



Impact of organizational socialization tactics on newcomer job satisfaction and engagement: Core self-evaluations as moderators



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ABSTRACT

This study proposes and tests a new model in which newcomer core self-evaluations (CSE) moderate the effects of organizational socialization tactics (OST) on job satisfaction and work engagement. Data were collected in nine luxury hotels in China and a total of 161 parent respondents with 5000 bootstraps were analyzed using structural equation modeling technique. The results from this study indicate that newcomer job satisfaction and work engagement each is predicted by institutionalized OST directly and positively. They also indicate that CSE moderates the relationship between OST and job satisfaction, but not the one between OST and work engagement. In particular, hotel newcomers high on CSE are much more adept, than their low CSE counterparts, at translating their organizational advantages of institutionalized OST into job satisfaction. These findings as well as their theoretical and practical implications are discussed within the contexts of organizational socialization research and hotel human resource development practices.

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1. Introduction

Newcomer organizational socialization (OS) typically refers to the process by which he or she learns how to effectively function in the workplace by both socialization and individualization following organizational entry (Ashforth et al., 2007; Jablin, 1982; Song and Chathoth, 2011; Song et al., 2012; Taylor and Finley, 2010).¹ OS is an important issue for both employees and organizations for several reasons. First, newcomers adjust quickly in the early stages of their socialization into an organization, with early adjustment having lasting influences and quantifiable outcomes (Bauer and Green, 1994). The costs of neglecting to intervene in newcomer OS process could be a number of negative consequences such as job dissatisfaction (Saks et al., 2007), disengagement (Saks and Gruman, 2011), and/or turnover (Choi, 2006; Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2006).

According to Griffin et al. (2000), OS outcomes can be influenced by personal and environmental factors as well as the interactions between the two. Accordingly, the dynamics of OS can be captured from each of the following three perspectives: the situationalist, the individual difference, and the interactionist (Saks and Ashforth, 1997; Song and Chathoth, 2010). *The situationalist perspective* emphasizes the roles of factors in the organization in shaping newcomer work attitudes and behaviors. One of those factors is *organizational socialization tactics* (OST), which could be defined as “the ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organization” (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979, p. 230). Furthermore, Bauer et al. (2007) note that OST is a predictor of newcomer job satisfaction.

The individual difference perspective otherwise emphasizes that factors in the person affect newcomer attitudes and behaviors. However, the foregoing two perspectives are argued to be limited in scope in that any of the perspectives alone cannot capture OS dynamics comprehensively (Gruman et al., 2006). However, *the interactionist perspective* could work around this limitation by integrating the foregoing two different approaches (Saks and Ashforth, 2000; Song and Chathoth, 2010). In the OS context, the interactionist perspective could be understood as the approach to studying the interplays between factors in the person and those in the organizations as well as their interaction effects on newcomer socialization

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¹ Organizational communication scholars prefer the term “organizational assimilation” to “organizational socialization” and they often distinguish between “socialization” as “role-taking” and “individualization” as “role-making” (Ashforth et al., 2007). For details, see the debate on whether organizational socialization or assimilation should be used, in the December 1999 issue of *Communication Monographs*, sparked by Kramer and Miller, 1999.

outcomes (Saks and Ashforth, 2000). For example, Sluss et al. (2012) note that *general self-efficacy* and *task significance* interact with each other to predict job satisfaction positively. To date, the roles of general self-efficacy as well as its moderating effects in newcomer OS phenomenon have been established (Sluss et al., 2012; Song and Chathoth, 2010), albeit not always consistently.

The role of general self-efficacy in shaping employees' attitudes and behaviors in organizational contexts has been empirically examined and confirmed in a number of studies (e.g., Song and Chathoth, 2010). Notably, one shift of this research paradigm involves the examination of individuals' *core self-evaluations* (CSE), a broad personality construct referring to fundamental appraisals that people make of their own self-worth, competence, and capabilities (Judge et al., 1997). This shift is largely due to CSE theory developed by Judge et al. (1997), who argue that CSE is a pretty broad theoretical construct that incorporates not only general self-efficacy, but also three more elements including general self-esteem, locus of control, and emotional stability.

Despite its short history, CSE is becoming a prevalent topic of investigation in the organizational sciences (Chang et al., 2012). While a majority of CSE research has focused on its direct effects on OS outcomes such as job performance (Song and Chathoth, 2013), a few studies (e.g., McNall et al., 2011) have explored the moderating roles of CSE in organizational contexts. To our knowledge, no study in this vein documents the moderating effects of CSE on the relationships between OST and each of the OS outcomes including job satisfaction and work engagement. Nevertheless, a review by Saks and Ashforth (1997) documents that job satisfaction is positively predicted by institutionalized OST. Research since 1997 (Bauer et al., 2007; Gruman et al., 2006) has reinforced this causal linkage. Recent research has expanded the number of OS outcomes including work engagement. In particular, Saks and Gruman (2011) theoretically hypothesize that institutionalized OST relates to newcomer work engagement. However, their empirical results do not support this hypothesis despite the sound rationale for the theoretical linkage between the two constructs. Furthermore, the generalizability of OS findings has been limited due to the fact that OS research has been solely based on the same few occupations using well-educated, white-collar, and Western samples (Ashforth et al., 2007). OS findings and conclusions that are meta-analyzed in Bauer et al. (2007), for instance, have not been based on hotel and resort organizations where less-educated newcomers dominate.

The research objectives of this study were therefore twofold: (a) to see whether institutionalized OST can predict hotel newcomer job satisfaction and work engagement, directly and respectively; and (b) to explore the potential moderating roles of CSE on the foregoing two direct causal linkages. In doing so, we not only illustrate how CSE may interact with OST to influence job satisfaction and work engagement, but also provide managers with guidance on enhancing their effectiveness in socializing newcomers. Below, Fig. 1 presents the conceptual framework within which the proposed direct and moderation effects are illustrated.

2. Theoretical background

Newcomer OS² has attracted the attention of many scholars and it continues to be an interesting and promising avenue of research (Bauer et al., 2007). Despite the strides made in OS research, the literature is often described as theoretically and conceptually fragmented (Bauer et al., 2007). This is attributable, in part, to "the relative lack of theory" in OS research (Cooper-Thomas and

Anderson, 2006). In this context, it is therefore necessary to look into the existing works that are both internal and external to the OS literature. This doing help develop a sound theoretical framework as well as research hypotheses.

2.1. The conceptual framework

The four theoretical constructs in the conceptual framework of this study have their theoretical and/or conceptual foundations in the literature. Specifically, OST is known as one of the classical theories in the OS domain (Saks et al., 2007). Job satisfaction is a default indicator of OS success (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2007; Khalilzadeh et al., 2013). Work engagement is recently argued to be one more important OS outcome (Karatepe and Demir, 2013; Saks and Gruman, 2011). Whereas Ashforth et al. (2007) argue that CSE is an important variable of newcomer individual differences, Judge et al. (1997) have developed CSE theory in the domain of industrial and organizational psychology.

With regard to the direct and interaction effects in our conceptual model, OS scholars (Griffin et al., 2000; Saks and Ashforth, 2000) theoretically purport that newcomers react differently to similar environments, and that those factors both in the person and in the organization as well as the interactions between the two should be jointly considered to explain newcomers' work attitudes and behaviors. In the same vein, theoretical notion has it that through the lens of the interactionist, newcomers are not only passive recipients of socialization, but also active agents who seek out opportunities to influence others at their workplace (Ashforth et al., 2007).

Specifically, Judge et al. (1997) theoretical posits that general self-efficacy – one of the four CSE components – may interact with situation-specific variables to influence employees' job satisfaction. More specifically, Judge et al. (1998) propose that CSE interacts with employees' perceptions of work characteristics to influence job satisfaction, such that employees high on CSE see challenging work as more satisfying than their low CSE counterparts. As such, this study argues that OST predicts job satisfaction and work engagement, directly and respectively. It also argues that newcomers high on CSE should translate, better than those low on CSE, their organizational advantages of institutionalized OST into higher levels of job satisfaction and engagement.

2.2. Organizational socialization tactics (OST)

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) propose six typologies of OST employed by the organization. The six tactics, each of which is bipolar, are (1) *collective versus individual* (whether newcomers are socialized in groups or individually); (2) *formal versus informal* (whether newcomers are segregated from insiders during OS); (3) *sequential versus random* (whether newcomers are told explicitly about the sequencing of planned OS events); (4) *fixed versus variable* (whether there is an explicit, fixed timetable for completing the various OS stages); (5) *serial versus disjunctive* (whether previous job incumbents are available as role models for newcomers); and (6) *investiture versus divestiture* (whether newcomers receive positive social support from insiders).

In a given situation, OST may present itself as either *institutionalized* or *individualized*. The former is formed by *collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture* tactics; in contrast, the latter is characterized by *individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture* tactics (Ashforth et al., 2007; Jones, 1986). Whereas institutionalized tactics reflect the presence of a structured and formalized OS process, individualized tactics tend to reflect the absence of a structured OS process such that newcomers are socialized more by default than by design (Ashforth et al., 2007).

² Current OS models are mainly rooted in life course socialization, occupational socialization, and socialization in total institutions; see Section *Early Roots of Socialization Research* in Ashforth et al.'s (2007, pp. 3–8) review work for details.

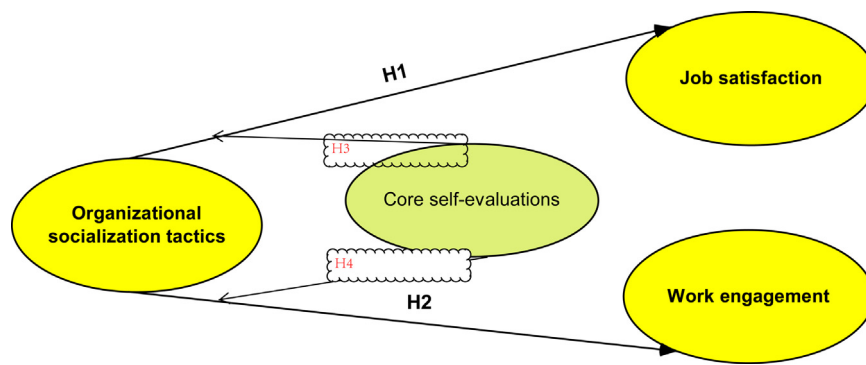


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework of this study.

2.3. Success-related OS outcomes

To date, there has been no agreement on what constitutes success-related OS outcomes (e.g., Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2006³; Song and Chathoth, 2010). What “successful socialization” actually means is contingent upon, and differs across, newcomers, organizations, and the likes (Bauer et al., 1998). Nevertheless, job satisfaction has been widely acknowledged as one of the success-related indicators of socializing employees in the hospitality organizations (Yang, 2010). Recently, Ashforth et al. (2007) consider job performance, turnover intentions, and citizenship behaviors, among others as successful OS indicators. More recently, Saks and Gruman (2011) note that work engagement is one more success-related OS outcome. Kahn (1990) defines work engagement as employees’ presenting themselves psychologically when occupying and performing their organizational roles (Kahn, 1990).

2.4. OST and job satisfaction

A review of the literature (Bauer et al., 2007) indicates that OST is associated with newcomer job satisfaction. The generalizability of this causal finding is, however, unknown or limited due to the fact that existing findings and conclusions in the literature have been solely based on the same few occupations using well-educated, white-collar, and/or Western samples (Ashforth et al., 2007). On the contrary, Chinese hotel employees are usually dominated by those with an education of senior middle school and below (Song and Chathoth, 2013). Although Huang and Cao (2008) have confirmed the causal relationship between OST and job satisfaction, their study sample has been based on well-educated Chinese employees whose employment organizations have not been hotels or resorts. It is well known that hotel and resorts are people-based and labor-intensive and those organizations usually implement institutionalized OS programs, in the belief that such well-structured programs could lead to positive outcomes such as higher job satisfaction. Based on the foregoing, an argument could be extended to expect that institutionalized OST will have a direct and positive impact on newcomer job satisfaction. Our first hypothesis could thus be developed as follows:

Hypothesis 1. Institutionalized OST will be positively related to newcomer job satisfaction.

2.5. OST and work engagement

Saks and Gruman (2011) have explored the relationship between OST and newcomer work engagement. However, their study has not lent empirical support to this causal relationship. Nevertheless, we argue that institutionalized OST will be related to higher levels of newcomer work engagement for the following reasons. First, institutionalized OST is believed to facilitate newcomer adjustment to work roles, because it is collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture (Jones, 1986), providing support, advice, positive information, guidance, orientation, supervision, among others to newcomers. In this kind of favorable environments, newcomers are very much likely to become engaged in their work. Second, individualized OST leads to entry stressors (e.g., role ambiguity and role conflict) (Saks et al., 2007) that are associated with lower levels of work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010). Finally, Saks and Gruman (2011) formally hypothesize that OST predicts work engagement. Based on the foregoing, our second hypothesis could be developed as follows:

Hypothesis 2. Institutionalized OST will be positively related to newcomer work engagement.

2.6. CSE as a moderator

The moderation effects of the four CSE components are documented in a number of existing works. Specifically, these components as well as their moderating roles involve general self-efficacy (Song and Chathoth, 2010), general self-esteem (Avey et al., 2011), locus of control (Claeys et al., 2010), and emotional stability (Wang et al., 2011). Comparatively, only a few studies to date have examined CSE as a moderator. For example, Judge and Hurst (2007) note that people high on CSE are adept at translating early advantages into later economic success. In particular, people’s family advantages and educational attainment operate more strongly for those high on CSE than for those low on CSE (Judge and Hurst, 2007). Simsek et al. (2010) documents that CEOs with high CSE have stronger positive influences on their firms’ entrepreneurial orientation; and that these influences are especially strong in firms facing dynamic environments. McNall et al. (2011) noted that when perceived organizational support is low, individuals high on CSE report higher work-family enrichment than those low on CSE. Finally, Bowling et al. (2012) noted that the relationship between job attitudes and organizational citizenship behaviors is stronger for workers who are high on CSE than for their low CSE counterparts. In short, the small number of studies as well as their findings would suggest that CSE generally functions as a moderator in people’s family and organizational lives.

In the OS domain, there has been a lack of empirical evidence on the moderating roles of CSE in the relationships of OST with job

³ Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006, p.497) discuss the issue of success-related organizational socialization outcomes.

satisfaction and work engagement. Nevertheless, there have been a few studies that have examined the moderating roles of *general self-efficacy*, which is only one of the four major theoretical components of CSE (noted earlier in Section 1). For instance, Song and Chathoth (2010) noted that the variance of intern newcomers' job satisfaction is incrementally explained by the interactions between general self-efficacy and each of the three newcomer learning dimensions (i.e., understanding, coworker support, and future prospect).

In contrast, Saks and Ashforth (2000) reported that the interactions between general self-efficacy and each of entry stressors such as role conflicts failed to predict newcomer job satisfaction. The foregoing somewhat contradictory findings regarding general self-efficacy's moderating roles would suggest that more research should be conducted, particularly with a focus on the moderating roles of general self-efficacy as well as its evolutionary construct of CSE.

In fact, the foregoing hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 in our study are somewhat replication of previous research. They actually serve as the necessary departure point for the interactionist perspective, from which the potential moderating roles of CSE in the two proposed direct causalities could be explored. In the present study, it is argued that CSE may moderate with OST to positively influence newcomer job satisfaction and work engagement for a number of reasons. First, CSE is associated with an individual's ability to take advantage of beneficial circumstances (Chang et al., 2012), but the extent, to which different newcomers translate these advantages into success-related OS outcomes, may significantly differ between newcomers high on CSE and those low on CSE. For example, Karatepe (2011) documents that CSE significantly moderates the effects of exhaustion on job satisfaction. In particular, we expect that the advantages of OS environment in terms of institutionalized OST may operate more strongly for those high on CSE than for their low CSE counterparts. More specifically, we argue that CSE may interact with institutionalized OST to influence socialization success-related indicators of job satisfaction and work engagement, respectively, such that each of the two positive relationships might be stronger, when CSE is high than when it is low. This rationale thus leads to the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3. The relationship between institutionalized OST and job satisfaction will be moderated by newcomer CSE, in that this relationship will be stronger when CSE is high than when it is low.

Hypothesis 4. The relationship between institutionalized OST and work engagement will be moderated by newcomer CSE, in that this relationship will be stronger when CSE is high than when it is low.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection

An unresolved issue in OS research pertains to the appropriate time for data collection. A wide variety of approaches have appeared in OS empirical studies because a specific theory on the timing aspect of OS has been lacking to date. Some (e.g., Gruman et al., 2006) measured newcomer OS at an early stage (i.e., between 1 month and 12 months after entry), assuming that OS phenomenon lasts only for a certain period of time following organizational entry. Others (e.g., Yang, 2010) regard OA as an ongoing process by which an employee socialize over time, assuming that OS lasts as long as one's organizational tenure.

In the context of this study, the tenure ranging from less than 2 month to around 12 months is a reasonable strategy for studying newcomers for a number of reasons. First, our research focus is on newcomer OS and his or her tenure in the foregoing first stream usually falls into this time frame. Second, it is well-known that hotels are essentially people-based and labor-intensive and hotel

turnover rate is usually higher than many other industries (Kim et al., 2010). These characteristics help single out the importance of employers' understanding of, and intervention on, their newcomer early experiences of OS. Third, in OS research, the impact of OST is often measured among newcomers whose organizational tenure is within one year following organizational entry (e.g., Allen and Shanock, 2013). Such relatively early OS experiences are believed to have more theoretical and practical implications than do the relatively later stages of employees' OS experiences.

In the present study, data were collected in 2013 in nine luxury hotels and resorts on China's Hainan Island. Specifically, a total of 400 questionnaires were administered to employees whose tenure was between 2 months and 3 years; and 364 copies of the questionnaires were returned. Only 161 out of 364 respondents fell into the frame between 2 and 12 months and they accordingly formed our hotel newcomer sample. The rest of the respondents whose tenure was over one year are regarded, as per McNatt and Judge (2008), as *recent insiders*, but not *newcomers*. Given the research objectives of this study, we only stay focused on analyzing the foregoing newcomer sample.

3.2. OST scale

Cable and Parsons (2001) suggest a 12-itemed OST scale that is based on Jones (1986) 30-itemed OST measure. Likewise, Allen and Shanock (2013) also chose to use the short version of OST scale due to space constraints imposed by the organization. Specifically, the OST measure (Cable and Parsons, 2001) covers a total of six specific tactics. One sample item of *collective vs. individual* tactics is "This organization puts all newcomers through the same set of learning experiences". An example of *formal vs. informal* tactics is "I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods". While *sequential vs. random* tactics are captured by statements such as "In this organization, there is a clear pattern in the way one role leads to another, or one job assignment leads to another", *fixed vs. variable* tactics are measured by items such as "The steps in the career ladder are clearly specified in this organization". Whereas *serial vs. disjunctive* tactics are measured by statements such as "My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to this organization", *investiture vs. divestiture* tactics are being reflected by items such as "I have received little guidance from experienced organizational members as to how I should perform my job". All the four theoretical constructs in our conceptual model were measured by a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from "1" (strongly disagree) to "7" (strongly agree).

Previous scholars have examined OST as a single factor (e.g., Gruman et al., 2006), three factors (Cable and Parsons, 2001), and/or six factors (e.g., Ashforth and Saks, 1996). The issue of the factorial structure of socialization tactics has not been resolved to date (Allen and Shanock, 2013). Given this fact, we took the bootstrap approach suggested by Linhart and Zucchini (1986) to compare the competing models. Specifically, we generated 5000 bootstrap samples by sampling with replacement from the original 161 parent samples. Then, for each of the competing models we calculated its corresponding mean value of ML (maximum likelihood) discrepancy (implied vs. population) over 5000 bootstrap samples. The results revealed that the mean value of ML discrepancy for the one-factor model of OST was 239.255 (SE = .271), which was smaller and thus better, as per Linhart and Zucchini (1986), than either the mean ($M = 320.960$, $SE = .308$) of the three-factor model or the mean ($M = 357.781$, $SE = .319$) of the six-factor model, respectively.

In addition, there have been a number of precedents of examining OST as a single factor in both field (e.g., Gruman et al., 2006) and meta-analytic review studies (e.g., Bauer et al., 2007, p. 713). Moreover, the reliability alpha value of OST in the present study is

Table 1
Mean, standard deviation, alpha, and correlations.

| Constructs | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Job satisfaction | 4.03 | .94 | (.87) | .61 | .31 | .11 |
| 2. Work engagement | 4.20 | .64 | .78* | (.80) | .17 | .08 |
| 3. Organizational socialization tactics | 4.38 | .66 | .56* | .56* | (.82) | .14 |
| 4. Core self-evaluations | 4.49 | .74 | .33* | .28** | .37* | (.89) |

Note. 1:

* $p < .001$.

** $p < .05$.

2. Reliability α values are shown in the parentheses located on the diagonal. 3. Partial correlation values as well as their squared values are below and above the diagonal, respectively. These values are based on the measurement model detailed in Table 2, model 2.

.82, which is quite close to .84, the value documented in Gruman et al.'s (2006) work. The one-factor model of OST in this study fits the data only marginally: $\chi^2/df = 3.69$, CFI = .785. Nevertheless, the goodness-of-fit statistics are in line with the results obtained in previous research (Ashforth et al., 1997). Based on all the above, we preferred the solution of the one-factor structure of OST to other alternatives. We therefore collapsed the OS tactics into a single factor in our study.

3.3. CSE scale

Judge et al. (2003) have developed the CSE measure, which ask respondents to indicate their level of agreement with each of the twelve statements. Sample statements of CSE include "I am confident I get the success I deserve in life" and "I am capable of coping with most of my problems". The 12-itemed model fits the data, however, only marginally: $\chi^2/df = 3.42$, CFI = .835. After deleting two redundant items, the 10-itemed CSE model fits the data well (i.e., $\chi^2/df = 2.43$, CFI = .916) and these fit indices are close to those (i.e., $\chi^2/df = 2.03$, CFI = .92) as what are reported in Judge et al.'s (2003) study. Nevertheless, we preferred the 12-item CSE solution to the 10-item solution for three reasons. First, the 12-itemed CSE scale presents itself as reliable ($\alpha = .89$) as what are documented in Judge et al.'s (2003) study where the reliability alpha values hover around .85. Second, the factor loadings of these items ranged from .55 to .74 and they were all statistically significant at .001 level. Third, the 12-itemed solution enabled us to compare our findings with those in the literature. We therefore collapsed all the 12 items into a single CSE factor. In fact, this doing is line with previous scholars (e.g., Kacmar et al., 2009) who have detected the moderation effects of CSE. As per Hair et al. (2010), splitting the overall sample into two halves is a must for detecting moderation effects using SEM when the moderator is a continuous variable. In this regard, Lee et al. (2013) provide an example of exploring the moderation effects of relational benefits. In our study, the median value of CSE is 4.5, a threshold level for us to split 161 respondents into two groups: high ($N = 75$) vs. low ($N = 77$) CSE groups.

3.4. Scales of job satisfaction and work engagement

We performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the measurement model that comprises both 3-itemed job satisfaction (Brayfield and Rothe, 1951; Cammann et al., 1983) and 9-itemed work engagement (Rothbard, 2001). An initial CFA results indicated that this measurement model did not fit the data parsimoniously: $\chi^2/df = 3.34$, CFI = .853, RMSEA = .121. After deleting three measurement items of work engagement, the model fits the data well: $\chi^2/df = 1.536$, CFI = .976, RMSEA = .058. Specifically, job satisfaction measure has three items: (a) "In general, I like working in this organization" (factor loading value = .83), (b) "Overall, I am satisfied with my present job in this organization" (.81), and (c) "I find real enjoyment in my present work" (.86).

The six retained work engagement items are (1) "I spend a lot of time thinking about my work" (factor loading = .51), (2) "I concentrate a lot on my work" (.74), (3) "I pay a lot of attention to my work" (.63), (4) "When I am working, I often lose track of time" (.76), (5) "When I am working, I am completely engrossed by my work" (.54), and (6) "Nothing can distract me when I am working" (.60). Finally, job satisfaction (reliability $\alpha = .87$) and work engagement ($\alpha = .80$) present themselves as having acceptable levels of internal consistency.

3.5. The overall measurement model as well as its psychometric properties

Based on the foregoing, the overall measurement model was specified and it therefore includes three theoretical constructs of interests, namely, OST, work engagement, and job satisfaction. CSE is not specified in this overall measurement model for one notable reason, that is, our goal was to detect the moderation effects of CSE using a multi-group analysis in SEM, a method suggested by Hair et al. (2010). The overall measurement model exhibits high levels of fit indices (see Table 2, model 1). In this model, factor loadings for the latent constructs of job satisfaction and work engagement range from .81 to .87 and from .53 to .76, respectively. The AVE (average variance extracted) value of job satisfaction is .70. Job satisfaction offers convergent validity evidence because its AVE is great than .50. Although the AVE value of work engagement (.41) is only close to the threshold level,⁴ it is greater than any of the squared correlation values (see Table 1). This fact thus offers a kind of evidence on the discriminant validity of work engagement.

The overall measurement model was validated across two random splits of the data set, namely, split sample 1 ($N = 80$) and sample 2 ($N = 81$). Our results indicate that the model presents itself as being factorial invariance ($\Delta\chi^2_{[7]} = 9.367$, $p = .23$). Prior to this test, a precondition for this invariance was met, that is, across the two split samples, both the unconstrained and constrained models exhibited acceptable levels of fit indices (see Table 2, models 3, 4). The stable and well-fitted measurement model enabled us to move on to test the hypotheses developed in this study (detailed later in Sections 4.2 and 4.3).

3.6. Data analysis

Anderson and Gerbing (1988) suggest a two-stage approach to SEM (structural equation modeling). The first stage concerns the measurement model, while the second involves structural model. We followed this approach by developing all the models that are detailed in Table 2. Prior to formally testing these models, the

⁴ The AVE value of work engagement could be equal to the threshold level of .50, if only three out of nine measurement items contributed by Rothbard (2001) were retained. The loading values of the three items are all higher or equal to .70. However, we chose to retain as many as six measurement items.

Table 2
Measurement and structural model fit indices.

| Models | $\chi^2_{[df]}$ | <i>p</i> | χ^2/df | CFI | IFI | TLI | RMR | RMSEA |
|--|-------------------------|----------|-------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Measurement models (N = 161) | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Overall model of OST, job satisfaction, and work engagement | 50.19 _[33] | .028 | 1.52 | .973 | .974 | .963 | .040 | .057 |
| 2. Models of OST, job satisfaction, work engagement, and CSE | 59.84 _[40] | .023 | 1.49 | .970 | .971 | .959 | .039 | .056 |
| Validating model 1 across two randomly split samples: Sample 1 (N = 80) vs. Sample 2 (N = 81) | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Non-restricted measurement in split samples | 94.816 _[66] | .012 | 1.43 | .957 | .958 | .941 | .053 | .052 |
| 4. Full metric invariance in split samples | 104.183 _[73] | .010 | 1.43 | .953 | .954 | .942 | .071 | .052 |
| Validating model 1 across two CSE samples: High CSE Sample (N = 75) vs. Low CSE sample (N = 77) | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Non-restricted measurement in CSE samples | 93.534 _[66] | .015 | 1.41 | .955 | .956 | .938 | .054 | .053 |
| 6. Full metric invariance in CSE samples | 105.120 _[73] | .008 | 1.44 | .947 | .949 | .935 | .072 | .054 |
| Overall Structural models (N = 161) | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Overall structural model of OST, job satisfaction, and work engagement | 50.187 _[33] | .028 | 1.52 | .973 | .974 | .963 | .040 | .057 |
| 8. Overall structural model of CSE, OST, job satisfaction, and work engagement | 59.844 _[40] | .023 | 1.49 | .970 | .971 | .959 | .039 | .056 |
| Validating Model 7 across CSE samples: High CSE Sample (N = 75) vs. Low CSE sample (N = 77) | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Unconstrained group model | 93.534 _[66] | .015 | 1.42 | .955 | .956 | .938 | .054 | .053 |
| 10. Constrained group model A (tactics → satisfaction being equal) | 100.451 _[67] | .005 | 1.49 | .945 | .947 | .926 | .092 | .058 |
| 11. Constrained group model B (tactics → engagement being equal) | 93.76 _[67] | .017 | 1.39 | .956 | .958 | .941 | .055 | .052 |

Note. (a) For each of the foregoing models, 5000 bootstraps were generated, based on its corresponding parent observations, using bootstrap ML method enabled by AMOS 17.0.

issue of sample size and the normality assumptions were examined. In models shown in Table 2, the ratio of respondents per variable is somewhere between 5:1 and 20:1, the suitable ranges that are recommended by Hair et al. (2010). In the overall measurement model using 161 data set, for instance, the univariate normality of each manifested variables is guaranteed, as the skew absolute values of individual manifested variables ranged from .043 to .620, and the kurtosis values varied from .008 to 1.530. However, this data set presents itself as multivariate non-normal: Mardia's (1970) multivariate kurtosis value is 32.871 (c.r. = 13.46). As such, the bootstrap SEM method suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2008) was used for subsequent data analyses. The bootstrap SEM method, as per Nevitt and Hancock (2001), involves a strategy of bootstrap resampling, which is known as "establishing an empirical sampling distribution associated with a statistic of interest by repeatedly sampling from the original 'parent' sample data" (p. 355).

3.7. Detection of moderation effects

By and large, previous works that detect moderation effects concern two different approaches: the multiple regression and the multi-group SEM (Ro, 2012). The former involves the interaction terms created by individual variables. It tends, however, to underestimate interaction effects particularly when the constructs involved in interaction have more than one measurement items and their measurement errors increase (Ro, 2012; Siemsen et al., 2010). Comparatively, the latter approach (i.e., the multi-group SEM) is fit for detecting moderation effects "because measurement errors in the SEM model can be controlled, thus minimizing the underestimation problem" (Ro, 2012, p. 956).

4. Findings

4.1. Respondents' characteristics

The 161 newcomers were about equally distributed between male (50.3%) and female (47.8%). Their organizational tenure predominately ranged from 2 to 9 months after organizational entry (81.4%), followed by the group whose tenure varied from 10 to 12 months (18.6%). The respondents were predominately between the age of 20 and 30 (83.9%). In terms of educational level, over half of the respondents (52.2%) had an education of senior middle school and below; and the rest of the participants (47.8%) had an education of 3-year college or above.

4.2. The direct effects

As shown in Table 2 (model 7) and as per Hair et al. (2010), the overall structural model fits the 161 data very well. Fig. 2 illustrates that OST significantly predicts job satisfaction ($\beta = .559, p < .001$) and work engagement ($\beta = .560, p < .001$), respectively. This would suggest that the foregoing two hypotheses (H1, H2) all gain empirical support in this study.

4.3. The moderating effects

As indicated in Table 2 (models 5, 6), the overall measurement model exhibits factorial invariance ($\Delta\chi^2_{[7]} = 11.586, p = .12$) across two split samples (i.e., high vs. low CSE groups). We then moved on to detect the moderating effects of CSE by checking the potential structural invariance between the same two split samples. As a result, constraining the causal estimate of the path between OST and job satisfaction to be equal between the two groups has

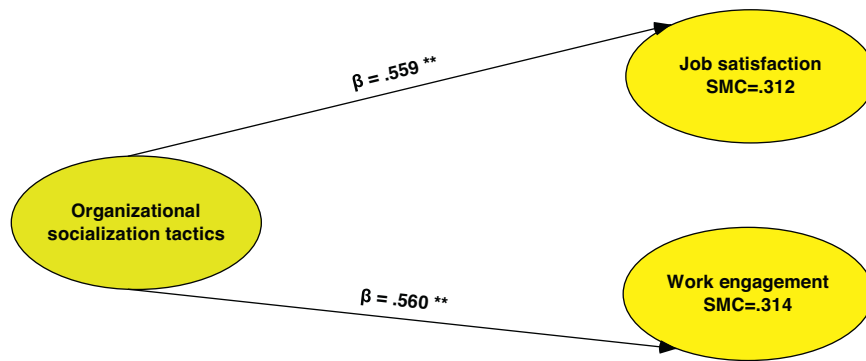


Fig. 2. The effects of OST on job satisfaction and work engagement. Notes: ** $p < .001$. This model fits the data of 161 sample very well (See Table 2, model 7 for detail).

produced worse fit significantly ($\Delta\chi^2_{[1]} = 6.917, p = .008$). Our results indicate that the same causal path between *OST* and *job satisfaction* is much stronger in high CSE group ($\beta = .672, p < .001$) than in low CSE group ($\beta = .295, p < .05$).

However, constraining the estimate of the path from *OST* to *work engagement* to be equal between the two groups has not produced worse fit significantly ($\Delta\chi^2_{[1]} = .226, p = .634$). A further check of the path regression coefficients between the two indicates that they are almost in the same magnitude: The path coefficient *beta* values of *OST* → *work engagement* in the high and low CSE groups are .510 ($p < .001$) and .559 ($p < .05$), respectively. Based on the foregoing, it could be stated that the relationship between OST and job satisfaction, but not the one between OST and work engagement, is significantly moderated by CSE. Therefore hypothesis 3 gains its empirical support in this study; but hypothesis 4 is otherwise rejected in the same study.

5. Discussion

In terms of determinants of shaping organizational newcomer socialization experiences, OS research has been criticized for overemphasizing factors in the organization, somewhat neglecting factors in the person, and somehow failing to consider a more interactionist approach (Ashforth et al., 2007; Song and Chathoth, 2010). We have partially worked around these research limitations by proposing and testing a new interaction model. Largely, our research model as well as its hypotheses gains empirical support from our study sample of hotel newcomer. As such, our study as well as its findings contributes to the body of knowledge substantially in several ways.

5.1. Newcomer job satisfaction as a function of OST and CSE

The results of meta-analytical reviews (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 2007) reveal that newcomer job satisfaction is influenced by OST. As expected, this finding also gains its empirical support in our study sample. Our finding is not only a certain kind of replication, but also a substantial extension. This is particularly true when considering that the OS literature has been solely based on the same few occupations using well-educated, white-collar, and/or Western samples (noted earlier in Section 1), and that our study sample includes those Chinese hotel employees who had been non-managerial and many of them had been less-educated. Thus, the generalizability regarding the causality between OST and job satisfaction is increased.

The foregoing direct causality, however, only partially captures the true dynamics of newcomer OS phenomenon due to the relatively narrow lens of the situationalist approach. A more complete and full lens in capturing the same true dynamics involves the interactionist approach. In this regard, our study provides the *first-ever*

empirical evidence on the moderating role of CSE in the relationship between OST and job satisfaction. In particular and as shown in Fig. 3, we have found that the same institutionalized OST produces a much stronger effect on newcomer job satisfaction when newcomer CSE is high than when it is low. The significance of this study comes to the fore when considering that interactionist approach has been rarely taken to studying newcomer OS phenomenon.

5.2. Determinants of work engagement

Saks and Gruman (2011) hypothesize that newcomer work engagement is positively related to his or her perceived institutionalized OST. Although this hypothesis has not been supported in the Western sample of Saks and Gruman (2011), it has otherwise gained empirical support from our Chinese sample of hotel newcomer. As such, our study adds value to the literature considering that it lends empirical support to the theoretical causal hypothesis developed by Saks and Gruman (2011). Furthermore, the foregoing direct causal relationship is not, however, moderated by newcomer CSE as per the corresponding empirical result in our study. In fact, this moderation finding is essentially exploratory in nature; and it is accordingly warranted to be verified in future studies.

5.3. Theoretical implications

In response to “*the relative lack of theory*” in OS research, the present study theoretically proposes an integrative new model (Fig. 1). All except for hypothesis 4 have gained empirical support in the present study sample. This implies that one promising and appropriate way in building OS theory concerns *the interactionist approach*, where factors in the person interact with those in the organization to influence newcomer attitudes and behaviors in organizational contexts (Ashforth et al., 2007; Saks and Ashforth, 2000). As such, moderation effects should be more thoroughly examined in a variety of contexts using a variety of variables of OS antecedents and outcomes.

For example, one popular fashion in OS research is that OST (a factor in the organization) and CSE (a factor in the person) are usually studied in isolation, with a neglect of the influence of the interaction effects between the two on OS outcomes. This fashion has actually hampered the OS theory and research. As a result, interaction effects have been so rare due to their methodological complexities (Ashforth et al., 2007). That said, empirical findings of our study are believed to have some break-through implications for the development of OS theory.

5.4. Practical implications

The *relative lack of theory* issue also hampers employers' practices for socializing their newcomers in an effective manner. From

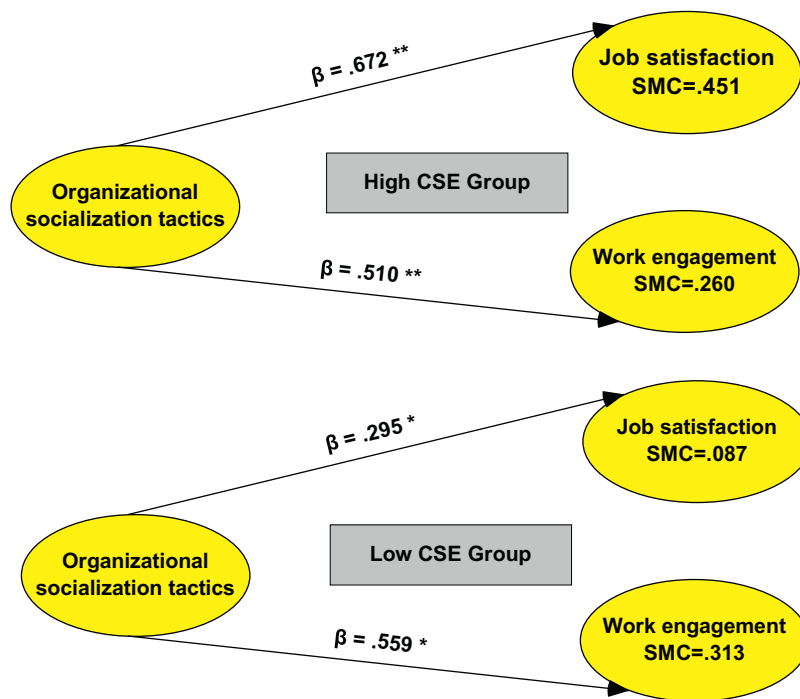


Fig. 3. The moderating effects of CSE on the proposed relationships. Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$. Across the two CSE split samples (i.e., High CSE and low CSE groups), this structural model exhibits acceptable levels of fit indices as what are shown in Table 2, models 5 and 6.

the interactionist perspective, we show (in Fig. 3) that OST explains 32.8% variance of hotel newcomers *high* on CSE, but the same OST explains only 23.2% variance of those *low* on CSE. One implication of this finding is that institutionalized OST produces relatively *weak* influences on newcomers with low CSE, no matter how perfect the socialization tactics employed by the organization are. As such, hotel managers should not only emphasize factors in the organization, but also pay more attention to the factors in the newcomers themselves in achieving success-related OS outcomes for one notable reason. That is, hotel newcomers high on CSE are much more adept, than those low on CSE, at translating their organizational advantages of OST into higher levels of job satisfaction. As such, at least the following two practical implications can be drawn.

One is that priorities in hotel HR practices should be given to attract and hire newcomers high on CSE. The other is that hotel OS programs should be designed to foster newcomer CSE levels. According to Montasem et al. (2013), three CSE components including general self-efficacy, general self-esteem, and locus of control can be regarded as *surface traits*, which are more malleable than *core traits* (e.g., Big Five personality traits). This offers encouragement for intervention. It could be wise for managers to test newcomer CSE levels before launching an OS program. Once those with low CSE are identified, hotel managers should implement CSE enhancing strategies, such as positive performance feedbacks and effective modeling and coaching (Luthans and Youssef, 2004; Song and Chathoth, 2010). Once the levels of newcomer CSE have been augmented, success-rated OS outcomes could be promoted accordingly.

On average, this study's OST as perceived by the 161 newcomers has been institutionalized ($M = 4.38$). Furthermore, institutionalized OST has been found to predict job satisfaction and work engagement, respectively. Jointly, these imply that hotel and resort managers are encouraged to make their OS programs more institutionalized, rather than individualized. In so doing, employers are more likely to achieve a greater success in socializing their newcomers.

5.5. Limitations and future studies

One limitation of this study is that cross-sectional data have been used in this study, which in turn might result in the problems of *common method variance* (CMV) and inflation bias. In this regard, Williams et al. (1989) propose the *unmeasured latent method construct* (ULMC) approach to detect the problems. Richardson et al. (2009) note that ULMC approach requires developing four different measurement models including (a) the trait-only model, (b) the method-only model, (c) the trait/method model, and (d) the revised trait/method model.⁵ We took the ULMC approach by developing the foregoing four measurement models, respectively, followed by a series of model fit comparisons among these models using procedures suggested by Williams et al. (1989).

As a result and as per Richardson et al. (2009), the trait-only model (i.e., model a) fits the data better ($\Delta\chi^2_{[2]} = 47.57$, $p = .000$) than the method-only model (i.e., model b), suggesting that observed variance in the independent and dependent constructs is not because of method alone. The trait/method model (i.e., model c) fits better ($\Delta\chi^2_{[10]} = 27.47$, $p = .000$) than the trait-only model (i.e., model a), which shows that trait-based and method variance are present in our data. Finally, the revised trait/method model (i.e., model d) does not fit worse ($\Delta\chi^2_{[4]} = .491$, $p = .974$) than the trait/method model (i.e., model c), providing no evidence of bias because of CMV.

Furthermore, a one-factor approach (Lee et al., 2014; Schriesheim, 1979) was taken as an alternative *post hoc* test for common method bias. In this approach, all measurement items for the dependent and independent constructs in our data were entered into a principal-components factor analysis with varimax rotation. The results indicate that there is a three-factor structure with no general factor present; and that the first factor explained

⁵ For detail specifications of these four models, please refer to the work contributed by Richardson et al. (2009).

for 25.38% of the variance, which is smaller than 50%, the threshold level of CMV suggested by Lings and Greenley (2005). These results would suggest, as per Podsakoff et al. (2012), that CMV was not substantial.

Siemsen et al. (2010) argue that empirical research findings associated with moderation/interactive effects should not be criticized for CMV. They note that “*finding significant interaction effects despite of CMV in the data set should be taken as strong evidence that an interaction effect exists*” (p. 470). As such, we argue that the nature of the data used in this study does not substantively alter our findings and conclusions for three main reasons. First, one primary foci of our study is to establish moderation/interaction effects. Second, to lessen CMV concern we proactively took several strategies such as ensuring anonymity in survey administration and using multiple measurement items for each constructs involved in this study. Last but not least, the foregoing *post hoc* statistical explorations and tests provide no evidence of CMV bias in our data.

One more limitation of this study involves the generalizability of this study’s findings. Largely, the findings in this study are essentially exploratory and they have been based hotel newcomers. It is unknown whether the same four research hypotheses developed in this study can gain their empirical support in other samples. Anyhow, to work around the limitations and for the sake of generalizability, future studies with longitudinal data and in different national cultures and geographical areas are therefore warranted. It is also warranted that future studies should further explore the moderating roles of CSE because our exploratory results suggest a new and promising avenue for research in newcomer socialization in organizational contexts.

6. Concluding remarks

From the perspective of interactionist, this study reveals that hotel newcomers high on CSE are particularly more adept, than their low CSE counterparts, at translating their organizational advantages in terms of institutionalized OST into higher levels of job satisfaction. We believe that such exploration and identification of the roles of CSE in moderating the direct causal relationships proposed in this study are novel and valuable. The significance of our study findings comes to the fore particularly when realizing that OS research and practice have been hampered by traditional views, in which a newcomer is regarded as either a reactive recipient of OS forces, or as an proactive participant in his or her own socialization in organizational contexts. Modern views, however, treat newcomers as both reactive and proactive agents throughout their OS processes. Our integrative theoretical model proposed and validated in this study is consistent with this modern view, which could be understood as a more realistic and complete lens, through which the dynamics of newcomer OS phenomenon can be better captured.

By replicating existing findings regarding the influence of OST on newcomer job satisfaction, we have extended this finding from Western, white-collar, and well-educated samples to our present hotel newcomer respondents who have been Chinese, non-managerial, and relatively less-educated. Moreover, the hypothesis developed by Saks and Gruman (2011) with regard to the causal linkage between OST and work engagement, has gained its empirical support in our study sample. We consider this as a significant progress in advancing our understanding of the phenomena of newcomer organizational socialization.

In closing, this study has found that hotel organization’s success in socializing their newcomers—in terms of job satisfaction and work engagement – can be predicted by organizational socialization tactics. It has also found that newcomer core self-evaluations moderate the relationship between organizational socialization

tactics and job satisfaction, but not the one between organizational socialization tactics and work engagement. That said, the findings of this study lend preliminary support to the interactionist perspective in capturing the dynamics of newcomer “onboarding” phenomenon.

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