Organizational Socialization: The Role of Dual Supervisory Relationships in Newcomer Adjustment

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Abstract
Integrating relative deprivation theory and social comparison principals with leader-member exchange (LMX) conceptual foundation, we develop a model to examine the effects of different supervisor-newcomer relationships on a newcomer socialization in a dual supervisory context. Specifically, it is proposed that the level of alignment or misalignment between supervisory relationships contributes to a meaningful variance in the newcomer self-efficacy and perception of person-organization (PO) fit beyond the effects of individual LMXs.

In addition, the effects of supervisors’ organizational rank and newcomers’ discretion about decisions over level and frequency of different exchanges on the relationships between supervisory relationships misalignment and newcomer adjustment are proposed.

Keywords: Newcomer, Socialization, Newcomer Adjustment, Leader-Member Exchange, Dual Supervisory Relationships.

Introduction
Organizational socialization is an important topic for both employers who strive to facilitate faster and more effective socialization process for their new hires and employees who are willing to effectively adapt to the new role setting. Successful newcomer socialization is especially important for organizations who make significant investments in recruitment, selection and training new staff with little opportunity to recoup a significant return on those investments. In fact, the highest rate of organizational withdrawal is often among new employees with inadequate socialization as one of the primary drivers. Research on newcomer socialization has shown that an effective socialization process can result in improved adjustment, better performance and lower turnover.

Unfortunately, the literature tends to focus on individual differences and socialization tactics which are formed in isolation, with comparatively little attention to the social context the employees are embedded in. The study of work context moves beyond isolated dyadic work relationships to consider certain environment surrounding employees. Particularly related to the purpose of this study is the examination of the dyadic supervisory relationships in the context of other supervisory relationships. As many contemporary organizations are increasingly applying matrix structures in which employees may interact with multiple supervisors concurrently, the study of multiple supervisory context is important as it can enable organizations to facilitate faster and more effective newcomer socialization.

Yet, the underlying assumption of the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory limits our explaining power in multiple supervisory context. LMX theory assumes an isolated dyadic relationship (i.e. one leader for each member) which is not applicable to many contemporary organizational structures. Expatriates, temporary and mobile employees and employees in organizations with matrix structures are examples of those who may interact with and report to more than one manager. Recently, Vidyarthi and colleagues based on this notion developed a model extending LMX theory to a dual leadership context. In fact, they modified the LMX conceptual foundation to make it applicable to the conditions where employees report to more than one leader.

However, the distinct features of the newcomers and their adjustment process warrant an in-depth study of the multiple supervisory context in newcomer socialization. Indeed, it has been shown that newcomer-supervisor relationships play a critical role in facilitating a newcomer adjustment. The purpose of this study, hence, is to examine how a dual supervisory context affects a newcomer socialization process. In particular, we attempt to understand the conditions in which alignment/misalignment between supervisor-newcomer relationships facilitate or prohibit the newcomer adjustment.

Therefore, we strive to make a contribution to the literature by adopting an approach integrating principals of extended leader-member exchange to a dual context with social comparison and relative deprivation theories to explain the conditions and dynamics at play in the newcomer socialization. Practically, this study urges managers to view the newcomer-supervisor relationships shaping in the context of other supervisory relationships and necessitates them to take the possible effects of converging/diverging supervision into account when designing and implementing socialization tactics.

Background
Organizational socialization is the process through which new employees move from being outsiders to becoming organizational insiders by learning and adapting to the new job setting and the culture of the workplace. Because all newcomers are exposed to some inevitable surprises, the
organizational entry and socialization experience can be stressful and anxiety-producing. Since the seminal work of Van Maanen and Schein, several conceptual and empirical studies have examined the newcomer socialization process, its antecedents and consequences. Specifically, the effects of newcomers’ individual differences and their socialization tactics as well as organizational efforts and supervisory tactics have been studied.

Researchers have investigated the role of various employee characteristics from personality traits to newcomer experience and pre-entry knowledge and newcomer socialization tactics in the organizational socialization process. Similarly, organizational tactics and supervisory tactics taken to accelerate the socialization process have been studied.

Furthermore, various theories have been applied to explain the organizational socialization process, its antecedents and outcomes. These theories range from social exchange, social expectancy theory, uncertainty reduction and sense-making theory, information theory and theory of achievement motivation and self-efficacy theory to attachment behavior theory, person-environment fit theory, role theory, action theory and leader-member exchange (LMX) theory.

Table 1 represents a list of various newcomer socialization outcomes (both proximal and distal) and their antecedents along with some conspicuous scholarly works on each. Note that this list does not aim to be comprehensive, rather it attempts to highlight some of the most established concepts in socialization literature. Because of limited space, the discussion of the whole table is avoided.

**Review of Literature**

**Newcomer Socialization:** Extant literature on organizational socialization generally examines the antecedents of the newcomer socialization, its proximal consequences and its distal outcomes (Table 1). The antecedents of newcomer adjustment can be categorized as the individual socialization tactics (including information seeking, feedback seeking, relationship building, network building, positive framing and self-management), individual differences (including pre-entry experience, newcomer knowledge and personality characteristics), organizational efforts (including socialization tactics, formal orientations, realistic previews in recruitment and organizational insiders activities) and supervisory tactics (including supervisory job-focused advise, guidance and role modeling).

Likewise, the outcomes of socialization process can be classified into proximal outcomes, often referred to as newcomer adjustment including role clarity, task mastery, social acceptance, political knowledge, social acceptance, person-organization fit and distal outcomes including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work withdrawal, voluntary turnover, role orientation and job performance.

**Organizational Efforts and Supervisory Tactics**

**Organizational Efforts:** One category of newcomers’ socialization antecedents associates with specific tactics the organizations use to facilitate newcomer adjustment to the new work setting. Organization efforts encompass four broad subcategories: socialization tactics, formal orientations, realistic previews in recruitment and activities of organizational insiders. In a different classification, Kammayer-Mueller and Wanberg identify organizational efforts, role of leaders and impact of workgroups as the subcategories of ‘socialization influence’ factor, an antecedent of the newcomer adjustment.

Although organizational efforts are critical in facilitating the newcomer adjustment and they may influence or get influenced by the supervisor-newcomer relationships; our knowledge regarding how newcomers are affected by alignment or misalignment of multiple supervisors’ interests is limited. As mentioned before, contemporary organizations increasingly tend to ask employees to report to more than one supervisor. Just as supervisors’ alignment can more effectively facilitate newcomer socialization in a synergic way, supervisors’ misalignment may inhibit a fast and effective adjustment by creating a destructive effect.

Therefore, the organizational efforts to facilitate a newcomer adjustment may be neutralized or even inhibited as a result of supervisors’ divergence.

For further illustration, suppose that two supervisors (one associated with the company headquarter and the other with the focal branch) are assigned to a new expatriate. If the organizational socialization tactics are translated differently to the supervisors, the newcomer may be confused with divergent requests coming from different sources that in turn can lead to further role ambiguity as a factor of misadjustment.

On the other hand, converging tactics associated with different supervisory sources may provide the newcomer with a further feeling of trust, perceived organizational support and a perception of organizational fit which in turn can facilitate a faster and more effective adjustment.

Note that the generalization of perceived person-supervisor fit to person-organization (PO) fit is in line with the propositions and findings of several studies which contend that a supervisor, as a key representative of the organization, personifies it for the employees.

In sum, organizational efforts in facilitating newcomer adjustment should be more carefully investigated in a multiple-supervisors context corresponding to contemporary organizational structures.
Table 1  
Antecedents and Consequences of Organizational Socialization and Examples of Related Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Examples of related studies</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Antecedents</strong></td>
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| **Individual characteristics:** | Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg\(^29\); Morrison et al.\(^45\)  
| • Proactive personality | Bauer and Erdogan\(^11\); Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller\(^67\)  
| • Openness | Litman\(^37\)  
| • Curiosity | Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller\(^67\)  
| • Extraversion | Adkins\(^1\); Carr et al.\(^14\); Kirschenbaum\(^31\)  
| • Experience | Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg\(^29\); Klein et al.\(^32\)  
| • Pre-entry knowledge | |
| **Individual tactics:** | Ashford and Cummings\(^7\); Miller and Jablin\(^44\)  
| • Information seeking | Crant\(^16\); Saks and Ashforth\(^54\)  
| • Feedback seeking | Major et al.\(^41\); Ryan et al.\(^51\)  
| • Relationship building | Mengue et al.\(^43\); Rollag et al.\(^50\)  
| • Network building | Ashford and Black\(^6\); Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller\(^67\)  
| • Positive framing | Saks and Ashforth\(^54\)  
| • Self-management | Allen\(^2\); Bauer and Erdogan\(^11\); Crant\(^16\); Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg\(^29\)  
| **Organizational efforts:** | Major et al.\(^41\); Sluss and Thompson\(^61\)  
| • Socialization tactics | Bauer et al.\(^10\); Mengue et al.\(^43\); Saks et al.\(^55\)  
| • Formal orientations | Jones\(^28\); Klein et al.\(^42\); Saks\(^53\)  
| • Realistic previews in recruitment | Bauer and Erdogan\(^11\); Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg\(^29\)  
| • Organizational insiders’ activities | Bauer et al.\(^10\); Mengue et al.\(^43\); Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller\(^67\)  
| • Supervisory tactics: | Carr et al.\(^14\); Chatman\(^15\); Major et al.\(^41\)  
| • Supervisory job-focused advice | Louis et al.\(^40\); Saari and Judge\(^52\)  
| • Guidance | Allen and Meyer\(^3\); Erdogan and Bauer\(^20\); Klein et al.\(^32\)  
| • Role modeling | Erdogan and Bauer\(^20\); Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg\(^29\)  
| **Proximal outcomes** | Erdogan and Bauer\(^20\); Nelson and Quick\(^47\)  
| • Role clarity/ resolution of role demands | Allen and Meyer\(^3\); Saks et al.\(^55\)  
| • Self-efficacy/ task mastery | Ashford and Black\(^6\); Bauer and Erdogan\(^11\); Crant\(^16\)  
| • Knowledge of organizational culture/ political knowledge | |
| • Insider acceptance/ workgroup integration/social acceptance | |
| • Person-organization fit | |
| **Distal outcomes** | |
| • Job satisfaction | |
| • Organizational (affective) commitment | |
| • Work withdrawal | |
| • Voluntary turnover (intention/real) | |
| • Role orientation | |
| • Job performance | |

**Supervisory Tactics:** Certain behaviors taken by the supervisors (e.g. regular supervisory job-focused advice, guidance and role modeling) have been shown to facilitate and accelerate the newcomer adjustment. Using temporally lagged data from 213 newcomers across 12 telemarketing organizations, Sluss and Thompson\(^61\) demonstrated a positive relationship between supervisory socialization tactics and newcomer occupational identification, perceived...
person-organization fit and job satisfaction. Moreover, they found a mediating role for newcomer LMX perception in the association between supervisory socialization tactics and occupational identification as well as between supervisory socialization tactics and perceived person-organization fit. They further argued that ‘serial socialization tactics’ (i.e. supervisory tactics) is a stronger predictor of the newcomer adjustment than institutionalized socialization tactics (i.e. organizational tactics).

Likewise, Major and associates in a longitudinal study of 248 newcomers showed a significant relationship between LMX, TMX and three organizational outcomes (organizational commitment, turnover intention and job satisfaction). They further demonstrated the moderating effect of both LMX and TMX on the negative relationship between unmet expectations (role clarity and role acceptance) and socialization outcomes.

Although these studies illuminate the critical role of supervisors in facilitating newcomer adjustment, they overlook the possibility of a multiple supervisor context. Assuming, in a context in which a newcomer establishes a high-quality relationship with one supervisor and a low-quality relationship with the other, our understanding of the newcomer perception of person-organization fit or role acceptance is blurred. Once again, the supervisory tactics taken by one supervisor might be neutralized or even prohibited under the influence of the tactics adopted by the other supervisor. Conversely, an effective alignment in the supervisory tactics adopted by different supervisors can create a synergic effect toward a faster and more effective newcomer adjustment.

Indeed, the summated effect of high quality LMXs with multiple supervisors may provide a newcomer with a higher degree of organizational fit perception and role clarity. Thus, the need for a new approach in studying supervisory socialization tactics in multiple-supervisors context is warranted.

Organizational Socialization Outcomes
Proximal Outcomes (Newcomer Adjustment): Role clarity, self-efficacy (task mastery), insider acceptance (workgroup integration or social acceptance), knowledge of organizational culture (political knowledge) and person-organizational fit are some of the main proximal outcomes examined in socialization literature (Table 1). Role clarity or resolution of role demands refers to understanding of the task, its priorities and its time allocation; Self-efficacy or task mastery refers to learning about the tasks of new job and gaining confidence in the role; Social acceptance, or workgroup integration/insider acceptance refers to becoming group insider liked and trusted by the peers.

The socialization research has established the relationships among socialization antecedents, newcomer adjustment to the role setting and further distal socialization outcomes. For example, Miller and Jablin show that role ambiguity and role conflict which newcomers experience in the early stages of organizational post-entry, reflect the level of uncertainty that influences their job satisfaction and productivity. They further, based on social exchange theory, propose that an effective socialization process reduces the level of uncertainty and social costs of communications.

Consistently, Saks and colleagues in their meta-analytic review show that institutionalized (i.e. organizational) socialization tactics are positively related to newcomers’ perception of fit to the environment. According to person-environment fit theory, when certain characteristics of employee and work environment are well-matched, the compatibility results between them. Therefore, effective individual tactics, efficient organizational efforts and supervisory tactics can facilitate higher person-organization fit (i.e. newcomer adjustment) which may result in desirable distal socialization outcomes such as newcomers’ organizational commitment and high performance.

Distal Outcomes: Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover (both intention to and real turnover), job performance and work withdrawal are some of the main organizational socialization distal outcomes examined in the literature (Table 1). Affective commitment refers to an “employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization”. Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg identify work withdrawal as a set of behaviors which reflects the employee’s attempt to psychologically disengage from the work tasks. Such behaviors include employee avoiding participating in scheduled work meetings and performing substandard work. Then, voluntary turnover refers to employee complete withdrawal from the work setting.

However, many studies have examined the newcomer turnover intention instead of real voluntary turnover since the longitudinal study design appropriate for examining real turnover has exclusive challenges and sometimes is impractical.

Generally, socialization research has supported the positive effects of productive socialization tactics and effective newcomer adjustment on socialization distal outcomes. In another exemplary study, as mentioned before, Major and colleagues found significant relationships between leader-member exchange (LMX), team-member exchange (TMX) as antecedents of newcomer socialization and three newcomer socialization distal outcomes (organizational commitment, turnover intention and job satisfaction).

They further showed the moderating effect of both LMX and TMX on negative relationships between unmet expectations (i.e. role clarity and role acceptance: socialization proximal outcomes) and aforementioned distal outcomes.
Leader-Member Exchange (LMX): Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory contends that leaders form differential relationships with their subordinates in the workplace\textsuperscript{21}. With a subgroup of subordinates, leaders may form relationships involving greater sensitivity, attention and support which go beyond the formal job descriptions whereas with others they may form a more formal and distal relationship\textsuperscript{36}.

In fact, this is conceptualized as ‘LMX differentiation’ in the leader-member exchange literature. According to leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, leader-member exchanges in the work setting may cause a norm of reciprocity among the parties that in turn leads to high levels of trust, liking and respect. Empirically, high quality leader-member relationships have been shown to result in both positive attitudinal outcomes such as of self-efficacy, job clarity, person-environment fit and behavioral outcomes such as job performance, organizational citizenship behavior and lower turnover intention\textsuperscript{4\textsuperscript{,}5}.

Furthermore, recent research on LMX has accentuated on the importance of social comparison processes present in the work context. Invoking such concepts as LMX differentiation\textsuperscript{33} and relative LMX\textsuperscript{36} into the leader-member dyadic relationships, Vidyarthi and colleagues\textsuperscript{65} demonstrated the significant influence of social context in which employees are embedded. In the study of 254 employees nested in 50 workgroups, they showed the significant effect of subjective ratings by individuals of their LMX compared to coworkers’ LMXs on employee job performance and organizational citizenship behavior beyond the effects of LMX and relative LMX. Indeed, social comparison theory provides the conceptual foundation for such an effect.

Social comparison theory postulates that individuals regularly scan their environment seeking information to help them form comparative judgments. The obtained information regarding their own standing relative to others, in turn, may influence their attitudes, aspirations and behaviors\textsuperscript{69\textsuperscript{,}70}. In fact, social comparison is a “central feature of human social life”\textsuperscript{13}.

In their study of LMX in dual leadership context, Vidyarthi and associates\textsuperscript{65} contend that social comparison processes may be activated in dual leadership context since employees reacting to two leaders “are confronted with parallels and differences between these two relationships that they maintain simultaneously”. Accordingly, they argue that “multiple leadership settings represent a contextual condition that requires modifications to LMX theory with the recognition that each relationship serves as a frame of reference for the other”.

Similar reasoning may apply to the situation when a newcomer interacts with multiple supervisors. However, the significant differences between a newcomer-supervisor relationship and a high-tenured employee-supervisor relationship warrants an in-depth investigation of the multiple supervisor context in newcomer socialization.

An Integrative Approach: In alignment with Erdogan and Liden’s\textsuperscript{21} call for studies integrating LMX and socialization literature, this study aims to introduce an extended conceptualization of LMX (i.e. LMX in a dual leadership context) to newcomer socialization process. Doing so, the current study builds on the research by Vidyarthi and colleagues\textsuperscript{65} in which the authors developed and tested a model extending LMX theory to a dual leadership context. However, our attempt is to understand how multiple leadership affects newcomer adjustment. Newcomers are different from employees in three major features. First, socialization literature asserts that newcomers think and behave differently compared to the employees with higher organizational tenure\textsuperscript{24\textsuperscript{,}27\textsuperscript{,}56}.

This implies that newcomers process the achieved information and make sense of the environment through different mechanisms than other employees with higher tenures do. As a result of these differing processes, the dynamics at work known for high-tenured employees may not be applicable in studying newcomer socialization.

Second, newcomers’ supervisory relationships follow different purposes than those of high-tenured employees in such a way that the primary goal of supervision is to facilitate a fast and effective newcomer adjustment. The different goals of newcomer-supervisor relationships compared to those of high-tenured employee-supervisor relationship is likely to affect the nature, frequency and quality of such relationships. Particularly, an effective and fast newcomer adjustment is salient to both organizations (and supervisors as representative of the organization) and newcomers, since both parties have invested valuable resources on the prospective collaboration. This can further call for special LMX characteristics.

Third, although LMX literature contends that leader-member relationships shape very early in the work setting and that such relationships are relatively stable over time, it is likely that the newcomers’ supervisory relationships be less mature compared to those of high-tenured employees. Indeed, this might be more salient when newcomers interact with more than one supervisor, since newcomers’ internal comparison processes regarding their relative standing in different LMXs may further inhibit establishing a ‘close’ relationship with either supervisors.

The immaturity of newcomer-supervisor relationship may influence the effectiveness of organizational efforts and supervisory tactics purported to facilitate the newcomer adjustment. Therefore, the mechanisms through which supervisors’ convergence/divergence affects newcomers may be different from the mechanism high-tenured employees are influenced due to already established LMXs.
having distinct features and goals and following different paths.

Therefore, in order to examine the influence of supervisory socialization tactics and specifically the effects of supervisors’ alignment/misalignment on a newcomer work adjustment in a dual leadership context, this study takes an integrative approach incorporating an extended LMX conceptualization and social comparison foundation in newcomer socialization process.

**Theoretical Argument and Propositions Development:**
According to Vidyarthi and colleagues\(^{65}\), relative deprivation theory provides the conceptual foundation to examine the dual leadership context. Essentially, relative deprivation theory contends that in contexts where information about referents are available, individuals tend to consider comparisons with their referents in reacting to their own circumstances\(^{17,18,65}\). Based on relative deprivation theory, employees in the work setting do not respond to their circumstances in isolation; instead, their reactions are affected by social comparisons they make where what they have “is pitted against what they believe they should have had”\(^{65}\).

Building on this conceptual foundation, Vidyarthi and associates\(^{65}\) argue that different relationships, in a context where employees simultaneously interact with two leaders, form alternate realities which suggest that diverging exchanges, even in the presence of a high LMX with one leader, is less desirable to the employees. They further demonstrate that the alignment/misalignment between two relationships predicts attitudinal outcomes beyond the effects of individual LMXs.

Similar logic applies to the context where a newcomer simultaneously reports to two supervisors. However, because of the specific characteristics of newcomer-supervisor relationships discussed earlier, social comparison processes with referent realities might be different in newcomer socialization as newcomers make sense of the new environment through different processes. Indeed, as the newcomers are actively engaged in achieving information and environmental cues, especially at the early stages of organizational post-entry, it is likely that they analyze and react to their comparisons differently.

In particular, we expect that the level of their affectivity as a result of their comparison with one-self and/or other coworkers be higher. However, their feeling of resentment, especially at the early stages, when they compare themselves with the higher-tenured employees may be less detrimental. This may be because they truly identify themselves as the newcomers and tend not to be influenced by their comparison of self with other employees who have richer histories. Notwithstanding is the proposition that LMX shapes very early, sometimes less than two weeks, during organizational entry\(^{62}\). Although these early shaped LMXs can be referred to as immature, they can provide the basis for newcomers’ social comparisons in reference to other employees. Thus, the newcomer socialization process suggests a distinct setting in examining the dual leadership context.

LMX research has shown a positive relationship between LMX and self-efficacy\(^{57}\) and between LMX and person-organization fit\(^{33}\) which can imply the significant effects of high-quality dyadic relationships on newcomer adjustment and distal socialization outcomes such as job satisfaction and voluntary turnover. Building on Vidyarthi and colleagues’\(^{65}\) findings, we suggest that alignment/misalignment of LMXs in a dual supervisory context explains a unique variance in newcomer self-efficacy and perception of person-organization fit, beyond the effects of individual LMXs.

Although other potential relationships might exist, we chose to examine the effects of dual supervisory relationships on newcomer self-efficacy and perception person organization (PO) fit for several reasons. First, the positive associations between isolated LMX and employee self-efficacy as well as between isolated LMX and employee perception of PO fit have been generally established in the literature. Thus, these concepts seem appropriate to investigate the further effects of dual supervisory relationships beyond those of isolated LMXs.

Second, self-efficacy and person-organization fit are attributed to employees’ perception of two distinct referents. The former is the employees’ perception of their ability to manage the challenging tasks coming from the job and environment whereas the latter is the employees’ perception of congruency in their goals relative to those of the organization. Hence, the difference in drivers of self-efficacy versus person-organization fit perceptions provides an appropriate ground for a relatively comprehensive and powerful study.

Furthermore, the proposition that supervisors personify organization for the employees\(^{34,49,59,60}\) suggests a significant correlation between the employees’ perception of their goal congruency with the supervisor(s) and the employees’ perception of their goal congruency with the organization as a whole. This further increases the likelihood that the alignment/misalignment between LMXs in a dual supervisory context has a significant impact on the employee perception of PO fit and consequently, a more powerful study. Finally, because self-efficacy and PO fit are attitudinal outcomes, it is more likely to find a significant relationship between the predictor variable (as a perceptual variable) and such outcomes than if the outcome variables were behavioral.

**Alignment between LMXs in a Dual Supervisory Context:** Self-efficacy refers to the belief in one’s capabilities to successfully perform a specific task\(^{9,53}\). Perceived self-efficacy is “concerned with judgments of how
well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations"8 and "beliefs in one’s capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands"70.

As discussed before, socialization research has demonstrated the positive effects of newcomer self-efficacy on job satisfaction, job performance and decreased voluntary turnover indicating a good predictability for self-efficacy.

Individuals seek information both through conscious (controlled) processes and/or unconscious (automatic or routine) processes. Albeit fundamental differences in their dynamics, both controlled and automatic processes involve information gathering to detect differences and similarities between multiple referents including one-self. Thus, these processes provide the employees with the information needed to make social comparisons.

According to relative deprivation theory, when newcomers compare the quality of their relationships with different supervisors in the same work setting, they may feel dissatisfied and experience tension if the two relationships are misaligned. Likewise, newcomers with low quality relationships are expected to experience a more severe sense of loss if they have had higher quality relationships in the past.

Therefore, we expect that when two newcomer-supervisor relationships are aligned, the newcomers experience less tension and conflict in their sense-making processes which in turn may lead to a perception of greater self-efficacy.

Note that it is the newcomers’ perception of alignment that is important; in other words, supervisory tactics might be misaligned in reality but still have constructive effects if newcomers’ perceptions are positive. Supposedly, a newcomer who receives (or believes in receiving) converging guidance and advice and who role models supervisors whose interests are aligned, is better able to establish the appropriate beliefs to mobilize motivation and resources in order to face prospective task demands. Obviously, convergence in high levels of relationship qualities can create such synergic effects not convergence in low levels of relationship qualities.

Proposition 1
Newcomer self-efficacy is associated with alignment in dual supervisory relationships beyond the effects of isolated LMXs so that self-efficacy is higher when two newcomer-supervisor relationships are aligned at a high level of quality.

Person-environment (PE) fit theory postulates that stress arises from misfit between a person and environment and has been recognized as providing some theoretical basis for understanding the mechanism of a newcomer adjustment. According to PE fit theory, compatibility between an individual and work environment occurs when certain characteristics are well-matched.

In organizational socialization, the stress a newcomer is confronted with when being exposed to a new environment, if not controlled and directed, can lead to newcomer voluntary turnover as indirect result of newcomer misfit perception with the work setting. Indeed, this is consistent with the attrition component in attraction-selection-attrition perspective which contends that if an employee cannot adapt to the work environment and consequently perceives a misfit with the organization, he/she may tend to leave the work setting.

Once again, based on relative deprivation theory, it is expected that when a newcomer perceives a misalignment between relationships with two supervisors, the arising tension and resentment further intensify the degree of stress the newcomer is confronted with when being exposed to the new work environment. As a result of this intensified stress, the newcomer may suffer from a perception of organizational misfit which in turn leads to higher turnover intention. Conversely, if a newcomer perceives an alignment between relationships with the supervisors, he/she may feel a sense of organizational fit which potentially leads to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention.

As discussed before, the contention that supervisors personify organization for the employees provides the conceptual foundation to propose that perceived misfit in regards with dual supervisory relationships can be generalized to perception of misfit with the organization.

Proposition 2
Newcomer perception of person-organization fit is associated with alignment in dual supervisory relationships beyond the effects of isolated LMXs such that perception of person-organization fit is higher when two newcomer-supervisor relationships are aligned at a high level of quality.

Misalignment between LMXs in a Dual Supervisory Context
In the situation where there is misalignment between two supervisor-newcomer relationships, multiple possibilities may emerge. We posit that the supervisors’ relative status in the organization and the newcomer level of discretion (versus obligation) on decisions about the type and frequency of different exchanges can play critical roles. In line with Self and associates’ findings that the LMX associated with a leader at higher hierarchical level relates to a member’s stronger feeling of being supported, it is expected that a high quality supervisory relationship with a supervisor who stands at a higher organizational rank more strongly associates with the newcomer self-efficacy and perception of organizational fit.

Indeed, assuming that higher organizational hierarchy translates to more power and influence on the newcomers,
this proposition is consistent with Bolino and Turnley’s contention that LMX quality is more strongly associated with the employees’ job attitudes and behavior when a leader has more power over the employees. Once again, it is the perception of the newcomer that is in effect, not necessarily what is going on in reality.

**Proposition 3**
In a misaligned dual supervisory relationship context, newcomer self-efficacy is higher when the quality of supervisor-newcomer relationship with a higher-ranking supervisor is greater than when the quality of supervisor-newcomer relationship with a higher-ranking supervisor is minor.

**Proposition 4**
In a misaligned dual supervisory relationship context, newcomer perception of organizational fit is higher when the quality of supervisor-newcomer relationship with a higher-ranking supervisor is greater than when the quality of supervisor-newcomer relationship with a higher-ranking supervisor is minor.

Despite the notion that employees in contemporary organizations are increasingly supposed to interact with multiple supervisor, it is possible that newcomers have a relative discretion in the level and frequency of exchanges they make with different supervisors. This is important because if newcomers benefit from such a discretion, they may intensify the level and increase the frequency of exchanges with a certain supervisor with whom they believe having established a higher quality LMX.

On the same token, they may decrease the level and frequency of exchanges with a specific supervisor in a less desirable relationship. On the other hand, if newcomers are obliged to interact equally with the diverging supervisors, the detrimental effects of a low quality LMX may be more sensed.

This is even more salient when the newcomer is obliged to more frequently interact with the supervisor in a lower quality relationship compared to the supervisor in a higher quality relationship.

Even if a newcomer is obliged to interact more with the specific supervisor in higher quality relationship, the constructive effects of the relationship might be less due to the newcomer sense of being enforced by the organization. Moreover, it is possible that newcomers tend to seek advice from the supervisors in lower quality relationships in special occasions, such as when they find that specific supervisor may be more helpful because of his/her valuable experience in the matter.

Therefore, we contend that the relative discretion newcomers may have in making unequal exchanges with misaligned supervisors can mitigate the negative impacts of the lower quality LMX on their self-efficacy and perception of PO fit.

**Proposition 5**
In a misaligned dual supervisory relationship context, newcomer self-efficacy is more strongly and more positively related to the higher quality LMX when the newcomer has the discretion to unequally interact with the supervisors.

**Proposition 6**
In a misaligned dual supervisory relationship context, newcomer perception of organizational fit is more strongly and more positively related to the higher quality LMX when the newcomer has the discretion to unequally interact with the supervisors.

Notably, it is likely that newcomers, regardless of their position in the organization, have less discretion in interacting with supervisors who are in higher organizational rank. In fact, senior managers compared to lower-rank managers, may be less engaged with operational tasks and more engaged with such general activities as decision making; thus, their resources for frequent exchange with the newcomers may be limited. For example, in the case of a newcomer expatriate interacting with both headquarter managers and focal organization supervisors, the newcomer possibility of interaction with the headquarter supervisors may be limited due to the space, time and resource constraints. This reasoning might explain why socialization literature emphasizes on the role of primary supervisors in facilitating newcomer adjustment.

However, a newcomer relative discretion in unequally interacting with misaligned supervisors can, to a great extent, reduce undesirable effects of a low quality LMX with one of the supervisors. This may be true even when newcomers have limited access to the desired supervisor. In fact, solely the positive mentality toward the discretion the newcomers enjoy can contribute to the positive outcomes. Thus, even though the probability of such an exchange discretion toward a higher-rank supervisor is limited, the potential significance of its effects warrants further examination. However, if the newcomers have the discretion on decisions over exchanges, the better and faster adjustment is more likely when the newcomers have established higher quality LMX with the higher-rank supervisor.

**Proposition 7**
In a misaligned dual supervisory relationship context, newcomer self-efficacy is more strongly and more positively related to the higher quality LMX associated with the higher-rank supervisor when the newcomer has the discretion to unequally interact with the supervisors.

**Proposition 8**
In a misaligned dual supervisory relationship context, newcomer perception of organizational fit is more strongly and more positively related to the higher quality LMX
associated with the higher-rank supervisor when the newcomer has the discretion to unequally interact with the supervisors.

**Results and Discussion**

Newcomer socialization researchers have long demonstrated the critical role of supervisors in enabling the newcomers experience a fast and effective adjustment. Specifically, several studies have shown the positive effects of high-quality supervisor-newcomer relationships on the newcomer adjustment. To further advance the understanding of supervisory effects on newcomer socialization and in an attempt to answer Erdogan and Liden’s call for the studies integrating LMX principals and socialization literature, we introduced the recently extended LMX conceptualization in a dual leadership context to the newcomer socialization process. Due to the specific characteristics attributed to newcomers, original LMX principals may not be applicable to the newcomer-supervisor relationships; hence, reexamination of some conceptual foundation of LMX in socialization context seems warranted.

Building on Vidyarthi and colleagues’ study, this study integrated social comparison principals and relative deprivation theory with LMX conceptual foundation to advance our understanding of the dynamics at work when newcomers simultaneously interact with two supervisors. We proposed that the quality of a specific supervisory relationship is perceived within the context of other supervisory relationships and that alignment between different supervisor-newcomer relationships provides the newcomer with a higher self-efficacy and perception of PO fit, beyond the effects of individual LMXs.

Note that we did not propose that alignment/misalignment between two LMXs mask the effects of individual LMXs, rather, the effects of such a divergence/convergence may explain a unique and meaningful variance in outcome variables beyond what individual LMXs do. It was further proposed that the highest level of self-efficacy and PO fit can be achieved when the quality of both LMXs is high and in alignment with each other.

In case of misalignment between two supervisory relationships, it is expected that the newcomers’ self-efficacy and perception of PO fit would be higher when their relationships with the higher-rank manager have better quality. In addition, this proposed effect could be stronger when a newcomer has the discretion in decisions over the type and frequency of exchanges with each supervisor.

The newcomers’ comparison processes in making subjective assessment of their current situation compared to similar others (i.e. referents), provide the theoretical logic of the aforementioned propositions. That is, newcomers’ internal evaluations aimed at comparing their current condition with reference to different supervisory relationships and/or with their own past situations may influence their attitudes and behaviors. Since it is almost impossible to accept that different supervisors establish the same quality relationships with a specific newcomer, the feelings of stress, tension and resentment may be triggered in a newcomer thinking of better conditions he/she could have had. This is in accordance with relative deprivation theory conceptual foundation when individuals tend to consider themselves as the primary referents.

Thus, dual supervisory context provides an appropriate setting to activate such internal comparison processes which may significantly affect newcomers’ socialization.

This study has multiple implications for both socialization and LMX literature. First, by proposing distinct effects of dual supervisory alignment/misalignment in the newcomer adjustment, this study advances our knowledge of socialization dynamics at play when a newcomer interacts with two supervisors at the same time. In an attempt to answer the Erdogan and Liden’s call to integrate LMX principals with socialization literature, we developed several propositions predicting the effects of supervisory diverging/converging relationships on the newcomer adjustment.

Second, leader-member exchange researchers have long called for investigation of LMX differentiation and social context in which the relationships are embedded as fruitful avenues for future research. For example, invoking the perception of relative quality of leader-member exchange (RLMX), which results from LMX differentiation, to antecedents of newcomer socialization may better explain the newcomer self-efficacy (one of the socialization proximal outcomes). Newcomers with higher perceptions of RLMX compared to their coworkers may feel more confident in their ability to manage the challenging situations (i.e. general self-efficacy) as well as to efficiently handle the task-specific responsibilities (i.e. task-related self-efficacy).

Similarly, contextual factors may affect distal socialization outcomes both directly and through newcomer adjustment. Just like the impact of RLMX perception on self-efficacy, newcomer perception of relative-LMX may influence newcomer distal job satisfaction directly or through some proximal outcomes.

Thus, the newcomer adjustment and its distal socialization outcomes may be better explained by taking into account the social context employees are embedded in. The current study contributes to our understanding of the impacts work setting can have on the newcomer socialization by incorporating social context surrounding the newcomers.

From a similar but distinct perspective, this study strives to make a contribution to the literature by capturing newcomers’ perceptions of their standing in different supervisory relationships they have established and
investigating the effects of such comparison. We proposed that newcomers are sensitive to different quality supervisory relationships they have and used to have and that they tend to regularly compare their current condition with the conditions they could have had or actually had in the past. Therefore, failing to take into account the higher order effect of converging/diverging supervisory relationships as well as the important role of newcomers’ internal comparison processes may give us a biased view of the impacts LMXs have on the newcomer adjustment.

Finally, newcomer adjustment is a change process to be understood and controlled rather than a level to be achieved. Particular to the purpose of this study was understanding the mechanism through which supervisory socialization tactics contribute to the newcomer adjustment. Our approach in integrating the LMX extended principals with social comparison and relative deprivation perspectives and introducing those concepts to the complicated dual supervisory context, advances the understanding of why and how adjustment process unfolds and ultimately causes (dys)functional changes in criteria.

**Conclusion and Practical Implications**

This study has important implications for the managers who wish to facilitate a faster and more effective socialization for their new hires, particularly in situations where newcomers have to or have the opportunity to interact with multiple supervisors. Managers need to consider that newcomers assess their relationship with each supervisor in the context of the relationships they have with the other supervisors. Moreover, newcomers may compare their current supervisory relationships with the ones they have had in the past. As a result of these comparison processes, newcomers may be more motivated and feel a high degree of fit with the organization when they have aligned multiple supervisory relationships.

On the other hand, diverging supervisory relationships may cause tension, stress, resentment and further adverse attitudes for the newcomers such as job dissatisfaction and turnover intention.

Therefore, managers should be aware of the newcomers’ internal comparison processes when designing socialization tactics. Particularly, in a dual supervisory context, managers should consider the importance of alignment/misalignment between different supervisor-newcomer relationships and the critical role of supervisors’ organizational rank. Furthermore, in adopting socialization tactics, managers should take into account potential effects the newcomers’ discretion in decisions over the type and frequency of interacting with different supervisors can have.

Note that it is not necessary for different newcomer-supervisor relationship to be actually ‘aligned’ in order for us to expect constructive results, because it is the perception of the newcomers that causes the proposed effects. Indeed, managers, taking into account the internal comparisons newcomers make, may try to maximize (minimize) those constructive (detrimental) effects even by fabricating the alignment in different supervisory relationships. Therefore, leveraging the newcomers’ perception of ‘alignment’ in their different supervisory relationships by means of any efficient approach can provide them with a sense of high self-efficacy and PO fit, which may further trigger such positive attitudes as higher job satisfaction and lower withdrawal intention.

**References**


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