained each message content area as a result of others' initiating the information exchange (information receiving). Participants were then asked the extent to which they obtained each message content area as a result of their own initiation of the information request (information seeking). In addition, to measure the extent to which the participants received consistent information from message sources, participants were asked to assess the extent to which the organization, supervisor, coworkers, and subordinates provided them with information that was consistent with information provided by the other sources. Again, participants were asked to respond to the single item, five-point Likert-type scale adjacent each of the Socialization Message Sources.

In sum, the initial survey was composed of measures of (a) formal socialization experiences, (b) informal socialization experiences, (c) socialization message content, (d) the extent of information receiving, information seeking, and information consistency from socialization message sources, and (e) demographic characteristics. The second survey was composed of measures of (a) role ambiguity, (b) role innovation, (c) organizational commitment, (d) leader-member exchange, and (e) coworker supportiveness.

Analysis

Data from this study were analyzed in a number of ways. First, confirmatory factor analysis tests assessed the internal and external consistency of Likert-type scales. Second, descriptive statistics were computed for each variable. These statistics were used, in part, to answer Research Questions 1 and 6. Third, a correlation matrix of formal and informal socialization experiences was used to test Research Question 2. Fourth, a

series of paired t-tests was used to answer Research Questions 3 and 5. Fifth, straight percentages with a Chi-Square test for differences were used to answer Research Question 4.

Based on the results of the confirmatory factor analysis, a structural equation model analysis (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982) was used to test the fit of relationships proposed in the Direct Predictor Model and the Mediated Predictor Model. These analyses also allowed Hypotheses 1-6 to be examined. Stepwise multiple regression was also used to test the unique contributions of the independent variables in the Direct Predictor Model. The impact of the moderating variables proposed in the Moderated Model and Hypothesis 7 were not included as part of the structural equation model test because moderator variables cannot be analyzed in a structural equation model (Arbuckle, 1997; Hunter & Gerbing, 1982). Consequently, this model was tested through stepwise multiple regression analyses of interaction effects by testing product terms for potential interactions and testing the significance of their impact (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Berry & Feldman, 1985). In addition, a moderator median split analysis (Jaccard, Turrisi, & Wan, 1990; Berry & Feldman, 1985) was conducted for significant interactions to determine the direction of the moderator relationship and to provide a further test of the significance of the moderator relationship. This analysis dichotomizes the moderator variable with a median split and runs separate regressions at the two levels of the moderator. One can then identify the direction of the moderator relationship. A t-test is then used to detect the significance of the difference between the two unstandardized regression coefficients.

CHAPTER 3: Results

Socialization Experiences

The first research question investigated the extent to which formal and informal socialization tactics described newcomer socialization experiences. In general, newcomers experienced more formal than informal tactics. As indicated in Table 4, newcomers in this study reported experiencing formal socialization tactics at a moderate level while experiencing informal tactics at a moderate to low level. Specifically, in terms of formally designed experiences, investiture tactics were experienced most readily ($\underline{M} = 4.00/5$), followed by sequential ($\underline{M} = 3.91/5$), serial ($\underline{M} = 3.64/5$), and fixed tactics ($\underline{M} = 3.36/5$). Of informal, non-organizationally orchestrated experiences, newcomers reported experiencing group orientation most often ($\underline{M} = 3.74/5$), followed by stories ($\underline{M} = 3.31/5$), trial-by-fire experiences ($\underline{M} = 2.79/5$), social activities ($\underline{M} = 2.52/5$), and informal initiations ($\underline{M} = 2.18/5$).

Relationship between Formal and Informal Socialization Experiences

The second research question inquired into the relationship between formal and informal socialization experiences. As reported in Table 4, investiture tactics were significantly related to four of five informal socialization experiences. Specifically, investiture tactics were significantly ($p < .05$) negatively related to informal initiation ($\underline{r} = -.45$) and trial-by-fire experiences ($\underline{r} = -.39$), but positively related to social activities ($\underline{r} = .26$) and group orientation tactics ($\underline{r} = .23$). None of the other formal experiences was significantly related to more than two of the informal experiences.

In turn, informal initiations were significantly ($p < .05$) and negatively related to investiture tactics to serial ($\underline{r} = -.28$) and fixed tactics ($\underline{r} = -.26$). Further, trial-by-fire

experiences were significantly ($p < .05$) and negatively related to serial ($r = -.56$) and fixed tactics ($r = -.36$).

Information Receiving versus Seeking of Socialization Messages

The third research question assessed newcomers' acquisition of socialization content primarily as a result of their active information seeking efforts or receiving information from others. Results (see Table 5) indicated that performance proficiency message content was gained equally through passive information receiving from others ($M = 4.09/5$) and as the result of active information seeking efforts ($M = 4.28/5$). Similarly, no significant differences were present in how often language message content was obtained through information receiving ($M = 3.95/5$) and information seeking ($M = 4.04/5$). However, newcomers acquired history message content significantly more often through information receiving ($M = 3.88/5$) than through information seeking ($M = 3.24/5$). Message receiving as opposed to message seeking was also the primary medium for acquiring message content about people ($M = 4.02/5$ vs. $M = 3.69/5$, respectively), politics ($M = 3.78/5$ vs. $M = 3.49/5$, respectively), and organizational goals and values ($M = 4.27/5$ vs. $M = 3.74/5$, respectively).

Primary Information Sources

The fourth research question asked who (the organization, supervisors, coworkers, or subordinates) were the primary sources of information for each of the socialization message content areas. The majority of newcomers (54.1%) identified their supervisor as the primary source for performance proficiency message content while 30.6 percent indicated their coworkers, 9.4% selected the organization, and 5.9% picked their subordinates as their primary source of performance proficiency messages ($\chi^2 = 50.58$).

3 DF, $p < .05$). In contrast, coworkers were reported to be the primary source (61.2%) of people messages while 17.6% selected their supervisor, 14.1% reported the organization, and 7.1% selected their subordinates ($\chi^2 = 61.31$, 3 DF, $p < .05$). Coworkers were also identified by almost half (48.2%) of the participants as the primary source of politics message content, followed by the supervisor (32.9%), the organization (14.1%), and subordinates (4.7%) ($\chi^2 = 38.53$, 3 DF, $p < .05$).

In terms of history and language messages, the distribution of primary information sources was more balanced. For information on the history of the organization, 35.3% identified their coworkers, 34.1% selected their supervisor, 20% reported the organization, and 10.6% noted their subordinates as the primary message source ($\chi^2 = 14.34$, 3 DF, $p < .05$). For the primary source of information for organization- and unit-language, 36.5% identified their coworkers, 32.9% selected supervisor, 27.1% reported the organization, and 3.5% selected subordinates ($\chi^2 = 22.44$, 3 DF, $p < .05$). Finally, the organization was identified as the primary source of goals and values message information by over half of the participants (50.6%), followed by the supervisor (40%), coworkers (8.2%), and subordinates (1.2%) ($\chi^2 = 58.76$, 3 DF, $p < .05$).

Message Consistency

The fifth research question investigated the extent to which newcomers received consistent information from the organization, supervisors, coworkers, and subordinates during organizational entry. In general, newcomers reported that their information sources were moderately consistent with information provided by the other sources (Organization: M = 3.84/5, SD = .98, n = 64; Supervisor: M = 4.13/5, SD = .97, n = 64; Coworkers: M = 4.06/5, SD = .85, n = 64; Subordinates: M = 3.29/5, SD = .96, n = 63).

An analysis of differences in the consistency of message sources indicated that subordinates provided less consistent information compared to other sources (Organization vs. Subordinates: $t = 3.64$, $p = .001$; Supervisor vs. Subordinates: $t = 5.35$, $p = .001$; Coworkers vs. Subordinates: $t = 5.75$, $p = .001$). Other differences in message consistency between sources were not significant.

Communication Relationships

The sixth research question inquired into the quality of newcomers' relationships with coworkers and supervisors. Both of these relationships were of a high quality. More specifically, the participants indicated that their coworkers were highly supportive ($M = 4.21/5$, $SD = .73$). Additionally, they also reported a high level of Leader Member Exchange with their supervisors ($M = 4.02/5$, $SD = .70$).

Direct Predictor Model

The first hypothesis represented the direct predictor model (see Figure 1), positing that (a) informal socialization experiences, socialization messages, and communication relationships would lead to reduced role ambiguity as well as increased role innovation and organizational commitment and (b) formal socialization experiences would lead to reduced role ambiguity and role innovation as well as increased organizational commitment. This hypothesis was partially supported. In order to identify a more parsimonious direct predictor model, a second order factor analysis was attempted to test the presence of second order factors (e.g. formal socialization experiences) behind the study's variables. This analysis failed to identify the presence of any second order factors. Subsequently, a global path analysis tested the individual links between the variables as identified in Figure 1. Results of this analysis indicated that the direct

predictor model represented a good fit to the data ($\chi^2 = .45$, 3 DF, $p > .90$). Three of 17 links between the predictors and role ambiguity were significant at $p < .05$. Three significant links were also present as predictors of role innovation and organizational commitment respectively. Table 6 lists the path coefficients for all predictor variables with all outcome variables.

In an effort to identify a revised direct predictor model with a better fit to the data, a model including only those links that were significant was tested. This model was judged to be a better fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 13.61$, 21 DF, $p > .925$) than the global model as indicated by the higher p value. Results indicated that role ambiguity was significantly predicted (at $p < .05$) by the informal socialization experience of trial-by-fire tactics ($\beta = .28$) and by performance proficiency socialization messages ($\beta = -.37$). Politics messages ($\beta = -.21$) no longer significantly predicted role ambiguity as they had in the original direct predictor model. Role innovation was significantly predicted by the formal socialization experience of investiture tactics ($\beta = -.42$) and the communication relationship variable of coworker supportiveness ($\beta = .29$), but the informal socialization experience of group orientation ($\beta = .21$) was no longer significantly predictive as it had been in the original direct predictor model.

In turn, socialization messages of language ($\beta = -.26$) and organizational goals and values ($\beta = .22$) significantly predicted organizational commitment. The link between the formal socialization experience of serial tactics ($\beta = -.04$) and organizational commitment was no longer significant as it had been in the original direct predictor model.

To further test the direct predictor model, stepwise multiple regression was used

to identify which independent variables were significantly contributing to the outcomes after eliminating those independent variables that were not significant contributors. These analyses yielded results that supported the revised direct predictor model. Table 7 reports the complete results of the stepwise multiple regression analyses of the direct predictor model.

The Mediated Model

Hypotheses pertaining to the mediated model (Figure 2) predicted that the impact of formal and informal socialization experiences on role ambiguity, role innovation, and organizational commitment were mediated by the content of received socialization messages. A global path analysis tested the mediated model and results indicated this model to be a good fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 36.08$, 45 DF, $p > .80$). Table 8 reports all the path coefficients in the test of the mediated model.

In terms of the hypotheses pertaining to the mediated model, the second hypothesis, predicting that formal socialization experiences would emphasize messages about performance proficiency, organizational goals and values, and organizational history more than messages about people, politics, and language, was partially supported. Fixed tactics were significantly (at $p < .05$) associated with performance proficiency ($\beta = .27$), politics ($\beta = .24$), and goals and values ($\beta = .32$) message content. Serial tactics positively predicted newcomer's receiving performance proficiency message content ($\beta = .42$), but were negatively associated with language message content ($\beta = -.33$). Investiture tactics, on the other hand, were significantly associated with people message content ($\beta = .30$). Sequential tactics were not significantly predictive of the message content areas.

The third hypothesis, which posited that informal socialization experiences would emphasize messages about performance proficiency, people, politics, and language more than messages about history and organizational goals and values, was also partially supported. Newcomers' experiences of stories positively predicted people ($\beta = .27$) and politics messages ($\beta = .25$). In contrast, informal initiation experiences resulted in newcomers receiving reduced levels of language message content ($\beta = -.24$). Group orientation, social activities, and trial-by-fire tactics were not significantly related to the reception of the message content areas.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that performance proficiency and language messages would be more direct predictors of reduced role ambiguity than formal socialization experiences and was partially supported by the test of the mediated model. Specifically, performance proficiency messages resulted in reduced levels of role ambiguity ($\beta = -.50$) while language message content was not predictive of role ambiguity. In turn, earlier analyses indicated that newcomers' formal socialization experiences were not predictive of role ambiguity.

The fifth hypothesis argued that messages of performance proficiency and politics would be more direct predictors of increased role innovation than informal socialization experiences, and was not supported. Neither performance proficiency nor politics message content was a significant predictor of role innovation while group orientation was predictive of role innovation.

Finally, the sixth hypothesis, which stated that people, organizational goals and values, organizational history, and work unit history messages would be more direct predictors of increased organizational commitment than formal socialization experiences.

was not supported. None of the predicted message content areas was significantly related to organizational commitment. Consistent with earlier analyses, language message content had a significant relationship, and it resulted in lower levels of organizational commitment ($\beta = -.27$). On the other hand, organizational goals and values messages which had significantly predicted organizational commitment in earlier analyses was no longer significantly predictive at $p < .05$ ($\beta = -.21$) in this analysis.

In sum, the mediated model did not provide as good a fit to the data as the direct predictor model due to the lower p value, although several mediated relationships were identified. Additional tests did not reveal other mediated relationships between formal socialization experiences and role innovation or organizational commitment. However, analyses revealed a previously unspecified mediator of role ambiguity (see Figure 4). In this case, fixed and serial tactics were positive predictors of receiving performance proficiency messages ($\beta = .34$ and $.46$, respectively), which along with sequential tactics resulted in lower levels of role ambiguity ($\beta = -.40$ and $-.22$, respectively). In addition, trial-by-fire tactics resulted in higher levels of role ambiguity ($\beta = .28$). This model ($\chi^2 = .43$, 4 DF, $p > .975$) represented a better fit to the data than the direct predictor model, the revised direct predictor model, or the mediated model as indicated by its higher p value.

Moderated Model

The moderated model, proposed in the seventh hypothesis, posited that LMX and coworker supportiveness would moderate the impact of socialization message content on role ambiguity, role innovation, and organizational commitment such that even lower levels of role ambiguity and even higher levels of role innovation as well as



organizational commitment would result from socialization message content. Stepwise multiple regression analysis of the impact of the interaction between LMX and the message content areas as well as the interaction between coworker supportiveness and the message content areas found only limited support for this model. First, none of the interaction terms had a significant impact on role innovation or organizational commitment. Second, while the interaction of performance proficiency message content with coworker supportiveness did have a significant impact on role ambiguity ($\beta = -.54$) in the direction proposed in Hypothesis 7, this finding can largely be attributed to the strong relationship between performance proficiency message content and role ambiguity. More specifically, when the sample was equally split between high and low levels of coworker supportiveness (above and below the median), the impact of performance proficiency message content was stronger for higher levels of coworker supportiveness ($\beta = -.64$) as compared to lower levels of coworker supportiveness ($\beta = -.54$) as proposed in Hypothesis 7. However, since the median of coworker supportiveness was so high ($Mdn = 4.50$, $M = 4.21$), there were not a substantial number of cases that could truly qualify as low coworker supportiveness. Furthermore, the moderator median split analysis revealed that the difference between these regression coefficients was not significant ($t = .78$, $81\ DF$, $p > .05$), thus most of the impact of the interaction term could be attributed to the influence of performance proficiency message content.

Interaction between politics message content and LMX also had a significant, but weak impact on role ambiguity ($\beta = -.20$), again in the hypothesized direction and with a $R^2 = .44$. Yet, the interaction's impact on role ambiguity could largely be attributed to

politics message content, which had a significant but weak impact only in the direct predictor model ($\beta = -.20$). LMX did not significantly impact role ambiguity in any of the models.

CHAPTER 4: Discussion

Despite the extensive amount of research and theory in the area of organizational socialization, the link between conceptual and operational definitions of relevant constructs is frequently unclear and often shaky. Studies examining communication during organizational entry assimilation often only address new hires' structured socialization experiences and ignore the efforts of incumbents, training, and work experiences in shaping newcomers' inculcation and acclimation (Jablin, 1987; Miller, Fritz-Harden, & Hart, 1999). This research advances knowledge of these linkages in three important ways. First, this study's findings suggest that the operational focus on institutional tactics has been simplistic, considering the broad theoretical definition of organizational socialization. Second, socialization experiences, whether formal or informal, only represent a portion of the socialization process while communication factors are central to the essence of organizational socialization. Third, results herein make a strong case for future investigations to examine both informal experiences and communication factors as central elements of organizational socialization.

In this chapter each of these contributions will be discussed by examining the study's findings. At the same time, limitations of this study will be discussed. Finally, some thoughts about directions for future research will be presented.

Formal and Informal Socialization Experiences

To date, much of the research in terms of socialization experiences focuses on the impact of the institutionalized tactics (associated with formal experiences in this study) described by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and operationalized by Jones (1986) (e.g., Allen and Meyer, 1990; Ashforth and Saks, 1996; Black, 1992; Laker & Steffy, 1995;

Orpen, 1995). These studies argue that the absence of institutionalized tactics infers individualized socialization experiences, which represents a major weakness in current socialization research. In fact, if newcomers do not experience institutionalized tactics as measured by Jones' (1986) scale, researchers have little way of detecting the extent to which newcomers received input and/or feedback from coworkers, had access to a set body of training materials on computer disk or in manuals, or were truly left on their own to figure their jobs out. In contrast, by explicitly broadening the operationalization of socialization experiences to include both formal and informal elements and identifying how these elements relate to each other, this study moves beyond the weaknesses imbedded in prior socialization tactic research.

A chief contribution of this investigation is the conceptualization and measurement of newcomers' informal socialization experiences. New managers report encountering moderate levels of informal tactics such as informal initiations, social activities, and trial-by-fire experiences. In particular, stories and group orientations are very common. Other recent investigations extend beyond Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) and Jones' (1986) frameworks. For instance, Flion and Pepermans (1998) examine the impact of a number of "orientation tactics" on job satisfaction. Tactics include a tour of the department, introduction to colleagues, explanation about task responsibilities and explanation toward the newcomer, overview of the organization, explanation of company values, explanation of compensation, meeting with higher management, provision of safety information, explanation of employee and union relationships, description of economic factors influencing employee work, design of an apprentice program, explanation about job specific rules and procedures, assignment of a mentor, and completion of an intermediate



evaluation. Likewise, Cawyer and Friedrich (1998) examine the impact of a host of orientation activities on new communication faculty members' satisfaction. These activities include departmental orientation, discussion of teaching expectations, discussion of research expectations, discussion of available research resources, explanation of internal and external research funding, explanation of expectations for service, explanation of first year progress toward tenure, explanation of expectations for promotion, support from chair/director, support from fellow faculty members, support from staff, receipt of social activities, discussion of expectations for departmental citizenship, orientation to institutional and community resources, meeting with community members, and discussion about consulting and outside activities.

While many of the above numerous actions mirror either the formal experiences identified by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) or the informal activities identified in this investigation, by-in-large they reflect actions pertinent to specific occupations or organizations and may not be appropriate for sampling a wide range of newcomer experiences. In contrast, this investigation provides a theoretical basis for distinguishing between formal and informal socialization experiences in such a way that subsequent operational definitions may be used to assess the socialization of a broad population. Thus, while recognizing the limitations to the measurement of newcomer socialization, this study moves beyond Van Maanen and Schien's (1979) and Jones' (1986) institutional tactics and provides researchers with a greater array of measurement options.

A number of scholars (Chao, 1997; Jablin, 1987; Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998) suggest that formal and informal socialization experiences occur in conjunction with each other rather than in opposition to each other. In this study, newcomers do not report

experiencing formal and informal socialization tactics as occurring at equal levels. In addition, with the exception of investiture tactics and a variety of informal experiences, there are few significant correlations between formal and informal experiences. Yet, it is premature, based on this limited sample, to suggest formal and informal socialization experiences do not co-occur. Rather, the lack of support for their co-occurrence may stem from this sample's organizational context (Colarelli, 1996). Nonetheless, this study's findings indicate that the relative impact of formal and informal socialization may be equally important. In several instances, both formal and informal socialization experiences were both found to be significant predictors of socialization outcomes. Consequently, their importance to employee adjustment may be the more important question to address in future research.

Several scholars (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998; Fisher, 1986; Saks & Ashforth, 1997) argue that the context is likely to influence organizations' choice and the subsequent helpfulness of socialization tactics. For example, Ashforth, Saks and Lee's (1998) report that mechanistic organizational structures (i.e., characterized by specialized jobs, formalized behaviors, centralized decision making, chain of command communication), organizational size, and jobs of high motivational potential are positively associated with Jones' (1986) institutional socialization tactics. In this investigation, the context of a large, international hotel corporation with numerous job specializations may contribute to new managers' experiencing more formal than informal socialization tactics. While research participants worked at a variety of different hotel brands and properties, no significant differences in responses due to hotel brands are present. Future research should examine work contexts where informal experiences are a

pivotal aspect to socialization in order to understand more clearly the relationship between formal and informal socialization experiences.

Formal tactics' prominence in this study may also reflect the timing of the dissemination of the survey, which came after all newcomers participated in a formal training program. The recentness of the training program constituted a major part of their socialization at the time of data collection. Saks and Ashforth (1997) argue that "the structure provided by institutionalized socialization may help alleviate the debilitating uncertainty described by URT (Uncertainty Reduction Theory" (p. 257), and may be more important to newcomer adjustment during the first several months of work. It can also be argued that formal tactics occur more frequently and more intensely at the early stages of employment as organizations "front-load" their orientation programs so that most of the structured activities occur at the beginning of newcomers' employment (Wanous, 1992). If the relationship between socialization experiences and outcomes are dynamic and change over time, informal experiences grow in importance – especially as newcomers become embedded in work units and establish relationships. It is important that scholars follow Saks and Ashforth's (1997) suggestion to investigate socialization activities over multiple time periods in an effort to understand socialization's dynamic processes.

Communication Factors

The comparison of the three models of communication during socialization in this investigation also creates a stronger link between the theoretical and operational definitions of organizational socialization. Clearly, communication is a central feature of any socialization act. This investigation operationalizes communication by measuring the

extent to which particular message content was received, the supportive relationships of supervisors and coworkers, the sources of message content, and the extent to which newcomers engaged in information seeking and receiving. A primary focus of the study pertains to the test of three models that sought to explain the function of organizational message-sending during socialization.

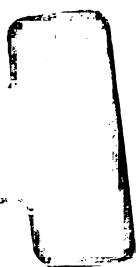
Direct Predictor Model. The direct predictor model posits that communication messages, along with formal and informal socialization experiences and communication relationships, each contribute directly to newcomer outcomes of role ambiguity, role innovation, and organizational commitment. As such, this model is helpful in identifying the relative contribution of socialization experiences and communication factors to the specified outcomes. Results indicate that elements of experiences (sequential tactics, trial by fire tactics, investiture tactics, group orientation tactics) and communication (performance proficiency message content, politics message content, coworker supportiveness) influence newcomers' role ambiguity and role innovation. In this model, communication factors are important to understanding how socialization impacts newcomer adjustment.

Mediated Model. The mediated model posits that the impact of formal and informal socialization experiences on newcomers depends upon the messages that are communicated in association with those experiences. In other words, a fixed socialization tactic is only as influential as the communication message associated with it. Tests of this model and its final version are some of the most intriguing findings of the study. The final model, which identifies the importance of performance proficiency messages in reducing role ambiguity, provides the best explanation of any of the path analytic models.

In addition, three out of the five hypotheses for this model were also at least partially supported, providing further support for this model.

Performance proficiency messages seem to be a key element in newcomers' adaptation to their roles. Even the additional significant links of sequential tactics and trial-by-fire experiences to role ambiguity have aspects of performance proficiency message content. Sequential tactics tell the newcomer what he or she needs to do to move from one role to the next. In contrast, since newcomers really do not know what they are doing in a crisis situation, trial-by-fire tactics do not provide directions for newcomers and appear to increase their role ambiguity. These findings are not all that surprising. If an employee receives explicit messages about how to do their job well then he or she is going to be more likely to understand his or her role.

It is possible that tactics identified in other studies primarily provide performance proficiency message content. For example, Cawyer and Friedrich's (1998) orientation activities of discussion of teaching expectations, discussion of research expectations, and such convey message content that deals specifically with performance proficiency for new university professors. Cawyer and Friedrich (1998) also report that faculty are generally more satisfied with the job interview than with the orientation activities, possibly because they received more detailed performance proficiency information (such as teaching, research, service, and promotion expectations) during the job interview than in the orientation. Similarly, Flion and Pepermans (1998) find that orientation tactics such as explanations about task responsibilities and expectations help to increase job satisfaction. These findings also build upon Chao et al.'s (1994) work, which finds that knowledge of performance proficiency information has its strongest positive correlation



with identity resolution (which is similar to role clarity, the opposite of role ambiguity), but also has positive correlations with other indicators of career success including personal income, career involvement, adaptability, and job satisfaction.

The importance of performance proficiency message content is also reflected in Tierney's (1997) interviews of over three hundred faculty in higher education, which find that the lack of clear-cut performance proficiency information in reference to organizational expectations is one of the weaknesses of their socialization.

One point these interviews underscore is the value and import of looking at the implicit factors of socialization rather than the flash points that Van Maanen noted were overstudied. With few exceptions the participants did not speak of presidential speeches, convocations, or intensive introductory training sessions as ways in which they learned about the organization. Instead, they emphasized that the goals for tenure were unclear: they knew they needed to "produce"- to be a triathlete, one person said- and that the work took a phenomenal amount of time...Grand markers that conveyed institutional meaning were absent, as were explicit, consistent messages on a more intimate level about what really mattered. (pp. 10-11)

In addition, Stohl (1986) reports that 48% of newcomers' memorable messages deal with the topic of role behavior and 10% pertain to evaluation. Messages related to how to perform the role are among the most remembered and consequently, are probably among the most important messages during organizational socialization. Consequently, employers should consider the extent to which they convey performance proficiency messages during entry. Employees who receive detailed information about how to perform their tasks will be more certain of the nature of their roles (Katz & Kahn, 1978), better adjusted (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), and, most likely, more successful employees (Chao et al., 1994; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). In short, the mediated model suggests that the information contained in the socialization messages are important factors, not just the tactic through which messages may or may not be communicated.

Moderated Model. The moderated model posits that the impact of socialization messages on new hires varies in keeping with the supportiveness of the supervisory and coworker relationships. In other words, messages communicated by supportive focal group members will have a greater impact compared to those sent by non-supportive others. This model did not find support in this study. At least two explanations may account for the lack of support for the moderated model.

First, the study is limited by the fact that most of the participants report generally high levels of coworker supportiveness and leader-member exchange. The sample is somewhat skewed toward participants who have good relationships with both their coworkers and their supervisors. Thus, variance in responses is limited, and it is difficult to conduct an effective test of the moderator relationship.

A second explanation is that the relationships with supervisors and coworkers are not that influential in determining the impact of message content on socialization outcomes. Most of the socialization messages assessed in this study, other than performance proficiency and maybe politics, do not have a significant impact on role ambiguity, role innovation, or organizational commitment. As such, the overall relationship between the new employee and their coworkers and supervisors may be more important in directly determining socialization outcomes rather than moderating the impact of content. As long as the information is received, the new employee is going to understand their job, regardless of whom the information is from. In addition, it may also be the case that relationships with an employee's role set are a more important factor in determining access to information (Stohl, 1986) than the extent to which that information impacts socialization outcomes, which was the focus of this study. Future research will

need to clarify this issue by investigating the extent to which particular kinds of message content were communicated by different sources.

Information Sources. Despite the just mentioned limitation about this investigation's inadequate examination of access to information, findings herein suggest that coworkers are vitally important sources of information during socialization. A vast amount of literature attests to the importance of communication between supervisors and subordinates (e.g., Jablin, 1980; Jablin, 1981; Jablin, 1982; Tjosvold, 1984; Wheelless, Wheelless, & Howard, 1984; Pincus, 1986), but research on communication between peers in organizations is relatively new (e.g., Comer, 1991; Sias & Jablin, 1995). While the findings of this investigation indicate the supervisor is an important source of information in all the content areas with the exception of people, coworkers are equally important source of information in all the content areas except goals and values. These findings further support the trend toward investigating the nature of and the impact of coworker communication.

This investigation also finds that peers are a primary source of information for people and politics message content. Since newcomers generally operate in a work unit, the coworkers are in the best position to indicate their acceptance into the work unit (people). In addition, it may also be the case that coworkers are the ones who can tell newcomers how the balance of power really functions in the organization (politics), or at least newcomers perceive that they are the best source of that kind of information. Newcomers may perceive the supervisor as the main source of information for performance proficiency because (a) the supervisor is mainly concerned with employee performance and (b) newcomers are concerned with the evaluation the supervisor can

provide and listen most intently to what their supervisor tells them about this area.

Another, notable content area concerns goals and values messages, which a majority of the participants indicate the organization as the primary source of information. This hotel corporation spends a considerable amount of time during the formal training discussing the goals and values of the corporation, so it is not surprising that these messages are acknowledged. It is also not surprising that the other sources are not viewed as primary for this content area. In other non-managerial settings, coworkers may be the best source for newcomers to understand the “real” goals and values of the organization (Zurcher, 1983).

In terms of consistency between the sources of information, it is surprising that subordinates are significantly less consistent than the other sources. Three different reasons may explain this finding. First, subordinates may not have enough of a knowledge base to pass along accurate information to their new supervisors. Second, the new supervisors may not view subordinates as credible sources of information and may perceive the information received from them as less accurate. Third, this investigation is limited in that no measure was taken of how many managers actually had subordinates underneath them. It may be the case that only a small number did, and thus, it would be difficult to compare the results for subordinates as an information source to the results for the other sources. The consistency between the other sources is also present in Stohl (1986) who reports that the consistency of messages held across organizational levels from vice-president to coworkers. However, those messages communicated informally outside of official organizational channels are the more memorable ones.

Information Seeking vs. Information Receiving. The final area of communication during socialization that this investigation studied is the issue of information seeking versus information receiving. In general, newcomers engage in information seeking during their socialization at least at a moderate level, which is consistent with what has been found and theorized in the work of other scholars (e.g., Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993; Myers, 1998) who argue that information seeking is an extremely important means by which newcomers obtain information. At the same time, passive information receiving is also just as important if not more important means of obtaining information (Ashford, 1986). In this investigation, particular kinds of information are more likely to be communicated through passive information receiving. History and organizational goals and values message content may be more likely to be communicated through information receiving because they are often common topics of formal socialization programs. People and politics message content may be more likely to be communicated through information receiving because there are status issues involved with that kind of information that may make a newcomer more hesitant to engage in a lot of information seeking about those types of information. It is not as easy to ask others whether one has been accepted into the work group or who the “real” power brokers are in the organization due to the fear of looking “nosy” or ambitious (Miller & Jablin, 1991). In turn, information related to performance proficiency is equally likely to be obtained through either information seeking or information receiving. Newcomers are often encouraged to ask specific questions related to how to perform their job duties well. The same may be the case with language, which is often related specifically to the performance of job duties, so newcomers may feel less hesitant to ask questions about

that kind of information.

Additional Limitations of the Study

While a number of limitations of this study are mentioned to this point, four additional limitations merit discussion.

First, as mentioned earlier, the sample for this study was limited to new hotel managers working for the same corporation. This sample stands in contrast to other socialization studies that typically track graduates of business programs who work in a wide variety of professions (e.g., Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Jones, 1986; Louis et al., 1983; Orpen, 1995). In addition, the participants in this study were self-selected to some extent. Although the sample was targeted by the hotel corporation and the researchers, the participants made the decision as to whether they were going to participate or not. It is possible that some common characteristic, such as a sense of responsibility to the organization, led the participants to be more motivated to complete the surveys (Schmitt & Klimoski, 1991). Consequently, the generalizability of these results to other organizational cultures and professions is uncertain as unique characteristics of this hotel corporation and the participants may contribute to this study's outcomes. At the same time, it should be noted that the participants did work in a variety of positions and locations. Each property has its own organizational culture, which may counter the limitation of using one organization and provide some degree of broader generalizability. In addition, some notable socialization studies assess employees in the same profession and even the same organization (e.g., Black, 1992; Zahrly & Tosi, 1989).

Second, the number of subjects ($N = 85$) limits the statistical power of this study to detect potentially important, but weak relationships. The likelihood of detecting

statistically significant relationships increases as the sample size increases (Schmitt & Klimoski, 1991). Consequently, the statistical tests in this study may not have sufficient power to detect significant, weak relationships based on this sample size (Sachs, 1984). For example, in this study, the statistical power of the test to detect significant correlations at $p < .05$ was equal to .52, a moderate power level (Welkowitz, Ewen, & Cohen, 1971). It would have been preferable to reach higher power levels, which could have been done with a larger sample size. In addition, the sample size may also contribute to the loss of items and even variables such as formal socialization tactics. Wide variations in responses from a small sample size are more likely to decrease the reliability of items and scales due to increased standard errors (Schmitt & Klimoski, 1991). Yet, with regard to this particular sample, the length and longitudinal nature of the survey may have discouraged some employees from filling it out. In addition, the hotel corporation limited the researcher's access to the participants to mail contact. Telephone calls or e-mails may have increased the sample size. In a voluntary study, more active means of encouragement may be necessary to increase the response rate (Schmitt & Klimoski, 1991). Still, the number of participants in this study is comparable to other notable socialization studies whose sample sizes range from 91 to 105 (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990, Laker & Steffy, 1995; Orpen, 1995).

Third, the loss of the collective and formal socialization tactics subscales limits this study's comparison to other socialization studies utilizing Jones' (1986) scale (e.g., Baker & Feldman, 1990; Black, 1992; Orpen, 1995). In this case, confusion on the part of the participants over the nature of their socialization experiences may have contributed to the loss of these subscales. For example, all the managers went through a group socialization

experience (i.e., collective tactic) when they went through the one-week off-site training program. They were surveyed after they started to work in their new positions where they may have encountered individual socialization tactics. The lack of clear references to the off-site training programs or the start of work in their unit may have led to a mixed impression of this particular aspect of their experience, creating an unreliable measure. At the same time, this study argues that Jones' (1986) scale represents only a portion of socialization experiences and the measurement of other tactics may enhance our understanding of their overall socialization experience.

A final limitation centers around the use of a single item measure to identify information seeking. It would have been helpful to measure specific information seeking tactics identified by Miller and Jablin (1991) or others (Ashford 1986; Morrison, 1993). It is possible that information about people or politics is obtained through more covert information seeking tactics like observation, which the participants may consider to be part of passive information receiving. Indeed, Morrison (1993) and Myers (1998) report that newcomers use a variety of information seeking tactics, but they may use different tactics to obtain different kinds of information. Unfortunately, the length of the survey prevented the use of multi-item measures to assess specific information seeking tactics. This study's findings suggest that future research should examine which tactics are used to obtain specific kinds of information. For instance, researchers should explore the extent to which threats to newcomers' status in obtaining particular kinds of information influence information seeking tactics selection or sources (Miller, 1996). The distinction between information seeking and information receiving may be a false one in that newcomers are always seeking information during their socialization and the level of

activity in the seeking out that information is the most critical element.

Directions for Future Research

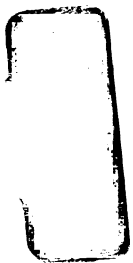
Individuals not only allow organizations and their assigned work units to influence them, but they also contribute to their own socialization in the assimilation process by seeking information, enacting scripts, and responding to cues from supervisors, coworkers, and other newcomers (Louis, 1980; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Saks & Ashforth, 1997; Zurcher, 1983). Consequently, theorists argue that communication between organizational oldtimers and newcomers creates and then reifies structures associated with socialization (Jablin, 1987; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). This study explores the role of very definable and obvious acts of social structuring which are considered to be the cornerstone of employee socialization. In focusing on organizational role-sending efforts and its communicative aspects, this work proposes and tests a broader, alternative schema to the contextual one that dominates current socialization research. The focus on relationships between formal and informal socialization experiences, socialization message content, and communication relationships within the role set provides further insight into the consequences of organization-generated structuring activities. In particular, by examining the types of messages received by new hires and their impact on newcomers' adjustment, we move closer to understanding communication as an influence during organizational entry (Jablin, 1987).

Future research, however, should continue to identify and test the impact of a broader range of tactics beyond those identified by Jones' (1986). In particular, the finding that newcomers do experience informal socialization and that those experiences

impact their adjustment bolster Chao's (1997) argument about the importance of informal socialization. As this study demonstrates, further investigations of those experiences can help to develop a more complete, testable model of socialization experiences.

This study also suggests that communication messages and relationships during entry, compared to more traditional contextual approaches such as Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and Jones (1986), may be substantial predictors of new hires' role ambiguity, role orientation, and organizational commitment. In moving beyond Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) approach where communication is largely implicit, researchers are able to examine the efficacy of organizational and role set members' role-sending efforts. Indeed, as numerous scholars (e.g., Brim & Wheeler, 1966; Feldman, 1976; Jablin, 1987; Stohl, 1986) note, information provided (i.e., communicated) to newcomers by role set members is a vital component to adjustment. As such, future research should continue to investigate the acquisition and impact of socialization message content as articulated by Chao et al. (1994). The communication models identified in this study offer numerous possibilities for further investigation. They need to be tested with other groups of newcomers so that the role of communication during socialization can continue to be more clearly identified.

In addition, while this study considers six types of messages using an adapted version of Chao et al.'s (1994) scale, other content areas may be equally important. For example, performance proficiency message content may be delineated into subcategories. Messages pertaining to the technical aspects of satisfactorily completing a task may only partially contribute to achieving competencies in that task. Messages guiding newcomers in how to develop relationships with incumbents or clients may be equally important in



successful task performance. In fact, earlier research by Stohl (1986) suggests that newcomers recall messages that situate themselves in their work setting in addition to those that convey workgroup acceptance.

Furthermore, Stohl's (1986) framework for identifying memorable messages and even Louis et al.'s (1983) investigation of helpful socialization practices may offer other ways to investigate communication during socialization in future research. This study asked newcomers which messages were emphasized and then related those messages to traditional newcomer adjustment outcomes, which is one route to identify the importance of messages. It may be more productive to directly ask newcomers which messages they remember best and which messages they felt were most helpful to their success as new employees. Those questions may be better indicators of the importance of socialization messages and may provide more practical recommendations for successful socialization.

Other aspects of message-sending such as source credibility also should be the focus of future research. Prior research suggests that supervisors and coworkers vary as sources in terms of their helpfulness (Louis, 1983; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). From new managers' report on the lack of consistency in messages from their subordinates, it is plausible that these new managers did not view their direct reports as credible. However, further investigation is warranted in this case as secretarial or administrative staff may need to be differentiated from the broad "subordinate" category. Often these subordinates are among the most helpful information sources (Louis, 1983) as they are gatekeepers of departmental information. It is likely that supervisors view the reliability of information from subordinates differently depending on whom it is coming from.

A final direction for future research is how individual characteristics affect the

perception of messages during socialization as well as newcomers' overall adjustment. This study investigates the extent to which newcomers engage in active information seeking and that has been an important area of socialization research, but there are many other individual characteristics of newcomers that are likely to impact socialization. For example, Saks and Ashforth (1997) point out that personality characteristics, affective dispositions, values and beliefs, needs and motives, and demographic variables are likely to impact newcomers' ability to learn during socialization and reduce their uncertainty. Wanous (1992) also argues that individual factors like willingness to conform may affect the acceptance of pivotal and relevant norms during socialization. Individual factors may determine which messages are remembered and considered helpful, and ultimately, the success of socialization efforts. Research to date tends to ignore individual differences during socialization (Saks & Ashforth, 1997), but their potential impact necessitates their investigation.

To conclude, this study's objective was to examine the role of communication in the newcomer socialization. Its findings suggest that communication indeed is a central component to this process. Researchers should now focus more specifically on many of the communication issues identified in this study such as message content and sources as well as information seeking and consistency. They should study these issues in greater depth and continue to more clearly identify exactly how communication contributes to the successful adjustment of new employees. Ultimately, we can discover what it takes to create a learned and well-adjusted employee, which both organizations and employees would certainly like to know.

Endnotes

¹ Taking a *role-making* perspective as opposed to a *role-sending* or *role-taking* perspective (Jablin, 1987; Katz & Kahn, 1978), a number of scholars (e.g., Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993) also examine new hires' information seeking and proactive adjustment efforts. The distinctions between role-taking, considered to be a vital aspect of organizational message-sending during socialization, and role-making, a fundamental aspect of individualization, are critical to this review and the conceptualization of the models posited. As stated earlier, our focus is on organizational socialization (i.e., role-sending) efforts.

² When organizations provide inadequate or unclear role related information, newcomers may become more proactive in obtaining role information from socialization agents (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

³ While Van Maanen and Schein (1979) propose that divestiture socialization tactics lead to custodial responses and investiture tactics lead to innovative responses, Jones (1986) posits and reports the opposite result.

⁴ Although research has indicated the importance of upward communication, little effort has been made to examine the role of subordinates during organizational socialization. Research on upward communication suggests that new supervisors are likely to receive information about subordinates' work, unsolved work problems, suggestions for improvement, and feelings subordinates have about their job and others in the work unit (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

⁵ In addition, innovative responses can be viewed as newcomers' response to role sending efforts as they move to the role making phase of the role episode (Katz & Kahn, 1978).



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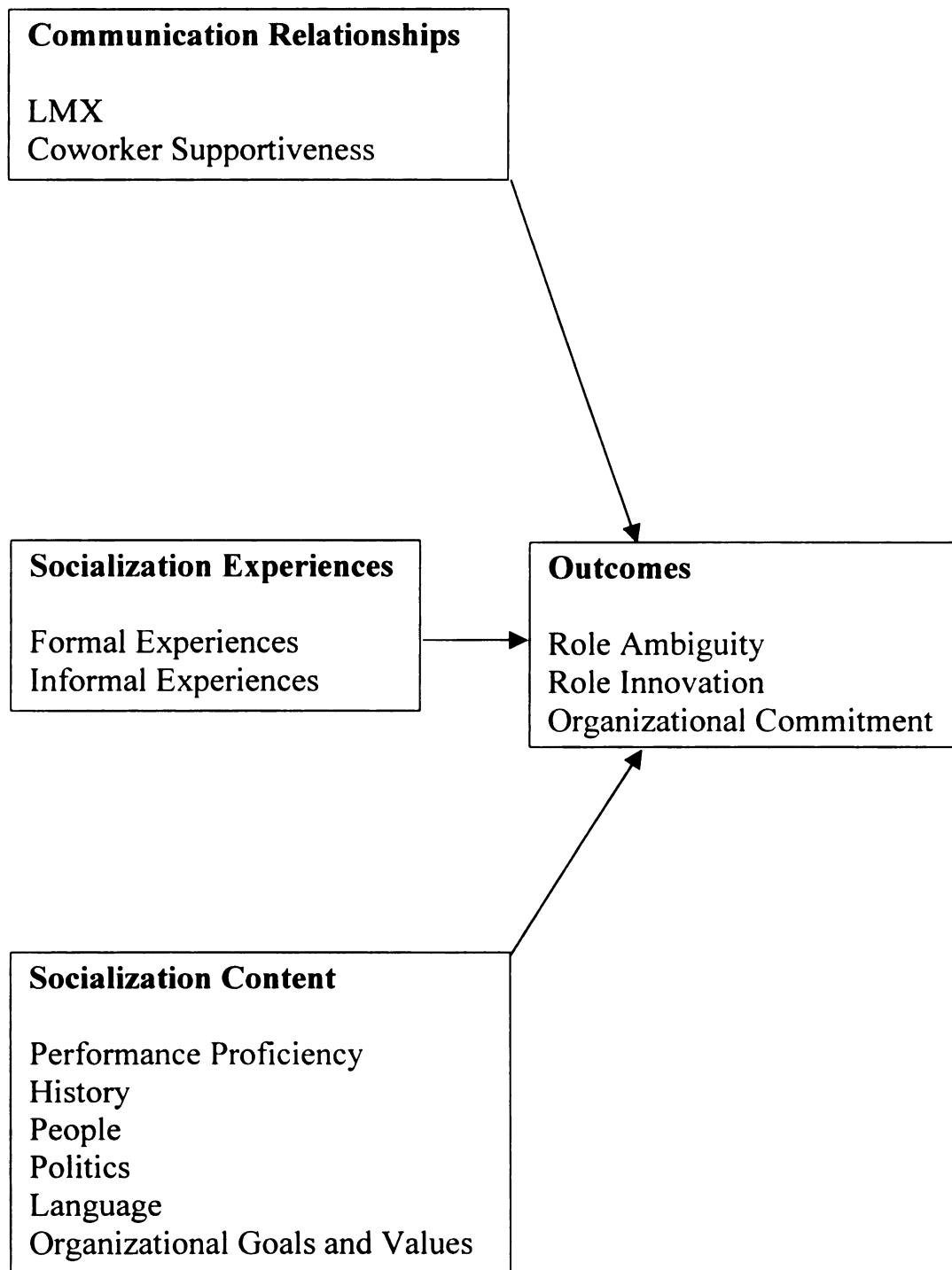


Figure 1.

Direct Predictor Model of Communication During Organizational Socialization

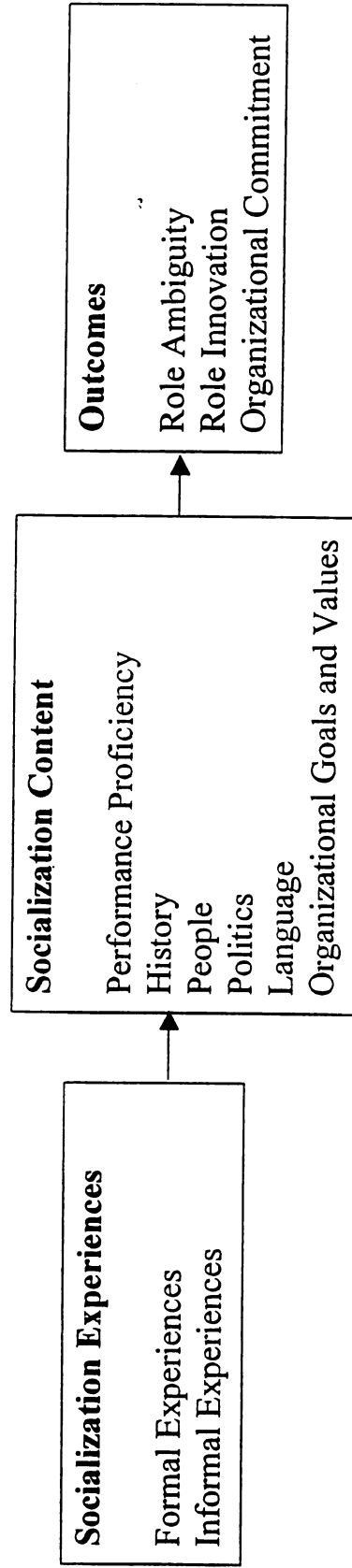


Figure 2.

Mediated Model of Communication During Organizational Socialization

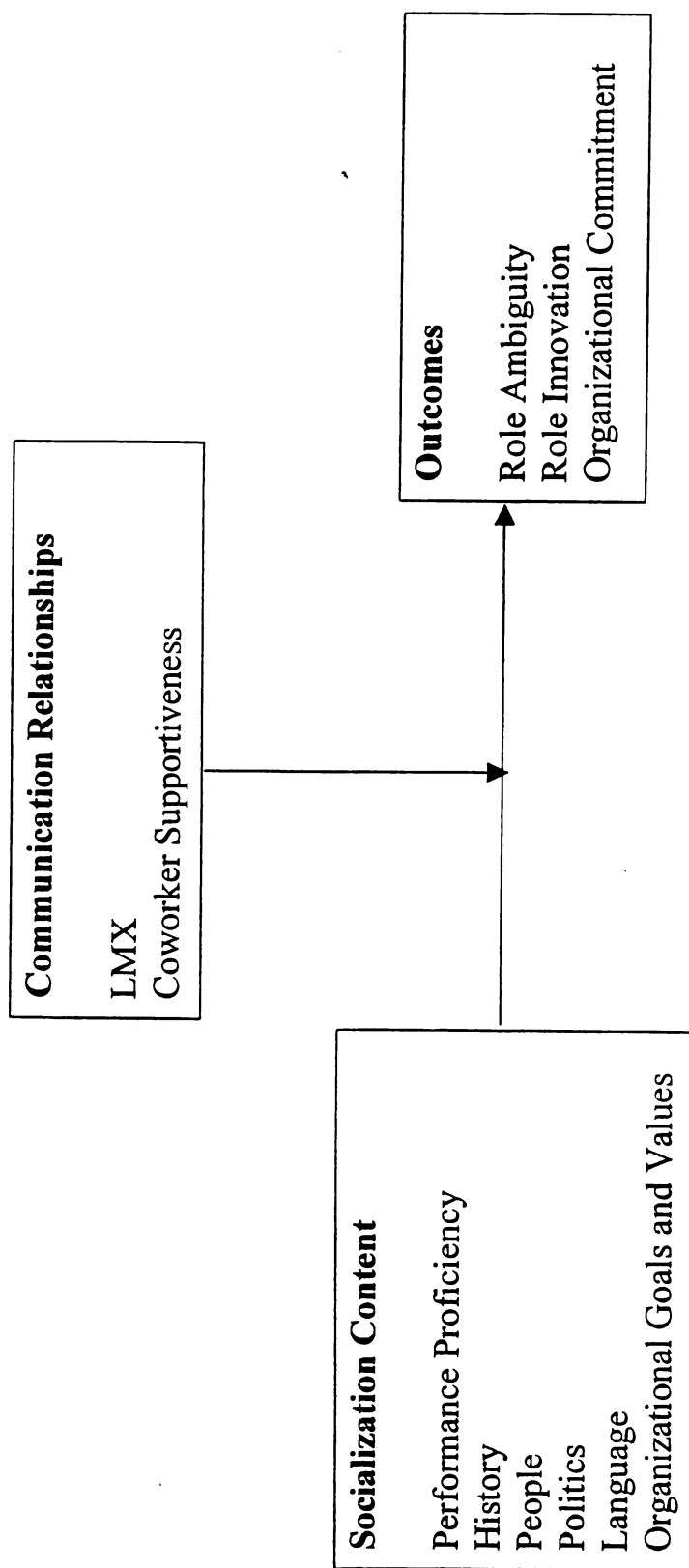


Figure 3.

Moderated Model of Communication During Organizational Socialization

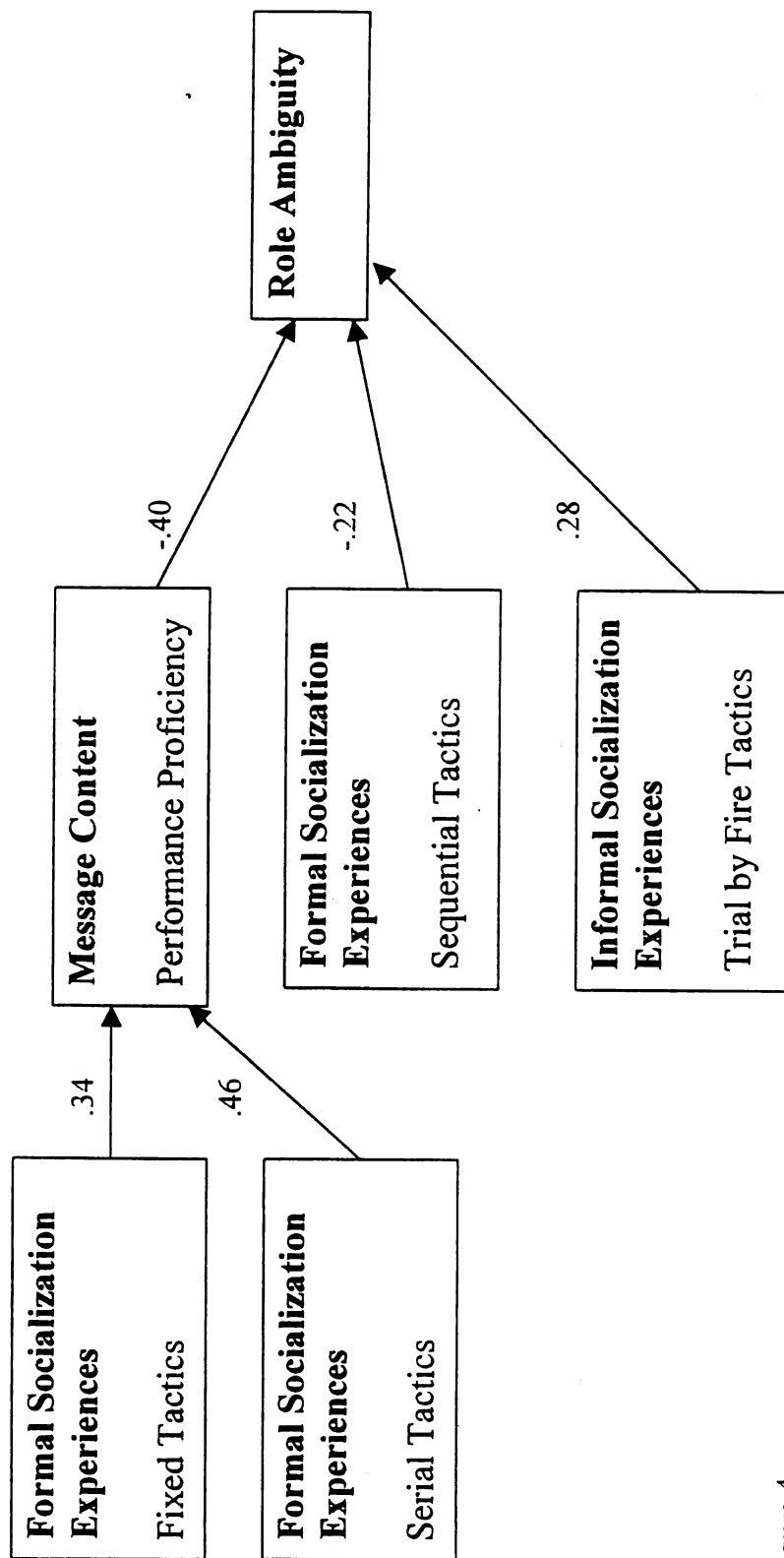


Figure 4.

Revised Mediated Model with Path Coefficients Included

Table 1

Features of Formal and Informal Socialization Experiences

Formal Socialization

Informal Socialization

General Characteristics

General Characteristics

Structured
Purposeful
Organization Level Focus

Unstructured
Random
Work Unit Level Focus

Tactics

Tactics

Collective vs. Individual
Formal vs. Informal
Sequential vs. Random
Fixed vs. Variable
Serial vs. Disjunctive
Investiture vs. Divestiture

Stories
Informal Initiations/Rituals
Group Orientation/Norm Reinforcement
Social/Recreational Activities
Trial By Fire

Table 2

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item InstrumentsFormal Socialization Experiences Scale (Jones, 1986) Factor Loading*Collective versus Individual* (Subscale dropped from analysis)

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 1. | In the last six months, I have been extensively involved with other new recruits in common, job related training activities. | N/A |
| 2. | Other newcomers have been instrumental in helping me to understand my job requirements. | N/A |
| 3. | This organization puts all newcomers through the same set of learning experiences. | N/A |
| 4. | Most of my training has been carried out apart from other newcomers. (R) | N/A |
| 5. | There is a sense of “being in the same boat” amongst newcomers in this organization. | N/A |

Formal versus Informal (Subscale dropped from analysis)

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 6. | I have been through a set of training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of job related skills. | N/A |
| 7. | During my training for this job, I was normally physically apart from regular organizational members. | N/A |
| 8. | I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods. | N/A |
| 9. | Much of my knowledge has been acquired informally on a trial and error basis. (R) | N/A |
| 10. | I have been very aware that I am seen as “learning the ropes” in this organization. | N/A |

Table 2 (cont.)

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item Instruments

<i>Sequential versus Random</i>		<u>Factor Loading</u>
11.	There is a clear pattern in the way one role leads to another or one job assignment leads to another in this organization.	.71
12.	Each stage of the training process has, and will, expand and build upon job knowledge gained during the preceding stages of the process.	.53
13.	The movement from role to role and function to function to build up experience and a track record is very apparent in this organization.	.71
14.	This organization does not put newcomers through an identifiable sequence of learning experiences. (R)	Item dropped
15.	The steps in the career ladder are clearly specified in this organization.	Item dropped
<i>Fixed versus Variable</i>		
16.	I can predict my future career path in this organization by observing other people's experiences.	.42
17.	I have a good knowledge of the time it will take me to go through the various stages of the training program in this organization.	.76
18.	The way in which my progress through this organization will follow a fixed timetable of events has been clearly communicated to me.	.45
19.	I have little idea when to expect a new job assignment or training exercise in this organization. (R)	.56
20.	Most of my knowledge of what may happen to me in the future comes informally, through the grapevine, rather than through regular organizational channels. (R)	Item dropped

Table 2 (cont.)

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item Instruments

<i>Serial versus Disjunctive</i>		<u>Factor Loading</u>
21.	Experienced organizational members see advising or training newcomers as one of their main job responsibilities in this organization.	.69
22.	I am gaining a clear understanding of my role in this organization from observing my senior colleagues.	Item dropped
23.	I have received little guidance from experienced organizational members as to how I should perform my job. (R)	.66
24.	I have little or no access to people who have previously performed my role in this organization. (R)	.47
25.	I have been generally left alone to discover what my role should be in this organization.(R)	.62
<i>Investiture versus Divestiture</i>		
26.	I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in this organization.	Item dropped
27.	Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me personally.	.73
28.	I have had to change my attitudes and values to be accepted in this organization. (R)	.58
29.	My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to this organization.	.48
30.	I feel that experienced organizational members have held me at a distance until I conform to their expectations. (R)	.49

Table 2 (cont.)

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item Instruments

Informal Socialization Experiences Scale

<i>Stories</i>	<u>Factor Loading</u>
1. Stories that are passed down from incumbent employees to newcomers are very important in this organization.	.55
2. I have heard a lot of stories from “oldtimers” about things that have happened in this organization.	Item dropped
3. I have learned a lot about the organization and my job from stories that have been told to me.	.52
4. Stories are frequently passed on from oldtimers to newcomers in this organization.	.64

Informal Initiations/Rituals

5. In this organization, new employees must pass certain “unofficial tests” before they are accepted as full members.	.77
6. This organization has many informal initiations and rituals.	Item dropped
7. New employees must complete “unofficial tests” before they are accepted into the organization.	.88
8. Informal initiations and rituals have been a part of my socialization into this organization.	.69

Group Orientation/Norm Reinforcement

9. My coworkers have been active in socializing me into the work unit.	.78
10. It is very important to learn the rules and norms of my work unit.	.48
11. Members of my work group have primarily been responsible for socializing me to the work norms and values.	.49
12. My interactions with workgroup members have taught me much about the “ropes” of the organization.	.47

Table 2 (cont.)

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item Instruments

Social/Recreational Activities Factor Loading

13.	I hang out after work with my coworkers.	.89
14.	I often meet other employees outside of work for social activities.	.87
15.	I participate in outside-of-work recreational activities with other employees.	.89
16.	I often do things with other employees outside of work hours.	.55

Trail-By-Fire

17.	I am given job assignments for which my formal training did not prepare me.	.55
18.	There is a lot of trial-by-fire learning in this job.	.75
19.	Newcomers are thrown into sink-or-swim situations in this job.	.66
20.	I've learned more about the organization from dealing with crises than from formal training experiences	.70

Socialization Message Content Scale* (adapted from Chao et al., 1994)

Please indicate the extent to which the following information has been emphasized since joining the organization.

Performance Proficiency

1.	"The ropes" of your job.	Item dropped
2.	How to successfully perform your job in an efficient manner.	.71
3.	The required tasks of your job.	.89
4.	The appropriate skills and abilities necessary to successfully perform your job.	.78
5.	All the duties your job entails.	.85

Table 2 (cont.)

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item Instruments

<i>Organizational History</i>		<u>Factor Loading</u>
6.	The organization's customs and rituals.	Item dropped
7.	The organization's long-held traditions.	Item dropped
8.	The history of your organization.	Item dropped
9.	The history behind your work unit.	.77
10.	The background of your work unit.	.77
<i>People</i>		
11.	That your coworkers are your friends.	.71
12.	Invitations to social gatherings given by other people in the organization.	Item dropped
13.	You are "one of the gang."	.73
14.	Invitations to be a member of informal networks or gatherings within this organization.	.59
15.	That most of your coworkers like you.	.67
<i>Politics</i>		
16.	How things "really work" on the inside of this organization.	.64
17.	Who the most influential people are in your organization.	.53
18.	Explanations of the politics in your organization.	.73
19.	What needs to be done in order to get the most desirable assignments in your area.	.56
20.	The people in this organization who are most important in getting work done.	Item dropped

Table 2 (cont.)

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item Instruments

<i>Language</i>		<u>Factor Loading</u>
21.	The specialized terminology and vocabulary of your trade/profession.	.91
22.	This organization's slang and special jargon.	Item dropped
23.	The meaning of this organization's abbreviations and acronyms.	.71
24.	The meaning of specific words and jargon in your trade/profession.	.88
25.	The meaning of most acronyms and abbreviations used in your trade/profession.	Item dropped
<i>Organizational Goals and Values</i>		
26.	The goals of this organization.	.80
27.	The values of this organization.	.80
28.	What a good representative of your organization would be like.	Item dropped
29.	The ideology of your organization.	.69
30.	This organization's mission.	.79

*All items of this scale were modified for this study.

Table 2 (cont.)

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item Instruments

<u>Role Ambiguity Scale (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970)</u>		<u>Factor Loading</u>
1.	I feel certain about how much authority I have. (R)	.40
2.	Clear, planned goals and objectives exist for my job. (R)	.70
3.	I know that I have divided my work time properly. (R)	.47
4.	I know what my job responsibilities are. (R)	Item dropped
5.	I know exactly what is expected of me. (R)	Item dropped
6.	Explanations of work assignments are clear. (R)	.70
7.	Clear, planned goals and objectives exist for my work unit. (R)	Item dropped
<u>Role Orientation Scale (Jones, 1986)</u>		
1.	I have made an attempt to redefine my role and change what I am required to do.	.68
2.	While I am satisfied with my overall job responsibilities, I have altered the procedures for doing my job.	Item dropped
3.	I have changed the mission or purpose of my job.	.68
4.	The procedures for performing my job are generally appropriate in my view. (R)	Item dropped
5.	I have tried to change the procedures for doing my job and to institute new work goals.	Item dropped

Table 2 (cont.)

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item Instruments

<u>Organizational Commitment Scale</u> <u>(Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974)</u>		<u>Factor Loading</u>
1.	I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	.45
2.	I feel very little loyalty to this organization. (R)	Item dropped
3.	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	Item dropped
4.	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	Item dropped
5.	I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. (R)	.76
6.	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. (R)	.55
7.	I am extremely glad I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	Item dropped
8.	There is not much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely. (R)	Item dropped
9.	For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	Item dropped
10.	Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part. (R)	.47

Table 2 (cont.)

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item Instruments

Leader-Member Exchange Scale

(Schriesheim, Neider, Scandura, & Tepper, 1992)

Factor Loading

*Responses varied for each item and are indicated below the item

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| 1. | The way my supervisor sees it, the importance of my job to his/her performance is: | Item dropped |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (5) Very Great - it critically affects his/her performance (4) Great (3) Moderate (2) Somewhat (1) Slight to none - it has little effect on his/her performance | |
| 2. | My supervisor would probably say that my work goals and his/hers are: | .84 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (5) The same (4) Similar (3) Unrelated (2) Different (1) Opposite | |
| 3. | On my present job, this is how I feel about the way my supervisor and I understand each other: | Item dropped |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (5) Very satisfied (4) Satisfied (3) Undecided or neutral (2) Dissatisfied (1) Very dissatisfied | |
| 4. | The way my supervisor sees me, he/she would probably say that my ability to my job well is: | Item dropped |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (5) Exceptional (4) Good to very good (3) Average (2) Below average (1) Poor | |

Table 2 (cont.)

Item Descriptions, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Multi-Item Instruments

Leader-Member Exchange Scale (cont.)

(Schriesheim, Neider, Scandura, & Tepper, 1992)

Factor Loading

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------|
| 5. | I feel that my work goals and those of my supervisor are: | .84 |
| | (5) The same | |
| | (4) Similar | |
| | (3) Unrelated | |
| | (2) Different | |
| | (1) Opposite | |
| 6. | On my present job, this is how I feel about the way my supervisor and I understand each other: | Item dropped |
| | (5) Very satisfied | |
| | (4) Satisfied | |
| | (3) Undecided or neutral | |
| | (2) Dissatisfied | |
| | (1) Very dissatisfied | |

Coworker Supportiveness Scale (Taylor & Bowers, 1972)

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| 1. | How friendly or easy to approach are the members of your work unit? | .64 |
| 2. | When you talk with members of your work unit, to what extent do they pay attention to what you're saying? | Item dropped |
| 3. | To what extent are members of your work unit willing to listen to your work related problems? | Item dropped |
| 4. | To what extent do members of your work unit communicate work related information to you? | .64 |

Table 3

Item descriptions for information sources, seeking and receiving instruments

Information Source, Receiving, and Seeking

Below are listed types of information typically received by new employees. Next to each type of information, circle the primary source of this information since you have been in this organization.

Next, indicate the extent to which you obtained this information as a result of the other person initiating the information exchange (i.e., giving you the information), or as a result of your initiating the information request (i.e., your seeking out the information).

EXAMPLE: If your supervisor was the primary source of information about your organization's health insurance coverage and you obtained this information as a result of your supervisor's extensive efforts to inform you while you also exerted some effort to obtain this information, you would respond as follows:

<u>Type of Information</u>	<u>Primary Source</u>	<u>Giving You Information</u>	<u>Your Seeking Out the Information</u>
1. Information on your organization's health insurance coverage.	Organization Supervisor Coworker Subordinates (Circle one)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

<u>Type of Information</u>	<u>Primary Source</u>	<u>Giving You Information</u>	<u>Your Seeking Out the Information</u>
1. Information about how to perform the tasks necessary to do your job	Organization Supervisor Coworker Subordinates (Circle one)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Information about your organization's and work unit's past.	Organization Supervisor Coworkers Subordinates (Circle one)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Information indicating your acceptance into your work unit.	Organization Supervisor Coworker Subordinates (Circle one)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Table 3 (cont.)

Item descriptions for information sources, seeking and receiving instruments

<u>Type of Information</u>	<u>Primary Source</u>	<u>Giving You Information</u>	<u>Your Seeking Out the Information</u>
4. Information about formal and informal work relationships as well as power structures within your organization.	Organization Supervisor Coworker Subordinates (Circle one)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Information about your profession's technical language as well as jargon which is unique to your organization.	Organization Supervisor Coworker Subordinates (Circle one)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. Information which provides an understanding of the rules or principles that maintain the integrity of your organization.	Organization Supervisor Coworkers Subordinates (Circle one)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Table 4

Variable Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	α	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)
(1) Sequential	3.91	.74	.68	---																			
(2) Fixed	3.36	.82	.62	.42	---																		
(3) Serial	3.64	.83	.70	.38	.41	---																	
(4) Investiture	4.00	.69	.65	.29	.33	.53	---																
(5) Stories	3.30	.80	.59	.07	-.10	-.06	-.04	---															
(6) Inform. Init.	2.18	1.01	.82	.05	-.26	-.28	-.45	.22	---														
(7) Grp. Orient.	3.74	.59	.56	.14	.15	-.07	.23	.30	.03	---													
(8) Social Act.	2.52	1.13	.87	.05	.17	.03	.26	-.02	.00	.24	---												
(9) Trial-by-fire	2.79	.94	.76	-.15	-.36	-.56	-.39	.14	.40	-.04	.08	---											
(10) Perf. Prof.	3.75	.88	.88	.41	.52	.60	.38	.06	-.18	.19	.07	-.44	---										
(11) History	3.37	.96	.73	.38	.34	.40	.29	.20	-.10	.16	-.09	-.29	.45	---									
(12) People	3.34	.88	.77	.09	.22	.24	.42	.23	-.17	.27	.26	-.27	.46	.29	---								
(13) Politics	3.44	.81	.71	.18	.32	.20	.27	.20	-.18	.17	.12	-.22	.55	.43	.65	---							
(14) Language	3.95	.91	.87	.22	.25	.00	.20	.06	-.27	.20	.19	-.18	.44	.33	.38	.44	---						
(15) Goals	4.02	.80	.85	.34	.48	.37	.41	.12	-.26	.24	.05	-.32	.59	.53	.59	.51	.48	---					
(16) LMX	4.02	.73	.83	.28	.14	.10	.03	-.07	.03	-.06	.00	.02	.10	.07	.08	.00	-.04	.19	---				
(17) C. Support	4.21	.70	.56	.13	.09	.29	.25	.15	-.19	.01	.16	-.10	.10	.12	.23	.17	.10	.21	.15	---			
(18) Role Am.	2.61	.70	.60	-.42	-.44	-.53	-.44	.01	.14	-.18	-.12	.49	-.61	-.37	-.38	-.48	-.26	-.40	-.14	-.28	---		
(19) Role Inn	2.83	.92	.61	-.15	-.20	-.17	-.30	.10	.29	.12	.03	.10	-.16	-.19	-.04	-.03	-.18	-.17	-.01	.19	.10	---	
(20) Commit.	4.02	.61	.55	.13	.09	.04	-.09	.03	.16	-.11	-.08	-.06	.07	.06	-.06	.01	-.16	.08	.14	.08	-.25	-.05	---

R = .22 or greater, $p < .05$ R = .29 or greater, $p < .01$

Table 5

Results of Paired T-tests Between the Means of Passive Information Receiving and Active

Information Seeking for Each of the Message Content Areas

	<u>Information Receiving</u>		<u>Information Seeking</u>	
<u>Message Content Area</u>	<u>Mean and Standard Deviation</u>		<u>Mean and Standard Deviation</u>	
Performance Proficiency	<u>M</u> = 4.09	<u>SD</u> = .93	<u>M</u> = 4.28	<u>SD</u> = .93
	(t = -1.33, p = .19)			
History	<u>M</u> = 3.88	<u>SD</u> = .92	<u>M</u> = 3.24	<u>SD</u> = 1.13
	(t = 4.20, p = .00)			
People	<u>M</u> = 4.02	<u>SD</u> = 1.12	<u>M</u> = 3.69	<u>SD</u> = 1.13
	(t = 2.18, p = .03)			
Politics	<u>M</u> = 3.78	<u>SD</u> = .97	<u>M</u> = 3.49	<u>SD</u> = .96
	(t = 2.12, p = .04)			
Language	<u>M</u> = 3.95	<u>SD</u> = 1.12	<u>M</u> = 4.04	<u>SD</u> = 1.02
	(t = -.53, p = .60)			
Goals and Values	<u>M</u> = 4.27	<u>SD</u> = .85	<u>M</u> = 3.74	<u>SD</u> = 1.04
	(t = 3.82, p = .00)			

Table 6

Path Coefficients for Direct Predictor Model

<u>Predictor Variables</u>	<u>Role Ambiguity</u>	<u>Role Innovation</u>	<u>Organizational Commitment</u>
<i>Formal Socialization Experiences</i>			
Sequential Tactics	-.16	-.01	.12
Fixed Tactics	-.05	-.11	.03
Serial Tactics	-.07	-.04	-.31*
Investiture Tactics	-.14	-.32*	-.03
<i>Informal Socialization Experiences</i>			
Stories Tactics	.10	-.05	.03
Informal Initiation Tactics	-.19	.21	.17
Group Orientation Tactics	-.08	.23*	-.17
Social Activities Tactics	-.01	.05	.03
Trial by Fire Tactics	.28*	-.17	-.20
<i>Message Content Areas</i>			
Performance Proficiency	-.23*	-.02	.21
History	.02	-.13	.03
People	.03	-.02	-.15
Politics	-.29*	.16	.03
Language	.01	-.15	-.32*
Goals and Values	.11	.00	.22*

*p < .05

Table 6 (cont.)

Path Coefficients for Direct Predictor Model

<u>Predictor Variables</u>	<u>Role Ambiguity</u>	<u>Role Innovation</u>	<u>Organizational Commitment</u>
<i>Communication Relationship Variables</i>			
LMX	-.05	-.01	.04
Coworker Supportiveness	-.17	.32*	.15

* $p < .05$

Table 7

Stepwise Multiple Regression Results of the Direct Predictor Model

Role Ambiguity as the Outcome Variable

$R^2 = .54$

<u>Predictor Variable</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Significance of T</u>
Trial by Fire Tactics	.28	3.24	.00
Performance Proficiency Message Content	-.28	-2.59	.01
Sequential Tactics	-.21	-2.51	.01
Politics Message Content	-.20	-2.17	.03
Coworker Supportiveness	-.16	-2.04	.04

Role Innovation as the Outcome Variable

$R^2 = .21$

<u>Predictor Variable</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Significance of T</u>
Investiture Tactics	-.42	-4.03	.00
Coworker Supportiveness	.29	2.88	.01
Group Orientation Tactics	.21	2.08	.04

Organizational Commitment as the Outcome Variable

None of the predictor variables reached a T value that was significant.

Table 8

Path Coefficients for Mediated Model

<u>Predictor Variables</u>	<u>Performance Proficiency</u>	<u>History</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Politics</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Goals and Values</u>
<i>Formal Socialization Experiences</i>						
Sequential Tactics	.10	.18	-.09	.01	.21	.09
Fixed Tactics	.27*	.17	.07	.24*	.12	.32*
Serial Tactics	.42*	.19	-.01	-.03	-.33*	.07
Investiture Tactics	-.02	.11	.30*	.12	.04	.18
<i>Informal Socialization Experiences</i>						
Stories Tactics	.07	.19	.27*	.25*	.11	.15
Informal Int. Tactics	.03	.04	-.01	-.09	-.24*	-.09
Group Orient. Tactics	.14	.07	.08	.01	.05	.11
Social Activities Tactics	-.01	-.17	.18	.05	.16	-.07
Trial by Fire Tactics	-.12	-.08	-.20	-.11	-.20	-.07

* $p < .05$

Table 8 (cont.)

Path Coefficients for Mediated Model

<u>Predictor Variables</u>	<u>Role Ambiguity</u>	<u>Role Innovation</u>	<u>Organizational Commitment</u>
<i>Message Content Areas</i>			
Performance Proficiency	-.50*	-.10	.10
History	-.09	-.14	.02
People	-.05	.03	-.18
Politics	-.18	.17	.07
Language	.08	-.14	-.27*
Goals and Values	-.02	-.05	.21

*p < .05

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