WORK GROUP NORMS AND NEWCOMER SOCIALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The factors that aid in or detract from newcomers' adjustment to an organization are critical. Research highlights the contribution of firm socialization tactics and newcomers' proactive behaviors on newcomer role learning and commitment to the organization. The transition from outsider to insider is also aided by newcomers' fit to the job, onboarding experiences, and training. Together, these experiences contribute toward newcomer uncertainty reduction, relationship development, and identity formation.

This study argues for the importance of work group performance and support norms for enhanced newcomer adjustment. The application of normative social influence theories to organizational socialization research in the context of work groups results in a meso-level approach that complements prior emphasis on organization-initiated onboarding activities and newcomers' proactivity. The proposed model was tested on a sample of 305 newcomers across a variety of occupational and organizational contexts. Regression-based analysis estimated the effects newcomers' perceptions of their work group's performance and support norms had on adjustment variables including role clarity, social integration, helping behavior, and task performance. Moderation analyses tested the interplay between perceived performance and support norms with newcomers' reported group salience and relationship quality with their manager (LMX).

Perceptions of work group norms played an impactful role on newcomers' role clarity, social integration, and behavior, yet many of these influences appear to derive from work groups where support is both prevalent and prescribed. In the case of social integration, perceptions of a high-performing work group and the enforcement of expectations toward supportive actions became relevant. A three-way interaction between perceived performance and support norms

with LMX suggests high support and performance norms may primarily benefit the performance of those who develop higher-quality relationships with their supervising managers.

The study contributes to organizational socialization research in three important ways. First, it extends socialization research by demonstrating when work group influences may contribute or hinder cognitive, social, and behavioral elements of newcomer adjustment. Second, it builds upon prior research by understanding normative influence through communicative patterns of ambient signals and discrete messages collectively received by newcomers from those they work alongside. Finally, it offers a measurement approach that distinguishes between informational and normative work group influence, which complements prior focus on assimilation (through "socialization tactics") and individualization (through newcomers' proactivity).

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INTRODUCTION

The factors that aid in or detract from newcomers' adjustment to an organization are of critical importance. Research highlights the contribution of firm socialization tactics and newcomers' proactive behaviors to newcomer role learning and commitment to the organization (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). The transition from outsider to insider is also aided by newcomers' fit to the job, onboarding experiences, and training (Klein et al., 2015; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Saks, 1995). Together, these experiences contribute to newcomer uncertainty reduction, relationship development, and identity formation (Kramer et al., 2024).

Although general socialization experiences and individual behaviors are vital to newcomers' entry, the influence of work group members is an obvious, yet largely undertheorized, aspect of newcomer socialization. The influence of incumbent group members' behaviors and standards, where newcomers are placed, has been long noted (Brim, 1966; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) though rarely explored, with notable exceptions (e.g., Chen & Klimoski, 2003; Manata, 2019). Ambient stimuli and discretionary messages from existing members convey information about the work environment and tasks regarding standards of performance, how to get along with others, and ways to perform work more effectively, to name a few (Hackman, 1992; Jablin, 2001). For example, monitoring prevalent behaviors of work unit members provides cues for what is commonly practiced whereas communication about what should or ought to be done requires discrete messages from supervisors or work group members.

Prior research by Chen (2005; Chen & Klimoski, 2003) suggests that low-performing newcomers placed into work groups with high performance standards develop into high performers. These newly developed high performers may observe consistent exemplars of effective behavior. Higher performing members may more explicitly and directly communicate

standards to assimilate newcomers to maintain high levels of performance. Yet, the nature of work group influence is far from clear. For instance, Chen notes that high performers placed in low performing units maintain their level of high performance, despite those surrounding them. The interplay between what is said by incumbents and what newcomers interpret is also crucial to the credibility and influence of the work group's norms (Rimal & Real, 2005). Divisions within work groups may offer inconsistent or even contradictory messages about standards, work processes, or relationships, further complicating newcomer acclimation.

The present research is guided by the question: What difference does the work group make on newcomer adjustment? Socialization at its core is about normative social influence, where individuals assimilate to and/or diverge from the values, norms, and behaviors of a relevant reference group (Merton, 1957; Parsons, 1949; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This study extends organizational socialization research by focusing on the effect of work group norm congruence regarding performance and supportive behaviors on newcomers' role learning, performance, and personal development. When taking into account newcomers' general entry experiences and individual differences in proactive behaviors, it is theorized that work unit norms will aid or hamper their adjustment. After review of major streams in organizational socialization research, focus shifts to the context of work groups. Theories of normative influence are presented and then applied to two content domains: performance and support norms. Finally, direct and interaction effects of performance and support norms are tested.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational socialization is broadly described as the processes whereby individuals learn about, transition into, and become full participating members of an organization (Jablin 2001; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). It is commonly conceived as stages of anticipation, encounter, metamorphosis, and exit (see Ashforth et al., 2007), with attention to myriad influences that provide information and assist new employees during their transition. Processes central to newcomer adjustment involve sensemaking, expectancy violations, role learning, development of self-efficacy through task mastery, information seeking, and social belonging (Kramer & Miller, 2014).

Employment in for profit, nonprofit, or government organizations offers a unique socialization context in contrast to socialization in educational settings, community and sectarian organizations or total organizations (Zurcher, 1983). Individuals' prior experiences through family, educational, and prior part-time or full-time positions shape their vocational interests and expectations about work (Holland, 1959; Jablin, 1987; Strong, 1943). The transition across workplace boundaries upon entry is marked by the learning and enactment of work roles and assimilation to normative values and practices that aid the persistence of the organization and its culture (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). It is particularly important that newcomers develop an understanding of their work group's and organization's history, commonly used language, its politics and power dynamics, social relationships, organization's goals and values, and what it takes to perform their role with proficiency (Chao et al., 1994; Hart & Miller, 2005; Klein & Heuser, 2008; Kramer et al., 2024).

Newcomers' Organizational Entry

Numerous reviews provide considerable depth and critique of organizational socialization research (e.g., Ashforth et al, 2007; Bauer & Erdogan, 2011; Chao, 2012; Kramer & Miller, 2014; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Streams of socialization research primarily focus on the broader socialization experiences or "tactics" an organization uses to structure the experience of newcomers and the information seeking behaviors or information sources of proactive newcomers. Certainly, new hires' onboarding experiences, including initial overview of policies, completing legal forms, tours, meet-and-greet events, can aid in "getting off on the right foot" (Klein et al., 2015). Yet, few would dispute the notion that both early influence efforts and newcomer adjustment fully commence following orientation, initial training, and placement into the work unit. The following selective review expounds upon the work group as the primary socializing context where unit in- and extra-role performance norms are central drivers of newcomer adjustment.

Organizational Socialization Experiences and Tactics

In one of the earliest conceptualizations of structured socialization experiences, Wheeler (1966) proposed that newcomer socialization experiences could be explained in terms of (a) access to others who formerly occupied their assigned position (serial-disjunctive) and (b) whether the newcomers were integrated into the organization alone or with a group of other newcomers (individual-collective). Mapping the two concepts onto a grid provided insight and implications for both the newcomer and the organization. Serial-individual settings, for example, allow newcomers to learn from experienced organizational members, yet without the support of other newcomers who were similarly transitioning into the organization. Collective-disjunctive settings provide support through interaction while learning alongside other newcomers at the

expense of the information and influence of existing organizational insiders. Wheeler theorized that the transfer of organizations' existing norms and culture occurs in serial settings where role models are present, providing a more stable socialization context. If existing norms and culture do not align with an organization's goals, or are dysfunctional or ineffective, then recruiting and socializing newcomers in a collective-disjunctive manner may provide opportunity to instill new values and norms to the new generation of employees. Given the tendency of many organizations to desire stable and effective operational norms, it is not surprising that newcomer experiences can commonly be described in terms of individual-serial or collective-serial.

The serial-disjunctive and individual-collective framework underwent four important developments. First, Van Maanen (1975) applied the framework to the formality and duration of police recruit socialization as well as the influence of coach/apprentice experiences. Of relevance here, the separation of recruits in formal and collective training settings encouraged conformity to appropriate attitudinal standards. However, behavioral norms and practices were picked up after recruits encountered existing police officers in serial or partnership settings. Second, Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) seminal article codified a set of six "organizational tactics": collective-individual, formal-informal, serial-disjunctive, sequential-random, fixed-variable, and investiture-divestiture. Adding to the tactic descriptions above, formal tactics refer to the extent that newcomers are exposed to a set of codified materials, sequential tactics refer to the perception of an orderly process, fixed tactics refer to the presence of a set timetable of entry experiences, and investiture tactics refer to perceptions of acceptance of newcomers. The mix of tactics was theorized to result in newcomers' conformity to existing role requirements or the leveraging of the newcomers' human capital to promote innovation. This framing of socialization in dualistic terms of assimilation and individualization/innovation implied that how organizations

"process" newcomers is the primary driver of role learning and cultural assimilation (Jablin, 1982; Jones, 1986).

Third, Jones' (1986) operationalization of these tactics into scales resulted in an explosion of quantitative research. Tactics were now construed as facets of institutionalized (in contrast to individualized) socialization that reflect newcomers' exposure to *social* cues and the *content* and *context* through which information is delivered. In subsequent research, socialization tactics served as antecedents to constructs relevant to newcomer adjustment including role clarity, role orientation, role conflict, self-efficacy, perceived fit with the job and/or organization, and social acceptance (e.g., Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Cable & Parsons, 2001). Adjustment, in turn, was predicted to increase performance, commitment, and satisfaction, all outcomes expected of someone who had integrated into the organization's social fabric. Fourth, meta-analytic findings support the general notion that more structured socialization experiences are associated with newcomers' adjustment to their role and environment (Bauer et al., 2007) and that the "social tactics [serial and investiture] prove to be the most useful predictor" (Saks et al., 2007, p. 426).

Overall, research into socialization tactics support Wheeler's (1966) initial observation of the importance of serial socialization—exposing newcomers to interaction with existing members—for the transfer of operational norms and the organization's culture. At the same time, the broad conceptualization of "institutionalized tactics" has several shortcomings. For instance, combining multiple, possibly disconnected tactics obscures the interplay between tactics as originally proposed by Wheeler (1966) and Van Maanen (1975, 1978), who suggest that the relevance of tactics may be context specific rather than universal. Importantly, tactics are operationalized with both organizational and individual referents and measured at the individual level (i.e., in typically cross-sectional samples versus intact organizational samples) which

constrains research from considering work group or team influences. Even Ashforth et al. (2007) point out that individual survey responses are assumed to reflect the experience of all newcomers at their organization and that items might be more appropriately phrased to measure experiences at the subunit rather than organization. In hindsight, the potency of serial socialization tactics (Saks et al., 2007) may be due to exposure to the work group's behavioral patterns and normative standards.

About the same time that Van Maanen and Schein's socialization tactics were becoming emblematic of organizational structuring attempts, nascent research started to focus on newcomers' responses and sensemaking of their entry experiences (e.g., Louis, 1980). Attention to assimilation and individualization processes positioned the newcomer as an active, rather than passive, agent in their socialization (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993). Interpersonal sources of information became more prominent in a second stream of socialization research in the 1990s and complimented a shift toward newcomers' (rather than the organization's) behavior.

Newcomer Proactivity, Information Seeking, and Relationships

Newcomers' proactive behaviors include taking initiative to experiment, network, seek feedback, and build relationships with incumbents, which reduce uncertainty, promote learning, enhance perceptions of fit, and bolster organizational commitment (Cooper-Thomas & Burke, 2012). Early on new hires seek information, typically in a direct manner, from supervisors and credible coworkers. Yet over time, potential social costs prompt more discrete means of information acquisition (Miller, 1996; Sias & Wyers, 2001). Although there are nuanced tactics for acquiring information such as overt inquiry, relying on third parties, and testing limits (Miller & Jablin, 1991), common operationalizations reduce information seeking to two dimensions: direct asking and indirect monitoring.

Meta-analytic results suggest the decision to directly seek information relates to (a) the perceived value, and potential costs, of asking, (b) the individual's propensity to ask directly, (c) whether the environment is conducive, and (d) when the information sought after is negative rather than positive (Anseel et al., 2015). Showcasing the benefits of proactivity in newcomer samples, a meta-analytic study reported moderate positive correlations between sensemaking (defined as seeking information and feedback), relationship building, and positive framing on proximal adjustment variables such as role clarity, task mastery, and social acceptance (Zhao et al., 2022). These associations, however, were stronger for younger employees and samples from collectivist cultures.

The relational quality between seeker and source also appears to influence the quality of information obtained (Bauer & Green, 1998). For example, supervisors' perceptions of newcomers' commitment and impression management motivations factor into their desire to share information (Ellis et al., 2017; Lam et al., 2007). Newcomers often seek the perspective of their supervisor for information about the organization, department, and particularly, the details relevant to the newcomer's job responsibilities (Jablin, 2001). One way to differentiate supervisor-employee relationships is via the concept of leader-member exchange theory (LMX), which juxtaposes dyads in "position-based" interactions versus those indicative of mutually trusting partnerships (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Newcomers with higher LMX standing are likely to be invited by their supervisor to engage in coordination or to participate in decision making (Sias, 2014). Yet greater access comes with potential social costs in work groups where LMX differentiation and inequitable management of relationships by the manager lead to coworker perceptions of unfairness (Yu et al., 2018).

Though newcomers may seek to learn role expectations of their supervisor, the proximity of coworkers affords them the ability to observe a newcomer's performance and thus provide performance feedback and support. Sias (2005) identified three types of peer relationships: information, collegial, and special. Employees with a greater number of collegial peer relationships, which involve both personal and work-related conversations, tend to receive higher quality information than those whose workplace friendships reside entirely within the bounds of work-related discourse (Sias & Cahill, 1998; Sias, 2014). Adjustment can also be enhanced through the development of a strong social network where dense ties and a broad range of connections encourage task mastery and role and organizational learning (Morrison, 2002).

The socialization of new members is vital for employee role learning and the operational success of the organization. Engaged newcomers play a key part in their own adjustment through actively networking and building relationships, taking initiative to acquire the information they need, and staying positive (Zhao et a., 2022). Yet, the initiative of young or new employees can also rock the boat, require extra work by colleagues, and may be motivated by personal ambitions as opposed to achievement of work group or organizational goals and objectives (Cooper-Thomas & Burke, 2012). Information acquisition and relationship development, though crucial to newcomer adjustment, are not simply a matter of the structure of newcomers' onboarding experiences or newcomers' ability and agency to socialize themselves. Rather, these areas of research point toward the pivotal function of communication dynamics among the work group members with whom newcomers interact from day to day. Socialization may primarily occur in work groups, yet theory is underdeveloped due to (a) early theorizing based on volunteer (as opposed to work) groups (b) the difficulty of acquiring appropriate samples for

multi-level analysis, and (c) challenges of precise specification and measurement of normative influence.

Entry into Work Units

Despite the inclusion of work group members in most socialization models, explicit theory development of work group socialization has been limited in comparison to the general models of newcomers' socialization (Anderson & Thomas, 1996; Moreland & Levine, 1982, 2001). Over the years, a number of researchers (Kozlowski & Bell, 2012; Kramer & Miller, 2014; Manata et al., 2016; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) opine the work group, rather than the organization, as the primary context where newcomers are socialized. After all, coworkers can serve as valuable socializing agents who convey work- and organization-related information, provide support and friendship, and orient a newcomer to work group processes (Jablin, 2001; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2020; Kramer, 2010; Sias, 2005; Zurcher, 1983).

> Work groups or teams can be defined as
>
> (a) Two or more individuals who; (b) socially interact (face-to-face or, increasingly, virtually); (c) possess one or more common goals; (d) are brought together to perform organizationally relevant tasks; (e) exhibit interdependencies with respect to workflow, goals, and out- comes; (f) have different roles and responsibilities; and (g) are together embedded in an encompassing organizational system, with boundaries and linkages to the broader system context and task environment (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006, p. 79).

Work groups vary by task, goals, roles, process emphasis, and performance demands (Kozlowski et al., 1999) and in keeping with authority differentiation, skill differentiation, and temporal constitution (Hollenbeck et al., 2012). Accordingly, team composition and mission shape the diffusion of responsibility, which is manifested in greater levels of self-management and autonomy (Hackman, 1992). In general, teams as opposed to work groups are more suited to accomplish projects and tasks that involve greater complexity and require ready adaptation (Hackman, 2002; Kozlowski & Bell, 2012).

When considering factors associated with unit effectiveness, researchers consider compositional aspects (e.g., similar skill levels and demographic characteristics), its context (e.g., project complexity), design of interaction patterns (Edmondson, 2012; Kozlowski & Bell, 2019) and team processes (LePine et al., 2008; Morgeson et al., 2010). For instance, units with members, who possess an ideal mix of expertise and skills and demonstrate an openness toward working with different others, may perform effectively while overcoming potential sub-group differences on team processes (Bell, 2007; Lau & Murnighan, 2005). However, high performing work groups and teams cannot be built through recruitment alone. Training processes can compensate for less-than-ideal member composition by enhancing task as well as teamwork competencies among members (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Salas et al., 2008). The imperative to predict work group/team effectiveness may implicate an assumption that the socialization of new members—which tends to examine individual-level adjustment variables– is simply a byproduct of effective teams, thus warranting little attention as a primary area of study. In contrast, work group socialization may be relevant in terms of potential disruptions to team continuity, utilization of new members' expertise, and implications on member and group performance.

Socialization in Work groups

Socialization in work units differs from organizational socialization in a number of ways. For example, orientation and onboarding are introductory and ephemeral whereas the work group serves as a more persistent context for task performance, relationship building, and support. (Manata et al., 2016). Onboarding also tends to focus on organizational formalities such as initial welcome, information on policies, explanation of benefits, as well as procedural directives for reporting hours, requests for resources, etc. (Klein & Polin, 2012). Formal trainings introduce technical task and processual specifications, range in duration, can be focused rather

than comprehensive, and foster learning that may or may not transfer into performed actions upon entry into the work unit (Salas et al., 2012). The work group can assist or undermine the transfer of training, as well as provide practice-based expertise through exposure to the tacit knowledge acquired by fellow members' extensive experience enacting the newcomer's role. The norms and informal work group structures that assist performance should, yet may not, align with what newcomers were taught in formal settings by organizational representatives or human resources trainers. Van Mannen's (1975) early research with police officers captures these differences in noting how conformity to appropriate attitudinal standards was accomplished during formal training with other new cadets, yet conformity to behavioral norms and standards occurred only once on duty with veteran officers.

In what is considered to be the first formal articulation of work group socialization, Moreland and Levine's (1982) stage model explicitly recognizes the influence of group norms and how the range of acceptable behaviors narrows over time as newcomers' tenure progresses. Their linear model focuses on new members' transitions from outsider to insider and their commitment to the group, and like other stage models, presents socialization as a stable social process. Critiques note the assumption of a stable social process, the lack of empirical testing, one-way influence of incumbents upon newcomers, the lack of challenges in newcomers obtaining vital information, consistency of relationships and influence, and their anticipated curve of commitment from beginning to exit (Anderson & Thomas, 1996; Manata et al., 2016).

Alternatively, Anderson and Thomas (1996) offer a model that specifies the proximal work group as the primary source for job-relevant information and reality testing and emphasize a bi-directional process of mutual influence, with symmetrical and asymmetrical development of commitment. However, both models fail to theorize the social and communicative mechanisms

that distinguish effective from ineffective socialization attempts. Socialization research in work unit contexts is also plagued with conceptualizations at the organizational level and inadequate measurement that conflates rather than distinguishes between individual, group, and organizational influences related to structure and information seeking (Manata et al., 2016). What is needed is the integration of theories of socialization and normative influence with the attention to detail given to communication experienced in the team context.

Prioritizing the communication aspects of socialization requires attention to the exchange and effects of messages and the inter-subjective coordination of meaning (Fairhurst, 2007). Early socialization research from a communication perspective focused on translating prominent organizational entry models in communicative terms (Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 1993; Kramer & Miller, 2014) such as newcomers' information-seeking tactics (Miller & Jablin, 1991), peer friendship and influence (Sias, 2005, 2014), and role negotiation (Miller, 1996). Though a single message can leave a memorable impression on newcomers (Stohl, 1986; Barge & Schlueter, 2004), patterns of communication that persist with a work group over time are more likely to consist of the value and behavioral frames with which a newcomer conforms.

Coworkers and peers continue to be considered a primary source of relevant job-related information (Frogeli & Erickson, 2023; Harris et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2022). However, largely absent is a consideration of conditions when their influence is most relevant or how the unit as a whole may influence newcomers. Kramer and Miller (2014) among others argue for greater attention to work group communication during socialization given that the work groups have a vested interest in getting newcomers up to speed and are known to enhance or undermine newcomers' adjustment. Further, members of teams who espouse high performance standards and accountability received higher performance ratings than members who experienced moderate

to low levels of such communication from their team (Manata, 2019). Attention to communicative actions in socialization which shape newcomer normative perceptions may shed further light on newcomer resource acquisition (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; 2023), sensemaking (Zhou et al., 2022), identity (Stephens & Dailey, 2012), and performance (Chen, 2005).

Unit-level analysis that compares differences between units doesn't assume newcomer socialization experiences are the same across the organization (Kramer et al., 2024). Cross-level effects of normative group influences can also be modeled as mediated through work group communication experiences of the individual (Manata et al., 2016). These unit-level influences must inform newcomers' perceptions of the normative expectations regarding performance and supportive behavior. As will be discussed, socialization occurs through ambient and discretionary stimuli and messages that, once processed and internalized, can result in conformity to group norms and standards (Hackman, 1992; Jablin, 2001). Normative research from social influence and persuasion scholars offers an intersection to explore the contribution of norms and communication in the work unit.

Normative Social Influence in Work groups

When encountering a novel or uncertain situation, individuals often look to others for information on how to understand the context accurately and/or appropriately. *Normative social influence* is defined as "the influence to conform with the positive expectations of another" whereas *informational social influence* refers to "influence to accept information obtained from another as evidence about reality" (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955, p. 629). The rich history of investigations into perceived rules for social behavior provides insights into reasons why individuals adjust their judgments to compromise or adopt a group's customs, traditions, or values (e.g., Asch, 1951; Jackson, 1966, 1975; Merton, 1957; Milgram et al., 1969; Sherif, 1936;

Thibault & Kelley, 1959). From this body of research, key factors shaping the influence of groups on others include (a) the perception that others have a more accurate perception of reality; (b) the perception that others' information is credible and consistent; (c) individuals' desire for others' social approval and membership inclusion; and (d) the intensity of group members' approval or disapproval of positions or behaviors.

In social influence terminology, the work group can serve as a relevant reference group. Based on Merton's (1957) in-group and out-group observations, Kuhn (1964) defines a reference group as those with whom individuals are emotionally and psychologically committed and share a general vocabulary. In addition, a reference group conveys the set of people with which an individual draws to develop their self-concept. Reference groups anchor an individual's experience and behavior (Sherif & Sherif 1969) and can be identified by general conceptions such as "those considered most important in the imparting and maintaining an individual's point of view." (Williams, 1970, p. 551). Work group members, who are central figures in new hires' role-set (Katz & Kahn, 1978), provide newcomers a reference for the internalization of the notion that "people like us" are to act in a certain way.

Though work groups likely do not function as a primary reference group for all members, for some, workplace relationships can foster strong identification and a sense of belonging. In team settings, where the salience of the group may be high, members may be more likely to accept and adopt the frames of reference believed to be collectively held by other members. Work groups—if they can be referred to as such—where individuals work independently, may play a less salient role, resulting in members' reliance on other more relevant reference groups (e.g., family, friends, religious or social organizations, etc.) to shape their understanding of normative values and behaviors.

Social-psychological Models of Normative Influence. The popular Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA; Fishbein, 1967; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970) offers a model for predicting behavior and integrates concepts of normative influence and reference sets. Beliefs about what reference individuals think one *should* do are theorized to affect behavioral intentions on individuals' attitudes. Individuals' perceptions regarding the normative beliefs of members in their reference set can be quantified at the group level by asking the extent to which member(s) of that set think the rater should or should not engage in a particular behavior. The *motivation to comply* with the expectations of reference set members, though difficult to assess accurately, may vary and thus intensify of attenuate the normative influence on behavior (Azjen & Fishbein, 1970). An ideal conception of subjective norm, theorized to influence individuals' intention to perform a particular behavior, involves both the perceived beliefs and desire to please reference group members.

More recently, the Theory of Normative Social Behavior (TNSB) provides a parsimonious model to examine the normative mechanisms that moderate the decision to act similarly to what we observe or perceive others do (Rimal & Real, 2005). The model relies on the explication of norms into collective, descriptive, and injunctive conceptualizations (Cialdini, et al., 1990; Lapinski & Rimal, 2005). A *collective norm* refers to the objective behavior of a particular reference group (what others do). The term, *descriptive norm,* describes an individual's perceived prevalence of the reference group's behavior (what *I believe* others do), which may but often does not, align with what is practiced. Collective and descriptive norms do not inherently involve evaluative judgments and thus are informational forms of social influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). *Injunctive* norms (what *I believe* others think I *should* do) relate to the appraisal

of social approval and reflect what Deutsch and Gerard regarded as normative social influence.[1] The salience of environmental cues, which reinforce or undermine injunctive messages (Kallgren et al., 2000), appears to serve as a lynchpin in activating the influence of norm-based messages. Findings suggest that individual behavior is more likely to be influenced by a social norm when (a) the prescriptive messages they encounter are consistent with the perceived prevalence of the respective behavior, (b) the relevant reference group is salient, and (c) the behavior can be enacted or is easily primed (Kallgren et al., 2000; Rhodes & Ewoldsen, 2009; White, Hogg, and Terry, 2002).

Work Group Norms of Performance and Support. The influence of norms has long been an interest in organizational and work group research (Etzioni, 1961; Kelman, 1961; Porter et al., 1975; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939)**.** Work group norms tend to be conceived as structured characteristics of groups that apply to team members' behavior (rather than their attitudes or climate), develop over time, relate to important or relevant aspects of group performance, and can be applied to specific roles (Porter et al., 1975). Group norms signal what behaviors are acceptable or approved of by fellow workers and motivate action toward the pursuit of specified attainable standards or unrealizable yet aspirational ideals (March, 1954). Norms develop within groups via the supervisor's or coworker's explicit statements, key historical events, and precedence-setting repeated behaviors (Feldman, 1984).

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[1] The TNSB model can incorporate norm salience (Cialdini et al., 1991), social categorization theory (Terry & Hogg, 1996), and expectancy theory (Fishbein, 1967; Vroom, 1964). TNSB predicts that descriptive norms influence individuals' behavior through three moderating mechanisms: perceived injunctive norms; outcome expectancies; and group identification. Outcome expectations refer to the economic reasoning regarding the behavior (how it benefits oneself or others), which can motivate conformity. Group identification (through perceptions of similarity or aspiration) captures to some extent the weighting of reference groups in motivating behavioral conformity to the group's norms. Further, collective norms can be added to the NSB. Discrepancies between the objective and perceived behavior of reference group members can exist and warrant alignment (Rimal & Lapinski, 2015).

At a micro level, a norm could be said to exist for any behavior. Norms can be as simple as for showing up to meetings on time or tidying up a workspace at the end of a day. Persistent behavioral patterns crystalize into constellations that govern expectations adopted by a work group and imposed upon future members. In this way, norms provide structure relevant to general expectations for in-role and extra-role performance (Feldman, 1984). As such, work group norms involve task and social behaviors that enhance or detract from the group's ability to achieve objectives related to the quantity, quality, and timeliness or relevant outputs, but also the satisfaction and continued viability of the unit or team (Campion et al., 1993; Hackman, 1992).

Norms are consensual in that they inspire conformity when attitudinal alignment exists between the group and target member and result in shared beliefs and the internalization of the group's values toward the behavior (Forsyth, 2010). However, when alignment does not exist, compliance may require pressure or incentive (Porter et al., 1975), especially when the norms facilitate group survival or "express the central values of the group" (Feldman, 1984, p.49). In these cases, public compliance without private acceptance can be problematic to the group as the member may discontinue the preferred behavior when external pressures are no longer present (Kelman, 1961). Internalization of operational norms by most members occurs over time, particularly when compliance with the expectations ensures the survival of the group, contribute toward task performance, enhances morale, or expresses core values (Feldman, 1984).

The application of work group norms of performance and support is theorized to be essential for unit performance and the "effective" socialization of newcomers. As depicted in Table 1, the exposure to messages that influence newcomers' adjustment as a high-performing member depends on the interaction between these two norms. Strong norms require clear and consistent signals regarding the prevalence of the respective behavior, the prescription or

expectation to conform, and consequences associated with norm (mis)aligned action. Weak norms, in contrast, are present when the inconsistency or lack of clarity makes it difficult to discern what behavior is prevalent, expected, and sanctioned. Message prescription, prevalence, and their related consequences indicate key elements in the broader theoretical domain of normative influence that distinguishes between norm types (Rimal & Lapinski, 2015) and involves sanctioning action by reference group members (Hackman, 1992).

Table 1

Unit Performance and Support Norm Interplay

Unit Performance Norms	(Low) Unit Support Norms	(High)
(High)	• Performance standards clearly conveyed • Responsibility and accountability messages • Appraisal feedback from monitoring and discrete messages • Variable job enabling and personal support • High unit performance • Lower member satisfaction and viability	• Performance standards clearly conveyed • Responsibility and accountability messages • Appraisal feedback from monitoring and discrete messages • High levels of job enabling and personal support • High unit Performance • High member satisfaction and viability
(Low)	• Inconsistent/mixed messages on performance standards • Performance relies on individual proactivity. • Role learning relies on experience or strong tie to supervising manager • Variable job enabling and personal support • Lower unit performance • Lower member satisfaction and viability	• Inconsistent/mixed messages on performance standards • Developmental feedback • High levels of job enabling and personal support • Average unit performance • High extra-role performance • Variable member satisfaction and viability

Members placed in high-performing and supportive groups may face pressure to attain high standards with the benefit of positive role models and a more psychologically safe environment to learn. In contrast, members in work groups with weak norms may experience role stress or need to navigate adjustment on their own or rely on a supervisor or mentor for

assistance. In work groups where there is an asymmetry between performance and support norms, members may risk disengagement from burnout or exhaustion on the one hand (high performance/low support) or from lack of challenge on the other (low performance/high support). As contexts for socialization this model of performance and support norm (a)symmetry is useful in explaining possible adjustment and performance differences of newcomers in the same organization albeit in different work groups.

The interplay between performance norms and support norms may appear reminiscent of other frameworks, such as Blake and Mouton's (1964) Managerial Grid or models highlighting the interaction between work demands and resources (Karasek et al., 1998; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; 2023). All similarly theorize a congruence effect when goal-directed achievement and availability of support are mutually emphasized. The current model differs in several ways. The aforementioned models aim to explain how managers (and job characteristics) create climates (largely without employee involvement) and are largely aspirational. Although the current model has aspirational elements, it aims to explain how managers *and* employees communicate normative messages toward newcomers. It also attributes social influence to patterned behaviors of work group members rather than managerial leadership style or job characteristics.

Performance Norms. Unit performance norms deal with the regulation of behavior toward greater efficiency and productivity through conveyed expectations, responsibilities, and accountability (Chen & Klimoski, 2003; Manata, 2019). Given the pressure to conform to high standards and to not let others down, newcomers are expected to maintain levels of performance closer to their maximum capability. In short-term contexts such as athletic competition, performance norms can promote sustained levels of peak performance and the avoidance of social loafing (Hoigard et al., 2006).

A work group's performance norms are regarded as a crucial influence on newcomers' adjustment, both in providing information on values, work standards, and priorities to which the new member is expected to conform. Work groups that provide access to high-performing role models, verbally convey performance expectations and standards, and hold one another accountable are theorized to afford new members greater opportunities for social learning, internalizing values of productivity, and enhanced self-expectations. Cohesion, often believed to accompany a strong norm (Festinger et al., 1952), enhances group pressure by reducing the costs associated with sanctioning deviant behavior (Horne, 2001). Taken together, performance norms can be motivational forces of social influence that direct members' behavior toward the accomplishment of group and organizational goals.

The normative regulation of members' performance can also be empowering. Interacting and being associated with high-performing units can be seen as a privilege and inspire members toward achievement to impress others and maintain their status (Chen, 2005). On the other hand, performance norms can suppress unit performance levels (Hamper, 1991). Classic tales from the Hawthorne Studies (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939) describe "merciless ridicule," physical abuse such as work group members punching ("binging") others in the arm when they worked too fast or too slow (Homan, 1950, p. 60-61). Normative pressure and excessive control among self-managed teams can also produce toxic behaviors among members (Barker, 1993).

Social Support Norms. A unit's long-term viability depends not only on its productivity but also on the extent to which members derive satisfaction from working with one another. When the provision of adequate supportive resources is normative among members, unit members tend to protect themselves against strain, burnout, and unnecessary turnover (Cohen & Willis, 1985; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; 2023). Across interpersonal and organizational

domains, the term, support, captures the positive social resources available to an individual, which can be called upon in situations when help or assistance of some kind is needed (Burleson et al., 1994; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Karasek et al., 1998).

The benefits of coworker social support trace back to human relations research and remain essential aspects of models on performance, well-being, and engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023; Mathieu et al., 2019). More importantly for this investigation, research on citizenship behavior norms demonstrate the influence of group-level behavior on individual member's subsequent enactment of helpful and supportive actions (Ehrhart & Naumann, 2004; Gonzalez-Mule et al., 2014; Jacobson et al., 2013; Naumann & Ehrhart, 2011). Team-level constructs that capture the ability of members to provide effective support (supportive climate, backup behavior) demonstrate the implications of support on team performance and member satisfaction (Anderson & West, 1994; McIntyre & Salas, 1995). An ideal work group is theorized to complement the demands associated with high performance standards with norms of consistent support (Kozlowski & Bell, 2013; Manata et al., 2016).

Newcomer adjustment is likewise enhanced by a socially supportive work group where members with longer tenure accept and validate the new members (Rink et al., 2013; Sanclemente et al., 2022). Learning in a new or uncertain environment requires psychological safety to overcome the potential fear of failure and concern of disappointing others as well as the opportunity to practice and develop one's skills (Salas et al., 2012). When push comes to shove, work groups with leaders and members who are attentive and responsive to the needs of one another, and communicate as such, should be better suited to onboard new members and leverage performance gains at individual and unit levels.

Socialization of Newcomers Through Normative Messages

Work group socialization involves interpersonal and group influences on newcomers as they learn and master specific task behaviors while being instilled with and conforming to the group's general performance expectations. Role learning depends upon newcomers' understanding of the expectations of role-set members (Jablin, 2001; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Normative expectations are communicated by ambient signaling and explicit, discrete messaging as illustrated in Table 2. Hackman (1992) defined ambient stimuli as background or hidden features about the situation, team, and task that, though mostly undiscussed, can shape members' assumptions about normative aspects of the group. These subtle signals form the basis of first impressions of a work unit's character and provide persistent cues that indicate future decisions or courses of action (Jablin, 2001).

Ambient Signals

Work design elements, such as autonomy or task variety, inherent in unit activities help form impressions of what it will be like to work in a group (Hackman, 1992). Taking note of the complexity or difficulty of projects taken on by the group, aesthetic features of the work environment, how members carry themselves and behave publicly, and even the composition of the work group itself, all provide signals of the work group's collective ambitions and competence. Artifacts that represent past achievements, such as awards, banners, etc. provide contextual information to signal competence and status. Workplace environments tend to be staged, rather than natural, contexts which potentially limits the extent to which ambient signals represent objective information as opposed to mere appearance. Nonetheless, contextual information is important, at least temporarily, to inform newcomer perceptions before more substantial experience in the group provides evidence of performance norms (Jablin, 2001).

Ambient signals, though ubiquitous, can also provide domain-specific information. Interest here is limited to cues relevant to the appraisal of a work group's performance and support norms. Observing a role model who meticulously, yet efficiently completes a complex task rather than taking a variety of shortcuts signals to the newcomer the unit's priority of quality over speed. Similarly, worn signage on a tile and terrazzo shop floor, though not directed to any one person, conveys the normative organizational message, "If you don't have time to do it right the first time, how will you make time to do it right the second time?" The alignment or consistency of ambient cues also speaks volumes about work group performance norms. Quality and safety may be seen as imperative but give way as speed and productivity take precedence when members actually engage in work. Monitoring these shifts can evoke initial confusion and require the sensemaking of inconsistent patterns. However, observing work group members in various contexts may result in the transfer of tactic knowledge (Polanyi, 1966), informing a newcomer how to act in the absence of verbally articulated messages (Miller & Jablin, 1991).

Beyond task-related activities, ambient signals allow newcomers to infer what types of supportive behavior are normal as well. Work groups may attempt to promote collaborative behavior through a socially open workspace design that encourages interaction rather than restricting members to offices or cubicles. The way people interact during workplace social activities signal whether such events are treated with enjoyment or as a required formality. The consistent display of supportive public interaction among work group members models exemplary behavior that shapes a newcomer's expectations regarding the willingness of others to offer support, which may mitigate perceived social costs when future consideration is given on whether it is appropriate in this unit to ask for help.

Table 2

Clarity and Consistency of Ambient and Discretionary Messages

Unit Performance Norms	(Low) Unit Support Norms	(High)
(High)	• Clear ambient signals regarding performance expectations • Consistency between performance related discretionary messages and observed behavior of work group members • Inconsistent or ambiguous ambient signals regarding expectations to provide support • Lack of discretionary messages urging supportive behavior	• Clear ambient signals regarding expectations for performance and support • Presence of discretionary messages urge members to meet high performance standards. • Presence of discretionary messages that encourage supportive behavior • Consistency between discretionary messages urging greater performance and/or support and observed behavior of work group members
(Low)	• Inconsistent or ambiguous ambient signals regarding expectations for performance and supportive behavior • Lack of discretionary messages urging high performance or supportive behavior • Inconsistency between discretionary messages and observed behavior of work group members	• Clear ambient signals regarding expectations to provide support • Consistency between discretionary messages encouraging supportive behavior and observed behavior of work group members. • Inconsistent or ambiguous ambient signals regarding expectations for performance • Lack of discretionary messages urging high performance

Though not explicated by organizational socialization scholars, ambient signals can be linked to covert forms of information seeking (Miller & Jablin, 1991). In such cases, newcomers learn from monitoring work group settings and interactions and make normative judgments based on observation. Ambient signals also possess conceptual consistency with Deutsch & Gerrard's (1955) notion of informational influence and Polanyi's (1966) tactic knowledge, which is useful for understanding how newcomers learn *descriptive* norms regarding the prevalence of behaviors and actions by relevant group members (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005). One value of ambient cues is their difficulty in faking over long periods of time. Individuals tend to trust what

they see and use as evidence when making normative appraisals. Yet, reliance on ambient signals alone to socialize new members would be inadequate. Discretionary messages more directly and efficiently disclose normative expectations associated with group membership.

Discretionary Messages

Discretionary stimuli include "direct messages of approval or disapproval, physical objects, money, instructions about (or models of) appropriate behavior, and so on" (Hackman, 1992, p. 201). The distinction here is that ambient signals though public, are interpreted privately, where discretionary messages are directed toward an individual by a work group or one of its members and thus are experienced by both message sender and recipient. For our purposes here, these messages can be thought to convey *injunctive* norms (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005) that prescribe standards of behavior and relate to Deutsch and Gerrard's (1955) definition of normative influence.

Out of necessity, high performing work groups must convey normative standards through discretionary messages to maintain future performance levels (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Explicit verbalization of performance standards and the accompanying expectations directed to individual members is a potent mode of directing the behavior of another. Messages that place responsibility on individual members (including newcomers) for their performance and contribution to the work group are likely to elicit greater effort from those who attempt to conform to group standards. Further, accountability messages maintain group standards by conveying potential consequences associated with newcomers' task behavior. Finally, appraisal feedback directed toward newcomers' performance serves the dual purpose of encouraging development while also explicitly signaling work unit norms.

Work group members convey two types of discrete messages to newcomers: those that build (or reduce) newcomer efficacy; and those that convey the expectation that they too should (or should not) support and help other members. Strong support norms exist within a work group when incumbents consistently reinforce newcomer self-esteem and act in instrumental ways to assist newcomers. The prevalence of both forms of support provides a context for newcomer adjustment to in-role responsibilities while also conforming to the group's expectations for extra-role performance (Jacobson et al., 2015; Naumann & Ehrhart, 2011).

Newcomers, however, are likely to observe ambient signals and receive discrete messages from a variety of sources within the unit. The (in)consistency in what is communicated plays a role in the extent to which an individual might comply, conform, and/or internalize the norm (Hackman, 1992). Though the effects of normative influence may be intensified by group consensus and agreement, the presence of inconsistency or the counteraction of a single deviant may be enough to undermine it or require the use of sanctions to prompt the continuation of the respective behavior (Asch, 1951; O'Keefe, 2004; Rimal & Lapinski, 2015). Therefore, it is important to consider the consistency within the constellation of work group performance and support norms.

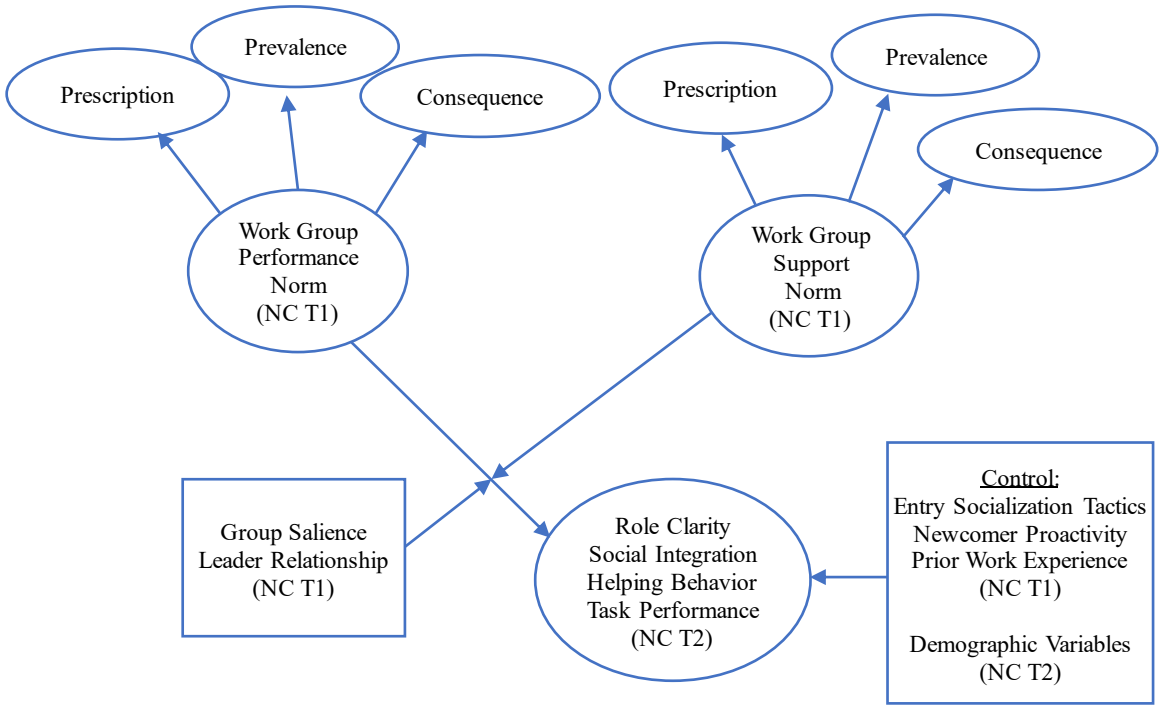
The Influence of Work Group Norms on Socialization Outcomes

Effective socialization of organizational newcomers is generally conceived as learning one's individual role, developing the ability to perform job tasks at an acceptable level, and developing relationships that embed one into the social/cultural fabric (Chao, 2012; Kramer & Miller, 2014). Individuals who experience "adjustment" vis-a-vis gaining role clarity, task mastery, and socially integrating into the unit and organization are likely to report organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and fit to the job/organization, which in turn benefits the

organization through performance gains and reduced turnover (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). Further, as noted earlier, the best predictors to date of newcomer adjustment are the ubiquitous organizational socialization tactics and newcomers' proactive behaviors (Anseel et al., 2015; Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). However, as Manata et al. (2016) and others (Kramer & Miller, 2014; Kramer et al., 2024) point out, (a) measures of socialization tactics mix onboarding and broader organizational experiences with new hires' experiences in the work unit, (b) the sole focus on the individual thwarts any understanding of work group norms, and (c) there is mostly speculation that differences in how work units socialize newcomers have a notable impact on newcomer adjustment. Consequently, Figure 1 illustrates the proposed model of how work group normative influence enhances newcomers' adjustment.

Figure 1

Work Group Performance and Support Norms on Newcomer Adjustment



Note. NC = Newcomer; T1 = Time 1, T2 = Time 2

Newcomer Adjustment

Role Clarity. The primary purpose of the communication a newcomer encounters within their first months on the job relates to understanding their new role in the context of others' roles (Fisher, 1986; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2020) When expectations are conveyed, the ambiguity newcomers initially experience gives way toward familiarity with specific role attributes as well as knowledge of how to perform essential and relevant tasks. Newcomers, particularly those experiencing uncertainty and aware of potential social costs of being too direct, are likely to monitor or observe others to reduce ambiguity associated with their roles (Miller, 1996). Work groups with high performance norms—where members verbally convey performance expectations and demonstrate high standards through their behaviors—provide advantaged contexts for newcomer role clarity relative to those in units where social learning is less available. Similarly, work groups with members who step in to provide emotional and instrumental support can further alleviate the anxiety that commonly accompanies a new environment. Work group support norms foster a learning climate conducive to newcomer adjustment. Performance norms enhance role clarity by conveying information and expectations aimed at reducing role ambiguity. In turn, support norms instill belief in newcomers' abilities, even in their early months of on-the-job learning. It is expected that role clarity will be higher among newcomers who benefit from units with high performance and support norms.

Performance. A second key socialization outcome is the newcomer's proficiency in performing job tasks at acceptable levels. Performance can be evaluated based on the quality, quantity, and timeliness of a product or service from the perspective of an end-user (Hackman, 1992) as well the subjective ratings reflecting how a supervisor, peer, or the target themselves feels an individual meets some performance criteria (Bennet et al., 2006; Gordon & Miller,

2012). Performance is not limited to the task domain of an individual's formal role. Performance can consist of extra-role behavior, often manifested through altruistic or other-directed actions that provide help of assistance (Organ et al., 2005). Among the various outcomes of newcomer adjustment, task performance and helping behavior are likely to vary the most depending on the strength of the work group's norms with which the new member resides (Chen & Klimoski, 2003; Manata, 2019, Nauman & Ehrhart, 2011). Units with high-performance norms challenge members to produce effort and hold them accountable to high standards. Task performance, associated with one's formal job description, is expected to be higher for members of work groups with high performance norms. Helping behaviors should similarly be associated with work units where supportive behavior is both prevalent and prescribed.

Social Integration. How new members become integrated into the social and cultural fabric of their work unit and/or organization constitutes a third indicator of effective socialization (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2020). Newcomers' boundary crossing from outsider to insider may garner attention, yet socialization is also related to changes as members move upward through promotion and inward through acceptance. Inward movement is described by Van Maanen and Schein (1979, p. 222) as involving:

> the social rules, norms, and values through which a person's worthiness to a group is judged by members of that group… To move along this dimension is to become accepted by others as a central and working member… and can normally not be accomplished unless the member-in-transition demonstrates that he or she too shares the same assumptions as others in the setting as to what is organizationally important and what is not.

Inward boundary crossing consists of more than an individual's attachment or sentiment to their work group or organization. Social integration involves adoption of the organization's values and missing, inclusion into the network of its members, and treatment as a full member with all accompanying rights and privileges. Work group performance and support norms are

expected to enhance the social integration of members who conform to the work group and internalize its values. Units with weak norms may lack the cohesion that sustains close relational ties and results in more autonomous contexts where integration may be less valued or sought. Though shared responsibility of challenging work objectives and the experience of mutual accountability are sure to build bonds, the expectation that members will support one another is necessary for the viability of social relationships. Units with high performance and support norms are more likely to socially integrate newcomers. Units high in one without the other may be less conducive for integration and less desirable to integrate within.

In an effort to assess the impact of normative work group influences on new hires, this study hypothesizes:

H1: Newcomers' perceptions of their work group's performance norms will positively relate to their (a) role learning, (b) social integration, (c) helping behavior, and (d) task performance.

H2: Newcomers' perceptions of their work group's support norms will be positively related to their (a) role learning and (b) social integration, (c) helping behavior, and (d) task performance.

H3: Newcomers' perceptions of their work group's performance and support norms will interact such that newcomers in high-performing, high-supportive work groups will report greater (a) role learning, (b) social integration, (c) helping behavior, and (d) task performance than newcomers in high performing-low support, high support-low performing, and low performing-low support groups.

Factors Mitigating the Influence of Work Group Norms on Newcomer Adjustment

Group Salience. Normative influence relies in part on the individual's motivation to comply, which can vary depending on the relationship between an individual and members of a reference set (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970). Individuals who identify with or desire to please the

group are more likely to conform to the behaviors modeled or prescribed by other members (Rimal & Real, 2005). Those who do not care to be associated with their work group may be understandably less inclined to act in ways that garner social approval. In fact, compliance with work group prescribed expectations to provide support was stronger when attraction to the group was high (Naumann & Ehrhart, 2011). Group salience also has a number of features in common with the concepts of social attraction, cohesion, and similarity, all of which may indirectly capture individuals' motivation to conform to the norms of the group (Carless & DePaula, 2000; Lott & Lott, 1965; O'Reilly & Caldwell, 1985).

The influence of performance and support norms on role learning, performance, and social integration is anticipated to be stronger when group salience is high. The influence of normative messages (i.e., People like us behave like this.) depends on the extent to which the "like us" is believed to be true by each member. Strong group salience indicates that the group is viewed as a relevant reference point on which one's own behavior should be based (Rimal and Lapinski, 2015). Members who identify with and desire to belong to their group also may be more concerned with the social consequences involved with deviating from what the group deems normative. In contrast, weak group salience indicates little attachment to the group, and thus its values and opinions are less likely to be viewed as important. This is not to say that external rewards and punishments cannot be applied to induce compliance from members who do not identify with the group. The key point is that social influence, based on belonging and approval, depends on the extent to which the group and its views serve as an important frame of reference. Newcomers are thus expected to learn from, conform to, and integrate within groups with which they report as being salient.

Leader Relationships. Supervising managers are commonly relied on as sources of information regarding expectations for role performance (Bauer & Green, 1998; Jablin, 2001; Katz & Kahn, 1978). New hires' relationship with their supervising manager appears to have considerable influence on their access to information, rating of job performance, and implications for work group dynamics between members (Duarte et al., 1994; Martin et al., 2018; Sias, 2014). If newcomers principally rely on their supervisor for role information and support in contrast to coworkers in their unit, newcomers may be able to dismiss their coworkers' attempts at normative influence. In other words, a strong relationship with their manager may buffer a new hire from the influences of work group members.

Alternatively, newcomers with little access to their supervisor may rely more readily on work group members as sources of information and influence. Supervisors often have little time to explain job tasks with new hires leaving them to rely on coworkers to "learn the ropes." When supervisors are accessible, the absence of a working relationship may limit their ability to understand or accommodate newcomers' learning needs. In some cases, the structure of the unit itself may be designed purposefully for newcomers to depend upon incumbents to master the role. Thus, individuals' ratings of leader-member exchange (LMX; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), one indicator of employee closeness with the supervisor, are expected to moderate the relationships between performance and support norms and the four outcomes such that the norms will have greater effect on those with lower LMX.

This study hypothesizes:

H4: The effects of perceived performance and support norms on newcomers' (a) role learning and (b) social integration, (c) helping behavior, and (d) task performance will be moderated by

newcomers' group salience such that increased salience will strengthen the norm-outcome relationship.

H5: The effect of perceived performance and support norms on newcomers' (a) role learning and (b) social integration, (c) helping behavior, and (d) task performance will be moderated by newcomers' LMX such that norm-outcome relationship will be stronger for those who report lower LMX.

The Role of Job Tenure on Perceptions of Norms and Supporting Relationships

The amount of time it takes for newcomers to become acclimated to their work role and environment can depend on the stability of the work environment, the type of onboarding experiences, and individual characteristics (Ashforth, 2012). Socialization studies that incorporate time into the research design tend to measure variables within newcomers' first year, at entry, and at three-month intervals (Bauer et al., 2007). The appropriate timing of measurement requires contextual information regarding the ease with which newcomers tend to learn role responsibilities given various contingencies of a particular organization.

Work group norms measured by newcomers' perceptions may vary over time. Newcomer adjustment variables also require attention to temporal considerations. For example, role learning may occur rapidly for some newcomers over others, and a longer gestation period may be appropriate to capture the normative influence of work group members. For the purposes of this study, newcomers were defined as full-time employees who have worked in the organization for 12 months or less. Stratification of the sample across organizational tenure also afforded the ability to control the effects on adjustment and a more precise examination of how newcomers' perceptions of work groups' norms vary at different points in participants' first year on the job.

RQ1: Do perceptions of work group performance and support norms vary based on the number of months each newcomer has worked in their job position?

The focus of the study was to capture the influence of the work group, yet individuals may vary in the number of work group members who actively play a role in the newcomer's development. For example, some newcomers may have a limited number of active friendships from which to draw support. Others may develop a strong network with multiple mentors whereas others may not. Several survey questions were geared toward understanding the relational context participants' experience within their work group. Participants were prompted to consider work-related goals and asked how many members of their work group they feel "actively support you?", "are role models for you?", and "actively mentor you?"

RQ2a: How many work group members do newcomers report as providing active a) support, b) role modeling, and c) mentoring?

RQ2b: Does the number of active a) supporters, b) role models, and c) mentors vary depending on how long the newcomer has worked in their position?

PILOT STUDY METHOD

Pilot Study Sample and Procedure

A pilot study sampled participants from a beverage manufacturing plant in the Midwest United States and was used to assess the dimensionality and validity of the performance and support norms latent factors. The plant's regional manager coordinated the timing of the survey on a day when hour-long town hall meetings required all plant employees to report at some point between 9 am and 2 am. Employees received information about the study during the two weeks prior to when the researcher arrived on site and paper and pencil surveys were distributed. For completing the survey, the organization offered a $10 prepaid card that could be used to purchase items in their breakroom and vending machines.

Roughly 25% of the plant employees completed the survey (N = 103), including a handful of newcomers who had been at the company less than one year (n = 12, 12%). Many had joined the company within the last 1-3 years (n = 38, 37%) or had worked for more than 20 years (n = 29, 28%), 6-10 years (n = 10, 10%), 16-20 years (n = 8, 8%), or 4-5 years (n = 6, 6%). The majority worked in production (n = 65, 63%), followed by maintenance and utilities (n = 18, 17%), warehouse (n = 11, 11%) and administration (n = 4, 4%). Five participants reported working in multiple departments. Personal demographic information was not collected.

The regional manager requested the term "work group" be changed to "coworkers" given that members of the organization were not assigned distinct work groups, but interacted with coworkers that span departments, product lines, and possibly shifts. To assess how participants viewed the concept of work group in their context, a multiple-choice question asked them to describe how they would define their "work group". The most popular response was "Coworkers in this plant" (27%), followed by "Coworkers in my functional division/department" (24%), "Coworkers who share my same role and tasks" (17%), "A small group of coworkers within the

same shift" (12%), "Coworkers who share the same shift and division" (9%), and "I don't really have a 'work group'" (4%). Seven selected multiple responses. The findings of the pilot data thus may represent how organizational members perceive the norms at the *plant* rather than *work group* level.

Operationalization of Constructs

This project attempted to leverage insights from the study of normative influence from both organizational and social psychological scholars. Norms were operationalized as second order latent constructs that consist of three dimensions: prevalence, prescription, and consequence. Prevalence captured the descriptive norms that provide information to group members of commonly practiced behavior, prescription identified the injunctive norms conveyed through verbal expectations for behavior, and consequence measured the extent to which work group members reward conformity or punish norm deviance. Work group performance and support norms were both specified in this way.

The following section summarizes the instruments used to measure factors included in the measurement model. The reliability of each scale was examined by calculating McDonald's (1999) Omega and its dimensionality was assessed with confirmatory factor analysis. The hypothesized hierarchical structure of performance and support norms as second-order factors was tested through comparison with alternative specifications as (a) three first-order factors, (b) a second-order factor (prevalence and prescription) with consequence remaining a distinct factor, and (c) a general composite factor.

Work Group Performance Norms

The measurement of work group performance norms captured the observed prevalence of high-performance behavior, the extent to which performance standards are conveyed, and the

consequence associated with holding members accountable to the unit's standards. Scale items (See Table 3) were based on Manata's (2019) work on normative standards and Morgeson et al's (2010) Establishing Expectations and Goals dimension.

The *prevalence* of high-performing behavior among work group members was measured with a four-item scale. Example items include, "Work group members visibly demonstrate high levels of work performance" and "Standards of excellence are conveyed through the way work group members approach their job." The extent to which the work group *prescribes* high performance behavior to its members was measured with six items, such as "My work group advocates for high performance when communicating with me" and "My meeting high performance goals is a priority of this work group." The positive or negative *consequence* of conforming to or deviating from the normative group standards was measured with five items and included "My work group gives members a hard time if their performance is too low or too high" and "My work group reward members who put forth effort to meet high performance standards."

Performance norms can be specified in several ways: as a general composite by aggregating all items to one score, as three scores representing distinct subdimensions, and as a second-order factor score. Prevalence and prescription could arguably be computed as distinct types of norms (descriptive and injunctive) and consequence could reflect norm enforcement rather than a component of the norm itself. However, a strong work group performance norm may require the presence of all three subdimensions. For a norm to exist, members must (a) be aware of it, (b) understand that (dis)approval of others depends on their compliance, and (c) recognize potential sanctions of some kind for noncompliance (Hackman, 1992).

Work Group Support Norms

The *prevalence* of supportive behavior among work group members was measured with six items derived from Rooney and Gottlieb (2007). These items include, "My work group members sympathize with members experiencing difficulties" and "My work group members praise a member's work in front of others." *Prescribed* expectations for supportive behavior were measured with five items and included, "My work group members say that we should make time to help others when they need it." and "Supporting each other is a priority of this work group." *Consequences* for norm-consistent or divergent behavior were measured with five items, which include, "My work group members verbally reward members who go above and beyond to help or assist others." and "Work group members provide negative consequences for selfish or disrespectful behavior."

Data Analysis

After a preliminary review of the data and descriptive statistics, the dimensionality and factor structure of each construct was examined independently through confirmatory factor analysis using the Lavaan package (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982; Rosseel, 2012). The hypothesized measurement model was then assessed to determine whether the specification of performance and support norms as second-order factors consisting of norm prevalence, prescription, and consequence fit the empirical data.

PILOT STUDY RESULTS

When assessed individually, CFA of the latent factors demonstrated excellent fit in most cases given the pilot data, indicating the unidimensionality of the respective constructs. Performance norm consequence (X^2 (102) = 40.50, df = 5, p < .001, CFI = .76, SRMR = .14) and support norm consequence (X^2 (102) = 17.22, df = 378, p < .001, CFI = .76, SRMR = .09) were exceptions. Several items possessed factor loadings less than .60 and were removed due to the low proportion of variance explained by the construct (Hunter, 1980). For example, the item "verbally reward members who go above and beyond…" was removed as it measures positive reinforcement, which contrasted the other consequence items that measured punishment and accountability. The removal of this item brought the global fit indices in range with Hu & Bentler's (1999) recommendations. However, three of the remaining four support norm consequence items decreased in magnitude ($.39 \leq \lambda \leq .59$). Removing additional items would result in just or under-identified models that would not allow further analysis of the individual construct and thus were retained to be investigated in the context of the entire norms measurement model. For ease in comparison between the pilot and main studies, factor loadings and McDonald's (1999) omegas for the norm factors are reported side by side in Table 4.

A saturated measurement model was specified with six correlated latent factors representing the dimensions of performance and support norms and demonstrated poor fit (X^2 (100) = 742.56, df = 378, p < .001, CFI = .80, SRMR = .15). Several additional items had low loadings ($.32 \leq \lambda \leq .52$), including two from the support norm consequence factor. When removed, the covariate matrix was not positively defined due to a large correlation between the performance norm consequence and support norm consequence factors. A review of the two consequence factors' response distributions and descriptive statistics identified highly skewed

variables indicative of a work context where little enforcement of norms (of either type) exists. The decision was made to remove the support norm consequence factor from the model. This modification resulted in an improved, albeit inadequate global fit (X^2 (101) = 418.65, df = 199, p < .001, CFI = .88, SRMR = .07).

The strong correlations between performance norm prevalence and prescriptions (r = .92) and between support norm prevalence and prescription (r = .81) supported the hypothesized specification of second-order performance and support norms factors. However, correlations between performance norm consequence with prevalence (r = .07) and prescription (r = .07) were weak. Second-order performance and support norm factors were specified by estimating loadings for norm prevalence and prescription, while performance norm consequence remained a first-order factor. Despite the additional three degrees of freedom gained in the hierarchical model, the likelihood ratio test results were identical (ΔX^2 = .05, Δdf = 3, p = .99).

Summary

The pilot study provided the opportunity to test survey administration and assess the measurement model of the performance and support norms instruments. Though designed to capture work group influences, the pilot study occurred in a context where norms likely operate at the plant, rather than work group level. The performance and prevalence dimensions showed promise in measuring normative influence. The study also challenged the assumption of unidimensionality for norm consequence factor that included reward of positive behavior, accountability, and punishment for norm deviance.

PRIMARY STUDY METHOD

Primary Study Sample and Procedure

The main sample was acquired from the sampling platform Prolific, which has a reputation for producing high-quality data relative to other platforms such as MTurk, Qualtrics, etc. (Peer et al., 2021) and allows qualifiers to be specified to screen and stratify participants based on relevant criteria. Pre-screeners were used to invite participants who meet the following criteria: (a) live in the U.S., (b) are currently employed full-time, (c) have an organizational tenure of less than one year, (d) work in a work group "part of the time" or "all of the time", (e) are age 22-60, and (f) have earned a bachelor's or master's degree. The desired sample of 400 participants was also stratified based on sex (50% male, 50% female) and tenure at the organization (20% less than 2 months, 25% 2-4 months, 25% 5-6 months, 30% 7-12 months). Of the nearly 200,000 active Prolific users, 1,009 met the inclusion criteria and received invitation to participate in the first (T1) survey. Participants receive $4.00 for completion of Survey 1 and an additional $1.00 for Survey 2.

In total, 350 individuals (34% of the total sampling pool) completed the T1 survey. Seventy-two were returned or rejected for failing to meet the criteria (full-time employment, less than one month at the organization), indicating their status had changed since the last time they updated Prolific pre-screener information. The second (T2) survey was completed 5-14 days after the first, which included a sample of 305 (87% retention rate). Because the desired sample size of 400 was not attained, the stratification based on sex and organizational tenure did not result in equivalent numbers.

This sample was predominantly white (n = 187, 61%), female (n = 178, 58%), and held a bachelor's degree (n = 205, 67%). Age ranged from 21-58 (M = 32, SD = 8.58). Regarding job

tenure, 38 (12%) were in their first month on the job, whereas 52 (17%) reported 2-3 months, 91 (30%) 4-6 months, 70 (23%) 7-9 months, and 54 (18%) 10-12 months. When asked to report the size of their work group, 139 (46%) selected 6-10 members, 80 (26%) less than 5 members, 45 (15%) 10-15 members, 21 (7%) 16-20 members, 8 (3%) 21-30, and 14 (5%) more than 30 members. A full description of participants' demographic information is provided in Table 3.

Table 3

Participant Personal Demographics

	Frequency	%
Sex:		
Female	178	58%
Male	104	40%
Non-binary	3	1%
Trans-Masculine	1	< 1%
Prefer not to respond	2	< 1%
Race/Ethnic Background:		
Asian	36	12%
Black or African American	26	9%
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish	20	7%
Middle Eastern or North African	6	2%
White	187	61%
Multi-Racial/Ethnic	29	10%
Prefer not to respond	1	< 1%
Education:		
Bachelor's Degree	205	67%
Master's Degree	93	30%
Other/Missing	10	3%
Months in Job Position:		
One month or less	38	12%
2-3 months	52	17%
4-6 months	91	30%
7-9 months	70	23%
10-12 months	54	18%

Measurement

As with the pilot sample, the primary study measured participants' perceptions of performance norm prevalence, prescription, and consequence as well as support norm prevalence, prescription, and consequence. In keeping with the study's hypotheses and research

questions, the following additional measures were included in the survey: Group salience, leader-member exchange, role clarity, social integration, helping behavior, task performance, collective and formal socialization tactics, and newcomer proactive behaviors.

Group Salience

A five-item scale, inspired by Carless and DePaula (2000), measured group salience. Example items include, "Compared with other social groups I belong to, being a member of this work group is important to me." and "Pleasing the members in my work group is important to me." Their research found that individual attraction to the group was distinct from task and social cohesion. It was used here to capture the extent to which an individual views their work unit as a salient reference group (Grossman et al., 2021).

Leader-Member Relationship (LMX)

The relationship quality with one's manager was measured with the LMX-7 scale (Graen & Uhl Bien, 1995). Example items include, "How well does your manager understand your job problems and needs?" and "How would you characterize your working relationship with your manager?" Although the phrasing of original items was kept, labels for each interval of the five-point scale were adjusted for greater clarity and consistency.

Role Clarity

The clarity with which one understands their role is a mainstay in socialization research. Role clarity was measured with Cooper-Thomas et al's (2020) five-item Role Understanding scale. Example items include, "I understand which job tasks and responsibilities take priority." and "I understand what the duties of my job entail." The scale demonstrated convergent validity with Rizzo et al's (1970) role clarity scale and has been validated across various occupational samples (Cooper-Thomas et a., 2020).

Social Integration

Becoming a socialized member of an organization involves becoming accepted and included in the social fabric of workplace relationships. A 3-item social integration scale was created inspired in part by the relationship dimension of the Newcomers Understanding and Integration Scale (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2020). Rather than focus on social acceptance, items measured the extent to which the individual felt they were integrated into their work group and organization. Example items include "I have successfully integrated into the culture of this organization." and "Others would say I am integrated into the "social fabric of the work group." Reliability and unidimensionality were assessed alongside other study variables.

Helping Behavior and Task Performance

Newcomers' performance was measured in two ways, with a six-item scale to measure task performance and a five-item scale to measure organizational citizenship helping behaviors (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Task performance refers to tasks associated with one's formal job responsibilities, whereas this dimension of organizational citizenship helping behavior (or extra-role performance) involves other-oriented helping behavior. Newcomers reported how they believed their supervisor would appraise their performance. Example items for in-role behavior (referred to as performance) include "My supervisor would say that I fulfill the responsibilities specified in my job description." and My supervisor would say that I adequately complete my job responsibilities." The items were adapted to measure supervisor perceptions of newcomer performance. Examples of OCBI (referred to as helping behavior) include, "I help others who have heavy workloads." and "I take time to listen to coworkers' problems and worries." Williams and Anderson (1991) report item loadings for each respective factor.

Theoretically Relevant Control Variables

Thirteen variables were included in preliminary regression models to identify relevant variables to control when testing hypotheses. Several variables were single-item survey responses to questions such as (a) "How many months have you been working in your current job position?", (b) "What percentage of your current job is performed in person (as opposed to remotely)?", (c) "In your current job, what percentage of your time at work is spent working in a group?", and (d) "In your current job, how important is teamwork for accomplishing your tasks?" To measure months on the job newcomers could select the category "Less than one month" or a number in 1-month intervals up to 12 months. Items involving a percentage were transformed to a 5-point scale by dividing the response by 20. Teamwork was measured on a five-point importance scale (1 = Not at all, 5 = a great deal).

Collective and Formal Socialization Tactics. The two 3-items scales from Jones (1986) were used to measure the contextual dimensions of organizational socialization tactics. These measures are the most commonly used by studies incorporated into prominent meta-analyses (Bauer et al., 2008; Saks et al., 2007). Example items include, "Job related training took place in a group of other new recruits rather than individualized training." (Collective) and "Much of my job knowledge has been acquired informally on a trial-and-error basis." (Formal).

Newcomer Proactive Behaviors. The study included five proactive behaviors (general socializing, role modeling, monitoring, information seeking, and feedback seeking) to control for the differences in effort that may enhance newcomers' adjustment toward work and their organization. Cooper-Thomas et al's (2014) selected items for the various behaviors have been previously tested in psychometric research yet adapted to include the relevant outcome the

behavior was to elicit (i.e., information seeking "to get the information I wanted."). The full list of items is available in Table 4.

Data Analysis

After preliminary review of the data and descriptive statistics, the dimensionality and factor structure of each construct were examined independently through confirmatory factor analysis using the Lavaan package (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982; Rosseel, 2012). The hypothesized measurement model was assessed to determine whether the specification of performance and support norms as second-order factors consisting of norm prevalence, prescription, and consequence fit the empirical data. Table 4 provides information from the CFA of the full model with all study variables.

Power Analysis using G*Power indicated that a sample size of 300 provides adequate power of .95% probability to detect effects in a linear multiple regression model of a magnitude of .03 using t-tests to assess whether the magnitude of the moderation effect is greater than zero or using either F test to capture an increase in R^2 of .01 or greater. Direct effects were tested with a series of regression models using the linear modeling function in R. Hayes's Process Macros in R was used to test for moderation effects. Variables in specified interactions were centered and bootstrapped confidence intervals were calculated. Analysis of variance and Chi Square tests were performed to probe research questions regarding potential differences in perceived norms based on how long newcomers had worked in their jobs and whether the number of work group members reported as active supporters, role models, and mentors vary for newcomers within their first 3 months relative to longer-tenured employees.

PRIMARY STUDY RESULTS

Measurement of Performance and Support Norms

The same CFA process was utilized for this sample, which consisted of participants from a range of geographic, organizational, and occupational contexts. Independent from one another, their response patterns are assumed to be free of the influence of a single organization, as was the case with the pilot sample. The Omegas coefficients and factor loadings were strikingly similar between the two samples, as CFAs of each factor resulted in the removal of the same "verbally rewards" items from the norm consequence factors and the "shows interest in others outside of work" item in support norm prevalence. One difference involved support norm consequence, which possessed a higher Omega coefficient than in the pilot sample (ω = .59, .75) and demonstrated good fit as a unidimensional factor with four items (X^2 (335) = 18.92, df = 2, p < .001, CFI = .95, SRMR = .04).

Specification of the six norm factors in a saturated measurement model also performed poorly with the main sample's data (X^2 (328) = 1105.24, df = 309, p < .001, CFI = .87, SRMR = .12). The factor loading for the performance norm item "hold each other accountable" decreased (λ = .42). The residual matrix was examined to assess the magnitude of misfit between the implied and observed covariance matrices. Large, standardized residuals for the two "hold each other accountable" items persisted across nearly all other items in the matrix. Further, one other cell marked a large residual (Ψ = 4.86), indicating the inability of the maximum likelihood algorithm to reproduce the implied covariation between the indicators. The two items, "*Work group members suggest that low performing members should transfer shifts or leave the group.*" and "*Work group members suggest that unsupportive members should transfer shifts or leave the group.*" were highly correlated (r = .65). This association may be due to similarity in phrasing or

to a confounding influence external to the enforcement of work group norms. The decision was made to remove the "hold each other accountable" items and specify a correlation between the residuals of the two "leave the group" items. Removing the items that convey positive (accountability and rewards) norm consequences resulted in the retention of indicators that measure only negative consequences of norm deviance. These modifications improved the estimated global indicators of model fit to acceptable levels (X^2 (329) = 604.81, df = 259, p < .001, CFI = .94, SRMR = .05).

Next, hierarchical models were specified to test against the first-order models. Two second-order performance and support norm factors were created and loadings for prevalence and prescription were estimated on each. Norm consequence remained first-order factors. Global fit indices approached adequate fit (X^2 (329) = 725.72, df = 265, p < .001, CFI = .92, SRMR = .07). A Chi Square different test favored the first-order model over the hierarchical model (ΔX^2 = 120.91, Δdf = 6, p < .001). A third model where prevalence and prescription items were specified as performance norm and support norm composites (the two consequence factors remained separate) did not perform as well relative to the first-order model (ΔX^2 = 480.20, Δdf = 10, p < .001), despite the added 10 degrees of freedom.

Analysis of Remaining Factors

Reliability and confirmatory factor analyses were performed on each remaining factor separately to test the unidimensionality of each factor and assess the extent to which the factor explained variance in each indicator. The standardized factor loading cut off .60 was kept as the basis for consideration of item removal. Nine items in total did not meet this threshold and were investigated further.

Socialization Tactics. The formal socialization tactic factor was problematic. The factor did not explain a large proportion of variance in item 2 ($R^2 = .32$) or item 3 ($R^2 = .30$). Due to the similarity of the item "I have been through a set of formal training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of job-related skills." and the strong correlation between the formal and collective factors ($r = .72$), it was combined with the collective tactic as a four-item composite. The "Tactics" factor possessed acceptable reliability ($\omega = ,79$) and good fit as unidimensional (X^2 (337) = 14.12, $df = 2$, $p < .01$, CFI = .97, SRMR = .03) when assessed independently. However, when incorporated into the full measurement model, the addition of the formal tactic item compromised the unidimensionality of the collective factor. Ultimately the formal tactic factor was removed from the analysis.

Proactive Behaviors. The five specific behaviors (general socializing, role modeling, monitoring, information seeking, and feedback seeking) were examined to test whether the five loaded on a general proactive behavior factor. The hierarchical model appeared to fit the data (X^2 (336) = 186.51, $df = 60$, $p < .01$, CFI = .95, SRMR = .08). The loadings on the second-order factor were strong for role modeling ($\lambda = .87$) and monitoring ($\lambda = .91$), but not general socializing ($\lambda = .33$), information seeking ($\lambda = .29$) or feedback seeking ($\lambda = .41$). Chi Square difference tests were performed to compare the first-order model with second-order models. The first-order model was preferred over a second-order factor with five dimensions ($\Delta X^2 = 56.34$, $\Delta df = 5$, $p < .001$). This did prompt closer comparison of the items in the role modeling and monitoring factors, which were nearly synonymous with one another. To remove redundancy, the role modeling items were removed from further analysis.

Moderators and Dependent Variables. Assessing the measurement structure of moderator and dependent variables resulted in high reliabilities yet fit indices suggested the

model could be improved (X^2 (265) = 819.13, *df* = 335, $p < .001$, CFI = .91, SRMR = .07). Three items possessed low factor loadings and were removed. Removing this measurement error resulted in a better-fitting model (X^2 (265) = 576.19, *df* = 260, $p < .001$, CFI = .93, SRMR = .06).

Full Measurement Model. The full model was specified with each variable as a first-order factor and approached adequate fit according to global fit indices (X^2 (257) = 2898.17, *df* = 1815, $p < .001$, CFI = .91, SRMR = .05). Next, a hierarchical model was specified to include the two second-order factors: performance norm prevalence/prescription, support norm prevalence/prescription. Despite having strong loadings on their respective factor, the first-order model demonstrated better fit ($\Delta X^2 = 87.20$, $\Delta df = 27$, $p < .001$). Results support the measure of norms as three distinct facets. However, given the high factor loadings of the prevalence and prescription factors on the second-order norm factors, aggregation was used for parsimony's sake for hypothesis testing of direct and moderation effects.

Table 4

Performance and Support Norms: Reliabilities and Standardized Factor Loadings

Norms Factors and Items	Pilot N = 100	Main N = 328
	Standardized Loadings	
Performance Norm: Prevalence (ω = .89, .90)		
My work group members visibly demonstrate high levels of work performance.	.83	.81
Observing my work group members shows me how to perform the job well.	.71	.80
My work group members role model how to meet high expectations.	.90	.89
A newcomer to this work group would observe examples of high performance among its members.	.86	.81
Performance Norm: Prescription (ω = .88, .85)		
My work group members advocate for high performance when communicating with each other.	.81	.77
Work group members ask each other to follow standards, rules, and regulations.	.69	.69
Work group members let each other know their expectations for how they should perform.	.76	.80
My work group members ensure that the team has clear performance goals.	.83	.76
Meeting high performance goals is a priority of this work group.	.77	.68

Table 4 (cont'd)

Performance Norms: Consequence (ω = .81, .82)		
My work group members give someone a hard time if their performance is too low or too high.	.66	.77
Work group members hold each other accountable for reaching performance goals.	x	x
My work group members verbally reward members who put forth effort to meet high performance standards.	x	x
My work group members provide negative consequences if a member's performance drops below what is expected of them.	.96	.89
Work group members suggest that low performing members should transfer shifts or leave the group.	.67	.67
Support Norm: Prevalence (ω = .91, .91)		
Work group members sympathize when members experiencing difficulties.	.66	.71
My work group members smile/appear happy to see each other.	.78	.76
My work group members give positive feedback when members deserve it.	.92	.91
Work group members thank one another for the things they do.	.85	.85
My work group members praise a member's work in front of others.	.83	.84
Work group members show interest in what's going on in each other's lives outside of work.	x	x
Support Norm: Prescription (ω = .92, .93)		
My work group members say that we should make time to help others when they need it.	.80	.84
My work group members advocate for members to support and care for each other.	.83	.88
My work group members directly communicate their expectations for caring and supportive behavior.	.92	.82
It is made clear that being part of this work group involves actively providing support.	.86	.85
Supporting each other is a priority of this work group.	.78	.87
Support Norm: Consequence (ω = .59, .76)		
My work group members give someone a hard time if they refuse to help one another.	x	.69
Work group members hold one another accountable for supporting members of the team.	x	x
My work group members verbally reward members who go above and beyond to help or assist others.	x	x
Work group members provide negative consequences for selfish or disrespectful behavior.	x	.73
Work group members suggests that unsupportive members should transfer shifts or leave the group.	x	.69
Correlation of Residuals: Performance and Support Norm Consequence Item 5		.53
Performance Norm (2nd Order Factor)		
Prevalence	.90	.83
Prescription	1.00	.96
Support Norn (2nd Order Factor)		
Prevalence	.91	.86
Prescription	.89	.97

Table 4 (cont'd)

Remaining Factors and Items	Main N = 305
Collective Socialization Tactics (ω = .79)	
Job related training took place in a group of other new recruits rather than individualized training.	.73
This organization puts all newcomers through the same set of learning experiences.	.77
Newcomers spend a great deal of time interacting and learning from one another.	.66
Formal Socialization Tactics (ω = .66)	
I have been through a set of formal training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of job-related skills.	x
I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods.	x
Much of my job knowledge has been acquired informally on a trial-and-error basis.	x
General Socializing (ω = .86)	
Participated in work social events to meet people.	.91
Attended work social functions to be introduced to colleagues.	.95
Tried to get to know your colleagues (e.g., coffee, lunch, drinks).	x
Role Modeling (ω = .82)	
Modeled your behavior on what gets rewarded.	x
Tried to copy the successful behaviors of a more senior colleague.	x
Used a senior colleague as a role model.	x
Monitoring (ω = .87)	
Paid close attention to your colleagues to learn appropriate behaviors.	.88
Observed your colleagues to see what behaviors get rewarded.	.83
Paid attention to how others in your work group behaved in order to learn what was right and wrong.	.79
Information Seeking (ω = .76)	
Asked specific, straight to the point questions to get the information you wanted.	.67
Asked questions about things you did not understand.	.83
Went to your colleagues and requested specific help with a problem.	.65
Feedback seeking (ω = .86)	
Sought feedback on your performance.	.89
Asked for your supervisor's opinion of your work.	.86
Sought feedback on your work from colleagues.	.69
Group Salience (ω = .88)	
Compared with other social groups I belong to, being a member of this work group is important to me.	.75
Pleasing the members in my work group is important to me.	.81
I value what my work group members think of me.	.87
The opinions of my work group are as important to me as the opinions of close colleagues outside of work	.80
This work group is like a family to me.	x
LMX (ω = .93)	
Do you know where you stand with your manager? Do you usually know how satisfied your manager is with what you do?	.78
How well does your manager understand your job problems and needs?	.77

Table 4 (cont'd)

How well does your manger recognize your potential?	.82
Regardless of how much authority your manager has, what are the chances that your manager would use their power to help you solve problems at work?	.81
Regardless of the amount of authority your manager has, what are the chances that they would "go to bat" for you at their expense?	.84
I have enough confidence in my manager that I would defend and justify their decision if they were not present to do so.	.78
How would you characterize your working relationship with your manager?	.88
Role Understanding (ω = .89)	
I understand which job tasks and responsibilities take priority.	.68
I know what my supervisor considers as good performance.	.76
I know what it takes to do well in my role.	.85
I understand what the duties of my job entail.	.80
I understand how to perform the tasks that make up my job.	79
Social Integration (ω = .91)	
I have successfully integrated into the culture of this organization.	.85
Others would say I am integrated into the "social fabric of the work group.	.92
I have embraced the values and norms of the organization.	.82
Helping Behaviors (ω = .76)	
I help others who have been absent.	.87
I help others who have heavy workloads.	.87
I take time to listen to coworkers' problems and worries.	.61
I take a personal interest in other employees.	x
Task Performance (ω = .86)	
My supervisor would say that I fulfill the responsibilities specified in my job description.	.89
My supervisor would say that I perform the tasks that are expected as part of the job.	.86
My supervisor would say that I adequately complete my job responsibilities.	.90
My supervisor would say that I neglect aspects of the job I am obligated to perform.	x

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were reviewed, and summary variables were created. Dummy variables for Sex (female = 0, male = 1) and Education (bachelor's degree = 0, master's degree = 1) were computed so they could be assessed as potentially relevant control variables prior to hypotheses testing. Analyses of variance were performed on all dependent variables to test for significant differences based on participants' racial/ethnic backgrounds. After testing to ensure the assumption of homogeneity of variance between the racial categories for each dependent variable was tenable, the six tests resulted in no significant critical values on the F distribution.

Dummy variables for Race were thus not computed for use in regression-based analysis. Table 5 reports variable means, standard deviations, and Pearson product-moment correlations.

Hypothesis Testing

Assessment of Theoretically Relevant Control Variables

A regression model was specified to detect potential effects of the various control variables on the dependent variables. Predictors included age, sex, education, months on the job, percentage of in-person work, percentage of work spent in a workgroup, the importance of teamwork to the work group, collective socialization tactics, and four proactive behaviors. Though the effects of some control variables persisted across multiple dependent variables (e.g., Months on the job, collective socialization tactics, and information seeking), each adjustment outcome maintained an association with a different constellation of predictors. Only those with a coefficient that reached a critical value on a t-distribution ($p < .05$) were retained in subsequent models. Relevant control variables for each dependent variable, discussed next, are also displayed in column one of Table 6, which reports results used to test Hypothesis 1 and 2.

Role Clarity. Demographic characteristics did not predict newcomers' role clarity. Newcomers' number of months on the job ($\beta = .03$, $p < .05$), prior experience in the field ($\beta = .09$, $p < .05$) and collective socialization experiences ($\beta = .13$, $p < .05$) proved to be of greater importance. Of the four proactive behaviors, only information seeking ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$) and feedback seeking ($\beta = .13$, $p < .05$) reached statistical significance. General socializing and monitoring did not appear to play a role. The model identified five relevant control variables and explained 16% of the variance in newcomers' role understanding.

Social Integration. Five of the thirteen variables predicted newcomers' report of socially integrating into their organization: The number of months on the job may be the most impactful

as each additional month results in a .05 ($p < .05$) increase in social integration when the other variables are held constant. Newcomers reported the extent to which teamwork was important in their work group context ($\beta = .12$, $p < .05$), which was also positively associated with social integration. Collective tactics ($\beta = .12$, $p < .05$), general socializing ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$), and feedback seeking ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$) were also significant predictors. In sum, the model explained 23% of the variance in the criterion.

Helping Behavior. Relevant control variables in terms of newcomers who contribute to their work group through helpful actions included months on the job ($\beta = .03$, $p < .05$), prior experience in the field ($\beta = .09$, $p < .05$), collective socialization tactics ($\beta = .08$, $p < .05$), information seeking ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$), and feedback seeking ($\beta = .23$, $p < .05$). The proportion of time spent working in-person vs. remote ($\beta = .07$, $p < .05$) also played a role, contributing to a model that explained 27% of the variance in newcomer reports of helping behavior.

Table 5

Variable Means and Zero-Order Correlation Matrix

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	31.92	8.58	-							
2. Sex	.40	.49	.10	-						
3. Education	.31	.46	.20***	-.06	-					
4. Months at job	5.67	3.31	.13*	.06	.02	-				
5. Prior experience	3.00	1.21	.36***	.09	.10	.04	-			
6. Time in person	3.14	2.00	-.10	.12*	-.01	.01	-.09	-		
7. Time in work group	1.95	1.38	-.04	.05	-.07	-.15**	-.01	.23***	-	
8. Importance of teamwork	3.48	1.03	.00	.04	.01	-.09	.16**	.13*	.49***	-
9. Collective	3.03	1.21	-.06	.09	.07	-.05	.00	-.01	.15**	.15**
10. General Socializing	2.26	1.15	-.01	.10	.08	.09	.08	.03	.11*	.24***
11. Monitoring	3.46	.98	-.04	.01	.02	-.09	-.05	.09	.13*	.17**
12. Information Seeking	4.06	.73	-.04	-.08	-.05	.03	-.10	.12*	.10	.16**
13. Feedback Seeking	2.98	1.02	-.12*	.06	-.01	.04	.01	.06	.17**	.25***
14. Performance Norm: Prevalence	3.70	.88	-.01	.03	.03	-.01	.00	-.01	.04	.23***
15. Performance Norm: Prescription	3.47	.88	-.05	.06	.06	-.03	-.02	.07	.14*	.30***
16. Performance Norm: Consequence	1.79	.87	.00	.13*	-.02	-.11	.05	.04	.09	.13*
17. Support Norm: Prevalence	3.82	.93	.03	-.12*	.11	.03	-.03	-.04	.04	.20***
18. Support Norm: Prescription	3.36	1.06	-.03	-.05	.07	-.05	-.02	-.01	.17**	.29***
19. Support Norm: Consequence	1.94	.87	.02	.22***	-.03	-.06	.01	.13*	.23***	.24***
20. Group Salience	3.19	1.02	-.01	-.07	.01	-.02	-.06	.01	.08	.30***
21. LMX	3.69	.91	.03	-.07	.07	.07	-.03	-.05	-.02	.12*
22. Role Learning	3.99	.72	.07	-.04	.00	.13*	.14*	.02	.11	.17**
23. Social Integration	3.27	.99	.05	-.03	.08	.14*	.09	.03	.13*	.26***
24. OCB-Helping	3.45	.91	-.08	.00	.03	.12*	.11	.19**	.20***	.29***
25. Performance	4.49	.61	.05	-.12*	.08	.14*	.07	.02	.02	.14*
26. Performance Norm (2nd Order)	3.58	.81	-.03	.05	.05	-.02	-.01	.03	.09	.29***
27. Support Norm (2nd Order)	3.59	.94	.00	-.09	.09	-.01	-.03	-.02	.11	.26***

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 5 (cont'd)

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9. Collective	-									
10. General Socializing	.28***	-								
11. Monitoring	.13*	.26***	-							
12. Information Seeking	.02	.19**	.20***	-						
13. Feedback Seeking	.27***	.32***	.33***	.40***	-					
14. Performance Norm: Prevalence	.18**	.27***	.41***	.32***	.35***	-				
15. Performance Norm: Prescription	.23***	.31***	.43***	.34***	.44***	.70***	-			
16. Performance Norm: Consequence	.03	.10	.18**	-.01	.14*	.06	.22***	-		
17. Support Norm: Prevalence	.21***	.26***	.18**	.36***	.30***	.54***	.43***	-.18**	-	
18. Support Norm: Prescription	.27***	.38***	.27***	.32***	.42***	.55***	.56***	.01	.78***	-
19. Support Norm: Consequence	.07	.18**	.20***	.10	.24***	.14*	.28***	.62***	.06	.24***
20. Group Salience	.16**	.36***	.38***	.33***	.34***	.56***	.47***	.07	.57***	.61***
21. LMX	.20***	.31***	.14*	.34***	.41***	.41***	.39***	-.11	.56***	.56***
22. Role Learning	.24***	.11	.03	.23***	.29***	.28***	.36***	.00	.37***	.36***
23. Social Integration	.25***	.34***	.20***	.24***	.33***	.44***	.38***	.03	.47***	.50***
24. OCB-Helping	.21***	.22***	.23***	.31***	.44***	.31***	.38***	.14*	.37***	.44***
25. Performance	.14*	.14*	.08	.17**	.09	.21***	.17**	-.13*	.31***	.25***
26. Performance Norm (2nd Order)	.22***	.31***	.46***	.36***	.43***	.92***	.92***	.15**	.53***	.60***
27. Support Norm (2nd Order)	.26***	.34***	.24***	.36***	.38***	.58***	.53***	-.08	.94***	.95***

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
19. Support Norm: Consequence	-								
20. Group Salience	.19**	-							
21. LMX	.09	.46***	-						
22. Role Learning	.12*	.24***	.49***	-					
23. Social Integration	.22***	.47***	.54***	.56***	-				
24. OCB-Helping	.28***	.40***	.34***	.44***	.54***	-			
25. Performance	-.02	.20***	.45***	.49***	.40***	.29***	-		
26. Performance Norm (2nd Order)	.23***	.56***	.43***	.35***	.44***	.37***	.21***	-	
27. Support Norm (2nd Order)	.16**	.63***	.59***	.39***	.52***	.43***	.30***	.60***	-

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Task Performance. Participants rated how their supervisor would assess their performance of job responsibilities. A negative estimate for Sex ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .05$) indicates that males in the sample rated themselves lower on average than females, holding other variables constant. Two other variables held positive associations with performance, namely months on the job ($\beta = .03$, $p < .05$) and information seeking ($\beta = .12$, $p < .05$). Overall, few predictors were identified, and the model explained only 7% of the variance in newcomers' self-reported performance ratings.

The evaluation of theoretically relevant predictors of newcomer adjustment supports the notion that socialization may occur naturally with time on the job and for those who have prior experience in the field, as opposed to individuals who not only have a new role in an organization but are new to work itself. Experiencing organizationally structured activities together as newcomers and proactively seeking information and feedback also remain important activities to learning the ropes, integrating within the work group, or taking advantage of opportunities to help. Surprisingly, the variables that help newcomers navigate the more social aspects of organizational socialization do not seem to contribute as much when it comes to their ratings of how well they perform their jobs. It's worth noting that the performance gain estimated for each additional month on the job (.03 unit increase on a 13-point scale) may be compiled to explain the role time plays in a newcomer's first year on the job.

Performance and Support Norms: Testing Direct Effects

Hypothesis 1 predicted direct effects of newcomers' perception of their work groups' performance norms on (a) role clarity, (b) social integration, (c) helping behavior, and (d) task performance. Similarly, Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive association between newcomer's perceptions of their work group's norms regarding supportive behavior on the four adjustment

variables. A second series of regression models was specified to include the second-order performance and support norm variables, the two norm consequence variables, and relevant covariates for each respective outcome. Results are displayed in the second column of Table 6 under the dependent variables' headings.

Perceptions of their work group's performance norms positively related to social integration ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$), but not to role clarity, helping behavior, or performance. The enforcement of performance expectations through negative consequences, performance norm consequence, did not explain any of the four adjustment outcomes. Newcomers' perceptions of their work groups' support norms, on the other hand, explained variance in role clarity ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$), social integration ($\beta = .32$, $p < .05$), helping behavior ($\beta = .26$, $p < .05$), and task performance ($\beta = .13$, $p < .05$). The enforcement of expectations for supportive behavior through negative consequences ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$) also played a role in the social integration of newcomers in their work group, but not in role clarity, helping, or performance.

These findings partially support Hypothesis 1, which predicted that perceptions of performance norms positively influence newcomer adjustment. The positive associations between perceptions of work groups' support norms and newcomer adjustment specified in Hypothesis 2 were also supported. Findings provide evidence for the efficacy of perceived performance and support norms to contribute to the socialization of newcomers, increasing the proportion of variance explained by an average of 10% across the four outcomes. Next, attention is given to the constellation of variables that contribute to newcomer role clarity, social integration, and performance of supportive and task-related actions.

Role Clarity. When it comes to role learning, supportive work group norms complement collective socialization experiences. Holding constant the effects of newcomers' prior work

experience and the months they've spent in their role; a one-unit increase in ratings of collective socialization experiences was associated with a .08 ($p < .05$) increase in their role clarity. The opportunity to interact with other newcomers during initial training and onboarding offered a positive social context for newcomers to learn. When the time comes to engage with incumbent organizational members, role learning is enhanced for newcomers in work groups where supporting one another is both prevalent and encouraged. Information and feedback seeking, though still important behaviors, no longer predicted role clarity when the work group was considered. It's possible the benefits of organizationally structured activities on the one hand, and work group support norms on the other may combine to assist newcomers without their needing to rely on proactive strategies to acquire the information and feedback they need.

Social Integration. The influence of work groups that demonstrate and advocate for both high performance and supportive behavior naturally provides a context where newcomers can integrate as members and adopt the values and behaviors of the group as their own. When the newcomers' job tenure was held constant, the work group's norms remained the prominent predictors of integration into the work group and organization. The magnitude of the estimated coefficients for collective socialization tactics, general socializing, and feedback seeking decreased in size and were no longer statistically significant. This does not mean that organizational activities and newcomer proactivity are not important as newcomers embed themselves within their work group. However, it provides evidence to suggest that what happens in the work group may be especially important. When work groups are perceived to demonstrate and set higher expectations on members regarding the performance of task and supportive behavior, newcomers are more likely to integrate into the group and organization. Social

integration also appears to be enhanced when the expectations for maintaining a supportive work group are enforced with negative consequences for selfish or unsupportive behavior.

Table 6

Testing the Direct Effects of Performance and Support Norms on Newcomer Adjustment

N = 272	Role Understanding		Social Integration		OCB: Helping		Performance	
Age	.00		.00		-.01		.00	.00
Sex	-.13		-.15		-.05		-.16*	-.12
Education	-.04		-.09		.08		.07	
Months on job	.03*	.03*	.05***	.04**	.03*	.03**	.03**	.02*
Prior Experience	.09**	.09**	.02		.09*	.10**	.04	
% In-person work (vs. remote)	.01		.00		.07**	.08***	.01	
% Work performed in work group	.03		.03		.04	.	-.01	
Importance of teamwork	.02		.12*	.07	.08		.07	
Collective tactics	.13***	.08*	.12*	.08	.08*	.05	.05	
General socializing	-.04		.14**	.05	.00		.01	
Monitoring	-.05		.06		.10	.09	.04	
Information seeking	.15*	.08	.13		.15*	.09	.12*	.06
Feedback seeking	.13*	.05	.15*	.05	.23***	.19***	-.02	
Performance norm (2^{nd} Order Factor)		.12		.17*		.05		.05
Performance norm: Consequence		-.03		-.08		.06		-.09
Support norm (2^{nd} Order Factor)		.17*		.32***		.26***		.13**
Support norm: Consequence		.05		.16*		.12		.02
Adjusted R^2	.16	.23	.23	.35	.27	.35	.07	. 20
Δ Adjusted R^2		.07		.12		.08		.13

Note. Unstandardized coefficients reported. Sex: female = 0, male = 1. Education: bachelor's degree = 0, master's degree = 1. Variables measured by percentages were transformed to a 5-point scale: 1 unit = 20% increase. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Helping Behavior. That supportive work groups would encourage newcomers to engage in helping behavior is in keeping with prior research (Ehrhart & Nauman, 2011). Members who see fellow work group members pitch in when others need assistance and hear the advocation to

make support a priority are likely to respond to the combination of information and normative influence. Findings that longer-tenured members ($\beta = .03$, $p < .05$), those with prior work experience ($\beta = .10$, $p < .05$), and those who spend more time working in person ($\beta = .08$, $p < .05$) are positively related to self-reported helping behavior also make intuitive sense. One is more likely to have the opportunity to provide help when in closer physical proximity to coworkers, and when you have the experience and expertise to offer advice or potential solutions. Proactively seeking information, typical of an individual who may be looking for help, no longer held a strong association. The relation of feedback seeking ($\beta = .19$, $p < .05$) to helpful behavior, however, hints at the reciprocity that can occur when someone who asks for—and thus, likely receives—constructive appraisals of their performance may feel as though they should offer their attention in return.

Task Performance. An association between perceived performance norms and performance was lacking. One would expect that perceptions of work groups possessing high performance norms would result in newcomers adjusting to become high performing themselves. Yet neither the prevalence and prescriptive aspect of normative influence, nor the provision of negative consequences for underperformance had any effect on newcomers' ratings of how they believe their manager would assess their competence. Norms tend to be conceptualized with a decided emphasis on the potency of the group to prompt conformity to norm-consistent behavior. Yet in this sample, perceptions of work groups where supportive activity is prevalent and encouraged ($ß = .13$, $p < .05$) was a strong predictor of newcomers' rating of their ability to fulfill job duties and responsibilities. The efficacy of perceived support norms to explain performance may exist due to idiosyncratic features of the sample, which consisted of educated

participants. It might also signal attempts by organizations to assert a positive workplace culture, as opposed to the application of pressure on newcomers to spur task performance.

Moderation Analysis

Hypothesis 3 proposed that newcomers' perceptions of their work group's norms would interact such that those in groups perceived to be both high performing and supportive would report greater role clarity, social integration, helping behavior, and performance. A sample size of 305 afforded the statistical power of 85% to detect effects of .03 or higher given the number of predictors in the moderation models. Haye's process macros in R was utilized to estimate potential interaction effects with 95% bootstrapped confidence intervals. Results found no interaction effects between perceptions of performance and support norms on role clarity (ß = .03, CI = -.06, .25), social integration (ß = -.03, CI = -.15, .07), helping behavior (ß = .00, CI = -.10, .10) or performance (ß = -.01, CI = -.08, .06). Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4 proposed a three-way interaction between performance norms, support norms, and group salience. The idea is that the normative influence of work groups would be stronger with members for whom the work group is an important reference group relative to other social groups with which they are involved. The three-way interaction was modeled with performance and support consequence and the relevant control variables as covariates. Results show not only no support for a three-way interaction but a lack of two-way interactions between either norm with group salience. Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that LMX would moderate the performance-support norm interaction such that the effects of norms would be stronger for those reporting lower levels of LMX. Members who possess a strong partnership with their manager may be afforded benefits and exceptions that may produce less desire or need to conform to normative group standards.

Table 7 reports coefficients estimated with Haye's process macros in R. No two-way interactions were detected. However, a three-way interaction was found where the conditional effect of newcomers' perceived performance norms on performance changed signification at different values of perceived support norms and LMX. However, as discussed below, the results of the three-way interaction were opposite of what was hypothesized for low-LMX newcomers. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

Table 7

Performance-Support Norm Interaction

	Role Learning	Social Integration	Helping Behavior	Performance
Interaction Effect	ß (95% CI)	ß (95% CI)	ß (95% CI)	ß (95% CI)
PNorm * Group Salience	.07 (-.12, 07)	-.02 (-.17, .16)	-.01 (-.15, .13)	-.04 (-.16, .11)
SNorm * Group Salience	-.01 (-.10, .09)	.01 (-.12, .13)	-.01 (-.13, .10)	.07 (-.04, .17)
PNorm * SNorm * Group Salience	-.02 (-11, .05)	-.02 (-.11, .09)	-.04 (-.12, .05)	-.01 (-.09, .06)
PNorm * LMX	.01 (-.10, 16)	-.05 (-.19, .11)	.06 (-.10, .20)	.03 (-.11, 16)
SNorm * LMX	.07 (-.03, .16)	.03 (-.07, .16)	-.01 (-.13, .10)	.04 (-.08, .14)
PNorm * Support Norm * LMX	.03 (-.07, .09)	.04 (-.03, .13)	.04 (-.04, .14)	**.08 (02, .15)**
	N = 305	N = 305	N = 305	N = 299

Note. PNorm = Performance Norm, SNorm = Support Norm.

When newcomers report average levels of LMX, there was very little difference in the relationship between their perceptions of work group performance norms and their performance, which ranged from -.03 to -.05 depending on whether the work group was also perceived to possess low or high support norms. However, distinct patterns emerge when newcomers reporting high LMX and those reporting low LMX relationships are compared. Below average LMX and perceptions of high support norms resulted in a negative slope (ß = -14) representing the relationship between perceived performance norms and performance. When LMX and perceived support norms were both low, the perceived performance norm-performance

relationship was positive (ß = .02). This finding suggests the intensity of both norms may in some cases combine to undermine performance rather than bolster it.

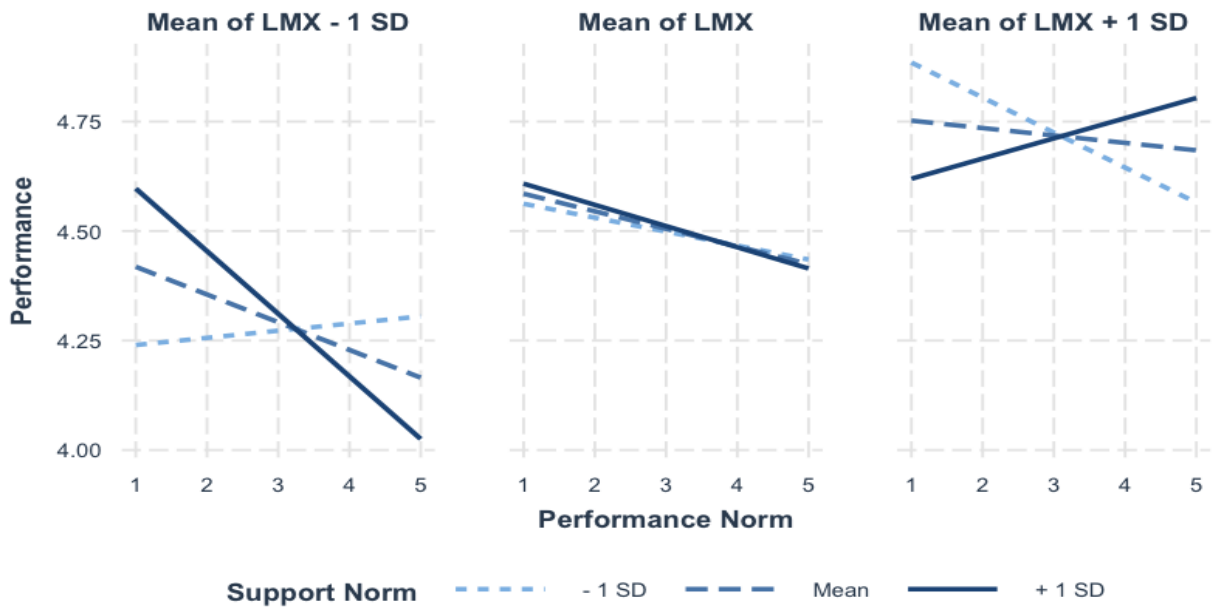
In contrast, newcomers who reported high-quality relationships with their managers reported the opposite. When LMX and perceived support norms are high, the slope representing the relationship between performance norms and performance is mild, yet positive (ß = .05). However, when LMX is high, but the work group is perceived as having low support norms, the slope of the performance norm-performance relationship becomes negative (ß = -.08). This suggests that reporting above average LMX may accompany high performance in work groups that have strong performance and support norms or weak performance and support norms, so long as the two are aligned. Figure 2 illustrates the changes in the slope of the norm-performance relationship at different values of the moderators. Curiously, the magnitude of each slope when averaged across different values of LMX is not statistically significant itself yet becomes so as the three variables interact. This finding is counterintuitive, difficult to interpret, and may be the result of idiosyncrasies of the sample and thus requires replication before serious consideration

The norms of a work group play an impactful role on newcomers' role clarity, social integration, and helping and task behavior, yet positive benefits appear to derive from work groups where support is both prevalent and prescribed. When it comes to social integration, perceptions of a high-performing work group and the enforcement of expectations toward supportive actions also become relevant. The study theorized the newcomers' perceptions of performance and support norms would interact to explain differences in the various aspects of newcomer adjustment, and that those interactions would further be amplified by the salience or importance of the work group and by the newcomer's relationship quality with their supervisor. With one exception, no interactions were found. A three-way Performance-Support-LMX

interaction appears to suggest that high support and performance norms may benefit the performance of those with above-average LMX.

Figure 2

Conditional Effects of Performance Norms on Performance based on Support Norms and LMX



Research Questions

Newcomers may begin their jobs with idealized expectations that adjust to become more realistic over time. It's possible perceptions of work group norms may be overly positive early on yet decrease over time (or vice versa) as experience provides more information. The first research question asked whether perceptions of newcomers in their first months on the job, regarding their work group's performance and support norms, are collectively different than those with longer tenure. Analysis of variance was performance on each of the norm variables. Results show no significant differences in perceived performance ($F(3, 301) = .30$, $p = .83$) or support norms ($F(3, 301) = .83$, $p = .48$) between newcomers who have been in their roles for 0-3 months, 4-6 months, 7-9 months, and 10-12 months. A second sequence of analysis of variance

tests separated newcomers within their first month as a distinct group. Again, no significant differences were found in how newcomer perceive their work group's performance ($F(3, 300) = .32$, $p = .87$) or support ($F(4, 300) = .62$, $p = .64$) norms based on whether they have worked less than 1 month, 1-3 months, 4-6 months, 7-9 months, or 10-12 months in their job.

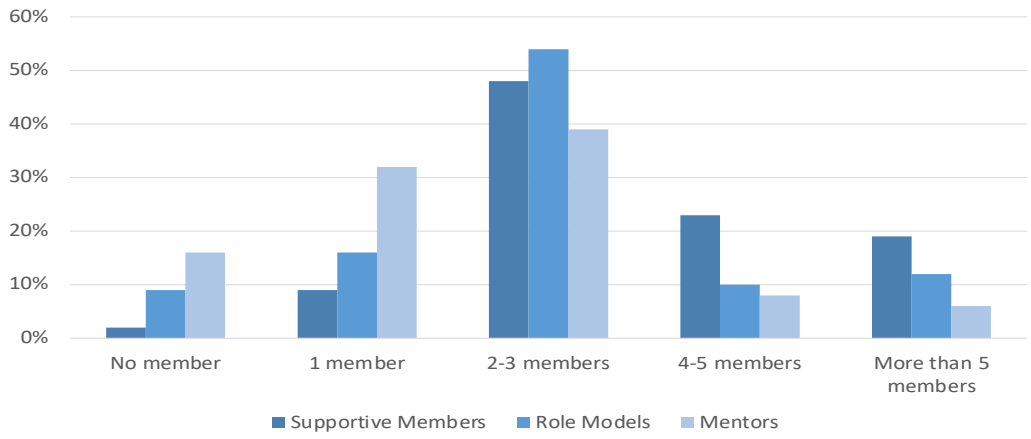
Examining norms required the assessment of work groups as whole units. Yet newcomers may differ in the number of friendship or mentoring relationships depending on their individual or network characteristics. The second research question probed into the social context of newcomers' relationships by exploring their report of the number of work group members who actively provide support, role model, and mentoring. Responses indicate that newcomers have a larger number of work group members who actively support them. Nearly half (n = 135, 47.7%) report 2-3 members whereas only 2.3% (n = 7) report having no one to actively support them, though 8.8% (n = 27) report only a single supporter.

Patterns regarding the prominence of having role models and mentors shift such that fewer newcomers report having 4-5 role models (n = 30, 10%) or mentors (n = 23, 8%). Fewer yet report more than five for each category. There was also an indication that for some, role models and mentors may be in short supply. Almost one in ten (n = 28, 9.2%) report only 1 role model and another 9.2% (n = 28) have no role models. Regarding mentors, 31.8% (n = 97) report having only 1 mentor, and 15.7% (n = 48) have no mentors. Patterned differences between the number of supporters and role models (X^2 (305) = 166.00, $df = 16$, $p < .001$), supporters and mentors (X^2 (305) = 133.00, $df = 16$, $p < .001$), and role models and mentors (X^2 (305) = 264.00, $df = 126$ $p < .001$) all reached statistical significance. Comparisons of the frequencies reported by newcomers regarding the number of active supporters, role models, and mentors in their work group are illustrated in Figure 3.

Further probing asked whether the number of supportive relationships (supporters, role models, and mentors) reported by newcomers vary based on how long the newcomer has been in their job. The same categorical scheme of newcomers' months on the job was used to explore potential patterns of difference. Chi Square tests found no significant difference between job tenure and the number of work group members reported as active supporters (X^2 (303) = 5.83, *df* = 12, *p* = .93) role models (X^2 (303) = 14.07, *df* = 12, *p* = .26) or mentors (X^2 (303) = 4.70, *df* = 12, *p* = .97). When newcomers within their first month were specified as a distinct job tenure category, the results were the same.

Figure 3

Number of Newcomers' Work Group Relationships: Active Supporters, Role Models, and Mentors



Two research questions prompted probing into whether perceived performance and support norms varied based on how long the newcomer had been in their job. However, no differences were found. The relational context (number of active relationships) that provides newcomers with support, role models, and mentors was also considered. The sample size afforded statistical power to detect effects of .03 or higher using a Chi Square test with 12

degrees of freedom. Differences were not found in the number of members reported by newcomers to offer support, role modeling, and mentoring based on how long newcomers had been on the job. However, newcomers collectively report having more active supporters than role models or mentors.

DISCUSSION

The earliest observations on adult socialization into their occupational and organizational roles noted the importance of their social groups (Brim & Wheeler, 1966). From others, new hires acquire information that enables sensemaking, observe models that encourage social learning, and receive messages that signal what is normative. The relative proximity of the work group affords it precedence as a primary influence alongside other community, family, religious, or volunteer associations to which an individual may be committed. The proportion of one's life engaged in work attests to the importance of the work group and the examination of its influence on its members.

Despite the reference to *organizational socialization*, the groups to which newcomers were exposed received primacy in early theorizing. Distinctions were made between the social influence on newcomers by incumbent members versus the social learning facilitated by collective experiences shared with other newcomers (Brim & Wheeler, 1966; Van Maanen, 1975; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). More recent research trends focus on individuals' responses to organizational entry contexts (e.g., Bauer & Greeen, 1998; Miller & Jablin, 1991). This study integrates organizational socialization research with theories of normative social influence to present a refined approach to measuring newcomers' perceptions of their work group's performance and support norms. It follows calls for greater attention to the influence of workgroup members' efforts to influence newcomers (Kramer et al., 2024; Manata et al., 2016).

A theoretical model of work group norms and newcomer socialization was tested on a sample of 305 newcomers and demonstrated preliminary evidence on the efficacy of perceptions of work group norms on newcomers' adjustment. After accounting for the newcomers' job tenure, structured onboarding activities, and individual proactivity, newcomers' perceptions of

their work group's performance norms were found to have a direct effect on newcomers' social integration. Newcomers' perceptions of work group support norms accompanied the report of increased role learning, social integration, frequency of helping behavior, and task performance. Strong links with social integration and helping behavior indicate the benefits of a supportive work unit on the more prosocial aspects of newcomer adjustment. Unit support norms also predicted newcomers' understanding of their work roles and explained an additional 13% of the variance in their self-rated performance.

This study contributes to organizational socialization research in three important ways. First, it extends socialization research by demonstrating when work group influences contribute to cognitive, social, and behavioral elements of newcomer adjustment. The findings indicate that work groups' support, where it is both prevalent and prescribed, can mitigate the necessity for newcomers to rely on their initiative to acquire needed information and resources. Myriad uncertainties accompany the transition into a new role and work environment, prompting the need for structured onboarding activities and newcomer initiative to seek information (Kramer, 2010). Work groups may ease this discomfort by proactively supporting newcomers and affording them the psychological safety needed to foster learning and mastery of task demands.

Second, the study builds upon Hackman's (1992) and Jablin's (2001) communicative understanding of normative influence to capture patterns of ambient signals and discrete messages collectively received by newcomers from those they work alongside. Theorizing socialization in these terms complements approaches that focus on organizational structure (Jones, 1986), behavioral frequency (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014; Miller & Jablin, 1991), or broad categories of information exposure (Chao et al., 1994; Klein & Heuser, 2008). Norm prevalence, prescription, and consequence offer three communication pathways from which the

normative influence of work groups can be further explored. A communication approach offers extensions beyond *whether* work group norms influence newcomers with the potential to uncover *how* norms influence through *what types* of normative messages.

Third, the study offers a measurement approach that (a) is theoretically grounded in social norms research (b) distinguishes between three facets of normative influence, and (c) complements instruments used in prior research that focus on organizational assimilation (through "socialization tactics") and individualization (through newcomers' proactivity). Norms can be measured in terms of perceived climate, change in observed behavior, aggregated social approval of group members, or individuals' perceptions (Asch, 1951; Jackson 1966; Rimal & Lapinski, 2015). This study's measures afford flexible use to capture norms at unit or individual levels, examine the alignment between the norm facets, and model meso-level influences that accompany newcomer socialization.

In short, the primary aim of the study asked, "When it comes to socialization, does the work group matter?" As an initial foray, the answer to this question is, "yes." When controlling for work context, collective socialization tactics, and newcomers' proactive behavior, the work unit support norms (and to a lesser extent performance norms) still make a difference in vital newcomer outcomes.

Work Group Norms and Newcomer Adjustment

Explaining Role Clarity and Social Adjustment

Empirically testing theorized relationships and learning when they are relevant is crucial to understanding newcomer adjustment. Role clarity requires understanding job duties and responsibilities as well as procedural elements involved in task performance. Structured organizational activities and newcomer proactivity are theoretical and empirical mainstays in

predicting newcomer adjustment. However, findings here demonstrate that some of the positive associations between these "traditional" predictors and adjustment outcomes diminish when the previously omitted work group performance and support norms are considered.

For a better understanding of the implications of these results, consider prior meta-analytic findings, which reported a moderate correlation ($\rho = .34$) with role clarity (Zhao, 2022) when information and feedback seeking were combined (labeled sensemaking). When studies that measured direct inquiry ($\rho = -.02$) and indirect monitoring ($\rho = .04$) were examined, the magnitude of corrected correlations with role ambiguity was relatively small. Information seeking was also marginally correlated ($\rho = .10$) to role clarity in Bauer and colleagues' (2007) classic meta-analysis. In this study, both information and feedback seeking were significant predictors of role understanding alongside other control variables. However, the relationships were reduced in magnitude and were no longer significant after the perceived work group norms were added, meaning the prior relationship may have been inflated due to the omission of a relevant predictor (Wilms et al., 2021).

A similar pattern occurred regarding the relationship between collective socialization activities and role clarity. Bauer et al. (2007) aggregated all six socialization tactics to represent institutionalized socialization, and a moderate meta-analytic correlation was reported with role clarity ($r = .27$). Saks et al. (2007) also reported a moderate relationship ($r = -.20$) between collective tactics and role ambiguity (the inverse of role clarity), yet relative weights analysis, where collective and formal tactics were combined to represent a context dimension, indicate these tactics ($\beta = .01$, ns) fail to explain role ambiguity relative to the social (serial and investiture) tactics ($\beta = -.47$, $p < .01$). Serial tactics refer to exposure to incumbent work group members and investiture could be interpreted as a proxy for socially support treatment of

newcomers by their work group members. Similar to how social aspects of structured organizational experiences take precedence over collective tactics in meta-analytic studies, this study found that perceptions of work group norms, particularly regarding support, also become more salient predictors of role clarity.

The study's findings further situate newcomer adjustment within the work group context, reinforcing prior theorizing regarding how work group members' collective expectations prompt newcomer performance growth through social exchange with existing members (Chen, 2005, Manata, 2019). Importantly, this investigation found that a one-unit increase in perceived work group support norms results in the equivalent increase in social integration as an estimated 8-month increase in work experience. One implication is that work group norms provide structure previously attributed as stemming from the organization. Another implication is that work group norms may mitigate the reliance on newcomers' proactive behavior (i.e., information seeking) for socially integrating into the unit.

It is possible that social integration may be the most relevant outcome in socialization research. It involves not just acceptance, but inclusion or embeddedness into the social fabric of the work group and wider organizational culture. It too has been associated with sensemaking ($\rho = .28$), information seeking ($\rho = .16$), and socialization tactics ($\rho = .19$) according to various meta-analyses (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007; Zhao et al., 2022). A dynamic work group may be a demanding yet inviting environment that effectively socializes members at an intensity beyond what is possible in early onboarding events and general socializing in open cafeterias or office parties. These activities remain important as they allow new members to meet others and form relationships that span work group boundaries. Collective tactics and deliberate socializing may thus foster introduction, yet the work group is where integration occurs.

Explaining Newcomer Performance

The lack of association between perceived performance norms and newcomer performance in this investigation diverges from commonly held assumptions about norms and their effects (Hackman, 1992; Kozlowski & Bell, 2019). Strong norms tend to be associated with behavioral conformity, cohesion, commitment, and achievement. It is assumed that in such a context, newcomers may face pressures that challenge them toward applying greater effort in the work. Although strong performance norms did foster integration, the lack of tangible performance gains is concerning.

Several possibilities may account for the lack of association between performance norms and newcomer-reported performance. The first pertains to the measurement of performance. The prompt asked newcomers to take the perspective of their supervisor or manager in rating their performance. Participants here believe their supervisors are very pleased, for the most part, with their performance as demonstrated by the sample average of 4.49 (SD = .61) on a five-point scale. A sample that consists only of high performers inhibits the ability to make inferences about the broad range of high and low-performing newcomers (Sacket & Wang, 2000). Further, the subjective nature of self-reported performance ratings may include distortions relative to supervisor ratings or objective measures (Bennet et al., 2006).

Second, though the study aimed to test the effects of work unit norms on adjustment and performance, socialization research tends to model adjustment as a proximal mediator and performance, commitment, and turnover as more distal outcomes (Bauer et al., 2007). Newcomers' task performance was more strongly correlated to role clarity ($r = .49$, $p < .001$) and social integration ($r = .40$, $p < .001$) than it was to performance norms ($r = .21$, $p < .001$). Thus,

the specification of models where the effects of work group norms on performance are mediated through adjustment may be appropriate.

A third interpretation is based on the three-way interaction between performance and support norms with LMX illustrated in Figure 2. This interaction estimated the effects of perceived performance norms on performance to be negative at average levels of LMX. Drastic slope differences were estimated for newcomers with above and below-average LMX and in work groups at different perceived levels of support. given the overwhelming number of participants who rated themselves as having a high LMX relationship, this finding warrants further investigation. For example, some respondents may be the only high LMX member in their unit or alternatively share similar LMX characteristics with their coworkers, which could change the influence of group norms on performance. Thus, there is a greater need to understand the compositional make-up of participants' work groups, one can only speculate how LMX differentiation may affect the relationships low or high LMX newcomers have with their work group members and what implications this may have on performance. LMX differentiation among work group members can affect perceptions of fairness depending on whether the referent individual is an ingroup or outgroup member (Yu et al., 2018).

Fourth, the relatively high-performing sample may explain why normative pressure via performance expectations might not result in further increases in role learning, helping, or task behaviors. Ambient and discretionary messages about performance may serve as positive reinforcement for high-performing individuals.

In contrast, where work group support is prevalent and expected, such perceptions make a significant difference in cognitive, social, and behavioral adjustment outcomes. As elaborated on in the next section, support norms were efficacious in a number of ways, including the

enhancement of newcomer performance. Supportive work groups provide space for newcomers to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities. As newcomers become more competent and socially integrated, greater attention can be given to aiding and assisting others within their unit.

Explaining Newcomer Helping Behavior

Performance can also be thought of in terms of supportive actions (Williams & Anderson, 1991), which might be expected to increase as a newcomer becomes a fully integrated and socialized organizational member. Newcomers employed in work groups where support is prevalent and expected also reported enacting more helping behavior toward other workers ($\beta = .26$, $p < .05$) when job tenure, prior experience in the field, and the proportion of work that occurs in person (all significant predictors) were held constant. This finding is similar to Nauman and Ehrhart's (2011) examination of unit-level helping norms and supervisor-rated helping behavior, where employee helping behavior was moderated by individuals' social attraction to their work group.

It is possible that newcomers' responses were influenced by a self-consistency bias (Wells & Sweeney, 1986), where participants were motivated to rate their behaviors similarly to how they described their work group in the prior survey. No such bias appears to inflate the correlation between the perceived performance norms and self-reported performance; however, support carries with it a positive moral character that might be more prone to social desirability (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

The handful of other relevant predictors indicate that newcomers with relatively longer job tenure (in months) ($\beta = .03$, $p < .05$) and more relevant experience from prior work ($\beta = .10$, $p < .05$) may be more likely to enact helpful behaviors. Learning to effectively perform role responsibilities may require the full attention of newcomers in their first months on the job.

However, findings suggest the knowledge and competence developed during their first year is leveraged to assist others. This notion is supported by the correlation between newcomers' reported role clarity and helping behavior ($r = .44$, $p < .001$). Future research might consider how supportive work group norms assist in the development of newcomers' role clarity and encourage them to use their knowledge and skills to the benefit of other work group members.

In sum, support norms also contribute to newcomers helping other work group members. In keeping with full integration into their work unit, newcomers assisting others and task performance go hand-in-hand. This finding aligns with meta-analytic estimates, where citizenship behaviors directed toward helping other individuals and task performance are substantially correlated ($\rho = .47$) (Podsakoff et al., 2009).

The Value of Supportive Work Group Norms

Newcomers benefit in several ways when placed into work groups where support is normative. Supportive coworkers help newcomers manage uncertainty through sensemaking, information sharing, and advice (Kramer, 2010; Sias, 2005; Zhou et al., 2022). Individuals vary in their propensity to directly ask for the information and resources they need. Even proactive newcomers may prefer to acquire information covertly to reduce the potential social costs of being viewed by others as lacking knowledge or competence (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Meta-analytic findings suggest the success of seeking information and feedback depends in large part on whether the environment is conducive to such attempts (Anseel et al., 2015). The present study found that information and feedback seeking did not explain variance in adjustment variables once perceptions of work group support norms were considered.

Although proactive behaviors were used as control variables in testing norm-outcome hypotheses, future research should examine the extent to which work group support norms

moderate the relationship between proactive behaviors and adjustment. It may be the case that the norms of a work group make proactivity less necessary, enhance the efforts of proactive newcomers, or benefit the less proactive through the provision of support without their asking. Research that explores how communicative behaviors influence newcomers could provide essential insights into coworker influence which is largely left to guess work. For instance, Chen and Klimoski (2003) suggest a Pygmalion Effect leads individuals (who were earlier labeled as low performers) to become high performers when placed into high performing units. However, how such Pygmalion conditions are achieved is not explained. Investigations that explore the confluence of group norms, entry contexts and tactics, and newcomer proactive behaviors may provide more practical insight into newcomer acclimation and development.

Strong work group support norms also enhance newcomer learning. Social learning occurs when newcomers observe the prevalent and accepted behavior of role models (Ashforth, et al., 2007; Bandura & Walters, 1977). Though extant socialization research emphasizes the content domains of information theorized to assist newcomers (Chao et al., 1994; Klein & Heuser, 2008), work groups can promote learning goal orientation to encourage both performance and adaptive behaviors (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2003; Kozlowski et al., 2001). The psychological safety inherent in work groups where support is prevalent and prescribed provides a context conducive to learning and development (Edmondson, 1999). Strong meta-analytic correlations between psychological safety and peer support ($\rho = .62$), information sharing ($\rho = .52$), and learning behaviors ($\rho = .62$) further reinforce the importance of supportive work group norms for newcomer adjustment (Frazier et al., 2017).

Finally, work group support norms encourage assimilation and integration. The earliest conception of organizational socialization includes the transition associated with becoming a new

member as well as the continued inward movement that accompanies social integration (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Becoming a socialized member involves adopting the values and behaviors congruent with the organization's culture and mission and results in perceptions of "fit" (Kristof, 1996). Newcomers' perceptions of fit are enhanced in organizations where supportive interactions with existing members are available (Cable & Parsons, 2003). Perceived member-group fit signifies assimilation toward the work group, its values, and its priorities, but also results in greater satisfaction ($\rho = .42$) and performance of helping behavior ($\rho = .23$) (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

For decades, the influence of workgroups on newcomers has been widely accepted (e.g., Jablin, 1987, 2001). This study extends socialization by providing evidence that newcomers' perceptions of their work group's norms play an important role in newcomer adjustment. Work groups where support is prevalent and prescribed assist newcomers' role learning and social integration while also encouraging the performance of task-related and helping behaviors. The positive impact of supportive work groups can be explained in terms of reduced uncertainty, sensemaking and information sharing, an environment conducive to learning, as well as assimilation resulting in shared identity.

Communication Approach to Work Group Socialization

Moreland and Levine's (1984, 2001) materials on work group socialization remain a principal resource for understanding newcomer acclimation. At the same time, several considerations in their socialization model to work groups were not given adequate attention. For instance, social or civic groups may have an extended period of recruitment that affords familiarity and relationship building. In contrast, the introduction and socialization of newcomers in work contexts can occur suddenly after onboarding or prior to official onboarding activities

(Klein et al., 2015). Performance demands associated with the prioritization of individual and group productivity is stronger in work groups and take precedence over the development of mutual commitment. Their descriptive model is useful for considering the broader socialization processes, but attention to mechanisms of socialization and their communicative nature was under-theorized and given brief consideration.

The instrumental nature of work groups achieving production-related objectives results in pressure on members to perform regardless of strong or waning commitment levels (Campion et al., 1993; Kozlowski & Bell, 2019). When failure to deliver on relevant work behaviors affects unit productivity, members may be forced to exit the group (or do so voluntarily). Socialization to enhance role learning and achieve performance gains is imperative particularly when newcomers don't necessarily have the desired skill to level or attitude (Bell, 2007). It is important to note that *how* work group members attempt to influence other coworkers requires considerable dexterity as harsh (i.e., non-supportive) words or actions can have a deteriorating effect on individuals as well as work group climate (Barker, 1993).

High-performing work groups tend to have a longer work history and thus possess heightened commitment and trust (Hackman, 1992). Depending on the temporal nature of the work group or team, effective communication may be expected from members who lack a history yet must flexibly act as if they trust one another even in its absence (Edmondson, 2012). In such cases, clear expectations for role-relevant and supportive behavior are necessary for team effectiveness (Valentine & Edmondson, 2015). It is important to note that Moreland and Levine (2001) theorize about normative influence and noted the necessity of old-timers passing on information to maintain group culture. Nonetheless, communication-based theories of social influence (Rimal & Lapinski, 2015; Rimal & Real, 2005) offer more nuanced mechanisms for

understanding how norms are conveyed and their relative efficacy. This study's attention to norm prevalence, prescription, and consequence is suited for both stable work groups and those designed to leverage the benefits of compositional and temporal flexibility. In stable work environments, new members may have the time to observe prevalent behavior to learn performance standards. In complex projects, where interactions between members are temporary, the importance of clear and candid communication makes the presence of norm prescription and consequence imperative (Edmondson, 2012).

Patterns of communication between new and existing work group members can assist or undermine newcomer adjustment. Though communication is implicit in Moreland and Levine's model, Jablin (2001) articulated how socializing influence can be traced to the ambient signals and discrete messages to which newcomers are exposed. Ambient cues, such as those acquired by observing the behavior of existing members, are the source of what is articulated as *informational* influence (*descriptive* norms) whereas discrete messages are the means through which *normative* influence (*injunctive* norms) is conveyed (Deutch & Gerrard, 1955; Hackman, 1992; Rimal and Lapinski, 2015). Hackman (1992) further argues that enforcement is a requisite condition for behavioral expectational to be considered a norm.

The operationalization of norms in terms of prevalence, prescription, and consequence provides insight into how common work group behaviors can serve as ambient signals regarding the group's values and priorities. The frequency and consistency of prescribed messages further reinforce accepted standards and practices in a more targeted manner. For parsimony's sake, the study aggregated the prevalence and prescription dimensions to capture work group norms more broadly at the level of newcomers' perceptions. When norms are analyzed at the message level (e.g., experiments testing message effects) distinctions between prevalence (descriptive norm)

and prescription (injunctive norm) may have unique effects (Cialdini et al., 1991; Rimal & Real, 2005). This investigation posited that descriptive norms in work group settings are primarily acquired through observation. Because discrete messages are directed, they are assumed to be interpreted as injunctive, regardless of the descriptive or injunctive message content. Although nuanced conceptualizations from social norms theory were utilized, norms were operationalized more similarly to broader climate constructs. Future research should test whether the perceptions of newcomers and their work group members are sensitive to the unique effects of norm prevalence and prescription and the extent to which this sensitivity exists at the level of how normative messages are framed. Understanding such sensitivities would allow

In short, this study builds upon the foundations of normative and organizational research by providing an operationalization of work group norms that is theoretically grounded and explicitly tied to how norms operate through ambient and discrete channels. Its findings demonstrate normative signals and messages perceived by newcomers can enhance cognitive, social, and behavioral aspects of adjustment. Importantly, the study responds to calls for (Kramer & Miller, 2014; Manata et al., 2016) and renewed examination of (Chen & Klimoski, 2003; Manata, 2019) the relevance of work groups on the socialization of new organizational members.

Measurement of Work Group Norms

Understanding normative influence is tied to how it is measured. Norms can be measured by the extent to which individuals conform (Asch, 1951), the perceived prevalence of a behavior or belief that others think one should enact (Azjen & Fishbein, 1970; Rimal & Lapinski, 2015), and objectively counting or estimating observed behavior. These approaches require the specification of a relevant behavior and offer precision in understanding individuals' beliefs which might be aggregated to generalize to a particular population and used to create persuasive

messages (Cialdini et al., 1991). Other measurement approaches involve surveying members of an intact group to measure the intensity of social approval on a range of behaviors (Jackson, 1966; 1975). The method captures the strength of the norm within the group, provides information on the latitude of acceptable behavior, and affords the evaluation of the point at which group member might maximize social approval by enacting a particular behavior such as working overtime or showing up late (O'Reilly & chasCaldwell, 1985). An advantage of group perceptions is that agreement can be calculated and modeled as additional evidence of norm strength or climate.

While most norm measures focus on descriptive and injunctive messages or group aggregated climate, few scales (Naumann & Ehrhart, 2011, are exceptions) are designed with both in mind. The measurement of performance and support norms used in the study distinguishes between behavioral prevalence, prescription, and consequence for norm deviation. This measurement approach captures ambient signals a newcomer would observe as a group member, the presence of verbal messages associated with conveyed behavioral expectations, and the extent to which these expectations are enforced. Though the prevalence and prescription factors were highly correlated and aggregated for greater parsimony due to model complexity, factor analysis (see Table 4) indicates the facets may have value as distinct constructs.

In terms of measuring socialization, the norms scale provides meso-level alternatives to the organizational tactics (macro) and proactive behaviors (micro) scales. Operationalizations of socialization tactics have been critiqued for lacking construct validity, mixing onboarding and broader organizational experience with new hires" experiences in their work group, and aggregating the six tactics to represent a single institutionalized socialization construct (Manata et al., 2016). Further, the mechanisms underlying serial and investiture tactics—deemed to be

most important for newcomer adjustment—occur in the work group setting where newcomers are exposed to prevalent, prescriptive, and consequential behavioral practices (Saks et al., 2007). The performance and support norm measures refer explicitly to the work group, are behaviorally based, capture distinct influences of normative social behavior, and complement prior instruments used to understand the structural and agentic aspects of newcomer socialization.

The measurement of work group performance and support norms here represents an important step forward in the assessment of unit-level influence (Manata et al., 2016; Kramer et al., 2024). As a foundational step, the factor structure of the pilot sample (new and existing members of the same plant) appears similar to the structure of newcomer ratings in the main sample though the correlations between norm prevalence and prescription were higher in the pilot sample. Next, this approach can be employed to assess the consistency (or lack thereof) between norm facets among different work groups within the same organization. These measures can also enable researchers to understand how group-level norms correlate to newcomers' reported proactive behavior and adjustment outcomes. Moreover, using these measures to ascertain coworkers' perceptions of normative influence are likely to provide a more accurate depiction of unit influences. Incumbents certainly have more experience within the group, offer a means for greater confidence in unit-level reliability, and are less prone to have "rose-colored" glasses compared to newcomers during their honeymoon phase (Jablin, 1987).

Limitations and Future Research

Designing a study that incorporates organizational, individual, and work group influences in a two-wave survey design is not without limitations. Several noteworthy limitations include the reliance on self-report data, the lack of attention that could be given to temporal dynamics of newcomer adjustment, the inability of the findings to make unit-level generalizations, and

limitations related to the linear model to detect complex interaction effects. Each limitation is discussed and recommendations for future research are suggested.

The use of a sampling platform provided the opportunity to screen participants according to relevant criteria and ensured a large sample size of newcomers. The benefit of acquiring newcomers' perspectives is also a limitation when making statistical inferences. Collecting self-report data from the same source can result in inflated estimates due to biases related to consistency and social desirability (Podsakoff et al., 2012; Spector, 2006). Though the dependent variables were measured at a separate time or data point, including other information sources would provide a more rigorous method of testing anticipated relationships. Asking newcomers' work group members to rate performance and support norms would be a more reliable way to assess the work unit since it does not assume the entire work group shares the perception of the newcomer. Gathering supervisory ratings of newcomers' performance or the extent to which newcomers are "learning the ropes" would further minimize common method bias. Large organizations where interdependent work groups are clearly defined would thus make an ideal sample.

Though the sample included participants across a wide array of occupational and organizational contexts, it represents an educated group of primarily knowledge workers in the United States. The patterns identified in the study provide value in understanding work group influences on newcomer socialization. However, the findings here should be complemented with research in organizational sites and other cultural contexts. Prior research reveals that the relationships between proactive behaviors and newcomer adjustment were found to be stronger for younger employees and in studies from collectivist countries (Zhao, 2022). Job design factors differentially affect work groups' sense of cohesion based on the groups' collectivist orientations

(Man & Lam, 2003). Future research should consider whether newcomers from different cultural backgrounds experience work group normative influence similarly and what implications this may have on their role and organizational adjustment.

Temporal considerations are essential to the exanimation of any process. To accomplish objectives that focused on the normative group influence, the influence of the length of employment and unit acclimation was limited to measuring the number of months each newcomer had experienced in their job position. Controlling time in this manner provided no information regarding how an individual's perceptions of their work group's norms evolve, nor how these changes affect and are affected by growth in role understanding, social integration, and performance. The study does provide options for performance and support norms to be measured in refined ways, which can be used in future research on longitudinal samples, where autoregressive and potential time-lagged effects can be modeled. Vancouver et al. (2010) argued for a dynamic rather than static view of newcomer adjustment, where unanticipated role changes can initiate new periods of information seeking and knowledge acquisition. Informational sources (i.e., managers and work group members) may appraise the newcomer performance relative to unit standards when deciding whether to share knowledge to aid learning. Newcomers also consider perceived standards of competence and role clarity when deciding whether to seek information. Normative work group influences may increase over time for some newcomers yet weaken for others.

Data from the pilot sample show that norms may operate at the plant rather than work group level. The lack of clear boundaries delineating one work group from another makes it unclear how to aggregate responses to assess inter-rater agreement at the work group level. The main sample in this study relied upon the newcomers' perceptions to measure the influence of

work group norms at the individual level. Any generalization to the unit level would assume the others in the participants' work groups perceive their unit's performance and support norms similarly. This study's findings must thus be interpreted as the effects newcomers' perception of work group norms have on their adjustment, without assuming they represent the collective perception of the entire group. Research designs that afford unit-level analysis would provide valuable insight regarding the consistency of norm perceptions by multiple group members. Future research should involve organizations where work is structured in clearly defined, interdependent work groups. This approach would provide greater validity in measuring norms and allow unit-level analysis to test potential between-group comparisons.

Lastly, the proposed theoretical model specified a multitude of relationships. This complexity made it challenging to use linear models to test nuanced associations between the distinct prevalence, prescription, and consequence norm facets. The specification of theoretically informed moderators and three-way interactions added further complexity. Given the number of normative factors and nuances of potential interactions in the study of organizational newcomers, alternatives should be considered. Future research involving machine learning, that utilizes prediction rule ensembles (PREs) such as classification and decision trees, may offer a more nuanced picture of the multiplex interactions between performance and support norm facets, proposed moderators, and organizations' collective socialization tactics, while also considering newcomer proactive behaviors. When the purpose is to examine underlying mechanisms, research studies could more selectively focus on the relationships between performance- or support-norm facets with a particular dependent variable. The socialization of newcomers involves many components, and its success likely involves the interplay between a handful of

relevant variables. Comparisons between linear and nonlinear models would offer valuable insights into the relative importance of the myriad predictors.

CONCLUSION

The ability to accurately model the key factors to predict newcomers' adjustment into their work groups and organizations provides incredible theoretical and practical value. A normative model of work group influence was forwarded through pilot testing an instrument to measure performance and support norm prevalence, prescription, and consequence. The model was tested on a subsequent sample of 305 newcomers within the first year on the job, which entailed a variety of occupations and organizations across the United States.

Findings show that newcomers' perceptions of work groups where supportive behavior was both demonstrated and expected predicted role clarity, social integration, helping behavior, and performance, when months on the job, in-person vs. remote work, collective training activities, and their proactive behaviors were all considered. Perceptions of performance norms held positive associations with newcomer's social integration. The estimated relationship of perceived performance norms with performance depended upon both perceived support norms and newcomers' ratings of LMX. The interaction between perceived performance and support norms was positive for newcomers who reported above-average LMX. For newcomers reporting below-average LMX, performance was estimated to decrease as performance and support norms intensified.

These findings complement past research that considered the socializing influence of structured organizational activities (Saks et al., 2007) and newcomers' proactivity (Bauer et al., 2007) by discussing the meso-level influence of newcomers' work groups. The efficacy of perceived support norms over performance norms in predicting newcomer adjustment also challenges prototypical associations of norms with more negative means of conformity-inducing behavior such as applying intense pressure, hazing, or punishment (Barker, 1993; Homan, 1950;

Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). The prevalence of supportive behavior has long been understood to positively impact workplace climate (Taylor & Bowers, 1972) and could assist newcomers' management of uncertainty, learning, and assimilation. The framing of support as normative, that is, where a group conveys and potentially enforces expectations for supportive behavior is a novel extension.

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