

Surprise and Sense Making: What Newcomers Experience in Entering Unfamiliar Organizational Settings

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Growing disillusionment among new members of organizations has been traced to inadequacies in approaches to organizational entry. Current directions of research on organizational entry and their limitations are described, and a new perspective is proposed. The new perspective identifies key features of newcomers' entry experiences, including surprise, contrast, and change, and describes the sense-making processes by which individuals cope with their entry experiences. Implications for research and practice on organizational entry are drawn.*

There is growing concern that current organizational entry practices do not adequately ease the transition of new members into work organizations. Voluntary turnover during the first eighteen months on the job is increasing among college graduates in first career jobs, and reports of mounting disillusionment among new recruits are accumulating in college placement offices and in corporate personnel departments. That these trends are found despite growing attention by companies to new member orientation highlights both the difficulty of bringing newcomers on board and the need for improved organizational entry practices.

The purpose of this article is to identify crucial gaps in current approaches to organizational entry and to develop a perspective that fills the gaps. The new perspective proposes that an appreciation of what newcomers typically experience during the transition period and how they cope with their experiences is fundamental to designing entry practices that facilitate newcomers' adaptation in the new setting. The article is organized in three parts: a review of previous research on organizational entry and suggested limitations of current perspectives; a new perspective; and its implications for research and practice.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Historically, organizational entry has been studied from at least two distinct perspectives. In one, the dominant theme has been recruit turnover. The other has focused on organizational socialization, in which entry represents a major phase. In this section we briefly review the important themes and limitations of each perspective as outlined in Figure 1.

Turnover Perspective

In general, research on turnover has aimed at identifying and manipulating its causes in order to reduce voluntary turnover, which has been considered wholly undesirable (Porter and Steers, 1973; Hand, Griffeth, and Mobley, 1977; Price, 1977; Bluedorn, 1978; Mobley et al., 1979a; Muchinsky and Tuttle, 1979). However, a more appropriately complex treatment of turnover has been urged by recent reviewers (Mobley et al., 1979a; Mobley and Meglino, 1979; Muchinsky and Tuttle, 1979). In particular, they have highlighted the need to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary turnover, to identify turnover antecedents relative to job tenure (e.g., the turnover process among newcomers may be different from the turnover among oldtimers), and to consider positive as well as negative effects of turnover.

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0001-8392/80/2502-0226\$00.75

I want to thank Roger Evered, Rick Mowday, and the ASQ reviewers for their encouragement and suggestions for improving the manuscript. My thanks also go to Tom Cummings, Carson Eoyang, and Paul Hirsch for helpful comments on an early draft of the paper.

Support for the research that resulted in this paper was provided, in part, by a grant from the Research Board of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and, in part, by a grant from the Office of Naval Research Foundation Research Program at the Naval Postgraduate School.

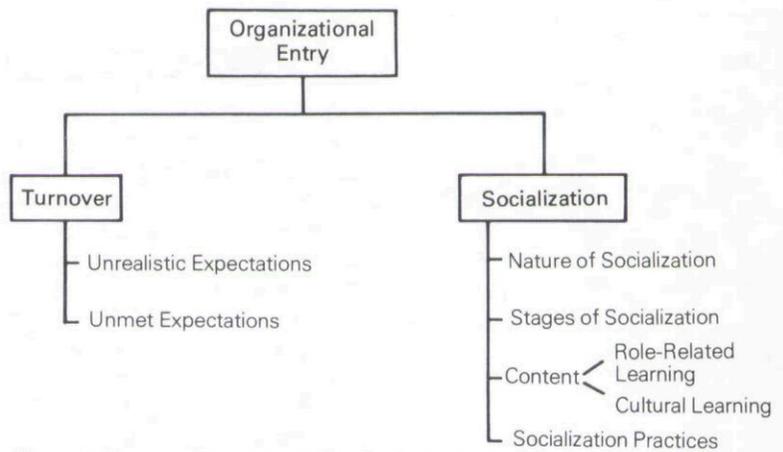


Figure 1. Perspectives on organizational entry.

Work on turnover among newcomers represents a special class of turnover research. Results of work on the antecedents of recruit turnover suggest that newcomers' expectations are a critical factor associated with voluntary recruit turnover (Ross and Zander, 1957; Katzell, 1968; Dunnette, Arvey, and Banas, 1973; Porter and Steers, 1973; Wanous, 1977, 1980; Mowday, 1979; Muchinsky and Tuttle, 1979). However, two different approaches to the role of recruit expectations in turnover have emerged. In the first, voluntary turnover among newcomers is attributed to unrealistic or inflated expectations that individuals bring as they enter organizations (Bray, Campbell, and Grant, 1974; Wanous, 1977; Mobley et al., 1979b). In the second, turnover is attributed to differences between newcomers' expectations and early job experiences, called unmet expectations (Ross and Zander, 1957; Katzell, 1968; Dunnette, Arvey, and Banas, 1973). Although previously collapsed into a single category (sometimes labeled the "met expectations hypothesis" [Mobley et al., 1979a]), the approaches are treated separately here in light of the substantially different operationalizations and action strategies they employ.

Unrealistic expectations. Work on unrealistic expectations relies on findings that recruits' expectations of their jobs prior to entering organizations are significantly inflated as a result of typical organizational recruiting practices (Ward and Athos, 1972) as well as newcomers' cognitive processes (Vroom and Deci, 1971). In response to the findings, a strategy to promote more realistic pre-entry job expectations among recruits, called the Realistic Job Preview (RJP), was developed. Using RJP's, greater realism in expectations has resulted when recruits receive orientation information through booklets, films, or other means, which describe in factual, rather than idealized, terms the company and the job (Wanous, 1976). Furthermore, Wanous (1977) has found realism to be negatively associated with turnover.

Several explanations for the effect of RJP's on turnover have been proposed (Ilgen, 1975; Ilgen and Dugoni, 1977; Wanous, 1977, 1980). A primary hypothesized explanation suggests that RJP's lower newcomers' initial expectations; lower expectations are more likely to be met than are higher expectations; met expectations lead to satisfaction, and satisfaction is inversely related to turnover (Ilgen, 1975).

Although results of early studies on realism seemed promising (Wanous, 1977), Wanous (1979) recently concluded that evidence of the hypothesized effect of realism on turnover is weak at best. No comprehensive explanation for the realism effect has been empirically supported (Ilgen and Dugoni, 1977), and methodological inadequacies (e.g., lack of a manipulation check) and inconsistencies between studies make generalization about RJP effects problematic. In addition, the relevant situational conditions and appropriate subject matter of preview information have not been adequately explored (Wanous, 1976, 1978; Reilly, Tenopyr, and Sperling, 1979). And finally, although realism suggests accuracy and appropriateness of expectations, it is usually operationalized merely as the inverse of expectation level. Lower expectations are considered more realistic than are higher expectations.

Unmet expectations. In contrast to the realism approach, the works of Ross and Zander (1957), Katzell (1968), and Dunnette, Arvey, and Banas (1973) operationalize unmet expectations as the difference between initial expectations (or needs) and actual experiences on the job. As used in the three studies, "unmet" expectations refer only to "undermet" expectations, that is, experiencing less of something desirable than was anticipated.

In all three studies, voluntary turnover was associated with unmet expectations and not with the level of initial expectations. In fact, in each case the leavers did not differ from the stayers in what they initially expected as they entered the organization. Like the unrealistic expectations approach, the unmet expectations approach hypothesizes that dissatisfaction and turnover result from disconfirmed expectations, similar to a "broken promise" effect. This approach is also plagued with problems in methodology and offers no adequate explanation for the effect.

The action strategy based on the unmet expectations approach aims at reducing recruit turnover by ensuring that newcomers' expectations of the job are met. The practical focus has been on the initial period on the job, rather than the pre-entry period. The key is to "manage the joining-up process," as Kotter (1973) describes it, by developing a psychological contract between the newcomer and supervisor in which the expectations of each are clarified and exchanged. The aim is to match individuals and their expectations to specific jobs. What neither the realism nor the unmet expectations approach considers, however, is that unmet expectations, broadly defined, may be an inevitable accompaniment to the experience of entering an unfamiliar organizational setting.

Reconciliation and critique. Both approaches to turnover focus on the role of expectations in organizational entry. The realism approach is concerned with the level of initial expectations, and the unmet expectations approach is concerned with the degree to which expectations are disconfirmed once the newcomer is on the job. They differ in the operationalizations and action strategies they use. How can we reconcile the two approaches? Do they reflect different psychological processes?

Consumer behavior literature bears directly on the issue, as Mowday (1979) has recently suggested. In work on product performance ratings, Oliver (1977) documented independent and separately significant effects of initial expectations and disconfirmed expectations, lending support to the distinction proposed here. He concluded that it is necessary to consider both in explaining the outcomes observed, that the process by which individuals respond to met and unmet expectations is more complex than is reflected in the single-effect view characteristic of research to date.

Fundamentally, both approaches to turnover are based on an assumption of rationality. It is assumed that newcomers are rational beings who enter unfamiliar organizational settings with preformed conscious expectations about their new jobs and organizations, which, if met, lead to satisfaction and, if unmet, lead to voluntary turnover. (In the next section, we show that this assumption of rationality is not well supported.) The conscious pre-entry expectations considered primary in turnover approaches are merely the tip of the iceberg in the view of the newcomer experience that we propose.

Historically, researchers have addressed one main question: "Do newcomers' expectations (initial or unmet) lead to voluntary turnover?" As a number of reviewers (Mobley et al., 1979a; Mowday, 1979; Muchinsky and Tuttle, 1979) have stated, a more complex and process-oriented treatment of the issue is needed. Since it is not yet clear that rational pre-entry expectations are the key feature in newcomers' experiences, we need to identify other elements in the entry experience, in addition to clarifying how turnover is being interpreted. Focus on the process requires new questions. How do newcomers cope with the experience of unrealistic/unmet expectations? As a beginning, the consumer behavior literature suggests several psychological processes through which disconfirmed expectations are managed (Sherif and Hovland, 1961; Carlsmith and Aronson, 1963; Anderson, 1973). And, more generally, how do newcomers cope with early job experiences? How do they come to understand, interpret, and respond in and to unfamiliar organizational settings? Such process-oriented questions have not as yet been addressed in research on antecedents of recruit turnover.

Socialization Perspective

The discussion of organizational socialization is organized around four key themes. The first deals with the general *characteristics* of organizational socialization, the second with *stages* of socialization. The third is the *content* of socialization — what is being imparted to the newcomer. The fourth focuses on characteristics and effects of socialization *practices*. (See Van Maanen, 1976, for a broad overview of the area.) Other writings on the subject are found increasingly in work on careers, into which, it appears, organizational socialization research is being absorbed (e.g., Hall, 1976; Van Maanen, 1977b; Schein, 1978).

Characteristics of socialization. Organizational socialization is the process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowl-

edge essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organizational member (Brim, 1966; Van Maanen, 1976; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Regardless of an individual's previous socialization experiences, each major passage (Glaser and Strauss, 1971) or role change involves socialization into the new role and setting. And, considering the variety and number of roles that the typical adult holds between high school and retirement, we can see that organizational socialization is a pervasive process throughout adult life (Brim, 1968; Glaser and Strauss, 1971). In general, a descriptively rich picture of the experience of entering a new organizational setting and role has been developed in the organizational literature on socialization. The experience is characterized by disorientation, foreignness, and a kind of sensory overload.

"Reality shock" is the phrase that Hughes (1958) used to characterize what newcomers often experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. Time and space become problematic at the moment of entry. At that particular time, all surroundings, that is, the entire organizationally-based physical and social world, are changed. There is no gradual exposure and no real way to confront the situation a little at a time. Rather, the newcomer's senses are simultaneously inundated with many unfamiliar cues. It may not be clear to the newcomer just what constitutes a cue, let alone what the cues refer to, which cues require response, or how to interpret and select responses to them. Time and space remain problematic until, as Van Maanen (1977a) has suggested, the newcomer is able to construct maps of time and space specific to the new setting.

In taking on a new role, the newcomer is typically given some time in which to "get up speed," that is, to master the basics of the job and to perform at or above some minimum level (Becker and Strauss, 1956). The newcomer must also "learn the ropes," as socialization is frequently termed by those going through it. Learning the ropes is necessary in each new organizational culture, since, by definition, cultures differ between organizations, and even between roles within the same organization (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Ritti and Funkhouser, 1977; Van Maanen, 1977a).

Stages of socialization. The second theme concerns stages through which newcomers pass during organizational socialization (Merton, 1957; Schein, 1962, 1968; Feldman, 1976; Van Maanen, 1976). According to Merton (1957), the process of organizational socialization begins in a stage called "anticipatory socialization." Recruits, while still outsiders, anticipate their experiences in the organization they are about to enter. During that period, outsiders develop expectations about their life in the organization and on the job. It is here that the unrealistic expectations identified by Wanous (1977) develop.

When beginning work, the individual passes from outsider to newcomer and enters the encounter stage. Experiences during the encounter period are critical in shaping the individual's long-term orientation to the organization (Hughes, 1958; Berlew and Hall, 1966; Van Maanen, 1976). During en-

counter, newcomers' anticipations are tested against the reality of their new work experiences. Differences between anticipations and experiences (including the previously described unmet expectations) become apparent and contribute to reality shock. Coping with such differences and "learning the ropes" of the new setting typically occupy the newcomer for the first 6 to 10 months on the job.

The individual's adaptation to the organization occurs with the passage from newcomer to insider. In most socialization models, adaptation is treated more as a state than a stage. That is, the state of being adapted, of having assumed an insider role are indications of the completion of socialization. Newcomers become insiders when and as they are given broad responsibilities and autonomy, entrusted with "privileged" information, included in informal networks, encouraged to represent the organization, and sought out for advice and counsel by others.

One critical limitation of the studies of socialization stages stands out. Although there are situations in which individuals simply add new roles to their portfolios of life roles, usually the process of entering an organization and/or role also involves leaving another one. Yet, with few exceptions (e.g., Becker and Strauss, 1956), views of organizational socialization have focused on the "changing to" process of entering the new situation, and have excluded the "changing from" process of leaving the old situation. Writings elsewhere suggest that the process of changing from has a significant impact on the success of the changing to process. For instance, the works of Lewin (1951), Argyris (1964), and Tannenbaum (1976) indicate that unfreezing, moving away, or letting go is a necessary preliminary step in effecting change at individual and group levels. Work in anthropology has focused on leavetaking and transition rituals in societal status passages (Van Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1969). Work on the resocialization of deviants and on brainwashing also bear on leavetaking aspects of assuming new organizational roles. In total institutional settings and tribal passage rites, recruits are processed as a group, isolated from former associates, stripped of prior status and individuality. Whether such transition rites are relevant in organizations that are not total institutions and in which individuals voluntarily elect to become members is questionable. Nevertheless, in future studies we must consider how leavetaking and the letting go of old roles do and should enter into newcomers' socialization experiences in typical organizational settings.

Content of socialization. Two basic kinds of content can be distinguished in socialization. The first is role-related learning, and the second is a more general appreciation of the culture of an organization. In order to perform adequately in a new role, an individual needs ability, motivation, and an understanding of what others expect (Brim, 1966). Ideally, during socialization, especially during the encounter stage, the newcomer's role-relevant abilities are identified, others' expectations are conveyed and negotiated, and incentives and sanctions are clarified, with the aim of enhancing motivation to perform.

Essential elements of any role a newcomer assumes are knowledge base, strategy, and mission (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). In addition, the newcomer must understand critical organizational values in order to identify essential or pivotal role behaviors, those that must be performed to avoid the risk of expulsion (Schein, 1971a). Although researchers have studied socialization into particular occupational and professional roles (e.g., doctors), no one has yet adequately described how the role-related content of socialization is conveyed in traditional organizational settings. However, both organizations and newcomers seem to appreciate the need for role learnings.

In contrast, there is usually very little understanding by either organization or newcomer of the need to learn the "culture" of the organization (Van Maanen, 1977a). An organization is more than a collection of roles positioned on an organization chart. It has a personality of sorts, often referred to as an organizational culture. "How we do things and what matters around here" are conveyed by an organization's culture. When newcomers are "learning the ropes" they are, in part, learning the culture. In organizations, as in societies at large, culture conveys important assumptions and norms governing membership, values, activities, and aims (Gamst and Norbeck, 1976). The norms and assumptions are collectively shared and interactively emergent; they are enacted rather than spoken (Mead, 1964; Schutz, 1964).

What culture "is," aside from what it conveys, is more difficult to identify. In anthropology, where culture has been most directly and extensively studied, a variety of views of culture has been advanced. For our purposes, a semiotic view (Geertz, 1973) seems more appropriate than a cognitive view (Goodenough, 1964) for examining culture in regularly convening organizational milieux. In the semiotic view, culture consists, as Geertz (1973: 12-13) has written, "... of socially established structures of meaning in terms of which people do such things as signal conspiracies and join them" More particularly:

it denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life. (Geertz, 1973: 89)

Between different organizations (and, to a lesser extent, between units of the same organization), there are different cultures. In different organizations, members may have substantially different orientations to one another, their roles, and the organizational mission. For instance, in one organization members may be personally concerned about the welfare of one another and loyal to the organization for life. In another, people may participate in more instrumental ways, putting in their 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, and collecting their paychecks. Recent characterizations of types A, J, and Z organizations capture the cultural distinctiveness of different settings (Ouchi and Jaeger, 1978).

In learning the culture, newcomers develop a definition of the situation (McHugh, 1968), a scheme for interpreting everyday events in the setting (Schutz, 1964; Berger and

Luckman, 1966; Cicourel, 1974). Newcomers need situation- or culture-specific interpretation schemes in order to make sense of happenings in the setting and to respond with meaningful and appropriate actions. They need a map of the territory, so to speak, that is sufficiently consonant with the maps that insiders carry and by which members enact the territory (Weick, 1979).

In general, the processes by which recruits come to appreciate pivotal organizational values, role-related abilities and missions, and interpretation schemes appropriate to the local culture have not been adequately explored in the literature on organizational socialization. To begin to understand the "appreciation" processes basic to socialization, we need to examine relevant work in other areas. For example, Weiss (1978) has applied concepts from social learning theory in explaining the acquisition of values in organizational socialization. Other learning paradigms (Gagné, 1965; Bruner, 1973) could help explain the knowledge-acquisition processes in socialization. Literature on personal change (Schein, 1979), on psychological contracting (Schein, 1965; Kotter, 1973) on goal setting (Locke, 1968; Latham and Yukl, 1975), and on performance feedback (Ilgen, Fisher, and Taylor, 1979) could aid in understanding the processes by which recruits come to appreciate role expectations, acquire task motivations, and carry out certain role missions. And work on the phenomenology of the stranger (Schutz, 1964) and cognitive processes in organizations (Weick, 1977, 1979) could provide a rich starting place in efforts to understand how newcomers learn the ropes in and of new organizational cultures.

Characteristics of socialization practices. The fourth theme concerns socialization practices and their effects on recruits. A number of researchers have examined the effects of alternative structures of socialization settings on recruits' adaptations (Wheeler, 1966; Glaser and Strauss, 1971; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Rather than looking at particular practices used in certain types of settings, they looked at the generic aspects of socialization practices by focusing on the structure of the socialization setting. For instance, Wheeler traced the effects of individual versus collective socialization and serial versus disjunctive socialization, that is, whether or not the recruit had predecessors available to help in learning the role.

Glaser and Strauss (1971) identified a dozen properties of organizational and other status passages, noting that some are more relevant than others, depending on the particular passage in question. Recently, Hall (1979) described the special characteristics of late career passages.

In the most comprehensive work on this theme to date, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) presented a structural analysis of socialization tactics, tracing the effects of each on recruits' responses. According to the authors, organizational socialization practices help to shape the kind of member the recruit will be. Socialization tactics were analyzed using six dimensions. In addition to the two that Wheeler proposed, the authors considered formal versus informal, sequential versus variable, fixed versus variable, and investiture versus divestiture. For each dimension, prototypical cases were described

and hypothesized effects on recruits outlined. Three kinds of recruit response were distinguished: custodianship, in which the status quo role is adopted; content innovation, in which the status quo mission of the role is adopted but the strategy for carrying out the role is altered; and role innovation, in which the newcomer alters the basic mission or ends served by the role (Schein, 1971b).

The work is an integrative framework, which can be used to compare socialization practices across socialization settings. But, as the authors carefully noted, they were concerned with the structural aspects of socialization. The internal processes by which external structure leads to outcome, by which socialization tactics or practices affect recruits in characteristic ways, have not been studied. In addition, decisions about which tactical dimensions to study were guided by logical deduction from empirical observations and accounts in the literature (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979: 232). As yet, no theoretical framework has been proposed to guide or justify the choice of particular tactical dimensions of socialization to study.

Turnover and Socialization: Fundamental Distinctions and Common Gaps

Whereas the turnover perspective was criticized for conducting overly simplistic empirical research, organizational socialization research suffers from nearly opposite weaknesses. It has been criticized for producing descriptive theories relevant only to specific socialization settings; instead, predictive models are needed that can provide strategic action guides applicable across socialization situations (Van Maanen, 1976). The two perspectives are opposites in other ways, so much so, that proponents of one seldom acknowledge or incorporate the ideas of the other. For instance, experimental and industrial psychology provide the discipline base and methodological tradition for the turnover view; sociology (particularly organizational and occupational sociology and sociology of work) provides the roots for the socialization perspective. Whereas rationality was assumed in turnover research, socialization studies have been grounded in a blend of phenomenology and social interactionism, in which meaning is assumed to be constructed afresh in interaction and based on situationally imbedded interpretive schemes (Mead, 1964; Schutz, 1964; Berger and Luckman, 1966). The two perspectives differ in research settings and designs and views of what constitutes data and knowledge. They are, in fact, different paradigms (Kuhn, 1970). So it is not surprising that they have previously not been linked as alternative perspectives on the same problem. And yet both are centrally concerned with the entry and adjustment of newcomers into unfamiliar organizational settings. They are considered jointly here in an attempt to piece together a completer picture of the entry phenomenon, by using each to shore up the deficiencies in the other and by exposing gaps common to both as a guide for future research.

Neither the turnover nor the socialization perspective has sufficiently studied the ways in which newcomers cope with early job experiences. How newcomers detect, diagnose, interpret, and select responses to features of the new

setting, including differences between their pre-entry expectations and experiences has yet to be described. Nor has either perspective studied why some newcomers choose to leave work organizations, others try to renegotiate job descriptions, and still others accept more readily the unanticipated reality of the new setting. What it is about the individuals themselves (e.g., personality and background), the situations they encounter, or the ways in which they internally process their experiences as newcomers that leads them to choose one of these responses over another remains to be explored. In the next section we propose a new perspective to fill this gap in knowledge about newcomers' organizational entry experiences and coping processes.

A MODEL OF THE NEWCOMER EXPERIENCE

In order to understand the processes by which newcomers cope with entry and socialization experiences, we must first understand that experience. In the following pages we identify some key features of the newcomer experience and outline a model for understanding the processes of newcomers' coping, or sense making. It is proposed that change, contrast, and surprise constitute major features of the entry experience. Although all refer to differences associated with entering new settings, they focus on separate types of differences.

Entry Experiences

Change. "Change" is defined here as an objective difference in a major feature between the new and old settings. It is the newness of the "changed to" situation that requires adjustment by the individual. The more elements that are different in the new situation as compared with the previous situation, the more the newcomer potentially has to cope with. This is true even though differences represent improvements over the previous situation. Defined more elaborately, change is publicly noted and knowable; that is, there is recordable evidence of a difference. Evidence includes new location, addresses, telephone numbers, title, salary, job description, organizational affiliation, prerequisites, etc. Such evidence exists in advance of the transition. In fact, changes themselves are knowable in advance.

With the start of a new job, the individual experiences a change in role and often in professional identity, from student to financial analyst, for instance. Such role changes are often accompanied by changes in status. Similarly, there are often major differences in basic working conditions. Discretion in scheduling time, opportunities for feedback, and peer interaction may be very different at work versus in school, in field sales versus marketing research or management.

Schein (1971a) has stated that an individual entering an organization crosses three boundaries: functional, hierarchical, and inclusionary. Together, the boundaries represent three more dimensions of change for newcomers. The newcomer takes on a set of tasks within a functional area (e.g., marketing, finance) and must learn how they are to be accomplished. The newcomer also acquires a position in the hierarchy, implying supervisory authority over subordinates and reporting responsibility to a superior.

A more informal but no less crucial boundary is the inclusionary one, which refers to one's position in the informal information and influence networks. Influence and information access from the previous situation can seldom be transferred into the new situation. As a result, newcomers usually hold peripheral rather than central positions in the inclusionary network. Over time they may develop access and influence bases, but initially they are usually "on the outside." Based on this view of change, we can generally expect a transition from school to a first full-time, career-related job to be accompanied by more changes and, therefore, more to cope with than a transition from one work organization to another, especially when the new job is similar to the previous one.

Contrast. The second feature of the entry experience is *contrast*, which is personally, rather than publicly, noticed and is not, for the most part, knowable in advance. Contrast, an effect described by gestalt psychologists (Koffka, 1935; Kohler, 1947), involves the emergence within a perceptual field of "figure," or noticed features, against ground, or general background. Particular features emerge when individuals experience new settings. Which features emerge as figure is, in part, determined by features of previously experienced settings. Both differences between settings and characteristics within (new) settings contribute to the selection of features experienced as figure. For example, how people dress in the new setting may or may not be noticed or experienced as a contrast by the newcomer, depending in part on whether dress differs between new and old settings. The presence of a difference in dress is a necessary but not sufficient precondition for the noticing of a contrast. Similarly, the absence of windows may or may not emerge through the contrast effect as a distinguishing feature of the new setting, depending on the individual and the full set of potential contrasts in the situation. Contrast is, therefore, person-specific rather than indigenous to the organizational transition. That is to say, for two people undergoing the same change, (e.g., leaving Stanford and entering Merrill Lynch), different contrasts will emerge.

A special case of contrast is associated with the process of letting go of old roles, which often seems to continue well into the socialization process. The prolonged letting go in organizational entry seems to differ markedly from the situation in tribal rites of passage and total institution inductions, as described earlier. In typical entry situations no newcomer transition ritual erases all trace of the old role before the new role is taken on. Instead, newcomers voluntarily undertake the role change, change only one of the many roles they simultaneously hold, and carry into the new role memories of experiences in old roles. The first time the newcomer is involved in almost any activity in the new role (e.g., a professor uses the computer or library or has a manuscript typed at the new university), the memory of the corresponding activity in one or more old roles may be brought to mind. The process is similar, though on a less emotionally charged scale, to the event-anniversary phenomenon that occurs in adjusting to the death of a loved one. As experiences from prior roles are recalled, contrasts

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are generated, and a variety of subprocesses may be triggered. For instance, the newcomer may evaluate aspects of the new role using old-role experiences as anchors on internal comparison scales. Or the newcomer may try to incorporate aspects of the old into the new role or resist the new role in favor of the old role.

Based on the natural limits of human capabilities for perceptual processing (Miller, 1956), we surmise that there may be some maximum number of contrasts to which individuals can attend simultaneously. In addition, it appears that for individuals in new situations, some minimum number of the contrasts emerge. The contrasts represent subjective differences between new and old settings by which newcomers characterize and otherwise define the new situation.

Surprise. The third feature of the entry experience is surprise, which represents a difference between an individual's anticipations and subsequent experiences in the new setting. Surprise also encompasses one's affective reactions to any differences, including contrasts and changes. Surprise may be positive (e.g., delight at finding that your office window overlooks a garden) and/or negative (e.g., disappointment at finding that your office window can not be opened). The subject of anticipation and, therefore, surprise may be the job, the organization, or self. Anticipations may be conscious, tacit, or emergent; either overmet or undermet anticipations can produce surprise. Figure 2 summarizes several forms of surprise in relation to three dimensions for understanding organizational entry phenomena. It is presented to illustrate some typical sources and forms of surprise and is not intended to be inclusive.

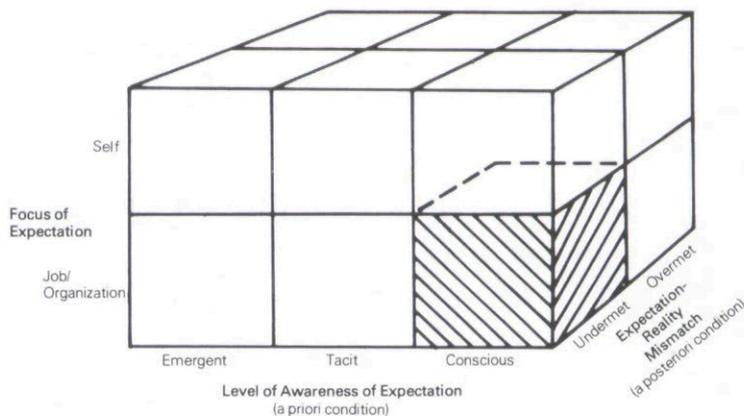


Figure 2. Varieties of surprise.

Several forms of surprise often arise during the encounter stage and require adaptation on the part of the newcomer. Only the first three can be traced directly to Figure 2. The first form of surprise occurs when conscious expectations about the job are not fulfilled in the newcomer's early job experiences. Unmet expectations, as typically used, refers to undermet conscious job expectations, shown as the shaded area in Figure 2.

A second form of surprise that may occur during encounter arises when expectations (both conscious and unconscious)

about oneself are unmet. Choice of the new organization is often based on assumptions about one's own skills, values, needs, etc. During encounter, errors in assumptions sometimes emerge, and the newcomer must cope with the recognition that he or she is different from his or her previous perceptions of self. For example: "I chose this job because it offered a great deal of freedom; now I realize I really don't want so much freedom."

A third form of surprise arises when unconscious job expectations are unmet or when features of the job are unanticipated. Job aspects not previously considered important stand out as important because their presence or absence is experienced as undesirable. As one newcomer said, "I had no idea how important windows were to me until I'd spent a week in a staff room without any." This is an example both of inadequacy in anticipations producing surprise and a contrast, indicating a typical overlap between the two features.

A fourth form of surprise arises from difficulties in accurately forecasting internal reactions to a particular new experience. "What will happen" (the external events) may be accurately anticipated, whereas "how it will feel" (the internal experience of external events) may not be accurately assessed by the individual. How new experiences will feel, as opposed to how the individual expected them to feel, is difficult to anticipate and often surprising. The difference is analogous to the distinction that can be drawn between "knowing about" in a cognitive sense and being "acquainted with" in an experiential sense. "I knew I'd have to put in a lot of overtime, but I had no idea how bad I'd feel after a month of 65-hour weeks, how tired I'd be all the time." In this example, the facts were available to the individual and were accepted; what was inaccurately anticipated and, therefore, surprising was how it would "actually feel," the subjective experience. The individual in this example might interpret his experience as, "I don't have as much energy as I thought," a form of unmet expectation about self.

A fifth form of surprise comes from the cultural assumptions that newcomers make. Surprise results when the newcomer relies on cultural assumptions brought from previous settings as operating guides in the new setting, and they fail. Van Maanen (1977a: 20) describes the situation as follows:

... a newcomer assumes that he knows what the organization is about, assumes others in the setting have the same idea, and practically never bothers to check out these two assumptions. What occurs upon experience is that the neophyte receives a surprise of sorts ... in which he discovers that significant others ... do not share his assumptions. The newcomer must then reorient himself relative to others ... through a cognitive revision of his previously taken-for-granted assumptions.

Since cultures differ between organizations, a cognitive framework for expressing and interpreting meanings in a particular culture must be developed in and for the specific culture in which it will be used.

A final point about surprise is necessary. Both pleasant and unpleasant surprises require adaptation. However, traditional formulations of unmet expectations implicitly treat only undermet expectations or unpleasant surprises. In the fu-

ture, it will be important to include both overmet and undermet expectations in considering surprises that contribute to newcomers' entry experiences.

The picture of the newcomer experience developed here suggests that the strategy of enhancing the realism only of conscious pre-entry job expectations is not adequate. Similarly, strategies to ensure that conscious pre-entry job expectations are not underfulfilled (unmet) in early job experiences are also not sufficient. Ultimately both views seek to aid newcomers by reducing the extent of their unmet expectations. Both implicitly deny the near inevitability of the myriad unanticipated and even unanticipatable changes, contrasts, and surprises attendant on entering substantially different organizational settings. Unmet conscious job expectations constitute merely one subset of surprise.

It is proposed that appreciation of changes, contrasts, and surprises characteristic of newcomers' entry experiences is essential in designing organizational structures that facilitate newcomer transitions. In essence, they constitute a part of the experiential landscape of individuals during the encounter stage of organizational socialization.

Sense Making

The role of conscious thought in coping. In order to understand how individuals in organizational settings cope with entry experiences, particularly surprises, we must first ask how people anywhere cope with normal, everyday situations that are not surprising. In familiar, nonsurprising situations, individuals seem to operate in a kind of loosely preprogrammed, nonconscious way, guided by cognitive scripts. A cognitive script, as defined by Abelson (1976: 33) is "... a coherent sequence of events expected by the individual." Several constructs are similar in idea to the cognitive script, among them schema (Bartlett, 1932; Weick, 1979), habitualization (Berger and Luckman, 1966), and "trustworthy recipes for thinking-as-usual" (Schutz, 1964: 95). What each of the constructs suggests is that conscious thought is not a very large part of our everyday mode of operating. We may drive to work, greet our colleagues, and sit in meetings with about the same deliberateness with which we brush our teeth. In fact, Taylor and Fiske (1978) suggest that most of our everyday decisions are made "off the top of our heads." In acting that is guided by cognitive scripts, conscious thought is minimal.

If that is the case, then it is necessary to know under what conditions coping is guided by thought or cognition rather than by preprogrammed scripts. One possibility is that conscious thought is provoked when the individual senses something "out of the ordinary." A number of writers have suggested that possibility, including James (1890), Dewey (1933), Mills (1940), Lewin (1951), Schutz (1964), and Langer (1978). Schutz (1964: 105), for example, states:

If we encounter in our experience something previously unknown and which therefore stands out of the ordinary order of our knowledge, we begin a process of inquiry.

Mills (1940: 905) expressed his view as follows:

... men live in immediate acts of experience and their attentions are directed outside themselves until acts are in some way frustrated. It is then that awareness of self and of motive occur.

More recently, Langer (1978: 58) developed a set of conditions under which thinking occurs. She proposed that conscious thinking is necessary when the outcomes of our acts are inconsistent with anticipated outcomes or when scripted behavior is effortful or interrupted. Abelson (1976) and Langer (1978) also treat behavior in novel situations as unscripted and, therefore, guided by thinking. However, it is clear that people do not always recognize when situations are novel and act, or rather think, accordingly (Schutz, 1964; Van Maanen, 1977a).

Scripts provide the individual with predictions of event sequences and outcomes. Implicitly, reasons for outcomes, that is, prospective explanations, are supplied. As long as the predicted outcomes occur, thinking is not necessary. However, when predicted outcomes do not occur, the individual's cognitive consistency is threatened (Festinger, 1957; Abelson et al., 1968). The discrepancy between predicted and actual outcomes, that is, between anticipations and experience, produces a state of tension which acts as a quasi-need, in Lewin's (1951) terms, unbalancing the equilibrium of the individual's psychological field. The quasi-need is for a return to equilibrium. Hence, when scripts fail, the individual must develop explanations for why the actual outcomes occurred and why the predicted outcomes did not. The retrospective explanations help to resolve tension states by restoring equilibrium, although in a new configuration. Retrospective explanations are produced through a particular thinking process that we call sense making. The explanatory products of sense making have been studied under such labels as accounts (Scott and Lyman, 1968) and attributions (Ross, 1977). Accounts are "... statements made to explain untoward behavior and bridge the gap between actions and expectations" (Scott and Lyman, 1968: 46). They provide reasons for outcomes, and for discrepancies.

In attribution research, individuals have been viewed as naive scientists, who make sense of events on the basis of available information (Ross, 1977). Researchers have identified rules and biases that guide naive scientists in attributing causes to events and properties to causes (Jones and Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967; Jones et al., 1972). They have also characterized types of attributions and examined attribution patterns produced in response to different outcomes (Weiner, 1974). Attributions about anticipated outcomes that actually occurred are examined; attributions about anticipated outcomes that did not occur are overlooked. Similarly, inadequate attention has been given to the question of when attributions are made (Kelley, 1976). Instead, this research seems to have assumed that people are always making attributions (and, hence, are engaged in thinking) and that attributions prospectively guide, as well as retrospectively explain, events (Taylor and Fiske, 1978). Attribution research has not adequately considered either the cognitive processes through which attributions are created or the social and institutional conditions in which attributions are employed (Kelley, 1976).

On the other hand, Weick (1977, 1979) has examined cognitive processes in organizational settings. He suggested that

an analysis of cognition in organizations ought to address the question of what provokes cognition in organizations (1979: 71). What we suggest here is that one kind of event that provokes cognition is surprise and that surprise seems to be an inevitable part of the experience of entering (in the sense of joining) an unfamiliar organizational setting.

How individuals cope with surprise. Recently a model describing the processes by which individuals detect and interpret surprises was developed (Louis, 1978). It suggests that sense making can be viewed as a recurring cycle comprised of a sequence of events occurring over time. The cycle begins as individuals form unconscious and conscious anticipations and assumptions, which serve as predictions about future events. Subsequently, individuals experience events that may be discrepant from predictions. Discrepant events, or surprises, trigger a need for explanation, or post-diction, and, correspondingly, for a process through which interpretations of discrepancies are developed. Interpretation, or meaning, is attributed to surprises. Based on the attributed meanings, any necessary behavioral responses to the immediate situation are selected. Also based on attributed meanings, understandings of actors, actions, and settings are updated and predictions about future experiences in the setting are revised. The updated anticipations and revised assumptions are analogous to alterations in cognitive scripts.

The cycle as described focuses on the more rational elements in sense making. It is meant to represent general stages in understanding one's experience, rather than the literal process by which all individuals respond to each experience. It is crucial to note that meaning is assigned to surprise as an output of the sense-making process, rather than arising concurrently with the perception or detection of differences.

In making sense, or attributing meaning to surprise, individuals rely on a number of inputs. Their past experiences with similar situations and surprises help them in coping with current situations. Individuals are also guided by their more general personal characteristics, including predispositions to attribute causality to self, others, fate, etc. (e.g., the locus of control [Rotter, 1966] and anomie [McClosky and Schaar, 1963]), as well as their orienting purposes in the situation and in general. Another input that shapes how sense is made of surprise is the individual's set of cultural assumptions or interpretive schemes, that is, internalizations of context-specific dictionaries of meaning, which "... structure routine interpretations and conduct within an institutional area" (Berger and Luckman, 1966: 138). In addition, information and interpretations from others in the situation contribute to the sense-making process. Figure 3 summarizes the model and presents it in relation to the features of entry experiences described earlier in the section.

What newcomers need. In order to assess the special needs of newcomers during sense making, we compare their situation in general with that of insiders. The experiences of newcomers differ in three important ways from those of insiders. First, insiders normally know what to expect in and of the situation. For the most part, little is sur-

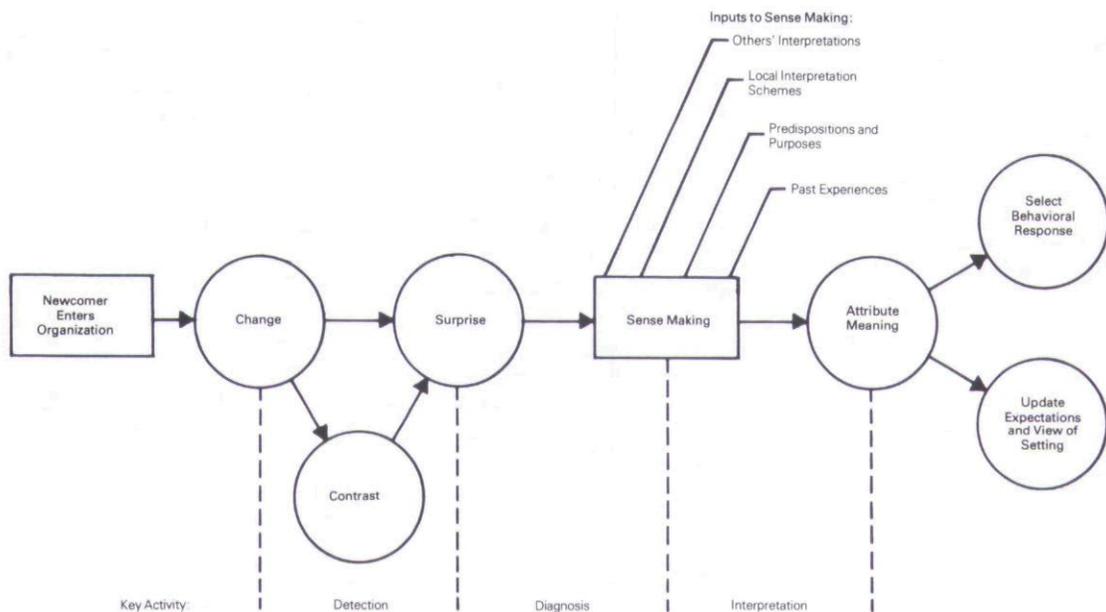


Figure 3. Sense making in organizational entry.

prising or needs to be made sense of. Second, when surprises do arise (e.g., not getting an expected raise), the insider usually has sufficient history in the setting to interpret them more accurately or to make sense based on relevant knowledge of the immediate situation. An insider probably knows, for instance, whether the denied raise is due to company-wide budget cuts or is related to the job performance and whether it is an indication of how the future may unfold or a temporary situation. Third, when surprises arise and sense making is necessary, the insider usually has other insiders with whom to compare perceptions and interpretations.

The comparison of newcomers' and insiders' experiences suggests that two types of input to sense making shown in Figure 3 may be problematic for newcomers: local interpretation schemes and others' interpretations. Concerning local interpretation schemes, newcomers probably do not have adequate history in the setting to appreciate as fully as insiders might why and how surprises have arisen. With time and experience in the new setting, they may come to understand how to interpret the actions of superiors and others and what meanings to attach to events and outcomes in the work setting. According to Berger and Luckman (1966), during the early stages in a new setting, newcomers internalize context-specific dictionaries of meaning used by members of the setting. At the outset, however, newcomers typically are unfamiliar with these interpretation schemes of the new setting. And, as we saw earlier, they are usually unaware of *both* their need to understand context-specific meaning dictionaries, or interpretation schemes, and the fact that they are unfamiliar with them (Van Maanen, 1977a).

As a result, newcomers often attach meanings to action, events, and surprises in the new setting using interpretation schemes developed through their experiences in other set-

tings. Based on these, inappropriate and dysfunctional interpretations may be produced. For example, what it means to "take initiative" or "put in a hard day's work" in a school situation may be quite different from its meaning in a work setting. In essence, this constitutes a variation on the kind of surprise that arises when tacit job-related expectations are unmet. Newcomers may also attribute permanence or stability to temporary situations, or vice versa (Weiner, 1974). Or, newcomers may see themselves as the source or cause of events when external factors are responsible for outcomes (Weiner, 1974). Similarly, one's understanding of why a superior responds in a particularly harsh manner may be inadequate. Overpersonalized attributions may result in the absence of knowledge about how that superior typically behaves toward other subordinates or without relevant background information, for instance, about the superior's recent divorce, lack of promotion, or reduction in scope of authority and responsibility.

The dysfunctional effects of such interpretational errors can be seen by tracing how the responses chosen are influenced by the meanings attributed in situations. In a series of studies by Weiner (1974), subjects attributing events to stable causes changed behavior more often than did subjects attributing events to unstable or temporary causes (e.g., the boss is always like this, or the boss is going through a rough, but temporary, period). In laboratory experiments, shifts in subjects' affect were more likely to result from personal, or internal, attributions than from external attributions (e.g., the boss doesn't like me, or the boss treats everyone harshly). Although further work is needed to assess the extent to which Weiner's findings hold in organizational settings, it seems obvious that individuals select responses to events at least in part on the basis of the meaning they attach to them. Decisions to stay in or leave organizations and feelings of commitment or alienation would appear to follow from sense made by newcomers of early job experiences.

The second type of input to make sense making problematic for newcomers is information and interpretations from others in the situation. In comparison to the situation of insiders, newcomers probably have not developed relationships with others in the setting with whom they could test their perceptions and interpretations. Since reality testing is seen as an important input to sense making, it seems particularly important for newcomers to have insiders who might serve as sounding boards and guide them to important background information for assigning meaning to events and surprises. Insiders are seen as a potentially rich source of assistance to newcomers in diagnosing and interpreting the myriad surprises that may arise during their transitions into new settings. Insiders are already "on board"; presumably, they are equipped with richer historical and current interpretive perspectives than the newcomer alone possesses. Information may also come through insider-newcomer relationships, averting and/or precipitating surprises. These relationships might also facilitate the newcomer's acquisition of the context-specific meaning dictionary or interpretation scheme.

The framework presented here suggests that sense made of surprises by newcomers may be inadequate in the absence of relevant information about organizational, interpersonal, and personal histories. Inputs to sense making from sources in the organization balance the inputs provided by the newcomer (i.e., past experiences, personal predispositions, and interpretive schemes from old settings), which are likely to be inadequate in the new setting. Until newcomers develop accurate internal maps of the new setting, until they appreciate local meanings, it is important that they have information available for amending internal cognitive maps and for attaching meaning to such surprises as may arise during early job experiences.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Summary

In the first section, we reviewed previous work on organizational entry as it has been approached in studies of recruit turnover and organizational socialization. The basic limitations of each approach and critical gaps common to both were identified. Specifically, both approaches were seen to suffer from the lack of a theoretical framework for understanding what newcomers experience and how they cope with their experiences in entering unfamiliar organizational settings.

In the second section, we proposed a new perspective designed to fill that particular gap. The new perspective first provided a picture of what the newcomer is likely to experience. Conceptual categories were created to distinguish among features of the entry experience. *Change* was said to represent the external, objective differences in moving from one organization to another (e.g., a change in physical location, title, salary). *Contrast* was used to refer to those differences that emerge in the newcomer's perceptual field as personally significant, as subjectively experienced characteristics of the new situation. *Surprise* was used to refer to differences between newcomers' anticipations of and actual experiences in the organization. Anticipations may be formed before or after entering the organization; anticipations and other action-guiding assumptions (e.g., cultural assumptions) may be conscious, tacit, and/or emergent, and anticipations can be focused on oneself, as well as the job, the organization, and its culture.

How newcomers cope with their entry experiences was the subject of the second component of the new perspective. We developed a model of newcomers' processes of coping based on the earlier picture of the newcomers' experience and on a comparison of ways in which people cope in everyday, unsurprising situations with ways of coping in novel or surprising situations. The sense-making model we proposed focused on the cognitive processes that individuals employ in organizational settings to cope with surprise and novelty. We identified newcomers' special sense-making needs. In particular, they need help in interpreting events in the new setting, including surprises, and help in appreciating situation-specific interpretation schemes or cultural assumptions. We saw that insiders are a potentially rich source of such help.

Research Implications

Theoretical and empirical implications of the perspective developed here for each of the two literatures concerned with organizational entry are briefly outlined below. First, the perspective provides a theoretical framework for understanding which aspects or dimensions of socialization are critical and why. It suggests that socialization practices that facilitate sense making and, in the process, encourage appreciation of the local culture and acquisition of a setting-specific interpretation scheme ultimately facilitate adaptation to the new setting and progress through the stages of socialization. Practices that facilitate sense making provide the newcomer with relevant and reliable information. Specific information is made available in response to newcomers' needs, rather than in advance, according to what is considered to be organizationally efficient. The information comes from someone who knows and is willing and able to share with the newcomer a particular part of "how things operate around here." Other newcomers do not have this information, and written orientation material usually does not give it. The perspective leads us to expect that "in-response" socialization practices facilitate sense making and adaptation far more effectively than "in-advance" practices. And similarly, practices in which insiders, rather than other newcomers, are the newcomers' primary associates and informal socializing agents should facilitate adaptation.

Although several socialization dimensions developed in previous studies touch on aspects of socialization suggested by the perspective, none does so exclusively. For instance, although formal (versus informal) socialization usually implies in-advance socialization, it conveys a set of other characteristics as well. Formal orientations typically process several newcomers at one time; they tend to present a great deal of general information representing official policy, rather than actual practice. In individual (versus collective) socialization, the newcomer probably has greater access to insiders as associates (rather than other newcomers), who are willing to speak "off the record" and share local norms with the newcomer. But individual socialization is also more likely to be informal than formal, confounding the picture further. Finally, in serial (versus disjunctive) socialization, insiders who previously held the role that the newcomer is assuming are present in the organization. Although suggesting that insiders may be among the newcomer's associates, serial socialization does not rule out the possibility that other newcomers are the primary associate group for the newcomer. Therefore, we suggest that future research specifically examine the separate effects of dimensions of socialization derived from the theoretical framework offered by the new perspective.

The surprise and sense-making perspective bears on recruit turnover research in a number of ways. We saw that the turnover approach to organizational entry focused on newcomers' conscious pre-entry expectations about the job. Yet the perspective proposed here suggests that surprise may arise from tacit and even emergent anticipations and assumptions, as well as from conscious expectations. It also suggests that expectations are not formed once and for all

before entering the new setting, but evolve and are periodically revised as a result of sense made of surprises. Further, it indicates that assumptions about oneself (e.g., what I can and want to do) may lead to surprises that have at least as much impact as expectations about the job. On the basis of the variety of sources and types of surprise typically experienced in entering organizations, we suggest that the narrow view of unmet expectations adopted in earlier research should be broadened in future research. In addition, the separate effects of initial and disconfirmed expectations and overmet as well as undermet expectations should be assessed. Future research is also needed to explore the underlying psychological processes by which expectations, and surprise in general, affect individuals. Toward that end, the sense-making model presented here provides a theoretical outline of some basic processes by which surprise precipitates sense making and through which individuals select responses to surprise.

Other implications for future research include the need to understand the processes by which cultural knowledge is acquired. Although we saw that surprise may result when cultural assumptions from old settings are not supported in new settings, we have not yet traced how newcomers learn the ropes and come to appreciate the local culture of the new setting. One way to pursue the question is to examine how culture is manifested in organizational settings and from there to trace how cultural manifestations are transmitted. In work on the role of stories, myths, and symbols in organizational life, cultural manifestations are being studied by a growing number of researchers, including Mitroff and Kilmann (1976), Dandridge (1979), Leifer (1979), Wilkins (1979), and Wilkins and Martin (1979).

Another area in which future research is needed is the transition from the old role itself, the leavetaking aspect of changing roles. How do newcomers in modern organizations let go of old roles as they take on new ones? Two alternative explanations of the letting-go process have been suggested here. In the *tabula rasa* process initiates are stripped of old roles before taking on new roles. In the event-anniversary process, letting go occurs gradually as experiences in the new role trigger recall of complementary experiences in old roles. The relative merit of each as an explanation of letting go during organizational entry is a question for future research.

Finally, further work is needed on surprise and sense making. Specific subprocesses within the sense-making cycle have not been adequately articulated. Perceptual and cognitive processes overlap from the detection to the interpretation of surprise. How do the processes interface? In terms of surprise, what personal and situational factors influence the newcomer's "novelty" threshold? Why do some people seem to thrive on novelty, whereas others seem burdened and surprised by almost any novel experience?

Practical Implications

Previous research has favored strategies for managing newcomers' entry into work organizations that provide individuals with more accurate (realistic) initial expectations, through a

Realistic Job Preview. In contrast, strategies developed from the new perspective take as given the near inevitability that newcomers will experience some unmet expectations and, more generally, surprise in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. Strategies based on the present framework would aim to intervene in the newcomer's cycle as sense is made of surprise, rather than merely attempting to prevent one form of surprise, the unmet conscious pre-entry job expectation.

What this means at the practical level is that, at a minimum, certain secrecy norms, the sink-or-swim, learn-on-your-own philosophy, and sanctions against sharing information among office members are dysfunctional for newcomers and for their employing organizations as well. Each of these restricts possible sources of relevant information available to newcomers. On the other hand, fostering links between newcomers and their insider peers or nonsupervisor superiors would be beneficial. Superiors can support informal associations between newcomer and co-worker insiders or more formal programs, such as buddy systems, in which insiders receive skills training and serve as guides for newcomers. Informal sponsor and mentor links between junior and senior members offer other models of relationships through which information, perceptions, and interpretations of events in the organization can be exchanged.

Another potential aid for newcomers is the appraisal process. Timely formal and informal feedback from superiors to newcomers about their performance may reduce the stress-producing uncertainty of "not knowing how you're doing," and replace possibly inaccurate self-appraisals with data from superiors, which guide the newcomer's subsequent assessments of equity in the situation. An early appraisal could provide newcomers with an understanding of the process and criteria of performance evaluation. With such first-hand knowledge, the newcomer can be expected to make more reality-based self-assessments; in addition, he or she is better equipped to interpret other events related to evaluation, a crucial area in the newcomer's early organizational life. An early appraisal could be treated as a collaborative sense-making session, in which the superior helps the newcomer try on a portion of an important insider's interpretive scheme.

Finally, there are implications for newcomers themselves and for those who help prepare them to select and enter organizations. It would be beneficial for newcomers to enter organizations with an understanding of the nature of entry experiences: why it is likely that they may experience surprises during the socialization period; why they, as newcomers, are relatively ill-equipped to make accurate sense of surprises arising during early job experiences; and how they might proactively seek information from insiders at work to supplement their own inadequate internal interpretive schemes. Toward that end, college curricula and placement activities could, as a matter of course, provide students with a preview of typical entry experiences and ways to manage them.

The implications for research and practice are based on the assumption that newcomers are ill-equipped to make sense

of the myriad surprises that potentially accompany entry into an unfamiliar organization. It has been proposed that entry practices that enhance newcomers' understandings of their experiences in and of new organizational settings will facilitate newcomers' adaptation. Socialization practices should be developed that help provide newcomers with insiders' situation-specific interpretations and setting-specific interpretive schemes. The insiders' view can supplement and balance natural inadequacies in newcomers' sense-making tendencies and can hasten the development of more adequate long-term self-sufficient functioning. Furthermore, it is likely that supplementing newcomers' sense making will facilitate accuracy in newcomers' interpretations of their immediate experiences, on the basis of which individuals choose affective and behavioral responses to early experiences on the job and in the organization.

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