

## Testing the Combined Effects of Newcomer Information Seeking and Manager Behavior on Socialization

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Both the newcomer and an important organizational insider, the manager, are predicted to influence the socialization process. Previously, these socialization mechanisms have been discussed or studied in the literature in isolation from one another. Data from 205 newcomers, 364 of their coworkers, and 112 of their managers were used to test the proposed model of newcomer socialization using a longitudinal, 3-wave data collection research design. In general, task-oriented manager behavior predicted task accommodation and relationship-oriented manager behavior predicted relational accommodation. Newcomer proaction, in the form of information seeking, was not a potent predictor of newcomer socialization. Only accommodation variables predicted performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Thus, it appears that different socialization behaviors tend to serve specialized roles in the socialization process.

The start of new jobs directly out of college represents an intense transition for new graduates. It is a period of new beginnings and accelerated learning. Recently, much has been discovered about how newcomers are transformed from organizational outsiders to organizational insiders (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, in press). This transition is called *socialization* and has been defined as a process by which an individual acquires the task, social knowledge, and behaviors needed to participate as an organizational member (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

This study focused on two key ways in which this

acquisition of knowledge may occur (information-seeking behavior by newcomers and the behavior of the newcomers' manager toward them). It is now well established that newcomers engage in proactive behaviors to learn about their work environments (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b). Past studies have shown that the types of information sought and acquired by newcomers are often related to important socialization outcomes such as adjustment, job attitudes, and on-the-job performance (e.g., Holder, 1996; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992, 1993). In most cases, however, research on information seeking has tended to study this process without examining other socialization mechanisms.

In addition, socialization researchers have long contended that organizational insiders, especially the managers of newcomers, proactively seek to provide guidance and important information to the newcomer (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Reichers, 1987). Similarly, those who manage newcomers have been seen as important sources of socialization information (e.g., Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), as role models for the newcomer (e.g., Holton & Russell, 1997; Weiss, 1977), and as mentors (e.g., Green & Bauer, 1995), but managers have yet to be studied as proactive partners in newcomer socialization. This study initiated the examination of the manager's role in socializing newcomers by examining how their behavior toward the newcomer might influence newcomer accommodation while using data from multiple sources across multiple time periods.

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## Hypotheses

Reichers's (1987) interactionist view of socialization posits that to fully understand newcomer accommodation during socialization, one must look at the behaviors of both newcomers and organizational insiders. Figure 1 depicts our proposed model of how newcomer information seeking and manager behavior work to simultaneously influence newcomer socialization. Prior to organizational entry, factors such as newcomer characteristics and job characteristics are in place, which may help or hinder newcomer socialization. We then predicted that newcomer information seeking and manager behavior would combine to positively influence newcomer accommodation (role clarity, performance efficacy, and feelings of acceptance by the manager). These factors as well as newcomer accommodation should affect later socialization outcomes.

### *Task-Oriented Behaviors and Newcomer Task Accommodation*

Two indicators of task accommodation are *role clarity*, which indicates the extent to which newcomers have fully dealt with the ambiguity of their role and achieved role definition, and *performance efficacy*, which is the extent to which the employee feels competent in the new role or has been initiated to the task (e.g., Bauer & Green, 1994; Feldman, 1976; Fisher, 1986; Louis, 1980). Newcomer information-seeking behavior and manager behavior are expected to influence both of these aspects of task accommodation.

Information about how to perform required job tasks is critical to newcomer success on the job (Morrison, 1993a), and newcomers often proactively seek the information they need to understand how to do their jobs effectively (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Ostroff and Kozlowski's (1992) study of engineering and management graduates showed information seeking to be related to a composite measure of newcomer adjustment. This finding has been replicated in additional studies (e.g., Holder, 1996; Morrison, 1993a). *Task information seeking* is a way for newcomers to increase role clarity.

Similarly, as newcomers better understand how to perform, their efficacy should rise (Bandura, 1986; Fisher, 1986). Jones (1983) predicted that those newcomers with greater efficacy would not be afraid to seek information and feedback. Although studies of information seeking have not looked at efficacy specifically, Laker and Steffy (1995) found that other proactive self-managing behaviors were related to newcomer efficacy levels.

In addition, previous research showed that manager-initiating structure behaviors were positively related to role clarity (Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Yukl, 1994) and

initiating structure behaviors included clarifying. Schaubroeck, Ganster, Sime, and Ditman (1993) took the issue one step further and trained managers to engage in clarifying behaviors. Their field experiment revealed that support-staff workers whose managers were trained to engage in clarifying behaviors reported feeling more role clarity than a control group reported several months later.

Managers also have been found to increase feelings of subordinate efficacy (e.g., Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Gomersall and Myers (1966) enhanced newcomer efficacy by telling newcomers that they could master their new tasks. Manager clarifying behaviors could also result in increased performance efficacy by removing performance barriers. Thus, it was expected that both task-oriented information seeking and manager clarifying behavior would influence task accommodation and that each type of proactive behavior would represent a unique, added influence on accommodation during socialization (Reichers, 1987).

*Hypothesis 1:* Newcomer task-oriented, information-seeking behavior and manager clarifying behavior are positively related to newcomer performance efficacy and role clarity.

### *Socially Oriented Behaviors and Newcomer Social Accommodation*

As Morrison (1993a) noted, feelings of social integration are critical to successful newcomer socialization. Fisher (1986) noted that managers are key agents of newcomer socialization and they set the social tone of the work group, but very little is known about their role. Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) also called for additional work that more clearly defines the role managers play in the socializing of newcomers. Thus, we felt it was important to examine how information seeking and manager behaviors are related to newcomer perceptions of their social accommodation. Moreover, given our focus on manager behavior, we examined social accommodation in terms of the newcomer's acceptance by the manager.

The more social information seeking that newcomers engage in, the better they should be able to adapt themselves in a way that allows them to feel accepted by organizational members. Past studies of newcomer information seeking found that social information seeking was related to overall adjustment (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) or social integration (Morrison, 1993a). Newcomers who knew information about what was and was not appropriate social behavior fit in better with organizational insiders (Chatman, 1991). Newcomer social information seeking should help them adapt to their managers' expectations and help them become more accepted.

Similarly, the leadership literature has also consistently demonstrated the importance of managerial concern for

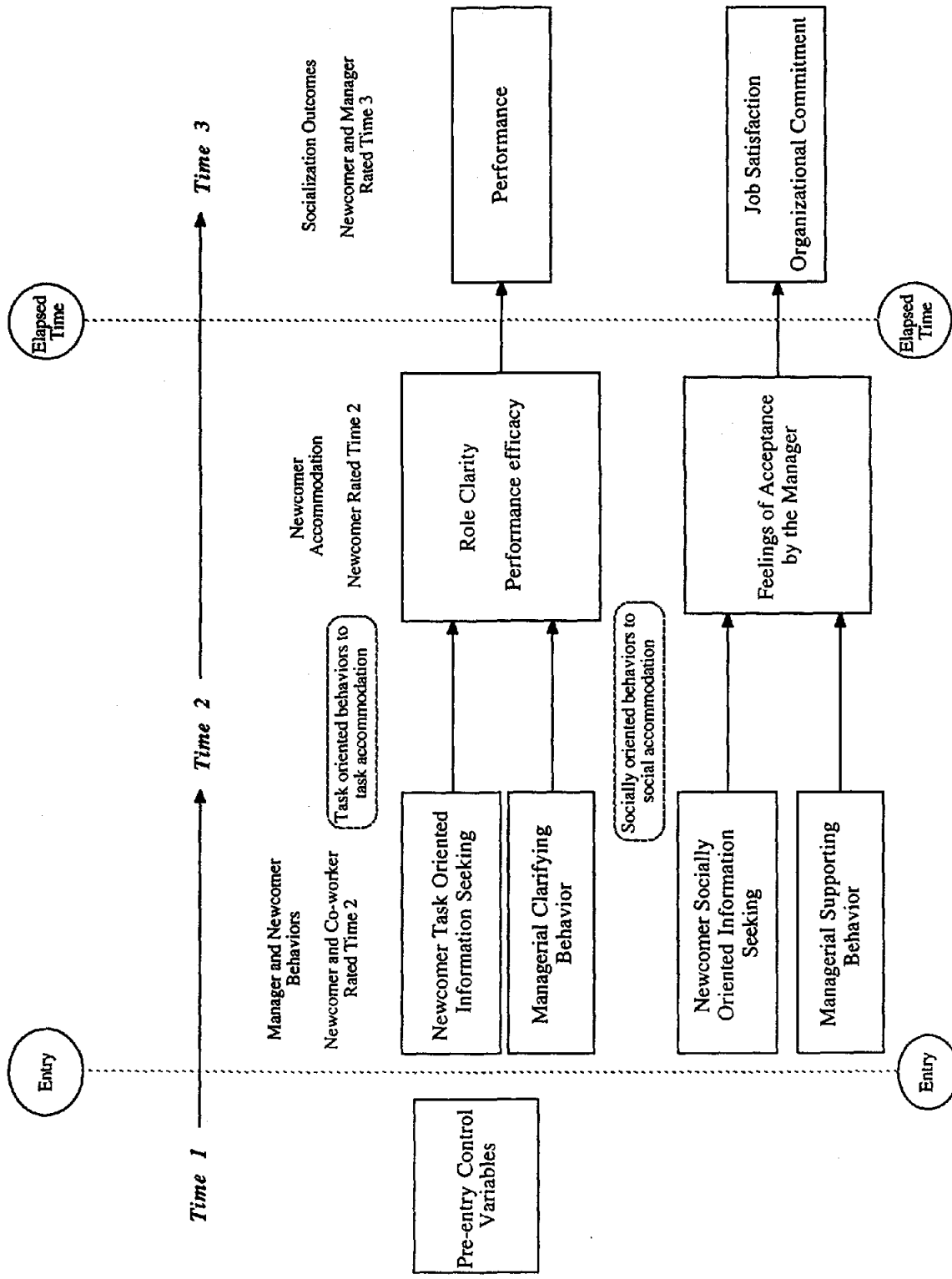


Figure 1. The proposed model.

people and for the more socially oriented aspects of leadership (Yukl, 1994). Major, Kozlowski, Chao, and Gardner (1995) found that, for their sample of business and engineering graduates, having a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship was related to positive newcomer adjustment. Subordinates also have greater satisfaction with supervisors who are supportive (La Rocco & Jones, 1978; Seers, McGee, Serey, & Graen, 1983).

*Hypothesis 2:* Newcomer social information-seeking behavior and manager supporting behavior are positively related to newcomer feelings of acceptance by the manager.

Drawing on Reichers's (1987) work, we have hypothesized additive effects of information seeking and manager behavior. Fisher (1986), however, pointed out that we cannot tell if different sources of information during socialization complement each other in an additive fashion or whether different sources may combine in an interactive way, perhaps substituting for one another. To date, we do not have a strong theoretical basis to predict interactions among these information sources. This idea, however, deserves attention. Therefore, the interaction of information seeking and manager behavior was examined as a research question. Does the interaction of information-seeking behavior and manager behavior add predictive power above and beyond their individual direct effects?

### *Predicting Socialization Outcomes*

Following Adkins (1995), three salient socialization outcomes were chosen for study (performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment). Our focus on task and social dimensions of socialization made it important for us to examine outcome variables that were task oriented, such as performance, and socially oriented, such as attitudinal variables.

Task accommodation is predicted to influence newcomer performance. McEnrue (1984) found that newcomer job performance was a joint function of perceived competence and role clarity, and Adkins (1995) found that role competence predicted job performance and that there is meta-analytic support as well (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Expectations of personal mastery affect both initiation and persistence in coping behavior. The strength of people's convictions in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even try to cope with a given situation and therefore achieve higher performance levels (Bandura, 1986). This persistence of effort should lead to enhanced newcomer performance if the newcomer is otherwise accommodated.

*Hypothesis 3:* Newcomer task accommodation predicts newcomer performance.

As noted earlier, relational ties are also important during socialization. Feeling accepted by one's manager should be associated with a better understanding of social issues (Louis, 1980; Louis et al., 1983; Reichers, 1987). For example, new doctoral students who had supportive advisors had greater commitment to their organization and careers (Green & Bauer, 1995). And, findings from the leader-member exchange literature indicate that higher quality exchange (i.e., more acceptance by the manager) has been a strong predictor of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (e.g., Graen & Cashman, 1975; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997; Major et al., 1995).

*Hypothesis 4:* Newcomer social accommodation predicts newcomer job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Although findings have been mixed (see Ashford & Black, 1996; Mignerey, Rubin, & Gorden, 1995), several studies have found positive relationships between information seeking and work attitudes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (e.g., Holder, 1996; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Field studies have established links between manager support (e.g., Greene, 1975, 1979) and clarifying behaviors (e.g., Greene, 1979) and performance. Social support from the manager is often associated with higher job satisfaction and involvement (La Rocco & Jones, 1978; Seers et al., 1983). We expect that manager behaviors will be particularly important, but we predict that the influence of these behaviors will be mediated by accommodation.

*Hypothesis 5:* Newcomer information-seeking behavior and manager behavior predict the socialization outcomes, but newcomer accommodation mediates this relationship.

## Method

### *Participants and Procedures*

The core participants described here are the same ones used by Bauer and Green (1996). Although both studies shared common new employees, they looked at substantially different variables, with only control variables and performance variables overlapping. This Method section describes the relevant information for the present study. Data were collected from college graduates, 364 of their coworkers, and 112 of their managers.

*Time 1.* Time frames were chosen because they have been noted as meaningful and within the scope of the newcomer adjustment process. At Time 1 (approximately 1 month prior to graduation), 311 graduating college students at a large Midwestern university reported starting salaries, ratings of prior work experience, demographics, job descriptions, and when and where they would start work. An additional 223 graduates reported that they were not seeking jobs that met the inclusion criteria at that time. These individuals were not included in the study. No participants had entered their new organizations at this time. Questionnaires were returned directly to Talya N. Bauer.

*Time 2.* At Time 2, 223 new employees rated their own

Table 1  
Means, Standard Deviations, Alphas, and Correlations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Work experience T1 <sup>a</sup>	10.65	15.23							
2. Major T1 <sup>a</sup>	0.36	0.49	.00						
3. People T1 <sup>a</sup>	5.65	1.22	-.12	-.03					
4. Data T1 <sup>a</sup>	1.17	0.90	-.09	-.26**	.00				
5. Things T1 <sup>a</sup>	4.39	2.74	.05	-.22**	-.27**	.29**			
6. Salary T1 <sup>a</sup> (in thousands)	35.60	9.50	.18**	.09	-.17*	-.02	-.18**		
7. Gender T1 <sup>a</sup>	0.51	0.50	.16*	.21**	-.03	-.17*	-.06	.17*	
8. Tenure T2 <sup>a</sup> (in weeks)	11.83	4.29	.01	.03	.17*	-.03	.02	-.12	.00
9. Tenure T3 <sup>a</sup> (in weeks)	34.42	5.71	-.07	.06	.02	-.14*	.00	-.15*	.11
10. Newcomer task IS T2	4.24	1.18	.04	-.05	.01	.02	.05	-.08	.01
11. Newcomer social IS T2	2.48	1.07	.01	-.08	.01	-.03	.02	-.01	-.11
12. Manager clarifying T2	3.25	0.95	-.11	.05	.13	-.04	.04	-.07	.09
13. Manager supporting T2	3.16	0.83	-.08	-.06	.08	-.01	-.05	-.10	.01
14. Role clarity T2	3.19	1.18	.10	-.15*	.06	.12	-.03	-.08	-.03
15. Performance efficacy T2	8.42	1.42	.12	.09	.09	.00	.04	.04	.10
16. Acceptance by mgr. T2	5.36	1.05	.12	.01	-.07	.01	.01	.00	.02
17. Job satisfaction T3	5.07	0.99	.08	.08	.14*	.06	-.03	.10	.10
18. Org. com. T3	5.10	1.23	.13	.03	.02	.05	-.04	.10	.10
19. Performance T3	5.60	1.26	.04	.12	.14*	.05	-.11	.05	.07

Note. Gender is coded 1 (males) and 0 (females). Boldface numbers along the diagonal represent alphas. T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2; T3 = Time 3. IS = information seeking; mgr. = manager; Org. com. = organizational commitment. Correlation matrix based on listwise deletion.

<sup>a</sup> Denotes data collected as a control variable.

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

information-seeking behavior, how their managers behaved toward them (i.e., the person whom they considered their direct supervisor), and their accommodation levels and returned surveys to Talya N. Bauer. Newcomers were asked to distribute surveys to three coworkers who worked under the same manager and were familiar with the newcomer-supervisor relationship. Coworkers responded to questions regarding their managers' behavior toward the newcomer.<sup>1</sup>

**Time 3.** Approximately 9 months after graduation, 205 participants returned a final questionnaire that gathered responses regarding socialization outcomes. Newcomers reported the name and address of their immediate manager. Data were used only for those newcomers who had not changed managers since joining the organization. Managers were sent letters soliciting their cooperation and a one-page survey to rate newcomer performance. They were asked to rate newcomer performance in reference to tenure on the job (i.e., compared with other employees at the newcomer's career stage). Those participants who did not supply an address were sent another survey and were asked to give it directly to their manager. A total of 112 supervisor surveys were collected for Time 3 data analysis: 85 (76%) directly and 27 (24%) through the graduate. *T* tests revealed no significant difference in performance ratings by data collection method.

At Time 3, the sample consisted of 205 matched surveys from newcomers. This comes to a final response rate of 66% for newcomer data only. Fewer usable, matching surveys were collected from coworkers ( $n = 165$ ) and managers ( $n = 104$ ). The response rate for complete data from newcomers, coworkers, and managers was 34%. This response rate is similar to recent longitudinal studies of newcomer socialization reviewed by Bauer et al. (in press).<sup>2</sup>

The final sample of newcomers was similar to the starting sample with an average age of 23.47 ( $SD = 2.90$ ) and an ap-

proximately equal number of women and men. Participants had 52 different majors (e.g., aviation, business, engineering, and political science), and their jobs represented 80 different job titles (e.g., advertising executive, design engineer, pharmacist) and organizations.

### Measures

**Control variables.** The *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT; U.S. Department of Labor, 1991) codes for data, people, and things were determined by reading the job title and job description given by each newcomer. Each newcomer's starting salary was collected. Gender was considered as a control variable (coded 1 for men and 0 for women). We collected tenure, measured by weeks on the job, and full-time work experience. We created a dummy code for college major: 1 = engineering (e.g., electrical, chemical, mechanical; 36% of the original sample of 311), and 0 = nonengineering (e.g., business, biology, political science; 64% of the original sample).

**Newcomer information seeking.** Morrison's (1993b) proactive information-seeking items were used to measure two types of sought information (task and social) from five sources (ask-

<sup>1</sup> A total of 168 newcomers had at least one, 103 had two, and 93 had three coworkers return surveys in postage-paid envelopes directly to Talya N. Bauer.

<sup>2</sup> The true sample population is unknown, but career center data showed that 1,734 graduates reported having jobs 2 to 3 months after the time of the first survey. Using this conservative benchmark, our starting sample was at least 18% of the true population and our final Time 3 sample with matched data was 6% of the true population.



## Results

Potential control variables that were significantly correlated with study variables were entered as control variables when testing hypotheses. In addition, all potential predictor variables, not just hypothesized predictors, were entered into equations when predicting dependent variables as well as other dependent variables in that group. This allowed for the prediction of only unique variance when predicting multiple outcome variables. Hypotheses were tested using hierarchical regression.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that newcomer task-oriented, information-seeking behavior and manager clarifying behavior would be positively related to role clarity and performance efficacy. Two regressions were run to test this hypothesis. Table 2 shows that newcomer task-oriented information seeking was unrelated to role clarity and performance efficacy. Manager clarifying was significantly related to both role clarity and performance efficacy. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that newcomer social information-seeking behavior and manager supporting behavior would be positively related to newcomer feelings of acceptance by the manager. Newcomer information seeking was not related to feelings of acceptance. Manager supporting behavior was significantly related to feelings of acceptance. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 stated that the better task and socially accommodated that newcomers are, the better newcomer performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment should be. Table 3 shows that the two task-oriented accommodation measures were related to performance and the social accommodation variable was related to job attitudes. Therefore, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were supported.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that newcomer information-seeking behavior and manager behavior would be related to the outcomes but newcomer accommodation would mediate the relationships. Neither newcomer task information-seeking behavior nor social information-seeking behavior met the requirements for mediation (e.g., Baron & Kenny, 1986), as neither was significantly related to the outcomes.

A different pattern emerged for the manager behaviors. The manager behaviors were significantly related to the accommodation variables and outcomes. The accommodation variables were significantly related to the outcome variables. The relationship between the manager behaviors and the outcomes disappeared, however, when the accommodation variables were present. Therefore, accommodation clearly mediates the relationship between the manager behaviors and newcomer performance. Accommodation partially mediates the relationship between the manager behaviors and newcomer organizational com-

mitment. Accommodation does not mediate the relationship between the manager behaviors and newcomer job satisfaction. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was partially supported.

The research question asked whether the interaction between newcomer and manager proaction added any unique explained variance beyond their individual components. The addition of the interaction terms did not add additional variance explained nor did the addition of the interaction term result in additionally significant betas. These results indicate that the interaction between newcomer and manager proaction does not add predictive power.

Although our response rate over time was reasonable compared with many longitudinal studies using data from multiple raters, it was not 100%. When any attrition occurs, a possible threat to internal validity exists. Following the recommendations of Goodman and Blum (1996), a series of post hoc *t* tests were conducted between Time 1 and 2 respondents and Time 1 respondents. There were no differences on salary levels, number of internships, site visits, offers, or the job ratings of data and things. There were significant differences on the *DOT's* (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991) people ratings, with those who did not return surveys having jobs lower in people orientation,  $F(103, 205) = 1.90, p < .01$ .

The *t* tests between those who had returned Time 2 surveys but not Time 3 surveys and those who had complete data at all points in time showed a different trend. All but one variable (manager clarifying) was significantly different for the two groups. Those who completed all surveys were better adjusted (i.e., more accepted by manager),  $F(17, 204) = 1.92, p < .05$ ; had higher role clarity,  $F(17, 204) = 1.69, p < .10$ ; had higher performance efficacy,  $F(17, 204) = 2.23, p < .01$ ; and reported being treated better by their managers' behavior, supporting,  $F(17, 204) = 2.45, p < .01$ . This indicates that those individuals who did not return surveys at Time 3 may not have been doing as well on the job at Time 2 as those individuals who did return all surveys. Therefore, the Time 3 performance test was a conservative one because variance was lost when these individuals did not return their surveys.

Finally, important pioneering studies of information seeking that have been interested in predicting outcomes using only information-seeking variables have often used a multiple source (e.g., managers, peers, written documents) and a multiple information-type (e.g., task, social) perspective (see, e.g., Morrison, 1993b). To be sure that our results were not unduly influenced by our composite measure when we averaged across sources, post hoc analyses were conducted, and we used multiple information-seeking predictors by source. The information seeking from managers consistently predicted outcomes. There-

Table 2  
*Hierarchical Regressions for Predicting Role Clarity, Performance Efficacy,  
 and Acceptance by the Manager*

Variable(s)	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$
Predicting role clarity (Time 2)				
Step 1: Demographic control variables (Time 1)		.01		1.02
Tenure	.05			
People	.08			
Major	.12			
Step 2: Accommodation control variables (Time 2)		.37	.36	45.43**
Performance efficacy	.34**			
Acceptance by manager	.26**			
Step 3: Manager behavior toward newcomer (Time 2)		.47	.10	14.81**
Manager clarifying	.29**			
Manager supporting	-.09			
Step 4: Newcomer information seeking (Time 2)		.47	.00	0.00
Task information seeking	.06			
Social information seeking	-.02			
Overall equation				15.42**
Predicting performance efficacy (Time 2)				
Step 1: Demographic control variables (Time 1)		.04		0.05
Tenure	.03			
People	.04			
Major	.15*			
Step 2: Accommodation control variables (Time 2)		.40	.36	47.7**
Role clarity	.33**			
Acceptance by manager	.34**			
Step 3: Manager behavior toward newcomer (Time 2)		.49	.09	13.85**
Manager clarifying	.19*			
Manager supporting	.02			
Step 4: Newcomer information seeking (Time 2)		.50	.01	1.55
Task information seeking	.05			
Social information seeking	.05			
Overall equation				17.16**
Predicting acceptance by manager (Time 2)				
Step 1: Demographic control variables (Time 1)		.00		0.82
Tenure	.01			
People	-.15			
Major	-.02			
Step 2: Accommodation control variables (Time 2)		.37	.37	46.69**
Role clarity	.27**			
Performance efficacy	.38**			
Step 3: Manager behavior toward newcomer (Time 2)		.44	.07	9.81**
Manager clarifying	-.04			
Manager supporting	.22**			
Step 4: Newcomer information seeking (Time 2)		.44	.00	0.00
Task information seeking	.00			
Social information seeking	-.02			
Overall equation				13.86**

Note.  $N = 165$ . Reported  $\beta$ s are those with all variables simultaneously entered in the final step.  
 \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .



Table 3  
*Hierarchical Regressions for Predicting Newcomer Performance,  
 Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment*

Variable(s)	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$
Predicting performance (Time 3)				
Step 1: Demographic control variables (Time 1)		.03		1.17
Tenure	-.07			
People	.06			
Major	.10			
Step 2: Outcome control variables (Time 2)		.30	.27	20.83**
Job satisfaction	.34*			
Organizational commitment	-.16			
Step 3: Newcomer accommodation (Time 2)		.49	.19	13.04**
Role clarity	.23*			
Performance efficacy	.26*			
Acceptance by manager	.13			
Step 3: Manager behavior toward newcomer (Time 2)		.52	.03	3.22**
Manager clarifying	-.09			
Manager supporting	.12			
Step 4: Newcomer information seeking (Time 2)		.53	.01	1.08
Task information seeking	-.04			
Social information seeking	-.07			
Overall equation				7.69**
Predicting job satisfaction (Time 3)				
Step 1: Demographic control variables (Time 1)		.02		1.26
Tenure	-.09			
People	.04			
Major	-.03			
Step 2: Outcome control variables (Time 2)		.73	.71	142.00**
Performance	.14			
Organizational commitment	.68**			
Step 3: Newcomer accommodation (Time 2)		.77	.04	6.09**
Role clarity	.17*			
Performance efficacy	.11			
Acceptance by manager	.28**			
Step 3: Managerial behavior (Time 2)		.81	.04	10.84**
Manager clarifying	.12			
Manager supporting	.07			
Step 4: Newcomer information seeking (Time 2)		.81	.00	0.00
Task information seeking	.02			
Social information seeking	.02			
Overall equation				20.46**
Predicting organizational commitment (Time 3)				
Step 1: Demographic control variables (Time 1)		.00		.00
Tenure	.08			
People	.04			
Major	.03			
Step 2: Outcome control variables (Time 2)		.70	.70	126.00**
Performance	-.08			
Job satisfaction	.81**			

Table 3 (continued)

Variable(s)	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$
Predicting organizational commitment (Time 3) (continued)				
Step 3: Newcomer accommodation (Time 2)		.72	.02	2.50*
Role clarity	.22**			
Performance efficacy	-.09			
Acceptance by manager	.19*			
Step 3: Manager behavior toward newcomer (Time 2)		.75	.03	6.18**
Manager clarifying	-.12			
Manager supporting	.15			
Step 4: Newcomer information seeking (Time 2)		.75	.00	0.00
Task information seeking	.02			
Social information seeking	.00			
Overall equation				20.46**

Note.  $N = 104$ . Reported  $\beta$ s are those with all variables simultaneously entered in the final step.

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

fore, we chose to keep the information-seeking measures as originally proposed.

### Discussion

Reichers (1987) suggested that when both newcomer information seeking and manager proaction occurs, socialization should be at its most potent. Building on this logic, this study assessed whether there were additive effects of information seeking and manager behavior on socialization accommodation and outcomes. Although both types of proaction showed at least some zero-order relationships to socialization variables, we did not find additive effects. Controlling for manager behavior eliminated the effects of information seeking, even though the levels of information seeking found in this study are relatively comparable with those reported in other socialization research. Although additivity is a compelling logic, the present results suggest that sometimes proactive behaviors may not add additional predictive variance in explaining socialization. We suspect other conditions, for example, the uniqueness of information from sources, may affect when sources are additive and when they are not.

In this study, information seeking was not influential. Although it yielded some zero-order relationships, no multivariate relationships with accommodation and outcomes emerged in this study. There may be several reasons for this pattern. Previous information-seeking findings may be inflated because of omitted variables. When information seeking was the only type of predictor, effects were found (e.g., Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992, 1993).<sup>4</sup> When other predictors of socialization were included in studies of information seeking, diminished effects of information seeking were observed

(e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Mignerey et al., 1995). It may be that the effects of manager behavior overpower information-seeking effects, as they did here. If this is a replicable pattern, it may suggest that one of the hidden causes of information-seeking effects in prior research was that such information seeking elicited manager behaviors. Thus, information-seeking effects may have been partially due to manager behaviors that were not measured and detected. The significant correlations between information seeking and manager behavior in this study are consistent with this argument. Another explanation may be due to the timing of data collection. Although the timing for this study was similar to those referenced above, failure to find support at 3- and 9-month lags may be simply due to the fact that information seeking matters earlier or later on the job. We hope that future studies will clarify these relationships.

Our work supports the inclusion of manager behavior as a key aspect of the newcomer socialization process. Manager behaviors demonstrated specificity in their relationships to accommodation. For example, clarifying behavior only predicted task-accommodation variables. Similarly, relationship-oriented behavior was the best predictor of acceptance by the manager. In turn, many of the accommodation-to-outcome relationships seemed to follow specific patterns as well. Thus, it appears that behaviors in this study served specialized roles in the socialization process. These findings are especially encouraging

<sup>4</sup> When only information-seeking variables are used in regressions to predict accommodation, they do predict all of the accommodation variables. They do not predict the outcomes of performance, job satisfaction, or organizational commitment.

in that they do not rely on self-reports about manager behavior.

No direct effects of manager behavior on newcomer performance and attitudes were found after accommodation was taken into account. It seems possible that early in the relationship, as studied here, manager behaviors have their strongest influence on newcomer learning and accommodation, indirectly affecting performance. However, as the newcomer gets more experience and becomes more fully socialized, it may be that other manager behaviors become directly related to employee performance. For a mature employee, learning may not be so much the issue as motivation or a sense of obligation to the manager to perform. Thus, the important manager behaviors for predicting performance could change over time, or manager behavior might change from having indirect effects on performance to having direct effects as the relationship progresses.

The present study collected data at three points in time so newcomer adjustment is seen as three snapshots rather than a moving picture. Therefore, we cannot make any clear statements of causation. Socialization, newcomer performance, and manager behavior are probably reflexive in nature, each influencing the other over time. Future studies that gather data at equal tenure intervals to truly control for the influence of tenure on socialization would help disentangle these potentially reflexive relationships. For example, studies that measure the socialization of groups of newcomers at various tenure intervals could directly compare the behavior, adjustment, and outcomes of each group of newcomers. Similarly, studies using a daily or weekly experience sampling approach (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1983) also might be effective at capturing subtle changes across time.

This work suggests that socialization research can ill afford to ignore the role of the supervising manager during the adjustment process. Manager behavior is important to understanding how newcomers become accommodated to their new organizations. Both newcomer and manager behaviors need to be included in studies of proactive socialization behaviors to truly assess their relative impact. This study is a step toward understanding the roles agents and newcomers play in socialization. The complexity of the manager–newcomer relationship and of the socialization process indicates that it is worth investigating further.

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