

# A Contingency Theory of Socialization

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A model of individual socialization into organizations is presented and tested. The model (a) identifies three distinct stages of socialization, (b) specifies the activities engaged in by an individual at each stage, and (c) specifies the personal and organizational contingencies that control an individual's movement through the stages. Interview and questionnaire data collected from 118 hospital employees — nurses, nurse's aides, radiology technologists, tradesmen, and accounting clerks — were used to develop, refine, and test the model. The model basically was supported by the data. Four variables are identified as possible outcomes of the socialization process: general satisfaction, mutual influence, internal work motivation, and job involvement. Two of these variables — general satisfaction and mutual influence — are empirically linked with important aspects of the socialization process, and are shown to increase steadily as individuals progress through socialization. The differences between the socialization experiences of professional, paraprofessional, and nonprofessional workers are identified and explained, and implications for the conduct of socialization programs are drawn.<sup>1</sup>

Scholars of organizational behavior and managers of organizations increasingly are becoming interested in the ways in which employees are socialized into work organizations. There has already been a considerable amount of work done on describing the phases and activities of the socialization process (Porter, Lawler, and Hackman, 1975; Van Maanen, 1975; Schein, 1968), explaining the recruitment process and the methods of socialization (Wanous, 1973; Caplow, 1964), and demonstrating the impact of the job environment, job duties, and supervisors on new recruits (Gomersall and Myers, 1966; Dunnette, Arvey, and Banas, 1973; Schein, 1964).

Although research in organizational socialization has progressed in generating descriptive models of the socialization process, empirical research testing these models has lagged far behind (Van Maanen, 1975). There are few empirical studies that identify the critical variables in the socialization process, or specify when or how they operate. The current state of knowledge about outcomes of socialization is likewise limited; there are few studies that both identify the outcomes of the socialization process and specify what variables determine whether individuals attain those outcomes.

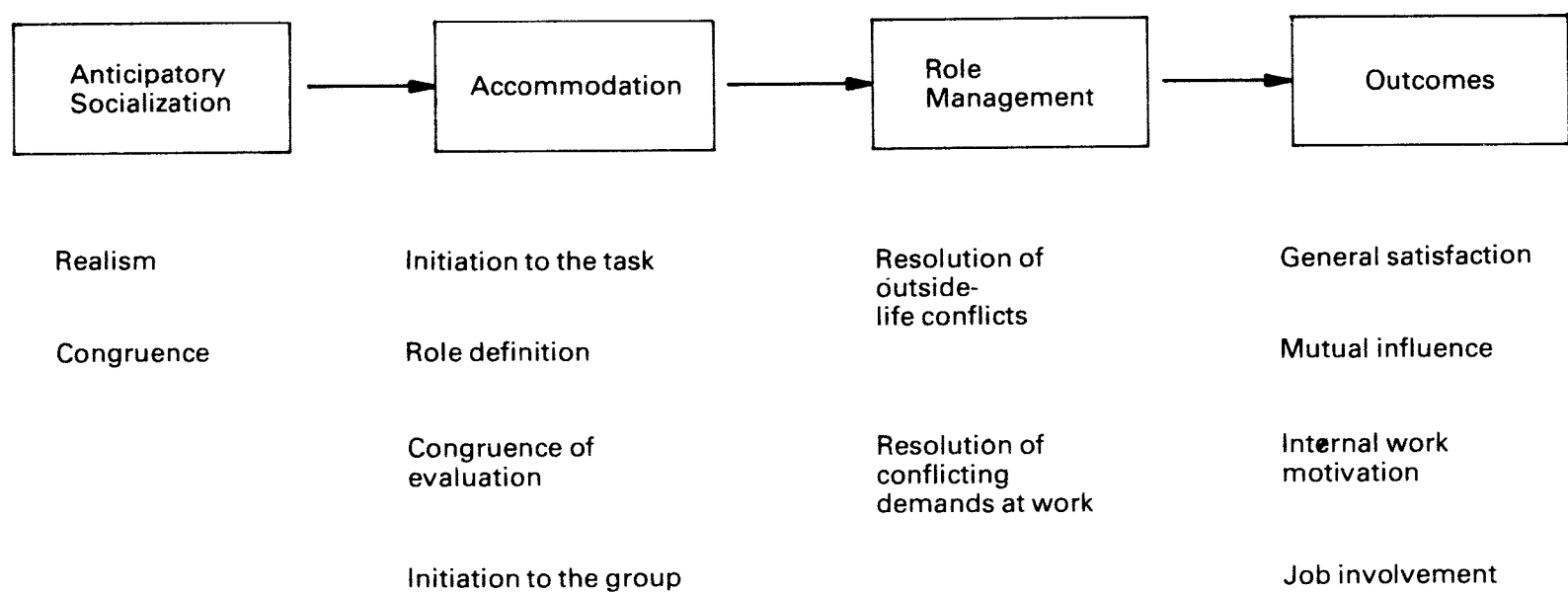
This research develops a model that clearly conceptualizes the socialization process. It identifies the stages of socialization, the activities engaged in at each stage in the process, and possible outcomes of socialization experiences. The research then presents empirical evidence that demonstrates which variables influence whether individuals proceed through socialization smoothly and attain outcomes of the process.

## THEORY

Much of the literature in organizational socialization has focused on the ways in which individuals learn the culture and

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**Figure 1. Process and outcome variables of socialization.**

the values of their new job settings (Van Maanen, 1975). This research looks at two other parts of the socialization process that occur along with the learning of the new values, and that are heavily influenced by this learning: adjustment to the work environment and development of work skills.

Specifically, the research looks at two types of variables in this socialization-as-adjustment process. Eight process variables are identified. Each signifies the extent to which an individual has concluded favorably a particular activity in the socialization process; each reflects the consequences of day-to-day organizational events on individual feelings about a particular aspect of the socialization experience. Four outcome variables are also identified. Each of these can be considered an indicator of the success of the entire socialization experience.

The model tested proposes that there are three stages in the socialization process, and identifies the distinct, and different, sets of activities that employees engage in at each stage. Each of the stages in the process, as well as its set of activities and process variables, is described in turn. Next, four possible outcomes of socialization are identified and described. Finally, the assumptions about the order of the stages and variables are discussed, and a distinction is drawn between successful and complete socialization.

### Anticipatory Socialization

This first stage of the socialization process encompasses all the learning that occurs before the recruit enters the organization (Van Maanen, 1975; Clausen, 1968; Brim and Wheeler, 1966). The stage has been labeled as pre-arrival by Porter, Lawler, and Hackman (1975). The main activities the individual engages in at this stage are forming expectations about jobs — transmitting, receiving, and evaluating information with prospective employers — and making decisions about employment.

At anticipatory socialization, there are two process variables that indicate progress through socialization.

**Realism.** Realism is the extent to which individuals have a full and accurate picture of what life in the organization is really like. It indicates how successfully they have completed the information sharing and information evaluation part of their recruitment.

## Socialization

**Congruence.** This is the extent to which the organization's resources and individual needs and skills are mutually satisfying. It indicates how successful individuals have been in making decisions about employment.

### Accommodation

Accommodation, the second stage of the socialization process, is that period in which the individual sees what the organization is actually like and attempts to become a participating member of it. This phase encompasses the encounter stage of Porter, Lawler, and Hackman (1975) and Van Maanen (1975), and parts of their change and acquisition and metamorphosis stages. There are four main activities that new employees engage in at the accommodation stage: learning new tasks, establishing new interpersonal relationships with coworkers, clarifying their roles in the organization, and evaluating their progress in the organization.

At accommodation, there are four process variables that indicate progress through socialization.

**Initiation to the task.** This is the extent to which the employee feels competent and accepted as a full work partner. It indicates how successfully the employee has learned new tasks at work.

**Initiation to the group.** This is the extent to which an employee feels accepted and trusted by coworkers. It indicates how successful the employee has been in establishing new interpersonal relationships.

**Role definition.** Role definition is an implicit or explicit agreement with the work group on what tasks one is to perform and what the priorities and time allocation for those tasks is to be. It indicates the extent to which employees have fully clarified their roles.

**Congruence of evaluation.** This is the extent to which an employee and a supervisor similarly evaluate the employee's progress in the organization. It indicates the degree of agreement between employees and supervisors about the employees' overall progress in the organization and about their particular strengths and weaknesses.

### Role Management

In the third stage of socialization, recruits already have come to some tentative resolution of problems in their own work groups, and now need to mediate the conflicts between their work in their own group and other groups which may place demands on them. There are two types of conflicts in particular that are crucial to manage at this point: such conflicts between work life and home life as schedules, demands on the employees' families, the effect of the job on the quality of home life; and conflicts between their work groups and other groups in the organization, such as over the inclusion or exclusion of certain tasks in the sets, priorities assigned certain tasks, and so forth.

At role management, two process variables are important.

**Resolution of outside life conflicts.** This process variable indicates the extent to which employees have come to be less upset by home-life/work-life conflicts and the extent to which they have come to some decision rules for dealing with these conflicts.

**Resolution of conflicting demands.** This variable indicates the extent to which employees have come to be less upset by conflicts among groups at work and the extent to which they have come to some decision rules for dealing with these conflicts.

### Outcomes

Four variables are identified as possible outcomes of socialization.

**General satisfaction.** This is “an overall measure of the degree to which the employee is satisfied and happy in his or her work” (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). It has often been found to reflect differences in the nature of jobs or work situations of individuals (Vroom, 1964).

**Mutual influence.** This variable is defined as the extent to which individuals feel some control or power over the way work is carried out in their departments. Lack of influence is one of the most frequently cited indicators of an ineffective socialization (Schein, 1968; Dubin, 1959; Whyte, 1956; Van Maanen, 1975).

**Internal work motivation.** This is “the degree to which an employee is self-motivated to perform effectively on the job” (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). It is most frequently associated with job performance (Vroom, 1964).

**Job involvement.** This is the degree to which employees are personally committed and involved in their work (Lodahl and Kejner, 1965). Wiener and Gechman (1977) and Katz and Kahn (1966) both associate job involvement with the values learned in the socialization process and with the degree of internalization of organizational goals.

## **Assumptions about Order of Variables**

Several assumptions are made about the causal order of variables in developing a contingency model of socialization. First, anticipatory socialization is assumed to precede accommodation in time. Second, accommodation is assumed to precede role management in time. Third, the process variables of any stage are assumed to influence directly the process variables of the immediately subsequent stage, and only indirectly influence variables of later stages. Finally, only those process variables at the role management stage are assumed to influence the attainment of outcomes (Figure 1).

## **Successful versus Complete Socialization**

A distinction is made here between successful and complete socialization. A socialization experience can be judged successful at any point in the process. Progress is judged to be successful at any point in time if individuals can proceed in becoming more proficient in the activities or resolving the conflicts of the stage they are in. If, however, an individual is personally unable or structurally prevented from making progress at a particular stage, then this employee’s socialization is not successful. For instance, if a married woman with children cannot get her family to accept her work commitments as legitimate and cannot get her employer to lessen her work load, she is not having a successful socialization experience. A complete socialization, on the other hand, occurs only when a person has proceeded through all three stages of the process and has concluded favorably the activities at the role-management stage. It is expected that the further along in the socialization process a person is, the greater an individual’s outcomes will be, and that those individuals who have completed socialization will have the highest levels on the outcome variables.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

The site of data collection was a 350-bed community hospital in a medium-sized industrial city in New England. One hundred eighteen employees of the hospital participated in the study, roughly one-eighth of the total hospital employee population, excluding doctors: 28 engineers—licensed tradesmen, such as electricians and plumbers; 25 accounting

clerks; 19 radiology technologists; 22 registered nurses; and 24 nursing technicians—orderlies, nurse’s aides. Eighty per cent of the engineers, accounting clerks, and radiology technologists participated, with only those employees who were on sick leave or vacation leave not participating. The sample of nurses and nursing technicians presents 33 per cent of the nursing service population and were selected randomly. There were 79 female subjects and 39 male subjects; their average age was 33. Almost all of the latter group were engineers. Forty percent of the sample had been employed by the hospital less than one year; 60 percent had been employed more than one year.

Procedures

Interviews and questionnaires were used to obtain ratings for each employee on the eight process variables and the four outcome variables.<sup>2</sup> Each employee was interviewed individually for 45 minutes about his or her socialization experience, during which time the researcher rated the employee on each of the variables. At the end of the interview, the employee was given a questionnaire of 47 Likert items to complete; the questionnaire went over much of the material in the interview. All data collection activities were conducted by the researcher during a six-week period.

Scales

Interview ratings and questionnaire items were combined in the formulation of the final scales; the interview rating was treated as an additional questionnaire item, and was averaged with the other questionnaire items in a scale. Interview-questionnaire correlations were sufficiently high to make this a reasonable strategy. Sixty-seven percent of the interview ratings correlated with their respective questionnaire items at the .001 level, and 88 percent of the interview ratings correlated

2 The interview schedule and the questionnaire used in this study were developed by the researcher, and are presented in full in Feldman (1976). All questionnaire items except those for general satisfaction, internal work motivation, and job involvement are new in this research; general satisfaction and internal work motivation items were developed by Hackman and Oldham (1975); the job involvement items come from Lodahl and Kejner (1965). Sample questionnaire items and interview questionnaires appear in the appendix to this article.

Table 1

Scale Score Statistics					
Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean within Scale Correlation	Mean outside Scale Correlation	Spearman-Brown Reliability
Realism	4.523	1.253	.414	.126	.739
Congruence	4.932	1.301	.502	.157	.751
Initiation to task	5.036	.846	.201	.113	.501
Role definition	4.962	1.235	.463	.206	.775
Congruence of evaluation	4.212	1.387	.491	.180	.743
Initiation to group	5.079	1.026	.345	.122	.612
Resolution of conflicting demands	4.715	1.130	.333	.127	.667
Resolution of outside-life conflicts	4.766	1.015	.181	.094	.400
General satisfaction	5.214	1.143	.501	.108	.801
Mutual influence	3.404	1.339	.450	.110	.711
Internal work motivation	5.625	.729	.214	.099	.521
Job involvement	3.461	.924	.190	.095	.539

Means on all scales range from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high).

with their respective questionnaire items at the .05 level. The descriptive statistics for the scales are presented in Table 1. The scales have moderate internal consistency and are independent; the average Spearman-Brown reliability, corrected for attenuation, is .65 and the average correlation of scale items with items not in the same scale is .13.

A factor analysis was done to examine the underlying pattern of the variables and to determine whether the variables clustered around the stage they were in, an aspect of the work environment they represented, or some other dimension. The factor pattern matrix, which was derived from an oblique-rotated factor analysis, is represented in Table 2. Four factors emerged. Two of these factors consist of an outcome variable and the process variables which are correlated with it; another factor consists of the two role-management variables; no variable loads highly on the fourth factor.

Table 2

Factor Analysis*				
	Factor 1†	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Realism	.401	.003	.104	-.309
Congruence	.849	-.216	-.037	.205
Initiation to task	.036	-.061	.490	.023
Initiation to group	.091	-.070	.394	.327
Congruence of evaluation	.276	.172	.495	-.047
Role definition	.558	.224	.081	-.214
Resolution of conflicting demands	.085	.436	.299	-.013
Resolution of outside-life conflicts	.093	.514	.099	.318
General satisfaction	.826	.013	-.019	.077
Mutual influence	-.030	.106	.607	-.031
Internal work motivation	.075	-.378	.002	.110
Job involvement	-.019	-.270	.216	-.055

• Factor pattern matrix: the square of a pattern matrix coefficient represents the direct contribution of a given factor to the variance of a variable.

† Factor 1 correlates .133 with Factor 2, .435 with Factor 3, and .034 with Factor 4; Factor 2 correlates .057 with Factor 3 and -.081 with Factor 4; Factor 3 correlates .013 with Factor 4.

Data Analysis

Partial correlations were used to determine the relationships between variables. The assumptions about the time order of variables outlined above imply that there are sets of intervening variables that are intermediate in the causal sequence between stages in the socialization process and the set of outcomes (Blalock, 1964). Partial correlations allow the researcher to look at the linear relationship between two variables after the linear effect of the control variables has been removed from both the independent and dependent variables, and make possible the identification of spurious and suppressed relationships. Partial regression coefficients are directly analogous to partial correlation coefficients, and could

have been used alternatively to determine the relationships between variables.

The following rules were used in calculating the partial correlations.

**Between variables in two different stages.** (1) Between two variables in two successive stages—between process variables of anticipatory socialization and accommodation, between process variables of accommodation and role management, and between process variables of role management and outcomes—all the other variables in these two stages were controlled. This was done because it might be possible for variables at one stage to be correlated generally with each other, and it was necessary to identify whether specific two-variable correlations were spurious.

(2) Between two variables from stages which were not successive—between process variables of anticipatory socialization and role management, between process variables of anticipatory socialization and outcomes, and between process variables of accommodation and outcomes—the other variables in those two stages, as well as all variables from the intervening stages, were controlled. Here, it was important to identify not only if correlations were spurious, but also if variables intervened in ways consistent with the model's assumptions about time.

**Between two variables in the same stage.** This is within anticipatory socialization, within accommodation, within role management, and between outcomes. (1) At anticipatory socialization, a simple Pearson correlation between realism and congruence was calculated. No prior causes to these two variables were assumed, nor were there other variables at this stage that might cause the relationship between congruence and realism to be spurious or suppressed.

(2) Between any two variables in accommodation, the other two variables in accommodation as well as realism and congruence were held constant. It is assumed that only the variables from the immediately prior stage or the same stage could be the source of spurious relationships.

(3) Between resolution of conflicting demands and resolution of outside-life conflicts, the four variables of the most prior stage, accommodation, were controlled to eliminate a spurious or identify a suppressed relationship. It is assumed that only the variables from the immediately prior stage could be the source of these correlations.

(4) Between any two outcome variables, the other two outcome variables, as well as resolution of conflicting demands and resolution of outside-life conflicts, were held constant. Once again, it is assumed that only the variables from the immediately prior stage or same stage could contribute to spurious or suppressed correlations.

Table 3 presents the zero-order correlation between every two variables in the study and the partial correlation between every two variables, calculated according to the decision rules listed above. The statistically significant partial correlations are displayed in diagram form in Figure 2.

Table 3

Zero-Order and Higher-Order Correlations among Scale Scores		
Variables	Zero-Order Correlation	Partial Correlation
Congruence with		
Realism	.283*	
Initiation to task	.226**	.063
Initiation to group	.306*	.232**
Congruence of evaluation	.351*	.158***
Role definition	.377*	.214***
Resolution conflicting demands	.124	-.065
Resolution outside-life conflicts	.094	-.013
General satisfaction	.694*	.605*
Mutual influence	.134	-.095
Work motivation	.117	.104
Job involvement	.034	-.081
Realism with		
Initiation to task	.152***	.061
Initiation to group	.076	-.029
Congruence of evaluation	.227**	.033
Role definition	.380*	.272**
Resolution conflicting demands	.119	-.004
Resolution outside-life conflicts	.021	-.060
General satisfaction	.336*	.112
Mutual influence	.202***	.124
Work motivation	-.094	-.124
Job involvement	.053	.048
Initiation to task with		
Initiation to group	.294*	.229**
Congruence of evaluation	.294*	.124
Role definition	.191***	.052
Resolution conflicting demands	.220**	.141
Resolution outside-life conflicts	.031	-.094
General satisfaction	.152***	-.014
Mutual influence	.273*	.159***
Work motivation	.016	.020
Job involvement	.105	.077
Initiation to group with		
Congruence of evaluation	.228**	.114
Role definition	.107	-.064
Resolution conflicting demands	.112	-.027
Resolution outside-life conflicts	.164***	.137
General satisfaction	.206***	.101
Mutual influence	.219**	.079
Work motivation	.082	.095
Job involvement	.064	.015
Congruence of evaluation with		
Role definition	.434*	.317*
Resolution conflicting demands	.356*	.210***
Resolution outside-life conflicts	.213***	.081
General satisfaction	.422*	.114
Mutual influence	.452*	.347*
Work motivation	-.003	.053
Job involvement	.078	.059
Role definition with		
Resolution conflicting demands	.307*	.148
Resolution outside-life conflicts	.191***	.085
General satisfaction	.472*	.237**
Mutual influence	.173***	.150
Work motivation	-.036	-.130
Job involvement	-.068	-.002
Resolution conflicting demands with		
Resolution outside-life conflicts	.267**	.201***
General satisfaction	.217**	.155***
Mutual influence	.209***	.144
Work motivation	-.211***	-.189***
Job involvement	.040	-.026
Resolution outside-life conflicts with		
General satisfaction	.236**	.189***
Mutual influence	.175***	.108
Work motivation	-.141	-.092
Job involvement	-.117	-.132
General satisfaction with		
Mutual influence	.213**	.143
Work motivation	.026	.085
Job involvement	.085	.095
Mutual influence with		
Work motivation	-.045	-.014
Job involvement	.093	-.104
Work motivation with		
Job involvement	.116	.091
<div><div>•</div><div>••</div><div>•••</div></div> <div><div><math>p \leq .001</math></div><div><math>p \leq .01</math></div><div><math>p \leq .05</math></div></div>		

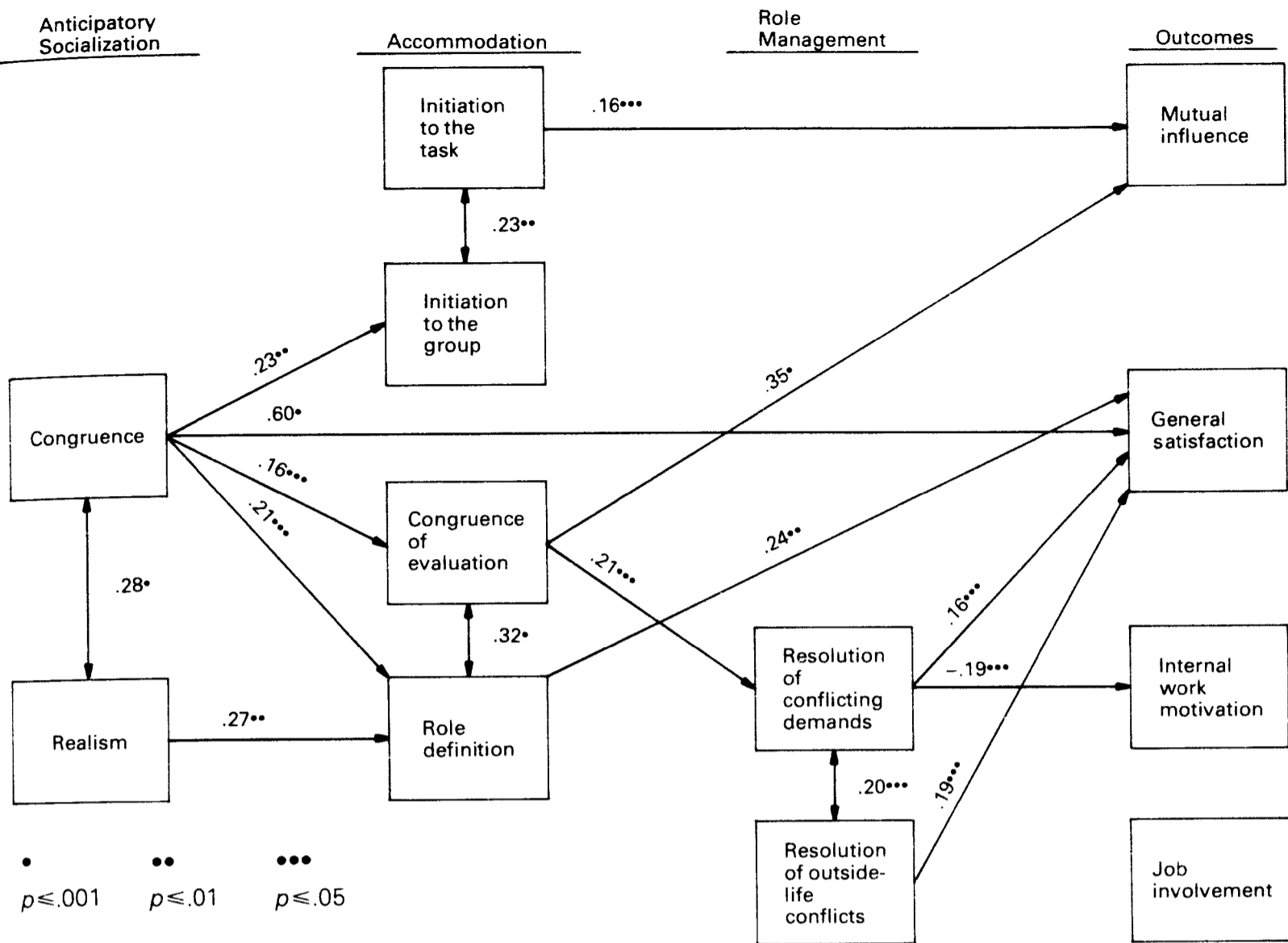


Figure 2. Significant correlations between process and outcome variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For each stage in the socialization process, the relationships among the variables at that stage are examined, followed by an examination of the relationships with prior variables. The relationships between outcomes and between outcomes and previous process variables are then discussed. Data are presented to illustrate the differences in outcome levels by job category and by point of progress in the socialization process.

### Anticipatory Socialization

Congruence and realism are correlated significantly with each other ( $r = .28, p \leq .001$ ). In cases where individuals withheld information from the hospital during the selection process to obtain jobs, or where the hospital held back significant facts from employees to get them to take positions, employees were more likely to end up with jobs that were not meeting some of their important needs.

The behavior of both employees and supervisors in the Accounting Department during the selection process illustrates this relationship. The employees in accounting mainly do such clerical work as billing, typing, filing, and keypunching. A very important aspect of these jobs, however, is dealing with patients and lawyers, who are often hostile and who are trying to unravel payment problems or billing errors. This part of the job is often not mentioned to new employees. Most employees who did not know that their jobs would entail so much interpersonal conflict often felt that they had taken clerical jobs much less suited for their abilities than other

similar jobs available. On the other hand, employees are generally made aware of the fact that the work load is heavy and that the jobs demand speed. Those employees who either overestimated their own typing skills or incorrectly pictured their abilities to their prospective supervisors were more likely to be hired and discover their jobs were too much for them.

### **Accommodation**

There are two important relationships between the process variables at the accommodation stage. Each of these is considered in turn.

**Initiation to the task and initiation to the group.** Initiation to the group and initiation to the task are significantly correlated with each other ( $r = .23, p \leq .01$ ). Neither of these variables is significantly related to either role definition or congruence of evaluation.

Although these two processes occur at the same stage in this model, and their correlation refers to the degree of their covariance, in this setting it is likely that initiation to the group precedes initiation to the task. Many employees reported feeling that until such time as they became friendly and could trust coworkers, they could not find out information that was essential to them to do their jobs well. For instance, in radiology, employees felt some of the most important things to learn about their jobs were the moods and personalities of the doctors they worked with, and their particular preferences about how medical and administrative procedures should be performed. Until the incumbent employees felt they could trust the newer members, the new employees were not given information about doctors' preferences and personalities, and thus were made to feel less competent by those doctors.

**Relationships with prior variables.** Congruence and initiation to the group are significantly correlated ( $r = .23, p \leq .01$ ). Research has shown that people in particular occupations tend to share certain values and attitudes (Vroom, 1964), and this type of research partially explains this finding.

A reasonable prediction in this model might have been that congruence would be correlated instead with initiation to the task, since both are concerned with task-related feelings, and that congruence would be related indirectly to initiation to the group, with initiation to the task as an intervening variable. A particularly salient characteristic of this organization is that initiation to the group seems to precede initiation to the task, and in fact, to be largely responsible for it. It might be the case that in organizations where initiation to the task and initiation to the group occur more closely in time, or where initiation to the task precedes initiation to the group, that congruence would be directly related to initiation to the task instead of to initiation to the group.

**Congruence of evaluation and role definition.** These two variables are significantly and positively correlated ( $r = .32, p \leq .001$ ). Neither is correlated with initiation to the task or initiation to the group.

If supervisors feel particularly positive about employees, and the employees feel they are doing well—high congruence—

the supervisors may give workers more opportunities to learn new tasks and skills, and be more willing to let them pass on unwanted chores to others. If, however, employees consider themselves quite competent, but the supervisors do not share that view—low congruence—the supervisors may load all the simpler tasks on them or hold them back from doing more challenging tasks until the supervisors feel the employees have mastered the tasks already assigned them. Moreover, if employees define their tasks and priorities in a way consistent with supervisor preferences, these employees will experience a greater congruence of evaluation with the supervisors.

An example of this relationship comes from nursing service. Three-year diploma nurses tended to feel the mark of a good nurse is the ability to keep on schedule, to handle all patients quickly and efficiently, and to be solicitous of the attending physician's demands. In contrast, four-year degree nurses tended to feel that the mark of quality nursing care is emphasis on the total patient—both their physical and psychological needs—and that the nurse should share more fully in the diagnosis and treatment decisions made on the floor. These two views of nursing entail desires for very different types of tasks to perform and very different priorities among these tasks. Head nurses differed in the extent to which they shared these two views of the nursing role. Those nurses who shared their head nurse's philosophy and defined their jobs accordingly also tended to feel more fairly and equitably evaluated on their job performance.

**Relationships with prior variables.** Realism and congruence are both significantly correlated with the outcome of employee role definition activities ( $r = .27$ ,  $p \leq .01$ , and  $r = .21$ ,  $p \leq .05$ , respectively). The more realistic picture employees have of the hospital, the easier will be their attempts to discover what is and is not expected of them at work. Employees who feel that they have incomplete or incorrect information will have a much more difficult time sorting out what exactly they are supposed to be doing.

The relationship of congruence and role definition is largely a result of the fact that employees who feel that they are suited to their jobs are more likely to find the set of tasks they are required to perform to be pleasant or enjoyable, and are less likely to desire to rearrange or redefine their job duties. On the other hand, where the initial congruence between employees and their jobs is low, employees may have to invest a good deal of energy in trying to restructure their jobs so that they can spend time doing those few tasks for which they feel they are well suited.

Examples of the relationships of realism and congruence with role definition come from the nursing technicians. About one-third of these technicians had had previous work experiences before coming to this particular hospital, and knew what their jobs would be like. They did not expect to be dispensing medicine or giving medical treatments to patients. In contrast to most of the technicians for whom this was the first job assignment, the more experienced technicians had little trouble in discovering what was expected of them and did not try to find ways to do tasks that were part of the registered nurse's job.

Congruence is also correlated with congruence of evaluation ( $r = .16, p \leq .05$ ). The more people perceive that they are suited to their jobs, the more likely they will feel fairly and equitably evaluated by their supervisors. Employees who feel that they are not well suited for their jobs are more likely to find the criteria by which supervisors evaluate them to be unfair and the expectations which supervisors set for them to be unrealistically high. In accounting, for example, clerks who were actually better suited for bookkeeping jobs rather than for their present clerk-typist jobs felt that they should be evaluated more on accuracy of work than on speed in typing, and felt supervisors set unrealistic goals for them.

### Role Management

The two process variables of role management, resolution of conflicting demands and resolution of outside-life conflicts, are significantly and positively correlated with each other ( $r = .20, p \leq .05$ ). Two factors seem to account for this correlation. Both these variables entail the same type of activity, and there are probably individual differences between people in perceiving and understanding the types of conflicts that exist, generating solutions which do not involve other people losing face, and having interpersonal competence in dealing with other people to resolve these conflicts. Second, this particular organization takes the same stance toward both kinds of conflict—passive and inflexible. Those individuals who depend on the flexibility of management to resolve their conflicts will meet with the same type of negative response or inaction.

There is a positive relationship between congruence of evaluation and resolution of conflicting demands ( $r = .21, p \leq .05$ ). Employees who feel that supervisors share the same evaluation of their work as they themselves have also feel that their supervisors may recognize the same role conflicts they recognize, similarly evaluate solutions to these conflicts, and be more flexible and active in resolving conflicts.

### Outcomes

The research examines four possible outcomes of the socialization process: general satisfaction, mutual influence, internal work motivation, and job involvement. These four variables are independent statistically; they are not significantly correlated with each other (Table 3). The relationships of each outcome with prior process variables will thus be discussed separately. Mean differences between job categories on the four outcome variables are also explained in terms of the relationships of outcomes with process variables. The mean differences for all process and outcome variables are displayed in Table 4.

**General satisfaction.** Four variables are significantly and positively correlated with general satisfaction: congruence, role definition, resolution of conflicting demands, and resolution of outside-life conflicts. Congruence is most strongly correlated with general satisfaction ( $r = .60, p \leq .001$ ) and accounts for over one-third of the variance in general satisfaction; the better the fit between individuals and their work, the more happy and generally pleased they will be with their job situation.

Table 4

Scale Scores by Job Category

Scale	Total Sample	Engineers	Radiology Technologists	Accounting	Nursing Technicians	Nurses
Realism•	4.52	4.39	5.36	4.20	4.44	4.40
Congruence	4.93	5.33	5.03	4.78	4.48	4.98
Initiation to task	5.03	5.17	5.05	4.68	4.92	5.36
Initiation to group	5.07	5.08	4.87	4.84	4.97	5.63
Congruence of evaluation	4.21	4.28	4.52	4.08	4.44	3.74
Role definition	4.96	5.07	5.32	5.03	4.84	4.55
Resolution of conflicting demands	4.71	5.02	4.55	4.59	4.94	4.35
Resolution of outside-life conflicts	4.76	4.90	4.93	5.04	4.65	4.25
General satisfaction•	5.21	5.63	5.39	5.25	5.03	4.68
Mutual influence	3.40	3.44	4.12	3.12	3.04	3.45
Job involvement•	3.46	3.77	3.61	2.87	3.49	3.57
Internal work motivation•	5.62	5.42	5.76	5.53	5.46	6.03

•  
F-test significant at .05 level.

Role definition and general satisfaction are also positively correlated ( $r = .24, p \leq .01$ ). Individuals who could largely determine what tasks they would do and how they could allocate their time among those tasks expressed more positive attitudes about the nature of their work and their relationship with other members of their work group. This is consistent with Dansereau, Graen, and Haga's previous work (1975) on the development of superior-subordinate relationships. They found that members of work groups with more latitude in negotiating roles reported less difficulty in dealing with superiors, perceived the superior's behavior as more responsive to their job needs, and expressed more positive attitudes about the intrinsic outcomes of their work and interpersonal relationships.

Given the prevalence of role conflict in this hospital setting, it is not surprising that resolution of conflicting demands is positively related to general satisfaction ( $r = .16, p \leq .05$ ). Role conflict with other departments serves as a constant irritant to hospital employees, making the overall quality of the work experience less positive. Those employees who have come to be less upset by role conflicts, and have come up with decision rules for how to handle those role conflicts, are happier with their work situations.

The positive relationship of resolution of outside-life conflicts with satisfaction ( $r = .19, p \leq .05$ ) is less intuitive, and raises

some provocative issues for the role of the organization in the socialization process. The finding suggests that what happens to individuals outside of the work place does indeed influence their satisfaction with their jobs. Moreover, with the exception of providing counseling or being flexible in scheduling, the organization may have little influence over a major determinant of job satisfaction.

When the correlations of the four variables which relate to satisfaction are examined, the reason for the department differences in general satisfaction becomes clearer. While nurses and engineers both have jobs which suit their skills and abilities, nurses have a good deal of difficulty in defining their jobs because they have many different tasks to do and disagreements about the priorities these tasks should claim. Moreover, nurses have the severest role conflicts to handle, at work managing the conflicting demands of medical and administrative duties, and at home managing unusual scheduling problems and the effects of patients' problems on them. In contrast, engineers have few inconsistent demands put on them as they clarify their work roles. They have very little to do with the medical hierarchy, and can go about their business fairly well without being bothered; rarely, if ever, do they have to work nights or weekends.

**Mutual influence.** Two variables at the accommodation stage are significantly related to mutual influence: initiation to the task ( $r = .16, p \leq .05$ ) and congruence of evaluation ( $r = .35, p \leq .001$ ).

Employees believe that until such time as they feel on top of their jobs, they would look foolish trying to suggest changes about work-related activities to coworkers or supervisors. Moreover, people feel they need to earn the right to make suggestions, and the way to do this is to demonstrate competence. The relationship between congruence of evaluation and mutual influence revolves around the probabilities that employees assign to the receptiveness of supervisors to their suggestions. Where employees feel they themselves are not appreciated or evaluated fairly, they doubt their supervisors will appreciate and evaluate their suggestions favorably. Supervisors are the people who will ultimately decide which suggestions to implement; when employees feel they are not valued by their supervisors, they have little reason to believe supervisors will heed their advice.

All procedures are determined at the upper echelons of the hospital, and not even first- and second-line supervisors have much influence in decisions which affect their work groups. For this reason, the mutual influence scores in the hospital are consistently low.

**3**

There is a significant negative correlation between resolution of conflicting demands and internal work motivation ( $r = -.19, p \leq .05$ ). This result is more likely an artifact of this particular sample than it is a theoretical finding. Highly motivated people, those who are most concerned with doing their jobs effectively, are the most frustrated in dealing with the many conflicts at work, and are the least satisfied with the ways these conflicts are being handled.

**Internal work motivation and job involvement.** No variable in this research is significantly and positively related to either internal work motivation or job involvement (Figure 2). It is more likely that the nature of the work itself rather than the way one is recruited or trained at work makes a difference in increasing the levels of these outcome variables.<sup>3</sup>

Hackman and Lawler (1971) and Hackman and Oldham (1975) show there are strong relationships between jobs with high motivating potential scores and internal work motivation and

job involvement. When the significant department differences on these two variables are examined, it can be seen that the three jobs with the highest motivating potential—nurse, radiology technologist, and engineer—also have the three highest scores on these two outcomes. These jobs involve the use of several different skills; workers do identifiable pieces of work; and employees can tell right away—from patients, films, or equipment—whether they have performed effectively. In contrast, accounting clerks and nursing service technicians have jobs with low motivating potential; their jobs require fewer skills, allow less autonomy, and are much less enriched than the other jobs studied.

There is additional evidence to support the hypothesis that general satisfaction and mutual influence, rather than internal work motivation and job involvement, are outcomes of socialization. Earlier, a distinction was drawn between successful and complete socialization. It is expected that the further along in the socialization process individuals are—that is, the more successful their socialization—the higher will be their outcome levels, and that those individuals who have completed socialization will have the highest outcome levels.

To test this hypothesis, the researcher determined to what stage in the socialization process each employee's socialization had progressed. If an employee averaged 5.33 or higher, out of a possible 7, on the process variables of a stage, the person was judged to have completed that stage in socialization (C); if the average of the process variables of a stage was at least 4 and lower than 5.33, that person was judged to be making moderate progress in completing that stage (M); if the average of the process variables of a stage was lower than 4, that person was judged to have made little progress at that stage (L). These cut-off points roughly divide the sample into thirds across all variables. There was thus a coding of C, M, or L for each employee on each of the three stages of socialization—anticipatory socialization, accommodation, and role management.

Table 5

Progress Point	General Satisfaction*	Mutual Influence**	Internal Work Motivation	Job Involvement
(1.) LLL ( <i>N</i> =9)	4.11	1.96	5.88	3.28
(2.) CLL ( <i>N</i> =8)	5.46	3.17	5.78	3.07
(3.) CMM ( <i>N</i> =9)	5.47	3.29	5.61	3.42
(4.) CCM ( <i>N</i> =12)	5.77	4.05	5.64	3.64
(5.) CCC ( <i>N</i> =13)	6.17	3.59	5.59	3.67

*Note.* Group 1, LLL, represents those people who have made little progress at any stage in the socialization process.

Group 2, CLL, represents those people who have completed anticipatory socialization, but have yet to make progress at the later two stages.

Group 3, CMM, represents those people who have completed anticipatory socialization and have made moderate progress at the later two stages.

Group 4, CCM, includes those people who have completed anticipatory socialization and accommodation, but have not completed role management.

Group 5, CCC, represents those who have completed socialization, having completed successfully all three stages of the process.

•

• •

*F*-test significant at .001 level.

*F*-test significant at .05 level.

Table 5 compares the means of five groups which have made differing amounts of progress in the socialization process. These groups were chosen because they represented the five most frequent points employees were at in their socialization process. Forty-four percent of the sample fell at these five points.

On general satisfaction, there is a perfect, steady increase in group means from those who have not completed anticipatory socialization to those who have completed all three stages. A one-way analysis of variance indicates that the differences between these five groups is significant at the .001 level. On mutual influence, with one exception, there is also a steady increase in group means corresponding to degree of progress through socialization; the one-way analysis of variance is significant at the .05 level. In contrast, on the two outcomes which were not correlated with any process variables—internal work motivation and job involvement—the differences between groups are small in magnitude and are not statistically significant.

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

There are two types of conclusions and implications to be drawn from this research: conclusions about the contingency model of socialization presented here, and implications the research has for organizational socialization in general. Each of these is considered in turn.

#### The Contingency Model of Socialization

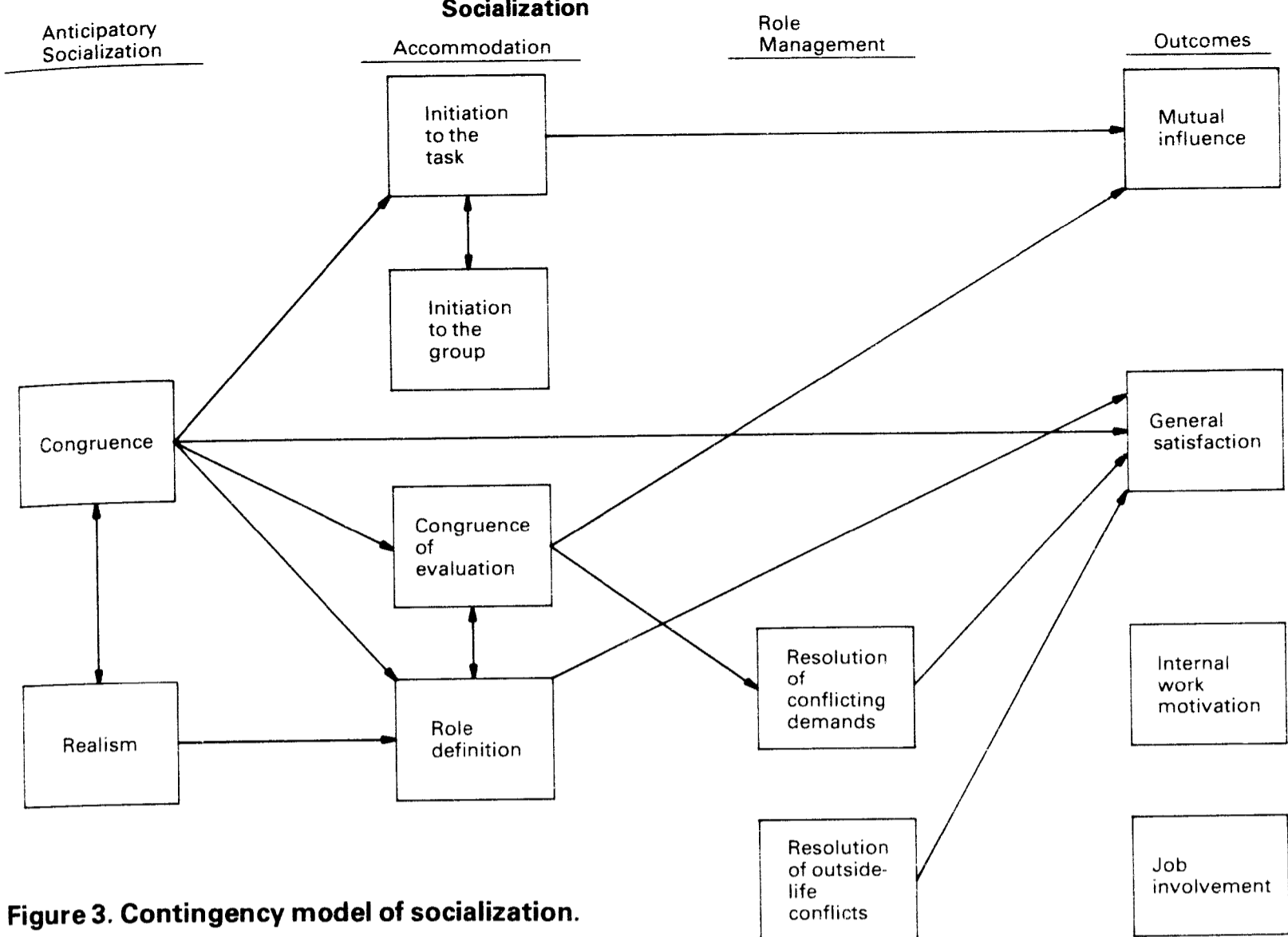
In Figure 2, the statistically significant correlations between all pairs of process and outcome variables are displayed. Although these correlations seem reasonable in explaining the data collected at this hospital, it is still not possible to state definitively that Figure 2 is the one model that best explains the relationships between the process variables and outcome variables of socialization.

Three correlations in particular seem to be significant due to the peculiarities of this particular hospital: the negative correlation between resolution of conflicting demands and internal work motivation, the positive correlation between resolution of conflicting demands and resolution of outside-life conflicts, and the positive correlation between congruence and initiation to the group.

Second, there were no hypotheses made about the significance of specific linkages between pairs of variables. To ideally test the fit of a model to actual data, additional data would have to be collected to see whether the relationships that emerged as significant from this data would emerge as significant again.

Third, it was not possible with this sample to sort out differences between socialization experiences of males and those of females, or to develop models specifically for particular occupational groups. An important research task still remaining is to investigate the differences between these subgroups in socialization, and to develop more elaborate or differentiated models of the process.

Fourth, this research is not longitudinal and does not test the assumptions made about the order in which socialization ac-



**Figure 3. Contingency model of socialization.**

tivities occur. Although the data collected at the hospital did not indicate that the assumptions made about this order are incorrect, many alternative models could be proposed from the same set of variables using different time assumptions.

All information considered, the model proposed as the most reasonable contingency model of socialization is displayed in Figure 3. While the time assumptions are kept the same, the three relationships discussed above are now hypothesized to be zero, and the relationship between congruence and initiation to the task is hypothesized to be significant. Since many alternative models could be proposed from the same set of variables, it is important to compare this model to other possible models to see which best explains the socialization process. Moreover, since some relationships salient in hospital settings may not be significant in other settings, and some relationships not significant in this setting may be very important in other organizations, it would be helpful to determine the appropriateness of the model for other types of jobs in other types of institutions.

### Implications for Organizational Socialization

One of the major implications of this research for organizational socialization is that socialization programs may not be appropriate for achieving some of the results most frequently expected from them. What socialization programs do affect are the general satisfaction of workers and the feelings of autonomy and personal influence workers have. This is important, because general satisfaction consistently relates to decreased turnover and absenteeism, and because mutual influence may increase the number and quality of creative suggestions made by workers. What socialization processes

do not seem to affect are the type of internal work motivation or job involvement associated with job performance, for none of the variables which have been commonly associated with the socialization process are correlated significantly with either internal work motivation or job involvement.

The results suggest an analogy to Herzberg's distinction between hygiene and motivator variables (Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman, 1959). Socialization processes function somewhat like hygiene variables; they are correlated positively with indicators of the quality of the work environment rather than with the quality of the work itself. The nature of the work itself acts more as a motivator variable, and is more strongly associated with employees' needs to self-actualize and to find self-realization through work (Alderfer, 1971).

In short, the present research emphasizes the need for a more sophisticated and differentiated study of organizational socialization. Without such an analysis, general expectations about the goals and advantages of socialization programs remain unclear and evaluations of actual socialization efforts remain difficult to assess.

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## **Socialization**

### **APPENDIX: SAMPLE INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS**

#### **Realism**

What did you expect your job to be like before you started to work? What did you think were the biggest advantages of that particular job? Disadvantages? Were your expectations confirmed? Disconfirmed? In what ways?

I knew what the good points and bad points of this job were when I was hired.

I did *not* know what to expect when I came to work for this hospital.  
(Reverse score)

#### **Congruence**

In what ways do you think there is a good fit between you and your job? Did you sometimes feel that the job was not the right job for you, or you might not be the right person for the particular job you do?

In some ways, I feel like this is not the right type of work for me, or I'm not the right type of person for this job. (Reverse score)

I'm sure there must be another job in the hospital for which I am better suited.

#### **Initiation to the Task**

If you could get more training, what are the areas you'd like to get it in? Do you feel the need for more training? What do you feel others think of your work? How would you feel about correcting other workers' errors?

I am sure that people around me are pleased with my work.

I feel confident enough about my abilities to correct other workers' errors.

#### **Initiation to the Group**

What was it like trying to get accepted by other department members? How relaxed do you think other department members feel with you now? To what extent do people confide in each other? How about you?

My coworkers actively try to include me in conversations about things at work.

I don't think my coworkers feel relaxed when they are with me. (Reverse score)

#### **Congruence of Evaluation**

What kind of procedures are there for performance evaluations? How does that system affect you? Do you feel you are doing a better job than you're getting credit for?

People around here rarely tell you how good they think your work is. (Reverse score)

I think I may be doing better in my job than my supervisors give me credit for.  
(Reverse score)

#### **Role Definition**

Do people feel job descriptions are accurate? How about you? Are there jobs you routinely do that you feel should be part of someone else's work? Can you do anything about it?

I frequently wonder why I get assigned some of the jobs I do. (Reverse score)

Some things I continually have to do at work should really be part of someone else's job. (Reverse score)

#### **Resolution of Conflicting Demands**

What other departments do you deal with? Smoothly or with friction? When there is a conflict with another department, how do you handle it?

I'm not sure what to do when people in another department give me a rough time. (Reverse score)

I'm upset we have to spend so much time dealing with the critics in other departments. (Reverse score)

**Resolution of Outside-Life Conflicts**

Do you feel as if your job interferes with your outside life? How much? In what ways? Do your family or friends encourage you to talk about problems at work outside the hospital?

My job schedule interferes with my life outside work. (Reverse score)

The people I see outside the hospital don't like to hear about what goes on at my job. (Reverse score)

**General Satisfaction**

Overall, how satisfied are you with the job? Where do you think you'll be a year from now? How optimistic are you about your future in the hospital?

I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do.

I frequently think of quitting this job. (Reverse score)

**Mutual Influence**

How much opportunity do you have to influence the way things are done around your department? If you had an idea about improving the ways jobs are done around here, how likely do you think it is you could change something?

If I had an idea about improving the way jobs were done in this department, I doubt I could get action on it. (Reverse score)

I feel I have a lot of influence in my unit.

**Internal Work Motivation**

I feel bad or unhappy when I discover that I have performed poorly on this job.

My own feelings generally are *not* affected much one way or the other by how well I do this job. (Reverse score)

**Job Involvement**

The most important things that happen to me involve my work on this job.

Most people on this job are very personally involved in their work.

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