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The Socialization of Newcomers

to the Work Setting

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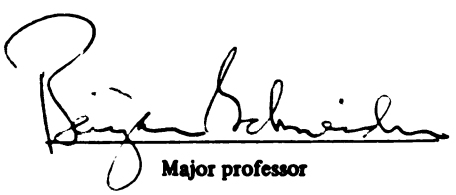

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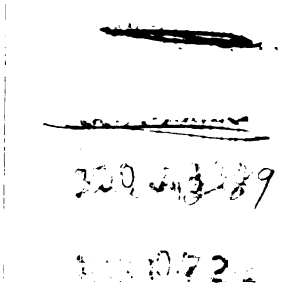

THE SOCIALIZATION OF NEWCOMERS TO THE WORK SETTING

By

Russell C. Barnes

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

THE SOCIALIZATION OF NEWCOMERS TO THE WORK SETTING

By

Russell C. Barnes

This thesis focuses on the influence of informal interactions on the amount of time newcomers later spend working on tasks. Further, it investigates the influence of newcomer proaction on their eventual adjustment to the new work setting.

Observational data was collected on 26 male and female participants spanning a twelve week period. The participants were newly hired to one of the following organizations: (a) a large midwestern university, (b) a large dry goods department store, and (c) a midwestern health maintenance organization.

It was found that large amounts of informal interactions during early work experiences were not a significant factor to consider in regards to facilitating the quantity of time a new worker will later spend working on task related matters. Informal interactions were also negatively related to how adjusted newcomers felt while formal interactions were positively related. Proactive behavior was not connected to feelings of adjustment. Further research was recommended to clarify issues raised by this research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank several people for their invaluable help: Ben Schneider, Mary Zelesny, and Neal Schmitt for their wisdom and guidance; Beth Shapiro for her understanding. I would also like to posthumously thank my parents for their decision to make my life possible. Finally, I thank the process of life for shaping my spirit.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In past years, an abundance of literature has been produced in the social science disciplines regarding the processes of socialization. Traditionally, the view has been held that significant socialization experiences only took place during childhood. However, this view has shifted rapidly as researchers have accumulated an extensive body of knowledge suggesting that meaningful socialization experiences also occur during adulthood (Becker, 1970; Clausen, 1972; Inkeles & Smith, 1974). Some of the varied areas of interest in adult socialization include life-span development (Goulet & Baltes, 1970; Neugarten, 1968a), the midlife crisis (Brim, 1976; Levinson, 1977; Levinson et al., 1974), aging (Bengston, 1973; Blau, 1973; Rosow, 1974), education (Becker et al., 1961), occupations (Moore, 1969), and the family (Hill & Aldous, 1969). The emphasis of this paper will focus on organizational socialization.

According to Schein (1968), organizations socialize their new members by creating a series of events which serve the function of undoing old values so the new hire will be prepared to learn new values. This process of undoing or unfreezing is often unpleasant and requires strong motivation (on the part of the newcomer) or strong organizational forces to make the new person endure it. As it stands, the formation and utilization of peer groups can strongly enhance the socialization process of peer group norms support organizational norms.

Socialization: General Issues

Socialization, be it of the childhood or adulthood variety, has a dual perspective in that it must be viewed from the vantage of the group as well as the individual (Clausen, 1968). From the standpoint of the group, socialization may be thought of as a mechanism through which new members learn the values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, and the interpersonal and other skills that facilitate role performance and further group goals. By contrast, the socialization process of an individual learning to participate in the work setting of the organization, and interactions (with others, physical work conditions, task, and social) related to the work setting, requires minimally stable and predictable behaviors on the part of the newcomer. The process does not include all changes in personality and behavior that occur in response to an infinite number of stimuli, rather, the focus of the process refers only to the learning that is relevant to social behavior and/or role enactment necessary for a smooth articulation between the new hire and his or her work setting.

Recurrent Research Themes

There appear to be two predominant themes which surface repeatedly during research of socialization in the post-adolescent phases of life. The first theme concerns the degree of consistency in personality and social behavior as individuals move through age-graded social roles and groups (Brim, 1968, 1970; Gerth & Mills, 1953; Haan, 1972; Mortimer & Simmons, 1978). Research findings on this perspective range from the claim that personality is completely shaped during early childhood to the belief that individuals are completely malleable throughout their

life span. However, the most popular belief assumes an intermediate position on the continuum, arguing that the core personality is established early in life while more specific changes occur later in response to acquisition of new group memberships and exposure to differently structured social situations (Brim, 1966; Cottrell, 1969). Kohn and Schooler (1978) provide evidence that indicate long-term personality consistency for intellectual flexibility was stable (over a ten year period) while other data generated in the same study demonstrate the propensity of adults to change in response to a change in their environment. Similarly, Maas and Kuypers (1974), in tracing the personality of parents between middle adulthood and old age found overall stability over time. However, their data also support the position that changes in social contexts (divorce or widowhood) are highly influential in shifting patterns of social behavior in later years. Overall, a number of other researchers have also noted that the scope of individual change in later years is determined by the amount of change in social situations, role demands, and challenges encountered throughout one's lifetime (Elder, 1974; Fendrich, 1976; Moss & Kagan, 1972; Newcomb, 1967; Renshon, 1974).

The second major theme, regarding adult socialization, concerns the difference between childhood/adolescence and adult socialization. Differences between these socialization periods are usually analyzed in terms of content, context, and the typical response set of the newcomer. In terms of content (Brim, 1966), childhood socialization is concerned with the regulation of biological drives; adolescence, with the development of values and self-image (Simmons et al., 1973); while adult socialization is seen as involving more overt and specific norms and

behaviors (e.g., work related roles). In addition, it has been suggested that preadult socialization involves learning new information and that the focus of this stage is more idealistic than the more realistic focus of adult socialization which is subjected to daily pressures (e.g., work related stress). Adult socialization, then, appears to be more mundane, involving the integration of what has been learned early on in the life process and the development of modes of reconciling contradictory normative standards (Clausen, 1968; Cottrell, 1969; Riley et al., 1969).

The Context of Socialization: Preadult vs. Adult

When the context of socialization is analyzed, preadult socialization clearly occurs within the family, peer group, or the school. Consequently, the newcomer assumes the role of learner in these affectively charged situations. Similarly, adulthood socialization also shares these same aspects as many of adult situations (apprenticeship programs, professional schools, etc.) are affectively charged, occur in the same contexts, and the newcomer assumes the role of a student. Thus, two primary contextual distinctions between adult and childhood socialization are: (a) an extensive amount of socialization occurs after the newcomer has assumed full incumbency of the role (e.g., after being hired into the organization), and (b) there is greater likelihood of more formal secondary relationships (as with occupational superiors, co-workers, clients/customers, and other organizational members) in adult socialization (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978).

Finally, adult and preadult socialization are distinguished by the typical response of the learner. For example, owing to the adult's considerable socialization experience, he may have more clearly defined expectations, hence, one could expect a greater amount of resistance to

change in the new socialization experience of an adult than in the more malleable preadult (Brim, 1968; Goslin, 1969; Riley et al., 1969; Rosow, 1974; White, 1952). It follows that much of the socialization which goes on in adulthood is selective, self-initiated and voluntary (Brim, 1969; Cottrell, 1969). Further, owing to the extensive repertoire that the adult has come to master via earlier socialization attempts, the adult is more able to resist involuntary socialization attempts (Brim, 1968; White, 1952) and find a role which is more congruent with their past socialization experiences.

Socialization: The Work Setting

To date, there have been extensive efforts, by researchers, to develop a viable concept of the adult socialization process. The product of this intensive energy expenditure can be seen in the number of theories this labor has produced. Identification theory (Bandura, 1969; Block & Haan, 1971: 257-58; Dager et al., 1976; Rosow, 1974), generalization theory (Inkeles & Smith, 1974; Kanter, 1977a; Kohn, 1969; Kohn & Schooler, 1973; Schooler, 1972; Seeman, 1967), symbolic interactionism (Bengston & Acoek, 1977; Cottrell, 1969; Greer, 1972; Van Maanen, 1976), exchange theory (Homan, 1961), and role theory (Brim, 1966; Merton, 1957; Turner, 1974: 160-76) are the predominant theoretical approaches to adult socialization.

Identification theory assumes a strong affective relationship between the role model and the newcomer. Under this assumption, the newcomer is perceived as dependent and having a strong emotional attachment to the role model. In fact, the attachment is so strong that the newcomer emulates the model's behavior. Rosow (1974) suggests three elements to

this model of socialization: (a) cathexis of the role, (b) identification with a real or ideal model, and (c) introjection of the model's values. In adapting the identification theory to an organizational socialization setting, the loose bolt within this structural model is readily observable. That is to say, this model cannot be used in many work settings as it is certainly unrealistic to assume that a desirable role model will be available for the new hire to emulate in the new work setting. Highly affective relationships (to the degree of emulating and introjection of values) are specific to rare combinations of individuals.

Generalization theory hypothesizes that the socialization of attitudes, values, and ways of thinking are abstracted and generalized from modes of successful adaptation to daily life pressures and situations (Inkeles & Smith, 1974; Kanter, 1977a; Kohn, 1969; Kohn & Schooler, 1973; Schooler, 1972; Seeman, 1967). Specifically, this model recognizes the importance of the actor's inferences from concrete experiences and assumes that actors choose to mold their new roles in accordance with previously developed cognitive orientations. On the same note, this model de-emphasizes the newcomer's role in the determination of outcomes and assumes the newcomer is passive and unable to influence the socialization process to any substantial degree. The proactive individual and his/her personalization of novel situations cannot be accounted for.

Symbolic interactionism represents still another theory concerning the socialization of adults. The perspective of this concept is that newcomers constantly create new meanings, develop their own understandings and definitions of the situation, and structure ambiguous social settings to meet their goals and solve common problems (Cottrell, 1969; Greer, 1972). Thus, the newcomer's perception (attitudes, situations, etc.) of what goes on in the new work setting becomes all important.

Similarly, exchange theory assumes that the newcomer is an independent and active negotiator for advantages in relationships with role partners and membership groups (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978). Conceptions of equity regulate the exchange processes and outcomes are heavily influenced by one's own resources (including alternative sources of reward) and bargaining strategies (Homans, 1961). This theory is closely related to Lawler's (1973) expectancy theory, which also attaches a great deal of importance to the actor's expectations regarding the behavioral outcomes of his or her efforts and the group's response to them.

Finally, we come to what may be the most interesting of any single theory of adult socialization; role theory. In contemporary role theory (Brim, 1966; Merton, 1957; Turner, 1974: 160-176), socialization is seen as a process where a newcomer acquires the norms, attitudes, self-images, values, and role behaviors that enhance acceptance to the group and the effective performance of the new role. Of paramount importance, regarding the mechanics of role theory, is that the newcomer learns primarily through interaction with significant others (peers, co-workers, supervisors, clients/customers, etc.) and observation of reference groups (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978; Thornton & Nardi, 1975).

Role Theory

Thornton and Nardi (1975) present a very complete concept of role theory. Their theory is presented such that several distinct stages are clearly represented and most important, they stress the significance of interaction between the individual and the role as well as between the individual and those persons in the novel setting (e.g., peers, superiors, clients/customers, supervisors, etc.). Before discussion of the stages

of their role acquisition, perhaps an explanation of some key terminology might prove useful.

First, there is the term expectation. Expectations may be behavioral, and refer to ways in which an incumbent should behave, attitudinal, referring to ideal attitudes and values, or cognitive, and refer to certain knowledge and skills the incumbent should process. Further, these expectations may be either explicit and formal or implicit and a part of the informal social process.

Expectations, during the socialization process, have several distinct origins. They may come from society at large, e.g., mass media. Secondly, they may originate from members of the role sets (peers) and reciprocal others (clients/customers, patients, etc.). Finally, the newcomers may be a source of expectations for their own role enactment.

Thus, the socialization process involves an increasing awareness of not only the explicit formal expectations encompassing the range of attitudes, values, behaviors, knowledge, and skills but also includes those implicit informal expectations that are generally not a part of the rules and duties assigned to the newcomer (Thornton & Nardi, 1975; Weiss, 1978).

Next, a distinction must be made between social adjustment, psychological adjustment, and adaptation. Social adjustment refers to the degree to which the newcomer adequately meets role expectations, i.e., their level of <u>performance</u> with regards to the role. By contrast, psychological adjustment involves the achievement of congruity between the newcomer's psychological needs and wants and the role. According to Schachter and Singer (1962), the newcomer may attain this congruity by using others in the work setting as a source of information. For

instance, Schachter and Singer investigated how people react in novel situations when reality is unclear. Overall, they found that the research participants used other people as information sources to assess how they should feel and behave. Participants were less likely to use these sources of information if: (a) they were forewarned of coming events, and (b) they perceived themselves not to be on the same level as other cohorts. On a similar note, Bem (1965) contends that people learn about their own feelings and attitudes (as well as those of others) by examining their own behavior and the context in which it occurs. Hypothetically, according to Bem and Schachter, a newcomer faced with the novel situation of a new work setting could not only gain knowledge about the role expectations, but could also attain information from incumbents regarding how comfortable or adjusted they feel about their newly acquired behavior. Thus, a newcomer's psychological adjustment can be influenced by observations/interactions with incumbents.

How can one determine whether the newcomer is becoming adjusted or not? What are some indicators of adjustment? One such indicator is input from the person that is most concerned and in touch with the process and who consequently could provide the most accurate information. That is to say, if one were looking for an accurate measure of how comfortable and adjusted a person was feeling in any given situation, the most direct way of obtaining this information would be to ask the person. Thus, while other measures of adjustment might exist (observation, performance, etc.), the self-report measure appears to be the most direct and accurate indicator of how psychologically adjusted one feels or how congruent their needs are with the new role.

Four Stages of Role Acquisition

The four stages of role acquisition are as follows: (a) anticipatory, (b) formal, (c) informal, and (d) personal. During each stage, newcomers are exposed to expectations that are external to them. This includes interactions, initiated by the newcomer, which are proactive and meant to influence expectations of others as well as interactions initiated by others.

The anticipatory stage of role acquisition is the time before incumbency in the new position during which those aspiring to membership in groups begin to adopt group values that prepare them for the future transition into the group (Merton, 1957a). Anticipatory socialization, then, aids the individual in dealing with the reality that is to follow by helping the person to form a framework or structure for the new context in which the individual will soon operate.

During the anticipatory socialization period, there are again several sources from which role expectations may be drawn. The mass media (newspapers, television, etc.) is one such information bank. Other sources include those individuals who are already incumbents on the job or social position and reciprocal-role others (clients/customers, or patients, etc.).

Overall, it may be said that during this phase of socialization, individuals develop images of future expectations and thus prepare themselves psychologically for their new role.

Unfortunately, this psychological preparedness is based on the selective attention of the individual to a specific range of information. The consequence of this interaction is that adjustment to the new position is dependent on the accuracy of the information conveyed and

perceived during this period, and inaccurate information actually impedes adjustment as an unlearning process must then be utilized to undo the faulty learning (Thompson, 1958; Johnson & Hutchins, 1966; Wright, 1967; Olesen & Whittaker, 1968).

The formal stage begins after new individuals assume their new role. Unlike the anticipatory stage, expectations are predominantly derived from members within the organization and primarily from those who are peers, co-workers, and reciprocal role others. These expectations tend to be straight-forward, explicit, and written in one form or another. For example, they may take the form of a job description or an employee handbook.

Quite unlike the formal stage of socialization, the rules and regulations of the informal stage are not documented in any written form. Rather, the context and climate of the informal stage are contained and exchanged via interactions between the new hire and more senior incumbents, supervisors, and others (clients/customers, patients, etc.). Such informal expectations are concerned with establishing and maintaining the group/organizational norm and the acceptable way to do things in the work setting. This informal stage is sometimes at odds with the formal stage and often its effects have more impact on newcomers than the formal stage (with regards to individual adjustment) in the new work setting. For example, an employee may learn from the new employee's handbook that coffee breaks may last only 15 minutes per episode. However, peers may interact with the new hire during a coffee break and let the new person know it's okay (even expected) with management, for them to stay on break for 20 minutes. Thus, the informal communication of norms aids the new individual to learn the ropes or become adjusted

to the new role and new work setting. That is, they learn the unofficial restrictions and the extent to which formal expectations can be bent.

What is crucial about the communication of these kinds of norms is that it is done through the informal interactions between the new hire and incumbents, supervisors, and reciprocal role others. Peer groups, work groups, cliques and similar groups form the primary source for the transmission of informal expectations. Gomersall and Meyers (1966) provided interesting research with regards to the transmission of this kind of information and adjustment. The experiment involved two groups of newly hired machine operators. The first group was oriented in the traditional way while the experimental group was given a new type of introduction to the work setting that included informal interactions with their peers.

Members of the control group received a two-hour personnel briefing and the following instructions from a friendly but apparently busy supervisor.

> I would like you to take the sixth yellow chair on this assembly line, which is in front of bonding machine number 14. On the left side of your machine you will find a wiring diagram indicating where you should bond your units. On the right-hand side of your machine you will find a carrying tray full of 14-lead packages. Pick up the headers, one at a time, using your 3-c tweezers and place them on the hot substrate below the capillary head. Grasp the cam actuator on the right side of the machine and lower the hot capillary over the first pad indicated by the diagram. Ball bond to the pad and, by moving the hot substrate, the wire to the pin indicated by the diagram. Stitch bond to this lead, raise the capillary, and check for pigtails. When you have completed all leads, put the unit back into the carrying tray.
>
> Your training operator will be around to help you with other details. Do you have any questions?

An overwhelming number of the new hires in the control group found it very difficult to cope with the instructions given by the supervisor even though he was polite and friendly.

By contrast, the experimental groups were given a different interactional sequence. First, they were isolated in a conference room and asked to relax and to get acquainted with one another.

Next, a few specially selected senior incumbents initiated interactions with the new hires and answered questions from the new hires regarding rules and regulations and, perhaps more significantly, the informal workings of the organization. In addition, the remainder of the encounter was structured to include discussions specifically focused on four major issues that revolved around learning the ropes. The first issue stressed that each new hire had a good opportunity to succeed in the work setting. Second, each new worker was told to expect some form of hazing, from peers not associated with the encounter, and to simply ignore such activity. The new hires were also encouraged to be proactive and take the initiative in communications with others in the work setting. They were told the supervisors expected new workers to ask questions and the management would not be offended by such questions. Finally, all of the new hires were given briefings about the specific personality of each supervisor (to whom they were assigned) which included such informal information as their overall character, hobbies, and other interests.

The results of this study indicate that the experimental group attained the organization-established level of competence for the job an average of four weeks sooner than the control group members. Similar results were replicated by these researchers using other groups of new

employees. With regards to this study, it appears that this structured concentration of learning informal expectations facilitated the adjustment of the experimental group while the control group, who were left to the traditional methods of learning informal expectations, appeared to become adjusted more slowly.

Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) have investigated the phenomenon of these traditional ways of communicating expectations between organization members and have termed the process role episodes. According to Kahn, role demands initially arise from the organizational situation. These demands become expectations for focal individual(s) in the role set. The role expectations are then communicated by the role set to the individual(s) in question and received by them in one form or another (sometimes distortion of messages occurs which yields an improper perception). The focal individual(s) must then interpret the expectations and translate them into appropriate behavior(s). If unclear, indirect, or misperceived communications develop, oftentimes, the result might manifest itself in inappropriate behavior.

Thus, it is clear that these informal expectations are communicated through interactions between the new hire and others (supervisors, peers, others) in the work setting. Norms are not formally stated, but learned only after a period of interaction (Thornton & Nardi, 1975).

Numerous researchers have noted the influences of organizational members on the adjustment of new hires to the work setting and through consensus have indicated that the organizational socialization process occurs primarily in a social context. Supervisors, co-workers, peers, and reciprocal role set others often provide psychological support and the information needed to reduce uncertainty and clarify roles. Feldman

(1976), Meissner (1976), Evan (1963), and Louis (1980b) have all indicated that new employees interact more with co-workers and peers than with supervisors and that these interactions were instrumental with regard to the individual's adjustment to the work setting.

Overall, it appears that informal communication of norms aids the new individual to learn the ropes of the organization and become adjusted. This exchange is fostered by informal interactions among supervisors, co-workers, and others at the job setting. In addition, it should be clear that this communication exchange is either initiated by or directed toward the new individual and that the frequency/quality of the exchange greatly enhances the rate of adjustment. For example, Kendon (1963) found that smoothness of establishing a network (meshing) was an essential part of the ability to establish an easy pattern of interaction. Meshing involves several underlying characteristics including: (a) rapid accommodation to the timing and emotional state of others, and (b) frequent initiation of interactions with few pauses or interruptions. Further, Kendon reports that individuals become more effective during interactions as they take the initiative, and consequently the control, in social interactions.

In summary, when one considers the evidence presented regarding such variables as informal interactions, proactive behavior and adjustment to the work setting, a distinct set of possibilities begins to form regarding the socialization and rapid adjustment of new employees to the work setting. Perhaps the informal and non-task related interactions one encounters just after joining an organization has some impact on the new worker. Does increasing amounts of informal interactions facilitate the process of adjustment of the new worker to the work

setting and consequently allow them to spend more time working or do formal interactions enhance this process? In order to investigate this issue more completely, the following hypotheses are offered:

> Hypothesis 1a: There will not be a significant positive correlation between the early total amount of informal interactions and later time spent working on tasks.
>
> Hypothesis 1b: There will not be a significant positive correlation between the early total amount of formal interactions and time later spent working on tasks.

Another closely related aspect that requires clarification involves Kendon's view of the proactive newcomer. Are the more proactive newcomers also more adept at becoming adjusted to new work settings? Schein (1971) suggests that the manifestation of high levels of proactive behavior early on during the socialization process is simply an adaptational pattern characteristic of innovators (newcomers who actively seek new information and then utilizes that information to personalize the new environment). If Schein and Kendon are correct in their speculations regarding the proactive behavior of newcomers, perhaps it would be beneficial to further investigate the relationship between active solicitation of information at the work setting and the newcomers feelings of adjustment. To this end the following hypotheses are offered:

> Hypothesis 2a: The total number of newcomer proactive interactions experienced early on in the socialization process will not be positively correlated with the later completed self-report measure of adjustment.
>
> Hypothesis 2b: The total number of other initiated interactions experienced by the newcomer early on in the socialization process will not be positively correlated with the later completed self-report measure of adjustment.

Even though newcomer initiated interaction is an important portion of the socialization process and a great deal of information may be

gleaned from these interactions, interactions initiated by others provided additional information regarding how the newcomer can best adjust to the new job setting. Gomersall and Meyers (1966) present evidence that speculates that newcomers adjust more successfully when incumbents initiate interactions. On the other hand, the research of Schein (1971) and Kendon (1963) suggest that newcomers become adjusted more easily if they are proactive in their interactions with others at the work setting. Thus, the literature presents two very different views regarding the type of interactions that facilitate the adjustment of newcomers to the job setting. In light of these research findings, the following hypothesis is offered:

> Hypothesis 2c: The combination of newcomer proactive interactions and other initiated interactions experienced early on will not be more highly correlated with adjustment than either the proactive or other initiated interactions alone.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

Sample

The participants in this study were 26 people who were newly hired to an organization. It was mandatory that each person was not acquainted with any member of the new work setting.

The organizations which were used in this study were a large dry goods department store, a large midwestern university, and a midwestern health maintenance organization (HMO).

The employees who participated in this study included both males and females who worked at various levels within their respective organizations, e.g., administrative clericals (first line supervisors), clerical and technical workers (typists, lab technicians), building sanitation workers, and sales clerks. These participants were asked, upon being hired, whether or not they desired to participate in this study. Twenty-nine people were initially asked to take part in this research. Thus, only three individuals refused to participate.

Procedure

Task Coding

The primary concern for the coding of tasks was to record the various activities in which each newcomer engages. The coding form was segmented into four categories of (on-task, interpersonal-task, interpersonal-social, other) activities (see Figure 1).

Actor's No. _____
Actor's Name _____
Coder's Name _____
Location _____

Page _____ of _____
Today's Date _____
Time: from _____ to _____

	On Task	Interpers-Task	Interpers-Social	Other
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				
25				
26				
27				
28				
29				
30				

Figure 1. Task Coding Form

When a newcomer was observed to be engaged in activities directly related to their major task function, they were considered to be on-task, i.e., a secretary performing routine duties, e.g., typing, filing, etc., was considered to be on-task and working on a segment of his/her major task function. Their behavior was then recorded by the observer as on-task. A one or two word description of the observed behavior was written in the space provided on the task coding form, in addition to a number indicating how many seconds (1-60) the new employee spent engaged in this behavior.

Interpersonal-task behavior was determined to be an interpersonal interaction that was intended to concern task-related matters (not work-related matters). For example, asking for or giving task-related information would be considered interpersonal-task behavior. Interpersonal-task behavior, like on-task behavior, was coded using the Task Coding Observation form, and applying the aforementioned coding procedure.

Interpersonal-social behavior was determined to be interactions (with peers, supervisors, or others) whose main content was non-task matters. More global work-related issues, e.g., discussions between employees regarding the organization in general would fall into this category as would general social talk, e.g., discussions about the weather, sports, and so on.

Behavior which fell into the other category was determined to be that which was not related to the task at hand or to social interaction, e.g., daydreaming and reading non-work materials, etc.

Each task coding observation period was preceded by a relationship observation period, lasting 20 minutes, and was conducted by an observer who watched from an unobtrusive position in the work setting.

Relationship Coding

The relationship observation was done separately from the task coding and was also a 20 minute time sample. The relationship coding involved observing and recording the informal interactions which went on during the normal course of work. The interactions that were observed were those which occurred between the actor (new hire) and the supervisor(s), peer(s), and/or others (clients, customers, etc.) who appeared at the work setting. Thus, the relationship coding form (Figure 2) reflects these three major categories of interaction (between superior, peer, other) which were most likely to occur in a work setting.

An early attempt to develop a coding form which would allow the aforementioned interaction information to be coded proved useful in that its design captured the general flavor of the information desired. Yet, its complexity was such that it hindered observers from making accurate observations.

One problem associated with the use of the first relationship coding form was that observers had difficulty recording a sequence of related verbal exchanges as one complete interaction, i.e., natural lags in conversation were interpreted as signifying a new interaction episode. In other words, a complete interaction is a sequence of interactions between individuals that continues in time (Bakeman, 1978). For clarity, consider the following scenario. A secretary is typing at his/her work station when from across the room, a graduate student asks for information regarding the functioning of the copy machine. He/she gives the student the appropriate information then resumes his/her typing. After a minute of silence, the student inquires once again because he/she had difficulty following the first instructions.

The secretary stops his/her typing, walks over to the copy machine, and delivers a 45 second spiel of information which explains the first instructions in greater detail. The student then acknowledges understanding, thanks the secretary, and begins to operate the copy machine whereupon the secretary returns to the work station and continues typing. According to the definition of an interaction adopted here, this entire sequence would be coded on the relationship form as one interaction.

Now, compare the following scenario to the one just given. Again, the secretary is typing at the desk when he/she is interrupted by the graduate student who asks for instructions regarding the operation of the copy machine. This time, he/she gives him/her instructions, he/she understands, and operates the machine without difficulty. After 25 seconds, the graduate student begins to talk to the secretary about a recent weekend experience. They chat on the subject for a minute whereupon the student leaves the office and the secretary resumes typing. Using the newer and more simplified version of the relationship coding form (Figure 2), this sequence of behaviors would be coded as two distinct interactions; the first interaction would involve the request and response for instructions while the second interaction would be the conversation regarding the weekend experience.

Further, the first of the aforementioned interactions would be coded formal-oriented (T) and be preceded by a check mark (✓) to indicate that the student initiated the interaction, e.g., ✓T (all interactions in which a person not assigned to the actor's work station enters that work station are considered to be initiated by the individual who enters the actor's work station). The ✓T would be coded in the <u>other</u> column as this interaction occurred between the actor and someone other

Actor's No. _____
Actor's Name _____
Coder's Name _____
Location _____

Page _____ of _____
Today's Date _____
Time: from _____ to _____

Format

Initiator of Interaction
actor: *
other: ✓

Superior	Peer	Others	Notes

Figure 2. Relationship Coding Form

than a supervisor or peer/co-worker. The second interaction involving the weekend experience (a non-task related issue) would be considered an informal-oriented (S) interaction and again be preceded by a check mark (✓), e.g., ✓S. As before, the ✓S interaction would be coded in the other column of the relationship coding form. Had the circumstances for this scenario been different, e.g., if the interaction had occurred between a peer/co-worker or supervisor, the interaction would have been recorded in the peer or supervisor column respectively. In addition, since peers and supervisors very often are assigned to the same work station, there is the occasion for the actor to initiate an interaction. All interactions initiated by the actor were coded with an asterisk (*) preceding the actual description of the interaction, e.g., *T or *S.

The relationship coding, like the task coding, was performed by observers who watched from an unobtrusive position in the work setting.

Adjustment

The adjustment of newcomers to the work setting was determined by two separate indices which were then combined to form one measure.

The first index of adjustment was a self-report measure that was completed after the last observation session. Each participant was asked to circle the face on the scale (Kunin, 1955) that best described how they felt about their job since joining the organization (Figure 3).

The second index of adjustment was also a self-report measure that participants completed after the final observation session. Each participant was asked to complete a semantic differential that asked them to circle the number which best representated how they felt they were getting along in their work setting. The bipolar scales consisted

YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT HOW YOU ARE GETTING ALONG. For each set of words, circle the number which best represents how you feel you are getting along in your work setting. That is, tell us the extent to which you feel adjusted, adapted, settled in, and so forth. Give us your first impression.

adjusted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unadjusted
adapted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	not adapted
settled in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	not settled in
uninvolved	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	involved
on the outside	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	on the inside
participating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	not participating
not comfortable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	comfortable
not confused	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	confused
accepted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unaccepted
relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	tense

YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR JOB. Circle the number below the pair of faces that best describes how you feel about your job.

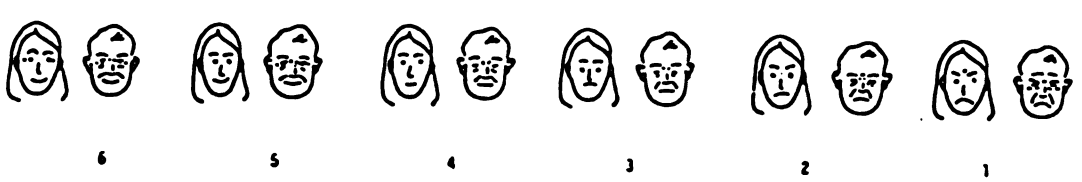

Figure 3. Self-Report Measure

of the following terms (and their polar opposites): adjusted, adapted, settled in, uninvolved, on the outside, participating, not comfortable, not confused, accepted, and relaxed (Figure 3).

Coders

All of the observers who collected data during this study were trained to discern the specific behaviors in question but were not told about the suggested hypotheses.

The extent of agreement between coders was determined by first recording their independent judgments of the variables to be analyzed during random coding sessions. For the nominal-scale attributes proposed for examination in this research, Π (Scott, 1955) was the appropriate tool with which to measure interrater reliability. Essentially, Π represents the extent to which two coders agree beyond the level of that expected by chance alone.

Scott and Wertheimer (1967) developed the Π index of intercoder agreement for nominal-scale judgments. According to their computational model, the chance or expected agreement between raters is represented as Pe and may be estimated by the following formula: $Pe = \Sigma\ pi^2$ where pi designates the proportion of cases assigned to the ith category. The rationale for this computation is that chance probability of both judges placing item A into category B equals the product of the separate probabilities that each judge will place item A into category B; i.e., $(P_B)\ (P_B)$ or P_B^2. By the same token, the probabilities of agreement of placements in categories D, E,...Z can be represented as P_D^2, P_E^2,...P_Z^2.

Pe has a maximum value of 1.00 and this value occurs when a single category contains all observations while the minimum value ($^1/_k$) occurs

when all K categories have equal frequencies. Thus, it follows that a useful index of coding reliability would be the degree to which observed intercoder agreement (Po) exceeds the level of agreement that would be expected via chance alone (Pe). This index of intercoder reliability is termed Π and is calculated as follows:

$$\Pi = \frac{Po - Pe}{1 - Pe}$$

The upper limit of Π is 1.00 and its lower limit is 0.00. However, if the judges' agreement is less than chance, Π will take on a negative value (e.g., -.00). Pe is calculated from the total number and distribution of all observations over the entire set of categories. Po, on the other hand, is the proportion of times judges agree (regardless of categories) after independently coding an observation session.

Analyses

Testing the first hypothesis involved correlating the total number of newcomer initiated informal interactions that occurred during the first ten observation sessions with the total amount of time the newcomer spent working on task related matters during the second ten observation sessions. Next, the total number of newcomer initiated formal interactions that occurred during the first ten observation sessions were correlated with the total amount of time the newcomer spent working on task related matters during the last ten observation sessions. Testing whether the informal interactions or formal interactions had more influence on the amount of time each newcomer spent working on task related matters involved determining whether the correlations of both informal and formal interactions with the amount of time spent on task were significantly different from each other.

Testing Hypotheses 2a and b involved counting the total number of newcomer initiated interactions that occur during the first ten observation sessions and correlating that total with the self-report measure of adjustment. Similarly, the other initiated interactions that occurred during the first ten sessions were tabulated and correlated with the self-report measure of adjustment. The effect of the newcomer initiated interactions was ascertained by determining whether or not the correlation of newcomer initiated interactions and other initiated interactions with adjustment were significantly different from each other.

Finally, Hypothesis 2c was tested by determining the correlation between all newcomer initiated interactions (both informal and formal) and all other-initiated interactions during the first ten observation sessions with the self-report measure of adjustment. This was tested by determining if the correlation of the combined newcomer interactions with the measure of adjustment was significantly different than either newcomer or other initiated interactions alone.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Table 1 provides the intercoder reliability as assessed via nominal-scale judgments measured by Π. For the present study, the average of six sessions in which interrater agreement was assessed yielded $\Pi = .90$. Among the six sessions analyzed, the lowest Π was .76 and the highest was 1.00.

Dependent Variable Reliability

There were two indices of adjustment used as dependent variables in this research. The first index was the face each participant circled on the Kunin (1955) scale that best described how they felt about their job. The second index was the semantic differential that also was completed by each participant the last time they were observed. In order to determine the relationship between these separate measures of adjustment, a Pearson Product moment correlation was computed between the degree of adjustment measured by the Kunin scale and the summed semantic differential ratings made by participants the last time they were observed. That analysis revealed a correlation of .66 ($p < .001$). This correlation indicates that the two measures overlapped significantly in measuring the extent to which people felt adjusted to their new work setting. The Kunin scale and the semantic differential were then combined to form one measure of adjustment by reverse scoring items

Table 1

Intercoder Reliability

CODER 1

Trainer	1	2	3	4	5	6	f12
1	13	2	1	4			20
2	3	8					11
3	2						2
4	1			18			19
5					40		40
6							0
f11	19	10	1	22	40	0	92
pi	.212	.114	.016	.223	.435		

$Po = \Sigma pi^2 = (.212)^2+(.114)^2+(.016)^2+(.223)^2+(.435)^2+(.000)^2$

$= .297$

$Po = \frac{13 + 0 + 18 + 40 + 0}{92}$

$= .859$

$R = \frac{.859 - .297}{1 - .297}$

$= .80$

CODER 2

Trainer	1	2	3	4	5	6	f12
1	9	1					10
2							0
3			6	2			8
4				2			2
5					18		18
6						2	2
f11	9	1	6	4	18	2	40
pi	.237	.013	.175	.075	.450	.050	

$Po = \Sigma pi^2 = (.237)^2+(.013)^2+(.175)^2+(.075)^2+(.450)^2+(.050)^2$

$= .299$

$Po = \frac{9 + 0 + 6 + 2 + 18 + 2}{40}$

$= .92$

$R = \frac{.92 - .299}{1 - .299}$

$= .886$

CODER 3

Trainer	1	2	3	4	5	6	f12
1	3	1	1	1			6
2		2		1			3
3				1			1
4				2			2
5					40		40
6							0
f11	3	3	1	5	40	0	52
pi	.057	.058	.019	.057	.769		

$Po = \Sigma pi^2 = (.057)^2+(.058)^2+(.019)^2+(.057)^2+(.769)^2-(.000)^2$

$= .607$

$Po = \frac{3 + 2 + 0 + 2 + 40 + 0}{52}$

$= .904$

$R = \frac{.904 - .607}{1 - .607}$

$= .76$

CATEGORY LABELS

1 = actor initiated

2 = other initiated

3 = social interactions

4 = task interactions

5 = time spent working on task

6 = interpersonal activities

Table 1 (cont.)

CODER 4

Trainer	1	2	3	4	5	6	f12
1	2						2
2		12					12
3			7	1			8
4				6	1		7
5					36		36
6					1		1
f11	2	12	7	7	40	0	68
pi	.029	.176	.110	.103	.574	.000	

$Pe = \Sigma pi^2 = (.029)^2+(.176)^2+(.110)^2+(.103)^2+(.574)^2+(.000)^2$

$= .384$

$Po = \frac{2 + 12 + 7 + 6 + 36 + 0}{68}$

$= .956$

$K = \frac{.956 - .384}{1 - .384}$

$= .93$

CODER 5

Trainer	1	2	3	4	5	6	f12
1							
2		2					2
3			2				2
4							
5					40		40
6							
f11		2	2		40		44
pi	.000	.045	.045	.000	.909		

$Pe = \Sigma pi^2 = (.000)^2+(.045)^2+(.045)^2+(.000)^2+(.909)^2+(.000)^2$

$= .83$

$Po = \frac{0 + 2 + 2 + 0 + 40 + 0}{44}$

$= 1$

$K = \frac{1 - .83}{1 - .83}$

$= 1$

CODER 6

Trainer	1	2	3	4	5	6	f12
1	8						8
2		10					10
3			4				14
4				14			4
5					36		36
6						2	2
f11	8	10	14	4	36	2	76
pi	.105	.132	.184	.053	.50	.026	

$Pe = \Sigma pi^2 = (.105)^2+(.132)^2+(.184)^2+(.053)^2+(.50)^2+(.026)^2$

$= .327$

$Po = \frac{8 + 10 + 14 + 4 + 36 + 2}{76}$

$= 1$

$K = \frac{1 - .327}{1 - .327}$

$= 1$

$\text{Reliability} = \frac{.80 + .76 + .93 + 1 + .89 + 1}{6}$

$= .90$

1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 10, summing over the ten items, dividing that total by 10, and adding the resultant score to the Kunin score. A Spearman-Brown estimate of reliability for these measures yielded a coefficient of 1.

In addition to the Pearson correlation between the two more global indices, analysis was performed on the semantic differential scale in order to assess its internal consistency. This analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .90 which is indicative of high internal consistency (Table 2).

It should be noted that none of the measures mentioned in Table 2 were tested for retest reliability.

Hypotheses 1 and 2

Hypothesis 1 suggested that informal (rather than formal) communication of norms helps the newcomer to learn the ropes of the organization. It was also expected that the communication exchange between the neophyte and incumbents was traditionally the process through which most of this informal communication was exchanged. With these ideas clearly outlined, Hypothesis 1 stated that the informal and non-task related interactions the newcomer encounters just after joining an organization, will not have a major impact on the amount of time each newcomer later spent working on tasks. Specifically, it was suggested that there would not be a significant difference between the correlation relating the total amount of informal interaction and time each worker later spent working on tasks and the correlation relating the total amount of formal interaction and the time each newcomer later spent working on tasks.

Analysis of the data regarding Hypothesis 1 revealed a negative and nonsignificant correlation (-.26, $p < .13$) between the amount of

Table 2

Item Correlation Matrix for the Semantic Differential

Standard Deviation	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.0	1.6	1.7
Mean	5.6	5.5	5.9	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.9	5.8	5.4
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1.00									
2	.86	1.00								
3	.77	.85	1.00							
4	.48	.52	.28	1.00						
5	.24	.32	.20	.61	1.00					
6	.15	.16	.09	.40	.48	1.00				
7	.55	.67	.51	.56	.53	.30	1.00			
8	.21	.20	.16	.29	.63	.33	.53	1.00		
9	.60	.72	.66	.38	.52	.38	.76	.49	1.00	
10	.77	.75	.64	.40	.22	.24	.70	.15	.75	1.00

1 = adjusted...unadjusted
2 = adapted...not adapted
3 = settled in...not settled in
4 = uninvolved...involved
5 = on the outside...on the inside
6 = participating...not participating
7 = not comfortable...comfortable
8 = not confused...confused
9 = accepted...unaccepted
10 = relaxed...tense

Note. A seven point scale was used for each item and items 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 10 were reversed scored. All items were averaged over 26 cases.

informal interaction that occurs during the first ten observation periods and the time each worker spent working on tasks during the last ten observation periods. The correlation between the number of formal interactions in the first ten observation periods and the time spent working on tasks during the last ten periods also proved not to be significant (.16, $\underline{p} < .25$). However, there was a significant difference between these two correlations. This assumption was tested by the following formula:

$$Z = \frac{\sqrt{N-1}\ (r_{12} - r_{13})}{\sqrt{(1-r_{12}^2)^2 + (1-r_{13}^2)^2 - 2r_{23}^3 - (2r_{23} - r_{12}\, r_{13})\ (1-r_{12}^2 - r_{13}^2 - r_{23}^2)}}$$

Where N = sample size

r_{12} = correlation between informal interactions and time spent working.

r_{13} = correlation between formal interactions and time spent working.

r_{23} = correlation between informal and formal interactions.

For Hypothesis 1:

$$Z = \frac{\sqrt{26-1}\ (-.26) - (.16)}{\sqrt{.8595 + .9494 - .001 - (.9568)\ (.6771)}} = \frac{-2.10}{1.077} = 1.95$$

Given a one tailed test, this $\underline{Z}$ score yielded an area of .95 of the total area under a normal curve and a corresponding $\underline{p} < .05$. Thus, Hypothesis 1a was rejected as the formal interactions were more positively related to the dependent measure than the informal interactions.

Hypothesis 2 focused on the proactive behavior of newcomers and their adjustment to the work setting. It suggested that the total

number of newcomer initiated interactions (proactive behavior) experienced early on in the socialization process would not be more positively correlated to the self-report measure of adjustment than the correlation between interactions initiated by others and the self-report measure of adjustment. Analysis of the data revealed that neither proactive behavior nor other initiated behavior were positively correlated with adjustment (-.14 and -.43, $p < .05$, respectively). The most important aspect of this analysis showed that there was not a significant difference between the correlation of proactive behavior and newcomer adjustment (-.14) and the correlation of other initiated behavior and newcomer adjustment (-.43). This assumption was tested by the formula used in Hypothesis 1.

$$Z = \frac{\sqrt{N-1}\ (r_{12} - r_{13})}{\sqrt{(1-r_{12}^2)^2 + (1-r_{13}^2)^2 - 2r_{23}^3 - (2r_{23} - r_{12}\, r_{13})\ (1-r_{12}^2 - r_{13}^2 - r_{23}^2)}}$$

Where N = sample size

r_{12} = correlation between proactive behavior and adjustment.

r_{13} = correlation between other initiated behavior and adjustment.

r_{23} = correlation between proactive and other initiated behavior.

For the present study:

$$Z = \frac{\sqrt{26-1}\ (-.14) - (-.43)}{\sqrt{.9968 + .8881 - .3149 - (1.070)\ (.6492)}} = \frac{1.45}{.8832} = 1.64$$

Given a one tailed test, this Z score yielded an area of .89 of the total area under a normal curve and a corresponding $p < .11$. Thus, Hypothesis 2a and b was not rejected.

Hypothesis 2c was formulated as a logical corrollary to Hypothesis 2a and b. That is to say, even though newcomer proactive behavior was thought

to be a more important part of the socialization process and adjustment than those interactions initiated by others in the work setting, the interactions that were initiated by others in the work setting could logically provide additional information regarding adjustment to the new setting. Thus, Hypothesis 2b suggested that the sum of actor-initiated plus other-initiated interactions would not be significantly more strongly correlated with adjustment than either was alone. Unfortunately, the analyses revealed that the correlation of proactive behavior plus other initiated interactions with adjustment was not significant ($r = -.31$). This finding matched the negative and non-significant correlations reported earlier for the two kinds of interaction mentioned above. Finally, neither the correlation of actor initiated interactions, or the correlation of other initiated interactions, with adjustment, were significantly different from the correlation of the sum of both kinds of interactions. Hypothesis 2c was thus not rejected.

Post-hoc Analysis

For the present study, further exploratory analyses were conducted. For example, one of the major tenets of this study revolved around the assumption that interactions experienced early in the socialization process had a significant impact on the adjustment of the newcomer later on in the socialization process. This impact was assumed to be fostered by the informal interactions between newcomers, peers, supervisors, and others in the work setting by reducing anxiety and surprise. It was further assumed that this reduced anxiety made it easier for the newcomer to adapt and become a more active participant in the new work setting. When one reflects on this hypothesized process, a question that comes to mind is: What is "early"?

"Early" can be defined in different ways. For instance, in the present study, "early" was operationalized to mean those experiences (interactions, time spent working, etc.) that occurred during the first three weeks (10 observations) of incumbency. However, given the ad hoc choice of three weeks, some post-hoc analyses were accomplished using other time periods for defining "early."

During the first three weeks that the new workers spent working on their jobs, they were observed a total of ten times. In order to examine the effects of work experiences that occurred before that three week period, the observations were divided and aggregated in the following fashion: observation sessions one, two, and three (the first work week for the new hire) were combined to form the first time unit of analysis, and in turn were added to observation sessions four and five to form a second time unit of analysis (approximately the first two weeks). Similarly, observation sessions one through five were added to sessions six and seven to form a third unit (about 2½ weeks), while sessions one through seven were added to sessions eight, nine, and ten (approximately the first three weeks of work) to form the fourth and final time unit, the unit used for the earlier analysis. Thus, the aggregation by session, for the independent variable, takes on the following pattern: 1 + 2 + 3; 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5; 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7; 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 9 + 10.

The dependent variable was divided in the following fashion: time unit a was composed of observation sessions 4 through 20, time unit b was composed of sessions 6 through 20, time unit c was composed of sessions 8 through 20, and time unit d was composed of sessions 11 through 20. Each time unit of the dependent variable (DV) was then matched with the

appropriate time unit of the independent variable (IV). For example, time unit 1 (IV) was matched with time unit a (DV), unit 2 with b, unit 3 with c, etc. Using this arrangement, the match of the IV and DV, by session, would form the following pattern: IV = 1-3 and the DV = 4-20; IV = 1-5 and the DV = 6-20; IV 1-7 and the DV = 8-20; IV = 1-10 and the DV = 11-20. Thus, in each instance, the dependent variable is collected immediately after the independent measure. This breakdown was used because the literature did not substantiate using any other scheme, and because it seemed logical to sample the dependent variable immediately after assessing the independent variable.

The first analyses under consideration are the formal interactions and their association with the amount of time new hires later spent working on tasks. As the reader will remember (from Hypothesis 1), formal interactions had a weak correlation with the amount of time the new worker spent working on task related matters (.16 at time unit four). Further analyses, using the break down mentioned above, also proved fruitless, revealing correlations of .09, .03, and .13 between formal interactions in units one, two, and three (respectively) and the amount of time the new workers later spent actually working on tasks.

The correlations between the amount of informal interactions each new worker experienced and adjustment proved interesting. Correlations of -.45, -.44, -.42, and -.54, were found to exist between these two measures (for units one through four respectively), and they suggest a moderate inverse relationship between the amount of informal interaction new workers experienced and their later perception of how well adjusted they felt.

While the inverse relationship of informal interaction and adjustment appears to be interesting when compared to the positive relationship between formal interactions and adjustment (.11, .02, .07, .01), the amount of informal interactions presents yet another interesting view when it is observed from a different angle.

The two groups of correlations in Table 3 represent the following: (a) correlations of the amount of informal interaction occurring between the new hire and others present in the work setting with the amount of time the worker later spent participating in non-work related activities (while at work), and (b) correlations of the amount of informal interaction and the amount of time the new hire spent engaged in work related activities (see Hypothesis 1).

Table 3 reveals a strong negative relationship between the amount of informal interaction workers experienced and the time they later spent working on task related issues. On the other hand, Table 3 also reveals a fairly consistent and positive relationship between the amount of informal interaction and the amount of time each worker spent engaged in non-task related matters. These results appear to make sense logically as the variables time on task and time on non-task issues are opposite in nature.

The final post-hoc analysis performed was a chi square test to determine if the obtained frequencies in the set of categories formed by the variables initiator (the person who initiated a conversation) and others in the work setting (supervisor or peer) differed significantly from the expected frequencies. Listed below are the results of that chi square analysis.

Table 3

Informal Interaction and Time Spent Working on Non-Task Matters

Time on Non-Task Matters

Informal Interactions	a	b	c	d
1	.19	.17	.17	.15
2	.49	.45	.47	.42
3	.40	.44	.40	.36
4	.41	.48	.41	.36

Informal Interaction and Time Spent Working on Task Matters

Time on Task

Informal Interactions	a	b	c	d
1	-.26	-.32	-.35	-.40
2	-.56	-.66	-.71	-.80
3	-.44	-.56	-.63	-.68
4	-.37	-.51	-.59	-.62

Independent Variable (informal interactions)

time unit 1 = amount of interactions during first week (observation sessions 1-3)
time unit 2 = amount of interactions during first 2 weeks (observation sessions 1-5)
time unit 3 = amount of interactions during first 2½ weeks (observation sessions 1-7)
time unit 4 = amount of interactions during first 3 weeks (observation sessions 1-10)

Dependent Variable (time on task/nontask)

time unit a = time spent working during last 11½ weeks (observation sessions 4-20)
time unit b = time spent working during last 10 weeks (observation sessions 6-20)
time unit c = time spent working during last 9½ weeks (observation sessions 8-20)
time unit d = time spent working during last 8½ weeks (observation sessions 11-20)

The correlations on the diagonal represent the logical scheme of analysis. The entire matrix was presented to emphasize the consistency of the relationships regardless of the breakdown.

Initiator	Others in work setting		Raw Total
	Supervisor	Peer	
Actor	163 43.6%	554 55.2%	717
Other	211 56.4%	449 44.8%	660
	374	1003	1377

$\chi^2 = 14.8$ ($\underline{p} < .001$)

The results of the chi square analysis indicate that the two variables differed significantly from the expected frequencies. The percent of interactions that occurred between the actor (newcomer) and peers were clearly higher than those that occurred between the newcomer and the supervisor as they accounted for 73% of the total interactions. In addition, when supervisors and newcomers were communicating, supervisors initiated the majority of the interactions (56.4%). In the newcomer peer condition, the opposite situation was found to exist, i.e., newcomers initiated the majority of the interactions (55.2%).

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Although the results of this study were not as expected, the post-hoc examination revealed that the amount of informal interaction newcomers engaged in when they were new to the job correlated positively with the amount of time they later spent working on non-task matters. There are several alternative explanations for these positive correlations (Table 3). For instance, one might view this phenomenon as a consequence of the stability of the behavior of the person being observed, i.e., new hires who spend a great deal of time involved in informal interactions just after being hired will probably spend a great deal of time not working at any given time during their incumbency. If, in fact, people are consistent in their behavior over time, their behavior in time sample one should not vary significantly from their behavior during time sample 2, 3, 4,...etc. Thus, this would account for the positive correlations between the two variables.

The other workers present on the job offers yet another alternative explanation why informal interactions correlated as they did with the time newcomers spent working on non-task and task related matters. For instance, suppose the newcomers observed were a part of a work group or performed a task that was dependent on others. The amount of time newcomers spent informally or formally may not have been a direct reflection of the individuals adaptational style. Rather, the time

they spent in either of these situations could have been a function of how well the group as a whole synchronized their work behavior.

From a different perspective, one might see the workload as the binding link between these variables. For example, people working on a job that has a very light workload may find themselves with a great deal of idle time to waste and may consequently spend that time engaged in informal interactions/behavior not related to the job. Given that one's workload is consistent, the behavior may be expected later on during incumbency and thus explain the positive correlations in Table 3.

The negative correlations between early informal interactions and later time spent working on tasks (Table 3) may be explained by some of the same reasoning introduced above. For instance, let us again suppose the workload is consistent, but for this example high. A newcomer in this situation would find it difficult to engage in frequent informal interactions (just after being hired). Given that the individual's workload is consistent, one would expect that the new hire would later spend a great deal of time involved in task related activities later on in the socialization process and relatively little time engaged in non-task activities during the same period of time. Thus, the negative correlations in Table 3 show that small amounts of informal interactions are associated with large amounts of task behavior.

Finally, there is a most important issue which may well be the best explanation for the positive correlations in Table 3. That is, since the informal interaction variable was composed of only informal interactions and the time spent on non-task behavior variable was composed of informal interactions plus other behavior (reading non-work material, personal phone calls, etc.), it is logical to expect the two

variables to have some overlap and consequently yield a positive correlation regardless of the difference in the time each sample was taken. Before leaving the topic of informal and formal interactions, it is necessary to look at these variables and their relationship to adjustment.

Both early informal and early formal interactions were correlated (in the post-hoc analysis) with the self-report adjustment data collected at the end of 12 weeks. These correlations proved to be interesting and worthwhile as they were opposite in direction, with informal interactions negative for all time periods sampled (-.45, -.44, -.42, -.54) and formal interactions positive (.11, .02, .07, .01). People often interpret adjustment as an issue determined by several facets of the work setting: the work itself and informal and formal relationships. At least for this sample, the more time people spend on their work the more adjusted they feel. However, the more they spend time early on with others (informally) the less adjusted they feel later. Perhaps this phenomenon occurred because more information regarding what one must know in order to adapt comfortably to a new work setting is passed during formal interactions rather than during informal interactions. The consequence of such an event(s) would yield the unique pattern of correlations found in the present study.

While the hypotheses investigated were not disproved by the research results presented here, the post-hoc analysis permitted examination of some hidden relationships which may fit very well with past attempts in this vein. For example, the results of the present research indicate that while informal interactions did not facilitate the adjustment process, the amount of formal interactions received during

early work experiences certainly did. This conclusion is congruent with the research of Moch (1980) who initially hypothesized that interpersonal interaction within the work-group had a negative relationship to job involvement, but later found these factors were positively related. Similarly, it also fits in well with research conducted by Graen (1976), who proposed the notion of interpersonal action in the socialization process. This model suggests that the assimilation of a new member can be modified by the interpersonal relationships between the new member, the supervisor, and others in the organization.

Feldman's (1976) research looks at the new worker's adjustment to the work environment as well as his/her development of new work skills. According to his research, there are three stages of the socialization process: anticipatory, accommodation, and role management. The accommodation stage is most relevant to the results of the present study. In this stage, the new hire sees what the organization is really like and makes efforts to become a participating member of that organization. There are two activities which go on during this stage that touch base with the present research, i.e., initiation to the task (an indicator of how successfully the employee has learned new tasks) and initiation to the group (an index of how successful the new employee has been in establishing new interpersonal relationships). Feldman found that initiation to the group and initiation to the task were positively and significantly related with each other ($r = .23$). In addition, Feldman concluded that initiation to the group was directly related to how successful the newcomer was on the job and speculated that successful interpersonal relationships preceded initiation to the task. However, the data that Feldman collected regarding initiation to the group and task were

collected during the same time sample and consequently were a measure of covariance. The present study took Feldman's research a step further by focusing in on the interaction process of interpersonal relationships and then differentiating the interpersonal interactions, e.g., assessing the type of interactions (informal vs. formal) and the initiator of interactions. Further, this study measures the interpersonal interactions at an earlier time than the newcomer's task behavior is observed and consequently eliminates the covariance problem that hampered Feldman's speculation regarding whether initiation to the group or initiation to the task actually occurred first in the sequence of events.

Although research in organizational socialization has progressed in generating descriptive models of the socialization process, empirical research testing these models has lagged far behind (Van Maanen, 1975). There are few empirical studies that identify the critical variables in the socialization process, or specify when or by what method they operate. While the research attempts mentioned above are similar in nature to the present study, they do not make distinctions regarding the qualitative aspects of the interaction between neophyte and incumbents, e.g., formal interactions vs. informal interactions. In this respect, the research conducted here seemingly adds to or enhances the collective body of knowledge generated by others.

One of the major difficulties in analyzing the data that were collected for this study is the complication generated by the small number of participants evaluated. That is, with a sample of 26 participants, it would be erroneous for one to assume that the statistics arrived at could support, without further research, the generalization of conclusions to a larger population. For that reason, the topics

discussed above are limited to and implicative of directions for future research that might be carried out to clarify issues that the present study has raised.

A post-hoc reflection of the methodology used to collect data for the present research revealed several interesting insights. Without question, the most significant problem involves the small number of participants used in the study. If the results were significant, due to the lack of statistical power, the generalizability would be non-existent. Generalizability was again reintroduced as a problem when two additional factors were taken into consideration: (a) multiple employment levels, and (b) between organization sampling. The employees who participated in this study were from a diverse range of both professions and positions within their respective organizations (i.e., administrative professionals, custodians, secretaries, nurses, key-punch operators, laboratory technicians, cashiers, etc.) Perhaps more useful information could have been derived if the research had been limited (focused) to one particular profession, or employment level. By the same token, if a larger sample within each organization had been used, comparisons between organizations might have proved both feasible and useful.

There also remains the question of whether a Hawthorne effect was operating when each participant was being observed. If in fact there was such a phenomenon present during the data collect phase, it is very questionable if the behavior exhibited by each participant during each session was truly representative of their normal work behavior. The consequences of this speculation is that the data collected represents newcomer behavior when they knew they were being paid attention to.

Specifically, one topic that warrants further investigation is the clarification of the relationship between formal interactions and the new hire's feelings of adjustment. Given that the formal interactions that the new hire experienced during the first week of incumbency correlated highest with adjustment, it would seem appropriate to examine that time period more exhaustively. In addition, it may prove useful to monitor the source of the formal interactions in order to see who is responsible for the majority of these types of interactions. Perhaps a laboratory experiment might help to determine the answers to such questions as well as questions regarding whether or not the job itself, individuals at the job setting, or the new hire's adaptational style (e.g., whether or not the newcomer is proactive) itself has any bearing on adjustment. In addition, it might prove fruitful to examine the pattern of socialization between organizations to determine if the climate of the worksetting has any effect on adjustment.

Another facet of socialization research which deserves attention is how the newcomer's performance fits into the adaptational process. For instance, does a person who perceives they are adjusting to the job actually exhibit behavior congruent with their perceptions? More important, do their perceptions/behavior match their supervisors perception or performance rating of the newcomer (Feldman, 1976). Perhaps if these issues were more clear, one could better understand the overall significance of the socialization process.

Another area of importance which the present study does not address is how much a newcomer's skill on a task moderates their adjustment rate. For example, one would clearly expect a newcomer with many years of experience performing a particular task to be more competent than a

newcomer who is a novice at the same task. By the same token, one might expect a newcomer who has performed a similar task on previous jobs to adapt more quickly than the newcomer who is totally unacquainted with a task. Thus, it becomes quite clear that practice and transfer of training have some effect on the socialization process.

The above remarks point out that large amounts of social interactions during early work experiences were not a significant factor to consider in regards to facilitating the quantity of time a new hire will later spend working on task related matters. It was suggested that more time working on task issues was a function of a consistent workload that kept social behavior at a minimum. Further, informal interactions experienced by the new hire early during incumbency were negatively related to how adjusted newcomers felt regarding their jobs, while formal interactions during this same period were positively related (especially during the first week of incumbency). The explanation for this phenomenon was that more information may be passed to the new hire (concerning what one must know to adapt) during formal interactions than informal interactions. Proactive behavior and/or other initiated behavior were not connected to feelings of adjustment, however, it was suggested that perhaps the time span used in the present study was inappropriate. Finally, it was determined that this study lacked statistical power and generalizability due to the small number of participants. To this end, further research was recommended to clarify issues raised by this research and to add statistical rigor to the methodology.

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