

Unwrapping the Organizational Entry Process: Disentangling Multiple Antecedents and Their Pathways to Adjustment

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This 4-wave longitudinal study of newcomers in 7 organizations examined preentry knowledge, proactive personality, and socialization influences as antecedents of both proximal (task mastery, role clarity, work group integration, and political knowledge) and distal (organizational commitment, work withdrawal, and turnover) indicators of newcomer adjustment. Results suggest that preentry knowledge, proactive personality, and socialization influences from the organization, supervisors, and coworkers are independently related to proximal adjustment outcomes, consistent with a theoretical framework highlighting distinct dimensions of organizational and work task adjustment. The proximal adjustment outcomes partially mediated most of the relationships between the antecedents of adjustment and organizational commitment, work withdrawal, and turnover.

The period of early entry is one of the most critical phases of organizational life. During this time newcomers determine what their new organization is like and decide whether they “fit in.” Many researchers have proposed that newcomers’ initial attitudes strongly influence subsequent attitudes and behavior (e.g., Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Wanous, 1992). Evidence that work attitudes soon after entry are highly correlated with attitudes many months later supports these contentions (e.g., Adkins, 1995; Morrison, 1993a). Numerous labor market studies have further shown that recently hired workers are the most likely to turn over (e.g., Farber, 1994; Jovanovic, 1979). This early turnover will be costly because employees are departing after investments have been made into recruitment, selection, and training but before the organization has been able to realize returns on these investments in the form of performance (Griffeth & Hom, 2001). In sum, understanding organizational entry is of critical importance.

At the heart of organizational entry is the concept of newcomer adjustment, which includes knowledge, confidence, and motivation for performing a work role, and commitment to the organization and its goals (Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Hulin, 1991; Nicholson, 1984). Considerable progress has been made toward understanding how adjustment arises, but the literature remains divided along a number of fronts. Some theories emphasize the

influence of newcomers’ characteristics, including preentry knowledge regarding the job (Louis, 1980; Nicholson, 1984; Wanous, 1992) or newcomers’ willingness or ability to engage in proactive adaptation in which they go through the process of achieving adjustment by changing their personal schemata to fit with the situation (Jones, 1983; Miller & Jablin, 1991). Other theories emphasize influences on newcomers from organizations’ use of formal socialization tactics (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Wanous, 1992). Still others suggest adjustment arises primarily through interpersonal communications between newcomers and established members of the organization, like leaders and coworkers (Moreland & Levine, 2001; Reichers, 1987).

This study extends previous work by examining a unified perspective on organizational adjustment by examining how these antecedents relate to variables that are more “proximal” to the process of adjustment and more global or “distal” indicators of newcomer adjustment by using a sample of newcomers to seven different organizations (see Figure 1). First, preentry knowledge regarding the job affects newcomers’ ability to select jobs that match their skills and abilities and facilitates the acquisition of information regarding the new environment. Second, newcomers’ disposition toward proactive behavior increases their acquisition of knowledge of the work environment and their willingness to modify their work role to match their preferences. Third, formal organizational training and orientation materials, leaders in the organization, and coworkers provide newcomers with important social information through socialization. Unlike previous research, we also focused on differences across these sources of socialization influence.

Relatively little is known about how these processes work in tandem. There are also competing claims from the literature regarding the relative importance of these antecedents of adjustment, claims that can be best examined in a study that includes assessments of each of the antecedents. For example, some researchers working on small group socialization have proposed that there is little impact from organizational efforts (e.g., Moreland & Levine,

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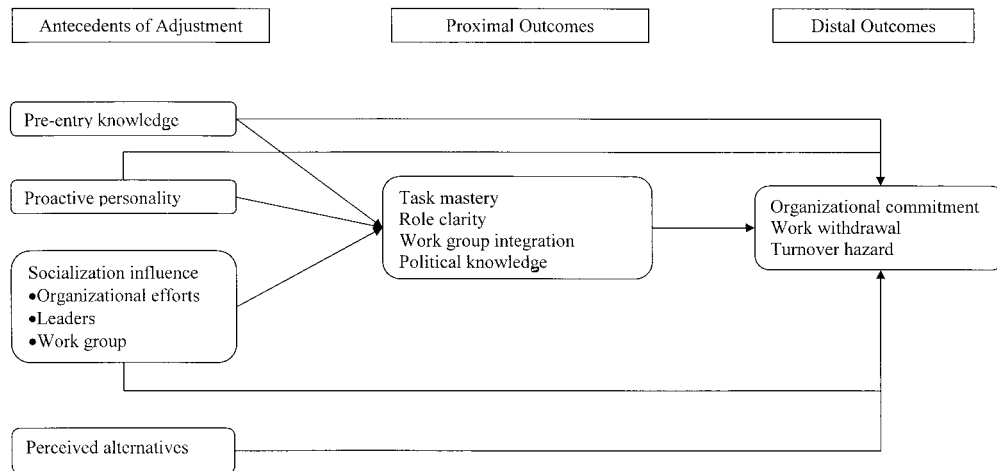


Figure 1. Conceptual model of adjustment for organizational newcomers.

2001); others have proposed that because organizations are strong situations, there is little support for individual differences as antecedents of newcomer adjustment (e.g., Saks & Ashforth, 2000). Other researchers have proposed that the effect of socialization processes may be attenuated by preentry knowledge of the organization (Louis, 1980), and still others have proposed that individual dispositions toward proactivity have not been adequately addressed as predictors of newcomer adjustment (Crant, 2000).

In addition to disentangling the effects of various antecedents of adjustment, we also endeavored to test the pathways by which these antecedents help transform newcomers into organizational insiders. Research has focused primarily on distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment, especially attitudes toward the organization, without sufficient attention paid to the processes underlying the development of these distal outcomes (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). The specific proximal outcomes of adjustment highlighted in this study are task mastery, role clarity, group integration, and political knowledge. Ultimately, we propose that successful achievement of these proximal adjustment outcomes leads to other, more distal adjustment outcomes, such as higher organizational commitment, lower work withdrawal, and lower likelihood of turnover.

Newcomer Adjustment

We introduce the distal outcomes before examining the means by which these distal outcomes may be affected by the organizational entry process.

Distal Adjustment Outcomes

Our distal outcomes were chosen to reflect unique and important attitudinal (organizational commitment) and behavioral (work withdrawal and turnover) reactions to the workplace that are conceptualized to be influenced by more proximal learning and social integration on the part of the employee. Our distal outcomes fall into the already established rubrics of commitment to the organization and behavioral participation at work, which are con-

sidered the major hallmarks of successful adjustment (Hulin, 1991; Wanous, 1992). Furthermore, theory and research suggests that the two domains may have different antecedents (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990; Hanisch, Hulin, & Roznowski, 1998). This distinction is analogous to the distinction between person-organization and person-job fit (e.g., Kristof, 1996).

Organizational commitment consists of a belief in the organization's goals and values and the willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization (Mowday et al., 1982). Acceptance of the organization's underlying values is a critical component of adjustment in many theories (e.g., Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Reichers, 1987; Wanous, 1992). Commitment has also been linked to newcomers' perceptions that they can obtain desired rewards through maintaining membership in the organization (Hulin, 1991; Moreland & Levine, 2001). Numerous studies have related commitment to adequacy of preentry information and socialization, but generally without mediating variables considered or without multiple antecedents and mediators considered simultaneously (e.g., Fisher, 1985; Hom, Griffeth, Palich, & Bracker, 1999; Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983; Meglino, DeNisi, Youngblood, & Williams, 1988; Saks, 1995). In other words, it is known that commitment is a potential outcome of adjustment, but it is not yet known how commitment is developed during organizational entry.

Work withdrawal is a combination of behaviors that reflect an attempt to psychologically disengage from work tasks, such as failing to attend scheduled meetings, doing substandard work, and avoiding work (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990). Besides indicating poor adjustment, work withdrawal also reflects poor task performance and thus is of considerable organizational interest. The premise behind withdrawal research is that these behaviors reflect a common underlying attitudinal aversion to the activities required on the job. These reactions are not necessarily directed toward the organization as a whole. Work withdrawal behaviors are theoretically defined as ways to avoid one's job tasks while maintaining organizational membership, but because they represent poor performance and disrupt organizational functioning, they are actually worse for the organization than if the employee would simply turn

over. As such, withdrawal is a critical indicator of adjustment. Studies have not linked the proximal adjustment variables in this study to work withdrawal behaviors previously, despite the theoretical linkages between adjustment and withdrawal (Hulin, 1991).

Turnover is the complete withdrawal of an individual from a work setting. The use of turnover to indicate newcomer adjustment has long been emphasized by researchers examining the effects of realistic job previews (Wanous, 1992). The possibility that turnover results from poor socialization or adjustment has been discussed in theoretical reviews (e.g., Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Mortimer & Simmons, 1978), but few studies in the socialization literature have examined turnover directly (see Cable & Parsons, 2001, and Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000, for exceptions), and none have used hazard methodologies to capture the time until the turnover event occurred.¹

Proximal Adjustment Outcomes

So how might these conceptually more distal outcomes be impacted by the adjustment process? To date, research has not addressed this question. Two recent, critical reviews of the socialization literature bemoaned the frequent examination of broad work attitudes, like organizational commitment and job satisfaction, as socialization outcomes without an accompanying examination of the processes by which these outcomes are affected (Bauer et al., 1998; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Newcomers will primarily be interested in resolving questions of how to act and how well they match the new environment, whereas appraisals of the new environment and behavioral reactions are secondary concerns (Ashford & Taylor, 1990). Further reflecting the peripheral status of traditional work attitudes in adjustment research, Wanous (1992, p. 209) referred to attitudes toward the organization and work effort as “signposts of successful socialization,” as opposed to direct outcomes of socialization.

Several typologies for delineating proximal outcomes of adjustment have been advanced (e.g., Bauer & Green, 1998; Chao, O’Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Fisher, 1986; Morrison, 1993b, 2002; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Van Mannen & Schein, 1979). An examination of this literature reveals that it is possible to distill four primary, salient proximal outcomes (task mastery, role clarity, group integration, and political knowledge) from existing frameworks. For example, Chao et al.’s (1994) *performance proficiency*, Reichers’s (1987) *development of work skills and abilities*, and Fisher’s (1986) *learning to do the job* can all be conceptualized under a general umbrella of *task mastery*. Feldman’s (1981) *adjustment to work group norms and values*, Fisher’s (1986) *learning to function in the work group*, and Chao et al.’s (1994) *people* are related to the concept of group integration. These proximal socialization outcomes are direct representations of the quality of a newcomers’ adjustment, indicating both the acquisition of requisite knowledge and skill for the organizational role as well as the development of social relationships that will help to bind the newcomer to the organization and its goals.

A major issue for newcomers, beginning the day they start work, includes acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills they need to complete expected task behaviors (e.g., Chao et al., 1994; Fisher,

1986; Reichers, 1987; Taormina, 1994). As operationalized in our present study, task mastery reflects this learning as a self-appraisal of one’s ability to successfully fulfill job responsibilities. Because task mastery relates to the ease and skill with which one can complete work, newcomers who master their tasks may find their jobs more pleasant and may feel less desire to withdraw, consistent with a self-reinforcing nonrecursive model of successful performance and work attitudes (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Those who have greater confidence that they will succeed in a task should also be more likely to exert effort toward the task (Bandura, 1999). Meta-analytic evidence supports the contention that there is a negative relationship between task performance and withdrawal behaviors (Bycio, 1992). The relationship between task mastery and organizational commitment is less theoretically clear, and empirical research has shown weak relationships between task mastery and commitment in prior studies involving newcomers (Adkins, 1995; Bauer & Green, 1998; Klein & Weaver, 2000; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Saks, 1995). Task mastery therefore seems to be related to the work, rather than the organizational, domain.

Hypothesis 1: Newcomer task mastery will be negatively related to work withdrawal.

Besides the technical competence required for task completion, to function in the organizational environment, newcomers must learn about their job’s purpose and relationship to other jobs (Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Louis, 1980). *Role clarity* reflects having sufficient information about the responsibilities and objectives of one’s job in the broader organization and having knowledge of behaviors considered appropriate for achieving these goals (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Ambiguous situations with unclear role expectations may make it difficult for individuals to assess where to direct their efforts, resulting in confusion and dissatisfaction (Miller & Jablin, 1991). This sense of confusion may be attributed to poor organizational coordination and lack of coherent purpose for jobs. Role clarity has been positively related to organizational commitment in studies of newcomer adjustment (Adkins, 1995; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Bauer & Green, 1998; Meglino et al., 1988; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). By providing a sense of direction and purpose to one’s job, however, role clarity may also lead to task participation. Clear goal direction is hypothesized to increase motivation by many theoretical frameworks and

¹ Unfortunately, it is not possible to test hypotheses regarding the proximal indicators of adjustment as predictors of turnover in the current study because of the timing of measurement. Proximal outcomes were assessed at several months into the newcomers’ tenure. This provides the advantage of ensuring that the proximal outcomes have had a chance to stabilize and separates the measurement of antecedents of adjustment and the outcomes of adjustment in time. Unfortunately, because of this delayed administration of the proximal outcome surveys, some people turned over before the proximal outcome survey was administered. Estimates that include only individuals who completed the proximal outcome surveys would be badly subject to selection bias because the relationship between only individuals who had not experienced negative early adjustment on certain dimensions would be in the sample. Thus, no direct hypotheses are offered for the relationship between turnover and the proximal adjustment outcomes in the current study.

is well supported by empirical evidence (e.g., Bandura, 1999). From this, we expect the following:

Hypothesis 2: Newcomer role clarity will be positively related to organizational commitment and negatively related to work withdrawal.

Outside of these role- and task-related elements, developing a social sense of the new work environment is a critical antecedent of adjustment (Fisher, 1986; Reichers, 1987). *Work group integration* relates to perceived approval from coworkers and inclusion in their activities, which can be a source of social support and assistance. Newcomers may also use social acceptance as an indication that they fit into their new work roles, meaning they have established a situational identity (Moreland & Levine, 2001; Reichers, 1987). Theorists posit that integration into a social group involves the establishment of a situational identity and that those who successfully establish an identity through social interactions more strongly identify with the organization as a whole (e.g., Reichers, 1987). Opportunities for social interaction on the job were negatively related to intention to turnover for newcomers in previous research (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), whereas social support from coworkers has been related to organizational commitment (Fisher, 1985). Although social integration may be related to increased commitment to the organization, there is not as strong a theoretical relationship between work group integration and work withdrawal because those who find a pleasant social environment at work will not necessarily find their actual work tasks any more or less pleasant.

Hypothesis 3: Newcomer work group integration will be positively related to organizational commitment.

Political knowledge, involving the informal network of power and interpersonal relationships in an organization, is an often overlooked dimension of learning how to fit into a new organization (Chao et al., 1994; Taormina, 1994). Unlike roles, which describe well-defined and structural components of the workplace, organizational politics are the informal power relationships between individuals and departments (Drory & Romm, 1990; Kacmar & Baron, 1999). Political knowledge may lead newcomers to believe they can obtain future rewards within the organization, as suggested by studies demonstrating positive relationships between political knowledge and both salary progression and career satisfaction (e.g., Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). Politically knowledgeable newcomers may also believe that they are more integrated in the informal structure of the organization because they have passed through more inclusion boundaries (Schein, 1978). This suggests that those who have more political knowledge will be more committed to the organization. As with group integration, there is no clear reason to believe that more political knowledge leads to more work withdrawal, however, because there is no clear relationship between political knowledge and one's appraisal of how pleasant work tasks are. As such, the following is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 4: Newcomer political knowledge will be positively related to organizational commitment.

Antecedents of Newcomer Adjustment

Preentry Knowledge

One of the most enduring models of organizational entry relates to the match between information held by newcomers before entry into the organization and their actual experiences after starting work (Wanous, 1992). Those who have accurate information about all aspects of the job will be better able to assess the extent to which they will "fit" in their new positions and will be in situations that better match their abilities and preferences compared with those who decided to take the job with poorer information. Louis (1980) and Jones (1983) further proposed that naïve newcomers may be defensive and will have difficulty adopting new behaviors and ideas because of a lack of extant schemas serving as a guide. This combination of self-selection and cognitive preparation suggests that newcomers with more accurate information will be better able to adjust to a new organizational environment.

Research has found that newcomers with more preentry knowledge report better adjustment. Vandenberg and Scarpello (1990) found a positive relationship between accuracy of preentry information and the degree to which a new job's rewards matched entrants' needs, whereas Bauer and Green (1994) found preentry information seeking was positively related to a number of adjustment-related outcomes among doctoral students. Unmet expectations, which should be more prevalent among those with poor preentry information, are related to lower organizational commitment and higher intention to turnover (Saks & Ashforth, 2000). Other results suggest pathways from preentry knowledge to adjustment through more proximal processes. Posthire realistic job previews, which act somewhat like preentry knowledge by allowing newcomers to psychologically prepare for their new jobs, are related to proximal indicators of adjustment, including problem-focused coping and role clarity (Hom et al., 1999; Meglino et al., 1988). Social capital researchers also suggest that preentry knowledge may result from contacts inside the organization, implying that those with more preentry knowledge are better informed about political and social behaviors required for the organization as well (Morrison, 2002). On the basis of existing theory and research, we propose to examine the relationship between newcomer preentry knowledge and our broader set of proximal outcomes.

Hypothesis 5: Newcomer preentry knowledge will be positively related to task mastery, role clarity, work group integration, and political knowledge.

Proactive Personality

Recent research on newcomer adjustment has focused on newcomer efforts to increase their adjustment proactively. Symbolic interactionism, exchange theory, and expectancy theory suggest that during the adjustment process, individuals actively interpret their environment and take on primarily those attitudes and behaviors construed to increase individual utility (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978). Newcomers may find that they are not given sufficient information to function in the organization and will have to seek out information to resolve this discrepancy (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Several authors have demonstrated that newcomers can successfully work to integrate themselves into a new organiza-

tional context (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Ashford & Saks, 2000; Morrison, 1993a; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

Stable personality traits like confidence or desire for control have often been described as important predictors of adaptation (e.g., Jones, 1983; Nicholson, 1984). Although these hypotheses are informative, a trait that reflects proactive behavior is more directly relevant to most adjustment theories. Recent research has shown that there is a dispositional tendency for some individuals to be more proactive, meaning they behave more confidently, actively work to control their environment, and seek out information (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant, 2000). Studies have related proactive personality to job performance (Crant, 1995), communication and participation at work (Parker, 1998), and career success (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). The latter relationship was partially mediated by political knowledge, personal development, and innovation (Seibert et al., 2001). Crant (2000) specifically called for research examining the relationship between proactive personality and newcomer adjustment. The only study to incorporate proactive personality in the socialization process found that among new doctoral students, there was a positive relationship between proactivity and task mastery, role clarity, and social integration (Chan & Schmitt, 2000). Because researchers have suggested that nearly every aspect of newcomer adjustment can be facilitated by the efforts of newcomers, it is hypothesized that proactive personality will be related to all proximal adjustment outcomes.

Hypothesis 6: Newcomer proactive personality will be positively related to task mastery, role clarity, work group integration, and political knowledge.

Influence of Socializing Agents

Although the previous antecedents of adjustment have been described in terms of individual knowledge and personality, newcomers will also encounter multiple messages coming from the *organization*, supervisors and mentors (hereafter referred to collectively as *leaders*), and *coworkers*. Few studies have attempted to incorporate multiple sources of socializing influence, but initial research has suggested that amalgamating sources of information into a general socialization construct would be misleading. Bauer and Green (1998) found that newcomer information seeking was related to indicators of adjustment but not when supervisor clarifying and supporting behaviors were taken into account. Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) found that no sources of information were significant univariate predictors of work attitudes, but multivariate results showed that information from supervisors was related to higher satisfaction, commitment, and adjustment. In another study, compared with orientation programs and coworkers, experienced members of the organization, such as supervisors and mentors, were the most important socializing influences on new employees (Anakwe & Greenhaus, 1999). These studies suggest that differentiating between sources of socializing information may help explain different patterns of adjustment.

One perspective emphasizes socialization through formal organizational orientation and training. Such programs explain how the organization works and what is valued, which should reduce role conflict and improve commitment (Miller & Jablin, 1991). In addition, organizational efforts signal to employees that their em-

ployers are concerned about them (Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1991). Institutionalized socialization tactics are positively related to aggregated measures of adjustment that include identification and intention to quit (Jones, 1986) and congruence with organizational values (Chatman, 1991). Although research consistently links organizational socialization efforts to broad indicators of adjustment, the pathways by which organizational efforts increase adjustment are less well known. Orientation program content can be expected to include information about the organization's mission, hierarchy, and coordination between functional areas. Organizational efforts should lead to greater understanding of organizational structure and goals, enhancing role clarity. Institutionalized strategies involving significant formal organizational efforts have been associated with higher role clarity (Jones, 1986; Ashford & Saks, 1996). This may be the limit of influence attributed to the organization, however. Although organizations may structure orientation sessions to include social interactions with coworkers, integration arising through these interactions will be more likely attributed to coworkers than organization influence (Moreland & Levine, 2001). Orientation sessions will not provide information regarding the political mechanisms in the organization, as politics are often defined as informal elements of the power and decision-making process that violate organizational rules (Kacmar & Baron, 1999). As such, high organizational influence is likely to relate primarily to the formal aspects of one's work responsibilities and expectations for goals.

Hypothesis 7: Organizational socialization influence will be positively related to role clarity.

Besides socialization provided by organizationally sanctioned programs, those in influential positions may exert a unique influence on role adjustment and personal integration. Unlike the organization as a whole, leaders can establish personal relationships. Because of their intimate knowledge of work roles and direct observation of newcomers, these individuals are in an especially good position to provide guidance and information on work role expectations. An especially strong link has been found between leader clarification of job and task information and role adjustment and performance efficacy for newcomers (Bauer & Green, 1998). Individuals in mentoring relationships report higher value congruence with the organization as a whole (Chatman, 1991) and report more knowledge about organizational reward structures compared with those without mentors (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993). Research suggests that supervisors or mentors may be important in explaining how informal political processes work (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992, 1993). As with orientation, whereas leaders may facilitate social communication with coworkers, social integration arising through these interactions will be more likely attributed to coworkers than through leaders. Thus, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 8: Leader socialization influence will be positively associated with task mastery, role clarity, and political knowledge.

The small group socialization perspective of Moreland and Levine (2001) de-emphasizes the organization and focuses on how individuals learn from those occupying similar roles. Consistent with this hypothesis, a study of union members found that indi-

vidualized socialization was related to commitment, whereas organizational orientation efforts were not (Fullagar, Gallagher, Gordon, & Clark, 1995). Research has also shown that those who see coworkers as more helpful in the socialization process are more satisfied, more committed, and report greater intentions to remain (Louis et al., 1983). Coworkers have been shown to be one of the most significant sources of information regarding knowledge of the work group (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Morrison, 1993b). Serial socialization tactics, involving the availability and helpfulness of role models, have also been related to higher organizational commitment and lower intention to turnover (Riordan, Weatherly, Vandenberg, & Self, 2001). The research on coworker socialization is not well differentiated in terms of what is learned, with researchers suggesting that every aspect of the organization can be learned through those who are most proximal to the newcomer. As such, the following hypothesis is conditionally offered:

Hypothesis 9: Coworker socialization influence will be positively associated with task mastery, role clarity, work group integration, and political knowledge.

Perceived Alternatives

Newcomers' belief that good alternative work environments exist, referred to as *perceived alternatives*, is a critical contextual variable that is often discussed as a predictor of work attitudes and behavior distinct from adjustment. Mobility-related factors affect attitudes toward the organization because the perceived quality of a job is based on comparison with the perceived quality of alternatives (Hulin, 1991; Mobley et al., 1979; Mowday et al., 1982). A newcomer's attitudinal commitment to a group can also be a function of unfolding perceptions that this group will provide greater rewards than membership in alternative groups, with commitment predicted to be reduced among those with good alternatives (Moreland & Levine, 1988). Those who believe they have poor alternatives may also be reluctant to engage in work withdrawal behaviors because these individuals will be concerned about the possibility of involuntary job loss. Recent studies have shown substantial relationships between alternatives and turnover, further suggesting a need to consider these perceptions in measures of any turnover-related behavior (Kirschenbaum & Mano-Negrin, 1999; Trevor, 2001). The inclusion of perceived alternatives also incorporates extraorganizational context in the study of entry, which has been suggested as an area in need of attention (Saks & Ashforth, 1997).

Hypothesis 10: Perceived alternatives will be negatively related to commitment and positively related to work withdrawal.

Method

Participants

The initial pool of participants consisted of 1,532 exempt employees recently hired to seven organizations. The primary operational activities of these organizations included manufacturing, food distribution, healthcare, and education.

The first survey was distributed to participants within their first month of employment. Data were collected longitudinally, with new surveys distrib-

uted every 4 months. At Time 1, questions related to occupation, demographics, preentry knowledge, and perceived mobility were asked, with 945 usable surveys completed, for a response rate of 61.7%. At Time 2, questions regarding proactive personality and the influence of socializing agents were asked, with 822 usable surveys completed. At Time 3, questions regarding proximal adjustment outcomes were asked, with 683 usable surveys completed. At Time 4, questions regarding organizational commitment and work withdrawal were asked, with 589 usable surveys returned for an overall response rate of 38%. The overall retention rate is consistent with other longitudinal studies of socialization (Bauer et al., 1998). Structural equation modeling analyses, described later, were based on the 589 individuals who responded to all four surveys. Turnover was assessed by using hazard modeling. Because hazard models are able to deal with nonrandom drop out or censoring of data, it is possible to use the entire sample of 822 individuals who responded to the questions at Time 2 regarding proactive personality and the influence of socializing agents in the hazard model.

Participants represented a variety of white-collar occupations. Of the 589 respondents to all four time waves, the occupational breakdown was as follows: 19.0% administration, 6.6% faculty members, 19.4% marketing or advertising, 11.3% service, 16.5% engineering, 10.1% research and development, 10.0% information technology, and 7.0% other miscellaneous occupations. The breakdown in representation by organization is as follows: 38% of respondents were from Organization 1 in the high-technology industry, 8% were from Organization 2 in healthcare, 3% were from Organization 3 in food distribution and agriculture, 9% were from Organization 4 in healthcare, 23% were from Organization 5 in food distribution and agriculture, 1% were from Organization 6 in education, and 17% were from Organization 7, which was also in education. All organizations studied had multiple locations and divisions, so the sample was geographically dispersed. The average age of respondents was 33.3 years ($SD = 0.1$), and the average number of years of professional work experience was 9.02 years ($SD = 8.89$). Of the respondents, 26% indicated they had 1 or fewer years of professional experience, whereas 39% indicated that they had 10 or more years of professional experience. This suggests that the sample does not consist exclusively of individuals entering their first professional jobs, unlike much of the literature on adjustment. Of the respondents, 50.5% were female, 89.7% were White, 3.9% were Asian-Pacific Islander, 2.4% were African American, 2.0% were Hispanic, and 2.0% chose the option "other."

Respondents to all four surveys were compared with those who only responded at Time 1. Logistic regression was used to model the probability of nonresponse using predictors from the Time 1 survey, with odds ratios (ORs) used as a measure of effect size. Responses at Time 4 were more likely among those who worked in administration ($OR = 1.94, z = 2.20, p = .03$), who were White ($OR = 1.81, z = 2.83, p = .01$), and who reported worse perceived alternatives at Time 1 ($OR = 0.83, z = 2.42, p = .02$). To assess whether nonresponse affected results, models were run using the sample selection procedure described by Heckman (1979). In this procedure, the probability of sample dropout is specifically included in the model as a function of respondent characteristics, meaning a control for nonrandom dropout is introduced in a manner similar to a multivariate correction for nonrandom range restriction. Results from this procedure can be compared with results of an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression equation to determine if the difference is statistically significant (Hausman, 1978). If there are no significant differences between the coefficients between models, then dropout did not significantly affect parameter estimates. Results of the Hausman (1978) test showed very minor and statistically insignificant differences between OLS and the sample selection models, suggesting differential attrition is not a serious concern for these data.

Measures

Control variables. Because differences in structure might be correlated with perceptions of organizational socialization efforts, fixed effect dummy codes were used to control for organization and occupation. Organization was known based on the organization that originally supplied the contact information. All other control variables were assessed at Time 1 as reported by respondents. The number of hours worked was assessed based on a respondent report of the number of hours that they worked in a typical week during the first survey period. Hours spent at work captures the amount of time the individual has to interact with others at work, and will also help to control for differences in labor market attachment. Ethnicity (1 = *White*, 0 = *non-White*) and gender (0 = *male*, 1 = *female*) were also controlled for because of evidence from the Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) that suggests that the provision of informal information regarding the organization may be differentially available to women and minorities. The number of years of education and professional experience held by newcomers was held constant to distinguish between socialization in the organization and socialization in the world of work as a whole. Education was reported in categories ranging from 1 (*high school or less*) to 5 (*graduate degree*). Years of professional work experience were assessed through the item "How many years of professional work experience do you have, in any occupation?"

Preentry knowledge. Newcomers reported their level of preentry knowledge using a five-item measure (Breugh & Mann, 1984). Consistent with the theoretical principles underlying hypotheses offered for this study, this measure indicates how much information newcomers have about their new jobs in advance rather than measuring met expectations. Example items included "I knew the good and bad points of this job when I was hired" and "I had a clear understanding of what this job entailed before I accepted it." Similar items have been used to examine level of preentry information in previous research involving newcomer adjustment (Vandenberg & Scarpello, 1990). Responses were scored from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Reliability for this scale was $\alpha = .85$.

Proactive personality. Proactive personality was assessed using a 10-item scale (Seibert et al., 1999). This measure shows positive correlations with need for achievement, conscientiousness, and extraversion consistent with the theoretical foundation for proactive personality, with lower correlations for less theoretically related constructs (e.g., Bateman & Crant, 1993). Responses were provided on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Example items included, "I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life," and "If I see something I don't like, I fix it." Reliability for this scale was $\alpha = .89$.

Socializing Influences Scale. Comparison of organizations, leaders, and coworkers as agents of socialization is important for this study. Consequently, an initial set of 15 items was developed for this study based on the literature on adaptation (Ashford & Taylor, 1990) and overviews of socialization (Fisher, 1986). The items asked newcomers to what extent they have been influenced by the three sources of socialization across seven broad domains of adaptation. On the basis of exploratory factor analyses and suggestions from a pilot group of 85 undergraduates, the scale was reduced to seven items per agent of socialization, and item wordings were modified. The hypothesized factor structure was tested using confirmatory factor analysis on the 814 participants who completed all socializing influences items at Time 2. Hu and Bentler (1999) suggested that multiple indices be used for judging model fit, particularly a combination of standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMSR) < 0.08 with comparative fit index (CFI) $> .95$. The hypothesized three-factor model specifying distinct organization, leader, and coworker socialization factors had adequate fit indices (SRMSR = 0.03, CFI = .94) and fit much better than either a one-factor model specifying a general socialization factor (SRMSR = 0.28, CFI = .43) or a two-factor model combining leader and coworker factors into one "interpersonal sources of influence" factor (SRMSR = 0.15, CFI = .70). The mean standardized factor loading in the final model was 0.86 (range = .72 to .94). Reliability was $\alpha = .94$ for

organizational influence, $\alpha = .93$ for leader influence, and $\alpha = .92$ for coworker influence. Items created for the current study are included in the Appendix.

Perceived alternatives. Perceived alternatives were assessed with the items "How easy or difficult would it be for you to find a job with another employer at least as good as the one you have now," ranging from 1 (*very difficult*) to 5 (*very easy*), and "How would you describe the number of comparable jobs, with all types of employers, for a person with your qualifications," ranging from 1 (*a very small number of comparable jobs*) to 5 (*a very large number of comparable jobs*) from Price and Mueller's (1981) widely used scale (Steel & Griffeth, 1989). Reliability was $\alpha = .77$.

Proximal adjustment outcomes. Self-rated task mastery was assessed with four items from Morrison (1993a) and with three items from Chao et al. (1994). An example item is "I am confident about the adequacy of my skills and abilities to perform my job within this organization." Role clarity was measured with six items from the Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) scale. This measure has been shown to have strong convergent and discriminant validity in meta-analytic research (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Example items include "I feel certain about how much authority I have," and "Clear, planned goals and objectives exist for my job." Work group integration was measured with a combination of four items from Morrison (1993a) and three items from Chao et al. (1994). Sample items included, "My co-workers seem to accept me as one of them," and "Within my work group, I would easily be identified as 'one of the gang'." Political knowledge was assessed with five items from Chao et al. (1994). Items included, "I do not have a good understanding of the politics in my organization," and "I know who the most influential people are in my organization." Responses for all proximal adjustment outcomes were on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Reliability for the scores were $\alpha = .84$ for task mastery, $\alpha = .89$ for role clarity, $\alpha = .91$ for work group integration, and $\alpha = .67$ for politics.

Distal adjustment outcomes. Organizational commitment was measured through Mowday, Steers, and Porter's Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1979). This measure has consistently demonstrated high internal consistency and prediction of a number of related constructs (cf. Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). The nine-item version of the scale, which has higher internal consistency and less overlap with the construct of intention to turnover, was selected for this study. Respondents indicated their agreement with statements such as "I find that my values and this organization's values are very similar," and "I really care about the fate of this organization" on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Work withdrawal was assessed based on self-reports of the frequency with which employees engage in withdrawal behaviors (i.e., failing to attend scheduled meetings, allowing others to do your work for you, do poor quality work, make excuses to go somewhere to get out of work) on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*once a week or more*) (Roznowski & Hanisch, 1990). Reliability was $\alpha = .90$ for commitment and $\alpha = .76$ for withdrawal.

Hire date and termination date were collected from the organizations for use in the turnover regressions, with days employed as the underlying measure of duration of employment. Because the focus of this study is early adjustment, the maximal period of observation for duration of employment was 1.5 years, or 547 days. Because measures for role clarity, task mastery, group integration, and political knowledge were administered at Time 3, these variables could not be used as predictors of turnover because much of the observed turnover had already occurred when the surveys were distributed. A total of 78 individuals, or 9.4% of the sample of 822 individuals with useable data, turned over during the entire 1.5-year study period. The duration of employment for those who turned over ranged from 168 to 540 days ($M = 375$, $SD = 88.4$). Of these individuals, 2 turned over between 0 and 200 days of employment, 18 turned over between 201 and 300 days of employment, 29 turned over between 301 and 400 days of employment, 22 turned over between 401 and 500 days of employment, and 9 turned over between 501 and 547 days of employment.

Analyses

The hypothesized measurement and structural models (along with several competing models) were estimated using LISREL 8.51 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001). Because inclusion of all 58 items used to measure latent constructs would result in a low subject-parameter ratio, item parcels were developed such that each latent construct had three manifest indicators. The exception was perceived alternatives that had two manifest indicators corresponding to the two items in the scale. To hold control variables constant without using up model degrees of freedom, control variables were partialled out of the covariance matrix prior to analysis. The covariance matrix was screened, and all variables were normalized prior to analysis using Prelis (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001). For all models the CFI, SRMSR, root-mean-squared error of approximation (RMSEA), and expected cross validation index (ECVI) are presented to gauge model fit. The latter two indices have the desirable property of providing better fit statistics for more parsimonious models and have calculable confidence intervals (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). The ECVI is assessed relative to saturated and independence baseline models, with lower values indicating superior fit. For the covariance matrix used for estimations in this study, the fully saturated ECVI = 2.125, and the independence ECVI = 19.707. Parsimony ratios are also presented, which are the residual degrees of freedom for the estimated model divided by the degrees of freedom for the null (uncorrelated) model (Mulaik et al., 1989). Higher values of this index indicate more parsimonious models.

Hazard regression, in which the hazard rate for leaving a job is the dependent variable, was used to assess employment duration (Singer & Willett, 1991). The analysis of duration data is not currently available in standard structural equation software packages; thus, this estimation was run separately, consistent with other recent research investigating structural equations and duration models (Hom & Kinicki, 2001). The Cox hazard model used in this study requires proportional hazard functions, with no significant interactions between time and the predictors. Tests developed by Grambsch and Therneau (1994) showed that the proportional hazards assumption was violated, $\chi^2(24, N = 822) = 46.38, p < .01$, but stratifying the baseline hazard by gender and ethnicity resolved the nonproportionality problem, $\chi^2(22, N = 822) = 22.76, p = .42$. Thus, coefficients from this stratified model are presented. Coefficients and significance levels for the unstratified model were essentially identical to the stratified model.

Results

The raw scale means, standard deviations, and correlations for the central study variables are presented above the diagonal in Table 1. Because the data used in this study came from seven different organizations, within-organization intraclass correlations were computed for all variables as well (Bliese, 2000). The 95% confidence intervals for all of the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC)(1) estimates included zero. The low correspondence of observations within organizations relative to the total variance is not surprising given the high geographical and functional variability for employees in most organizations. Although these ICC(1) values are low, organizational fixed effects were partialled out of the covariance matrix prior to analysis (which reduces all ICC[1] values to zero) to control for organization effects and to minimize problems due to violations of independence.

One descriptive finding is of note. Mean values of coworker influence were significantly higher than values for leader influence ($d = 0.42$; 95% CI = 0.31, 0.53) or organizational influence ($d = 1.53$; 95% CI = 1.43, 1.63), and values for leader influence were significantly higher than values for organizational influence ($d = 1.07$; 95% CI = 0.97, 1.18). This ordering is

Table 1
Scale Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability, and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	ICC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Hours worked (T1)	45.17	7.84	.06	—	-.04	-.17	.17	-.06	-.02	.02	.09	-.01	.08	.00	-.07	-.05	.03	.06	.11	-.01
2. Ethnicity (T1)	0.90	0.30	.01	—	—	.02	-.07	.11	-.09	.03	-.03	-.10	.05	.04	.05	-.04	.01	.01	-.03	-.05
3. Gender (T1)	0.50	0.50	.07	—	—	—	-.02	.02	-.03	.03	-.04	.05	.03	.13	.07	.03	.08	.08	-.03	-.05
4. Education (T1)	17.50	2.16	.16	—	—	—	—	.09	-.19	.09	.07	-.19	-.01	-.07	-.02	-.03	-.04	.02	-.01	-.06
5. Experience (T1)	9.02	8.89	.13	—	—	—	—	—	-.18	-.13	.16	-.07	-.03	-.18	.09	.05	-.11	-.03	.05	-.25
6. Perceived alternatives (T1)	2.89	0.97	.12	—	—	—	—	—	.77	-.13	.06	.03	-.04	-.04	.11	.05	.09	.01	-.13	.10
7. Preentry knowledge (T1)	3.95	0.80	.03	—	—	—	—	—	-.08	.85	.02	.08	.12	.09	.16	.34	.17	.11	.27	-.10
8. Proactive personality (T2)	3.72	0.61	.03	—	—	—	—	—	.10	.08	.89	.06	.09	-.01	.30	.07	.14	.13	.14	-.10
9. Organizational influence (T2)	2.56	0.93	.08	—	—	—	—	—	-.08	.12	.02	.94	.34	.29	.01	.19	.17	.07	.22	-.04
10. Leader influence (T2)	3.53	0.88	.05	—	—	—	—	—	-.10	.14	.05	.38	.93	.35	.05	.22	.19	.19	.23	.02
11. Coworker influence (T2)	3.89	0.80	.02	—	—	—	—	—	-.10	.14	-.02	.29	.38	.92	.00	.11	.27	.05	.21	.05
12. Task mastery (T3)	3.97	0.68	.03	—	—	—	—	—	.15	.23	.37	.01	.02	-.01	.84	.43	.29	.30	.12	-.22
13. Role clarity (T3)	3.65	0.83	.02	—	—	—	—	—	.11	.42	.12	.19	.20	.12	.53	.89	.40	.38	.34	-.21
14. Group integration (T3)	4.12	0.76	.00	—	—	—	—	—	.09	.25	.13	.17	.21	.27	.37	.48	.91	.30	.32	-.11
15. Political knowledge (T3)	3.48	0.66	.01	—	—	—	—	—	-.02	.20	.15	.10	.23	.05	.37	.52	.41	.67	.20	-.15
16. Organizational commitment (T4)	3.67	0.77	.14	—	—	—	—	—	-.15	.32	.14	.22	.21	.24	.18	.39	.41	.31	.90	-.27
17. Work withdrawal (T4)	1.53	0.47	.01	—	—	—	—	—	.00	-.13	-.16	-.12	.02	.03	-.26	-.26	-.23	-.16	-.34	.76

Note. $N = 589$. Correlations above the diagonal are for raw summary scale scores. Correlations below the diagonal are partial correlations between latent constructs and are corrected for measurement error and non-normality. The subdiagonal correlations have organization, occupation, hours worked, years of professional experience, ethnicity, gender, and education partialled out. Coefficient alphas are in bold italics on the diagonal for composite variables. 95% confidence intervals for ICC include zero for all variables. Correlations greater than .09 are significant at $p < .05$. Correlations greater than .11 are significant at $p < .01$. ICC = within-organization intraclass correlation coefficient; T1 = variable collected at Time 1; T2 = variable collected at Time 2; T3 = variable collected at Time 3; T4 = variable collected at Time 4.

consistent with literature suggesting coworkers and leaders provide more socialization influence than organizations.

Model Comparisons

Our first step was to examine the measurement model, or the discriminant validity, of our constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). To demonstrate discriminant validity, the hypothesized measurement model was contrasted against two competing measurement models: (a) a single common factor model that allowed all item parcels to load on a single latent variable and (b) latent variables in aggregated groupings with all socialization influences indicators on a single factor, all proximal outcome indicators on a single factor, and all distal outcome indicators on a single factor. Table 2 presents the fit indices for these measurement models. The alternative models demonstrate poor fit with the data. On the basis of criteria from Hu and Bentler (1999) and the significant difference between the hypothesized model's ECVI and the saturated model ECVI, the hypothesized measurement model was the only measurement model to show acceptable fit. The mean standardized factor loading was 0.67, and all *t* values were greater than 8. Correlations between latent constructs as estimated in this measurement model are presented below the diagonal in Table 1.

We then estimated three structural models to contrast the proposed theoretical model with two alternative empirical possibilities. Model 1, the hypothesized model, allowed for direct effects from antecedents of adjustment to distal outcomes, for a total of 33 structural coefficients. Model 2, which has more parameters than the hypothesized model, constrained paths from perceived alternatives to the proximal outcomes to zero, but left all other parameters free for a total of 40 structural coefficients. If Model 2 is supported above Model 1, this suggests that the theory introduced in the introduction is an oversimplification of the pattern of relationships between constructs involved in newcomer adjustment, and that the specific theoretical grounding for constraining some paths to nonsignificance is not warranted. Model 3 eliminated the nonsignificant paths from Model 1 for a total of 21 structural coefficients. If Model 3 receives greater support than Model 1, it suggests that the hypothesized conceptual model is unnecessarily complex, and a different theoretical perspective is warranted that introduces more constraints.

To assess generalizability, a multisample analysis was conducted using the three organizations with over 100 participants. The structural models were estimated with all parameters constrained to be equal for all organizations and then contrasted with models in which structural coefficients (including the Φ and Ψ matrices) were free to vary across organizations such that the generalizability of these coefficients was assessed (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). Relaxing constraints did not substantially change the model fit indices, with the 90% CI = 0.03, 0.05 for RMSEA for all constrained and unconstrained models and the CFI = .93. This provides preliminary support for the hypothesis that the structural parameters generalize across organizations after holding organization fixed effects constant, although further research is needed.

We describe the hypothesized model below because it fit as well as the alternatives and is matched to an a priori theoretical structure. Figure 2 presents the path diagram for Model 1. Table 3 presents the standardized structural coefficients from Model 1.

Proximal Outcome \rightarrow Distal Outcome Relationships

The first four hypotheses pertained to the relationship between the proximal adjustment outcomes measured at Time 3 with the distal adjustment outcomes measured at Time 4. Hypothesis 1 suggests that because task mastery relates primarily to the work domain, it would be negatively related to work withdrawal. This hypothesis was supported. Hypothesis 2 proposed that because role clarity should affect both the organizational and work domains, it would be positively related to commitment and negatively related to withdrawal. This hypothesis was also fully supported.

Group integration and political knowledge were conceptualized as more organization-related than task-related adjustment outcomes. Hypothesis 3 suggested that group integration would be positively related to organizational commitment. This was supported. Contrary to Hypothesis 4, which proposed a positive relationship between political knowledge and commitment, political knowledge was not significantly related to organizational commitment, although the lack of a relationship between political knowledge and work withdrawal was as anticipated. Overall, the results were consistent with the framework of distinguishing between

Table 2
Fit Indices for Alternative Models

Model	<i>df</i>	Parsimony ratio	χ^2	χ^2/df	CFI	SRMSR	RMSEA 90% CI	ECVI 90% CI
Measurement								
Single factor	560	.94	8,496	15.46	.26	.137	.165, .171	16.4, 17.5
Aggregated measures	539	.91	4,324	8.29	.65	.096	.114, .120	8.18, 8.93
Hypothesized measures	494	.83	774	1.69	.97	.033	.027, .035	1.64, 1.89
Structural								
Model 1	505	.85	809**	1.72	.97	.039	.027, .036	1.65, 1.91
Model 2	498	.84	797**	1.72	.97	.036	.027, .036	1.66, 1.92
Model 3	520	.87	844**	1.71	.97	.046	.028, .036	1.66, 1.92

Note. *N* = 589. CFI = comparative fit index; SRMSR = standardized root-mean-squared residual; RMSEA = root-mean-squared error of approximation; ECVI = expected cross validation index; CI = confidence interval. ** *p* < .01.

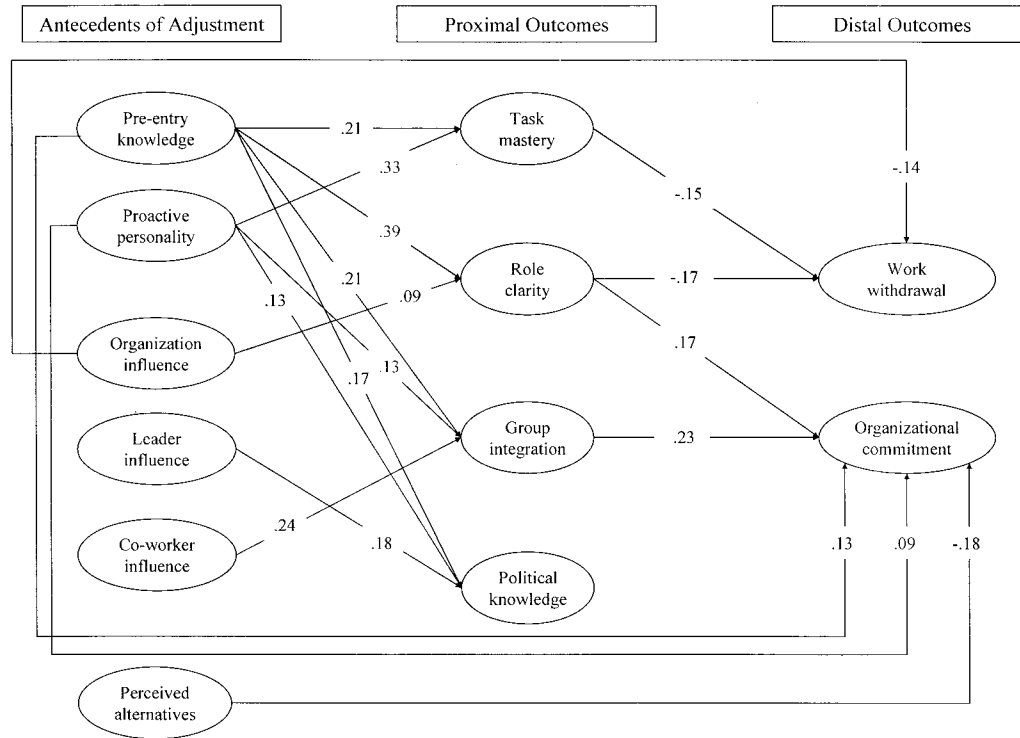


Figure 2. Structural Model 1. *N* = 589. All numbers reflect standardized path coefficients for latent variables with organization, occupation, hours worked, years of professional experience, ethnicity, gender, and education partialled out.

Table 3
Prediction of Adjustment Outcomes: Standardized Structural Coefficient Estimates From Model 1

Variable	Proximal adjustment								Distal adjustment			
	Task mastery		Role clarity		Work group integration		Political knowledge		Organizational commitment		Work withdrawal	
	γ	<i>SE</i>	γ	<i>SE</i>	γ	<i>SE</i>	γ	<i>SE</i>	γ	<i>SE</i>	γ	<i>SE</i>
Antecedents of adjustment												
Preentry knowledge	.21**	.05	.39**	.05	.21**	.05	.17**	.05	.13**	.05	-.02	.06
Proactive personality	.36**	.05	.09	.04	.13**	.05	.13**	.05	.09**	.04	-.09	.06
Organization influence	—	—	.09*	.04	—	—	—	—	.08	.04	-.14*	.05
Leader influence	-.04	.05	.08	.05	—	—	.18**	.05	.02	.05	.10	.06
Coworker influence	-.04	.05	.02	.05	.24**	.05	-.04	.05	.09	.05	.06	.06
Perceived alternatives	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-.18**	.05	.05	.05
Proximal adjustment									β	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>SE</i>
Task mastery									—	—	-.15**	.07
Role clarity									.17**	.06	-.17**	.07
Group integration									.23**	.05	—	—
Political knowledge									.05	.06	—	—
<i>R</i> ²	.18		.21		.14		.09		.31		.13	

Note. *N* = 589. Organization, occupation, hours worked, years of professional experience, ethnicity, gender, and education were partialled out of the covariance matrix prior to analysis. Dashes indicate parameter values constrained to zero values. All values are for standardized path coefficients.
* *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01.

work and organizational domains of adjustment for organizational newcomers. There were also no results demonstrating significant, unhypothesized relationships between the proximal and distal outcomes of adjustment in the unconstrained model (Model 2), which supports the validity of the theoretically applied constraints in Model 1.

Antecedent→ Proximal Outcome Relationships

Hypotheses 5 and 6 both related to the characteristics of persons as they came into their new organizations. Hypothesis 5 proposed that newcomer proactive personality would be related to all proximal adjustment outcomes. Although proactive personality was significantly related to task mastery, work group integration, and political knowledge as hypothesized, it was not related to role clarity. Hypothesis 6, which related to preentry knowledge, was fully supported. As expected, preentry knowledge was positively related to task mastery, role clarity, work group integration, and political knowledge.

The socialization influence variables at Time 2 showed much more specific effects than the person-related variables on the Time 3 proximal adjustment outcomes, as suggested in Hypotheses 7–9. Consistent with Hypothesis 7, organization influence was positively related to role clarity. Hypothesis 8, which proposed that influence from leaders would be significantly related to role clarity, political knowledge, and task mastery, was only partially supported. The hypothesized relationship with political knowledge was found, but the relationships with task mastery and role clarity were not significant. Hypothesis 9, which proposed that influence from coworkers would be related to all the proximal outcomes, was mostly rejected. Influence from coworkers was significantly related to group integration, but was not significantly related to task mastery, role clarity, or political knowledge.

Hypothesis 10 proposed that perceived alternatives would be negatively related to commitment and positively related to work withdrawal. There was a negative relationship between perceived alternatives and organizational commitment, but the relationship between perceived alternatives and work withdrawal was small and not statistically significant.

Mediating Relationships

Mediation was assessed on the basis of the difference between reduced form coefficients γ_{rf} (direct effects from antecedents of adjustment to distal outcomes without proximal outcomes in-

cluded) and structural coefficients γ_{fm} (direct effects from antecedents of adjustment to distal outcomes with proximal outcomes included) as suggested by Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998). This is essentially the same as the traditional two-step regression procedure for assessing mediation except in a structural equation modeling framework. The percentage mediated from Table 4 represents the percentage by which the reduced form coefficient decreases when the mediating proximal outcomes are included (Alwin & Hauser, 1975). This focuses attention on the magnitude of the mediation relationship rather than focusing on statistical significance.

As shown in Table 4, there were significant direct effects on organizational commitment from preentry knowledge and proactive personality when proximal outcomes were included in the model. For all cases, less than 50% of the influence of the predictors on the distal outcomes mediated through the proximal variables. Other variables may mediate between these antecedents of adjustment and commitment. The significant reduced form coefficients for organizational influence and coworker influence were both reduced below significance in the full model, although the percentage mediated for both of these relationships was comparatively small. The path between preentry knowledge to work withdrawal was almost fully mediated by the proximal adjustment outcomes. On the other hand, the path from proactive personality to work withdrawal was only 44% mediated by the proximal variables, and the path from organizational influence to work withdrawal was barely mediated at all.

Turnover Results

Table 5 displays the results for turnover. Because the proximal outcomes were assessed at Time 3, these variables could not be used as predictors of turnover because a significant proportion of turnover had occurred before these measures had been administered. Coefficients from the hazard models were exponentiated, meaning they are relative hazard ratios (*rhr*) with values below one indicating that a variable reduces the hazard of leaving the job, and values above one indicating that a variable increases the hazard of leaving the job. All scale scores were standardized prior to analysis; therefore, coefficients can be interpreted in terms of standard deviation units. The results from these regressions demonstrated that preentry knowledge and leader influence were both negatively related to turnover, with hazard ratios of $rhr = 0.74$ and $rhr = 0.72$, respectively. None of the other antecedents of adjustment were significantly related to turnover hazard.

Table 4
Reduced Form and Full Model Coefficients for Mediation Analysis

Variable	Organizational commitment			Work withdrawal		
	γ_{rf}	γ_{fm}	Mediated (%)	γ_{rf}	γ_{fm}	Mediated (%)
Preentry knowledge	.26**	.13**	50	-.12**	-.02	83
Proactive personality	.14**	.09*	36	-.16*	-.09	44
Organization influence	.10*	.08	20	-.15*	-.14*	7
Leader influence	.04	.02	50	.09	.10	-11
Coworker influence	.14**	.09	36	.06	.06	0

Note. $N = 589$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 5
Predictors of Turnover Hazard

Predictor	Turnover	
	<i>rhr</i>	<i>SE</i>
Hours worked	0.98	0.02
Education	0.94	0.06
Professional experience	0.99	0.02
Perceived alternatives	1.17	0.17
Preentry knowledge	0.64	0.12*
Proactive personality	1.13	0.16
Organizational influence	1.06	0.14
Leader influence	0.72	0.10*
Coworker influence	0.96	0.11
Model <i>df</i>	22	
Model χ^2	76.75**	

Note. $N = 822$. Baseline hazard stratified by gender and ethnicity. Organization and occupation were also controlled in this analysis. Coefficients for these variables are available on request from John D. Kammeier-Mueller. *rhr* = relative hazard ratio, with values higher than 1.00 indicating increased turnover as the predictor increases and values lower than 1.00 indicating decreased turnover as the predictor increases relative to the baseline.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Discussion

Organizational entry is one of the most important phases of organizational life. Despite long-term interest in the topic, research has not clarified how antecedents of influence are related to newcomer adjustment. Implications of this study are considered below.

Antecedents of Adjustment

This study provides corroboration for prior research suggesting that preentry knowledge is a significant predictor of adjustment (Wanous, 1992), as expected based on Hypothesis 5. The comparatively large effect sizes for preentry knowledge and the significant negative relationship between preentry knowledge and turnover argue for the importance of this variable. Although the relationship between information adequacy and organizational commitment among newcomers has been shown previously (Meglino et al., 1988; Saks & Cronshaw, 1990), the current results suggest that preentry knowledge may have its influence on organizational commitment through its positive effects on task mastery, role clarity, group integration, and political knowledge.

Proactive personality was also a seemingly critical characteristic for newcomers in our study in improving their adjustment, consistent with Hypothesis 6. Advancing previous literature, our study found that newcomers who reported that they tended to be proactive experienced more positive adjustment outcomes, including increased task mastery, group integration, and political knowledge. These results extend and support a recent recognition in the socialization literature that newcomers play an important proactive role in their own adjustment and suggest proactive socialization may be determined by personal factors (e.g., Wanberg & Kammeier-Mueller, 2000). Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) also found watching and trying were more significantly related to task

knowledge than obtaining information from interpersonal communications. Seibert et al. (2001) recently demonstrated a similar relationship between proactivity and political knowledge in a sample of more established workers. The current study extends these findings by showing this relationship also holds for organizational newcomers.

Unlike the comprehensive effects for the person-related variables, each socializing influence was related to only one or two other adjustment-related outcomes. Organizational influence was positively related to role clarity, but the standardized effect size of this relationship was relatively small, which was only partially consistent with Hypothesis 7. However, organizational influence was positively related to organizational commitment and negatively related to work withdrawal. The mediation analysis suggests that the effect of organizational influence on these outcomes is not well explained by the proximal adjustment outcomes examined in the current study. One potential alternative explanation for the relationship between organizational influence and the distal outcomes is that orientation and training sessions act to increase perceptions of organizational trust and support, as suggested by Tannenbaum and colleagues (1991).

Leader influence stood out as a predictor of the proximal adjustment outcome of political knowledge, as expected in Hypothesis 8, and was the only socialization factor that was significantly related to reduced turnover hazard. Previous research on the topic of organizational socialization has suggested that those in leadership positions are likely to provide some of the most important socialization outcomes (e.g., Anakwe & Greenhaus, 1999; Bauer & Green, 1998; Morrison, 2002; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993). On the other hand, leader influence was not significantly related to organizational commitment and work withdrawal in either the reduced form or the full model. It is not clear, based on the current results, why supervisor influence might reduce turnover without affecting commitment. It may be that newcomers develop commitment to their specific supervisor rather than to the organization as a whole.

Coworker influence was almost exclusively related to group integration; thus the components of Hypothesis 9 regarding a relationship between coworker influence and task mastery, role clarity, and political knowledge were not supported. These results may appear to conflict with recent theories arguing that coworker socialization is critical (Moreland & Levine, 2001) and empirical studies showing newcomers proactively seek more information from coworkers than from any other source (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). However, the mean levels of coworker socialization in this sample were also much higher than mean levels of other socialization influences. Coworker influence was also the antecedent of adjustment that was most strongly related to organizational commitment in the reduced form equations. It should be borne in mind that the results suggest variability in coworker influence levels may not be a significant predictor of several proximal outcomes, even though all respondents did agree that coworker influence was important.

Perceived alternatives were shown to be an important correlate of adjustment, as evinced by the comparatively strong negative relationship between alternatives and organizational commitment as anticipated by Hypothesis 10. The importance of perceived alternatives in the process of adjustment, particularly in the literature on socialization, has been largely overlooked (Saks & Ash-

forth, 1997). A growing body of empirical research (Kirschenbaum & Mano-Negrin, 1999; Trevor, 2001) has supported theoretical work that emphasizes the importance of alternatives in the development of work attitudes. Although these studies show a relationship between perceived alternatives and turnover, the current study demonstrates that organizational newcomers who believe they have good alternatives will tend to be less committed. However, there did not appear to be a strong relationship between perceived alternatives and work withdrawal behaviors.

There are several practical implications that arise from these results. Although causal inferences are not warranted, the findings suggest there may be advantages to providing recruits with comprehensive, accurate information. Meta-analytic results, however, suggest that the correlation between realistic job previews and adequacy of prehire information is small ($r = -.02$; Phillips, 1998). More developed preentry opportunities to learn about jobs may be advisable, such as extended work samples or internships. Increased empirical investigation of these widely used interventions is strongly recommended. In addition, research should examine other potential antecedents of preentry knowledge, such as general mental ability, social networks (Morrison, 2002), and the amount of time newcomers spend researching their new jobs before entry. Organizations may find that the administration of personality surveys early during the selection process may be useful, either to select primarily those who have higher proactivity or to identify individuals who may need more assistance in adjustment because they are less proactive. Organizations may also be well served by ensuring that supervisors and coworkers, who appear to provide important socialization information, are well trained for this role. Peer and supervisory mentoring programs are one potential mechanism to leverage the existing patterns of socialization to greater effect (cf. Allen, McManus, & Russell, 1999; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993). The fact that neither coworker nor supervisory socialization facilitated role clarity or task mastery was contrary to our expectations. Methods that might help get this information to newcomers once they are on the job should be explored.

Achieving Distal Adjustment Outcomes

The distal outcome results were consistent with the theoretical division of organizational and task domains. Task mastery and role clarity had distinct, but partially overlapping, relationships with sources of information and adjustment (Morrison, 2002). Task mastery was unrelated to organizational commitment, but was related to reduced work withdrawal, providing partial support for Hypothesis 1. Those who are better able to complete their work tasks may gain a greater sense of accomplishment from work and will have less drive to avoid working, consistent with the theoretical model of work withdrawal described by Hulin (1991). Role clarity was substantially related to both commitment and withdrawal as expected based on Hypothesis 2. The positive relationship between role clarity and organizational commitment suggests that individuals who have a clear sense of their job responsibilities will have more positive feelings toward the organization as a whole. The consistent relationship between role clarity and the indicators of adjustment suggest that the emphasis on role clarity as *the* critical outcome of socialization in Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) work is well founded.

On the social side, the current results also agree with Hypothesis 3 and similar findings that demonstrate higher commitment among those with greater knowledge regarding their work group's functioning (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) or stronger friendship networks (Morrison, 2002). Group integration was also a significant predictor of organizational commitment, with a fairly large standardized effect size relative to other predictors. Organizations may find that cooperation and coordination within work groups will spill over into a greater desire to fit with the organization as a whole. Political knowledge was not related to organizational commitment or work withdrawal, contrary to Hypothesis 4, which suggests that those who understand how informal decisions are made may not have a more positive view of organizational functioning.

Although conceptualized as proximal in the socialization literature and in our model, it should be noted that these relationships may also possibly be reciprocal—for example, that organizational commitment could also have a reciprocal influence on task mastery through a motivational process. Future research involving repeated longitudinal measures of these constructs may help to resolve these issues.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the conceptual model provided in Figure 1 is a useful unifying framework for predicting the course of newcomer adjustment. First, this study demonstrates how the antecedents of adjustment, including that of preentry knowledge, proactive personality, and socialization influences from the organization, supervisors, and coworkers work in tandem, hopefully resolving some issues regarding competing claims from the literature regarding the importance of these different antecedents. Second, this study also shows how proximal outcomes mediate the relationship between antecedents of adjustment and distal outcomes. Third, the current article is the first to differentially measure sources of socialization information. The inclusion of a new scale of socialization that specifically identifies different sources of socializing information demonstrated that there are differences in what is provided by the three sources of socialization we examined and that these differences are consistent with theoretical principles described in the literature review.

This study had a number of methodological advantages over previous studies in the area of organizational adjustment. Although other studies have had elements of the research design employed here, the combination of a multiwave, multiorganization design with a sample of newcomers who were heterogeneous with respect to occupation and experience is a distinction between this study and previous research. However, a number of caveats are in order in interpreting these results. First, the data are self-report in nature with the exception of turnover. Common methods bias concerns are reduced by our separation of measures by 4 months in time over four time waves. The highly differentiated pattern of results across survey domains further suggests that collecting information from a common source did not lead to an inflated set of relationships across all variables. In addition, most of the constructs of interest are internal psychological processes that are best answered by the individual experiencing the process (Sackett & Larson, 1990). Although there was occupational diversity, the sample was made up exclusively of white-collar workers, so generalization of

these results outside of this population is not warranted. Future research should endeavor to compare these results with these other occupational samples that might have much different patterns of socialization and to build on these findings by examining reports from leaders and coworkers in the process of adjustment.

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Appendix

Socializing Influences Scale Items

For each of the following item stems, participants reported their responses for the domains *orientation, training, and other organizational efforts, supervisors or others higher up in the organization, and other co-workers*.

1. To what extent have each of the following influenced how you have "learned the ropes" as you've entered your new work environment?
2. To what extent have each of the following affected your ideas about appropriate behaviors for your job, work group, and organization?
3. To what extent have each of the following influenced how much you have learned about the way your organization works?
4. To what extent have each of the following influenced what you see as most important to learn?
5. To what extent have each of the following influenced how you have adapted to your work environment?
6. To what extent have each of the following influenced your ideas about appropriate attitudes and norms for your job, work group, and organization?
7. To what extent have each of the following influenced how you have figured out how to act in your work environment?

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