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Individual Factors and Newcomer Adjustment Among Recent College Graduates

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University of Connecticut, 2013

Every year recent college graduates enter the workforce and experience newcomer adjustment, the process of learning the tasks of a new job and becoming integrated into an organization during the first year of employment. Some new professionals effectively cope with the changes they experience, while others are less successful. Newcomers' negative reactions to the school-to-work transition can cause lower job performance, job satisfaction, and/or organizational commitment, and ultimately possible turnover within the first year on the job. Despite research and programming by both human resource development professionals and undergraduate education scholars and practitioners, gaps exist in the literature as to how best to address newcomer adjustment. Psychological capital (PsyCap) and proactive behaviors offer a new perspective on how individual newcomers can influence their own newcomer adjustment.

In this manuscript I provide a theoretical, empirical, and practical examination of the ways and extent to which PsyCap and proactive behaviors relate to successful newcomer adjustment among recent college graduates. The first article is a theoretical integrative literature review in which I propose a model of newcomer adjustment specific for recent college graduates that includes the roles of PsyCap and proactive behavior in successful adjustment. In the second article I describe an empirical study of relationships between PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and the newcomer adjustment outcomes of self-reported job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among 73 bachelor's degree graduates within 1 year after college.

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The findings indicate that traditionally-aged recent college graduates who possess PsyCap and engage in proactive behaviors in their employment, especially in socializing and seeking information, consistently report higher levels of adjustment in terms of self-rated job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The consistency of the results across adjustment outcomes suggests that PsyCap and proactive behaviors may indeed play an important role in newcomer adjustment among recent college graduates. Lastly, I present a course curriculum to help undergraduate educators develop college students' PsyCap and enhance their use of proactive behaviors prior to entering the professional workforce so that students leave college with the tools necessary to succeed in the newcomer adjustment process.

Keywords: newcomer adjustment, psychological capital, PsyCap, proactive behaviors

Individual Factors and Newcomer Adjustment among Recent College Graduates

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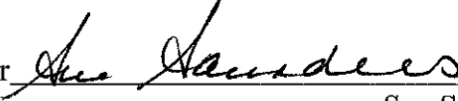Individual Factors and Newcomer Adjustment among Recent College Graduates

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"It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end."

-Ernest Hemingway

For 7 years I have been on a journey to earn a doctorate. It was a scenic route with many bumps in the road and mountains to overcome as well as several memorable moments and successes along the way. The journey and reaching my final destination would not have been possible nor nearly as educational and entertaining without the guidance, love, and support with which I have been so blessed.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Each year more than 1.6 million young adults graduate with a bachelor's degree from a postsecondary institution in the United States (Aud et al., 2011). Many of these young adults enter the workforce after graduation and experience *newcomer adjustment,* the process of learning the tasks of a new job and becoming integrated into an organization during the first year of employment (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007). All new employees go through an initial learning and adjustment period, especially during the first year. The process is particularly challenging for traditionally-aged, new college graduates ages 21-23 (Justice & Dornan, 2001) who are starting their first professional position while simultaneously experiencing multiple life transitions (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). Some newcomers effectively cope with the changes they experience, while others are less successful. Unsuccessful adjustment can have negative consequences for individuals, employing organizations, and undergraduate education institutions.

Problem Statement

The extent to which a young adult successfully adjusts as a newcomer in an organization can impact his or her short-term and long-term professional and personal development in terms of well-being, adult identity, and decision-making abilities (Ng & Feldman, 2007). In the short-term, challenges associated with newcomer adjustment can cause young adults to perform less productively, feel less satisfied with their job and committed to the employer, and ultimately leave the organization (Holton, 1995). Unsuccessful newcomer adjustment causes approximately 50% to 60% of newcomers to voluntarily or involuntarily leave their new positions within the first 7 months of employment (Leibowitz, Schlossberg, & Shore, 1991). Even newcomers who

stay in their first professional position for a full year consider leaving shortly thereafter. In an empirical study Holton (1995) found that approximately 33% of recent graduates, after 1 year in their first professional position, planned to search for another job in the next year.

Both employing organizations and undergraduate education institutions have a stake in the success of new graduates in the workforce. For each new employee that leaves, organizations incur 1 to 2 years' worth of salary and benefits costs by restarting the recruitment and training process (Fitz-Enz, 1997). These significant costs and the disappointment of not retaining a new hire may lead employers to limit or refrain from hiring future graduates of institutions whose newcomers consistently struggle to successfully adjust (Geroy, 1990).

In preparing graduates for success in the workforce, undergraduate institutions have focused on matching students' interests, attributes, and career choices and developing students' prerequisite skills and knowledge (Henscheid, 2008). However, Holton (1995) stated that colleges and universities "must hold themselves accountable for successful organizational entry, not just job placement" (p. 75). Because young adults are likely to experience organizational entry many times, college can be a place where students learn attributes, skills, and behaviors that will enable them to experience successful newcomer adjustment. Little is known about individual factors that impact newcomers' success in a new job, particularly among young adults entering the professional workforce.

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics and behaviors among traditionally-aged recent college graduates that relate to their adjustment as newcomers in an organization. The outcomes inform practices in undergraduate education and employing organizations that enable young adults to be successful in the workplace their first year after graduation.

Conceptual Framework

The empirical and theoretical research relevant to identifying individual characteristics and behaviors that relate to successful newcomer adjustment among recent college graduates is disjointed since researchers have examined the relationships from many different perspectives. These include the impact of organizational socialization tactics on adjustment (see Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007), individual dispositions and personality traits related to successful adjustment (see Saks & Ashforth, 2000), cognitive processes used by individuals to cope with job transition (see Falcione & Wilson, 1988), and the effect of unmet expectations on work-related outcomes (see Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis, 1992). In each of these perspectives, individuals are viewed as passive agents reacting to or dependent upon others in their newcomer adjustment process.

Two relatively new lines of research hold promise in enhancing current understanding of factors that impact newcomer adjustment. The first perspective focuses on psychological capital (PsyCap), which involves the development of individuals' self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency in order to improve their work-related outcomes (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). The second perspective highlights the role of proactive behaviors in successful adjustment to the workforce (Ashford & Black, 1996). These research perspectives consider newcomers to be positive and active participants influencing their own adjustment through specific qualities and behaviors.

This study serves as a first step in connecting PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and newcomer adjustment among recent college graduates. In the next three chapters, I discuss important aspects of the study. Chapter II proposes a model of newcomer adjustment among recent college graduates based on PsyCap and proactive behavior research through an integrative

literature review. A later version of this paper was published in *Human Resource Development Review* in 2013 (Larson & Bell, 2013). Chapter III presents the empirical study I conducted to address the overarching research question: To what extent and in what ways do individual characteristics, including PsyCap and proactive behaviors, explain variance in indicators of newcomer adjustment among employed college graduates during their first year after graduation? I intend to submit this paper for publication in the *Journal of College Student Development*. Chapter IV details a suggested curriculum and research-based rationale for student affairs professionals and undergraduate educators to incorporate into senior year experience courses in order to develop college students' PsyCap and proactive behaviors. Chapters II, III, and IV were composed as stand-alone articles, and thus include redundancies in background information and reviews of empirical research. In the final chapter, Chapter V, I provide a brief conclusion to the dissertation manuscript.

CHAPTER II

In this first paper, I discuss the current issues associated with newcomer adjustment and utilize an integrative literature review approach to examine the relationships between PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and the newcomer adjustment outcomes of job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Based on this research, I present a model of newcomer adjustment among recent college graduates, which guides my research detailed in subsequent chapters. As previously stated, a later version of this paper was published in *Human Resource Development Review* in 2013 (Larson & Bell, 2013).

Newcomer Adjustment among Recent College Graduates:

An Integrative Literature Review

Each year more than 1.6 million young adults graduate with a bachelor's degree from a degree-granting postsecondary institution in the United States (Aud et al., 2011). Many of these graduates enter the workforce as new members of an organization and experience newcomer adjustment. Newcomer adjustment is the process an individual goes through within the first year at an organization in order to learn how to perform the tasks of the job and develop positive attitudes toward the organization, work environment, and job requirements (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007). All new employees experience newcomer adjustment, however, the process is particularly challenging for traditionally-aged, recent college graduates ages 21-23 (Justice & Dornan, 2001) who are likely to be entering their first position in the professional workforce while simultaneously experiencing multiple life transitions (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000).

Newcomer adjustment affects individuals as well as organizations. For young adults who are recent college graduates, an unsuccessful adjustment can impact their professional and

personal development (Ng & Feldman, 2007; Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). It can cause them to question their job satisfaction and organizational commitment, perform job tasks less productively, and ultimately leave the organization (Holton, 1996; Leibowitz, Schlossberg, & Shore, 1991). For organizations, the financial costs associated with decreased productivity, rehiring, and retraining due to disengaged newcomers or losing new employees to turnover can impede growth and profitability (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000).

Even in a weak economy when voluntary turnover is typically low, newcomer adjustment is a significant concern. In a weak economy, newcomers are more likely to stay in their position but may not perform at their peak, making limited contributions to the organization (Davis, 2010). A 2009 poll conducted by human resource consultant Right Management indicated that up to 60% of employees intend to leave their job when the economy stabilizes as a result of low staff morale, disengagement from added responsibilities, and dwindling benefits (Light, 2010). Newcomers could be part of the 60%, and employers may be hiring an influx of college graduates in their first professional job to replace the employees who leave. Thus, a better understanding of factors related to successful newcomer adjustment is more important than ever.

The importance of newcomer adjustment makes it an issue of concern in both undergraduate education and human resource development (HRD) domains, specifically recruitment and hiring and new employer orientation, training, and development. In HRD, researchers and practitioners have focused primarily on socialization tactics organizations can implement to help newcomers adjust (Allen, 2006; Ashforth & Saks, 1996) and applicant characteristics that are most likely to fit with and adjust to the organization and the position (Saks & Ashforth, 2000). In contrast to employer goals, those in higher education have avoided newcomer adjustment to the professional workforce almost entirely by concentrating on helping

undergraduate students secure a job after graduation that match their chosen career path, interests, skills, and values (Henscheid, 2008) or by teaching personal aspects of the school-to-work transition such as budgeting or relocating. In undergraduate education researchers have focused on student and career development theories, but not on students' development of attributes associated with successful newcomer adjustment.

The different approaches taken in HRD and undergraduate education reflect differences in organizational goals, relationship with the individual newcomer, as well as theoretical and empirical foundations. The two different perspectives threaten to perpetuate unsuccessful newcomer adjustment among new college graduates. The need exists for a synthesis of perspectives that benefit both HRD and undergraduate education in efforts to address the challenges associated with newcomer adjustment. The purpose of this integrative literature review is to fill this gap. The outcomes serve to inform research in the fields of HRD and undergraduate education and practitioners in both organizations as they support young adults during their first year of professional employment after graduation.

Background

In this section I provide background on how newcomer adjustment impacts organizations, higher education, and the newcomers. I then present research questions that guided my integrative literature review, the findings, and conclusions.

Impact on Organizations

Approximately 50% to 60% of newcomers voluntarily or involuntarily leave their new positions within the first 7 months of employment (Leibowitz et al., 1991). More recently a 2010 Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Foundation report (Bauer, 2010) revealed that within the first 120 days, half of all hourly workers leave their new positions. Even

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newcomers who stay in their first professional position for a full year consider leaving shortly thereafter. In an empirical study Holton (1995) found that approximately 33% of recent graduates, after 1 year in their first professional position, planned to search for another job in the next year. High turnover of newcomers is a considerable concern to organizations.

Employers expend a great deal of time and money recruiting, training, motivating, and attempting to retain new employees. According to a 2008 SHRM Foundation report (Allen, 2008), organizations spend 50% to 60% of an employee's annual salary recruiting and hiring for the position. If a newcomer subsequently leaves the company either voluntarily or involuntarily, the employer incurs the financial costs of lost productivity and restarting the recruiting and training processes. These direct and indirect costs are significant. A study by Fitz-Enz (1997) and the Saratoga Institute suggested that organizations lose on average at least 1 to 2 years worth of pay and benefits for each new employee that leaves the company, and the aforementioned 2008 SHRM Foundation report stated that total costs associated with hiring a replacement due to turnover range from 90% to 200% of the employee's annual salary.

For organizations the immediate financial loss associated with ineffective newcomer adjustment is considerable, but minimal compared to the long-term consequences. In the most extreme cases, excessive employee turnover and poor newcomer productivity could jeopardize the organization's viability. The loss of key employees could compromise the quality, quantity, and/or innovation of the organization's services and products, leading to lower customer satisfaction (Krell, 2012; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2006). One estimate indicated that voluntary and involuntary turnover costs American industry $11 billion per year (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000), with additional costs when newcomers remain with the company but perform

below expectations. Successful transition of newcomers to the work environment is essential to the company's economic survival.

For this reason, during the past six decades HRD researchers have examined newcomer adjustment using various perspectives. In an early approach, researchers studied formal and informal socialization tactics used by organizations to help new employees learn the company's beliefs, goals, values, policies, and procedures (see Jones, 1986; Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This perspective helped organizations understand and create tactics best suited to assist newcomers in adjusting to the company and professional working environment. More recently, researchers have worked to identify the most desirable dispositions for successful adjustment so that organizations can recruit and hire the "right" candidates (see Saks & Ashforth, 2000; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). This perspective focuses on what employers can do during hiring and training, and puts the responsibility for successful newcomer adjustment primarily on the shoulders of the organizations. In doing so, organizations can use intentional recruiting and training practices in hopes of reducing the challenges newcomers experience during the adjustment process; however, they have had limited success, as the problem persists. According to a recent report by SHRM, is has been challenging for organizations to recruit employees with the right skills for their available positions (2012).

Impact on Undergraduate Education

Newcomers transitioning from school to work experience a more challenging adjustment than those transitioning from job to job (Bauer et al., 2007). Despite part-time jobs and internships, traditionally-aged new college graduates often have little exposure to professional settings. Furthermore, graduating from college may trigger additional significant developmental transitions associated with adulthood, such as becoming increasingly independent from family

and other support systems, developing self-awareness, learning new roles and routines, and establishing new social networks or family of one's own (Määttä, Nurmi, & Majava, 2002; Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). Because young adults are likely to experience newcomer adjustment many times—on average individuals with a bachelor's degree have 6.2 jobs between the ages of 18 and 24 and 3.1 jobs between ages 25 to 29 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012)—early development of the attributes and behaviors that make effective newcomer adjustment more achievable is especially important. Since many recent college graduates apply for entry-level professional positions (NACE, 2012), higher education can be a place where students learn and develop these attributes and skills.

Undergraduate institutions already have a stake in newcomer adjustment. Although colleges and universities aim to prepare students to become educated and engaged citizens that contribute to society, helping them secure their first professional job is a significant institutional goal (Henscheid, 2008). However, as Holton (1995) emphasized, colleges and universities "must hold themselves accountable for successful organizational entry, not just job placement" (p. 75). By failing to prepare students to adjust to their role as working professionals, undergraduate institutions risk hindering the future success of the constituents they serve.

Colleges and universities face additional consequences if they neglect to prepare undergraduate students for workforce entry. According to Geroy (1990), if employing organizations deem that graduates from a certain university are not ready and able to manage the requirements of their chosen job, company, or career, employers may be less likely to hire future graduates from that school, reducing the value of the institution's degrees. A college with subsequently low job placement rates may experience a decrease in the school's reputation,

lower numbers of potential new students choosing to attend, and less money brought in from tuition and donations.

Furthermore, because of the vast amount of time, energy, and resources students and their parents invest in undergraduate education, they demand that colleges and universities do more to meet their needs, including preparing students for professional workforce entry (Wood, 2004). An institution's ability to meet this need is the top consideration for students and parents in the college selection process. According to a study by the Higher Education Research Institute (2010), 56.5% of college first year students chose to attend their college because its graduates secure good jobs, the most important reason by almost 15%. Thus, undergraduate institutions have numerous incentives to assist in the newcomer adjustment process.

In addressing the senior year transition from undergraduate education to full employment, faculty and staff have focused on preparing seniors to secure a professional job and gain discipline-specific knowledge in order to work in targeted fields. One approach to this involves senior seminars or capstone courses in specific academic majors that help students apply comprehensive skills and knowledge learned from classes in their academic major (Gardner, 1999). Another approach is the Senior Year Experience. These courses and programs are specifically designed to prepare senior undergraduate students for the transition from college to post-college life including career development (Gardner, 1999). The courses may address development of professional workplace behaviors, covering topics such as business etiquette and workplace ethics, or personal areas of transition such as wellness, relocation, and personal finance (Henscheid, 2008). Although valuable, such approaches lack a focus on specific individual attributes, behaviors, and skills most related to successful newcomer adjustment, and providing supports for students to develop them.

Impact on Newcomers

Young adults who are recent college graduates can struggle during their first year in the professional workforce. Initially, new professionals may become stressed, experience negative mood changes, or lose motivation and confidence in themselves and their abilities (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). Such changes can impact newcomers' job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, and can ultimately lead to voluntary or involuntary turnover sometime within the first year of employment (Holton, 1995; Leibowitz et al., 1991).

An unsuccessful experience can also negatively influence young adults' long-term professional and personal development. A negative newcomer experience may relate to increased risk of developing longer-term personal issues with adult identity and decision-making abilities (Ng & Feldman, 2007), psychological well-being (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000), and self-efficacy (Fournier & Payne, 1994), as well as career identity and career and income trajectories (Määttä et al., 2002).

Since the effects of unsuccessful newcomer adjustment have the potential to be detrimental to new professionals, researchers have investigated the cognitive processes through which newcomers internalize and cope with their new surroundings (see Falcione & Wilson, 1988; Feldman & Brett, 1983; Louis, 1980). Additionally, studies explored how individuals' initial expectations differed from realities of the work environment (see Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995; Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis, 1992) and newcomers' perceptions of how well the job and organization fit with their interests and values (see Saks & Ashforth, 2002). These lines of research considered new employees to be reactive participants responding to their environment (Morrison, 1993) and failed to take into account adjustment initiatives

conducted by the newcomers themselves or individual attributes that may enable successful newcomer adjustment.

Conclusions

In reviewing background information on how newcomer adjustment impacts organizations, undergraduate institutions, and individuals, I was struck by differences in perspectives taken by researchers in HRD and education to understand the phenomenon. In HRD, often the focus has been on what employers can do to make newcomer adjustment to the *professional world* an easier and more successful process. In contrast, higher education has concentrated on teaching the tasks *prior* to newcomer adjustment (i.e. how to get a job) or personal adjustment to *post-graduate life* (i.e. how to transition to post-graduate life by budgeting, relocating, etc.). Yet, I also identified an underlying assumption common across perspectives, in which the individual is viewed as a passive entity—either an inexperienced learner lacking "real work world" knowledge and skills or an employee dependent upon employer supports in order to successfully navigate his or her first year on the job. Noticeably missing from the literature were theoretical or empirical works that provided insight into the active role of the individual, particularly young adults, in adjusting to an organization as a newcomer.

In my review of the literature on newcomer adjustment I found two research perspectives in which individuals are viewed as proactive agents in their own newcomer adjustment process through development of the necessary qualities and behaviors to make success a reality (Morrison, 1993). The first perspective focuses on psychological capital (PsyCap), an emerging HRD construct that involves development of individuals' self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency in order to improve work-related outcomes (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). The

second line of research highlights the role of proactive behaviors in successful adjustment to the workforce (Ashford & Black, 1996). Proactive behaviors are the intentional actions taken to gather information, build relationships, and change working conditions in order to effectively adapt to a new work environment (Ashford & Black, 1996). The purpose this paper was to integrate the literature pertaining to PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and newcomer adjustment outcomes such as job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, leading to the development of a model of newcomer adjustment. In doing so, I hope to offer a guide for researchers and practitioners in HRD and undergraduate education in promoting successful newcomer adjustment among recent college graduates.

Research Questions

My investigation was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How does PsyCap relate to newcomer adjustment outcomes?

RQ2: How do proactive behaviors relate to newcomer adjustment outcomes?

RQ3: How does PsyCap relate to the use of proactive behaviors?

Methods

Newcomer adjustment is a relatively established phenomenon and mature topic (Torraco, 2005) in the HRD field. Little consensus exists, however, on how best to tackle the problems related to unsuccessful adjustment, particularly among recent college graduates. Guided by my research questions, I conducted an integrative literature review by reviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing relevant literature (Torraco, 2005) to expand and reconceptualize the topic to include emerging research on individual attributes such as PsyCap and proactive behaviors.

Procedures

To create a data set, I examined peer-reviewed articles and books in the English language. I conducted searches through ERIC, PsycINFO, ABI/INFORM Global, and Academic Search Premier using the following descriptors: "newcomer adjustment," "psychological capital," "proactive behavior" with "newcomer adjustment," and "proactive behavior" with "socialization." By setting up alert notifications using these descriptors on the aforementioned databases, I identified newly published articles subsequent to the initial database search. Additionally, through my connections with the researchers who originally developed the construct of PsyCap, I received notice of new publications on the topic. Using these search strategies I initially identified 293 sources. I excluded book and article reviews, interviews, no access to full-text articles, and articles not written in English. Inclusion criteria included relevancy to work settings and work-related outcomes and a focus on individual characteristics and behaviors rather than organizational efforts. After filtering out duplicate articles and entries not meeting the inclusion criteria, the final data set consisted of 55 peer-reviewed journal articles and 1 scholarly book. The scholarly book was conceptual and addressed PsyCap. The articles were categorized into: 30 PsyCap articles (20 empirical, 10 conceptual), 19 proactive behavior articles (18 empirical, 1 conceptual), and 6 empirical newcomer adjustment articles relating to self-efficacy. The authors reviewed multiple times each article in each category to identify information that could be compared, contrasted, and synthesized with information obtained from other articles to formulate an answer to each research question. I used an Excel file to organize information extracted from each article. Organizational headings included article type (empirical, conceptual, practice), author names, publication data, publication source, purpose, conclusions,

and implications. Additional headings for empirical articles included research questions or hypotheses, methods, instruments and scales, results, effect sizes, and limitations.

Limitations

The findings of this integrative literature review may be limited by the methods used to identify and select articles and to extract information. Some relevant articles may have been overlooked because they were not identified by the search terms or because they did not meet all of the inclusion criteria. Important information may have been omitted due to errors in extracting information from included articles. Finally, I limited my search to English language sources and relevant articles may exist in other languages that may have informed this review.

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Findings

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I report the findings from my synthesis of the literature in relation to the three research questions. First I present findings related to RQ1 in which I synthesized literature indicating how PsyCap relates to newcomer adjustment outcomes. The findings pertaining to relationships between proactive behaviors and newcomer adjustment outcomes (RQ2) are next, followed by relationships between PsyCap and proactive behaviors (RQ3).

How does PsyCap relate to newcomer adjustment outcomes?

In the pursuit of sustained competitive advantage, many organizations recognize the importance of the collective and implicit knowledge, skills, and experiences of their employees, also known as "human capital," in achieving economic capital (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007, p. 20). However, recent research suggests organizations need to move beyond the "what you know" of human capital to "who you are" and "what you are becoming" (p. 20). This uniquely positive focus on employees and their development into their "possible self" is called positive psychological capital, or PsyCap (p. 21). The construct of PsyCap originated in the field of

organizational behavior based in research spearheaded by Luthans and colleagues (Luthans,

Youssef, et al., 2007) who defined PsyCap as:

> An individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized
>
> by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort
>
> to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about
>
> succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when
>
> necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when
>
> beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond
>
> (resiliency) to attain success. (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007, p. 3)

PsyCap consists of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency. The four components

represent distinctive developmental capacities that are positive, theory and research-based,

measurable, and state-like (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). When combined, they synergistically

create the higher order core construct of PsyCap. The impact of overall PsyCap on performance

and attitudinal outcomes is larger than its individual facets, indicating that "the whole (PsyCap)

[is] greater than the sum of its parts" (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007, p. 19). Luthans, Avolio,

Avey, and Norman (2007) tested this hypothesis using a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on

the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ), an instrument developed by Luthans, Youssef, et

al. (2007) to measure PsyCap and each of its components. The CFA revealed that self-efficacy,

hope, optimism, and resiliency all loaded at .99 on the latent factor PsyCap, while each

component singularly ranged from .89-.98 ($p < .01$). Additionally, a χ^2 goodness of fit test found

the four-factor structure to be the best fitting model ($\Delta\chi^2 (7) = 1831.14$, $p < .001$). The

researchers tested the PCQ on four samples ranging from students to professionals and found a

Cronbach's alpha for overall PsyCap ranging from .88-.89.

As a construct, one of PsyCap's unique qualities is its state-like distinction on the state-trait continuum. State-like constructs are more stable than states (e.g., moods) but more malleable and open to change than trait-like constructs (e.g., personality characteristics) and fixed traits (e.g., inherited attributes) (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). Thus, an individual's overall PsyCap can be developed if presented with effective intervention and environmental conditions (Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008; Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008).

Researchers have connected PsyCap to prominent work-related outcomes such as job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Support for the positive relationship between PsyCap and job performance is based on two studies reported by Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007). In the first study of engineers and technicians from a Fortune 100 manufacturing firm ($N = 115$), total PsyCap had a moderate positive correlation with supervisor-rated performance ($ESz_r = .34$)[1]. In the second study of employees from all functions and levels of a midsized insurance firm ($N = 144$), the correlation between PsyCap and supervisor's performance ratings was smaller ($ESz_r = .22$) yet still notable. Similarly, Luthans, Avey, Clapp-Smith, and Li (2008) and Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, and Li (2005) found a small positive correlation between PsyCap and supervisor-rated performance among workers in China, including its largest private and state-owned enterprise (SOE) copper refining factories ($ESz_r = .26$; $N = 456$) and three additional factories ($ESz_r = .27$; $N = 422$). Together, these studies indicate that employees with higher PsyCap may demonstrate higher job performance, based on supervisor assessments.

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[1] To enable comparison of correlation values across different studies, all effect sizes are reported as correlations using Fischer's transformation of r (ESz_r). (See *Practical Meta-analysis*, by M. W. Lipsey and D. B. Wilson, 2001, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.) Descriptors of the magnitude of effect size values are based on Cohen's conventions for correlation r (small = .10-.29; moderate = .30-.49; and large $\geq$ .50), from *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed.), by J. Cohen, 1988, Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

In addition to higher job performance, individuals with higher levels of PsyCap tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and committed to the organization than individuals with lower PsyCap. Larson and Luthans (2006) found PsyCap had a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction ($ESz_r = .39$) and organizational commitment ($ESz_r = .32$) among production workers in a small medium-tech manufacturing company in the Midwest ($N = 74$). In two later studies Luthans, Norman, et al. (2008) found even stronger relationships. They identified moderate to large correlations between PsyCap and job satisfaction (Study 1: $ESz_r = .60$; Study 2: $ESz_r = .91$) and organizational commitment (Study 1: $ESz_r = .47$; Study 2: $ESz_r = .52$). Participants in Study 1 ($N = 163$) were policy and claims processing employees in a midsize insurance services firm, and those in Study 2 ($N = 288$) were engineers and technicians in a very large high-tech manufacturing firm. The consistency across multiple populations and work settings suggests that when applied to newcomer adjustment, newcomers with higher levels of PsyCap may perform moderately better, and be more satisfied with their job and committed to their employing organization than their peers with lower levels of PsyCap.

Though much of the empirical support for the positive relationship between PsyCap and job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment come from studies of experienced workers, researchers have found similar outcomes in studies with younger adults. For example, Luthans, Norman, et al. (2008) found a moderate correlation between level of PsyCap and self-rated job performance ($ESz_r = .26$), job satisfaction ($ESz_r = .41$), and organizational commitment ($ESz_r = .32$) among undergraduate management students ($N = 404$) who answered questions in terms of their current or most recent job or class project in order to frame the study in a work-related context. Since the results mirrored those of Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007), Luthans, Avey, Clapp-Smith, et al. (2008), Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2005), and Larson

and Luthans (2006), I can reasonably conclude that PsyCap's relationship with performance and attitudinal outcomes is present across individuals of different ages (including young adults), work experience levels, and work environments. This conclusion gives additional credibility to the possibility that supporting undergraduate students' development of PsyCap prior to organizational entry may enhance their newcomer adjustment outcomes.

Unlike other individual characteristics associated with newcomer adjustment such as personality traits and dispositions (Luthan, Avey, Avolio, & Peterson, 2010), PsyCap is state-like, and thus malleable and open to development through training interventions. Luthans, Avey, and Patera (2008) used an experimental study to examine if a highly focused, short duration, web-based intervention specifically designed to develop self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency could enhance PsyCap. The study participants were working adults from a variety of industries and jobs randomly assigned to an intervention ($n = 187$) or control ($n = 177$) group. Each group completed two, 45-minute online training sessions, with the intervention group focused on developing the individual psychological components of PsyCap while the control group learned about decision-making. Post-test PsyCap levels increased slightly ($ESz_r = .10$) among members of the intervention group, whereas levels decreased slightly among the control group ($ESz_r = -.08$). The study demonstrated that PsyCap can be developed in individuals through a highly focused, web-based micro-intervention.

The impact of training on the development of PsyCap was also demonstrated among college students. In a study by Luthans et al. (2010), 242 upper-level undergraduate management students were randomly assigned to intervention ($n = 153$) or control ($n = 89$) groups. Students in the intervention group who participated in a 2-hour training intervention called the psychological capital intervention (PCI) demonstrated gains in PsyCap ($ESz_r = .20$), while those in the control

group who participated in training centered on group decision making experienced virtually no change in pre- to post-test PsyCap levels ($ESz_r = .02$).

PsyCap can be developed among adults, including younger adults in college settings, and relates positively to job performance. Also in job settings, PsyCap has been shown to mediate the relationship between supportive organizational climate and performance. In a study of insurance employees ($N = 163$) and high-tech manufacturing engineers and technicians ($N = 170$), Luthans, Norman, et al. (2008) proposed a supportive climate might produce the positive environment necessary for PsyCap to thrive. Supportive climate was a self-report measure of participants' perceptions of supportive aspects of their organizational climate. Using Sobel (1982) tests for mediating effects, the results confirmed that PsyCap mediated the relationship between supportive climate and performance among both insurance employees ($z = 2.23$, $p < .05$) and manufacturing engineers ($z = 2.83$, $p < .01$). The results indicated employees who perceive their organization's climate is supportive are likely to have higher levels of PsyCap, which in turn positively impacts their performance.

With regard to RQ1, multiple studies by Luthans and colleagues suggest that PsyCap positively relates to newcomer adjustment outcomes of job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Studies of PsyCap have focused on work-related outcomes of all employees, not the subpopulation of newcomers experiencing their first professional job. By applying PsyCap to newcomer adjustment through a supportive climate (Luthans, Norman, et al., 2008) and strategic interventions (Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008), newcomers may be better equipped to handle challenges and take initiative to gather the necessary information and support during organizational entry to achieve success as a new working professional.

How do proactive behaviors relate to newcomer adjustment outcomes?

Organizational entry is a challenging experience for newcomers, especially traditionally-aged college graduates. In addition to the ambiguity new graduates feel upon gaining independence they also may feel they have little control over their daily lives due to the uncertainty of a new job (Ashford & Black, 1996). Regaining feelings of control and subsequent professional success increasingly involves the use of proactive behaviors (Ashford & Black, 1996; Crant, 2000). Crant (2000) defined proactive behavior as "taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones; it involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting to present conditions" (p. 436).

Utilizing proactive behaviors is one way for newcomers to actively influence their own adjustment success. Proactive behaviors help newcomers gain the information and develop the relationships necessary to effectively accomplish their jobs and fit with the organization. Ashford and Black (1992) proposed that the more proactive newcomers were, the more successful they would be in their adjustment to the organization within the first year of employment. The proactive behaviors identified as advantageous in the newcomer adjustment process were sensemaking (information seeking and feedback seeking), relationship building (general socializing, networking, and building relationships with one's boss), negotiating job changes, and positive framing. Over the past decade, researchers have linked proactive behaviors to prominent newcomer adjustment outcomes such as job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Engaging in proactive behaviors helps newcomers achieve their maximum job performance potential within the first year of employment. In a study of MBA graduates employed as practicing managers ($N = 69$), Ashford and Black (1996) assessed proactive

behaviors 6 months after entry and self-reported job performance 12 months after entry to demonstrate the relationship between proactive behaviors and performance. The researchers found that job performance had a strong correlation with building relationships with one's boss ($ESz_r = .63$), a moderate correlation with positive framing ($ESz_r = .42$), and a small correlation with information seeking ($ESz_r = .22$) and feedback seeking ($ESz_r = .23$). Overall, proactive behaviors explained 33% of the variance in job performance 12 months after entry, indicating that newcomers who engaged in proactive behaviors perform moderately better than their peers.

Newcomers who engaged in proactive behaviors not only reported better job performance than their peers, they were also somewhat more satisfied with their jobs. Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) conducted a longitudinal study of formerly unemployed adult workers ($N = 181$) recently hired in a wide variety of jobs and occupational categories to determine the relationship between newcomers' use of proactive behaviors and their job satisfaction during organizational entry. The researchers discovered moderate correlations between job satisfaction and information seeking ($ESz_r = .35$), feedback seeking ($ESz_r = .38$), relationship building ($ESz_r = .29$), and positive framing ($ESz_r = .38$). In total, proactive behaviors explained 28% of the variance in self-reported job satisfaction after an average of 56.4 days on the job. Similarly, Gruman, Saks, and Zweig (2006) found small to moderate correlations between job satisfaction and information seeking ($ESz_r = .22$), feedback seeking ($ESz_r = .39$), general socializing ($ESz_r = .38$), networking ($ESz_r = .25$), and boss relationship building ($ESz_r = .40$) in undergraduate management students ($N = 140$) after completing a 4-month full-time cooperative education (co-op) experience. The results indicated that newcomers, including young adults in undergraduate education, who frequently engaged in proactive behaviors were, to a moderate degree, more likely to be satisfied with their jobs than those who did not.

In addition to moderately better performance and higher job satisfaction, the use of proactive behaviors helps newcomers successfully adjust with increased commitment to the organization. In the study by Gruman et al. (2006) of 140 undergraduate management students who completed a 4-month full-time cooperative education experience, the researchers found moderate correlations between organizational commitment and feedback seeking ($ESz_r = .40$), general socializing ($ESz_r = .38$), networking ($ESz_r = .31$), and relationship building with one's boss ($ESz_r = .48$). Overall, use of proactive behaviors accounted for 29% of the variance in organizational commitment. The results suggested that when young adult newcomers engage in proactive behaviors, particularly in settings where they engage in individualized instruction, both the individual and the organization benefit.

In sum, studies by Ashford and Black (1996), Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000), and Gruman et al. (2006) show that newcomers who engage more frequently in proactive behaviors may perform better, be more satisfied with their job, and be more committed to the organization. The correlation effect sizes were consistently moderate in magnitude and explained close to a third of the variance in these newcomer adjustment outcomes.

Coaching newcomers to engage in proactive behaviors early on in a new job is especially important since engaging in these behaviors enhances newcomer learning and adjustment outcomes more than participating in organization-driven socialization tactics. Ashforth, Sluss, and Saks (2007) examined the effects of proactive behaviors and organizational socialization tactics on newcomer learning related to socialization by longitudinally analyzing the entry experiences of business and engineering graduates employed full-time after graduation ($N = 150$). Learning was assessed in seven socialization content areas including technical, normative, organizational, political, referent, and appraisal. They found a medium positive

correlation between learning and proactive behaviors (ESz_r = .44) and a smaller positive

correlation between learning and organizational socialization tactics (ESz_r = .27), suggesting that

newcomers learned more by engaging in proactive behaviors than by participating in

organizational socialization tactics. The researchers also found that after 7 months on the job,

compared to new employees who learned solely through organizational socialization tactics, new

employees who engaged in more proactive behaviors had higher job performance (ESz_r = .37 vs.

ESz_r = .19), greater job satisfaction (ESz_r = .32 vs. ESz_r = .21), and more connectedness to the

organization (ESz_r = .31 vs. ESz_r = .21). According to the researchers, "newcomers acquired

more content through active rather than passive means" (p. 459).

Unlike PsyCap, my review revealed no empirical evidence supporting or refuting the

proposition that an intervention or supportive environment can increase individuals' use of

proactive behaviors during the newcomer adjustment process. However, Bandura's (1997)

research on social learning theory indicates that behaviors can be learned through modeling if

attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation are present, making it likely that proactive

behaviors can also be learned under these conditions. If proactive behaviors can be learned

through modeling and observation, a strong likelihood exists that they can be also developed

through effective interventions in a supportive environment.

For RQ2, consistent evidence exists across a variety of newcomer settings indicating

proactive behaviors positively relate to newcomer adjustment outcomes of job performance, job

satisfaction, and organizational commitment. By frequently utilizing proactive behaviors during

their first year of employment, newcomers, including recent college graduates, may learn critical

information about job tasks, the organization, their performance, supervisors, and coworkers.

This knowledge may help them overcome the challenges many newcomers face and enable their success.

How does PsyCap relate to proactive behaviors?

According to my analysis of the literature, PsyCap and proactive behaviors share significant relationships with important newcomer adjustment outcomes. New employees with high levels of PsyCap have more psychological resources to utilize during transitional experiences (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007), and proactive behaviors allow newcomers to acquire the necessary information, feedback, support systems, job tasks, and positive perspectives to survive professional workforce entry (Ashford & Black, 1996). Because individuals with high PsyCap are confident (self-efficacy), have positive expectations (optimism), persevere towards goals (hope), and overcome adversity (resiliency), I hypothesize they may also be more proactive to ensure their success during newcomer adjustment.

In work contexts, PsyCap reveals itself through behaviors and actions, many of which proactively support newcomer adjustment. Though researchers have yet to assess the nature of relationships between PsyCap and specific proactive behaviors in workplace settings, two studies suggest that the two sets of individual states are positively interrelated. In their study of employees from a wide variety of organizations and jobs ($N = 132$), Avey, Wernsing, and Luthans (2008) demonstrated that individuals with high levels of PsyCap were likely to engage in more organizational citizenship ($ESz_r = .47$) and less deviant behaviors ($ESz_r = -.58$). These behaviors are conceptually akin to proactive behaviors, particularly relationship building, and can be intentionally utilized by newcomer employees.

Providing additional support for the link between PsyCap and newcomers' proactive behaviors is the positive relationship between self-efficacy, proactive behaviors, and newcomer

adjustment outcomes found by Gruman et al. (2006). The researchers focused on the self-efficacy aspect of PsyCap among 140 undergraduates completing a 4-month co-op experience. They found that students with high self-efficacy were more likely to engage in proactive behaviors than those with low self-efficacy. Specifically, self-efficacy had small to moderate positive correlations with feedback seeking ($ESz_r = .29$), information seeking ($ESz_r = .22$), general socializing ($ESz_r = .46$), boss relationship building ($ESz_r = .37$), and networking ($ESz_r = .33$). Further analysis revealed proactive behaviors fully mediated the relationship of self-efficacy and institutional socialization tactics with organizational commitment and partially mediated this relationship with job satisfaction, revealing that self-efficacy, a component of PsyCap, may be an important predictor of proactivity among young adults in workplace settings even when institutional socialization tactics are present.

In addressing RQ3, these two studies (Avey et al., 2008; Gruman et al., 2006) provide initial evidence for a positive relationship between PsyCap and proactive behaviors. However, questions remain as to how these two variables interrelate with regard to specific newcomer adjustment outcomes such as job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among traditionally-aged recent college graduates. Given that PsyCap represents psychological states that can impact behaviors, they may enable proactive behaviors. Without additional evidence to clarify the relationship, I offer that PsyCap and proactive behaviors are at least mutually reinforcing. Further research is needed to determine if newcomers with high levels of PsyCap are also likely to frequently engage in proactive behaviors during their first year in the professional workforce.

Discussion: A Model of Newcomer Adjustment

I presented evidence that PsyCap and proactive behaviors relate to newcomer adjustment outcomes and to each other. Previous research on newcomer adjustment (e.g. Ashford & Black, 1996; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000) included proactive behaviors as a factor in the successful adjustment to the professional workforce. My integrative literature review represents an attempt to connect newcomer adjustment, PsyCap, and proactive behaviors and to examine the implications of these relationships when the newcomers are traditionally-aged recent college graduates. In Figure 1 I offer a model of relationships among these factors in the contexts of undergraduate education and employing organizations based on my analysis and synthesis of the literature. The ultimate goal of the newcomer adjustment process is for the newcomer to become an effective, satisfied, and committed member of the organization, and I propose that PsyCap and proactive behaviors are important individual factors that can make this outcome possible.

Although newcomer adjustment is a difficult process, particularly for recent college graduates entering the professional workforce, PsyCap and proactive behaviors may make the transition easier. Each newcomer entering the adjustment process is a unique individual. How newcomers react and proactively adjust to the transition depends in part on "who they are" and "what they can become," i.e., their PsyCap (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007, p. 20), and how they engage in proactive behaviors. New employees with high PsyCap have the confidence to succeed, the capability to set realistic goals, the ability to make positive attributions about their successes and failures, and the power to recover from setbacks. Similarly, because newcomers cannot learn and retain all of the information, skills, and resources provided by employing organizations during orientation, engaging in proactive behaviors will enable them to gather
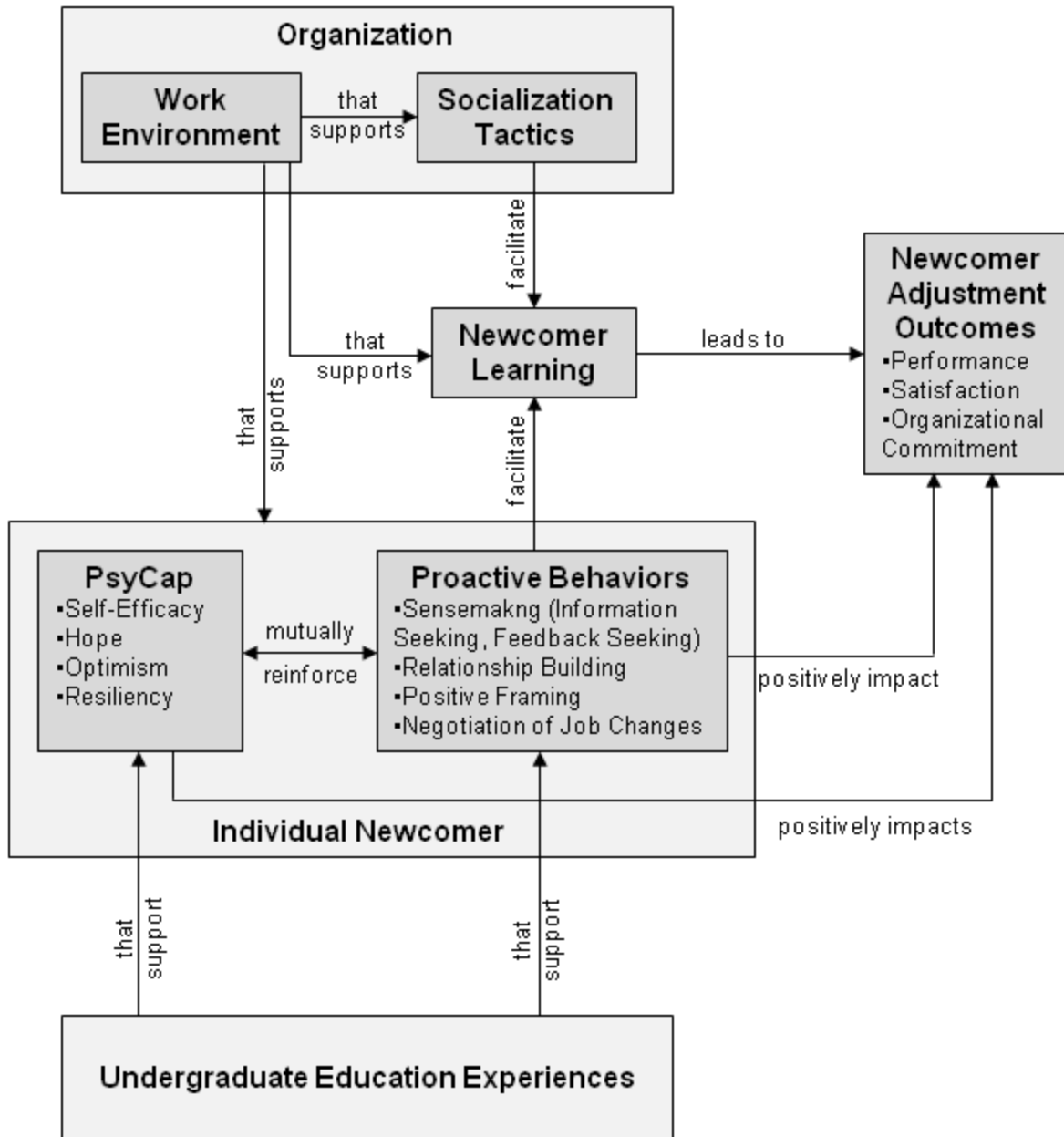
Figure 1. Model of newcomer adjustment for recent college graduates.

these essential components themselves (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Engaging in

proactive behaviors helps newcomers learn about their job tasks, the organization, and their

performance and develop support systems to reduce uncertainty. Thus, if PsyCap and proactive

behaviors are present, newcomers are more likely to be successful in their adjustment to the professional workforce.

The model also depicts the mutual relationship between PsyCap and proactive behaviors. Given that newcomers with high levels of PsyCap are confident (self-efficacy), have positive expectations (optimism), persevere towards goals (hope), and overcome adversity (resiliency), they may be more likely to engage in proactive behaviors to ensure their success during the adjustment period. Engaging in proactive behaviors provides the basis of learning through experience. Experiencing positive outcomes as a result of engaging in proactive behaviors may heighten one's confidence to accomplish job tasks and overcome difficulties, leading to positive expectations and persistence in achieving goals (Bandura, 1997). Thus, I propose PsyCap and proactive behaviors are self-reinforcing, enabling newcomers to continuously invest in these individual attributes and achieve success during their first year of employment.

Because undergraduate education is invested in the success of its graduates, it is well positioned to support students in developing skills and experiences that enhance PsyCap and increase the likelihood of their engaging in proactive behaviors as newcomers in an organization. Organizations can continue to promote learning that relates to PsyCap and proactive behaviors through formal and informal environmental supports and socialization tactics. The supports and interventions young adults receive from undergraduate education and new hire orientation and training in employing organizations may make their successful newcomer adjustment more likely, and I offer implications for practice in both settings later in the paper.

In summary, newcomers who develop PsyCap and engage in proactive behaviors may be more likely to achieve their maximum job performance potential while being satisfied with their job and committed to the organization within the first year of professional employment. A better

understanding of how these factors characterize recent college graduates who are successful newcomers will enable undergraduate education faculty and staff to support students' development of these characteristics prior to graduation and assist employing organizations to offer continued supports and resources that increase the likelihood of successful adjustment.

Research Recommendations

This integrative literature review and resulting model serve as a first step in identifying interrelationships among the specific individual attributes of PsyCap and proactive behaviors that may play an important role in recent college graduates' success as newcomers in the professional workforce. Empirical research is required to substantiate the model as a guide in designing interventions that effectively develop these characteristics among college students and increase the likelihood of their success in the workplace. Recommendations for practice need to be guided by future research, beginning first by testing the model. Until this point, all of the studies regarding PsyCap involved employees of various ages and years of experience. Empirical research focusing on newcomers, especially in school-to-work contexts, is needed to determine the relationship between PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and newcomer adjustment. After the relationships and model are established, developing and assessing the effectiveness of targeted interventions for students in both undergraduate education and professional environments is a logical next step, as well as longitudinal studies following the professional careers of newcomers after an intervention occurs.

Although quantitative studies provide a solid base, researchers need to utilize various methodologies to fully describe PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and newcomer adjustment and their interrelationships in different contexts. I encourage researchers to apply qualitative methodologies to complement existing quantitative studies. Qualitative methodologies can

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capture in-depth meaning and holistic complexity in relationships and their interactions (Creswell, 1998) that quantitative approaches cannot. Qualitative studies can capture the voice of the individual in describing how PsyCap and proactive behaviors influence their newcomer adjustment process. A synthesis of information from the *what* and *why* of quantitative research and the *how* of qualitative will enable educators to better understand the newcomer adjustment process and provide direction in designing ways to develop undergraduate students' capacities and behaviors for transfer to the professional workforce.

After the relationships and model are established for this population, developing and assessing the effectiveness of targeted HRD interventions for college students in undergraduate settings and newcomers in professional environments are necessary. An intervention similar to the PCI (psychological capital intervention) (Luthan et al., 2010) could be integrated into the formal and informal socialization tactics conducted by organizations during newcomers' first year on the job. A similar intervention with college students in a senior year experience, capstone course, or co-op experience could be conducted to assess its impact on developing PsyCap and proactive behaviors among future newcomers. Longitudinal studies will be needed to assess the impact of an early intervention during individuals' undergraduate education on their adjustment to the professional workforce as newcomers and during the course of their professional careers.

Implications for Practice

New hire and training and development HRD professionals and undergraduate educators have opportunities to work toward a common goal of preparing traditionally-aged college students to succeed in the professional workforce. Educators are interested in whether or not graduates from their institutions are ready and able to manage the requirements of their chosen job, company, and career (Geroy, 1990). They have a vested interest in working with employing

organizations to prepare students for their impending transition from the educational environment to the world of work (Holton, 1995; Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). PsyCap, consisting of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency, and proactive behaviors, such as sensemaking, relationship building, and positive framing are qualities that educators in undergraduate education should intentionally foster among students to assist with newcomer adjustment because of their relationship to job performance, satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Ashford & Black, 1996; Gruman et al., 2006; Luthans, Norman, et al., 2008).

Unlike dispositions, which are innate, students can more readily develop their state-like psychological capacities and behaviors (Gruman et al., 2006; Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). Student affairs administrators can utilize academic experiences, co-curricular programming, and student services like career services and counseling to increase students' awareness of the issues surrounding newcomer adjustment (Wood, 2004), helping students see the urgency of the issues and motivating them to enhance their PsyCap and proactive behaviors prior to entering the professional workforce. Additionally, in academic and co-curricular settings, student affairs educators could use Senior Year Experience courses and career development programming to develop students' PsyCap and proactive behaviors through experiential activities and simulations while undergraduate faculty members could integrate these and other indirect activities into academic capstone and other advanced courses specific to their discipline of study (Holton, 1995; Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008). Transfer of these qualities and behaviors from the college setting to the newcomer adjustment process can be enhanced by collaborating with training and development HRD practitioners to develop and implement newcomer adjustment training into university classes, programs, and services, as well as continuing the training in organizations,

resulting in a better prepared, more satisfied, and more committed workforce (Gruman et al., 2006).

Conclusion

Employing organizations expect recent college graduates to make a seamless transition from higher education to the professional workforce (The Conference Board, 2006; SHRM, 2012). Unfortunately, due to graduates' high expectations, uncertainty about their organizational role, lack of experience in professional settings, and insufficient transition preparation in educational institutions, successful adjustment to the professional workforce may not happen for every newcomer (Geroy, 1990). In this integrative literature review I introduce two perspectives, PsyCap and proactive behaviors, that show promise in uniting the disjointed newcomer adjustment research. Both perspectives represent ways for newcomers to actively impact their own organizational entry and professional transition. Since new employees with high PsyCap have more self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency to utilize during transitional experiences (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007), they may engage in proactive behaviors to acquire the necessary information, feedback, and support to survive the newcomer phase (Ashford & Black, 1996).

If undergraduate education and HRD are to have a profound impact on the success of newcomers who are recent college graduates, they will need to collaborate in order to design and deliver effective methods of developing students' PsyCap and promoting the use of proactive behaviors during professional workforce entry. By doing this, graduates will leave college with not only a diploma, but also with the essential psychological capacities and behaviors to achieve success during their first year of professional employment.

CHAPTER III

The integrative literature review presented in Chapter II provided a conceptual

foundation for the design of my empirical study in which I examined the relationships between

PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and newcomer adjustment outcomes among a sample of

traditionally-aged recent college graduates. The results indicate that young adults with higher

levels of PsyCap and use of proactive behaviors in the workplace exhibited higher levels of

newcomer adjustment. The findings suggest that student affairs professionals and faculty can

promote graduates' successful transition and adjustment to the professional workforce by helping

students develop these individual attributes and behaviors prior to graduation.

PsyCap, Proactive Behaviors, and Newcomer Adjustment

among Recent College Graduates

Each year in the United States more than 1.6 million young adults graduate with a

bachelor's degree from a postsecondary institution (Aud et al., 2011). Traditional graduates, ages

21-23 (Justice & Dornan, 2001), commonly experience multiple transitions at this period of their

lives. They may rely less on family and existing friends for financial and emotional support

while forming new roles, routines, and relationships (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). Many enter the

professional workforce for the first time and experience *newcomer adjustment*, the process of

learning the tasks of a new job and becoming integrated into an organization during the first year

of employment (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007).

Some newcomers effectively cope with the changes they experience, while others are less

successful. Struggling new professionals can experience increased levels of stress, negative

emotions, and lack of motivation and confidence in themselves and their abilities (Reicherts &

Pihet, 2000). These emotional states may manifest in newcomers' work life where unsuccessful

adjustment may be characterized by lower job performance, job satisfaction, and/or organizational commitment (Bauer et al., 2007; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). These circumstances can ultimately lead to voluntary or involuntary turnover within the first year on the job (Leibowitz, Schlossberg, & Shore, 1991).

With the large number of young adults graduating from college with a bachelor's degree and entering the professional workforce each year (Aud et al., 2011), newcomer adjustment is a significant concern to student affairs practitioners and faculty who work to develop students into future leaders and professionals (Gardner, 1999). With students, parents, and prospective employers questioning the value of an undergraduate degree, Gardner (1999) states that, "higher education has a moral obligation to pay more attention to students' preparation for practical success beyond graduation" (p. 6). Many programs and services do help students prepare for practical success. For example, Career Services helps students find and secure post-graduate job opportunities; students learn discipline-specific knowledge in academic major capstone courses; and they develop personal and professional skills such as etiquette, wellness, and personal finance in Senior Year Experience classes (Henscheid, 2008).

Student affairs professionals and faculty working in such programs need to identify and help develop in students the individual characteristics and behaviors that enable successful newcomer adjustment because recent college graduates are likely to change jobs at a higher rate early in their careers (Bauer, 2010). In the study of undergraduate education, research related to the school-to-work transition has focused on student and career development theories, but not on students' development of attributes associated with successful newcomer adjustment (Henscheid, 2008). Researchers in the fields of human resource development and organizational behavior have found that among a variety of adult populations and work contexts, certain individual

characteristics like psychological capital (F. Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007) and proactive

behaviors (Ashford & Black, 1996) are positively associated with successful work-related

outcomes. However, a gap in the research exists regarding how these characteristics relate to

newcomer adjustment among traditionally-aged new college graduates.

The purpose of this study was to identify how individual factors of psychological capital

and proactive behaviors related to indicators of newcomer adjustment among traditionally-aged

college graduates within the first year after graduation. Understanding these factors will allow

student affairs practitioners and faculty to design educational and co-curricular interventions that

effectively develop these characteristics in college students and increase the likelihood of

newcomer success in the professional workforce.

Newcomer Adjustment

During the first year of employment in a new organization individuals must learn the

tasks and responsibilities of the job as well as the policies, procedures, and cultural norms of the

organization. With the increasing mobility of jobs and individuals due to globalization and

technology, the average number of jobs during a worker's lifetime is rising (Bauer et al., 2007).

With this rise comes an increase in the number of times individuals will experience newcomer

adjustment, particularly during the early stages of their careers. According to the Bureau of

Labor Statistics (2012), individuals with a bachelor's degree have an average of 6.2 jobs between

the ages of 18 and 24 and 3.1 jobs between ages 25 to 29. Traditionally-aged college graduates

will experience organizational entry numerous times and each instance carries the risk of

unsuccessful newcomer adjustment, which can culminate in leaving the organization within the

first year (Leibowitz et al., 1991).

On average for each new employee that leaves, organizations incur 1 to 2 years' worth of salary and benefits through restarting the recruitment and training process (Fitz-Enz, 1997). Organizations also incur costs when newcomers remain employed but have lower than expected productivity due to unsuccessful adjustment (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000). These circumstances lead to disappointed employers who may be less likely to hire future graduates from institutions whose newcomers consistently struggle (Geroy, 1990). When a school's job placement rates decline so does its reputation, the number of new students attending, tuition dollars, and donations (Lee, 2001; Pryor et al., 2012). Thus, both employers and undergraduate institutions have a stake in ensuring that traditionally-aged college graduates succeed as newcomers by performing well, being satisfied with the job, and becoming committed to the organization.

Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and self-reported job performance are often used as indicators of newcomer adjustment (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). Perceived job performance reflects an employee's perception of how well he or she performs the tasks related to the job (Heilman, Block, & Lucas, 1992). Job satisfaction refers to the employee's feelings of being content and fulfilled in the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Organizational commitment is the extent to which the employee "identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in, the organization" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 2). These outcomes point to productive, content, and loyal employees who have adjusted to the job tasks and organization (Ashforth et al., 2007).

During the past five decades, researchers from a variety of disciplines have examined newcomer adjustment using various perspectives. These include the impact of organizational socialization tactics on adjustment (see Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007), individual dispositions and personality traits related successful adjustment (see Saks & Ashforth, 2000), cognitive processes used by individuals to cope with job transition (see Falcione & Wilson,

1988), and the effect of unmet expectations on work-related outcomes (see Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis, 1992). In each of these perspectives, individuals are viewed as passive agents reacting to or dependent upon others in their newcomer adjustment process. Two alternative perspectives, psychological capital (PsyCap) (F. Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) and proactive behaviors (Ashford & Black, 1996), view individuals as proactive agents in their professional success. Each shows promise as a way for student affairs professionals and undergraduate faculty to positively impact newcomer adjustment among traditionally-aged college graduates because these state-like characteristics and behaviors can be developed or learned while in college.

Individual Factors Related to Newcomer Adjustment

PsyCap

Psychological capital (PsyCap) reflects a positive focus on employees in order to help them reach their maximum potential (F. Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). Instead of employers emphasizing "what you know," the application of PsyCap focuses on "who you are" and "who you are becoming" (F. Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007, p. 20). F. Luthans, Youssef, et al. (2007) define PsyCap as:

An individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized

by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort

to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about

succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when

necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when

beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond

(resiliency) to attain success. (p. 3)

PsyCap consists of four distinctive developmental qualities (self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency) that are positive, theory and research-based, measurable, developable, and state-like. When combined they create a higher order core construct that is "greater than the sum of its parts" (F. Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007, p. 19).

Past research (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011) has consistently associated PsyCap with job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, three key indicators of newcomer adjustment. In a meta-analysis of 51 samples ($N = 12,567$), Avey et al. (2011) found that PsyCap had large correlations with job satisfaction, moderate correlations with organizational commitment and self-rated performance, and small correlations with supervisor-rated performance and objective performance. These results were consistent across both student and working adult populations.

PsyCap's state-like quality, which is more malleable than fixed traits, allows it to be developed if presented with effective intervention and a supportive environment (F. Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). F. Luthans, Avey, Avolio, and Peterson (2010) demonstrated this quality in a study of undergraduate management students. Students ($n = 153$) who participated in a 2-hour in-person training focused on developing PsyCap experienced an increase in pre- to post-test PsyCap levels, while members of the control group ($n = 89$) who participated in a 2-hour in-person training on group decision making experienced practically no change in PsyCap.

The samples in these studies included individuals with a range of time at the workplace, from undergraduate students with minimal work experience to individuals in their first year and those with years of experience, though none of the studies specifically targeted newcomers. However, consistent results across multiple populations and work settings (Avey et al., 2011) suggest that PsyCap may be an important component of successful newcomer adjustment,

including adjustment among recent college graduates, through its positive relationship to job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Proactive Behaviors

Whereas PsyCap represents a state-like quality enabling individuals to positively impact work-related outcomes, proactive behaviors serve as positive, deliberate ways for newcomers to take action in their adjustment process. According to Crant (2000), proactive behavior is "taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones; it involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting to present conditions" (p. 436). Proactive behaviors consist of sensemaking (information seeking and feedback seeking), relationship building (general socializing, networking, and building relationships with one's boss), negotiation of job changes, and positive framing activities (Ashford & Black, 1996). By engaging in proactive behaviors, newcomers can actively help themselves learn information and develop the relationships essential to successful adjustment during their first year in an organization.

Proactive behaviors have an important role in newcomer adjustment considering their positive relationship with learning and work-related outcomes. In a study of 150 business and engineering graduates employed full-time after graduation, Ashforth et al. (2007) found that the newcomers learned more through proactive behaviors than from organizational socialization tactics used by the employer, such as new employee orientation and informal gatherings. The findings suggest that encouraging recent college graduates to proactively pursue learning in their new organizations rather than exclusively through passive learning from organizational socialization activities may enhance newcomer adjustment results.

Newcomers who utilize proactive behaviors exhibit better job performance, higher levels of job satisfaction, and more commitment to their employing organization. Ashford and Black

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(1996) reported that among 69 MBA graduates employed as practicing managers, four proactive behaviors (building relationships with one's boss, positive framing, information seeking, and feedback seeking) were positively correlated with job performance and three behaviors (positive framing, general socializing, and networking) were positively correlated with job satisfaction. Gruman, Saks, and Zweig (2006) discovered the same proactive behaviors minus general socializing had similar positive relationships with job satisfaction and organizational commitment among 140 undergraduate management students who completed a 4-month full-time cooperative education experience. The outcomes of these studies suggest that newcomers who are more proactive are more likely to experience successful newcomer adjustment during their first year.

Conclusions and Research Question

In sum, researchers looking at various work contexts and populations have demonstrated that by having high PsyCap and engaging in proactive behaviors, individuals can achieve high levels of job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Additional research is needed to better understand these relationships in the context of newcomer adjustment among traditionally-aged college graduates transitioning from school to work. Direct evidence is needed to confirm these relationships before educators in undergraduate institutions explore the possibility that promoting the development of PsyCap and proactive behaviors among undergraduate students may enable their success as newcomers in the professional workforce.

My study represents an initial effort to empirically examine the role PsyCap and proactive behaviors play in job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among traditionally-aged recent college graduates. This study was guided by the overarching research question: To what extent and in what ways do individual characteristics, including

PsyCap and proactive behaviors, explain variance in indicators of newcomer adjustment among employed college graduates during their first year after graduation?

Methods

Participants

The target population was the 4,610 bachelor's degree graduates from the Class of 2009 (May, August, and December graduates) at a large public university on the East Coast of the United States who were employed full-time or part-time. Because no comprehensive list of contact information for this population was available, the accessible population were the 806 members of an unofficial "Class of 2009" Facebook group for the institution and 36 Class of 2009 alumni who were graduates of a career development program coordinated by the institution's Career Services.

Data collection occurred in the summer of 2010, approximately 6 to 14 months after participants graduated. See Appendix A for the study's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter. Participants were invited to participate through a Facebook group message (see Appendix B) or email (see Appendix C) to members of the accessible population with a link to a web-based survey managed by Campus Labs (formerly StudentVoice) (See Appendix D). At the end of the survey, participants had the option of completing a second separate online survey to be entered into a raffle to win one of four $25 Amazon.com gift certificates (see Appendix E).

For the purposes of my study, I excluded graduates who were not employed full-time or part-time. A total of 144 individuals entered the survey (17% of the accessible population); 42 (29%) did not meet the criteria for employment. Of the remaining surveys, 73 (9% of the accessible population) had complete data that were available for data analysis. The demographic profile of the survey sample was 79.5% female and 84.9% Caucasian/White, with a mean age of

22.77 years (*SD* = .84). Compared to demographics of the total undergraduate population where

50.5% were female and 77.9% were Caucasian/White, my sample over-represented

Caucasian/White females. Approximately 66% of the participants were employed full-time and

34% were employed part-time and enrolled in graduate school either full-time or part-time. The

participants worked in a variety of industries including educational services (20.5%), health

care/social assistance (17.8%), and retail/wholesale trades (12.3%). They held an average of 1.68

jobs (*SD* = .80) since graduating with a bachelor's degree and had been in their current position

for an average of 10.35 months (*SD* = 11.47). This very large standard deviation means that

some participants had been working in their job less than a month and others over a year.

Survey Instrument

The survey comprised items to assess individual characteristics, including researcher-

designed demographic items and items from pre-existing instruments to assess PsyCap, proactive

behaviors, and the three indicators of newcomer adjustment—perceived job performance, job

satisfaction, and organizational commitment. See Appendix D for the complete questionnaire.

Demographic questions consisted of age, race/ethnicity, gender, graduation date, major,

employment status, educational status, number of months in current job, industry, and number of

jobs held since graduation. See Appendix D, Questions 1-10 for instrument items.

I measured PsyCap using the 24-item PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ) (6 items for each of

the four components—self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency) (F. Luthans, Avolio, et al.,

2007; F. Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). See Appendix D, Questions 11-34 for instrument items.[2]

Each factor was assessed on a 6-point Likert-type agreement scale. Overall PsyCap score ranged

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[2] The publisher of the PCQ requested that I do not reproduce in this dissertation all of the items from the PCQ
included in my online survey to minimize the risk of the instrument being used out of context. They granted
permission to list five of the items I used. I provided five out of the 24 items in Appendix D.

from 24 to 144 with higher scores indicating higher levels of PsyCap. I followed

recommendations by F. Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007) and reported PsyCap as the sum of

responses to the four subscales because the combination of the four factors creates a higher order

core construct. In prior studies internal reliability coefficient alpha for PsyCap scores ranged

from .88 to .89 for samples of undergraduate students, engineers and technicians, and insurance

employees (F. Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007), which exceeded the generally acceptable level of

good internal consistency of .75 or above (Portney & Watkins, 2009).

I used the 24-item Proactive Socialization Tactics questionnaire (Ashford & Black, 1996)

to measure proactive behaviors, which included the following seven factors: (a) information

seeking, (b) feedback seeking, (c) general socializing, (d) networking, (e) building relationships

with one's boss, (f) negotiation of job changes, and (g) positive framing. See Appendix D,

Questions 35-58 for instrument items. Three or four items contributed to each factor.

Respondents indicated how frequently they engaged in behaviors using a frequency scale of 1 (*to

no extent/never*) to 5 (*to a great extent/always*). The score for each factor was the average of

responses to factor items, ranging from 1-5, with higher scores indicating greater use of the

proactive behavior. Each item also included a NA not applicable option. Coefficient alpha values

for the seven factors were established in a study involving MBA graduates employed as

practicing managers (*N* = 69) and ranged between .78 and .92 (Ashford & Black, 1996).

To assess self-perceptions of job performance, I adapted a supervisor-rated Perceived

Competence scale developed by Heilman et al. (1992) and modified by F. Luthans and

colleagues (personal communication, March 8, 2010) resulting in four self-rated questions, each

measured on a 9-point scale. See Appendix D, Questions 59-62 for instrument items. The four

questions were: "Overall, how competently do you perform your job?" (*not at all competently* to

very competently); "In your estimation, how effectively do you get your work done?" (*very ineffectively* to *very effectively*); "How would you judge the overall quality of your work?" (*poor* to *excellent*); and "What is your overall perceived competence?" (*not at all competent* to *very competent*). Responses to the items were averaged for a score of 1 to 9 with higher scores indicating higher perceived job performance. Coefficient alpha for the original Perceived Competence scale was .96 and .95 for samples of undergraduate students and white males (Heilman et al., 1992).

To measure job satisfaction I adapted the five-item General Satisfaction scale of the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). See Appendix D, Questions 63-67 for instrument items. I used a 6-point Likert-type agreement scale, and the average of responses to the five items reflected "the degree to which the employee is satisfied and happy with the job" (Hackman & Oldham, 1980, p. 162). Average scores range from 1 to 6 with higher scores indicating higher job satisfaction. In developing the survey, Hackman and Oldman (1980) tested the instrument on a heterogeneous group of employees and achieved an internal consistency reliability of .76.

I measured organizational commitment using items adapted from the six-item Affective Commitment scale of the Three-Component Model (TCM) Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer & Allen, 1991). See Appendix D, Questions 68-73 for instrument items. I used a 6-point Likert-type agreement scale, and averaged the responses to the six items to produce the scale score, which ranged from 1 to 6 with higher scores indicating stronger commitment. In their original work Meyer and Allen (1991) obtained a coefficient alpha of .87 for the Affective Commitment scale in a sample of employees from two manufacturing firms and a university.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS-PC v. 19. I used correlational analyses to identify relationships among all variables and hierarchical regression analyses to identify the extent to which demographic variables and individual characteristics of PsyCap and proactive behaviors explained variance in each of the three outcome variables—job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. All statistical tests were set at alpha level of .05 (two-tailed).

Limitations

This study had several potential limitations. Limited access to the target population posed a threat to the generalizability of results from the sample to the target population. I compared demographics of the sample with those of the overall undergraduate population and found an overrepresentation of Caucasian/White females in the sample. Because the accessible participants were volunteers recruited through a social networking site or a professional career development program, the possibility exists that unknown characteristics of persons who participate in these activities may have influenced the way they responded to survey items. Additionally, job performance was self-rated and participants may have provided inaccurate assessments of their actual performance. However, Avey et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of PsyCap and found that the difference in performance effect sizes between PsyCap with self, supervisor, and objective ratings was negligible, indicating that same source bias may not be as problematic for PsyCap as it is for other variables.

<center>Results</center>

I started my data analyses by examining properties of each outcome variable to ensure I had a reliable measure for each. Tests for self-reported job performance and perceived job satisfaction indicated the scales for these two items had good reliability and were consistent with

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properties obtained by prior researchers. Specifically, coefficient alpha for the four questions measuring job performance was .89. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated the four items loaded on one factor, accounting for 77% variance of the latent variable, with a statistically significant Goodness-of-fit test (Chi Square = 6.10, $p < .05$). Similarly, coefficient alpha for the five questions contributing to job satisfaction was .85, and factor analysis confirmed the five items loaded on one factor, accounting for 63% of the variance (Goodness-of-fit Chi Square = 43.43, $p < .001$). The initial factor analysis for properties of organizational commitment indicated responses to four of the six questions for this variable loaded strongly on one factor and the two remaining items loaded weakly on a second factor. I removed the two questions to improve the reliability of the responses for this scale. Coefficient alpha for the remaining four questions was high (alpha = .87), and the items accounted for 72% of the variance in the latent factor of organizational commitment (Goodness-of-fit Chi Square = 19.54, $p < .001$).

I also assessed the reliability of the scale for the independent variable PsyCap and found support for using the sum of responses to the four subscales (hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience) as an indicator of total PsyCap. Coefficient alpha for the four subscales was .83. Factor analysis confirmed the four items loaded on one factor, total PsyCap, accounting for 52% of the variance in responses (Goodness-of-fit Chi Square = 6.33, $p < .05$). The seven proactive behavior independent variables had small to medium intercorrelations, ranging from $r = .13$ to .57, supporting my using each as a separate variable. Internal reliability for five of the seven variables was quite high (ranging from .88 to .99), however two scales had lower reliability values (.81 for building relationships with boss and .71 for positive framing).

In Table 1 I present the mean and standard deviation for participants' responses to each newcomer adjustment outcome variable (job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational

commitment) and independent variable (number of months in current position, number of jobs since graduation, PsyCap, and seven proactive behaviors) as well as intercorrelations between variables. Overall, participants rated their job performance as moderately high ($M = 7.75$, $SD = 1.0$, on a 1-9 scale), were satisfied with their jobs ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.15$, on a 1-6 scale), and had moderately high commitment to their employing organization ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.19$, on a 1-6 scale). The three newcomer adjustment outcome variables had medium to high positive intercorrelations. Organizational commitment had a medium correlation ($r = .45$) with both job performance and job satisfaction. Job performance and job satisfaction were highly correlated ($r = .99$), and the implications of this strong relationship will be addressed in the Discussion. For the independent variables, participants had moderately high levels of PsyCap ($M = 113.22$, $SD = 16.22$, on a scale of 24-144). The large standard deviation indicated that some newcomers felt they had very high levels of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency while others felt quite the opposite. Among the seven proactive behaviors, each measured on a scale of 1-5, newcomers engaged most frequently in information seeking ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .83$) and positive framing ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .67$), and least frequently in negotiation of job changes ($M = 2.79$, $SD = .93$). Mean standard deviations ranged from .67 to 1.13, showing the highest variability in networking and general socializing. Because my study represented an initial examination of both PsyCap and proactive behaviors among traditionally-aged recent college graduates, I examined closely interrelationships among these independent variables. PsyCap had a large positive correlation ($r = .53$) with only one proactive behavior, positive framing, and small to negligible correlations with the other six behaviors ($r = .24$ with information seeking to $r = .004$ with building a relationship with one's boss).

Analysis of variance tests indicated no significant differences existed in PsyCap, reported

Table 1

Correlation Matrix of Newcomer Adjustment Model (N = 73)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. PsyCap[a]	113.22	16.22	1.00												
2. Information Seeking [a]	4.14	.83	.24*	1.00											
3. Feedback Seeking	3.48	.90	.05	.23	1.00										
4. General Socializing	3.55	1.13	.10	.19	.42**	1.00									
5. Build Relationship-Boss	3.54	.88	.00	.23*	.50**	.57**	1.00								
6. Networking[a]	3.69	1.00	.11	.40**	.30**	.41**	.39**	1.00							
7. Negotiation of Job Changes	2.79	.93	.01	.36**	.38**	.38**	.42**	.34**	1.00						
8. Positive Framing	4.05	.67	.53**	.28*	.34**	.27*	.32**	.47**	.13	1.00					
9. Job Performance[a]	7.75	1.00	.36**	.14	.25*	.29*	.02	.08	.13	.38**	1.00				
10. Job Satisfaction[a]	4.18	1.15	.36**	.14	.26*	.29*	.03	.08	.13	.39**	.99**	1.00			
11. Organizational Commitment[a]	4.24	1.19	.31**	.32**	.22	.53**	.29*	.16	.21	.30*	.45**	.45**	1.00		
12. Months in current job	9.26	6.50	.18	.01	-.12	-.01	-.11	.06	.05	-.06	.23*	.23*	.03	1.00	
13. Jobs since graduation	1.68	.80	.01	-.03	-.06	-.13	-.04	-.19	-.07	.08	.12	.11	-.02	-.32**	1.00

Note: PsyCap = Positive Psychological Capital; Months = Number of Months on Job; Jobs = Number of Jobs since Graduation.
[a]These variables were transformed using inverse square root to reduce skewness and normalize distribution. Transformed variables were used in all correlation analyses.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

use of proactive behaviors, or the three newcomer adjustment outcomes among participants based on gender, college major, or type of industry in which they were working. To answer my overarching research question regarding the extent and ways individual characteristics, particularly PsyCap and proactive behaviors, explained variance in indicators of newcomer adjustment, I conducted hierarchical multiple regression analyses. In constructing the most parsimonious regression model for each newcomer adjustment dependent variable, I entered statistically significant independent variables in a pre-determined order, starting with the number of months in the job, followed by PsyCap, and then proactive behaviors. This order reflected the theoretical extent to which each characteristic can be influenced by external factors, ranging from a pre-existing demographic, to state-like PsyCap, to proactive behaviors reflecting individuals' variable responses to environmental circumstances.

The final regression model for self-rated job performance is in Table 2. The final model for perceived job satisfaction is in Table 3. In both models, 25% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained by three independent variables: number of months in the job, PsyCap, and the proactive behavior of general socializing. In the final block (Block 3) of both models PsyCap made the largest contribution in explaining variance, with the highest standardized beta weight coefficient. Number of months in the job made the next largest contribution, closely followed by general socializing.

As indicated in Table 4, together PsyCap, information seeking, and general socializing explained 35% of the variance in organizational commitment. Whereas PsyCap made the largest contribution to the models for job performance and satisfaction, general socializing made the largest contribution in the final block of the model for organizational commitment, followed by PsyCap and information seeking.

Table 2

Final Hierarchical Regression Model for Job Performance among Newcomers

Variables	Block 1 β	Block 2 β	Block 3 β
Months in job	0.23*	0.30**	0.29**
PsyCap		0.42***	0.39***
General Socializing			0.25*
Adj R^2	.04	.20	.25
F	3.87*	9.91***	9.05***
ΔR^2		.17	.06
ΔF		15.18***	5.93*
ΔF df	(1, 71)	(1, 70)	(1, 69)

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 3

Final Hierarchical Regression Model for Job Satisfaction among Newcomers

Variables	Block 1 β	Block 2 β	Block 3 β
Months in job	0.23*	0.30**	0.30**
PsyCap		0.41***	0.39***
General Socializing			0.25*
Adj R^2	.04	.20	.25
F	3.94*	9.77***	8.95***
ΔR^2		.17	.06
ΔF		14.84***	5.99*
ΔF df	(1, 71)	(1, 70)	(1, 69)

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 4

Final Hierarchical Regression Model for Organizational Commitment among Newcomers

Variables	Block 1 β	Block 2 β	Block 3 β
PsyCap	0.31**	0.25*	0.22*
Information Seeking		0.26*	0.18
General Socializing			0.47***
Adj R^2	.08	.14	.35
F	7.47**	6.69**	13.65***
ΔR^2		.07	.21
ΔF		5.43*	23.34***
$\Delta F\ df$	(1, 71)	(1, 70)	(1, 69)

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$

In sum, results of the data analyses indicate that PsyCap, certain proactive behaviors, and number of months in the job were related to the newcomer adjustment outcomes of perceived job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment for traditionally-aged recent college graduates in their first year in the professional workforce. In particular, PsyCap, general socializing, and number of months in the job explained a significant portion of variance in perceived job performance and job satisfaction. Similarly, general socializing, PsyCap, and information seeking accounted for the variance in organizational commitment.

Discussion

To my knowledge, this is the first study to examine the relationship between PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and newcomer adjustment outcomes. My goal was to provide an initial analysis of these relationships among traditionally-aged recent college graduates working in professional settings one year post-graduation. Although the sample size was small compared to my target population and over-represented Caucasian/White females, I found great variability in

perceptions of PsyCap and use of proactive behaviors among participants. Some newcomers appeared to have high levels of PsyCap and engaged in proactive behaviors while others did not. Four variables in particular (PsyCap, the proactive behaviors of general socializing and information seeking, and number of months in the job) played a large role in explaining variance in the newcomer adjustment outcomes of self-rated job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, with higher levels of each factor relating to higher adjustment outcomes. Two variables, PsyCap and general socializing, contributed to explaining variance in all three outcomes. These findings supported my framing PsyCap and proactive behaviors as complementary characteristics that may positively relate to recent college graduates' successful adjustment in the workforce.

In my study PsyCap had a stronger relationship with self-rated job performance ($Ez_r = .36$) than previous research, where the correlation between PsyCap and self-rated performance was $ESz_r = .26$ among undergraduate management students considering their performance over the past week in a work-related context (F. Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007). The possibility exists that PsyCap helped newcomers view their long-term performance in a new job more positively than students who were considering their work-related performance over a short period of time. The participants in my study were, on average, moderately satisfied with their jobs and had moderately-high levels of PsyCap, but the correlation between the two variables ($Ez_r = .36$) was somewhat lower than that found in previous studies ranging from $ESz_r = .39-.91$ for experienced employees (Larson & Luthans, 2006; F. Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008). One explanation for the lower correlation between PsyCap and job satisfaction in my sample could be that as newcomers in an organization, recent college graduates experience numerous uncertainties associated with the first year after college (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000).

Other factors associated with school-to-work transition, such as lack of experience in the workforce (Bauer et al., 2007) and individual readiness (Holton & Russell, 1999), may have been more strongly related to job satisfaction than PsyCap, however I did not measure these factors.

Interestingly, PsyCap had a stronger relationship with perceived job performance and job satisfaction than with organizational commitment. Although previous studies of experienced employees found slightly higher relationships ranging from $ESz_r = .32-.52$ among PsyCap and organizational commitment (Larson & Luthans, 2006; F. Luthans et al., 2008), my findings mirrored the results of a sample of undergraduate management students $(ESz_r = .32)$ studied by F. Luthans et al. (2008). My results may reflect the reality that younger workers have numerous jobs early in their professional career and may not stay with their current employer for an extended period of time regardless of their level of PsyCap (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Cennamo and Gardner (2008) discovered that millennial workers (born between 1980-2000) have significantly higher intentions to leave an organization than Generation X (born between 1962-1979) and Baby Boomers (born between 1946-1961). Millennial workers valued status and autonomy more than their Generation X and Baby Boomer counterparts. Millennial workers may intend to leave their current organization in search of another that aligns more closely to these values. Regardless, PsyCap's positive relationship with all three newcomer adjustment outcomes suggests that supporting traditionally-aged students' development of PsyCap during college may enable them to be successful employees during their first year in the professional workforce.

General socializing also related positively to each newcomer adjustment variable, in particular organizational commitment. The correlation between general socializing and organizational commitment $(Ez_r = .53)$ was significantly higher than those obtained by Gruman et al. in 2006 $(ESz_r = .38)$ and Saks, Gruman, & Cooper-Thomas in 2011 $(ESz_r = .32)$ among

undergraduate students enrolled in a 4-month co-op experience. Recently graduated newcomers in their first professional position may be more invested in socializing to build relationships in an employing organization compared to students in a co-op or internship experience. Building relationships with coworkers and supervisors is especially important for traditionally-aged recent college graduates who are experiencing multiple transitions and establishing new post-college friendships (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). Closeness with supportive colleagues and mentors may influence newcomers to stay at the organization. Once relationships are established, newcomers are then able to seek information about the organization, gain feedback on performance, and acquire skills and support in order perform well and be satisfied with the job (Ashford & Black, 1996). This is why I believe general socializing had a stronger relationship with organizational commitment than with the two other newcomer adjustment variables. General socializing essentially serves as the foundational proactive behavior that allows newcomers to subsequently employ other proactive behaviors that may have greater impact on perceived job performance and job satisfaction long term (Saks et al., 2011). This gives credibility to Tull's (2006) statement, "The success or failure of new professionals has been attributed to the social support that is received within the organization" (p. 465).

In addition to general socializing, the proactive behavior of information seeking explained a notable portion of the variance in organizational commitment. I found a stronger positive relationship between information seeking and organizational commitment than past studies, in which correlation values ranged $ESz_r = .12$-$.20$ (Gruman et al., 2006; Saks et al., 2011). Similar to general socializing, recently graduated newcomers may be more invested in seeking information about the organization in which they intend to be employed longer than a 4-month co-op or internship. This finding indicates that the more information traditionally-aged

recently graduated newcomers learn about the organization and its policies and procedures, the more likely they are to be committed to the organization. Information seeking is especially important for young adults who likely have little exposure to the professional world (Holton, 1995). Learning about the employing organization and how to effectively navigate a professional job helps to reduce uncertainty that may be even more pronounced during the school-to-work transition and organizational entry (Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993).

My study found few correlations between PsyCap and proactive behaviors. Only positive framing and information seeking had a significant relationship with PsyCap. This result is interesting since self-efficacy, a component of PsyCap, has been linked to the proactive behaviors of feedback seeking, information seeking, general socializing, building a relationship with one's boss, and networking (Gruman et al., 2006). The difference in findings suggests that when self-efficacy is combined with hope, optimism, and resiliency to represent overall PsyCap, the relationship of self-efficacy alone with proactive behaviors is reduced. The large correlation between PsyCap and positive framing reflects a conceptual similarity between the optimism component of PsyCap and viewing situations in a positive light, which characterizes positive framing. I was unable to identify empirical studies in addition to ours in which this relationship was apparent. However, it seems that, overall, newcomers with varying levels of PsyCap engage in proactive behaviors during their first year in the professional workforce. Thus, high levels of PsyCap are not essential in order for newcomers to engage in proactive behaviors and vice versa, but they can both relate to newcomers' success.

Because of the positive relationship between PsyCap and some proactive behaviors with newcomer adjustment indicators among recent college graduates, students who leave college with developed PsyCap and knowledge of how to engage in proactive behaviors are at an

advantage starting out their professional work life and careers. A strong need exists for student affairs professionals and undergraduate faculty to support students' development of these attributes and behaviors while in college. The original investigators of PsyCap provided support for this recommendation. According to F. Luthans, Youssef, et al. (2007), "The importance of coming to the workplace prepared with such enduring talents, strengths, and especially personality traits, as well as the relatively early age at which they are developed has led such initiatives to be mostly transferred to educational institutions" (p. 14). Research by F. Luthans et al. (2010) demonstrated that undergraduate students' level of PsyCap can be increased through specific interventions like the Psychological Capital Intervention (PCI). The PCI incorporates activities such as creating goals, generating action plans, anticipating and reflecting on obstacles, positively reframing events and expectations, mastering challenging tasks, and learning from others. Proactive behaviors may be developed using similar techniques. Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2008) suggested that the process of self-regulation can help newcomers to set realistic goals appropriate for organizational entry and identify and proactively implement strategies and behaviors that will help them achieve their goals and manage the emotions involved with uncertainties of the situation. A large body of research exists that can guide educators in supporting undergraduate students' development of learning self-regulation skills (see Butler & Winne, 1995; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991; Wolters, 1998; Zimmerman, 2008).

Using these interventions as guides, student affairs and faculty educators can design intentional experiential activities and simulations in academic experiences, co-curricular programs, and student services. Senior year transition courses are ideal settings to increase students' awareness of the challenges associated with the transition from school to work. In these classes, students can participate in problem solving scenarios, role-play situations, and reflection

activities that allow students to enhance PsyCap and practice proactive behaviors in low-risk settings. Through one-on-one career counseling, career services professionals have the opportunity to support students' development of PsyCap and proactive behaviors in individualized situations. However, interventions to cultivate these attributes and behaviors should not be limited to the senior year but instead incorporated throughout students' academic career (B. C. Luthans, Luthans, & Jensen, 2012). B. C. Luthans et al. (2012) found that undergraduate business students with higher levels of PsyCap also had higher grade point averages (GPAs). Developing PsyCap and proactive behaviors early in students' academic careers may provide them with effective tools to acquire a competitive advantage in both academic performance while in school and career success after graduation (B. C. Luthans et al., 2012).

Collaboration between student affairs practitioners and faculty in undergraduate education with human resource development (HRD) practitioners can enhance students' transfer of PsyCap and proactive behaviors from the college setting to the newcomer adjustment process. HRD professionals have expertise about the most appropriate proactive behaviors for specific work settings, career fields, and jobs, while educators possess specific knowledge of this unique population and proficiency in designing curriculum and programming. Both entities may be able to capitalize on each other's expertise. Not only can educators and HRD professionals work together to create intentional learning opportunities on campus tailored to newcomer adjustment, but they can also collaborate to develop and enhance socialization tactics such as new hire orientation and mentorship programs in employing organizations. By building on learning experiences in college that develop students' PsyCap and proactive behaviors, organizations can transform their socialization tactics into effective newcomer transition and training programs.

This proposal is supported by empirical research from Gruman et al. (2006) who found that newcomers who participated in structured and formalized socialization were more likely to engage in proactive behaviors compared to those who experienced individualized socialization tactics. The combination of coordinating interventions in both undergraduate institutions and employing organizations may result in a better performing, more satisfied, and more committed workforce (Gruman et al., 2006).

One additional factor shown to explain variance in two of the newcomer adjustment outcomes was number of months in the job. Number of months in the job reflects actual job experience and explained variance in both perceived job performance and self-rated job satisfaction. These results highlight the role of experience in learning job tasks and responsibilities and having an experiential basis on which to make an assessment of job satisfaction. With more experience comes greater job-specific skills, organizational knowledge, and ability to assess one's own performance (Paloniemi, 2006) and job satisfaction (Bedeian, Ferris, & Kacmar, 1992). The positive relationship between number of months in the job with job performance and satisfaction, but not with organizational commitment, suggests that organizational commitment may not be related to quantity of time on the job, but quality of experience (Quinones, Ford, & Teachout, 1995).

My study found that PsyCap, certain proactive behaviors, and number of months in the job were positively associated with newcomer adjustment outcomes. However, a significant portion of the variance of newcomer adjustment outcomes was not explained by these factors, suggesting that other factors may relate to newcomer adjustment among traditionally-aged recent college graduates that were not measured by this study. Researchers have shown that the effects of met and unmet expectations, when what newcomers expect to encounter on the job matches or

does not match their reality, may explain additional variance in newcomer adjustment outcomes (Wanous et al., 1992). According to a meta-analysis conducted by Wanous et al. (1992) and a more recent empirical study by Moser (2005), newcomers who felt their expectations of the job and organization were met performed better on the job, were more satisfied with the job, and were more committed to the organization. The influence of met and unmet expectations in newcomer adjustment may be an important factor for young adults entering the professional workforce after graduating with an undergraduate degree. Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons (2010) found that young adults in the millennial generation (born between 1980 and 1995) expected rapid career advancement, skill development, work-life balance, and individualistic work that may not be realistic for their first post-undergraduate job. Future research is needed to determine the role that expectations play in recent college graduates' adjustment to the workplace compared to PsyCap and proactive behaviors.

Another interesting result was the very high correlation between job performance and job satisfaction. In my study, these two outcomes correlated .99, which is very high in comparison to other studies (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). In a meta-analysis Judge et al. (2001) reported that the correlation between job satisfaction and self-reported job performance ranged from ESz_r = .21-.33, with the highest correlation coming from employed MBA students, the sample most similar demographically to my sample (Lopez, 1982). The similarity in the final regression models for perceived job performance and job satisfaction and the very high correlation between the two outcomes suggests that among traditionally-aged college graduates with limited work experience, perceptions of job performance and job satisfaction are essentially one in the same. Researchers have identified that in both workplace and educational contexts the relationship between these two variables can be mediated by perceptions of pressure to perform.

For example, a study of undergraduate students by Ewen (1973) found the correlation between expected grade, a measure of self-rated performance, and course satisfaction was much higher ($ESz_r = .52$) in a required course where the consequences of failure were great compared to the correlation ($ESz_r = .05$) in an elective course where pressure to succeed was low. This relationship is supported by Judge et al. (2001). Their meta-analysis found that the more complex the job the stronger the correlation between job satisfaction and performance. Traditional-aged college graduates in their first professional position may feel intense pressure to perform well in a job that is complex due to their lack of familiarity with the new tasks, creating conditions for a high correlation between job satisfaction and self-rated job performance. The possibility exists that with more experience on the job, less high stakes pressure, and with receiving external indicators about job performance these individuals may conceive of their job performance and satisfaction as different and the correlation between the two factors may decrease.

Conclusion

Newcomer adjustment can be a challenging process, especially for traditionally-aged recent college graduates in their first professional role after graduation (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). My study provides initial evidence of the positive role PsyCap and proactive behaviors may play in their success as newcomers in the professional workforce. Young adult newcomers who have high levels of PsyCap and engage in certain proactive behaviors are more likely to believe they are performing well, are satisfied with their job, and are more committed to the organization in their first year post-graduation. While in college, student affairs staff and undergraduate faculty have the means and opportunity to support young adults in developing these characteristics and behaviors before they enter the professional workforce. Furthermore, employing organizations will need to continue to support newcomers' PsyCap and utilization of proactive behaviors

through new hire orientation and other organizational socialization tactics in order to promote transfer of these attributes and behaviors from the college setting to the newcomer adjustment process. Since traditionally-aged recent graduates experience multiple personal and professional transitions during their first year after college (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000), giving them the tools they need to succeed professionally will help them to better cope with this challenging transition. By doing so undergraduate educators can support traditionally-aged graduates' transition to the professional workforce and help them better prepare for lifelong success.

CHAPTER IV

The outcomes of the integrative literature review presented in Chapter II and the empirical study presented in Chapter III suggest that PsyCap and proactive behaviors are positively associated with newcomer adjustment among traditionally-aged recent college graduates. Given this relationship, experiences that promote students' development of these attributes and behaviors prior to graduation may equip them with a cognitive and behavioral repertoire that promotes their success as newcomers in organizations during their first year in the professional workforce. In this chapter I present a curriculum for an undergraduate senior year experience course with objectives to enhance students' PsyCap and proactive behaviors while in college that they can transfer to the newcomer adjustment process post-graduation. I have applied a variety of best practices in adult learning in development of the curriculum.

Developing PsyCap and Proactive Behaviors:

A Curriculum to Prepare Undergraduate Students for Newcomer Adjustment

More than 1.6 million students graduate with a bachelor's degree each year from a postsecondary institution in the United States (Aud et al., 2011). Traditionally-aged graduates, ages 21-23 (Justice & Dornan, 2001), often experience multiple personal, financial, and emotional challenges as they transition from school to their post-college lives (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). After graduation young adults attempt to become emotionally and financially independent relying less on support from family and existing friends while also forming new roles, routines, and relationships (Määttä, Nurmi, & Majava, 2002; Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). Many graduates also begin their first professional job where they face *newcomer adjustment*, "the process of learning the tasks of a new job and becoming integrated into an organization during the first year of employment" (Larson & Bell, in progress).

Newcomer adjustment can be a challenging process for some newcomers. The uncertainties of a new role, organization, and support system, compounded by the other transitions recent graduates may be experiencing, can lead to reduced motivation and confidence and higher levels of negative emotions and stress (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). These feelings often negatively affect newcomers' job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), potentially resulting in newcomers leaving or intending to leave the organization within the first year of employment (Leibowitz, Schlossberg, & Shore, 1991).

Undergraduate educators including student affairs professionals and faculty have the opportunity to help students develop the attributes and behaviors essential to achieve success in the first year after graduation (Larson & Bell, 2013). In particular, Larson and Bell (in progress) have identified psychological capital (PsyCap) and proactive behaviors as two important individual developmental factors that relate to successful newcomer adjustment among recent college graduates. By integrating reflective and experiential learning methods to develop PsyCap and proactive behaviors into senior year transition courses, undergraduate educators can provide college students with the tools to proactively impact their own newcomer adjustment success.

Background

During the past 5 decades, researchers from a variety of disciplines have examined newcomer adjustment using various perspectives. These include the impact of organizational socialization tactics on adjustment (see Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007), individual dispositions and personality traits related to successful adjustment (see Saks & Ashforth, 2000), cognitive processes used by individuals to cope with job transition (see Falcione & Wilson, 1988), and the effect of unmet expectations on work-related outcomes (see Wanous, Poland,

Premack, & Davis, 1992). In each of these perspectives, individuals are viewed as passive agents reacting to or dependent upon others in their newcomer adjustment process. Two alternative perspectives, PsyCap (F. Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007) and proactive behaviors (Ashford & Black, 1996), view individuals as proactive agents in their professional success. These factors show promise as a way for student affairs professionals and undergraduate faculty to positively impact newcomer adjustment among traditionally-aged college graduates because these state-like characteristics and behaviors can be developed or learned while in college (F. Luthans, Avey, Avolio, & Peterson, 2010).

PsyCap

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a form of positive organization behavior that focuses on "who you are" and "who you are becoming" in order to help employees achieve their maximum potential (F. Luthans et al., 2007, p. 20). PsyCap is defined as:

An individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized

by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort

to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about

succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when

necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when

beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond

(resiliency) to attain success. (F. Luthans et al., 2007, p. 3)

PsyCap's four components, self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency, are developmental capacities that are also positive, theory and research-based, measurable, and state-like (F. Luthans et al., 2007). They create a synergistic higher order core construct when combined,

meaning that "the whole (PsyCap) [is] greater than the sum of its parts" (F. Luthans et al., 2007, p. 19).

Among traditionally-aged recent college graduates experiencing newcomer adjustment, PsyCap positively relates to job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Larson and Bell (in progress) conducted an empirical study of 73 recently graduated newcomers within their first year in a professional position. The researchers found that newcomers with higher levels of PsyCap were moderately more likely to be satisfied with their jobs ($ESz_r = .38$), committed to the organization ($ESz_r = .32$), and believe they performed their job well ($ESz_r = .38$). Furthermore, B. C. Luthans, Luthans, and Jensen (2012) discovered that PsyCap related positively with academic performance in the form of higher cumulative grade point averages ($ESz_r = .29$) in 95 undergraduate business students.

Unlike fixed traits, PsyCap is considered to be state-like and can grow and develop over an individual's lifetime if presented with ideal situational factors, stimuli, and environmental conditions (F. Luthans et al., 2007). F. Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, and Combs (2006) developed a micro-intervention called the PsyCap Intervention (PCI) that aims to cultivate and enhance individuals' levels of PsyCap. It was later refined by F. Luthans et al. (2007). Offered in a 1-3 hour online or in-person workshop format, the PCI focuses on developing each individual component of PsyCap in order to enhance the overall construct. In order to cultivate hope, the PCI implements activities that compel participants to identify real-life job-related goals that are personally valuable, challenging, realistic, and measurable; obstacles to accomplishing the set objectives; and pathways and alternatives to reaching the goals. Development of optimism occurs by building off of the hope exercises. By generating goals and strategies, planning for obstacles, and obtaining group feedback, participants begin to feel increasingly positive and

confident about their own expectations for success. Efficacy is developed through creating step-by-step strategies to achieve goals and explaining them to others. Getting positive and constructive feedback allows participants to feel as though they have mastered tasks, learn from others through vicarious learning, and ultimately feel emotionally positive and confident that their goals will be achieved. The PCI develops resiliency through identifying, assessing, and implementing realistic options to maximize assets and resources and minimize risks in order to achieve goals. The combination of these activities within the intervention helps participants increase their levels of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency to develop overall PsyCap.

Research conducted by F. Luthans, Avey, and Patera (2008) and F. Luthans et al. (2010) tested the PCI's effectiveness. In order to determine if a web-based micro-intervention related to changes in participants' PsyCap, F. Luthans, Avey, et al. (2008) conducted an experimental study with working adults from various industries and job functions. The participants were randomly assigned to an intervention ($n = 187$) or control ($n = 177$) group. The intervention group completed two, 45-minute online training sessions with experiential and reflective activities designed to develop the self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency components of PsyCap. The control group also participated in two, 45-minute online training sessions, but their sessions focused on decision-making. The post-test PsyCap levels of the intervention group increased ($ESz_r = .10$), while among the control group these levels slightly decreased ($ESz_r = -.08$). After the success of a web-based version of the PCI, F. Luthans et al. (2010) tested the intervention through in-person trainings with college students. Using an experimental study design, the researchers randomly assigned 242 upper-level management students into intervention ($n = 153$) or control ($n = 89$) groups. The intervention group participated in a 2-hour training based on the PCI, while the control group participated in a 2-hour training focused on

group decision-making. The results indicated that students in the PCI intervention group had increased post-test levels of PsyCap ($ESz_r = .20$), whereas post-test levels of PsyCap for students in the control group were nearly unchanged ($ESz_r = .02$). These studies revealed that highly focused, short-duration trainings of the PCI either in person or online may relate to increases in individuals' level of PsyCap.

In addition to intentional interventions, having a supportive organizational environment is also a key factor in the development of PsyCap. F. Luthans, Norman, Avolio, and Avey (2008) conducted an empirical study to determine if a positive environment helped PsyCap to flourish. Analysis using Sobel tests to determine mediating effects found that PsyCap mediate the relationship between participants' perceived supportive organizational climate and performance among 163 insurance employees ($z = 2.23$, $p < .05$) and 170 manufacturing engineers ($z = 2.83$, $p < .01$). The results demonstrated that employees who perceive their organizational climate to be supportive are more likely to have higher levels of PsyCap, which in turn positively impacts their performance.

Proactive Behaviors

Unlike PsyCap, which is a developable state-like psychological attribute that empowers individuals to positively impact work-related outcomes (F. Luthans et al., 2007), proactive behaviors serve as a way for newcomers to take an active and intentional role to reduce uncertainty and succeed in their own adjustment process (Ashford & Black, 1996). Crant (2000) characterized proactive behavior as "taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones; it involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting to present conditions" (p. 436). Proactive behaviors involve information seeking, feedback seeking, general socializing, networking, building relationships with one's boss, negotiation of job changes, and

positive framing (Ashford & Black, 1996). Engaging in proactive behaviors can help traditionally-aged recent college graduates proactively impact their own newcomer adjustment experience by helping them learn the information and develop the relationships needed to succeed in the first year of a new job (Larson & Bell, 2013).

Proactive behaviors play an important role in helping young adult newcomers succeed in their first year in the professional workforce. In an empirical study, Larson and Bell (in progress) examined the relationship between proactive behaviors and newcomer adjustment outcomes among 73 recently graduated traditionally-aged newcomers. In particular, feedback seeking (ESz_r = .26), general socializing (ESz_r = .30), and positive framing (ESz_r = .40) were positively related to self-rated job performance. These same proactive behaviors had similar correlations to job satisfaction: feedback seeking (ESz_r = .27), general socializing (ESz_r = .30), and positive framing (ESz_r = .41). A slightly different set of proactive behaviors positively related to the third newcomer adjustment outcome of organizational commitment: information seeking (ESz_r = .33), general socializing (ESz_r = .59), relationship building with one's boss (ESz_r = .30), and positive framing (ESz_r = .31). The results indicate that traditionally-aged recent college graduates who engage in proactive behaviors are more likely to believe they are performing well, be satisfied with their job, and be committed to the organization.

Although there is distinct evidence that PsyCap can be developed through effective intervention (F. Luthans et al., 2010; F. Luthans, Avey, et al., 2008), and evidence indicates that proactive behaviors positively relate to newcomer adjustment (Larson & Bell, in progress), at this time no empirical support exists indicating that proactive behaviors can be intentionally developed, and consequently improve job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. However, Bandura's (1997) social learning theory shows that learning behaviors

can occur through modeling and observation with the ideal conditions of attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. It is likely that proactive behaviors can also be learned through effective social learning interventions in a supportive environment. Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2008) took this in a slightly different direction by suggesting that the forethought (goal and pathway setting), performance, and self-reflection activities of self-regulation can help newcomers with identifying and implementing specific behaviors that will proactively impact their organizational entry experience. Some researchers in other fields have shown that Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller's idea holds merit by studying self-regulation's impact on the development of individual proactive behaviors. For example, Zimmerman (2006) demonstrated increases in individuals' information seeking and feedback seeking behaviors after participating in strategies to increase self-regulated learning. While further research is needed to guide the design of an effective intervention for the development of proactive behaviors in both higher education and employing organizations, these studies provide a research-based foundation on how to begin this process.

Conclusion

In summary, researchers have shown that PsyCap and proactive behaviors related to newcomer adjustment indicators among recently graduated traditionally-aged newcomers, and these characteristics may be developed through intentional interventions in a highly supported environment. By incorporating purposeful experiential and reflective activities into undergraduate curriculum like senior year transition courses, educators can help students develop PsyCap and proactive behaviors in order to provide newcomers with the tools they need to succeed in their first year post-graduation.

Curriculum

Overview

Many institutions have senior year transition or academic capstone courses intended to help undergraduate students gain knowledge to successfully transition to life after college. These courses often fail to acknowledge the challenges of newcomer adjustment and prepare students with the individual attributes and behaviors that can make this transition more successful (Larson & Bell, 2013). However, senior year transition courses offer an ideal collegiate setting to prepare students for the newcomer adjustment process. The purpose of this curriculum is to enhance undergraduate students' awareness of the newcomer adjustment process and provide them with the opportunity to develop PsyCap and practice proactive behaviors in a low risk setting. By integrating all or even a subset of the components of the following curriculum into a multisession unit within senior year experiences, undergraduate institutions can encourage greater success among their graduates starting in the first year after college.

Objectives

As a result of participating in this curriculum, undergraduate students will be able to:

1. Recognize the importance of the newcomer adjustment process and the opportunities and challenges associated with the school-to-work transition

2. Describe PsyCap and proactive behaviors and their use in the newcomer adjustment process

3. Demonstrate increased levels of PsyCap within the context of the course

4. Demonstrate increased understanding of proactive behaviors within the context of the course

Assessment

In order to measure the effectiveness of the curriculum in developing students' PsyCap and proactive behaviors, students will take an online pre-test prior to starting the class and an online post-test at the end of the course. The pre- and post-tests will consist of the PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ) to measure level of PsyCap (F. Luthans et al., 2007) and a modified version of the Proactive Socialization Tactics questionnaire (Ashford & Black, 1996). The pre-test will also include basic demographic information such as age, sex, race/ethnicity, and major to determine if there are any differences in scores based on pre-determined characteristics.

Components

This curriculum consists of four out-of-class homework assignments alternating with three in-class sessions as a multisession unit within a senior year experience course. It also uses an accompanying online course management site for paper submission and discussion boards. The combination of these components provides students with multi-faceted, experiential, reflection-based learning experiences to achieve the curriculum objectives. The following tables serve as a step-by-step guide for instructors to engage students in discussion, reflection, and assignments designed to prepare them for the newcomer adjustment process and enhance their levels of PsyCap and use of proactive behaviors. The first column of each table, Student Learning Goals, defines the learning goals for students in terms of content knowledge, task and metacognitive skills, values, and attitudes students may achieve by participating in the class sessions and completing the homework assignments. The Instructor Actions column describes what the instructor will do at various points during the class session or assignment. Similarly, the Student Actions column summarizes what actions the students will perform at various points during the class session or assignment. The fourth column, Rationale, explains how the

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instructor's and students' actions achieve the learning objectives and connect to newcomer adjustment, PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and adult learning theory. The Assessment Indicators column outlines the behaviors, skills, and knowledge the students will exhibit that indicate the extent to which they have achieved the learning goals. These tables and their respective columns collectively provide instructors with specific content and teaching methods to achieve the curriculum objectives and can be creatively adapted to the specific course and student population.

Table 5

Assignment 1

Student Learning Goals	Instructor Actions	Student Actions	Rationale	Assessment Indicators
As a result of completing this assignment, students will be able to describe PsyCap and proactive behaviors in the context of newcomer adjustment.	Provide students with reading assignments on the newcomer adjustment topic prior to the first class session.	Read information about the transition from college to the professional workforce and an overview of PsyCap and proactive behaviors.	By reading about PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and newcomer adjustment prior to the first class, students will create the foundation of their mental models on the subject (Sheckley, 2007) and establish an understanding of the concepts in order to apply them to practice.	Students will be able to accurately discuss and describe applications of PsyCap and proactive behaviors to past, present, and future transition experiences during subsequent in-class discussions and out-of-class reflection assignments.

Table 6

In-Class Session 1

Student Learning Goals	Instructor Actions	Student Actions	Rationale	Assessment Indicators
As a result of participating in this class, students will be able to: 1. Define PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and newcomer adjustment. 2. Recall a past transition experience, including successes and challenges. 3. Identify individual attributes and behaviors that helped them successfully navigate a past transition experience. 4. Demonstrate increased levels of PsyCap. 5. Recognize how a past transition experience relates to the school-to-work newcomer adjustment process.	Break the class into small groups to discuss the assigned readings, define PsyCap and proactive behaviors in their own words, and determine in which life and work instances these attributes and behaviors are beneficial. Facilitate full class dialogue of small group discussion. Give students a worksheet that directs them to, "Think back on your most recent significant life transition, most likely from high school to college" and answer questions regarding their experience, strategies, and actions in the context of PsyCap and proactive behaviors.	Discuss assigned readings, define PsyCap and proactive behaviors in their own words, and determine in which instances these attributes and behaviors are beneficial. Each group records a summary of discussion and definitions on flipchart paper. (15 minutes) Each group reports a summary of discussion to the full class. (10 minutes) Complete a reflection worksheet (10 minutes). Think back on your most recent significant life transition, most likely from high school to college. Answer the following questions based on this transition experience:	Discussing and defining PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and newcomer adjustment in their own words with peers allows students to expand their original mental models on the subject in order to apply them to practice in a supportive environment (Sheckley, 2007). This reflection activity incorporates key experiences (Sheckley, Kehrhahn, Bell, & Grenier, 2007) and analogical reasoning, structural mapping, and self-regulation to help students make future decisions, actions, and strategies based on past experiences (Sheckley, 2007; Zimmerman, 2006; Zull, 2006). Each question also	1. Students will effectively and accurately define and describe PsyCap, proactive behaviors, and newcomer adjustment in their own words during small and large group discussion and written on flipchart paper. 2. Students will complete the reflection activity and thoughtfully discuss a past transition with classmates. 3. Students will relate PsyCap attributes and proactive behaviors to their past transition experience. 4. Students will attain increased PsyCap scores on the PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ) taken at the end of the course compared to pre-test PCQ scores. 5. Students will write genuine and thoughtful

	relates to various PsyCap attributes and proactive behaviors.	reflection papers about their expectations and goals for their first year after college.
1. What were your academic, personal, social, and professional goals upon entering college? 2. What did you think you would do to achieve these goals? Did any of these strategies relate to proactive behaviors or PsyCap?	Questions #1 and #2 help students recognize that they have already utilized the goal and pathway setting strategies necessary to develop PsyCap hope (F. Luthans et al., 2007) and proactive behaviors (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2008).	
3. Were your intended strategies implemented? In actuality, what did you do and how did that differ from your intentions? Did any of these actions relate to proactive behaviors or PsyCap?	Question #3 aims to show students they have already mastered strategies (self-efficacy) and behaviors related to PsyCap and proactive behaviors in the context of transitions similar to newcomer adjustment (Bandura, 1997).	
4. What obstacles, both anticipated and unanticipated, did you encounter? How did you manage them?	PsyCap hope, optimism, and resiliency help students identify obstacles, plan ways to avoid them, and overcome barriers when they cannot be avoided (F. Luthans et al., 2007). PsyCap self-efficacy is also developed	

		in this question because students recognize that they have already successfully managed struggles and can do it again in the future (F. Luthans et al., 2007).
	5. Did you meet your short and long-term goals? How?	Mastery of goals helps to increase PsyCap efficacy and indicates that the strategies (F. Luthans et al., 2007) and behaviors used may be transferable to future situations (Zimmerman, 2006).
	6. Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?	Reflecting on what to do differently helps to transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (LeGrow, Sheckley, & Kehrhahn, 2002).
Break the class into small groups for discussion.	Discuss transition, strategies, actions, obstacles, etc. with small group. (15 minutes)	Discussion of others' experiences, strategies, actions, obstacles, etc. helps students to learn from each other, modeling self-regulating behavior that leads to positive PsyCap self-efficacy and proactive behaviors (Bandura, 1997).

Facilitate a full class discussion about how the students' past transition relates to the post-graduation transition and newcomer adjustment. Keep in mind that some students will be working at jobs while others will be going to graduate school, starting their own business, volunteering, or pursuing other plans. Help students become aware of and challenge any negative thoughts and provide positive feedback when necessary. Discuss SMART (Specific Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) goals.	Discuss with full class how individual's past transition relates to the post-graduation transition and newcomer adjustment. Learn about SMART goals. (15 minutes)	Reflective discussion involving analogical reasoning and structural mapping helps to connect past experiences to future, novel situations (Sheckley, 2007). Additional positive reinforcement and constructive feedback helps students build PsyCap self-efficacy and optimism, respectively (F. Luthans et al., 2007). Learning is most effective when it is personal and connects to situations relevant to the learners (Knowles & Associates, 1984). Developing "personally valuable, reasonably challenging" goals (F. Luthans et al., 2007, p. 215) helps students enhance their PsyCap hope and proactive behaviors, as well as makes learning more likely to be effective since it is personal to the student.
Direct students to work in small groups to create questions for next class's young alumni panel. Encourage questions that discuss life after college	In small groups develop questions for young alumni panel regarding newcomer adjustment, PsyCap, and proactive behaviors. Turn in questions prior to the	By creating questions for young alumni prior to the next class, the panelists will be able to tailor their topics to the interests of the students, making the

and link to the concepts of PsyCap and proactive behaviors. Instructor will inform the students of his/her expectation that the students will be participatory, respectful, and ask thoughtful questions of the panel during the next class. Finally, describe the next assignment.	end of class. (10 minutes)	activity as personal and self-directed as possible (Knowles & Associates, 1984).

Table 7

Assignment 2

Student Learning Goals	Instructor Actions	Student Actions	Rationale	Assessment Indicators
As a result of completing this assignment, students will be able to: 1. Describe their expectations for their first year after college. 2. Identify SMART personal and professional goals for the first year after college. 3. Identify possible personal and professional obstacles that they will need to overcome during the first year after college. 4. Enhance levels of PsyCap.	At the end of In-Class Session 1, inform students their next assignment is a 2-3 page, double-spaced reflection paper regarding their expectations for the first year after college. Notify students they will need to bring one copy of the paper to the next class for discussion and additional reflection and notes. Students will also need to upload an electronic copy of the paper to the online course management website for instructor feedback. Feedback on the papers will be based on thoughtfulness and quality of reflection. Provide feedback that constructively challenges and supports students' expectations and goals as well as provides observations of where students made links to	Consider your first year after graduation, in particular your work or graduate/professional school plans. 1. What are your expectations for this year? 2. What are your goals? Remember to make these SMART including "personally valuable, reasonably challenging" with a "clear beginning and ending point" (F. Luthans et al., 2007, p. 215). 3. What challenges do you expect to encounter? Write a 2-3 page double-spaced reflection paper in which you honestly and critically assess and describe your personal and professional goals and expectations, both positive and negative, of life after college. The paper may be	This reflection paper aims to make newcomer adjustment, a topic that can seem ambiguous and far-off to students, personal and real (Sheckley, 2007). The questions help students set expectations for their first year after college. Question #2 begins to develop proactive behaviors through the forethought phase (goal and pathways setting) of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2006). By setting goals, students will be able to later create strategies involving proactive behaviors to meet their goals. Question #2 also starts the process of developing PsyCap hope through creating goals, while Question #3 focuses on enhancing PsyCap hope, optimism, and resiliency by identifying obstacles (F. Luthans et al.,	1. Students will provide thoughtful reflection about their first year after college in the reflection paper and subsequent in-class discussions and second reflection paper. 2. Students' post-graduate goals will be personal, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. 3. Students will describe thoughtful and individualized personal and professional obstacles they may encounter in their first year after college. 4. Students will attain increased PsyCap scores on the PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ) taken at the end of the course compared to pre-test PCQ scores.

| PsyCap or proactive behaviors. | structured in any format that you choose as long as it is consistently applied. Please follow general grammar, spelling, and punctuation guidelines. Bring one copy of your paper with you to the next class and upload an electronic copy to the online course management website for instructor feedback. | 2007). Subsequent assignments will allow students to plan how to avoid obstacles (hope) and reflect on how to handle barriers when they cannot be avoided (resiliency), increasing PsyCap optimism by helping students to have positive expectations due to pre-planning (F. Luthans et al., 2007). |

Table 8

In-Class Session 2

Student Learning Goals	Instructor Actions	Student Actions	Rationale	Assessment Indicators
As a result of participating in this class, students will be able to: 1. Recognize the challenges of the newcomer adjustment process. 2. Apply "lessons learned" and knowledge of the newcomer adjustment process, PsyCap, and proactive behaviors from young alumni to their own expectations and strategies to succeed in the first year after college.	Prior to visiting class, prepare three young alumni (less than 5 years removed from college) with information about PsyCap and proactive behaviors. Provide them with questions developed by the students in Session 1. Ask panelists to prepare a story about their first year after college that relates to one or more of the questions. Encourage panelists to be genuine and honest and tell their stories and lessons learned rather than give advice. Urge them to incorporate PsyCap and proactive behaviors into stories if possible. Possible questions to send to panelists in addition to student questions include: 1. What were your personal and professional expectations for your		The first year after college will be a novel situation for students who may have unrealistic expectations for this time in their lives. The young alumni narrative panel aims to help align students' mental models with more realistic mental models by either confirming (conduit effect) or disproving (accordion effect) their expectations of newcomer adjustment (Sheckley & Keeton, 1997). By encouraging panelists to share stories and lessons learned rather than giving advice, students are encouraged to "develop their own representations, theories, and actions instead of attempting to transfer our knowledge to them" (Zull, 2006). Making PsyCap and proactive behaviors an important part of the conversation helps students make connections	1. Students' second reflection paper and follow-up class discussions will indicate increased understanding of the challenges they will face during the first year after college. 2. Students' second reflection paper will discuss specific, thoughtful strategies and behaviors, including PsyCap attributes and proactive behaviors, that will help them avoid and overcome obstacles and achieve success during newcomer adjustment.

first year after college? Were those expectations met? What did you not expect?

2. What challenges and obstacles, both anticipated and unanticipated, did you encounter? How did you manage them?

3. What attributes and behaviors most helped you to succeed? How have PsyCap and proactive behaviors in particular helped you in your first year after college?

to how these attributes and behaviors can be applied in their personal newcomer adjustment process (Hoban & Hoban, 2004).

On the day of the panel, begin class by introducing the young alumni and describing the storytelling or narrative format. Panelists will spend 10 minutes introducing themselves, their educational background, career path, and current position and company and sharing their newcomer adjustment story.

Listen to the newcomer adjustment stories and lessons learned of three young alumni panelists. Take notes so that Assignment 1: Reflection Paper can be altered. (30 minutes)

After each panelist concludes his/her story, open the discussion to 5-10

Ask thoughtful questions after each panelist's story. (30 minutes)

minutes of questions from the students before moving to the next panelist. Repeat the cycle until all panelists have shared their thoughts.

Next, provide observations of themes that emerged in the panelists' stories and link them to PsyCap and proactive behaviors. Direct students to discuss what they learned from the panelists in small groups.

If time permits, close the class by asking the panelists one or both of the following questions:

1. In hindsight, what would you have done differently?
2. What advice do you have about the first year after college for future graduates?

Thank panelists for their time and insight. Explain the next assignment. Ask students to bring paper to class for discussion and upload an electronic copy of the paper to the online course management site.

Listen to instructor's observations and make links to their own newcomer adjustment expectations. In small groups discuss what they learned and how the panelists' stories and the instructor's observations relate to their own future newcomer adjustment. (15 minutes)

Table 9

Assignment 3

Student Learning Goals	Instructor Actions	Student Actions	Rationale	Assessment Indicators
As a result of completing this assignment, students will be able to: 1. Describe their expectations for their first year after college. 2. Identify SMART personal and professional goals for the first year after college. 3. Identify possible personal and professional obstacles that they will need to overcome during the first year after college. 4. Create ways to avoid obstacles and bounce back from those that are unavoidable. 5. Enhance levels of PsyCap. 6. Develop ways that proactive behaviors can help meet their professional goals.	At the end of In-Class Session 2, inform students their next assignment is to revise and add to their previous reflection paper regarding their first year after college based on what they learned from the young alumni panel. Feedback on the papers will be based on thoughtfulness and quality of reflection. Provide feedback that constructively challenges and supports students' expectations, goals, strategies, and potential obstacles as well as provides observations of where students made links to PsyCap or proactive behaviors.	Consider your first year after graduation, in particular your work or graduate/professional school plans. Alter your first reflection paper based on the information you learned from the alumni panel and peer discussions. In addition, address your reflections on the following questions: 1. What specific strategies and behaviors will help you achieve your post-graduation goals? Make sure you provide specific action steps for these strategies and behaviors that build on each other. 2. How do you plan to avoid obstacles you expect to encounter? How do you plan to bounce back from obstacles that are unavoidable? 3. What assets and	This paper allows students to reflect on their changing mental model of newcomer adjustment (Sheckley & Keeton, 1997) and take an active role in their post-graduate success. In particular, Question #1 helps students develop intentional strategies involving PsyCap and proactive behaviors to make this transition more successful by incorporating the self-regulated learning activities of pathways setting (forethought) and task strategies (performance) (Zimmerman, 2006). Question #2 helps to develop students' PsyCap by compelling them to plan to avoid obstacles (hope) and overcome unavoidable barriers (resiliency). Creating strategies to succeed help	1. Students will provide thoughtful reflection about their first year after college in the reflection paper and subsequent in-class discussions. 2. Students' post-graduate goals will be personal, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. 3. Students will describe thoughtful and individualized personal and professional obstacles they may encounter in their first year after college and realistic ways to avoid and overcome them. 4. In the reflection paper and future class discussions, students will have a specific plan of what proactive behaviors they would like to utilize during the newcomer adjustment process and how they

resources, both personal and professional, can you draw from to accomplish your goals and overcome barriers?

Honestly assess and describe your personal and professional goals and expectations, both positive and negative, for your first year after college and what you need to do to achieve your goals. The paper may be structured in any format that you choose as long as it is consistently applied. Please follow general grammar, spelling, and punctuation guidelines.

students enhance their positive expectations (optimism) and confidence (self-efficacy). Question #3 supports fostering resiliency as it is enhanced by "building awareness of personal assets in the form of talents, skills, and social networks" (F. Luthans et al., 2010, p. 66).

plan to utilize them in the workplace during the first year after college.

5. Students will attain increased PsyCap scores on the PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ) taken at the end of the course compared to pre-test PCQ scores.

Table 10

In-Class Session 3

Student Learning Goals	Instructor Actions	Student Actions	Rationale	Assessment Indicators
As a result of participating in this class, students will be able to: 1. Apply PsyCap attributes and proactive behaviors to key experiences. 2. Enhance levels of PsyCap and proactive behaviors.	Break the class into small groups for discussion. Instruct them to discuss their first and second reflection papers focusing on the specific questions listed under Student Actions.	Discuss revised reflection paper with small group (20 minutes). In particular, answer the following questions: 1. How did your expectations, goals, and obstacles change from your first paper to the second? 2. What strategies and behaviors will help you achieve your post-graduation goals? Do any of these relate to PsyCap and proactive behaviors?	Small and large group discussion with peers allows students to learn from each other, modeling self-regulating behavior that leads to enhanced PsyCap self-efficacy and optimism and proactive behaviors through the positive feelings and confidence derived from task mastery and vicarious learning (Bandura, 1997; F. Luthans et al., 2010).	1. Students will attain increased scores on the altered Proactive Socialization Tactics questionnaire taken at the end of the course compared to pre-test scores. 2. Students will attain increased PsyCap scores on the PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ) taken at the end of the course compared to pre-test PCQ scores.
	Facilitate full class dialogue of small group discussion. Help students be more aware of and challenge negative thoughts. Encourage them to focus on the positive.	Each group reports a summary of discussion to the full class. (10 minutes)	By helping students be more aware of and supportively challenging negative thoughts and focusing on positives, students will experience optimistic thinking related to PsyCap and engage in the positive framing component of proactive behaviors (Ashford &	

Black, 1996; F. Luthans et al., 2007).

Post 11 flipchart papers on the walls around the room, each with a label of a PsyCap attribute or proactive behavior. Inform students that the next step in the process is to practice applying PsyCap attributes and proactive behaviors. Provide them with instructions for the next activity.	Create at least one activity to practice each PsyCap attribute and proactive behavior in your everyday life, such as other classes, social and extracurricular activities, home, work, etc. Identify situations where you anticipate you could be more proactive or adopt a more positive PsyCap state. For each PsyCap attribute and proactive behavior, use a marker and write your ideas on the respective flipchart paper. (20 minutes)	This activity encourages students to practice PsyCap and proactive behaviors in a low-risk setting and in ways that are personally beneficial to their learning (Hoban & Hoban, 2004; Larson & Bell, 2013).
Break the class into small groups for discussion.	Discuss your ideas in small groups. (15 minutes)	Again, modeling and vicarious learning are utilized to provide students with additional ideas for practice (Bandura, 1997; F. Luthans et al., 2010).
Provide final observations of how important newcomer adjustment is and why PsyCap and proactive behaviors can be a tool to help students cope with this transition. Explain next assignment to		

students. (10 minutes)

After class, record the results of the flipchart activity and post results to the class discussion board on the online course management site.

Table 11

Assignment 4

Student Learning Goals	Instructor Actions	Student Actions	Rationale	Assessment Indicators
As a result of completing this assignment, students will be able to: 1. Apply PsyCap attributes and proactive behaviors to key experiences. 2. Enhance levels of PsyCap and proactive behaviors.	Monitor online discussion group. Provide feedback on reflection journals based on quality of activities performed in order to practice PsyCap and proactive behaviors and thoughtfulness of reflection on how the activities influenced students' likelihood of utilizing these individual attributes and behaviors in the newcomer adjustment process.	In the last class you identified activities and situations where you could practice PsyCap attributes and proactive behaviors in your daily life. Implement three of these strategies over the next week. Record your experiences in a reflection journal and post to the class online discussion board.	This assignment gives students the opportunity to practice PsyCap attributes and proactive behaviors in a low-risk setting (Larson & Bell, 2013). The experiential nature of this assignment leads to more effective learning as learning is "grounded in experience" (Kolb, 1984).	1. Students will attain increased scores on the altered Proactive Socialization Tactics questionnaire taken at the end of the course compared to pre-test scores. 2. Students will attain increased PsyCap scores on the PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ) taken at the end of the course compared to pre-test PCQ scores.
	Provide feedback on thoughtfulness of students' responses to other classmates' reflection journals.	Read through your classmates' reflection journals and write thoughtful and reflective comment on two journals.	Reading, reflecting, and responding to classmates' reflection journals encourages PsyCap self-efficacy through vicarious learning and modeling (F. Luthans et al., 2010).	

Conclusion

In the first year after graduation, recent college graduates can experience multiple difficult transitions, in particular adjustment as a newcomer in a professional organization. Researchers (Larson & Bell, in progress) have shown that traditionally-aged recent college graduates who have higher levels of PsyCap and utilize proactive behaviors in the workplace report greater levels of job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational commitment—all indicators of successful newcomer adjustment. Other researchers (F. Luthans et al., 2010) have shown that college students can experience increases in PsyCap after engaging in learning activities specifically designed to support development of this cognitive state. Additionally, theoretical research (Bandura, 1997; Larson & Bell, 2013; Zimmerman, 2006) indicates that proactive behaviors may also be developed among undergraduates through intentional learning activities. Using "multifaceted, multidimensional, and experienced-based" (Sheckley, 2007, p. 4) teaching methods focused on PsyCap and proactive behaviors in senior year transition or academic capstone courses, undergraduate educators can help students develop these important attributes and behaviors prior to entering the professional workforce (Larson & Bell, 2013). By doing so, colleges and universities will be giving students the tools they need to better cope with this challenging transition and become higher achieving and more satisfied and committed new professionals prepared for lifelong career success.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Newcomer adjustment is a challenging process for any new employee, especially traditionally-aged recent college graduates who may be experiencing multiple life transitions after graduation (Reicherts & Pihet, 2000). While some effectively cope with the transition from school to work, struggling newcomers can experience lower levels of job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, and possibly turnover (Bauer et al., 2010). Although unsuccessful newcomer adjustment may not be entirely eliminated, the outcomes of my research suggest that among recent graduates the likelihood of success may be greater if these young adults utilize PsyCap and engage in proactive behaviors during their first year in a new organization.

This study begins to address the challenges of this pervasive issue by identifying the relationships PsyCap and proactive behaviors have with newcomer adjustment outcomes among recent college graduates. The three papers presented provide a comprehensive examination of the ways and extent to which PsyCap and proactive behaviors relate to recent college graduates' adjustment process. In the first paper, I used an integrative literature review methodology to understand past research and develop a model of factors, including PsyCap and proactive behaviors, that influence the success of traditionally-aged college graduates during their first year in the professional workforce. In my empirical study presented in the second paper, I identified that PsyCap and proactive behaviors, particularly the behaviors of general socializing and information seeking, had moderately strong positive relationships with three different newcomer adjustment outcomes among a sample of recent college graduates, indicating that these attributes and behaviors are integral tools for newcomer success. The third paper builds on

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the research conducted in the first and second paper to provide undergraduate educators and student affairs professionals with a practical, theory and research-based curriculum using adult learning principles to promote students' development of PsyCap and proactive behaviors prior to leaving college.

In addition to the implications for practice, as illustrated in the curriculum I developed in Chapter IV, my research has theoretical implications for better understanding the school-to work transitional experiences of young adults, specifically traditionally-aged college students and recent graduates. This study provides an initial examination of what psychological capacities and behaviors can facilitate the shift in recent graduates' mental models from college student to working professional (Sheckley, 2007) and enable their initial success as newcomers in the professional workforce. Although additional research is needed to confirm and expand my findings, PsyCap and proactive behaviors may be important concepts to integrate into college student development transition theory such as Schlossberg's Theory of Transition (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995) or vocational psychology and learning theories used by the school-to-work movement like Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Counseling (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999).

In particular, the Trio Model of Adult Learning (Sheckley, Kehrhahn, Bell, & Grenier, 2007) proposes that optimal adult learning is characterized by individual attributes that enable making meaning of experience, key experiences that connect past to present learning, and environmental affordances that both challenge and support learning. This study provides support for the important role PsyCap and proactive behaviors play as individual attributes that enable young adults to make meaning of their experiences as undergraduates and as newcomers to the professional workforce in ways that promote self-efficacy and persistence and socializing with

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others in productive ways. Furthermore, key experiences and a supportive environment can cultivate PsyCap and encourage engagement in proactive behaviors both in undergraduate (B. C. Luthans, Luthans, & Jensen, 2012; F. Luthans, Avey, Avolio, & Peterson, 2010; F. Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008) and work contexts (F. Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008; F. Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2008). A premise of the Trio Model is that adult learning is optimized when all three components—individual attributes, key experiences, and environmental affordances—coalesce. The outcomes of my research indicate that, with regard to PsyCap and proactive behaviors, the possibility exists that educators in both undergraduate and workplace settings can optimize learning for young adults during their transition from school to work and their first year in the professional workforce.

This study can contribute to adult learning theory in other ways such as transfer of training theory. A goal of developing PsyCap and proactive behaviors among traditionally-aged undergraduates is to transfer them to the work setting so that as newcomers they can learn organizational knowledge and job-specific skills and build the relationships necessary to succeed within the first year on the job. Transfer of training is an ongoing challenge for organizations as knowledge and skill transfer from training to job tasks can be as low as 10 percent (Naquin & Baldwin, 2003). Low transfer yield could also apply to the transfer of PsyCap and proactive behaviors from the undergraduate setting to the professional workforce, especially if there is an extended length of time between when graduates learn these psychological capacities and behaviors in college and when they are utilized in the first year in the job. Even though coordinating efforts between educators in undergraduate settings and employing organizations may be challenging, developing PsyCap and proactive behaviors in students while they are in college may make them more "transfer-ready" (Naquin & Baldwin, 2003, p. 81) to apply the job-

specific knowledge and skills they learned from the undergraduate classroom and co-curricular experiences to the professional workforce. The results of this study have the potential to augment transfer of training theory, which already includes self-efficacy (Goldstein & Ford, 2002), by drawing attention to the roles PsyCap and proactive behaviors may play in developing individual capacities that enable learning and transfer of knowledge and skills.

As newcomers in an employing organization, traditionally-aged recent graduates can intentionally and positively impact their own adjustment process by utilizing PsyCap and engaging in proactive behaviors (Larson & Bell, 2013). Educators in undergraduate institutions and employing organizations have the opportunity to support these efforts through academic and co-curricular programs and services and new hire orientation and training. By working together to have a positive, intentional, and proactive impact on graduates' success as newcomers in the professional workforce, educators can help ensure graduates will leave college with not only a diploma, but with the psychological capacities and behaviors needed for newcomer and lifelong career success.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval

University of Connecticut
Office of Research Compliance

DATE: May 11, 2010

TO: Sandy Bell, Ph.D.
Educational Leadership, Unit 2093

Rachel E.K. Larson, MA, Student Investigator
155 Windermere Avenue, #304
Ellington, CT 06029

FROM: Deborah Dillon McDonald, RN, Ph.D. DDM/lw
Chair, Institutional Review Board
FWA# 00007125

RE: Exemption #X10-159: "Individual Factors and Newcomer Adjustment"
Please refer to the Exemption# in all future correspondence with the IRB.
Funding Source: Investigator Out-of-Pocket
Approved on: **May 11, 2010**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the protocol application for the research study referenced above. According to the information provided, the IRB determined that this research is exempt from continuing IRB review under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2): Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. Enclosed is the validated information sheet. **The text from the approved, validated information sheet (with the IRB's stamp) must be used to consent each subject.**

Per 45 CFR 46.117(c)(2), the IRB waived the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for the subjects because it found that the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

All investigators at the University of Connecticut are responsible for complying with the attached IRB "Responsibilities of Research Investigators".

Any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of the research study must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to their implementation.

An Equal Opportunity Employer

438 Whitney Road Extension, Unit 1246
Storrs, Connecticut 06269-1246

Telephone: (860) 486-8802
Facsimile: (860) 486-1044
web: compliance.uconn.edu

APPENDIX B

Invitation Message for "Class of 2009" Facebook Group

Dear UConn Class of 2009 graduate:

My name is Rachel Larson and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Connecticut. As part of my doctoral research, I am conducting a study on the experiences of Bachelor's degree graduates during their first year after graduation. Your participation will help make my study a success, and help UConn better prepare new graduates.

Your participation will require completion of a 10-15 minute online questionnaire. Your participation is anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. This survey does not involve any risk to you. After completing the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter a drawing to win one of four $25 Amazon.com gift certificates.

If you are interested in participating in this study, click on the following link or cut and paste the link into your Internet browser: link

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rachel E.K. Larson
Rachel.Larson@uconn.edu
402-450-6985

APPENDIX C

Invitation Message for Class of 2009 Explore Alumni

Dear Explore Alum:

My name is Rachel Larson and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Connecticut. As part of my doctoral research, I am conducting a study on the experiences of Bachelor's degree graduates during their first year after graduation. Your participation will help make my study a success, and help UConn better prepare new graduates.

Your participation will require completion of a 10-15 minute online questionnaire. Your participation is anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. This survey does not involve any risk to you. After completing the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter a drawing to win one of four $25 Amazon.com gift certificates.

If you are interested in participating in this study, click on the following link or cut and paste the link into your Internet browser: link

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rachel E.K. Larson
Rachel.Larson@uconn.edu
402-450-6985

Online Questionnaire

University of Connecticut

UConn Class of 2009 New Graduate Survey

Principal Investigator: Alexandra Bell, Ph.D.
Student Researcher: Rachel E.K. Larson
Study Title: Using Psychological Capital and Proactive Behaviors to Enhance School-to-Work Newcomer Adjustment

You are invited to participate in a survey regarding your first year out of college. I am a graduate student at the University of Connecticut and am conducting this survey as part of my doctoral work. I am interested in finding out what impacts graduates' transition from college to work.

Your participation will require completion of the following online questionnaire. This should take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. Your participation is anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. This survey does not involve any risk to you. After completing the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter a drawing to win one of four $25 Amazon.com gift certificates.
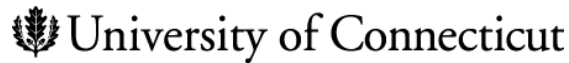
You do not have to participate in this study. If you agree to take part, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences if you decide that you do not want to participate.

If you have questions about this project or have a research-related problem, you may contact me, Rachel Larson (the student) at 402-450-6985, or my advisor, Alexandra Bell at 860-486-0251. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 860-486-8802. The IRB reviews research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

By clicking "Next" at the bottom of the page, you indicate that you have read this form and decided that you will participate in the project described above.

Thank you.

Rachel E.K. Larson
Rachel.Larson@uconn.edu
402-450-6985

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is your current age? (drop down list)
   a. 18
   b. 19
   c. 20
   d. 21
   e. 22
   f. 23
   g. 24
   h. 25
   i. 26
   j. 27
   k. 28
   l. 29
   m. 30+

2. With which race/ethnicity do you identify? (drop down list)
   a. Asian/Asian American
   b. Black/African American
   c. Hispanic/Latino/a
   d. Native American/Alaskan Native
   e. White/Caucasian
   f. Multiracial
   g. Other
   h. Prefer not to respond

3. With which gender do you identify? (drop down list)
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Transgender
   d. Other
   e. Prefer not to respond

4. When did you graduate with your Bachelor's degree? (month, year)
   a. May 2009
   b. August 2009
   c. December 2009
   d. Other

If participant's answer to question 4 is a, b, or c, will be directed to move on to the next question.
If answer to question 4 is d, will be directed to the last page.

5. What was your primary undergraduate major? (drop down list)
   a. African American Studies
   b. Agricultural & Natural Resources

c.   Allied Health Sciences
d.   Allied Health Sciences: Diagnostic Genetic Sciences
e.   Allied Health Sciences: Dietetics
f.   Allied Health Sciences: Health Promotion Sciences
g.   Allied Health Sciences: Health Sciences
h.   Allied Health Sciences: Medical Technology
i.   Allied Health Sciences: Occupational Safety & Health
j.   American Studies
k.   Animal Science
l.   Anthropology
m.   Art History
n.   Biology: Biological Sciences
o.   Biology: Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
p.   Biology: Molecular & Cell Biology
q.   Biology: Physiology & Neurobiology
r.   Biology: Structural Biology & Biophysics
s.   Business: Accounting
t.   Business: Finance
u.   Business: Health Care Management
v.   Business: Management
w.   Business: Management & Engineering for Manufacturing
x.   Business: Management Information Systems
y.   Business: Marketing
z.   Business: Real Estate & Urban Economic Studies
aa.   Business: Risk Management & Insurance
bb.   Business & Technology
cc.   Chemistry
dd.   Classics & Ancient Mediterranean Studies
ee.   Coastal Studies
ff.   Cognitive Science
gg.   Communication Sciences: Communication
hh.   Communication Sciences: Communication Disorders
ii.   Dietetics: (Nutritional Sciences)
jj.   Dramatic Arts: Acting
kk.   Dramatic Arts: Design & Technical Direction
ll.   Dramatic Arts: Puppetry
mm.   Dramatic Arts: Theatre Studies
nn.   Economics
oo.   Education: Kinesiology: Athletic Training
pp.   Education: Kinesiology: Exercise Science
qq.   Education: Kinesiology: Sport Management
rr.   Education: Teaching: Agriculture Education (IB/M)
ss.   Education: Teaching: Elementary Education (IB/M)
tt.   Education: Teaching: English (IB/M)
uu.   Education: Teaching: History & Social Studies (IB/M)
vv.   Education: Teaching: Mathematics (IB/M)

ww. Education: Teaching: Music (IB/M)
xx. Education: Teaching: Science (IB/M)
yy. Education: Teaching: Special Education (IB/M)
zz. Education: Teaching: World Languages (IB/M)
aaa. Engineering: Biomedical Engineering
bbb. Engineering: Chemical Engineering
ccc. Engineering: Civil Engineering
ddd. Engineering: Computer Engineering
eee. Engineering: Computer Science
fff. Engineering: Computer Science & Engineering
ggg. Engineering: Electrical Engineering
hhh. Engineering: Engineering Physics
iii. Engineering: Environmental Engineering
jjj. Engineering: Management & Engineering for Manufacturing
kkk. Engineering: Materials Science & Engineering
lll. Engineering: Mechanical Engineering
mmm. English
nnn. Environmental Science
ooo. Environmental Science: Biology
ppp. Environmental Science: Chemistry
qqq. Environmental Science: Environmental Health
rrr. Environmental Science: Geography
sss. Environmental Science: Geoscience
ttt. Environmental Science: Marine Sciences
uuu. Environmental Science: Natural Resources
vvv. Environmental Science: Resource Economics
www. Environmental Science: Soil Science
xxx. French & Francophone Studies
yyy. Geography
zzz. Geoscience
aaaa. German
bbbb. German: EUROTECH
cccc. History
dddd. Horticulture
eeee. Human Development & Family Studies
ffff. Individualized Major
gggg. Italian Literary & Cultural Studies
hhhh. Journalism
iiii. Landscape Architecture
jjjj. Latin American Studies
kkkk. Linguistics: (Philosophy & Psychology)
llll. Maritime Studies
mmmm. Mathematics
nnnn. Mathematics: Actuarial Science
oooo. Mathematics: Applied Mathematical Sciences
pppp. Mathematics: Statistics

qqqq.   Music: History
rrrr.   Music: Jazz Studies
ssss.   Music: Performance (Instrumental)
tttt.   Music: Performance (Vocal)
uuuu.   Music: Theory
vvvv.   Natural Resource Environment
wwww.   Nursing
xxxx.   Nutritional Sciences
yyyy.   Pathobiology
zzzz.   Pharmacy Studies
aaaaa.   Philosophy
bbbbb.   Physics
ccccc.   Political Science
ddddd.   Psychology
eeeee.   Resource Economics
fffff.   Sociology
ggggg.   Spanish
hhhhh.   Statistics
iiiii.   Studio Art: Communication Design
jjjjj.   Studio Art: Illustration
kkkkk.   Studio Art: Painting
lllll.   Studio Art: Photography
mmmmm. Studio Art: Printmaking
nnnnn.   Studio Art: Sculpture
ooooo.   Turfgrass & Soil Science
ppppp.   Urban & Community Studies
qqqqq.   Women's Studies

6. Are you currently enrolled in graduate or professional school?
    a. Enrolled full time
    b. Enrolled part time
    c. Not enrolled in graduate/professional school

7. Are you currently employed?
    a. Employed full time
    b. Employed part time
    c. Not employed (looking for work)
    d. Not employed (not looking for work)

If participant's answer to question 7 is a or b, or c, will directed to the next question.
If answer to question 7 is c or d, will be direct to the last page.

8. How many months have you been in your current job?

9. What is your company's primary industry? (drop down list)
    a. Accommodation & Food Services

b. Agriculture & Mining
c. Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation
d. Communications/Utilities
e. Construction
f. Educational Services
g. Finance & Insurance
h. Health Care & Social Assistance
i. Information & Technology
j. Manufacturing
k. Other Services (except Public Administration)
l. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services
m. Public Administration, Nonprofit, & Government
n. Real Estate
o. Retail/Wholesale Trade
p. Transportation & Warehousing
q. Other

10. Including your current position, how many jobs have you held since graduating with your Bachelor's degree?
a. 1
b. 2
c. 3
d. 4
e. 5 or more

Please answer the following questions based upon your current job and employing organization.

Below are statements that describe how you may think about yourself right now. Use the scale below to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

1 = Strongly Disagree	4 = Somewhat Agree
2 = Disagree	5 = Agree
3 = Somewhat Disagree	6 = Strongly Agree

11. I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution. 1 2 3 4 5 6

12. I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management. 1 2 3 4 5 6

█████████████████████████████ 1 2 3 4 5 6
██████

████████████████████████████ 1 2 3 4 5 6

████████████████████████████ 1 2 3 4 5 6
████████████████

██████████████████████████████ 1 2 3 4 5 6

17. If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it. 1 2 3 4 5 6
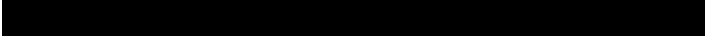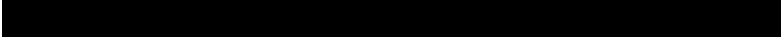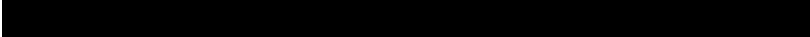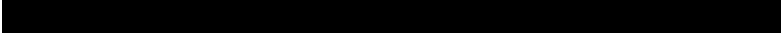
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██████████████████████████████ 1 2 3 4 5 6
██████

23. When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on. (R) 1 2 3 4 5 6

███████████████████████████ 1 2 3 4 5 6

███████████████████████████ 1 2 3 4 5 6

███████████████████████ 1 2 3 4 5 6

████████████████████████████████████   1   2   3   4   5   6

████████████████████████████   1   2   3   4   5   6

29. When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best.   1   2   3   4   5   6

█████████████████████████████   1   2   3   4   5   6

██████████████████████████████   1   2   3   4   5   6

███████████████████████████████   1   2   3   4   5   6

████████████████████████████████   1   2   3   4   5   6

███████████████████████████   1   2   3   4   5   6

Use the following scale to indicate how frequently you have participated in the behaviors listed below in your current job.

1 = Never   4 = Frequently
2 = Rarely   5 = Always
3 = Occasionally   NA = not applicable

During your time in your current work position, how frequently have you:

35. Sought feedback on your performance after assignments?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

36. Solicited critiques from your boss?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

37. Sought out feedback on your performance during assignments?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

38. Asked for your boss's opinion of your work?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

39. Negotiated with others (including your supervisor and/or   1   2   3   4   5   NA
    coworkers) about **desirable job changes**?

40. Negotiated with others (including your supervisor and/or   1   2   3   4   5   NA
    coworkers) about your **task assignments**?

41. Negotiated with others (including your supervisor and/or   1   2   3   4   5   NA
    coworkers) about the **demands placed** on you?

42. Negotiated with others (including your supervisor and/or   1   2   3   4   5   NA
    coworkers) about their **expectations** of you?

43. Tried to see your situation as an opportunity rather than as a 1   2   3   4   5   NA
    threat?

44. Tried to look on the bright side of things?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

45. Tried to see your situation as a challenge rather than a problem? 1   2   3   4   5   NA

46. Participated in social office events to meet people (i.e., parties, 1   2   3   4   5   NA
    softball team, outings, clubs, lunches)?

47. Attended company social gatherings?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

48. Attended office parties?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

49. Tried to spend as much time as you could with your boss?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

50. Tried to form a good relationship with your boss?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

51. Worked hard to get to know your boss?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

52. Started conversations with people from different segments of the   1   2   3   4   5   NA
    company?

53. Tried to socialize with people who are not in your department?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

54. Tried to get to know as many people as possible in other sections   1   2   3   4   5   NA
    of the company on a personal basis?

Use the following scale to indicate the extent to which you have participated in the behaviors
listed below in your current job.

        1 = Not at All
        2 =
        3 =
        4 =
        5 = To a Great Extent
        NA = not applicable

55. Tried to learn the organizational structure (official)?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

56. Tried to learn the organizational structure (unofficial)?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

57. Tried to learn the important policies and procedures in the   1   2   3   4   5   NA
    organization?

58. Tried to learn the politics of the organization?   1   2   3   4   5   NA

Please answer the following questions based upon your current job.

59. Overall, how competently do you perform your job?
        1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
     Not at all   Very
   Competently   Competently

60. What is your overall perceived competence?
        1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
     Not at all   Very
   Competent   Competent

61. In your estimation, how effectively do you get your work done?

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

  Very   Very

Ineffectively   Effectively

62. How would you judge the overall quality of your work?

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

  Poor   Excellent

Now please indicate how you personally feel about your current job.

Each of the statements below is something that a person might say about his or her job. You are to indicate your own personal feelings about your job by indicating your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on the scale below:

      1 = Strongly Disagree   4 = Somewhat Agree

      2 = Disagree   5 = Agree

      3 = Somewhat Disagree   6 = Strongly Agree

63. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.   1   2   3   4   5   6

64. I frequently think of quitting this job. (R)   1   2   3   4   5   6

65. I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job. 1   2   3   4   5   6

Now please think of the other people in your organization who hold the same job as you do. If no one has exactly the same job as you, think of the job that is most similar to yours.

Please think about how accurately each of the statements describes the feelings of those people about the job. It is quite all right if your answers here are different from when you described your own reactions to the job. Often different people feel quite differently about the same job.

Once again, mark how much you agree with each of the statements based on the following scale:

      1 = Strongly Disagree   4 = Somewhat Agree

      2 = Disagree   5 = Agree

      3 = Somewhat Disagree   6 = Strongly Agree

66. Most people on this job are very satisfied with the job.   1   2   3   4   5   6

67. Most people on this job often think of quitting. (R)   1   2   3   4   5   6

Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement regarding your current employment organization.

1 = Strongly Disagree	4 = Somewhat Agree
2 = Disagree	5 = Agree
3 = Somewhat Disagree	6 = Strongly Agree

68. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.   1 2 3 4 5 6

69. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.   1 2 3 4 5 6

70. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization. (R)   1 2 3 4 5 6

71. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization. (R)   1 2 3 4 5 6

72. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.   1 2 3 4 5 6

73. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization. (R)   1 2 3 4 5 6

Thank you for completing the survey. If you would like to be entered into a raffle to win one of four $25 Amazon.com gift certificates, please click here to be taken to a separate web page where you will enter your name and contact information. Your identifying information will in no way be connected to your answers in the survey you just completed.

Incentive Survey

Thank you for completing the survey about your first year after college. To be entered into a raffle to win one of four $25 Amazon.com gift certificates, please complete the following information:

Full Name:
Email Address:
Phone Number:
Mailing Address:
City:
State:
Zip:

The raffle will occur during the first week in September 2010. You will be notified via email or phone if you are one of the winners.

Your identifying information will in no way be connected to your answers in the survey you just completed. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the principal investigator (Alexandra Bell at Sandy.Bell@uconn.edu or 860-486-0251) or the student researcher (Rachel Larson at Rachel.Larson@uconn.edu or 402-450-6985). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 860-486-8802.