

**The Influence of Organizational Socialization Tactics and
Information Seeking on Newcomer Adjustment: Evidence from
Two Studies in China**

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Abstract

Given the urgent need to integrate newcomers into organizations quickly in the age of globalization, it becomes essential to enhance knowledge on how to facilitate newcomer adjustment in the workplace. In the literature, organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking are widely investigated in the western context as two critical factors influencing socialization outcomes. However, since most existing findings are based on western experience, the first purpose of this research is to investigate the influence of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking on socialization outcomes in an Asian context, specifically in China.

Further, given that many existing studies have discussed the overall influence of organizational socialization tactics, but failed to explore in detail how specific socialization tactics affect newcomer adjustment, the second purpose of this research is to address this omission by taking an in-depth look. Additionally, in spite of the recognition of the practical value of perceived organizational support (POS) for newcomer adjustment, no research to date has been conducted to explain how to develop newcomers' POS. Therefore, the third purpose of the research is to explore this issue through the discussion of the influence of organizational socialization tactics. Finally, although the significance of information seeking has been widely recognized, given that studies have found only weak or neutral relationships between information seeking and socialization outcomes, there are some research calls for unveiling such relationships through a discussion of potential moderators. Therefore, the last purpose of this research is to clarify the conditions under which newcomer information seeking really matters to socialization outcomes through the involvement of a moderating factor, leader-member exchange (LMX).

The proposed hypotheses are examined through two studies in China following a pilot study. In the first study, data were collected through 177 newly hired insurance agents in a leading insurance organization in south China. In the second study, data were collected from 245 newly appointed doctors/nurses in southeast China. Results from hierarchical multiple regression indicate that of the three aspects of organizational socialization tactics, the social aspect is the strongest influential factor on socialization outcomes as against the context and content aspects. Moreover, the results signal a message that under collective, formal, fixed, sequential, serial and investiture organizational socialization tactics, newcomers are more likely to develop POS. The results also confirm the significance of information seeking on newcomer adjustment in China and go further to indicate that the influence of information seeking on socialization outcomes is weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX. The implications of findings on theory and managerial practices are then discussed, followed by the research directions, strengths and limitations.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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List of Abbreviations

ALS	Average Leadership Style
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
HR	Human Resource
HRM/D	Human Resource Management/Development
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LMX	Leader-Member Exchange
LMX-MDM	Multidimensional Measure of Leader-Member Exchange
POS	Perceived Organizational Support
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SD	Standard Deviation
SPOS	Survey of Perceived Organizational Support
VDL	Vertical Dyad Linkage

Chapter 1 Introduction

The primary aim of this chapter is to provide the rationale of why it is necessary to conduct this research. There are eight sections of this chapter, including the research background (section 1.1), theoretical and methodological concerns in organizational socialization studies (section 1.2), research aims and objectives (section 1.3), research questions (section 1.4), research methods (section 1.5), the background of the researcher (section 1.6), ethical considerations for this research (section 1.7) and an overview of the structure of the thesis (section 1.8).

1. 1 Research Background

With the advent of globalization, employees have become more mobile than ever before, and as a result, high rates of voluntary turnover have become a substantial problem for many organizations. In particular, the highest voluntary turnover rate has been reported to occur during the first few years after newcomers enter the organization (Hom et al., 2008). Given the fact that a high turnover rate may often influence organizational performance and financial costs (Kacmar et al., 2006), employers can no longer afford the luxury of waiting for many months until newcomers settle down at their new workplaces by themselves. Therefore, substantial sums of money have been invested to speed up the newcomer adjustment process (Demarco, 1996; Goldstein and Ford, 2002). In fact, it has been estimated that over 90% organizations apply some forms of orientation programmes to help newcomer adjust into the new workplace (Anderson et al., 1996). The assumption behind this heavy investment is that a sound start can help new incumbents adapt to the environment, enhance task performance, improve job satisfaction and achieve long-term effectiveness, while a poor start may have a long lasting negative effect for both newcomers and organization development (Holton, 2001; Katz, 1980).

However, do these programs bring desired outcomes? This question is hanging over the heads of both practitioners and academics because despite a vast amount of investment

a high turnover rate for newcomers has still loomed over job markets across the world. For example, it is reported that nearly 40% newly hired managers failed to perform their roles effectively within their first 18 months (Bradt et al., 2006). It is revealed that 57% of newly hired employees were inclined to leave after less than two years' employment based on a survey across multi-national companies in United States and United Kingdom (*Kenexa Research Insititute*, 2007). Similarly, the issue of newcomer turnover is also present in non-western organizations, as evidenced by Daisy Dai, Human Resource Director in L'Oreal (China), who reported that the company lost almost all new staff within their first three years of employment (*Economist*, 2005).

Against such a background of the increasing mobility of employees, an improved understanding of newcomer adjustment is of growing importance. Such scrutiny is warranted particularly on the research of organizational socialization. For example, Saks and Ashforth (1997a) suggested that:

The experience of socialization and resocialization is likely to become an increasingly frequent occurrence for individuals, groups, and organizations as the nature of work and careers continue to evolve. Thus, research on organizational socialization can be expected to become more important than ever in the years ahead. (p. 273)

More recently, Weller et al. (2009) restated the significance of a better understanding about the potential predictors on employee turnover, and pointed out that the turnover rate was generally highest during the first 2 years after organizational entry. What is more, Korte (2010) further addressed the importance of the starting experience of newly hired employees by suggesting that poor start experience may discourage individuals and waste talents. As it can be seen, rather than waning, the study of organizational socialization is still an essential issue on both practical and theoretical grounds.

1. 2 Theoretical and Methodological Concerns in Organizational Socialization Studies

Organizational socialization is defined as ‘the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role’ (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979, p. 211). As mentioned before, given that an individual’s socialization experience after entering the organization is of significance as it may have a lasting influence on his or her future performance and career success, considerable research efforts have been devoted to this area.

Historically, organizational socialization has been studied from at least two perspectives. The dominant emphasis on the first perspective lies in the work contextual factors such as organizational norms and socialization strategies. In general, research on this perspective assumes that individuals tend to be overwhelmed by the existing organizational settings (e.g. Van Maanen and Schein, 1979; Wanous, 1980, 1992). The other perspective has argued that facing the uncertainty and new working environment, newcomers themselves are motivated to take an active role in engaging proactive behaviours to adjust into the new workplace (Crant, 2000; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b).

More recently, research interest has turned towards the integration of both organization-driven strategies and individual-driven proactive behaviours by following Reichers’s (1987) suggestion of a more interactionist approach in understanding organizational socialization (e.g. Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002; Gruman et al., 2006). Under the interactionist approach, Reichers (1987) suggested not going to the extreme to emphasize the effects of situations or individuals and argued that individuals gained the perceptions of events through the interactions with others in a particular setting.

Furthering the understanding of those contextual factors and individual behaviours, Bauer et al. (2007) pointed out two most frequently discussed antecedents which are considered to impact newcomer adjustment based on the extant literature. They are organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking. To illustrate, organizational socialization tactics refers to organizational strategies and approaches to transform individuals from outsiders to insiders (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979), which emphasizes the role of the organization on newcomer adjustment. Newcomer information

seeking refers to the process in which newcomers seek and acquire information and resources to settle down (Morrison, 1993a, 1993b), which emphasizes the proactive role of newcomers themselves.

The importance of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking has been also emphasized by other scholars. For instance, Ashforth et al. (2007) suggested that, “the process of socialization has often been operationalized as either socialization tactics or newcomer proactive behaviour” (p. 448). Fu et al. (2008) indicated that it was necessary to explore socialization tactics and individual seeking behaviors to fully understand the influential factors on socialization outcomes. According to these arguments, it is reasonable to consider that organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking are considered as the key potential factors to influence newcomer adjustment in the current organizational socialization research. However, despite of the awareness of the significance of organization socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking, some improvements can be made, as elaborated in the following sections.

1.2.1 Theoretical Concerns

1.2.1.1 Organizational Socialization Tactics

In the literature, Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) typology of organizational socialization tactics is quoted as ‘one of the most theoretically developed models of socialization’ (Saks and Ashforth, 1997b). This typology has been widely applied and investigated across a variety of contexts (Ashforth et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2005; Saks et al., 2007). However, while studies of organizational socialization tactics have advanced our understanding on the strategies and approaches that organizations can apply to structure newcomers’ socialization experience, such discussions are not without limitations.

First of all, although it has been shown that organizational socialization tactics play a key role in influencing newcomer adjustment (Gruman et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2005), a key question proposed by Jones (1986) on how specific socialization tactics affect

newcomer adjustment remains unaddressed. By and large, most studies on organizational socialization tactics have generally discussed the relationships between socialization outcomes and the overall function of organizational socialization tactics, instead of linking socialization outcomes to the specific dimensions of organizational socialization tactics (e.g. Allen and Meyer, 1990; Gruman et al., 2006). In fact, some studies have suggested that different aspects of organizational socialization tactics may be differentially related with socialization outcomes (Ashforth and Saks, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; Cable and Parsons, 2001). Therefore, to clarify the understanding of the relationships between each aspect of organization socialization tactics and socialization outcomes, it is necessary to address this omission by taking an in-depth look.

Second, it is noted that Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) typology of organizational socialization tactics was developed in the western context, raising questions about the extent to which the findings can be generalized to the eastern countries particularly under the backdrop of the global nature of business. Although it is likely that many of the findings may be still hold true in non-western contexts (e.g. Kim et al., 2005; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009), such studies are still very few. Therefore, in order to broaden the understanding of how these socialization tactics operate across cultural boundaries, and provide insights for employers working in multinational corporations, it is desirable to investigate the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment in a non-western context.

Third, the existing empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that organizational support, as an essential form of social support, is important in influencing employees' job attitudes and behaviours (e.g. Allen et al., 2003; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003). An implicit point of view arising from those studies is that employees and organizations can be involved in a social exchange relationship (Loi et al., 2009). In this stream of research, employee-organization exchange is widely operationalized by using the explanatory mechanism of perceived organizational support (POS) which stands for 'a global belief concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being' (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 501). It is claimed that POS can satisfy employees' needs for self-esteem,

affiliation, emotional support and approval (Eisenberger et al., 1998) which are particularly important in describing the concerns of newcomers who are eager to be accepted and to build their identities at their new workplaces. In addition, given that POS provides resources and information that facilitate employees to accomplish tasks (Hochwarter et al., 2006), it is reasonable to assume that POS is essential and relevant for newcomer adjustment.

Interestingly, in spite of the significance of POS for newcomer adjustment, organizational socialization studies mainly focus on how socialization tactics influence newcomer behaviours and attitudes such as individual task mastery, role clarity, social integration and job satisfaction, and we know little about their influences on newcomers' perceptions towards the organization. Indeed, as Tacheuchi and Tacheuchi (2009) have recently pointed out, "...much less research had been conducted on demonstrating the importance of social exchange relationships in the process by which newcomers adjust themselves to the organizations they join" (p. 9). In a similar line, Korte (2010) also addressed the need of employing the perspective of social exchange theory or relationship studies to enhance the understanding of organizational socialization process. Therefore, due to the importance and relevance of POS for newcomer adjustment, it appears interesting and meaningful to examine how to develop newcomers' POS through the discussion of the influences of organizational socialization tactics.

In short, there are three potential limitations within the current literature on organizational socialization tactics: (1) it is not clear whether organizational socialization tactics impact newcomer socialization outcomes differentially; (2) there is a lack of research addressing the impacts of organizational socialization tactics in a non-western setting; and (3) there is limited understanding on the development of newcomers' POS.

1.2.1.2 Newcomer Information Seeking

Given the process of joining a new organization is associated with stress and uncertainty (Louis, 1980), it has been argued that newly hired employees take an active role in engaging a variety of practices to reduce uncertainty and to master new skills such as

positive framing, information seeking, negotiation of job changes and relationship building (Ashford and Black, 1996; Griffin et al., 2000). Among them, newcomer information seeking is considered as the 'primary method of newcomer proactive behaviours' examined in many organizational socialization studies (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks and Ashforth, 1997b). An important implication behind such studies is that information seeking can help newcomers achieve a sound knowledge about rules, norms, organizational culture, work techniques and communication skills to integrate into the new environment (Crant, 2000; Morrison, 1993a).

However, in spite of those research efforts, it has been noted that the majority of existing findings on newcomer information seeking were developed in the context of western countries. Morrison (2002) proposed that a great deal of research attention was needed to discuss the effects of the cultural differences because employee proactive behaviours may have new characteristics in other cultures. For example, research has shown that in Asian cultures such as China, employees' behaviours and attitudes are deeply influenced by Confucianism that emphasizes collectivism and interpersonal harmony (Huang et al., 1997; Hwang, 1987). Therefore, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of newcomer information seeking behavior, it is crucial to examine whether the influence of newcomer information seeking can cross cultural boundaries and be validated in a non-western context.

Moreover, although the significance of newcomer information seeking has been widely recognized and investigated (Ashforth et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 2007; Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002), a range of empirical studies found only weak or neutral relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes (Ashford and Black, 1996; Bauer and Green, 1998; Gruman et al., 2006). Therefore, the relationship between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes may be more complicated than we thought. To explore this issue, it appears necessary to clarify the conditions under which newcomer information seeking really reacts with socialization outcomes. Indeed, there are some research calls for unveiling the relationship between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes through discussing potential moderators. For example, Crant (2000) indicated that it was of significance to specify the

moderator under the proactive behaviour process. Ashforth et al. (2007) stated that it was helpful to investigate factors that may moderate the impacts of proactive behaviour on newcomer adjustment. Major et al. (1995) further suggested that:

...recent research on newcomer information seeking suggests that the increased use of supervisors as information sources over time is related to improvements in socialization outcomes (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992). However, the nature of the interaction between the newcomer and the supervisor (LMX) and its potential to moderate information seeking and socialization outcomes have not been addressed. (p. 429)

In addition, another point worth noting is that the primary focus of newcomer information seeking literature has been on the discussion of the antecedents and benefits associated with high frequency of seeking information. For example, Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller's (2000) research demonstrated that newcomers with higher extraversion and openness were more likely to seek feedback and build relationships. Additionally, Major and Kozlowski (1997) proposed that highly self-efficacious newcomers might be more likely to take the initiative to communicate with others and thus better adjust in the new workplace. In a similar line, Bauer and Green (1998) claimed that self-efficacy was positively connected with newcomers' adjustment, which was also shared by other scholars (e.g. Jones, 1986; Saks and Ashforth, 1996). However, the problem is that newcomers do not always exhibit high self-efficacy, extraversion and openness in the workplace. Admittedly, the organization can select newcomers with those characteristics when recruiting, but it is also considered important to understand how to deal with newcomers with low information seeking behaviour and how to buffer its negative effects.

To sum up, there are two potential limitations within the current literature about newcomer information seeking: (1) a lack of research on the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes in a non-western setting; and (2) a lack of understanding about when newcomer information seeking really matters to organizational socialization outcomes and how to manage newcomers whose proactive

information seeking behaviour is low.

1.2.2 Methodological Concerns

As mentioned above, given that most research findings have been gained in western countries, an examination of newcomer socialization in a non-western context may advance our understanding and result in important theoretical insights. In addition, it has been found that research samples in most of the existing studies consisted of MBA students or professional occupations such as accountants. Although it is possible that the findings based on those research samples could be still hold true in other contexts, a more heterogeneous sample is obviously needed (Bauer et al., 1998; Nelson, 1987). In a similar line, Saks and Ashforth (1997a) pointed that future research needed to involve a wide variety of occupational groups by indicating that:

Socialization research has tended to rely on a narrow sample of recent graduates and newcomers from only a handful of occupations....the reliance on a relatively limited and more or less homogeneous sample restricts the generalizations that can be made regarding socialization processes and their consequences....Socialization research needs to include a much more diverse sample of newcomers from a greater variety of occupations. (p. 259)

In brief, a summary of both theoretical and methodological concerns within the socialization literature is presented in Table 1.1, which provides a rationale of ‘why’ this research is conducted.

Table 2.1 Summary of concerns within the organizational socialization literature

Aspects	Sub-aspects	Concerns/ Limitations	Future research / Implications
Theoretical Aspect	Organizational socialization tactics	(1) Unclear about the influences of different socialization tactics on newcomer adjustment; (2) Lack of research on the impacts of organizational socialization tactics in a non-western setting; (3) Lack of understanding about the linkages between organizational socialization tactics and newcomers' perceived organizational support.	(1) Investigating how different socialization tactics are related with socialization outcomes (Jones, 1986; Cable and Parsons, 2001); (2) Examining the effects of organizational socialization tactics on socialization outcomes in a non-western context; (3) Exploring how different organizational socialization tactics are related with newcomers' perceived organizational support.
	Newcomer information seeking	(1) Lack of understanding of whether the impact of information seeking can be cross-validated in a non-western setting; (2) Lack of understanding about when newcomer information seeking behaviour really matters to socialization outcomes and how to manage newcomers whose proactive behaviours are low.	(1) Examining the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes in a non-western setting; (2) Bringing a moderating variable (e.g. leader-member exchange) to explore the impact of newcomer information seeking on socialization outcomes (Ashforth et al., 2007; Crant, 2000; Major et al., 1995).
Methodological Aspect	Research context	(1) Lack of research in non-western contexts.	(1) Collecting data from a non-western context (Bauer et al., 1998; Bauer et al., 2007).
	Research sample	(2) Research sample was restricted to MBA students or professional occupations such as accountants.	(2) Involving a more heterogeneous research sample (Saks and Ashforth, 1997a).

1. 3 Research Aims and Objectives

As mentioned above, research in organizational socialization has achieved much but still holds potentials for further investigation. To address current gaps in the literature, this research is expected to achieve five aims.

First, although it is not new to assess the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes, it is noted that most of extant studies were conducted in the western context. Therefore, the present research aims to investigate such relationships in a non-western context, specifically in the context of China. The investigation of this issue could be of significance and benefit to organizations in guiding the design of appropriate policies and strategies to improve the return of the investment on newcomer socialization, particularly for those employers from western countries but working in China.

Second, this research is to investigate the influences of different organizational socialization tactics on newcomer socialization outcomes, including an examination of which aspect of socialization tactics is most strongly associated with socialization outcomes. As noted before, very few studies have explored how different organizational socialization tactics manifest their impacts on socialization outcomes, with the exception of a few studies such as Jones (1986), Cable and Parsons (2001) and Takeuchi and Takeuchi (2009). Therefore, this research is expected to fill this gap.

Third, it is noted that few empirical studies could be found investigating the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and newcomers' POS, although the significance of POS for newcomer adjustment is recognized. An additional aim of this current research is thus to unfold this issue by exploring the relationships, if any, between different organizational socialization tactics and newcomers' POS. The purpose of exploring this issue is to examine whether organizational socialization tactics could be attributed to the development of newcomers' perceptions towards organizational support. Moreover, since no other empirical studies, to the author's knowledge, have made efforts to explicitly clarify the linkage between organizational socialization tactics and POS, addressing this issue may lead to a clearer and comprehensive understanding of the effects of organizational socialization tactics.

Fourth, since few empirical studies have explored the impacts of information seeking on newcomer adjustment in the context of China, this research is thus expected to provide

an initial attempt at discussing whether the influence of newcomer information seeking can be validated in Asian countries like China. It is believed that examining this issue in a non-western context may expand the understanding about how newcomer information seeking works across cultural boundaries.

Finally, the present research aims to explore the moderation effect, if any, in the relationships between newcomer information seeking and organizational socialization outcomes. The exploration of this issue may provide practitioners with a better understanding of when newcomer information seeking really matters to their adjustment. The discussions are also expected to satisfy the practitioners' needs of understanding strategies to help newcomers adjust to the organizational environment more effectively.

In summary, this research is expected to bring benefits for both academics and practitioners. The major aims of the present research can be summarized as follows:

- To examine the relationships between different organizational socialization tactics and organizational socialization outcomes in a non-western context.
- To discuss how different organizational socialization tactics are related to newcomers' socialization outcomes.
- To explore how different organizational socialization tactics are related to newcomers' perceived organizational support.
- To provide clarification of the relationships between newcomer information seeking and organizational socialization outcomes in a non-western context.
- To improve the understanding on the extent to which newcomers' information seeking affects their adjustment through the inclusion of a potential moderator.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve those research aims and objectives, this research sets two specific research questions for investigation. The first research question focuses on organizational socialization tactics and the other mainly deals with newcomer information seeking. These research questions are presented as follows.

1.4.1 Research Question (1): Are organizational socialization tactics related to organizational socialization outcomes in the context of China, and which socialization tactics have the strongest impacts? Do different organizational socialization tactics influence newcomers' perceived organizational support?

The first research question includes two parts. The first part is to examine the impacts of different organizational socialization tactics on organizational socialization outcomes in a non-western context, specifically in China. In particular, this research goes further by examining which organizational socialization tactics have the strongest impacts on socialization outcomes. The second part of the first research question is to discuss the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and newcomers' POS. It is necessary to clarify that although most of existing research to date has applied POS in the western context, yet the concept of POS has been in fact examined and validated in a number of empirical studies, such as in Korea (Lee and Peccei, 2007), in Japan (Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009) and in mainland China (Chen et al., 2005; Hui et al., 2007; Liu and Ipe, 2010; Loi and Ngo, 2010). Accordingly, since the substantial body of empirical findings has shown consistent validity of POS across cultures, it is believed that the concept of POS could be hold up in the context of China.

1.4.2 Research Question (2): Is newcomer information seeking related to newcomer socialization outcomes, particularly in the context of China? If so, when does newcomer information seeking really matter to newcomer socialization outcomes, again in the context of China?

The second research question focuses on the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes. The first part of this research question raises the issue about whether the impact of newcomer information seeking can be validated in a non-western context, specifically in the context of China, and the second part addresses under what circumstance newcomer information seeking really matters in terms of newcomer socialization outcomes, again in the context of China. To explore this question, the moderating role of leader-member exchange (LMX) will be considered, addressing the research call of Major et al. (1995).

LMX represents the nature of the work relationship between leaders and members (Scandura and Graen, 1984). Given the significant position of the supervisor to clarify job

requirement, to guide newcomers to learn the rules and to make decisions on promotions and bonuses, the work relationship with the supervisor is considered as the most important influence on newcomer adjustment (Chen and Tjosvold, 2005; Graen and Scandura, 1987; Liden et al., 2004; Katz, 1980; Nahrgang et al., 2009). Further evidence to support the importance of supervisor for newcomers can also be found in the argument of Loi et al. (2009) who suggested that, “through the intense daily interactions, supervisors play a key role in providing valuable information to an organization’s newcomers and assist them in the process of organizational assimilation” (p. 405). Sluss and Thompson (2009) further pointed out that the immediate supervisor was a valued relational source in socialization. In support, Thomas and Lankau (2009) investigated the direct and indirect effects of LMX on newcomer role stress and burnout. Their results suggested that newcomers with a high quality of LMX were less likely to suffer from emotional exhaustion. Thomas and Lankau (2009) further explicitly addressed the need for investigating LMX as a source of social support to influence newcomer adjustment.

However, although the potential value of LMX for newcomer adjustment has been recognized, some critics have questioned whether this western concept is applicable to high power distance contexts embedded with collectivist cultures such as China. In fact, LMX theory is considered particularly meaningful and useful for the study of Chinese employment relationships because Chinese people have a strong ‘personal orientation’ in their daily interpersonal interactions (Hui et al., 2009). Chinese society is, to some extent, considered as a ‘guanxi’ society, and people are implicitly socialized to value personal guanxi (Hui and Graen, 1997). The word ‘guanxi’ in Chinese can be a verb or a noun, and it means a personal link or tie. Guanxi is a critical determinant of the quality of social interpersonal interactions in the context of China (Hwang, 1987; Huang et al., 1997). In the work place, Chinese employees have been observed to be particularly motivated to behave in ways to enhance the interpersonal relationship with employers (Hui et al., 2004a).

Given such a strong emphasis of interpersonal relationships in the traditional Chinese culture, Aryee and Chen (2006) addressed the significance of LMX in the collectivistic culture of China which values personal relationships and respect for the authority. Hackett et al. (2003) explicitly suggested that, “there are strong grounds for expecting the basic tenets of LMX theory to generalize to the Chinese context” (p. 249). In addition, the cross-cultural validity of LMX has been also achieved in a number of empirical Chinese studies (e.g. Hui et al., 1999; Law et al., 2000; Wu et al., 2006). Therefore, considering the significant role of supervisors for newcomer adjustment and the cross-cultural

generalizability of LMX, it appears to be reasonable and logical to involve LMX in the current research.

1.4.3 Why focus on China?

As is seen, both of the research questions are examined in a non-western context, specifically in the context of China. The reason of selecting China as the research site is because China, a typical Asian country, is considered as ‘a vital arena for contemporary research on organizations and organizational behaviour’ (*Management and Organization Review*, 2005, p.1). In a similar line, Hui et al. (2004b) pointed out that, “China is arguably one of the fastest-growing major nations, and an understanding of employment relationships in this relationship-oriented society may result in important theoretical insights” (p. 312).

To illustrate, China has been undergoing a gradual shift from an ossified centrally planned economy towards a ‘socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics’ since 1978 (Ding et al., 2000). The successful adoption of the policy of ‘Economic Reforms and Opening up to the Outside World’ has led to a sustained and high-speed economic growth in China’s national economy. However, against the backdrop of tremendous changes of economy and ideology in Chinese society, significant changes have taken place in employment policies and practices (Warner, 2000, 2005, 2008). A remarkable consequence of organizational downsizing has been a dramatic increase in job mobility for employees who have to adjust and adapt to new settings more than ever before. Consequently, the high rate of turnover has been recognized as a substantial problem in managing Chinese employees especially in joint ventures, and particularly for newcomers (Beamer, 1998).

Facing this challenge of managing newcomer turnover, many multi-national corporations have invested a great deal of money to facilitate newcomer adjustment. However, in spite of practical concerns aimed at improving the understanding of newcomers’ work-related behaviours, the studies on organizational socialization in the Chinese context are still quite limited, with the exception of the empirical studies of Wang and Shi (2006) and Yi and Uen (2006). Therefore, given the practical challenges and limited studies on newcomer socialization, it is particularly meaningful and interesting to set the research agenda in the context of China.

1. 5 Research Methods

In order to explore the research questions, a deductive research strategy was applied by using surveys. To illustrate, one pilot study and two main studies (i.e. Study 1 and Study 2) were designed and conducted. Specifically, the aim of the pilot study was to assess the construct validity of POS and LMX. Data were collected from the Chinese alumni of a university in the UK through a web-based survey, including 191 respondents from a variety of industries in China. Confirmative factor analysis was applied to examine whether POS and LMX were two distinct constructs in the context of China.

Study 1 was designed to examine the proposed hypotheses through hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Data in Study 1 were collected from a leading insurance organization in south China: 177 complete responses were submitted for the subsequent regression analysis. Study 2 was conducted to retest the hypotheses by using a very different research sample: 245 responses were collected from newcomers in the medical sector. The reason of conducting a replication survey is to extend the range of conditions under which the results can be still hold up in different contexts (Lindsay, 1995).

Therefore, the results of Study 1 and Study 2 together serve as approximations to present a more comprehensive answer to these two research questions. A detailed description of the data collection procedures and research samples are presented in Chapter 5; the results of the analyses are presented in Chapter 6.

1. 6 The Author

The author came to this research with relevant working experience in Human Resource Management in China, particularly in the areas of new employee orientation and employee relationships. Thus, admittedly, the author brought a background of personal working experience and beliefs that have influenced the selection of the research topic and ideas underpinning the following discussion. In addition, it is necessary to notice that the writing might be shaped by three assumptions the researcher carried prior to conducting this research, which are listed as follows:

- Organizational socialization is a continuous change process.
- The socialization process can be guided and facilitated by various organizational supportive practices, but these practices are meaningful and useful only when their values are understood and shared with individuals.

- The supervisor's support is essential for newcomer adjustment, especially in the team context.

1. 7 Ethical Considerations

Having briefly looked at the background of the author, consideration now turns to the ethical considerations involved in this research. Research ethics mean to be compatible with fundamental moral standards of conducting the research and treating the research subject (*American Psychological Association*, 2010). There are some ethical considerations with respect to prospective research benefits for the research organization and respondents, including fidelity, responsibility, confidentiality and anonymity.

In gaining research access, efforts will be spent in negotiating and communicating with the potential participants. If required, the research tool (i.e. the questionnaire) can be customized to accommodate the context of the potential organization when not breaking the research objectives. A formal report on the research findings will be forwarded to the participating organization, with no indications in this thesis which might identify the organization and participants. Moreover, to improve rigour, during the process of administering the survey, the researcher should be able to facilitate each step of the research. Local contacts need to be clearly briefed with the research purposes and objectives.

In order to help the participant understand the research purpose and facilitate the process of filling in the questionnaire, a cover letter should be attached to the formal survey questionnaire. The participants should be not forced to complete their questionnaires, and should be given time to complete the questionnaires under their own volition (Saunders et al., 1997). Also, confidentiality must be guaranteed to the participants: any identity information (e.g. names of the participants) should be kept anonymous.

In brief, the author strives for consistency of the relevant morale norms and rules across the whole research process in order to avoid the bias, and to respect the rights and well-being of the organizations and respondents.

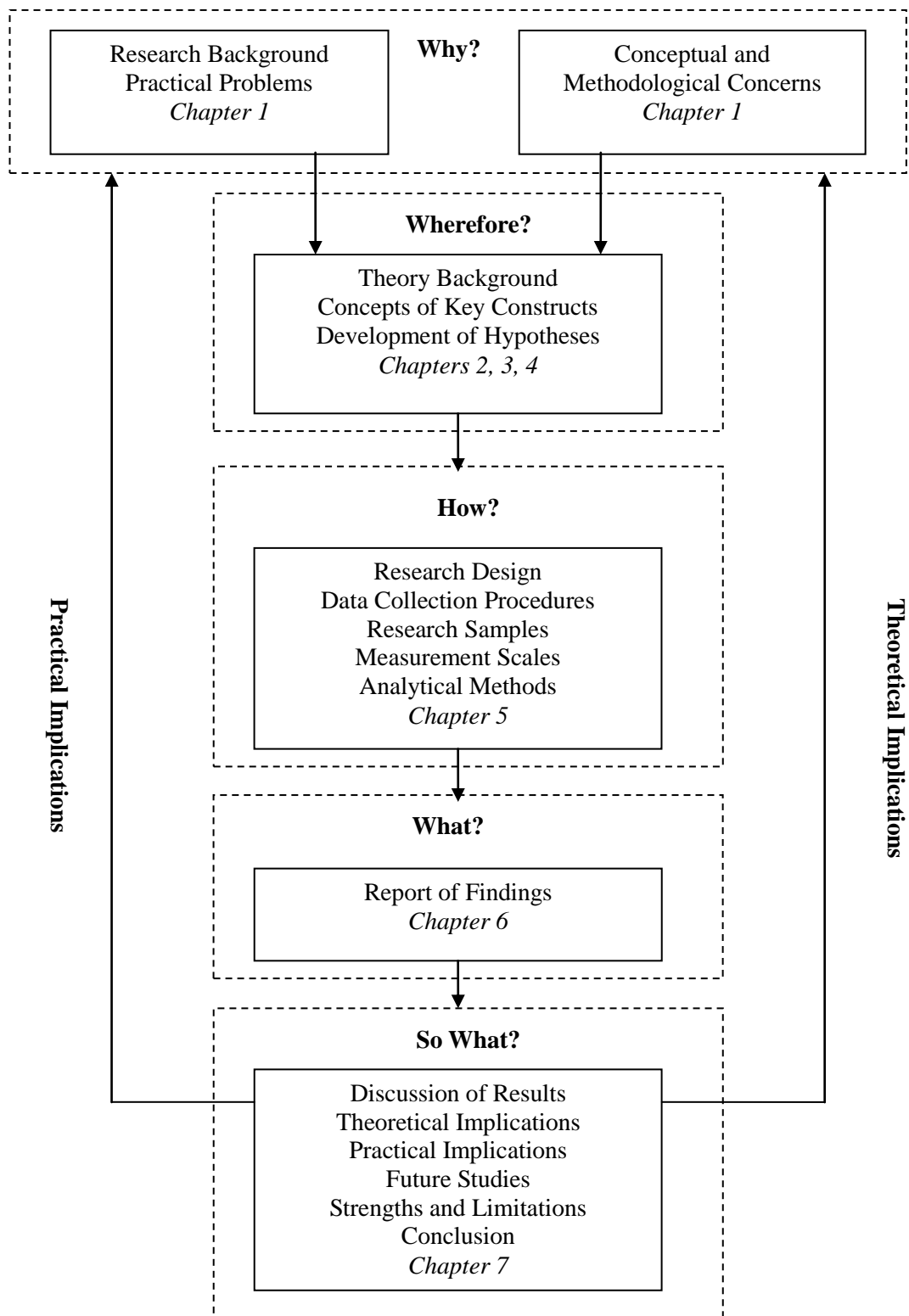
1. 8 Structure of the Thesis

All seven chapters integrate together to answer the research questions. The overall

thesis structure is presented diagrammatically in Figure 1.1.

- Chapter 2 **Theoretical Background: Organizational Socialization Tactics and Newcomer Information Seeking.** This chapter continues the review of organizational socialization literature and presents a detailed discussion of the definitions, processes, outcomes and antecedents of organizational socialization. In particular, the nature and scope of some key concepts (i.e. organizational socialization tactics, newcomer information seeking and organizational socialization outcomes) are clarified in this chapter.
- Chapter 3 **Theoretical Background: Perceived Organizational Support and Leader-Member Exchange.** Social exchange theory, the conceptual root of POS and LMX, is first presented in this chapter. Then, a detailed discussion demonstrates the definition, characteristics and nature of POS and LMX respectively.
- Chapter 4 **Hypotheses Development:** After clarifying all the key variables involved in the present research, specific hypotheses are developed based on the theory and empirical studies from the existing literature.
- Chapter 5 **Methodology:** This chapter presents the rationale for the research design used in this research, including a detailed explanation about how and from who the data were collected. Measurement validity and a description of the analytical methods used in the study are also included.
- Chapter 6 **Findings and Results:** This chapter presents detailed results of the main analyses for the research.
- Chapter 7 **Discussion and Conclusion:** This chapter discusses the significance and implications of the research findings towards the literature and practitioners. Future research directions, research strengths and limitations are also considered in this chapter, ending with overall conclusions from the research.

Figure 1.1 Overall structure of the thesis



Note: Inspired by the structural figure of Liu (2008).

Chapter 2 Theoretical Background: Organizational Socialization Tactics and Newcomer Information Seeking

2. 1 Introduction

Building on the discussion of organizational socialization in the first chapter, this chapter continuously explores two essential factors that are likely to affect newcomer socialization outcomes, namely organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking. The clarification of these concepts is essential in answering the research questions developed in Chapter 1. However, before turning to a closer examination of the scope and definition of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking, several dominant themes in the organizational socialization literature will be discussed, particularly based on the recent reviews (e.g. Antonacopoulou and Güttel, 2010; Ashforth et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). The themes are: (1) what is organizational socialization; (2) what are the stages of the organizational socialization process which an individual goes through; (3) what is learnt during organizational socialization, reflecting the content of socialization; and (4) the scope of organizational socialization outcomes.

This chapter starts with the definition of organizational socialization (section 2.2), then follows with a discussion of organizational socialization process/stages (section 2.3) and content (section 2.4). Thereafter, organizational socialization outcomes are clarified (section 2.5), followed by discussions of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking (section 2.6). Concluding remarks are contained in section 2.7. The hypothesized relationships among organizational socialization tactics, newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes will be developed in Chapter 4.

2. 2 What is Organizational Socialization?

In practice, there are many terms to describe the process of newcomer adjustment after organizational entry, such as orientation (also called induction or on-boarding) which is usually understood as ‘the period that immediately follows organizational entry’ (Wanous, 1992, p.165). Compared with those phases of organizational entry, organizational socialization certainly is much broader and more complicated, which includes almost

everything that occurs after organizational entry (Van Maanen, 1978; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979), and can not be completed by only conducting any specific action such as a formal orientation program (Wanous, 1992). To explain further, a list of definitions was firstly collated based on the extant classical articles in this area (Table 2.1). The content of each definition was examined to identify the purpose highlighted in bold and process highlighted in italics respectively.

As illustrated in Table 2.1, the conceptualization of organizational socialization has evolved a great deal of overlap among those definitions about the purpose and process of organizational socialization. The notions of personal change, learning process, organizational identity and social integration have been encapsulated within most of the definitions. Enabling newcomers to adapt into the new workplace and to become functional organizational members is one of the primary purposes of this process. Furthermore, of the attempts to extend and deepen the understanding of what affects organizational socialization, some different perspectives were emphasized.

Van Maanen (1975), for instance, suggested that the individual role could be structured by others within the organization. Wanous (1992) indicated that the central purpose of organizational socialization was the transfer of organizational norms and values to newly hired employees by suggesting that, “organizational socialization is one way to ensure that newcomers will adhere to the important values of the organization” (p.189). In a similar line, Chow (2002) pointed out that, “to maintain control by ensuring the employees conform to and share the same norms and values as those of the organization” is the fundamental objective of organizational socialization (p.720). In general, those suggestions regard organizational socialization as a process of accepting situational settings. This conceptualization of newcomer socialization puts priority on the influence of organizational context, and assumes that individuals tend to be overwhelmed by the environment with existing norms and rules, and newcomers are often portrayed as passive and reactive. A good example is given by the words like control, adoption, acceptance, assimilation and transmission (Schein, 1988; Van Maanen, 1978; Wanous, 1992).

On the contrary, the role of learning and newcomers’ own proactive behaviours in the process of organizational socialization was emphasized by some other scholars (Chao et al., 1994; Morrison, 1993b; Taormina, 1997). They attempted to discover what newcomers need to do and what the potential impacts of those individual behaviours are by placing newcomers in the focus during the organizational socialization process.

Table 2.1 Definition of organizational socialization (**Bold**=purposes; *Italic*=processes)

Authors/Sources	Definitions, purposes and processes
Brim (1966) p.9	The manner in which an individual learns the behaviour appropriate to his position in a group , <i>through interaction with others who hold normative beliefs about what his role should be and who reward or punish him for correct or incorrect actions.</i>
Van Maanen (1975) p.67	Organizational socialization refers to the process by which <i>a person learns the values, norms and required behaviours</i> which permit him to participate as a member of the organization.
Feldman (1976) p.434	...two other parts of the socialization process that <i>occur along with the learning of the new values</i> , and that are <i>heavily influenced by this learning</i> : adjustment to the work environment and development of work skills. [socialization-as-adjustment process]
Van Maanen and Schein (1979) p.211	Organizational socialization is the process by which <i>an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills</i> necessary to assume an organizational role.
Louis (1980) p.229	The process by which a person comes to <i>appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge</i> essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organizational member.
Jones (1983) p.464	...the socialization process is analyzed from an interactionist perspective in which <i>newcomers are accorded an active role</i> in mediating personal and role outcomes.
Kammeyer et al. (1990) p.129	Socialization is the process by which <i>a person learns and generally accepts</i> the established ways of a particular social group, or society.
Wanous (1992) p.187	Socialization concerns <i>the ways in which newcomers change and adapt to the organization. The types of changes are learning new roles, norms, and values.</i>
Morrison (1993b) p.557	The <i>process</i> whereby newcomers learn the behaviors and attitudes of assuming roles in an organization.
Taormina (1997) p.29	Organizational socialization is the process by which <i>a person secures relevant job skills, acquires a functional level of organizational understanding, attains supportive social interactions with coworkers, and generally accepts</i> the established ways of a particular organization.
Chow (2002) p.720	It is <i>the process</i> by which an individual acquires the knowledge and skills needed to perform his or her job. Socialization is <i>a change process involving the transmission of important norms and values to employees.</i>
Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) p.492	Organizational socialization reflects <i>a learning process</i> through which <i>a new organizational employee adapts</i> from outsider to integrated and effective insider.
Ardts et al. (2007) p. 159	<i>the learning process by which newcomers develop attitudes and behaviour</i> that are necessary to function as a fully-fledged member of the organization.
Bauer et al. (2007) p. 707	<i>the process</i> by which newcomers make the transition from being organizational outsiders to being insiders.

Recently, a significant group of scholars have suggested that both situational and personal factors are essential to account for the variation in individual socialization behaviours (Ashforth et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 2007; Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2006). In other words, both organizational context and newcomer's own efforts are important for an effective organizational socialization. However, in spite of the development and evolution of organizational socialization concepts, it is noted that there are fewer suggestions on how such interactions between newcomers and organizations or supervisors may manifest their impacts on newcomer socialization (Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009). Korte (2010) also implied that the existing literature underestimated the social influences of supervisors immediately experienced by newcomers in their work group. For this reason, besides the discussion of organizational context and newcomers' proactive behaviours, a closer view of organizational socialization was taken in the present research by involving the consideration of interactive issues on newcomer adjustment, which will be illustrated further in Chapter 4 in detail.

2. 3 What is the Organizational Socialization Process?

2.3.1 The Stage Models of Organizational Socialization

There are a number of different models to present the stages of organizational socialization process (e.g. Feldman, 1976; Louis, 1980; Van Maanen, 1975; Wanous, 1992). In Van Maanen's (1975) model for instance, he argued that organizational socialization was a continuous change process which started with 'anticipatory socialization', in which individuals were influenced by the amount of prior knowledge, social experience and career direction, established before organizational entry. Then, the 'encounter period' started after newcomers formally registered into the organization. During this stage, newcomers learned to adapt into the new workplace by participating in the organizational events, performing assigned tasks and communicating with other colleagues. The later process of coping with change was viewed as the termination of 'metamorphosis'. If they succeeded, newcomers would become the insiders and be accepted by other colleagues. However, if they still felt uncomfortable living in the new organization or their expectations could not be satisfied, they would leave. In Van Maanen's (1975) model, each stage of the organizational socialization process is interdependent with a causal order.

Consistent with Van Maanen, Feldman (1976) suggested that the organizational

socialization process started with the stage of 'anticipatory socialization' which usually occurred in the period of deciding whether to take a job offer. He further suggested that newcomers at an 'accommodation stage' needed to clarify their job roles, master tasks and build relationships with other insiders. In Feldman's model, 'role management' reflecting the final stage refers to a process of solving both internal and external conflicts to settle down. Compared with Van Maanen's (1975) model, Feldman's (1976) 'accommodation stage' is very similar as the combination of Van Maanen's latter two stages of 'encounter' and 'metamorphosis'. In addition, both Feldman and Van Maanen agreed that the individual socialization process was not a one-night change, but a continuous change process. Also, they agreed that an individual's initial experience after entering the organization may also influence the subsequent organizational socialization outcomes.

Besides the efforts of Van Maanen and Feldman in strengthening the understanding of the nature and process of organizational socialization, Louis (1980) went a step further to discuss individual sense-making process during organizational socialization. He suggested that newcomer adjustment was not only a process of 'adding new roles to their portfolio of life roles', but also involved a process of leaving a former role. Differing from Feldman's overwhelming emphasis on the activities newcomers may engage in after organizational entry, Louis focused on newcomer cognitive experience, particularly in coping with surprises and making sense of the new settings. Specifically, Louis identified 'change', 'contrast' and 'surprise' as key features of the newcomers' experience during organizational entry. He pointed out that individuals could not erase all the memories of former roles before setting into the new role. Therefore, they were inclined to subconsciously undertake role change by interrelating with new settings and using previous experiences to manage surprise. Louis's inclusion of the significance of the individual's own cognitive process in managing surprise is shared with some other scholars (e.g. Chao et al., 1994), but a criticism can be made of Louis's overemphasized conception of the role of surprises in provoking cognition during socialization, which thus leaves an obvious de-emphasis on other factors influencing newcomer sense-making process, such as external support from both organizations and other colleagues who may stimulate the thinking process of newcomers by sharing with their experiences or providing necessary learning materials.

Based on those attempts to distil the socialization process, Wanous (1980) synthesized the previous studies and developed an integrative model of post-entry organizational socialization concerning what newcomers are likely to experience after

organizational entry. Wanous' model includes four stages: Stage 1, *confronting and accepting organizational reality*: confirmation or disconfirmation of organizational reality; Stage 2, *achieving role clarity*: defining and understanding the work role and interpersonal role in the workplace; Stage 3, *locating oneself in the organizational context*: developing an attachment to work and the organization; and Stage 4, *detecting signposts of successful socialization*: achievement of organizational commitment and work effectiveness.

The accumulated research on stage models of socialization has clearly shown that organizational socialization indicates a continuous change process. Moreover, although it is admitted that pre-entry experience may be closely related with subsequent formation of post-entry attitudes and behaviours (Louis, 1980), all other stage models have in common an emphasis on the significance of the period of post-entry in which newcomers start to engage in organizational activities, form initial networks with other insiders and learn to survive in the new workplace.

2.3.2 Time Line for Organizational Socialization

Based on the discussion above, it is known that organizational socialization is an on-going process. However, the knowledge about when a newcomer tends to be a functional organizational member is very limited. In fact, there is no consensus about the time line of how long it takes for a newcomer to be socialized (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2005; Saks and Ashforth, 1997a; Wanous, 1992). For example, Major et al. (1995) measured newcomers' socialization outcomes only four weeks after organizational entry, which implicitly indicates that the effects of socialization processes appear relatively rapidly. On the other hand, Adkins (1995) suggested that it was reasonable to predict newcomer's socialization outcomes (e.g. job performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment) at a time of six months after employment. Alternatively, some empirical studies use twelve months as the time frame to assess newcomer socialization outcomes (e.g. Gruman et al., 2006; Kammeyer-Muller and Wanberg, 2003; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009; Wanberg and Kammeyer-Muller, 2000), but some other scholars suggested that it may take an even longer time span for newcomers to learn and establish networks with other colleagues (Ashford and Black, 1996; Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2005; Robinson et al., 1994; Wanous, 1992).

Seeking the reasons of why the time span for socialization varies, Katz (1980) pointed out that:

One must also realize that socialization, unlike an orientation program, does not take place over a day or two. It takes a fair amount of time for employees to feel accepted and competent and to accomplish all of the tasks necessary to develop a situational perspective. How long this socialization period lasts is not only influenced by the abilities, needs, and prior experiences of individual workers, but it also differs significantly across occupations. (p.129)

Despite there being no consensus of the time span for the socialization process, there is a number of recent empirical studies using a two-year time line (e.g. Bravo et al., 2003; Cable and Parsons, 2001; Ferzandi, 2008; Joksaari and Nurmi, 2009). A critical reason for applying a longer time span is down to the awareness that newcomers' learning and many critical events, such as change in work assignments, supervisor-subordinate conflict, an increase in salary and newcomers' expectations of their employers' obligations are more likely to occur during the second year of employment (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005; Robinson et al., 1994).

Moreover, looking at longitudinal research on the newcomer socialization process, Thomas and Anderson's (1998) studies provided further evidence to suggest that newcomer organizational socialization is a continuous change process, and socialization outcomes tend to be stable after a period of time. For the reasons given above, the stance taken in the present study is that newcomer socialization may extend to the end of the second year. Therefore, a two-year time span was adopted in this research.

2. 4 What is Learnt During the Organizational Socialization Process?

The content of socialization is another very important issue, which is often defined as what is learnt during organizational socialization process (Chao et al., 1994; Morrison, 1993b; Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992). Chao et al. (1994) developed six content areas describing what a newcomer may learn during the socialization process, including performance proficiency, people, politics, language, organizational goals and values, and history. 'Performance proficiency' refers to learning job-related knowledge, and mastering

skills and techniques to perform the required tasks successfully. When newcomers lack necessary techniques to do the job well, they could hardly meet others' expectations and be accepted by organizational insiders.

'People' refers to organizational members who have been in the organization for a while, and thus they might have been already socialized and performed in a proper way to match the organizational value. Fisher (1986) implied that it was important for newcomers to establish work relationships with other organizational members and to find the right people to contact for learning about job skills and the organization.

Also, in order to feel comfortable in the new workplace and to improve communication with other organizational members, newcomers need to learn 'politics' and 'organizational languages'. Politics refers to work relationships and both informal and formal power structure within the organization. It is suggested that if newcomers are aware of which people are more experienced and powerful than others, their adjustment process may become more effective (Chao et al., 1994). Organizational language concerns individual's knowledge about job-related terminology and the knowledge unique to the organization such as special slangs, acronyms and jargons. It is essential for newcomers to learn organizational language in order to comprehend information from others and communicate effectively with other organizational members.

For a better understanding of the organization, organizational goals, values and history are also important elements needed to learn. 'Organizational goals and values' are the core to integrate every member within the organization. Each newcomer is thus required to learn and internalize the organizational values to feel as a part of organization. 'Organizational history' stands for organizational tradition and customs. The learning about the organization's past can help newcomers understand which types of behaviour are accepted and proper in specific situation.

Chao et al.'s research on socialization content has provided a clearer description of what newcomers learn during socialization. Based on their work, Thomas and Anderson (1999) developed four dimensions of socialization knowledge, including social, role, interpersonal resources, and organization, which were later used by Taorimina (2004) when he examined the intensive socialization process of military recruits to investigate relationships between socialization tactics, information seeking, and attitudinal outcomes associated with effective organizational socialization outcomes.

Although all of the described socialization contents are considered essential for newcomer to learn, given the importance of performance proficiency for newcomers to

settle down (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992), of particularly interest in this research are job-related skills. In support, a discussion of the types of information that newcomers proactively look for will provide further illumination on this choice (section 2.6.2.2).

2. 5 What are Organizational Socialization Outcomes?

In terms of the question of ‘what constitutes effective newcomer adjustment?’, both conceptual and empirical studies have not achieved consensus, because effective socialization outcomes may differ across types of jobs, newcomers, organizations, and cultures (Bauer et al., 1998). However, along with the discussion of the organizational socialization process and stages, the understanding of socialization outcome variables has been subject to clarification. For example, Feldman (1981) suggested that:

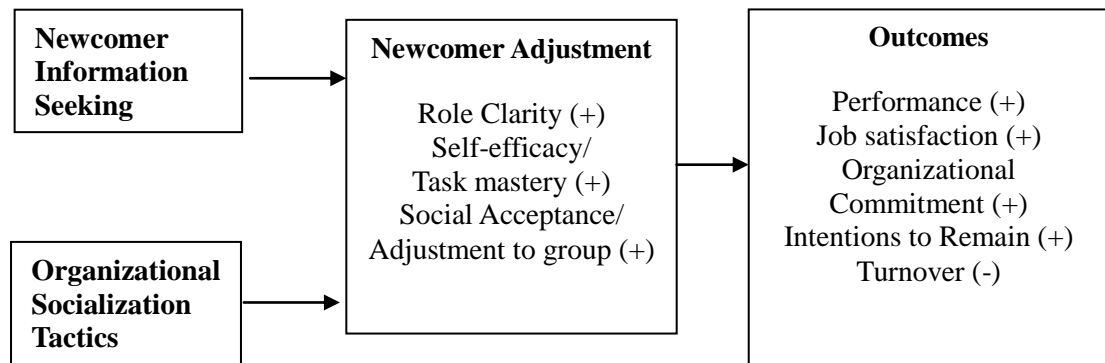
The three process variables at the change and seeking stage each reflect mastery over one of the three major tasks of organizational socialization: 1. *Resolution of role demands*: Agreeing implicitly or explicitly with the work group on what tasks to perform and on task priorities and time allocation; also, coming to some mutually acceptable role decisions both to deal with conflicts between personal life and work life and to deal with intergroup role conflicts at work. 2. *Task mastery*: Learning the tasks of the new job, and also gaining self-confidence and attaining consistently positive performance levels. 3. *Adjustment to group norms and values*: Coming to feel liked and trusted by peers, understanding the group's norms and values, and making a satisfactory adjustment to the group culture. (p. 310)

According to Feldman’s clarification, role clarity, task mastery and social integration are three important tasks for newcomers to master after organizational entry. Moreover, based on Feldman’s work and the previous empirical studies, Bauer et al. (2007) summarized ‘the most commonly studied constructs’ within the socialization literature in their meta-analysis, including role clarity, self-efficacy/task mastery, and social acceptance/group integration as indicators of newcomer adjustment outcomes. Achieving role clarity suggests that the newcomer is clear or certain about his or her own role, including job duties, priorities, responsibilities, expectations and time allocation for tasks (Rizzo et al., 1970). Task mastery indicates the level to what extent newcomers are

confident about how to perform their jobs. Social integration reflects the status of being accepted by other group members (Morrison, 1993a; Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg, 2003).

Those three newcomer adjustment outcomes are often regarded as ‘proximal’ socialization outcomes in organizational socialization studies (e.g. Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman et al., 2006; Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg, 2003), proximal in the sense of occurring in the shorter term. Closely related with those three socialization outcomes, Bauer et al. (2007) also included both attitudinal (job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intentions to remain) and behavioral (performance and turnover) variables as indicators of ‘distal’ socialization outcomes, distal in the sense of occurring in the longer term. Among them, job satisfaction refers to what extent an employee feels satisfied with the job; organizational commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to the organization; turnover intention refers to an employee's intention to quit and leave the organization, performance and turnover indicate an employees' behaviour. These distal socialization outcomes have also been widely investigated in the socialization literature (e.g. Saks and Ashforth, 1997b, 1997c; Wanous, 1992). Bauer et al.'s (2007) model is presented as below (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Antecedents and outcomes of newcomer adjustment



Source: Bauer et al. (2007)

Note: In the model of Bauer et al. (2007), self-efficacy and task mastery are interchangeable, and social acceptance and adjustment to group are interchangeable.

In the present research, instead of involving all of the socialization outcomes discussed in the model of Bauer et al. (2007), the focus was restricted to the three typical newcomer socialization outcomes (i.e. social integration, task mastery and role clarity) for two reasons. In the first place, due to the typical characteristics of newcomers and the

significance of newcomer adjustment, Ashford and Black (1996) suggested that future research needed to focus more on proximal socialization outcomes, instead of involving all the traditional work outcomes. The rationale behind their argument may be because the proximal socialization outcomes serve as potential predictors of distal socialization outcomes such as turnover intention and organizational commitment. In fact, the significant relationship between proximal socialization outcomes and distal socialization outcomes was found in the meta-analysis of Bauer et al. (2007). Therefore, the investigation of the proximal socialization outcomes appears more urgent and critical, and thus becomes the focus of this research.

In the second place, the three proximal socialization outcomes appear to be more focused and appropriate given that the research context is China. According to Hofstede's (1980) work, Chinese culture is characterized by collectivism-orientation and high uncertainty avoidance. Under such a context, Chinese employees are viewed as connected with each other, and tend to avoid ambiguity in the workplace. Given the fact that social cohesion and role clarity appear essential for Chinese employees to feel safe and comfortable (Hui and Graen, 1997), the perceptions of being accepted in the group and enhancing role clarity become particularly important and relevant for newcomers in the context of China.

2. 6 Which Factors May Affect Organizational Socialization Outcomes?

As illustrated in section 2.2 regarding the definition of organizational socialization, it is understood that both situational and person factors may affect newcomer adjustment, but there is no clear steer on which situational factors and individual behaviours should be included when analyzing newcomer adjustment. This concern has been explicitly addressed by some scholars recently. For example, Bauer et al. (2007) summarized the two most discussed factors on newcomer adjustment, namely organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking behaviour, in their meta-analysis (see Figure 2.1). Payne et al. (2008) suggested that, "socialization is the result of the interaction of formal organizational tactics and individual employee proactive behaviour (e.g. information seeking)" (p. 466). The empirical study of Gruman et al. (2006) also included organizational socialization tactics and information seeking to explore newcomer adjustment and treated them as the key predictive factors on newcomer adjustment. The

consistent emphasis of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking in those studies suggest that these two factors as the critical factors of organizational socialization outcomes are well developed in the literature. To take this further, the concepts of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking are discussed in the following sections respectively.

2.6.1 Organizational Socialization Tactics

2.6.1.1 Van Maanen and Schein's Typology of Organizational Socialization tactics

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) pioneered the concept of organizational socialization tactics as “the ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organization” (p. 230). Those socialization tactics are often considered as methods and approaches organizations apply when treating newcomer adjustment. In Van Maanen and Schein's typology, each tactical dimension would be a manifestation of organizational socialization tactics which exists on a bipolar continuum including collective (vs. individual), formal (vs. informal), sequential (vs. random), fixed (vs. variable), serial (vs. disjunctive) and investiture (vs. divestiture), as presented in Table 2.2 (see next page). These six dimensions of socialization tactics are not mutually exclusive. Instead, the effects of those tactics on newcomers are consequently accumulative (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). In the following sections, each tactic is described in detail based primarily on Van Maanen and Schein's arguments.

Table 2.2 Van Maanen and Schein's theory of organizational socialization tactics

<i>Collective</i>	<i>Individual</i>
The degree to which individuals are socialized collectively, analogous to batch or mass production modes of production.	The degree to which individuals are socialized singly, analogous to unit modes of production.
<i>Formal</i>	<i>Informal</i>
The degree to which the setting in which the socialization takes place is segregated from the ongoing work context and the degree to which an individual newcomer role is emphasized and made explicit.	The degree to which there is no sharp differentiation from other organizational members and much of the recruit's learning takes place within the social and task related networks that surround his or her position.
<i>Sequential</i>	<i>Random</i>
The degree to which the transitional processes are marked by a series of discrete and identifiable stages through which an individual must pass in order to achieve a defined role and status within the organization.	The degree to which the socialization processes are accomplished in one transitional stage.
<i>Fixed</i>	<i>Variable</i>
The degree to which the recruit is provided with a precise knowledge of the time it will take him to complete a given step.	The degree to which the recruit is not provided with any advance notice of his transition timetable.
<i>Serial</i>	<i>Disjunctive</i>
The degree to which experienced members groom newcomers about to assume similar roles in the organization.	The degree to which a newcomer does not have predecessors available in whose footsteps he can follow.
<i>Investiture</i>	<i>Divestiture</i>
The degree to which the socialization processes ratify and establish the viability and usefulness of the characteristics the person already possesses. The degree to which the socialization processes confirm the incoming identity of a newcomer.	The degree to which the socialization processes deny and strip away certain entering characteristics of a recruit. The degree to which the socialization processes dismantle the incoming identity of a newcomer.

Source: Adapted from Baker III and Feldman (1991).

First of all, under *collective* socialization tactics, newcomers are required to get together to attend collective learning or training, usually segregated from other experienced colleagues. Under such tactics, newcomers are more likely to develop similar views and perceptions which lead to the consciousness that they are in the same situation (Becker, 1964). Conversely, with *individual* tactics, newcomers are socialized in isolation. Under this context, newcomers are provided with a greater control of their learning process. They learn the norms and principles usually from the interactions with other colleagues, and master the skills from the assigned tasks.

Formal socialization tactics, closely related with collective socialization tactics, indicate that newcomers learn their roles from the structured settings, such as training classes or orientation programs; whereas *informal* tactics suggest that newcomers learn from the real work experience, without involving clearly defined socialization activities. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) suggested that formal tactics were likely to be found in the professional work or other jobs involved high levels of risk for newcomers. For example, doctors and nurses are usually required to attend long periods of formal socialization before they are allowed to work by their own due to the complexity involved in the work. Another example of the formal approach is when technical workers are required to attend the formal training to learn how to use the equipment before they are allowed to perform by their own. Those formal socialization programmes are expected to 'minimize risk by providing each new recruit with standard training that emphasizes the proper and accepted ways to accomplish things in the organization' (Salisbury, 2006, p. 22). In contrast, newcomers with informal tactics are left to the work team and learning usually takes place 'on the job'.

With *sequential* socialization tactics, newcomers are provided with information on a sequence of learning activities and training experiences leading to the fulfillment of a specific task. Taken in this sense, newcomers under the sequential socialization are more dependent on organizational guidance and instruction. On the other hand, with *random* tactics, newcomers are not exposed to such information. Random socialization often occurs when there is no clear sequence of steps leading to the target role, particular in the unknown or ambiguous situation. Baker III and Feldman (1991) further suggested that under random tactics, newcomers were exposed to a variety of views and perceptions of developmental path, and thus more likely to lead to innovative orientations.

Fixed socialization tactics provide a set of pre-determined timetables associated with a particular career for individuals to follow. For example, some newly hired senior

managers in the multinational organizations are often required to attend rotational assignments annually or work overseas despite their own wishes. However, *variable* socialization tactics provide little or no information about the transition timetable indicating when newcomers may reach a certain stage within a particular career structure. With fixed tactics, newcomers are expected to reduce the uncertainty of the timing of progression during specific stages of socialization, and a sense of control can be expected to increase. On the other hand, under the variable tactics newcomers were likely to feel anxious due to the uncertainty and little control about the future career (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). However, Jones (1986) found that variable socialization tactics may encourage innovative responses, which is also supported in the study of Allen and Meyer (1990).

In *serial* socialization tactics, individuals are formally guided by an experienced member as a role model or mentor; whereas under *disjunctive* tactics there are no experienced members available to guide newcomers, and thus individuals have to rely on themselves to learn appropriate behaviour. Cable and Parsons (2001) provided that a mentor program was an example of a socialization tactic characterized as serial. Another sample reflecting serial socialization tactics is a buddy system in which newcomers are provided with an opportunity to be paired with experienced members who will provide support to help newcomers adjust. In contrast, under disjunctive tactics, there is no role model to inform newcomers as to how to proceed to a new role, and newcomers learn mainly through personal observation and internalization.

Finally, *investiture* tactics affirm the newcomers' incoming identity by providing social support and social feedback. In other words, investiture socialization processes tend to accept newcomers as they are and newcomers are valued for what they bring to the organization; while *divestiture* processes, on the other hand, deny these personal attributes and ensure newcomers accept prescribed standards of membership. Under divestiture tactics, organizations intend to mould newcomers into the forms based on the wishes of the organization. For example, Ashforth et al. (1997) demonstrated an example of divestiture tactics, by explaining that during police training, new cadets are informed that they are no longer ordinary citizens and their behaviour need to be strictly regulated.

Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) organizational socialization tactics model is widely applied and quoted as 'the most conceptually advanced model of socialization' (Ashforth et al., 1997), 'the most influential theoretical contribution on organizational socialization' (Antonacopoulou and Guttel, 2010) and 'one of the most prominent theoretical models of

socialization' (Simosi, 2010). The popularity of this model is possibly due to the fact that Jones (1986) provided a sound measure of Van Maanen and Schein's six conceptual tactics dimensions to guide the subsequent empirical research. Jones' refinements and measurement of those socialization tactics will be described in the following section.

2.6.1.2 Jones' Grouping of Organizational Socialization Tactics

Jones (1986) was among the first researchers to operationalize Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) six socialization tactics by developing six five-item measurement scales, which have been used in a large number of studies in socialization studies (e.g. Allen, 2006; Griffin et al., 2006; Gruman et al., 2006; Joksaari and Nurmi, 2009; Kammeyer-Muller and Wanberg, 2003; Kim et al., 2005; Saks and Ashforth, 1997b; Saks et al., 2007; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009).

Building on Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) work, Jones (1986) argued that those six dimensions of organizational socialization tactics can be grouped in a single and global cluster to represent the role orientation they bring, namely '*institutionalized socialization vs. individualized socialization*', as presented in Figure 2.2. Collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics reflects 'institutionalized socialization'; whereas the individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture tactics are grouped as 'individualized socialization'. By following such a classification, organizational socialization tactics range from those adopting 'a formal, structured, and planned program of newcomer socialization', to those applying 'a unique, relatively unplanned, and loosely structured approach' (Liden et al., 2004, p. 239).

Figure 2. 2 A classification of organizational socialization tactics

	<i>Institutionalized</i>	<i>Individualized</i>
Context Aspect	collective	individual
	formal	informal
Content Aspect	sequential	random
	fixed	variable
Social Aspect	serial	disjunctive
	investiture	divestiture

Source: Jones (1986).

According to Jones (1986), institutionalized socialization is likely to produce ‘custodial role orientations’ and encourage a passive acceptance of the status quo; in contrast, at the opposite side of the socialization continuum, individualized socialization may create ‘innovative role orientations’ and encourage newcomers to question pre-set work roles (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Ashforth and Saks, 1996; Jones, 1986).

However, in spite of the ease of using the single dichotomy ‘*institutionalized socialization vs. individualized socialization*’, Jones (1986) suggested that it was not wise to abandon those six dimensions in favour of simplicity, and argued that those six socialization tactics represented three distinct aspects: *context aspect of tactics* that refer to the way in which organizations provide information to newcomers, including collective (vs. individual) and formal (vs. informal); *content aspect of tactics* that indicate the content of the information organizations provide to newcomers including sequential (vs. random) and fixed (vs. variable); and finally *social aspect of tactics* (serial vs. disjunctive and investiture vs. divestiture) that reflect the interpersonal support during the learning process of newcomer. These three aspects of organizational socialization tactics are claimed to be conceptually distinct (Jones, 1986).

Collective and formal tactics reflect a more structured socialization tactics. An example reflecting collective and formal socialization tactics is a newcomer orientation program where newly hired employees get together to attend a formal and off-job training to become familiar with organizational business and policies.

Sequential and fixed tactics are characterized by ‘having newcomers move through a specific order of assignments or positions according to a set timetable’ (Salisbury, 2006, p. 23). An example reflecting sequential and fixed socialization tactics would be a training calendar posted on the organization website or notice board which allows newcomers to understand the arrangements about training activities and career development.

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) suggested that in serial and investiture socialization tactics newcomers were guided and supported by experienced organizational members who act as role models, and newcomers’ personal values were respected by the organization. Conversely, in disjunctive and divestiture socialization tactics, newcomers are not able to get access to the experienced members and if their personal values do not match with the organization, newcomers are required to change because the organization may not accept an individual’s previous identity.

The research hypotheses pertaining to the differential impacts of each aspect of organizational socialization tactics (i.e. context, content and social aspect) on socialization outcomes will be discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.2).

2.6.1.3 The Dimensions of Organizational Socialization Tactics in This Research

In the literature, there is still a debated question about how to measure organizational socialization tactics. Some studies have treated all dimensions of organizational socialization tactics as a whole (i.e. ‘institutionalized socialization vs. individualized socialization’) when discussing the impacts of organizational socialization tactics on organizational socialization outcomes. For example, it has been found that institutionalized socialization tactics are positively related with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Ashforth and Saks, 1996; Saks and Ashforth, 1997b), and negatively related with role conflict and turnover intention (Mignerey et al., 1995). Allen and Meyer (1990) used one-factor dimension (institutionalized socialization vs. individualized socialization) as a convenient way, but they admitted that ‘the empirical legitimacy of this unidimensional view has not yet been established’. In response to the controversy in the socialization tactics scales, some authors suggested that future research needs to refine the scales in order to improve their reliability and validity (Hart and Miller, 2005; Saks et al., 2007).

The present research adopted the three-factor dimension of organizational socialization tactics rather than treating the six socialization tactics separately or as a whole

because the three-factor socialization tactics had been examined and validated in the contexts of both western countries (e.g. Jones, 1986; Cable and Parsons, 2001) and non-western countries like Japan (Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009). Although China is culturally different from Japan, involving specific national characteristics in organizations, yet considering both countries are clustered in the dimension of collectivist cultures (Hofstede, 1980) and influenced by the Confucius, it was assumed that the three-factor dimension of organizational socialization tactics can be across the border and hold true in the context of China.

Moreover, compared with treating organizational socialization tactics as a single factor, distinguishing the effects of each aspect of socialization tactics on socialization outcomes is helpful for organizations in guiding the design of appropriate policies and strategies to improve the effectiveness of newcomer adjustment by paying particular attention to those socialization tactics which are strongest related with socialization outcomes.

2.6.2 Newcomer Information Seeking

In the literature, it has been argued that besides organizational support to structure the socialization process for newcomers, newcomers are also motivated to take an active role in engaging proactive behaviours to reduce their levels of uncertainty and to master new skills and techniques (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002; Morrison, 1993a). Chan and Schmitt (2000) summarized that, “these proactivities are behavioural manifestations of the newcomers’ attempt to ‘make sense’ and to facilitate adjustment in a period of transition” (p.191). Those proactive behaviours are claimed to include positive framing, information seeking, negotiation of job changes and relationship building for satisfying the desire of control (Ashford and Black, 1996). More recently, Griffin et al. (2000) revealed a list of proactive socialization behaviours that newcomers may take part in, including performance feedback seeking, information seeking, relationship building, job change negotiation, positive framing, involvement in work-related activities, behavioral self-management, and observation/modeling.

Among those proactive behaviours, newcomer information seeking¹ has been caught particular research interest in the literature, because information seeking is considered as

¹ Newcomer information seeking is also understood as newcomer information acquisition (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002). In this thesis, these two concepts are interchangeable.

one of the major approaches for newcomers to reduce uncertainty and settle down in the new workplace (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks and Ashforth, 1997a, 1997b). To illustrate, a positive relationship has been found between newcomers' information seeking and a number of socialization outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, task mastery, job performance, and a negative relationship with work anxiety and intention to turnover (Saks and Ashforth, 1997b). Studies on newcomer information seeking have also presented findings in terms of the relationship between information seeking and role clarity (Kammeyer-Muller and Wanberg, 2003).

Thus, given that information seeking appears to have a significant impact on newcomer adjustment based on the findings of previous empirical studies, this research focuses on newcomer information seeking as a typical form of newcomers' proactive behaviours. To further clarify how newcomer information seeking is conceptualized in the present study, it appears useful to reveal four implicit components within this construct, including motives, types, sources and individual tactics of seeking information.

2.6.2.1 Motives of Seeking Information

By review, some essential motivational factors which are likely to influence newcomers' intention to seek information have been identified in the literature, including social costs (Holder, 1996) and proactive personality (Wanberg and Kammeyer-Muller, 2000). In addition, research has demonstrated that self-efficacy is also an essential determinant of individuals' motivation and behaviour (Nease et al., 1999). Self-efficacy in the context of newcomer information seeking is conceived as one's internal beliefs about one's capability to manage a specific task based on one's previous experience and knowledge (Major and Kozlowski, 1997). It is suggested that highly self-efficacious newcomers might be more likely to take the initiative to communicate with others to break into the new workplace because, based on Major and Kozlowski's (1997) explanation, newcomers with high self-efficacy are assumed to have successful experience to manage similar situations. In a similar line, Bauer and Green (1994) claimed that self-efficacy was positively connected with newcomers' adjustment, which was also shared by other scholars (e.g. Jones, 1986; Morrison and Branterner, 1992; Saks, 1995).

Taking the argument further, Miller and Jablin (1991) claimed that newcomers were likely to experience role ambiguity due to the inadequacies in information by suggesting:

Although newcomers receive role-related information, the information they receive is frequently perceived as inadequate; hence, they usually experience fairly high levels of uncertainty. This uncertainty is reflected in the levels of role ambiguity and role conflict which newcomers experience and is of importance because it may have an impact on employees' job satisfaction, productivity, and, ultimately, job tenure. (p. 93)

This inadequate information may be because: 1) incumbents forgetting their experience when they entered the organizations, or 2) incumbents feeling hesitant in revealing role-related information until newcomers have shown certain trust and commitment (Moreland and Levine, 1982), or 3) organizations finding it impossible to provide all types of the information newcomers need to adapt into the organization (Jablin, 2001). Therefore, due to the inadequacies of information, newcomers' proactive information seeking is considered as a possible approach to satisfy their needs of reducing uncertainty.

2.6.2.2 Type of Information

Drawing on previous work on organizational socialization content, Morrison (1995) identified seven types of information newcomers need to acquire in order to master their jobs and become integrated into their organizations. They are job-related information (i.e. technical information), organizational information, political information, referent information, normative information, appraisal information and relational information.

Among them, *job-related information* refers to information about how to perform the job, including how to use equipment and materials, procedures and priorities for the completion of work, job duties, work roles and responsibilities. A number of empirical studies used job-related information as one of the measures to testify the relationship between information seeking and socialization outcome (e.g. Major and Kozlowski, 1997; Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

Morrison (1995) claimed that newcomers also seek *referent information*, with the aim to clarify work role and expectations, which is consistent with Miller and Jablin's (1991) dimension of *referent information*. Most frequently, this kind of information can be sought from job description and interactive communication with supervisors and colleagues. In addition, in order to smoothly settle down in the group, it is imperative for

newcomers to master organizational norms, cultures and values. This kind of information is labelled as *normative information*, or information about values and norms about living in the organization.

Another type of information is *appraisal information*, which is similarly as Miller and Jablin's (1991) domains of appraisal categories, especially referring to feedback on evaluating performance and behaviour. Performance feedback is one of this information, commonly considered to be especially important in the process of adaptation as it can help individuals understand whether their behaviour is appropriate and what performance is expected (Ashford, 1986; Ashford and Cummings, 1983). In the interpersonal area, performance feedback explicitly reveals information about how others perceive and evaluate newcomers' behaviour and performance. A substantial body of research has examined the role of feedback in individual's performance. For example, Ashford and Cummings (1985) claimed that, "feedback forms an important organizational resource, helping produce the performance and motivational outcomes most valued by the organization" (p. 67). More recently, Morrison (2002) bridged the literature on employee feedback and information seeking, indicating that feedback seeking may lead to a reduction in uncertainty over time. Besides, Morrison (1995) proposed another two kinds of information, namely *organizational information* of understanding organization's context such as structure, business, and performance, and *political information* about power distribution.

In addition, Miller and Jablin (1991) highlight the importance of '*relational information*' which is considered as 'soft' information to help build relationship with others. As is known, establishing network in the new workplace is particularly important for newcomers to master job, get to familiar with job roles, avoid psychological loneliness (Nelson and Quick, 1991), build friendship networks and social support (Morrison, 1993b) and eventually break into the working environment. The strength of the relationship and the extent of mutual relationships are known as the essential determinant of the individuals' attitude and career success (Granovetter, 1985). Further, empirical studies also indicate that as newcomers develop personal relationships, the subsequent adaptation outcome of social integration increases over time (Chan and Schmitt, 2000).

As it can be seen, there are various categories of information in the workplace, and the significance of seeking information has been demonstrated in many studies. However, rather than including all those forms of information, the present study was particularly interested in the job-related information for two reasons. First, it is because job-related

information is considered to be the most frequent information sought by newcomers (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992). In support of Ostroff and Kozlowski's argument, Simosi (2010) indicated that according to stage models of the socialization process, one of the urgent tasks for newcomers to settle down is to learn tasks and to perform the job. Second, given the significance of job-related information, a number of sound empirical studies have also focused on this type of information in examining the relationships between newcomer information-seeking behaviour and socialization outcomes (e.g. Chan and Schmitt, 2000; Major and Kozlowski, 1997; Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

2.6.2.3 Sources

In an effort to further clarify the concept of newcomer information seeking, it is often difficult to ignore the sources to which newcomers turn. Usually, sources for information can be classified into four distinct sets (Miller and Jablin, 1991). Specifically, most often, members considered in this first category are immediate supervisors and co-workers; impersonal information such as task manuals, organizational bulletins and magazines is the second source for newcomers; organized events such as formal training and orientation programme is considered as the third frequent type of source to provide newcomers with a general picture about organizational basic rules and norms; and individuals' self-processed information serves as their own source of information to guide their behaviours.

Among these sources, supervisors and co-workers are usually considered as the most common targets for newcomers to turn to for information and feedback. The reason behind this is the significance of the support of supervisors and co-workers on newcomers' adjustment (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2006; Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg, 2003). In particular, supervisors are in a position to clarify job requirements and expectations, help newcomers improve job performance, and guide newcomers to learn the rules by rewarding or punishing their behaviours (Morrison, 1993a). Moreover, Katz (1980) suggested that, "supervisors play a very direct role in dealing with the initial concerns of young employees, allowing them to reduce uncertainty by helping them understand and interpret the reality of their new settings" (p. 136). Co-workers, on the other hand, may also offer newcomers with a variety of useful information to help them settle down (Louis et al., 1983). Furthermore, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) suggested that co-workers played an essential role in mentoring and facilitating newcomers' learning about group processes and inter-group relationships. Also, in the study of Posner and Powell (1985), newcomers

reporting their daily interaction with peers tend to be particularly important for them to adapt to their new jobs.

While information from supervisors and co-workers is considered very important, the newcomers' responses towards the acquired information may also vary depending on the credibility of the information itself. Of the few studies that have examined this issue, research in performance feedback literature has shown that source credibility may be positively associated with the perception and response of feedback recipients. For example, London and Sessa (2006) claimed that "feedback is likely to be perceived as important, accurate, and useful for learning when it comes from a knowledgeable, trustworthy, and objective source" (p. 317). Similarly, Ilgen et al. (1979) proposed that the source's power might be an essential factor connected with the individual's perception of the accuracy of the feedback by arguing that "the more positive the stimulus and the greater the power and credibility of the source, the more accurately the individual senses the feedback sent by the source" (p. 356).

Given the significance of supervisors and co-workers for newcomers to socialize and the authority of supervisors in the workplace, information from supervisors and co-workers is the focus in the present study. In fact, a number of empirical studies have also emphasized the source of supervisors and co-workers in measuring newcomer information seeking, such as Major and Kozlowski (1997) and Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000).

2.6.2.4 Individual Information Seeking Tactics

Research has shown that newcomers might vary their tactics to acquire information, which can be generally categorized into two approaches, namely inquiry and monitoring (Ashford and Cummings, 1983). Inquiry tactics refer to overt and direct interaction with others to acquire information, while monitoring tactics mean covert behaviours to gain 'informational cues' (Chan and Schmitt, 2000). For example, if newcomers wish to acquire their supervisor's feedback towards their general performance, they can inquire or have a meeting with the supervisor, or they can monitor by carefully observing what supervisor does and says, and then develop a perception of how their performance is evaluated (Ashford and Cumming, 1983).

In addition, individual tactics of seeking information must be also considered in concert with the accessibility of sources. As noted, individuals tend to avoid social costs,

like losing face, when involved in seeking information (Miller and Jablin, 1991), and thus, newcomers are more likely to take initiatives to seek information when the sources are perceived accessible and approachable (Major and Kozlowski, 1997).

The present research investigated newcomer information seeking behaviours with respect to the use of inquiry because inquiry can help to clarify the messages transferring between newcomers and others, reduce misunderstandings and thus is considered as an efficient tactic (Miller and Jablin, 1991). Moreover, Filstad (2004) indicated that when newcomers acquired job-related information and resources, they were more likely to approach supervisors and co-workers, and use monitoring and observation to a lesser degree. Filstad's finding echoes the early studies of Jones (1983) and Major et al. (1995), both of whom emphasized the role of social interactions between newcomers and organizational members for newcomer adjustment and the achievement of successful socialization. In addition, it is considered that inquiry is much more explicit than monitoring, and thus it is more amenable to measure, just as Chan and Schmitt (2000) indicated that:

We focused on the inquiry method because it is relevant to seeking information from both co-workers and supervisors, whereas the monitoring method is less relevant with respect to the supervisor as an information source. In addition, inquiry is the most widely studied method of information seeking. (p. 191)

Therefore, due to the significance and measurability of inquiry, information-seeking through inquiry was focused upon in this research.

2.7 Concluding Remarks

Having reviewed the literature on organizational socialization, it is found that the concept of organizational socialization has been in the process of development for over half a century, particularly encompassing the concepts of stage, content, socialization outcomes, and potential antecedents influencing newcomer adjustment. However, in spite of the progress of research in this area, the organizational socialization literature still has some pitfalls and ambiguities as identified in Chapter 1 (section 1.2.1). This section continues to discuss the organizational socialization literature, particularly focusing on two

essential antecedents (i.e. organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking), in order to clarify the scope and approaches of the research.

First, organizational socialization in this research was conceptualized as a continuous change process by which a newcomer adapts from an outsider to a functional insider. This concept entails that: (1) newly hired employees are the researched samples; (2) organizational socialization is a continuous change process; and (3) newcomers are expected to become a functional insider finally. However, what should be noticed is that since there is no consensus on the time line of how long it takes for a newcomer to become a fully-fledged insider, empirical studies have not solved such debate over past decades. In the present research, a two-year time span of organizational socialization was adopted because many critical events may be expected to extend to the end of the second year. This view was consistent with many recent empirical studies (e.g. Cable and Parsons, 2001; Ferzandi, 2008; Joksaari and Nurmi, 2009).

Also, as there is no agreement of the meaning of ‘a functional insider’ in the literature, the assumption taken in the present research is that a functional insider may demonstrate a set of expected socialization outcomes. The focal socialization outcomes of interest in the present research are social integration, task mastery and role clarity which have been frequently addressed in the previous empirical studies and identified as the proximal socialization outcomes in Bauer et al.’s (2007) meta-analysis.

The discussions in this chapter have further suggested that newcomer adjustment is influenced by both settings and individual efforts. In accordance with the view of Bauer et al. (2007), organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking are included in this research as the critical antecedents of organizational socialization outcomes. The reason for including these two factors is that they are well developed and represent the mainstreams in the literature (Ashforth et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). Organizational socialization tactics exist on a bipolar continuum including collective (vs. individual), formal (vs. informal), sequential (vs. random), fixed (vs. variable), serial (vs. disjunctive) and investiture (vs. divestiture). These six dimensions of organizational socialization tactics have been measured in different ways by different authors. In this research, organizational socialization tactics are conceptualized as a multidimensional construct, including context, content and social aspects. This conceptualization is based on the empirical findings of Jones (1986), Cable and Parson (2001) and Takeuchi and Takeuchi (2009).

Newcomer information seeking has been also identified as a primary antecedent to

organizational socialization outcomes in previous studies. The present research focuses on one of the most studied types of information (i.e. job-related information) sought from the most commonly targeted sources (i.e. supervisors and co-workers) using the most widely studied method (i.e. inquiry). The present research is not unique in operationalizing newcomer information seeking in such way. In fact, a number of empirical studies have measured newcomer information seeking behaviour in the same way (Major and Kozlowski, 1997; Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

So far, the concepts and scope of organizational socialization outcomes, organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking have been clarified in this chapter. In order to explore the research questions, attention will be drawn to another two essential concepts in Chapter 3. One is POS, and the other is LMX.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Background: Perceived Organizational Support and Leader-Member Exchange

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 briefly illustrated the concepts and rationale of applying POS and LMX in the present research (section 1.4). This chapter continues this discussion in much more detail to further elucidate how POS and LMX are conceptualized and defined in the present research, including a discussion about their nature, characteristics, development and significance. This chapter starts with a review of the major historical studies of social-exchange theory and the theoretical root of POS and LMX, particularly focusing on three important early works of Homans (1958, 1961), Blau (1964) and Gouldner (1960) (section 3.2). This is followed by a presentation of POS (section 3.3) and LMX (section 3.4). Finally, the concluding remarks will be made (section 3.5).

3.2 The Major Historical Roots of Social-Exchange Theory

Social-exchange theory (also known as ‘exchange theory’) is considered as one of the most documented approaches to explain the motivational basis of humans’ fundamental social behaviours (e.g. power, status and justice) (Homans, 1961). Either explicitly or implicitly, Lee and Peccei (2007) suggested that the social exchange approach had been the dominant framework underpinning much of the organizational research dealing with employees’ attitudes and behaviours. Specifically, this theory is strongly tied to organizational studies, particularly in the areas of communication (Villard and Whipple 1976); employees’ justice perceptions (Loi et al., 2006; Masterson et al., 2000), trust (Aryee et al., 2002; Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2007), contract violations (Tekleab et al., 2005), safety-related behaviour (Hofmann and Morgeson, 1999) and organizational citizenship behaviour (LePine et al., 2002; Ilies et al., 2007). More recently, social exchange theory has also been widely applied in examining the employee-organization relationship, evidenced with the special issues in *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (2003, issue 24) and *Management and Organizational Review* (2009, issue 1).

In organizational studies, social exchange concepts are often operationalized as employee-organization exchange (i.e. POS) and employee-supervisor exchange (i.e. LMX)

(Settoon et al., 1996). In fact, as proposed by Coyle-Shapiro and Conway (2004), “POS and LMX extend social exchange theory by highlighting which inducements are important in prompting employee reciprocation and thus present clear prescriptive guidelines for organizations to fully realize employee contribution” (p. 14). However, before discussing the concepts of POS and LMX, it is necessary to first present their theoretical root in social exchange theory.

In the following section, the author selected the central philosophy of exchange theory, drawing on the fundamental works of Homans (1958, 1961), Blau (1964) and Gouldner (1960). Moreover, as the focal interest in this research is to explore individual behaviours in the setting of organizations, the broader social structures involved in the discussions of social exchange theory are thus not included in the following discussions. A comprehensive review of each topic within the social exchange theory can be found in the articles of Cook and Emerson (1978) and Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005).

3.2.1 The Social Exchange Theory of George Homans

According to Homans (1961), social exchange “envisages social behaviour as an exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons” (p. 13). As can be seen, rewards and costs are emphasized in his version of exchange theory. To further illustrate the roles of rewards and costs in affecting humans’ social interactions, Homans developed five propositions in his *Social behavior: Its elementary forms* (1961). These propositions are claimed to build ‘the groundwork of exchange theory’ (Ritzer, 2008). They are as follows (because of their fundamental importance, they are presented here in Homans’ wording):

1. The Success Proposition: If in the past the occurrence of a particular stimulus situation has been the occasion on which a man's activity has been rewarded, then the more similar the present stimulus situation is to the past one, the more likely he is to emit the activity, or some similar activity now. (Homans, 1961, p.53)
2. The Stimulus Proposition: The more often within a given period of time a man's activity rewards the activity of another, the more often the other will emit the activity. (Homans, 1961, p.54)
3. The Value Proposition: The more valuable to a man a unit of the activity another

gives him, the more often he will emit activity rewarded by the activity of the other. (Homans, 1961, p.55)

4. The Deprivation-satiation Proposition: The more often a man has in the recent past received a rewarding activity from another, the less valuable any further unit of that activity becomes to him. (Homans, 1961, p.55)
5. The Aggression-Approval Proposition: The more often to a man's disadvantage the rule of distributive justice fails of realization, the more likely he is to display the emotional behaviour we call anger. (Homans, 1961, p.75)

Needless to say, Homans' exchange theory in general has advanced the knowledge of social interactions. In fact, as Treviño (2009) points out, Homans is widely known as 'the father of social exchange theory'. However, his work still has some weaknesses, which have been raised particularly in the work of Ekeh (1974). In over ten pages, Ekeh criticized Homans' (1961) assumption that fundamental human behaviour was rooted from animal behaviours. Ekeh argued that although Homans admitted the differences between human behaviour and animal behaviour, it was not proper to trace all the symbolic human behaviours and complicated social relations from conditioned animal behaviours. He explicitly pointed out that:

The painful contradiction in Homans' social exchange theory is that he believes he is dealing with a psychology, behavioral psychology, that studies men as men, as members of the human species, and yet it is a psychology that takes its principles from animal behaviour. (p.120)

Another critique from Ekeh on Homans' work refers to the overemphasis of past experiences and the neglect of future possibilities. However, in spite of such weaknesses, Homans' studies of elementary forms of social behaviours appeared to generate profound insights for many other later works, including Blau (1964).

3.2.2 Peter Blau's Social Exchange Theory

Heavily influenced by Homan's theory, Blau (1964) defined social exchange as 'voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to

bring and typically do in fact bring from others' (p. 91), but compared to Homans, Blau emphasized *reciprocity* in exchange of social rewards by arguing that, "if we feel grateful and obligated to an associate for favors received, we shall seek to reciprocate his kindness by doing things for him" (p. 16). Blau explicitly pointed out that it was mutual exchange of favours that formed social bonds between involved actors, and it took mutual efforts from each actor to maintain and develop the relationship.

In contrast to Homans, Blau paid more attention to the 'exchange' process itself. To illustrate, Blau (1964) assumed that, "the basic social processes that govern associations among men have their roots in primitive psychological processes, such as those underlying the feelings of attraction between individuals and their desires for various kinds of rewards" (p. 19). In other words, individuals are motivated to associate with others due to social attraction and the pursuit of rewards. The purpose of social association is to satisfy individual psychological needs.

Blau's view is also criticized by the form of 'calculated gain' in the social association, which indicates that individuals are consciously choosing what to do based on 'self-interested deliberation' in advance (Emerson, 1976). In a similar fashion, Ekeh (1974) claimed that the item of 'voluntary' behaviours defined in Blau's social exchange theory was based on the premise of self-interest considerations. He explicitly claimed a more economic view in Blau's version of exchange theory by stating that "the fact that Blau uses psychological terminology does not alter the crucial importance of economic motivation in his social exchange theory" (p. 169).

In response, Blau (1968) did not deny the links and similarities between economic and social exchange by indicating that:

The very term 'social exchange' is designed to indicate that social interaction outside the economic sphere has important similarities with economic transactions. ... Moreover, the economic principle of eventually declining marginal utility applies to social exchange as well. (p. 454)

In fact, Blau frequently used the concepts of profit, calculations and transactions in his work. However, Blau did make efforts to highlight several typical differences between economic and social exchange. First of all, he suggested that 'unspecified obligations' form the most profound and essential difference between social exchange and an economic transaction. In other words, although the receiving party is expected to return favours, the

exact nature of the rewards is not explicitly informed or specified in advance under the social exchange. On the contrary, an economic exchange depends on a 'formal contract' which defines the quantities to be exchanged. The reason for the unspecific favors is possible due to the general and ambiguous nature of obligations involved in social exchange.

Therefore, since social exchange is concerned with unspecific obligations and a non-compulsory requirement of repayment, its fulfillment is based on voluntary behaviours between two parties. Blau (1964) thus emphasized the role of 'personal obligation, gratitude, and trust' in the process of social exchange, which is considered as the second typical difference from economic exchange (p. 94). Specifically, if two parties hope to develop a long-term relationship for the benefit of both, mutual trust is a key way of nurturing this exchange relationship gradually.

By contrast, the fulfillment of economic exchange lies in explicit obligations and requirements. To sum up, contract-based obligations and moral-oriented obligations represent the key difference between social exchange and economic exchange in Blau's theory, but Ekeh (1974) also pointed out that even pure economic exchange requires trust, and distrust behaviours were dangerous. However, on closer observation, it should be noted that the understanding and scope of 'pure economic exchange' underlying the two authors' views is somewhat different. Blau regarded it as a simple technical event, while Ekeh took it as activities involved in economic life which was obviously more complicated than that in Blau's view.

Besides, Blau (1964) pointed out that, "(Economic and social) extrinsic benefits are, in principle, detachable from the source that supplies them, but their detachability is a matter of degree" (p. 95). He asserted that the values of both economic and social extrinsic benefits were to some extent related with suppliers, but he also assumed the difference lied in degree. He stated that the value of extrinsic economic commodities was more impersonal than the benefits involved in the social exchange because their values were not affected or controlled by their suppliers. In contrast, the benefits in social exchange are inclined to be influenced by the 'interpersonal relationship' between the supplier and receiver.

Moreover, Blau (1964) argued that although there exist few saints, who devoted good deeds for others without expecting any returns, and unselfish altruism may influence individual social behaviours, he claimed that people did need some motives to do things which would bring social approval and rewards to benefit one another. In fact, he assumed

that, “beneath this seeming selflessness an underlying ‘egoism’ can be discovered’ the tendency to help others is frequently motivated by the expectation that doing so will bring social rewards” (p. 17). Therefore, it seems that social exchange lies in the middle between ‘pure calculation of advantage’ and ‘pure expression of love’. As it can be seen, Blau’s image of social exchange theory shares some fundamental similarities with economics in terms of incentives of rewarding. That is the possible reason why Ekeh (1974) claimed that although Blau made a great deal of effort to distinguish social exchange from economic exchange, yet as long as one premise of social exchange was concerned with economic motives such as rewards, it was, to some extent, hard to totally separate social exchange from economic exchange.

3.2.3 Gouldner’s View of Norm of Reciprocity

In addition to Homan’s and Blau’s arguments, Gouldner’s (1960) view of the norm of reciprocity also makes a considerable contribution to the understanding of the social exchange process. Gouldner (1960) suggested that reciprocity is a ‘key intervening variable through which shared social rules are enabled to yield social stability’ (p.161). To illustrate, Gouldner emphasized the reciprocal norm which evokes social interactions by indicating that the fundamental principles of reciprocity lie in the imbedded obligations to return benefits or injuries to givers who have provided benefits or injuries to them, meaning that people should help those who have helped them, and people should not injure those who have helped them. Moreover, Chen et al. (2009) summarized two types of reciprocity as ‘a positive norm of reciprocity’ and ‘a negative norm of reciprocity’, and indicated that both positive and negative norms of reciprocity covered the range of reciprocity involved in social exchange process.

However, in spite of the recognized importance of the norm of reciprocity, Blau (1964) suggested that Gouldner’s norm of reciprocity did not explain a ‘fundamental starting mechanism’ of why people are involved in social interactions, and instead, the norm of reciprocity is more treated like a powerful motivational factor to explain why one recipient needs to repay another. In contrast, Chen et al. (2009) did not share such an opinion and suggested that “both positive and negative norms of reciprocity serve as starting mechanisms as well as stabilizing functions in that they help initiate and maintain equitable interpersonal exchanges in human evolution (p. 24)”. According to these

arguments, there is no consensus on whether it is the norm of reciprocity that stimulates the starts of social interactions, but it is generally agreed that the norm of reciprocity plays a key role in social interactions.

3.2.4 Application of the Norm of Reciprocity and Social Exchange Theory

According to Gouldner (1960), the norm of reciprocity is a global human character trait which exists under every society and could be applied to all cultures, even though the extent of the degree of reciprocity might be different across cultures and social backgrounds. This view is supported by Greenberg (1980, p. 4) who suggested that indebtedness, ‘a state of obligation to repay another’, cannot be restricted only in ‘American college sophomores’. Instead, she claimed that it was not culture bounded and could be applied universally.

In a similar line, while the fundamental concepts of social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity have a Western origin, Shore and Coyle-Shapiro (2003) stated that “social exchange processes were apparent in several different cultures, including the United States, China, Singapore, and Belgium. This suggests support for the universality of social exchange and the norm of reciprocity” (p. 444). Their argument has been supported by Wu et al. (2006) who agreed with the universal nature of the reciprocity norm, and validated the norm of reciprocity in the Chinese context. They further pointed out that reciprocity is of great significance in Chinese people’s daily lives, and indicated that there had appeared an increasing research interest in applying social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity in the Chinese context due to the relational-oriented nature of Chinese society. In fact, the social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity have been already examined and validated in a number of empirical studies in the context of China (e.g. Chen et al., 2005; Chen and Tjosvold, 2005; Hackett et al., 2003; Hui et al., 2007). Accordingly, an underlying assumption in this research is that social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity can be applied in the context of China and tested using Chinese respondents. The same assumption would also hold true for frequently discussed social exchange relationships within the workplace (i.e. POS and LMX).

However, it should be noted that this assumption is made subject to an awareness of the difficulties of gaining a context-free theory. Although the social exchange process is claimed to be based on human psychological phenomena, it is not argued that the degree of exchange and the styles associated with the exchange process are universal across contexts. It is possible that personal values and perceptions embedded within particular cultures may

influence the manifestations of the social exchange process, but it is not denying the applicability of social exchange concepts (e.g. POS and LMX) in contexts other than western countries. In order to further clarify the concepts of POS and LMX, the following section will provide a closer look at their nature and significance.

3.3 Perceived Organizational Support

3.3.1 Definition and Characteristics of Perceived Organizational Support

As mentioned in Chapter 1 (section 1.2.1), Eisenberger et al. (1986) suggested that employees develop global beliefs – operationalized as the POS construct – about “the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being” (p. 501). This definition indicates that POS is highly subjective, reflecting a kind of individual psychological assessment of what employees have received from the organization. Also, it suggests that POS is only concerned with employees’ belief about the extent to which the employer cares about their well-being, regardless of whether the organization has promised to provide such support (Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2005). In other words, it focuses on employees’ unilateral beliefs about the perceived level of support from the organization. The theoretical foundation of POS builds on organizational support theory which has its root in social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). Organizational support theory posits that employees often use POS as an indicator of the organization’s benevolent or malevolent intent (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 1997).

Moreover, given that supervisors are often considered as agents of the organization, employees tend to regard treatments received from the supervisor as the signal to judge whether the organization cares about them, and thus develop views towards the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). This argument is supported by Kiewitz et al. (2009) who suggested that:

Employees habitually view the actions of organizational agents as indications of the organization's intent rather than the agents' personal motives... employees tend to anthropomorphize their work organizations and regard the favourable or unfavourable treatments that they receive from organizational agents as indicative of whether they are favoured or disfavoured by the organization. (p. 808)

However, although it is commonly agreed that the supervisor serves as the agent of the organization, it is necessary to notice that POS and LMX have unique emphases, just as Erdogan et al. (2004) indicated that:

LMX is a function of the interpersonal treatment of the leader (Masterson et al., 2000), and impression management behaviours of subordinates (Wayne et al., 1997), whereas POS is a function of fairness of organizational procedures (Masterson et al., 2000) and developmental experiences available to employees (Wayne et al., 1997). (p. 311)

Therefore, although the treatments employees receive from the supervisor are likely to provoke corresponding perceptions and beliefs of organizational cares and concerns to the employees, POS is conceptually different from LMX.

3.3.2 Development of Perceived Organizational Support

It is suggested that POS would be developed when individuals' socio-emotional needs for approval, esteem and social identity are satisfied in the organization, and when individuals believe that their performance and contributions to the organization will be recognized and rewarded (Eisenberger et al., 1997). However, although it seems that POS is closely associated with personal needs and perceptions, it is necessary to note that individual demographic variables such as age, education and gender may not show much of a relationship with POS (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

Besides personal socio-emotional needs, Eisenberger and his colleagues (1986) suggested that employees' POS would be also affected by organizational settings and treatment. To illustrate, procedural justice, organizational rewards and favorable job conditions were all essential antecedents for POS (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Shore and Shore, 1995). Specifically, procedural justice concerns the way of the decision to distribute resources (Greenberg, 1990). A number of empirical studies have demonstrated the predictive influence of justice perceptions in the formulation and development of POS. For example, Fasolo (1995) found that perceptions of fair performance appraisal explained unique variance in POS. When performance appraisal is delivered in a fair and accurate way, employees are more likely to accept the appraisal outcome, and consider it as a way

of presenting organizational care and concern. On the contrary, if performance appraisal is not implemented with enough transparency, it is unlikely for employees to regard the appraisal system as a fair tool.

In the literature, studies also provide empirical evidence to support the view that organizational rewards and favorable working conditions contribute to the development of POS. For example, it is considered that developmental opportunities, representing one of the favorable working conditions, are particularly important in affecting employees' POS (Allen et al., 2003; Eisenberger et al., 1997; Kraimer and Wayne, 2004; Shore and Shore, 1995; Wayne et al., 1997). Organizational rewards, such as promotion and job enrichments, are also reported to be linked with POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Wayne et al., 1997).

In addition, it is worth noting that to develop POS, organizational support needs to be viewed as *discretionary* (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Shore and Shore, 1995). If the supportive practices are required by a labour law or a union contract, it is less likely that employees will develop POS (Eisenberger et al., 1990). In other words, employees would be more likely to develop POS only when they felt to be supported and rewarded beyond the contractual agreement. Also, since both parties (i.e. employees and organizations) involved in the exchange process take a risk that the efforts would not be repaid, mutual trust is emphasized in developing POS (Shore and Shore, 1995). For example, an organization may invest a great deal of money in launching some training programme for employees. However, if employees destroy the implicit agreement by not repaying the organization with higher performance and commitment, the continuous social exchange between employee and organization may be undermined (Shore and Shore, 1995).

3.3.3 Significance of Perceived Organizational Support

As discussed above, the development of POS relies on organizational care, support and concern, but why it is important to develop employees' POS? To answer this question, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) provided a detailed explanation about the psychological process underlying the consequences of POS:

First, on the basis of the reciprocity norm, POS should produce a felt obligation to care about the organization's welfare and to help the organization reach its objectives. Second, the caring approval, and respect connoted by POS should fulfill

socioemotional needs, leading workers to incorporate organizational membership and role status into their social identity. Third, POS should strengthen employees' beliefs that the organization recognizes and rewards increased performance (i.e. performance-reward expectancies). These processes should have favorable outcomes both for employees (e.g., increased job satisfaction and heightened positive model) and for the organization (e.g., increased affective commitment and performance, reduced turnover). (p. 699)

Based on the analysis of the psychological process, it is understood that when employees receive support and care, they tend to feel obligated and thereby demonstrate commitment and loyalty in return. Conversely, it would reduce employees' POS and lessen their perceived obligations to the organization if the organization does not care about their welfare and value their contributions. As illustrated, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) implicitly suggested that POS served as an explanatory mechanism underlining the relationships between organizational support and employees' attitudes and behaviours. Their analysis of the psychological process of the consequence of POS implied that POS went far beyond the mere belief concerning the extent to which the organization cares about employees, and it appeared reasonable to take it as a part of an implicit reciprocal exchange relationship, involving both employees and organizations.

Rhoades and Eisenberger's argument has been supported by a robust theoretical discussion and empirical studies. For example, a recent study of Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe (2003) suggested that POS could satisfy employees' needs to be respected, recognized and accepted, which in consequence would generate a strong feeling of belonging, and would contribute to the development of psychological adherence with the organization. In a similar line, it is proposed that if employees have a positive feeling towards the organization and consider that the organization is willing to care about their development and well-being, they tend to establish a stronger psychological link with the organization, which can further generate the feelings of obligation and organizational affective commitment (Hutchison, 1997; Tsui et al., 1997; Wayne et al., 1997). In support, Loi et al. (2006) suggested that employees may go and search for an alternative employment opportunity if they could not perceive adequate support and care from their organization.

Moreover, Allen et al. (2003) suggested that organizational care and support were essential for employees to gain confidence and feel comfortable, and they found a

significant positive relationship between POS and employee job satisfaction. Their finding was consistent with a number of studies (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Eisenberger et al., 1997; Riggle, et al., 2009; Shore and Terick, 1991; Wayne et al., 1997).

Further, Eisenberger et al. (2001) found that employees with POS tend to feel obligated to care about the organization's welfare and support the organization to achieve its aims. Positive relationships have been also found between POS and organizational involvement (Eisenberger et al., 1990) and innovative behaviours (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003).

Following these research findings, it is clear that the significant role of POS has been widely recognized in the workplace, particularly in relation to work outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention. Indeed, all those work outcomes are also considered as distal socialization outcomes which have been frequently investigated in the socialization studies (see Chapter 2 section 2.5). Some evidence can also be found in the expatriate research which suggest that expatriates' perceptions of support from the parent organization is positively related to their work and general adjustment (Kraimer et al., 2001; Shaffer et al., 1999).

In addition, it is suggested that organizational support can encourage individuals to interact with each other and promote employees' group integration, just as Erdogan et al. (2004) suggested that, "POS may help facilitate communication and cooperation among organizational members (p. 312)." To illustrate, Saks (2006) also suggested that a positive relationship exist between perceived supportive management and employees' psychological safety. In this sense, it is logical to assume that newcomers with POS may be more likely to have the propensity to develop the emotional link with the organization and to gain the feelings of being accepted and integrated in the new workplace.

Also, POS may be positively related with newcomers' task performance because high levels of organizational support provide necessary resources, information and funding to employees (Kraimer et al., 2001). In support of this view, Hochwarter et al. (2006) indicated that, "an employee reporting high levels of organizational support may perceive that managers are positioning workers to be successful by providing sufficient resources and facilitating cooperation through recognition and rewards" (p. 483). Accordingly, newcomers with resources and information provided by the organization are more likely to build confidence to perform tasks. In contrast, newcomers without information and resources are likely to feel frustrated and dissatisfied about their work conditions, which might influence their task performance.

Following through the arguments above, it seems clear that POS plays a significant role in the context of newcomer socialization. Further exploration of how to develop newcomers' POS may provide an improved understanding for practitioners about how to facilitate newcomer adjustment. More focused discussion of this issue will be discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.3).

3.3.4 Measurement of Perceived Organizational Support

Since Eisenberger and his colleagues developed a survey of perceived organizational support (SPOS) in 1986, the SPOS has been widely applied to measure POS across a variety of contexts (Farh et al., 2007; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Shore and Tetrick, 1991). The unidimensionality of the SPOS as a measure of POS has received empirical support in the meta-analytic reviews (e.g. Eisenberger et al., 2001; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Shore and Wayne, 1993). The full version of SPOS contains 30 statements that are considered to generically capture individual perception towards organizational support. Example statements are: "My organization cares about my opinions"; "My organization really cares about my well-being"; and "My organization strongly considers my goals and values". Respondents are usually asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with those statements.

However, it is necessary to clarify that for practical reasons POS is actually often measured with the shorten version of SPOS by most scholars through the selection of several high-loading statements (e.g. Eisenberger et al., 2001; Hekman et al., 2009; Wayne et al., 1997). Consistent with the approach of Eisenberger et al. (2001), the author utilized six high-loading items from SPOS in the current research.

3. 4 Leader-Member Exchange

3.4.1 Definition and Characteristics of Leader-Member Exchange

Since the initial studies in 1970s, the LMX theory has become one of the most researched approaches to leadership in the last decades (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Schriesheim et al., 1999). During this period, research into LMX theory has evolved from the early studies of vertical dyad linkage (VDL) (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). In contrast to

the theory of the average leadership style (ALS) that suggests that a leader shares the same cognitive thoughts towards each employee, and uses the same approach in managing each subordinate, a typical characteristic of the VDL theory is its emphasis on different work relationships between supervisors and subordinates, instead of considering that a leader has a universal style to every employee (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen and Cashman, 1975).

Similarly, LMX reflects workplace relationships in the supervisor-subordinate dyad. A 'leader' in LMX is usually considered as someone who has authority over a 'member' who is often considered as subordinate in the workplace (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Based on this explanation, the concept of LMX refers to the two-way dyadic work relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate, instead of a 'downward' influence from a supervisor over all the subordinates (Hackett et al., 2003, p. 220). The dyadic relationship between supervisors and subordinates can vary in quality, ranging from high quality to low quality of LMX (Liden et al., 2006; Henderson et al., 2009; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Managerial behaviour is dependent on the quality of LMX, which may further influence employees' responses towards their leaders (Testa, 2009).

High quality LMX is usually assumed to involve such characteristics like mutual liking, loyalty, professional respect and contribution behaviours between the two parties (Liden et al., 1997; Liden and Maslyn, 1998). The subordinates with high quality LMX are often considered as in-group members who tend to acquire much more respect, confidence, and care from supervisors. Supervisors are more likely to provide job-related resources, guidance, trust and respect to the subordinates who are considered to have a high quality of work relationship (Mueller and Lee, 2002; Wayne and Ferris, 1990). Concerning the rationale behind the high quality of LMX, Schriesheim et al. (2001) indicated that:

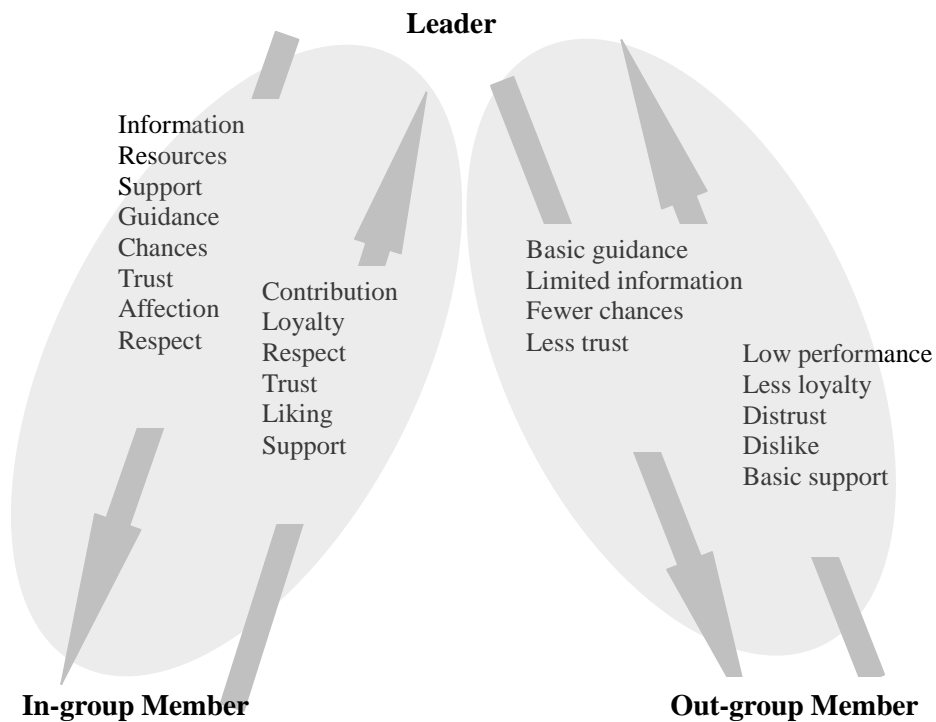
Subordinates with high LMX tend to invest increased levels of effort and personal loyalty in their relationship with the leader, thereby providing an enhanced contribution to the unit and leader's performance. Leaders tend to reciprocate by giving such subordinates increased social support, organizational resources, and rewards. (p. 525)

On the contrary, a low quality of LMX is characterized by less trust, low loyalty and a lower degree of respect and support in both parties (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). The subordinates with low quality of LMX are usually considered as out-group members who have relatively fewer chances to obtain access to superiors and fewer opportunities to be

noticed and promoted. In addition, conflicts are more frequent when both supervisor and subordinates perceive the poor quality of the relationship (Paglis and Green, 2002). Schrieheim et al. (2001) further suggested that the reason for less favorable treatment towards out-group members was due to the fact that employees with low quality of LMX were less likely to go beyond the formal exchange relationships in the workplace or perform beyond the normal work expectations, and thus their leaders were less likely to reciprocate with incremental support and benefits in exchange.

To sum up, the exchange between leaders and in-group members and out-group members are demonstrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Exchange interactions between leaders and members



Source: Adapted from Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995).

3.4.2 Development of Leader-Member Exchange

It has been suggested that it is the cumulative effects of a series of interactions and exchange behaviours between leaders and members that defines the quality of the exchange (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden et al., 1997). To illustrate, Graen (1976) developed an interpersonal role-making model to conceptualize this interactive process

between leader and member by stating:

The leader holds a set of expectations regarding the appropriate role behavior of the member (Role Expectation). The leader communicates his expectations to the member through a number of different channels. Although these expectations maybe misinterpreted due to noise in the communication process, the member receives and interprets these sent expectations (Received Role). Based partly upon theses received roles, the member may modify his behavior. Feedback to the leader concerning the impact of his sent role transmitted by the member is role behavior (Monitored Behavior). If the leader interprets the role behavior of the member as sufficiently discrepant from his role expectations, he may decide to communicate this to the member and thus initiate another cycle of events. (p.1202)

Based on Graen's (1976) conceptualization, Graen and Scandura (1987) later delineated a three-stage model of a role making process, including: (1) *role taking* in which leaders have initial expectations and tested members' capabilities by trying out different roles on the subordinate through assigning tasks or requests; (2) *role making* in which leader delegation and member reaction interact to establish and formalize the exchange relationships and the subordinate's role, and (3) *role routinisation* in which the leader-member relationship has become stable, and two parties of the leader and member are more likely to be emotionally bonded.

Graen and Scandura's (1987) role-making perspective of conceptualizing the development of LMX has been argued to be similar to the three-stage model of 'life circle of leadership development' (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). To be more specific, in stage one, supervisors and subordinates come together, from being *strangers* to *independent work members*. During this process, a leader discovers the subordinates' characteristics by setting tasks for them, and may have some initial expectations of them; and the subordinates obey the leader's orders and try to achieve his or her expectations. Hackett et al. (2003) suggested that during this period, the interactions are formal, mainly based on the contract, and the exchanges usually occur immediately.

At stage two, along with the daily communication and interaction, the relationship between leader and member changes from being *strangers* to *acquaintances*. The mutual trust is continuously developed during the exchange of information and support. Based on the subordinates' behaviours, the leader judges whether to initiate other tasks and roles to

the subordinates. In other words, it is still a testing stage, where the relationship between supervisors and subordinates progresses to the role-making stage (Nahrgang et al., 2009). The balance of reciprocity between each party is expected to be maintained for a short time (Hackett et al., 2003).

At stage three, the relationship between leader and member becomes 'stable, smooth-running and automatic' (Hogg and Vaughan, 2008, p. 321). Under such more mutual relationships, the exchange process is 'less time-bounded' because the two parties now look forward to a more long-term reciprocity instead of a short-term reciprocity (Hackett et al., 2003). Moreover, through mutual understanding and expectations, exchanges are not restricted within the work contract but involved with 'social-based exchange' because employees are more likely to engage in extra-role behaviours not specifically prescribed by their organization, as illustrated by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995):

...followers are willing to exert extra effort by engaging in activities that are not specifically prescribed by the organization, exercising personal initiatives, exercising personal leadership to make their work unit more effective, taking career risks to accomplish assignments and being a good organization citizen and so forth. (p.233)

During all three stages, reciprocity governs the development of relationships (Hackett et al., 2003), and it is found that the base for reciprocity is the development of mutual trust (Bauer and Green, 1996). This view was shared and echoed in the studies of Brower et al. (2000) and Scandura and Pellegrini (2008), who both integrate LMX and the trust concept in the discussion of relational leadership.

Additionally, Uhl-Bien et al. (2000) presented a relationship-building model, which suggests the relationship development begins when a leader and member experience an interaction over a limited period of time. They argued that the initial interaction may cause the individual actors to form perceptions and attitudes towards each other, and thus develop the initial exchange relationship. This initial interaction is then followed with a sequence of exchanges in which individual actors evaluate each other and test the relationship in order to decide whether it is possible to develop trust, respect and obligations for building a high quality of exchange relationships. Uhl-Bien et al.'s model shared many commonalities with those of other scholars such as Dienesch and Liden (1986) who further suggested that:

The LMX model is best seen as one operationalization (out of many possible) of the role-making approach. It is based on the concept that role-development will inherently result in differentiated role definitions and, therefore, in varied leader-member exchanges. (p. 621)

Within the process of developing LMX, the initial effort of developing LMX is very important for the subsequent relationship quality (Graen and Cashman, 1975, Graen and Scandura, 1987). One potential explanation is that the early stage of a work relationship may predict the latter exchange relationship which was inclined to remain relatively stable over time (Deluga, 1994). It is known that once newcomers are recruited into the new workplace, supervisors and newcomers are in the process of negotiating to clarify the job role and understanding the mutual responsibilities. If the initial quality of LMX is low, further efforts for improvement would be prohibitive because both employees and supervisors may think the quality of the work relationship is just that and is hard to change (Graen and Scandura, 1987; Scandura and Graen, 1984). The exchange relationship may be thus hard to achieve high quality of LMX. On the contrary, if the reactions in the initial testing interactions are positive and the expectation of the exchange is satisfied, the continuous and repeated interactions are inclined to be encouraged, which may lead to a high quality of LMX.

In terms of specific predictive factors in developing LMX, Graen and Cashman (1975) indicated that the quality of LMX is influenced by subordinate performance and leader-member compatibility. In support of Graen and Cashman's arguments, Wayne and Ferris (1990) found that performance rating was positively related to the quality of exchange. Basu and Green (1995) stated that, "individuals are more likely to find compatible other individuals who share similar attitudes and values, or are demographically and socially similar" (p. 80). Bauer and Green (1996) substantiated this argument with their finding that leader and member characteristics, such as positive affectivity similarities, would influence initial interactions between a leader and a member. Some other scholars further proposed that factors such as liking (Liden et al., 1993), demographic (Judge and Ferris, 1993) and perceived attitudinal similarity (Turban and Jones, 1988) were all important antecedents of the development of LMX. Research on the whole suggests that individual performance and interpersonal similarity and attraction are significant in influencing the quality of LMX.

Moreover, the link between procedural justice and leader-member relationship was

also validated by Graen and Cashman (1975) who pointed out that fair procedures could signal the message of whether the supervisor valued employees' efforts and contributions, which may further influence the change of employees' behavior in the future. In addition, Folger and Konovsky's (1989) study provided a more explicit view by suggesting that procedural justice was significantly related to trust in a supervisor, which was considered to further influence the relationship between subordinate and supervisor.

However, despite of the improved understanding of possible influential factors underlying the quality of LMX, leaders usually cannot develop high quality LMX with every subordinate. Instead, as mentioned earlier, most leaders utilize personal energy to develop high-exchange relationships with a small number of trusted subordinates through reciprocal reinforcement of behaviour (Yukl, 2006). Moreover, Nahrgang et al. (2009) found that the quality of LMX was dynamic, increasing over time after repeated interactions, and tending to be stabilized, following a positive, non-linear developmental trajectory in the longer term.

Nevertheless, in spite of the widely application of LMX theory in organizational studies, there is surprisingly little agreement on the time span of how long it takes for an employee to develop high quality LMX from the initial interaction, or when this exchange relationship tends to be stabilized. For example, the organizational tenure for the researched sample in Chen and Tjosvold's (2007) study was around one year. The average job tenure of participants in the study of Hui et al. (1999) which assessed the impacts of LMX on in-role and extra-role performance was two years. One possible reason of such non-consensus is may be due to the fact that the time span of developing LMX may be different due to the nature of the dyadic relationship (Gerstner and Day, 1997), individual personalities like extraversion and agreeableness (Nahrgang et al., 2009), individual needs such as growth need strength (Liden et al., 1997), individuals' attitudes and abilities (Dienesch and Liden, 1986), demographic factors such as age, tenure and gender (Tsui and O'Reilly, 1989), and contextual factors such as interpersonal situations (Uhl-Bien et al. 2000). However, based on the argument of Gerstner and Day (1997) that "exchange quality is determined early in the dyadic relationship and remains relatively stable over time" (p.838), a measure of LMX taken at two years in this research appears reasonable in the development of a dyadic relationship.

3.4.3 Significance of Leader-Member Exchange

The purpose of developing the quality of LMX is often for the sake of improving employee productivity and the efficiency of the work (Chen and Tjosvold, 2006). For example, a high quality of LMX has been shown to be positively and significantly related with a number of work behaviours and attitudes in the job, such as task performance (Bauer and Green, 1996; Howell and Hall-Merenda, 1999), perceived happiness in the job (Martin et al., 2005), and performance rating (Wayne et al., 1997), and the quality of LMX is negatively related to role conflict and work-related problems (Dunegan et al., 1992). Moreover, a handful of studies have demonstrated that employees with high quality of LMX are more likely to receive chances to access resources and gain rewards (e.g. Dienesch and Liden, 1986; Wayne et al., 1997).

Taking the argument further on the underlying process of LMX, supervisory support is said to strengthen members' belief that the supervisor is willing to provide care and support, and members with such high quality of LMX are therefore inclined to form job satisfaction (Erdogan and Enders, 2007). However, although it appears that LMX typically captures the work relationship between supervisors and subordinates, it is noticed that when employees are satisfied with the behaviours and interpersonal relationships with their supervisors, they are also likely to assume that the environment in the new workplace is friendly and supportive, which may contribute to the formation of positive impressions and feelings towards the organization.

In fact, a number of empirical studies have shown that the quality of LMX is also associated with organizationally relevant outcomes such as organizational citizenship behaviour (Deluga, 1994; Wech, 2002), organizational commitment (Epitropaki and Martin, 1999) and turnover intention (Gerstner and Day, 1997). One of the possible reasons behind these findings may due to the fact that supervisors are commonly considered as essential agents, representing the organization in dealing with the employment relationships (Wong et al., 2003), and they play a significant role in supporting employees to realize their obligations to the organization (Loi et al., 2009).

3.4.4 Measurement of Leader-Member Exchange

As presented in Figure 3.1, the exchange process in the interaction between leader and member concerns the exchange of both emotion and resources, such as respect, mutual

trust, mutual obligations, information, material resources and support (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Foa and Foa, 1980). Due to such complexity in conceptualizing the exchange between leader and member, there have been some controversies over what components should be included in the measurement of LMX.

For example, based on a widely accepted conceptualization of a role-making process, the quality of LMX is conceptualized in terms of three underlying sub-components: the mutual respect for the capabilities of each other, mutual trust with each other, and increasing interactive obligation (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Specifically, these dimensions reflect the leader's recognition of the member's potential, confidence about that person's ability, willingness to help the member work out of problems, and an understanding of their needs and requirements. Uhl-Bien et al. (2000) suggested that a high quality of LMX was characterized as being high on all those three components.

A closer observation of Graen and Uhl-Bien's conceptualization of LMX reveals an essential implication that these authors were mainly interested in the supervisor-subordinate relationships within the work context. In other words, LMX is used to describe 'work-related interactions', which is different from the Chinese concept of interpersonal relationship (*guanxi*) that also covers a mutual benefit of favour exchange but mainly includes non-work exchange developed through social interactions, such as personal gifts and home visits (Law et al., 2000; Hui and Lin, 1996).

Since Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) suggested that those three components within the LMX concept were highly correlated, LMX has been subsequently measured as a one-dimensional measurement scale, with the most common scale being the LMX-7 (Scandura and Graen, 1984). LMX-7 includes seven items such as "my manager recognizes my potential" and "I have enough confidence in my leader that I would defend and justify his/her decision if s/he would not present". Those items reflect the overall effectiveness of work relationships between leader and member.

However, as there is no clear indication about which items in LMX-7 represents which components within LMX, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) suggested using LMX-7 as a whole only. Empirical studies have shown the reliability and validity of the measure of LMX-7, and it has been widely applied across contexts (e.g. Aryee and Chen, 2006; Ferris et al., 2009; Hui et al., 1999; Law et al., 2000; Loi et al., 2009; Wayne et al., 1997).

In contrast, there are some alternative measures of LMX in the literature to suggest that LMX should be measured as a multidimensional construct. As a typical example,

Dienesch and Liden (1986) advocated that the conceptualization of the quality of LMX needs to include three types of ‘currencies of exchange’:

(a) Perceived contribution to the exchange-perception of the amount, direction, and quality of work-oriented activity each member puts forth toward the mutual goals (explicit or implicit) of the dyad [labelled contribution] ; (b) Loyalty – the expression of public support for the goals and the personal character of the other member of the LMX dyad [labelled loyalty]; (c) Affect – the mutual affection members of the dyad have for each other based primarily on interpersonal attraction rather than work or professional values [labelled affect]. (p. 624-625)

Dienesch and Liden suggested that these three dimensions were key factors to determine the quality of LMX, and those three components could be mutually reinforced through continuous interactive reciprocity between leader and member. Based on the work of Dienesch and Liden (1986), Liden and Maslyn (1998) proposed an additional dimension of LMX, namely professional respect concerning the “[p]erception of the degree to which each member of the dyad has built a reputation within and/or outside the organization of excelling at his or her line of work” (p. 50). Liden and Maslyn further suggested that leaders and members may develop professional respect even before meeting or working in the dyad relationship. Therefore, based on the works of Dienesch and Liden (1982), Liden and Maslyn (1998) advocated that LMX should be operationalized as the multidimensional measure of leader-member exchange (LMX-MDM), including affect, loyalty, contribution, and professional respect. This measure has been also examined in several empirical studies and has demonstrated reasonable reliability and validity (Law et al., 2000; Schriesheim et al., 1999).

Since there is little agreement on how to measure LMX in the current literature, and both a unidimensional measure (i.e. LMX-7) and a multidimensional measure (i.e. LMX-MDM) have shown satisfactory reliability and validity in empirical studies, there is a dilemma in selecting the measurement scale of LMX for this research. However, after considering the research context and recent empirical reports, it was thought that the unidimensional measure (i.e. LMX-7) was more appropriate for the present research, primarily for at least four reasons.

First, this measurement has been argued to have ‘the soundest psychometric properties of all instruments’, and it is, in fact, the most frequently used measure scale in

the majority of the leader-member exchange studies based on the meta-analytic review of Gerstner and Day (1997). Second, considering that a multidimensional measure of LMX is regarded as more meaningful when capturing the content exchanged in the dyad relationship (Law et al., 2009), the selection of a unidimensional measure of LMX appears to be more appropriate as the research focus here is on the overall quality of the LMX relationship and to test its impact in the relationship between newcomer information seeking behaviour and socialization outcomes. Third, this research is set in the context of workplaces and the research samples are newcomers who are assumed not likely to have had significant social interactions with their supervisor to develop interpersonal relationships, so the use of LMX-7 focusing on overall work relationships is considered more straightforward. Finally, Law et al. (2009) suggested that in a holistic culture like China, global LMX (i.e. LMX-7) appears more relevant and important. They stated:

It is well known that the Chinese culture is highly holistic (Ji, Peng, and Nisbett, 2000)... Chinese employees reciprocate for a holistic relationship with their supervisors, more than for particular reasons such as affect, loyalty or respect. A Chinese employee, who 'lives in a complex, interdependent social world with many role prescriptions, need[s] to attend to relationships and to the context' (Nisbett and Miyamoto, 2005: 469, italics added). It is therefore clear that for Chinese employees, global LMX (*i.e. LMX-7*) is a much more important antecedent of job performance (italics added).

To support Law et al.'s argument, it has been noted that the scale of LMX-7 had been examined in a number of empirical studies in Asian contexts (e.g. Chen and Tjosvold, 2007; Huang et al., 2010; Hui et al., 1999; Law et al., 2000; Liu and Ipe, 2010), and this scale has consistently achieved satisfactory reliability and validity.

3. 5 Concluding Remarks

The previous chapter discussed and clarified two essential concepts which would be examined in the present research, namely organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking. The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the scope and theoretical stance of another two concepts in this research, POS and LMX.

First of all, the major historical development of social exchange theory was illustrated at the beginning. By drawing from the classic works of Homans (1958, 1961), Blau (1964) and Gouldner (1960), the theoretical foundations of POS and LMX were clarified, which emphasized reciprocity in an exchange process during social interactions. Through the discussion, it was shown that many of social exchange processes can be motivated by incentives of social reward or approval, though obviously not all. Also, it is the norm of reciprocity that maintains the social exchange process to keep the balance between two involved parties.

Based on social exchange theory, two concepts were developed for describing exchange relationships in the workplace, i.e. POS and LMX. They both, implicitly or explicitly, emphasize an exchange relationship between two parties, namely employee-organization and employee-supervisor. The theory of POS suggests that it is based on the perception concerning the extent to which the organization values employees' contributions and cares about their well-being upon which employees make decisions on the extent to which they need to repay the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). LMX emphasizes a reciprocity relationship between employees and their supervisors in the workplace. Leaders are encouraged to provide valuable resources for employees, and employees are obligated to leaders for their support and help (Graen and Sandura, 1987). To sum up, the brief summary of POS and LMX is presented in Table 3.1 (see next page).

Having clarified all the concepts involved in the current research, the discussion turns to explore the implications of the social exchange theory on newcomer socialization in Chapter 4 through a discussion of the potential relationships among those major concepts.

Table 3.1 Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange

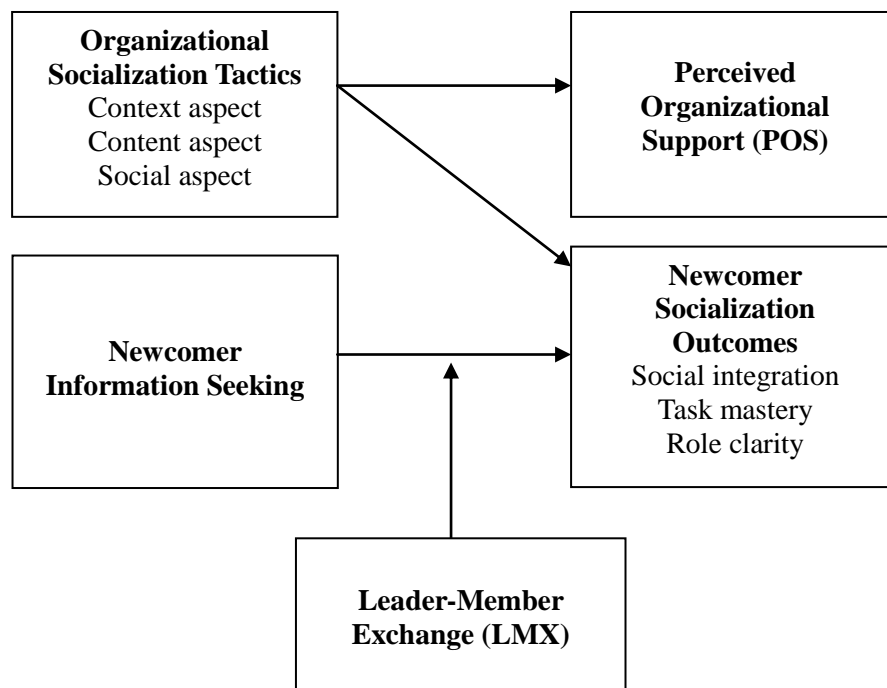
<i>Aspects</i>	<i>Perceived organizational support</i>	<i>Leader-member exchange</i>
<i>Theoretical Background</i>	The norm of reciprocity; Social exchange theory	The norm of reciprocity; Social exchange theory
<i>Definitions</i>	Employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986)	A reciprocity based work relationship involving amounts of resources, information and emotional support exchanged between superiors and subordinates (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995)
<i>Characteristics</i>	employee-organization; humanlike characteristics; discretionary ; trust	employee-leader; in-/out-group, high quality of LMX/ low-quality of LMX
<i>Theoretical implications</i>	POS indicates a kind of reciprocal exchange agreement when employees receive support, care, trust and approval connoted with a high POS they tend to feel obligated by demonstrating satisfaction, commitment and loyalty in return.	Leader has a unique treatment towards each employee, resulting in deferential quality of LMX which may influence employee productivity, communication and efficiency of work.
<i>Dimension</i>	Unidimensional measure	Lack of agreement, but the unidimensional measure (i.e. LMX-7) is adopted in the current research.

Chapter 4 Hypotheses Development

4. 1 Introduction

Having clarified the basic scopes and definitions of organizational socialization tactics, newcomer information seeking, socialization outcomes and two typical social exchange variables (i.e. POS and LMX) in the previous two chapters, the discussion now turns to look at the relationships between those variables. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the variables and relationships to be investigated in the present research. This chapter starts with the discussion about the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes (section 4.2) and POS (section 4.3). The relationship between newcomer information seeking on socialization outcomes is discussed later in section 4.4, followed by the discussion about the potential moderating role of LMX in that linkage (section 4.5).

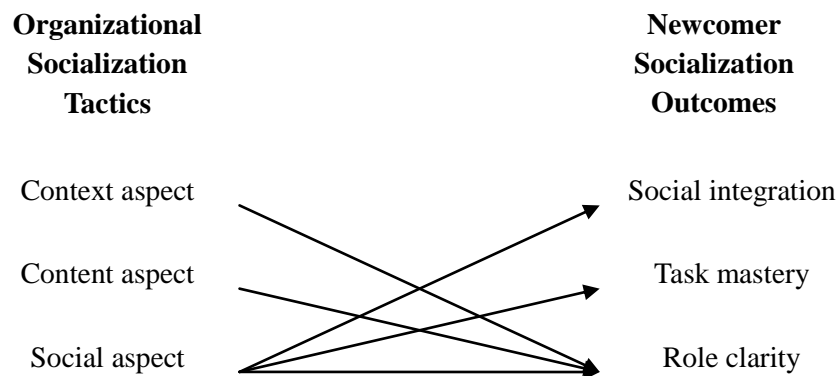
Figure 4.1 Overview of research model



4. 2 Organizational Socialization Tactics and Socialization Outcomes

As mentioned before, although it is noted that the typology of organizational socialization tactics was developed in western countries (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979), this construct has been widely examined and validated across different contexts (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002; Gruman et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2005; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009), which provides some confidence to believe that it may be possible to apply the concepts of socialization tactics in the context of China. The construct validity of organizational socialization tactics (Chapter 5 section 5.4.4.1) also provides further evidence to support that the typology of organizational socialization tactics can hold up in the context of China. The following sections review the growing literature to examine the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes. Figure 4.2 provides an overview of the variables and relationships to be investigated in this section.

Figure 4.2 Organizational socialization tactics and newcomer socialization outcomes



First of all, it is predicted that newcomers are more likely to enhance role clarity under collective and formal socialization tactics because a shared collective and formal learning experience can help newcomers reduce feelings of stress and frustration in the new place, obtain a general picture of the business within the organization, and improve the understanding of job role in the workplace.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.6.1), collective (vs. individual) and formal (vs. informal) socialization tactics reflect context aspect of socialization tactics (Jones, 1986). Under such tactics, newcomers are usually expected to be separated from current employees, and attend training and learning programmes in groups (Cable and Parsons,

2001). In the context of collective and formal socialization, newcomers are expected to formulate a shared view of the existing organizational values and norms, and to receive a common message about how to behaviour and respond to situations (Allen, 2006; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). By doing this, newcomers are likely to reduce uncertainty and stress (Ashforth and Saks, 1996), and enhance awareness of job responsibility (Bauer et al., 2007).

In contrast, if the socialization context is more individually oriented, newcomers are required to learn and acquire information from real work experience, similar to the ‘trial-and-error’ process (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Moreover, individual socialization allows newcomers to develop heterogeneous interpretations to the situations. With such latitude, newcomers may have different responses about how to perform the job and what is expected from them. Under such a context, if there is no guidance from other colleagues or supervisors, it may aggravate the feeling of frustration and stress, and lead to the uncertainty about job role (Cable and Parsons, 2001).

Hence, putting these arguments together, the predictive effect of collective and formal socialization tactics on newcomer role clarity seems to be convincing. Therefore, the forgoing arguments suggest:

Hypothesis 1a: Collective and formal (vs. individual and informal) socialization tactics are positively related to newcomer role clarity.

Additionally, it is suggested that under sequential and fixed tactics, newcomers are also likely to develop role clarity. Based on the study of Jones (1986), sequential (vs. random) and fixed (vs. variable) socialization tactics are grouped to refer to the content aspect of socialization tactics. Cable and Parsons (2001) suggested that under sequential and fixed tactics, newcomers were more likely to understand the prescribed behaviours and assessment criteria, and thus made efforts to internalize the organization’s values; while under random and variable socialization tactics, newcomers were encouraged to respond in the individualized way.

Several empirical studies have also provided evidence to support the positive influences of sequential and fixed tactics on enhancing newcomers’ role clarity. For example, Allen and Meyer (1990) suggested that when organizations provided newcomers with explicit steps and timetables about the sequence of learning activities, newcomers were likely to experience a reduced sense of ambiguity. Also, Ashforth and Saks (1996)

found negative relations between structured and fixed socialization tactics and newcomers' role ambiguity. In a similar vein, it is suggested that the extent to which the organization uses sequential and fixed socialization tactics is positively related with newcomers' role clarity (Ashforth et al., 1997; Bauer et al., 2007; Jones, 1986). Therefore, in line with aforementioned argument, this suggests:

Hypothesis 1b: Sequential and fixed (vs. random and variable) socialization tactics are positively related to newcomers' role clarity.

Additionally, it is proposed that serial and investiture (vs. disjunctive and divestiture) socialization tactics are also related to newcomer adjustment. It is known that the serial (vs. disjunctive) and investiture (vs. divestiture) socialization tactics are grouped together to reflect the social aspect of socialization tactics (Jones, 1986). The effects of the social aspect of socialization tactics on socialization outcomes have been noticed in several studies. For example, Louis et al. (1983) suggested that the interactions with the experienced members in the new environment may help to reduce newcomers' uncertainty and stress given that they can gain resources and assistance from the experienced members. Newcomers under the serial socialization are also likely to develop a continuity of skills and values about a particular organizational role due to the influence of the assigned mentor or role model (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Also, Simosi (2010) suggested that role models or mentors serve as a significant source of information to enhance newcomers' understanding of the task and role's demands. In this sense, it is reasonable to assume that the mentors' or other experienced members' support is important in improving newcomers' task mastery and role clarity.

Meanwhile, it is assumed that interactions with experienced members not only help newcomers remove some levels of uncertainty and enhance their confidence in doing the job, but also benefit their adjustment into the group, because encouraging communications with experienced members could increase newcomers' social comfort within the new work setting (Ashforth et al., 1997; Kim et al., 2005; Saks and Ashforth, 1997b). Support can be also found from the argument of Simosi (2010) who suggested that, "mentors have been found to act not only as sources of job-related information but also as sources of social support, advice and 'inside' information while helping the newcomer be integrated into the informal social network" (p. 303). Moreover, since newcomers are accepted in terms of their individual identity and their personal values are respected under the investiture tactics,

they are thus likely to develop the sense of competence and confidence, feel general satisfaction and be comfortable in the working group (Allen, 2006; Ashforth et al., 1997; Bauer et al., 2007; Saks and Ashforth, 1997b). Hence, putting these findings together, the positive predictive effects of serial and investiture socialization tactics on newcomer socialization outcomes seem to be convincing. Therefore, following these arguments, another hypothesis is proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 1c: Serial and investiture (vs. disjunctive and divestiture) socialization tactics are positively related to newcomers' social integration, task mastery and role clarity.

Among those three aspects of organizational socialization tactics, Jones (1986) suggested that the social aspect (i.e. serial and investiture vs. disjunctive and divestiture) would be the strongest predictor of newcomer adjustment, followed by the content aspect, with the context aspect coming last. Despite Jones' study, there is still no agreement on this issue because, as mentioned before, many empirical studies grouped all the socialization tactics dimensions together without discussing whether they were differentially related with socialization outcomes. However, it is encouraging to find that there are a few empirical studies looking at this issue. For example, Allen and Meyer (1990) found that among those six dimensions of socialization tactics, an investiture dimension which was grouped as part of the social aspect of socialization tactics, served as the strongest predictor for newcomers' affective organizational commitment. Cable and Parsons (2001) pointed out that the social aspect of socialization tactics was the strongest predictor of newcomers' person-organization fit perceptions.

More recently, Allen (2006) found that the social aspect of socialization tactics had the most significant negative effect on newcomers' turnover intention. Takeuchi and Takeuchi (2009) further suggested that when compared with the context and content aspects of socialization tactics, it was the social aspect of socialization tactics that had a greater influence on newcomers' socialization perceptions. Moreover, Saks et al. (2007) found that from their meta-analysis that the social aspect was the strongest predictor of newcomer adjustment outcomes such as role clarity, job performance, fit perceptions and job satisfaction within the three dimensions of socialization tactics. Based on these empirical findings, it is thus proposed that:

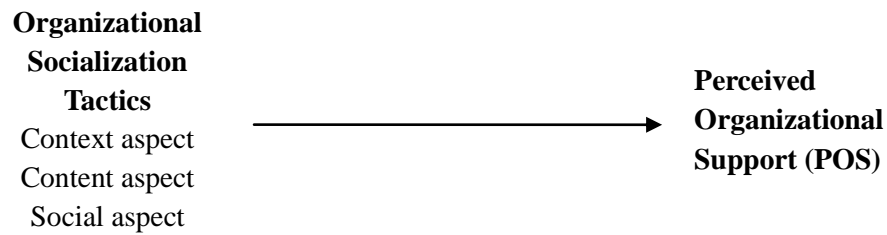
Hypothesis 1d: Of the three aspects of socialization tactics, the social aspect of socialization tactics has the strongest positive influence on newcomer socialization outcomes.

As is seen, the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes were not all included in the proposed hypotheses due to a lack of explicit discussion of some relationships. For example, under collective and formal socialization tactics, newcomers usually only get to know the general picture about the job role, and in this circumstance, the impact of collective and formal tactics on newcomer task mastery is thus not clear. Also, since newcomers are commonly separated from other team members under the collective and formal socialization tactics such as orientation programme, whether collective and formal socialization tactics are associated with newcomer social integration is uncertain either. Therefore, based on the guidance of extant empirical results and logical consideration, only the most literature-driven relationships between each aspect of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment outcomes were developed in the present research. However, those relationships not directly included in the hypotheses will nevertheless be examined on an exploratory basis.

4.3 Organizational Socialization Tactics and Perceived Organizational Support

In addition to the socialization outcomes, it is argued that, under different organizational socialization tactics, newcomers are inclined to form different perceptions towards the organizational support (Figure 4.3). To illustrate, those formal, structured and planned socialization tactics provided for newcomers are likely to signal the message that the organization cares and will support newcomer adjustment, especially in a long-term basis. In contrast, if newcomers do not feel concern and care from the organization through those socialization strategies and practices, they are thus less likely to develop perceptions of organizational support.

Figure 4.3 Organizational socialization tactics and perceived organizational support



Specifically, it is first suggested that newcomers who have experienced collective and formal socialization tactics should be more likely to develop POS. There are two reasons for this expectation. First, under a collective and formal setting, newcomers can grasp the overview of the organization and reduce the distance between them and the organization, which is helpful in making newcomers feel comfortable in the new workplace (Cable and Parsons, 2001). Second, the message from collective and formal socialization tactics indicates that the organization is willing to invest in newcomers, and to show concern and support to ease any uncomfortable feelings and stress associated within the initial period in the organization. Since it is not compulsory for the organization to provide newcomers with a community learning context, these investments and support are likely to be considered as an extra effort from the organization. Newcomers thus tend to take it as a discretionary treatment, which is likely to contribute to the development of POS (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Shore and Shore, 1995). Therefore, the following hypothesis is put forward:

Hypothesis 2a: Socialization tactics that are collective and formal (i.e. context socialization tactics) are positively related to newcomers' perceived organizational support.

As suggested by Katz (1980), after organizational entry, newcomers gradually become concerned about 'how their progress fits within some framework of career benchmarks' (p.134). They tend to compare their career advance with the timetable of others to measure success. Under such circumstances, sequential and fixed socialization tactics appear important in informing newcomers about the career path they will experience in the future, which may to some extent further reduce their uncertainty. Meanwhile, since newcomers under such tactics share opportunities to succeed by

undergoing the standardized process to develop careers, it can to some extent increase newcomers' perception of fairness towards the organization.

On the contrary, under random and variable socialization tactics, there is no fixed pathway of career development, and newcomers are encouraged to individually manage uncertainty and to find the ways to succeed by themselves. Although it is not the purpose to argue whether these tactics are good or not for newcomer adjustment, it is assumed that random and variable socialization tactics may not easily generate the linkage between newcomers and the organization, and thus it becomes harder to create communicational channels for newcomers to feel organizational care and support (Cable and Parsons, 2001). Hence, the discussion above suggests:

Hypothesis 2b: Socialization tactics that are sequential and fixed (i.e. content socialization tactics) are positively related to newcomers' perceived organizational support.

The last aspect of socialization tactics is the social dimension (i.e. serial and investiture vs. disjunctive and divestiture). Under serial and investiture socialization tactics, newcomers gain opportunities to learn from experienced insiders and obtain social support to become familiar with other colleagues in the workplace (Jones, 1986; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Conversely, newcomers under disjunctive and divestiture socialization tactics cannot easily get support and guidance from the insiders. Since newcomers are eager to reduce uncertainty and integrate into the group, insiders' support and experience appears to be essential to speed up their socialization process (Simosi, 2010).

Moreover, the mentoring usually under the serial tactics is claimed to be particularly important to develop employees' POS. Baranik et al. (2010) explicitly suggested that, "through supportive interactions with mentors, protégés may develop perceptions about whether or not the organization cares for their well-being" (p. 367). Hence, based on those arguments, it is reasonable to assume that if the organization provides access or assigns experienced members to facilitate newcomers and to help them become familiar with the work environment, newcomers are more likely to view the mentor's support as indicative of the organization's support, and thus develop POS. This reasoning leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2c: Socialization tactics that are serial and investiture (i.e. social socialization tactics) are positively related to newcomers' perceived organizational support.

4. 4 Newcomer Information Seeking and Socialization Outcomes

Given the process of joining a new organization is associated with stress, uncertainty and surprise (Louis, 1980), it is claimed that newcomers often take the initiative to acquire resources and information for adjustment (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992). An important assumption is that information seeking can help newcomers to achieve a sound knowledge about rules, norms, organizational culture, work techniques and communication skills to settle down in the new environment (Morrison, 2002). In such circumstances, individual information seeking appears as an essential approach for newcomer adjustment.

In the literature, a number of studies have shown that information seeking is related with newcomer socialization outcomes. Morrison (1993a), for instance, found that newcomer information seeking was important for individual adjustment as it led to a number of valuable socialization outcomes, such as task mastery, social integration and role clarity. In particular, Morrison found that the frequency of seeking job-related information was positively related with newcomers' task mastery. Morrison's findings were supported by several studies (e.g. Ashforth et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 1998; Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002). A recent empirical study of Yang (2008) in Taiwan also supported this view by suggesting that seeking information from experienced persons is crucial for newcomer adjustment after entering the organization.

Moreover, Ashford and Cumming (1985) suggested that employees' information seeking was associated with role clarity. Ashford and Black (1995) further suggested that, "newcomers who attain such clarity through information and feedback seeking should also experience greater job satisfaction" (p.203). In support, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) found a positive relationship between newcomer information seeking and higher adjustment and lower stress. Additionally, the conceptual framework of Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) suggested that newcomer information acquisition would be positively related to newcomers' task mastery, role clarity and social integration.

Despite of these promising findings of the impacts of information seeking on newcomer adjustment, it is noted that most empirical studies of newcomer information

seeking were mainly based in the western context, and the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes have not yet been tested in the Asian context. It is believed that examining this issue in a non-western context may expand the understanding about how newcomer information seeking works across cultural boundaries.

The stance taken in the present research is when faced with uncertainty, it is natural for newcomers to seek information, and uncertainty reduction through information seeking is not culturally bonded. In fact, research has shown that Chinese are clustered in the group of high uncertainty avoidance, representing high emotional response to changes and regulations (Hofstede, 1980). With such needs of avoiding uncertainty, it is reasonable to assume that individual information seeking behaviour is of great importance for newcomer adjustment in the context of China.

However, it is necessary to clarify that this is not arguing that the impacts of newcomer information seeking on socialization outcomes are necessarily in the same strength and in the same pattern as those in the western countries. The purpose here is not to compare the strength of the relationships between western and Chinese contexts, but to test the generality of this relationship.

Hypothesis 3: Newcomer information seeking is positively related to social integration, task mastery and role clarity.

4.5 Moderating Role of Leader-Member Exchange

So far, we have discussed the role of newcomer information seeking in influencing newcomer socialization outcomes. However, different to the first set of hypotheses about the direct relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes, the primary focus here is not to examine the direct relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes, but to go further to examine under what circumstance information seeking really matters newcomer adjustment. Of particular interest is that the relevance of newcomer information seeking to newcomer adjustment may be dependent on the quality of LMX. In other words, whereas the frequency of newcomer information seeking is expected to have an effect on socialization outcomes we expect a different pattern of relationships between newcomer information

seeking and socialization outcomes under different levels of LMX. However, before jumping into the discussion of the potential moderating effect of LMX, it is necessary to first draw attention to several cultural underpinnings of newcomer information seeking behaviours in the context of China.

4.5.1 Newcomer Information Seeking in the Context of China

First of all, Sully de Luque and Sommer (2000) indicated that information seeking behaviour was different in ‘specific-oriented’ and ‘holistic-oriented’ cultures. Based on their explanation, people living in specific-oriented cultures, such as countries like United States, are likely to favour ‘a more intensive direct-inquiry approach’; while people in holistic-oriented cultures, such as countries like China, tend to prefer ‘more indirect inquiry and intensive monitoring strategies’ (p. 834). The reason behind this argument is possibly because employees in the context of China are particularly careful in looking for help because it may threaten the feelings of independence and competence, which may result in losing ‘face’ (*mian zi*). Face stands for the image of the person as well as a safe cover of a person’s prestige, dignity and one’s standing in the group (Hwang, 1987). A variety of face-related explanations in Chinese society shows the importance of face in another way. For example, a Chinese folk saying goes, ‘just like trees need bark, men need face’ (Huang et al., 1997). Due to this consideration, newcomers in the context of China may tend to worry about seeking ‘simple’ information and being considered as incompetent and insecure when directly asking other members, which may easily generate the feeling of losing face.

Second, it is suggested that Chinese newcomers are far more likely to follow a supervisor’s guidance because employers are often considered as having a dominant role in the Chinese workplace (Ngo et al., 2002), and thus Chinese employees may be hesitant to take on responsibility and make judgment without guidance (Jackson and Bak, 1998). In support, Cheng and Cascio (2009) suggested that, “the respondents (Chinese employees) prefer direct and precise instructions, especially from someone at the top – that is someone with proper authority and power (the one in-the-know). They depend on such individuals to clarify work issues whenever ambiguity arises” (p. 332). As proposed by those authors, the social hierarchical order and power distance can be potential reasons why employees in the context of China prefer to be clearly guided.

As is well-known, Confucian philosophy (Confucius, 551 BC - 479 BC) is generally regarded as the root of many Chinese cultural concepts. Under the rule of Confucian philosophy, each role in the relationships is defined by the interactions with other individuals in the group and has its own responsibility to provide some benefits to other members in order to maintain harmonious relationships within the society (Bond, 1986). Within this structure, Chinese people are claimed to adhere to ‘a strict social structure in which people on top of the hierarchy possess considerable power over those lower in the hierarchy’ (Hui et al., 2004b, p. 313). Therefore, the respect for hierarchy and authority is considered significant to keep the harmony within the work group. It is thus assumed that Chinese newcomers tend to favour clear guidance about what to do, and obey with what they are required to do.

In addition, according to Hofstede’s (1980) work, Chinese culture is characterized as collectivism-oriented. Under such a context, people tend to constrict their personal needs and desires in order to avoid interfering with the needs and goals of significant others (Triandis, 1995). Therefore, individuals are more likely to engage in group activities rather than engage in activities alone (Triandis, 1994), just as Morrison et al. (2004) argued that, “societies low on the cultural dimension of individualism (i.e. collectivistic societies) place relatively little emphasis on the assertion of individual needs and rights” (p. 3).

Further, Morrison et al. (2004) pointed out that organizational insiders in collectivistic societies were more likely to take the initiative to provide information to newcomers as they took it as part of their responsibilities by suggesting that:

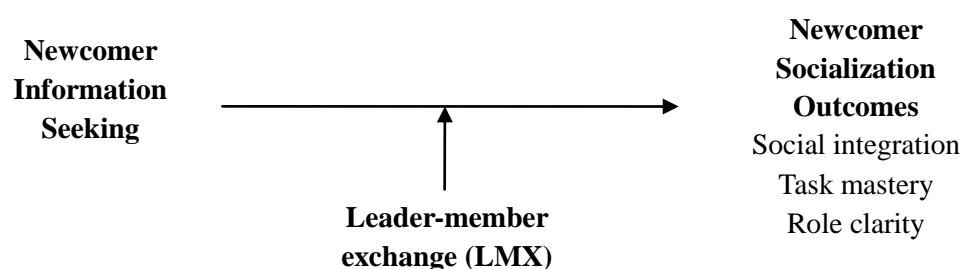
Research on cultural differences, however, suggests that feelings of information deprivation are more likely to be experienced by newcomers within individualistic societies than by newcomers within societies low on individualism (i.e. collectivistic societies). Individualism implies independence and looking out for oneself (Triandis, 1995). By contrast, collectivism implies a socialisation process whereby insiders assume responsibility for assimilating newcomers and for providing them with the guidance, information, and feedback that they need. (p. 6)

Consistent with Morrison et al.’s view, Cheng and Cascio (2009) suggested that the responsibility for providing information and feedback is actually often assigned to those in management roles because it is believed that information provided by superiors or authorities is more likely to be perceived to be reliable and trustworthy than that provided

by others in the context of China. This phenomenon is attributable to the traditional Chinese legal system, which is characterized as being by ruled by men (*ren zhi*) rather than by legal principles (*fa zhi*). Hui and Graen (1997) provided an explanation of such a cultural scenario by suggesting that, “when proprieties of social actions are defined according to wu lun²[referring to *five basic human relations in Confucianism*], emphasis on guanxi is higher than emphasis on laws” (p. 456). In a similar line, Hintzen (1999) addressed that law and regulations were usually considered to be ineffective in the Chinese society, and it is inter-personal relationships that have carried more weight (Bozionelos and Wang, 2007). From those arguments, it is clear that the awareness of personal rule may affect the individuals’ judgment about the truthfulness of the acquired information. Influenced by this awareness, it is not hard to understand why Chinese employees are more likely to believe the words and information provided by superiors.

The arguments above have shown some typical features of cultural underpinnings of newcomer information seeking behaviour which emphasized the significant role of leaders in providing guidance, resources and information for newcomers in the Chinese work place. The following section goes further to discuss how the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes can be moderated by leader-member relationship. Figure 4.4 provides an overview of the proposed relationships.

Figure 4.4 The moderating effect of leader-member exchange



4.5.2 Newcomer Information Seeking and Social Integration

First of all, it is proposed that the relationship between information seeking and social integration is of less importance when a newcomer has a high quality of LMX than a

² Basic Human Relations: Sovereign and subject (or master and follower), father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brothers, friend and friend (Confucius, 551 BC - 479 BC).

low quality of LMX. To be more specific, it is suggested that a high quality of LMX could compensate for the influence of information seeking behaviour on newcomer social integration because supervisors can support newcomers in communicating with others, and help them to reduce uncomfortable feelings in the group, specifically in the context of China. In contrast, when a newcomer has a low quality of LMX, their information seeking becomes more significant for their social integration. There are another two reasons for such expectation.

In the first place, it is suggested that newcomers with a high quality of LMX are more likely to be involved in the group activity and thus build an initial network within the group. This proposition has been supported by the argument of Katz (1980), who said that “supervisors operate as effective socializing agents and networks builders for their young employees” (p. 136). Kramer’s (1995) study provided some evidence to support Katz’s argument by suggesting that it was more likely for job transferees who had a high quality of LMX to develop communication relationships with their peers in the new workplace. Furthermore, Erdogan et al. (2004) stated that a high quality of LMX was significant for developing open communication within the group, which may be of benefit for newcomers or job transferees to settle down. Consistent with Liden et al.’s (2004) perception, Yukl (2006) also suggested that social support from the supervisor was usually associated with a higher level of involvement in the team work, which may further increase the chance of an employee’ initiation to the group.

In short, it appears likely that a higher quality of LMX is significant for newcomers to integrate in the group context. However, those newcomers who have a low quality of LMX cannot rely on the supervisor to provide opportunities or support for their adaptation into the group. At this moment, the behaviour of information seeking tends to be important for their integration into the work group because it provides a channel to communicate with other colleagues.

In the second place, a high quality of LMX may counterbalance the effect of information seeking when newcomers’ values do not match those of other group members, because a high quality of LMX can make newcomers feel trusted and valued (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). For newcomers with a good relationship with supervisors, it is reasonable to assume that they tend to have an advantage in obtaining information and resources based on the theory of LMX. In this case, supervisory support may strengthen newcomers’ belief that the supervisor is willing to care and support their job, and employees are therefore likely to feel safe and accepted on the basis of an important alliance with the supervisor in

the group (Erdogan and Enders, 2007). Therefore, in line with aforementioned argument, it is expected that the relationship between information seeking and social integration is less strong when newcomers have high quality of LMX than those with low quality of LMX. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4a: LMX moderates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and social integration in the context of China, such that the relationship is weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX.

4.5.3 Newcomer Information Seeking and Task Mastery

Besides social integration, it is argued that LMX serves in a compensatory role influencing the effect of information seeking on newcomer task mastery. The first reason is that since the supervisor is considered as one of the most targeted resources for a newcomer to seek information (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992), it is reasonable to assume that newcomers with a high quality of LMX tend to have an advantage in obtaining valued resources and information because they are trusted and valued by supervisors (Liden and Maslyn, 1998). In this case, members with a higher quality of LMX are more likely to receive resources that may meet individual developmental needs and enhance job performance (Graen and Cashman, 1975; Graen and Ulhen, 1995).

In support, Law et al. (2009) found that LMX served as a significant predictor of task performance in two different Chinese samples. Similar findings have also been found in the studies of Duarte et al. (1994) and Vecchio and Gobdel (1984). In a similar line, Bravo et al. (2003) further suggested that supervisors are essential for newcomers to achieve task mastery by providing information, feedback and advice and by assigning proper task. Accordingly, it is assumed that newcomers with high quality of LMX are more likely to have task mastery due to the support and valued resources provided by the supervisor.

Moreover, it is claimed that the interactions with significant others, such as leaders or supervisors, are likely to affect the evaluation of individuals' performance, which may also influence individuals' level of self-esteem. For example, Duarte et al. (1994) indicated that in both the short and long term, leaders tended to rate higher when evaluating the subordinates who had a high quality of LMX, while they were likely to be stricter with subordinates who had a low quality of LMX. In support of their arguments, Stark and

Poppler (2009) proposed that the quality of LMX would account for variance in a supervisor's evaluation of a subordinate's job performance. One of the possible reasons for those different responses could be due to the 'attributional bias' (Yukl, 2006). That is the positive behaviours of employees with a high quality of LMX were more likely to be acknowledged while mistakes of employees with a low quality of LMX were more likely to be condemned (Wayne et al., 1997). The empirical study also suggested that receipt of positive feedback and rewards is related to self-efficacy (Murphy and Ensher, 1999). Therefore, newcomers with a high quality of LMX are assumed to be praised, which is likely to bolster employees' task mastery towards the job responsibility.

In addition, it has been assumed that newcomers with a high quality of LMX tend to be liked by supervisors, and as a return, their efforts are inclined to be recognized and appreciated, which may further solid newcomers' confidence in task performance (Wayne et al., 1997; Yukl, 2006). Thus, based on the arguments above, it is proposed that:

Hypothesis 4b: LMX moderates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and task mastery in the context of China, such that the relationship is weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX.

4.5.4 Newcomer Information Seeking and Role Clarity

What is more, it is assumed that LMX moderates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and role clarity. As discussed, a high quality of LMX is highly valued during the process of information seeking in the workplace because a supervisor is in an essential position to define job content and expectations for newcomers, and thus has a chance to influence a newcomer's awareness of the job role (Bravo et al., 2003; Graen, 1976). Accordingly, since newcomers with a high quality of LMX are more inclined to gain support, guidance and valued information, it seems logical to propose that newcomers with a high quality of LMX are more likely to reduce uncertainty and achieve role clarity than those with a low quality of LMX because they could depend on supervisors' support to improve job awareness.

This argument is supported by the studies of Bauer and Green (1998) and O'Driscoll and Beehr (1994) who both suggested that newcomers' role clarity was predicted by supervisor's clarifying behaviour. In a similar fashion, Katz and Tushman (1983) indicated

that the high level of interpersonal contact between young employees and supervisors may benefit for achieving a more accurate understanding about one's role in the job. Major et al. (1995) also explicitly demonstrated a positive relationship between a high quality of LMX and newcomers' role clarity. The empirical study of Jokisaari and Nurmi (2009) further revealed that perceived supervisor support was related with role clarity for newcomers during 6 to 21 months after organizational entry.

On the contrary, if newcomers are not able to develop a high quality of LMX, they may be no longer dependent on receiving information or valued resources from their supervisors to enhance role clarity. Under this circumstance, their information seeking thus becomes more relevant and more likely to matter their role clarity. Hence, the forgoing arguments suggest that LMX plays a compensatory role in buffering the effect of information seeking on newcomer role clarity, which leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4c: LMX moderates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and role clarity in the context of China, such that the relationship is weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX.

4. 6 Concluding Remarks

To answer the first research question (i.e. Are organizational socialization tactics related to organizational socialization outcomes in the context of China, and which socialization tactics have the strongest impacts? Do different organizational socialization tactics influence newcomers' perceived organizational support?), a group of hypotheses were developed, presented in Table 4.1. Among them, Hypotheses 1a-1d deal with the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes; Hypotheses 2a-2c focus on the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and POS.

To answer the second research question (i.e. Is newcomer information seeking related to newcomer socialization outcomes, particularly in the context of China? If so, when does newcomer information seeking really matter to newcomer socialization outcomes, again in the context of China?), another set of hypotheses were developed. Hypothesis 3 presents the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes. Hypotheses 4a-4c demonstrate the moderating effect of LMX in

such relationships. The summary of these hypotheses is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1 Hypotheses about organizational socialization tactics

<p>Hypothesis 1: Relationship between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 1a Collective and formal (vs. individual and informal) socialization tactics are positively related to newcomer role clarity.</i></p> <p><i>Hypothesis 1b Sequential and fixed (vs. random and variable) socialization tactics are positively related to newcomers' role clarity.</i></p> <p><i>Hypothesis 1c Serial and investiture (vs. disjunctive and divestiture) socialization tactics are positively related to newcomers' social integration, task mastery and role clarity.</i></p> <p><i>Hypothesis 1d Of the three aspects of socialization tactics, the social aspect of socialization tactics has the strongest positive influence on newcomer socialization outcomes.</i></p>
<p>Hypothesis 2: Relationship between organizational socialization tactics and POS</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 2a Socialization tactics that are collective and formal (i.e. context socialization tactics) are positively related to newcomers' perceived organizational support.</i></p> <p><i>Hypothesis 2b Socialization tactics that are sequential and fixed (i.e. content socialization tactics) are positively related to newcomers' perceived organizational support.</i></p> <p><i>Hypothesis 2c Socialization tactics that are serial and investiture (i.e. social socialization tactics) are positively related to newcomers' perceived organizational support.</i></p>

Table 4.2 Hypotheses about newcomer information seeking

<p>Hypothesis 3: Newcomer information seeking is positively related to social integration, task mastery and role clarity.</p>
<p>Hypothesis 4: The moderating role of LMX in the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 4a: LMX moderates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and social integration in the context of China, such that the relationship is weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX.</i></p> <p><i>Hypothesis 4b: LMX moderates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and task mastery in the context of China, such that the relationship is weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX.</i></p> <p><i>Hypothesis 4c: LMX moderates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and role clarity in the context of China, such that the relationship is weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX.</i></p>

Chapter 5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to convey information about the research design utilized in this research, including both philosophical and theoretical principles that underpin the approaches and choices related to the research questions and objectives. The detailed research methods, data collection procedures, samples, measurements and analytical methods are also included in this chapter. Specifically, the following topics are covered: (1) the research approach, strategy and methods based on the research objectives and research questions (section 5.2); (2) a complete outline of the data collection procedures and profiles of the research samples (section 5.3); (3) the measurements applied in the present study, including their validation processes through factor analysis (section 5.4); (4) the analytic methods and procedures used in the main analyses (section 5.6); and the concluding remarks in the end (section 5.7). This will provide a comprehensive explanation of ‘how’ the research questions were intended to be answered in the present research.

5.2 Overview of Research Design

Research design is defined as ‘a process of making all decisions related to the research project’ (Blaikie, 2003, p. 21), or ‘a structure that guides the execution of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data’ (Bryman, 2005, p. 27). It involves a consistent and unified decision-making process to provide a framework for bringing concepts and research methods together within the research objectives (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). In this regard, this section starts with a description of the research objectives and the research questions in order to build the rationale of the research approach, strategy and methods.

5.2.1 Research Objective

There are three typical research objectives (i.e. exploration, description and explanation) frequently examined in organizational studies. Each of these research

objectives contributes to a distinctive view on the way of developing a methodological framework to expand knowledge. For example, exploratory research often starts with a research question of ‘how’, in order to satisfy the researcher’s desire of understanding a social phenomenon, or to develop the methods to be employed in a subsequent study (Babbie, 2004). On the other hand, research with the purpose of explanation usually answers the question of ‘why’ in order to seek an explanation of a problem, or to explain patterns relating to a situation, or to identify relationships between aspects of the phenomenon (Babbie, 2004; Blaikie, 2003; Robson, 2002). As for descriptive research, it usually presents ‘what’ is happening in some social context, or portrays the characteristics in some population, or demonstrates an account of some phenomenon (Blaikie, 2003; Punch, 2005). In brief, Table 5.1 presents a summary of those research objectives mainly based on the works of Babbie (2004), Blaikie (2003) and Robson (2002).

Table 5.1 Characteristics of three typical research purposes

	<i>Exploration</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Research Objectives	1) to satisfy the researcher’s curiosity and desire for better understanding; 2) to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study; 3) to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study.	1) to present an accurate account of some phenomenon; 2) to estimate the distribution of characteristics in some population; 3) to demonstrate the patterns of relationships in some social context.	1) to seek an explanation of a situation or problem; 2) to explain patterns relating to the phenomenon being researched; 3) to identify relationships between aspects of the phenomenon.
Types of Questions	Answering ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions	Answering ‘what’ and ‘where’ questions	Answering ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions

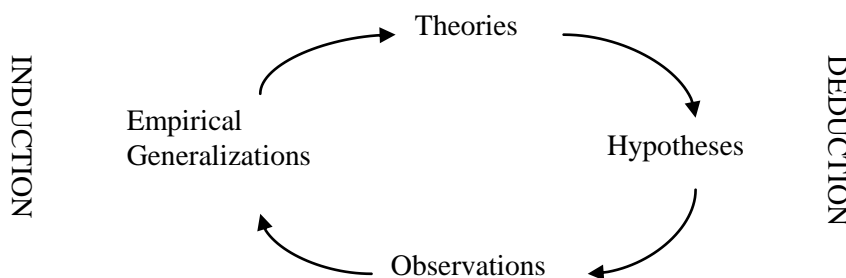
Source: Adapted from Babbie (2004), Blaikie (2003) and Robson (2002).

According to the type of research question, the primary research objective in this research involves providing a reasonable explanation of the relationships between different aspects of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer socialization outcomes, explaining the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and POS, and assessing ‘when’ newcomer information seeking behaviour really affects newcomers’ adjustment by investigating the moderating role of LMX. Therefore, the research objective, which is incorporated in the context of the current research, involves *explanation*. The relationships between aspects of the phenomenon are thus emphasized here.

5.2.2 Research Approach

The literature describes two distinctive research approaches, which can be applied to answer research questions, namely inductive and deductive. As shown in Figure 5.1, the inductive approach formulates theory following data collection; whereas the deductive research is a theory-driven process, which assumes that a theory can be formed or supported by testing hypotheses through the examination of empirical evidence (Babbie, 2004).

Figure 5.1 The wheel of science



Source: Wallace (1971).

The deductive research strategy has its origin in the theoretical perspective of positivistic tradition, the basic idea of which is that social phenomena can be understood ‘in the same state of mind as the physicist, chemist or physiologist when he probes into a still unexplored region of the scientific domain’ (Durkheim 1950: xiv). In other words, society can be studied scientifically, the same as natural science. Positivism indicates that

the cause-and-effect relations within society can be explained or understood through testing empirical data (Punch, 2005).

In the literature, questions are often asked regarding the differences between positivism and other social science epistemological considerations. The reasoning underlying these theoretical perspectives is beyond the scope of this thesis, but in order to spell out the essentials of positivism to allow quantitative interpretation, positivism and interpretivism are compared, derived from the classification of Bryman (2005), shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Comparison between positivism and interpretivism

	<i>Positivism</i>	<i>Interpretivism</i>
Definition	An epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the objective study of social reality and beyond.	A contrasting epistemology that suggests that the meanings of the social reality can be grasped by human beings through subjective interpretation.
Implications	The role of research is to test theories and to provide material for the development of laws.	The role of researcher is to provide a subjective interpretation of the social phenomena through collecting information.
Research approach	Deductive approach	Inductive approach

Derived from Bryman (2005)

In the present research, the aim is to investigate the hypothesized relationships developed in Chapter 4 from theoretical considerations. As ‘the deductive research strategies are the most suitable for pursuing the objective of explanation’ (Blaikie, 2003, p.126), the deductive research approach is considered more appropriate here.

5.2.3 Research Strategy

Research strategy is commonly understood as the approach used to provide answers to the research questions. According to Saunders et al. (2007), there are six typical research

strategies, namely grounded theory, ethnography, experiment, survey, action research and case study. Different research strategies serve to address different types of research question. For example, Yin (2003) stated that a descriptive question may suit a flexible case study; an explanatory question is traditionally answered through an experiment or a survey design; while an exploratory question can be investigated via a qualitative research strategy like case study to allow researchers to explore what is going on, particularly in an unknown area or with little support in theory.

The present research employs a survey design as the research is focused on providing an explanation to a phenomenon, and because it is applicable to research contexts which attempt to test whether the predictive hypotheses can hold true through empirical data. The alternative, an experimental design, is not applicable, as this would involve experimental control over characteristics of the participants or conditions that they experienced. Experimental designs are used when different interventions are applied to different groups of participants, and this is not the case here. In this study, the phenomena are to be studied in their natural setting without any experimental control.

5.2.4 Research Methods

The literature presents two typical methods of conducting research, namely quantitative research methods and qualitative research methods. Quantitative methods involve collecting numerical data that are then used to prove or disprove hypotheses (Bryman, 2005), or at least provide evidence for or against such hypotheses. Such methods are used in cross-sectional surveys, for example. In contrast, qualitative research methods deal with words and detailed views to address a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009). They are often used within the research strategies of grounded theory, ethnography and action research. Burns (2000) provides a comparison of these two methods, shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Comparison between qualitative methods and quantitative methods

<i>Qualitative Methods</i>	<i>Quantitative Methods</i>
Data collection using participant observation, unstructured interviews	Data collection via questionnaires or interviews, with testing and measuring
Conclude with hypothesis and grounded theory	Commence with hypothesis and theory
Emergence and portrayal	Sometimes experimental control
Inductive and naturalistic	Deductive; either naturalistic or experimental
Data analysis by themes from informant's descriptions	Statistical analysis and reporting
Data reported in language of informant	Abstract impersonal write-up

Source: Adapted from Burns (2000).

Surveys may involve qualitative or quantitative data. Based on Burns' descriptions, however, it is clear that quantitative methods are more suitable for the present research given that the research is deductive, with a focus on testing proposed relationships developed from theory and previous studies. In terms of specific quantitative methods, a structured questionnaire is considered proper because it has the capacity for generating quantifiable data on large numbers of participants who are representatives of a much wider population for examining the hypotheses (Bryman, 2005). Moreover, questionnaires are often utilized in testing the hypotheses within the area of organizational socialization studies (e.g. Jones, 1986; Cable and Parsons, 2001; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009).

5. 3 Research Procedure and Samples

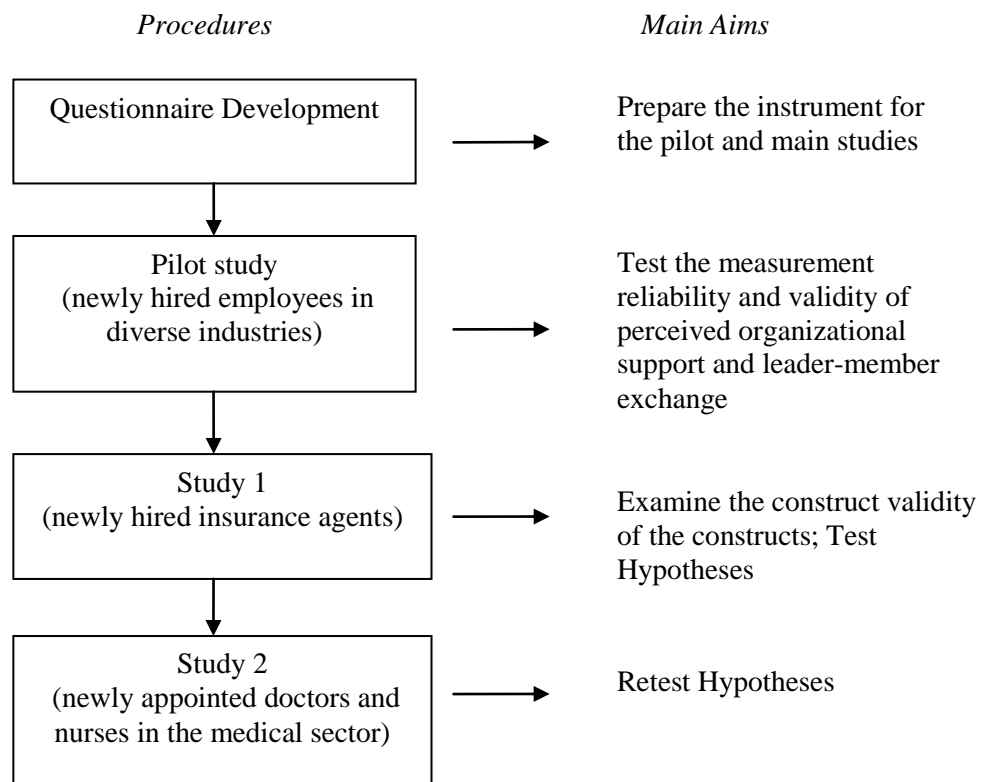
Having described the research approach, strategy and methods, the discussion now turns to present research procedures, followed by a profile of the research samples.

As presented in Figure 5.2 which gives an overview of the research procedure adopted, this research involved four steps. First of all, the instrument was carefully developed. Then, a pilot study was conducted through a web-based survey with the aim of testing the validity of variables representing two essential constructs, i.e. POS and LMX,

and of deciding on the number of response options.

After reviewing the results of the pilot study, two independent surveys were performed, namely Study 1 and Study 2. Study 1 was conducted to examine the validity and reliability of the constructs which had not been examined in the context of China, and also to test the hypotheses deduced from the existing theory. Study 2 was to replicate the research in order to provide confidence about the proposed relationships in the research model in a very different setting and to improve the reliability and generalizability of those results gained in Study 1. The details of research procedures in each study are described in the following sections.

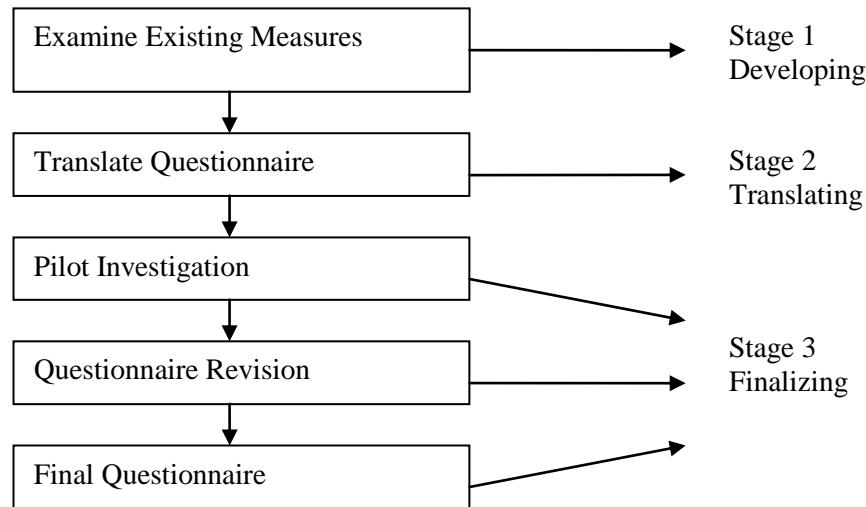
Figure 5.2 Research procedure for this thesis



5.3.1 Questionnaire Development

The overview stages of developing the instrument for the present research is presented in Figure 5.3, including the stages of developing, translating and finalizing.

Figure 5.3 The process of questionnaire development



5.3.1.1 Stage 1 Developing

As suggested by Churchill (1979), there are a number of methods used to develop an instrument, such as literature review, existing surveys, focus groups, and in-depth interviews. In this research, existing validated measurement scales were incorporated into the present research design to capture the different concepts in the current research. This method was suggested by Punch (2005) who said that:

Research results from different studies are more easily compared, and integrated and synthesized, if the same measuring instrument from a central variable has been used... I would not recommend developing a new measure, especially if a reasonable instrument is already available. (p. 93-94)

As an example, there are an abundant number of empirical studies that have applied existing measures across a variety of contexts (e.g. Chen and Tjosvold, 2007; Hui et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2005; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009).

A comprehensive literature review was thus conducted mainly based on academic journals and books, covering areas of social exchange theory, POS, LMX, and newcomer organizational socialization via Google Scholar Search Engine and major academic databases in the areas of business/economics and education, such as ABI, EBSCOhost, Emerald Database and Ovid Online. The following key concepts and constructs involved in

the research model were used either alone or in combinations: newcomer, organizational socialization, organizational socialization tactics, newcomer proactive behaviour, information seeking, social exchange, POS, LMX, socialization outcomes. It is worth noting that two of the most popular Chinese academic databases were also used: Ilib and Weipu, which include the most important Chinese academic journals and periodicals such as *Advances in Psychological Science* and *Acta Psychology Sinica*.

Moreover, considering that the research context is China, the existing indigenous Chinese measures which have been applied and validated in Chinese samples were initially to be given priority in the choice of measures. However, given there were no indigenous Chinese measures available at the time of the research planning, measures which had western origins but have been well-established and cross-culturally validated, especially in Asian contexts, were thus given priority in the selection for the instrument. The criteria to select the measurement scales lay in the empirical support from the previous literature.

5.3.1.2 Stage 2 Translating

Since the original measurements were developed in the context of western countries, but conducted in the context of China, the quality of the instrument translation process would play a significant role in ensuring the quality of this research. Therefore, the forward-backward method suggested by Brislin (1986) was applied to ensure the quality of the translated instrument. Specifically, three bilingual master students in a UK University were initially invited to help translate the initial questionnaire in English into Chinese. All translators were blind to the study's hypotheses, and they were required to translate independently. Before translation, the researcher clarified two criteria for translation, including 1) understandable and accurate in both spelling and meaning in Chinese, and 2) clear and simple in the sentence structure of each item.

During this process, the translators had problems translating three statements: (1) I usually know where I stand with managers; (2) My working relationship with my manager is effective; and (3) The organization values my contributions to its well-being. For clarification, one native English speaker was asked to paraphrase these three sentences. Then, the paraphrased sentences were discussed with translators and one professional translator in a Chinese university to clarify the meanings of those three sentences. After developing the Chinese version of the instrument, another three bilingual master students

were invited to translate from Chinese into English. Therefore, a back-translated instrument was obtained.

In comparing the initial instrument and back-translated instrument, an evaluation form (see Appendix 1) was designed to assess the equivalency of the original and back-translated instruments, based on the suggestion of Chen (2003). Afterwards, the evaluation form was sent to four Human Resource Development/Management (HRD/M) lecturers in a UK university. All four were native English speakers. Following the suggestion of Banville et al. (2000), statistical techniques were used to look into the psychometric quality of the instrument translation through comparing the spelling and meaning of each item in the original and the back-translated instruments. Those items were assessed through 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

On examining the feedback from the HRD/M lecturers, the average score for all the statements was found to be or above 3 (medium), which meant that the translated questionnaire was similar to the original instrument in both spelling and meaning. After discussion with the HRD/M lecturers, some expressions in the questionnaire were modified in order to make it much more proper and accurate. Finally, one editor of a leading newspaper organization in China was invited to check the translated questionnaire, particularly in content and Chinese wording.

5.3.1.3 Stage 3 Finalizing

Since it is suggested that the survey questionnaire should be tested before being fully launched (Churchill, 1979), a pilot investigation was performed. Firstly, in order to check the content validity³ of the measurement, the translated questionnaire was first sent to 17 participants in China to investigate whether the items in the questionnaire were understandable and clear. This would find simple typographical errors (e.g. in punctuation) promptly to avoid problems in the full-scale survey.

Among the 17 participants, 3 were HRM/D managers, 1 was an HRM specialist, and the others were new employees in organizations without any experience in the HR area. None of the participants were told about the hypotheses of the research. The comments provided by those participants indicated four potential problems: (1) some items in the questionnaire shared similar meanings; (2) the items were not in any particular order or grouping; (3) there were some sensitive items in the questionnaire (e.g. I am actively

³The definition of content validity will be presented later in section 5.4.2.

looking for a job outside); (4) overall, the questionnaire was too long.

Based on the suggestions of Punch (2005), it was decided to keep the similar items within the construct as it may be detrimental to delete items from the original design in case this affects internal reliability and construct validity. However, in order to present items in a clearer structure, the items were grouped.

5.3.2 Pilot Study: Newly Hired Employees in Diverse Industries

There were two main purposes for conducting the pilot study. The first was to investigate the construct validity⁴ of two essential variables, i.e. POS and LMX, in a Chinese sample. The reason for focusing on POS and LMX in the pilot study was because these two variables were developed from the same theoretical root of social exchange theory, and shared many conceptual similarities, as described in Chapter 3 (section 3.3). In fact, some studies have demonstrated strong mutual relationships between those two variables (e.g. Wayne et al., 1997). It was thus not clear whether these two types of social exchange differed in the eyes of Chinese newcomers.

The second purpose was to investigate the range of response choices. As is seen in the organizational studies, some authors applied a 7-point Likert-type scale to assessing POS and LMX (e.g. Wayne et al., 1997; Rhoades et al., 2001), and others used a 5-point Likert-type scale. There was no widely preferred approach. However, in order to make a decision about the type of scale in the main study, a 5-point Likert scale was tested in the pilot study. To examine the range of response choices, Pett et al. (2003) suggested that the researcher needed to consider ‘how many response options are needed to allow subjects to discriminate meaningfully,’ but also pointed out that this was up to researcher’s subjective decision. In this pilot study, the frequencies of responses on each item were examined. The reasoning behind this is that a large number of responses in one or more categories may suggest a need to break down the Likert scale to obtain a finer response.

5.3.2.1 Pilot Study: Research Procedure

A survey was carried out from November 2007 to February 2008 using a web-based interface. The reasons for using the Internet as the medium were:

⁴ The definition of the construct validity will be demonstrated in section 5.4.2.

- (1) The Internet has become more and more widespread in use during daily life and work;
- (2) An Internet sample was expected to be much larger and more demographically diverse than traditional samples without the restriction of geographic location and type of industry;
- (3) Recently studies have found that no significant differences between samples recruited through the web and samples recruited face-to-face from companies or via postal questionnaires in terms of sex, age or education;
- (4) Using the Internet as a medium to administer a survey is considered to be cost-effective and less time-consuming for both participants and investigators. (Hewson et al., 2003, p.28).

Moreover, when participants complete an online survey, all the information can be automatically stored in a database, and data entry errors that often happen in traditional paper-and-pencil surveys can be avoided.

Clearly, the potential benefits of utilizing the Internet make the idea of an Internet-based approach very attractive for investigators short on resources or budget. However, it is worth noting whether Internet sampling can be representative of a larger group is still a conversational concern for academics. A web-based survey is more inclined to be criticized for the sampling bias caused by Internet access availability and low response rate (De Vaus, 2002). Considering these potential weaknesses, only the two essential variables (i.e. POS and LMX) were focused in the pilot study, in the expectation of improving the response rate.

Regarding the sampling approach, 240 invitation emails were sent with a link to the web-based survey to the Chinese alumni of a UK university. Also, an invitation email was sent to the researcher's previous classmates and colleagues in China and asked for their support in forwarding the web survey to their newly hired colleagues. Hewson et al. (2003) indicated that the research can be more under control by using email, and suggested that "it is likely to help reduce biases due to factors such as volunteer effects and frequent-user effects" (p. 81). However, although it is generally assumed that the participants express genuine feelings or perceptions towards the questions in the survey, Hewson et al. (2003) suggested that it was impossible to judge participants' attitudes towards a web-based survey by tracking their responses as in a traditional pen-and-pencil survey and to control the conditions for participants to do the survey. Furthermore, as it was hard to know

whether all potential contacts received the survey links attached in the email, it was not possible to calculate an accurate response rate. However, this does not necessarily imply that response rate will be low. In fact, it is reported that a web-based survey can yield response rates ‘at least equal to both personal and telephone interviews and at a much lower cost’ if well planned and conducted’ (De Vaus, 2002, p. 127).

5.3.2.2 Pilot Study: Research Sample

A sample of 191 newcomers participated in the pilot study. The respondents worked in a variety of industries in China, including state-owned enterprises (16, 8.4%), foreign invested organizations (82, 42.9%), public service sectors (e.g. education institutions, government, hospitals) (64, 33.5%) and others (e.g. joint venture, private organizations) (29, 15.2%). The sample consisted of 96 (50.3%) female and 95 (49.7%) male respondents, with 157 (82.2%) participants under the age of 30.

5.3.3 Study 1: Newly Hired Insurance Agents

There were two purposes for conducting Study 1. One was to examine the construct validity of all of the independent variables (i.e. organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking) and dependent variables (i.e. social integration, task mastery and social integration), which had not been investigated on a Chinese sample. The other purpose was to make a preliminary examination of the proposed hypotheses.

5.3.3.1 Study 1: Research Procedure

5.3.3.1.1 *Pre-contact*

Research locations for Study 1 were first restricted to Shenzhen, Xiamen, Shanghai and Beijing. There were several reasons for this initial sampling frame. First, they were large cities with significant influences in their local areas. Second, these were among the fastest developing areas in China with relatively high employee mobility. Third, due to the consideration of costs and time, personal networking in those regions played a key role to motivate the participation.

Initially, 12 organizations and public sectors in those regions were contacted by

sending invitation emails to HR departments. In the email, the research objectives and potential benefits for the participants and organizations were included. Follow-up letters were sent to those units which did not reply one week later. A promise was given to guarantee the confidentiality of the feedback. After one month, six organizations showed interest in the research. However, after negotiation, only one insurance organization was willing to participate by using the intended questionnaire, under a condition that formal reports be presented afterwards.

5.3.3.1.2 Preliminary Interview

Preliminary interviews were first conducted in February 2008 with one senior HR manager and one training manager in that organization to obtain general information about the role of supervisor and organization during newcomer socialization. The interviews revealed that the organization had a consistent structured system for newly hired insurance agents: each was required to attend a two-day intensive course at the training centre usually after a three-month orientation in each branch. During these three months, newcomers were guided by their supervisors in their daily job. Each morning of a working day, newcomers were required to have a brief meeting with their supervisors, and supervisors were expected to give feedback and provide guidance to improve newcomers' performance. Therefore, it was clear that social interactions between newcomers and supervisors were frequent in this organization.

5.3.3.1.3 Questionnaire Administration in Local Branches

After preliminary interviews, support was gained from the senior HR manager in that insurance organization to administer the developed questionnaire (Appendix 2) in November 2008. The senior HR manager first contacted two HR managers and asked them to support the process of administering the survey under the guidance of the researcher. The HR managers were from the departments of Talent Management and Performance & Salary respectively. To promote participation and to speed up data collection, questionnaire administration was conducted by those two HR managers. However, it was explained to them that all the responses of participants would be used for academic research only, with no personal information revealed, and that they were blind to the research hypotheses. Then, the two HR managers were asked to send memoranda to managers in local branches, requesting their support to select newcomers randomly to participate in this survey.

Specifically, newcomers in each local branch were issued a time to complete the

survey. The newcomers worked within multilevel, goal-based work teams, with at most two years of service in the current branches. When participants received the questionnaire, a cover letter was attached to reassure them that participation was important for the organization to understand their work attitudes and perceptions, and that all responses would be treated as anonymous and confidential. Once the questionnaires had been completed, local managers collected them and posted them to the two HR managers who later posted them to the researcher. Since this study involved newcomers in seven different cities working in seven branches of that insurance organization, the data collection process lasted up to five months until March 2009. The initial research aim was to access all newcomers in those branches, but since the researcher was not able to have access to demographic data from the organization's HR information system, it was understandably not clear precisely how many newcomers actually received notification of this research.

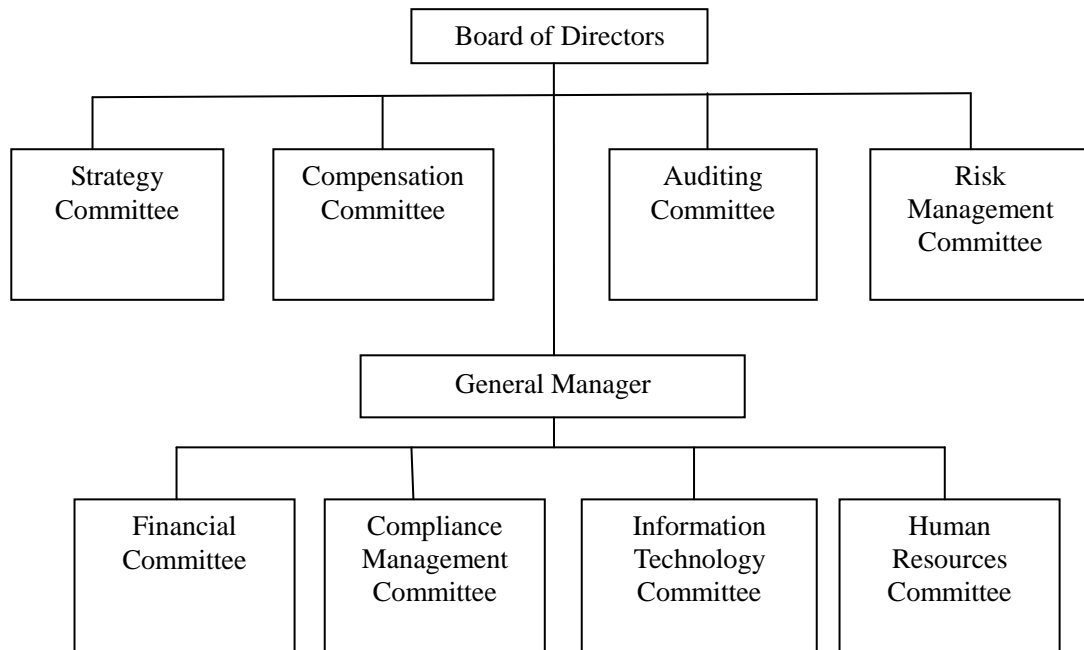
5.3.3.2 Study 1: Organizational Context

After gaining the membership in WTO in late 2001, the Chinese insurance market has undergone considerable change and become a significant contributor to nation's financial performance. It is certainly one of the most promising markets in the world as China has more than 20% of world population but only accounts for 2.5% of global insurance market share (*DBS Group Research*, 2010).

The insurance corporation examined in Study 1 is one of the largest life insurance organizations in south China. The organization structure is demonstrated in Figure 5.4. Within this organization, there are over 5000 branches and roughly 65,000 employees working within a variety of divisions, including administration, compensation and performance, training and development, information technology and audit. The insurance corporation is ranked among 'China's Top 500 Enterprises', and among 'China's Top 500 Enterprises in the Service Industry'. It has also won a number of rewards, such as the 'International Gold Star for Quality' and 'Award for Enterprises with Outstanding Contribution'.

Generally speaking, the HR practices in this organization cover four main functions: training and development, performance evaluation and rewards, recruitment, and employment relationships. It is reported that substantial investment has been spent on employees' training and learning. This organization has dedicated itself to support employee development in fulfilling its duty as a responsible employer.

Figure 5.4 Organizational structure in the insurance organization



5.3.3.3 Study 1: Organizational Socialization in the Insurance Organization

Currently, the organization employs a variety of supportive practices to facilitate newcomer adjustment. For example, the organization has designed structured induction training programmes. To be specific, each of newcomers is required to attend a two-day intensive training course at the training centre usually after a three-month orientation in his/her respective branch. During these three months the newcomers are required to pass the initial performance assessment to ensure that they have achieved acceptable performance and abilities to be certified as an insurance agent.

In order to gain a general picture about newcomers' opinions towards the orientation package provided in this organization, with the support of the training manager, the author had the opportunity to administer an open-ended questionnaire during the two-day intensive training session in March 2008. The designed questions included 'what do you think of this newcomer training session?' and 'what are your opinions towards the role of supervisor and organization in your adjustment?' Before participants filled in the questionnaire, they were given an introduction to the study and informed that their participation was voluntary and that their individual responses were considered to be confidential. All together, a total of 22 questionnaires were successfully used, with a response rate of 100 percent (22/22). The sample covered 6 (27 %) male and 16 (73 %) female participants.

female between the ages of 21 and 34. The average organizational tenure was 3.8 months.

Based on the feedback from those 22 newcomers who attended the newcomer induction training session, it was found that most of the newcomers felt satisfied with the training programme and with the support provided by supervisors and the organization. The results are briefly summarized and presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Results of preliminary survey in the insurance organization

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Responses from participants</i>
1, What do you think of this newcomer training session?	Extended the professional knowledge and information; Improve communication skills; Gained confidence, and reduce uncertainty and stress; Learnt how to improve job performance; learnt about the individual development plan; Understood the development of the organization and business.
2, What are your opinions towards the role of supervisor and organization in your adjustment?	Give guidance on managing tasks and cope with psychological stress; Provide support by giving professional information and resources; Share relevant experiences; Stimulate and encourage me, especially when I meet problems; Being a model for me to learn how to do the tasks; Serve as a link for me to communicate with other colleagues and to help me integrate into the group environment.

5.3.3.4 Study 1: Research Sample

Based on the feedback of the HR managers in local branches, they administered 320 questionnaires to newcomers, and a total of 186 questionnaires were sent back to the researcher (58.1% response rate). After deleting those with missing data, 177 complete questionnaires were submitted for analysis. The demographic information was obtained from the first part of the questionnaire, and presented in Table 5.5. Among the participants, 123 (69.5%) were women and 54 (30.5%) were men. The average age was 26.7 years ($SD=4.0$), with 85.9% participants below 30. The average organizational tenure was 13.1 months ($SD=7.2$). Among the participants, 50.3% had been with the organization less than 12 months and all of the others had been with the organization less than or around 24 months. The education level was moderate with 48.6% participants having a college degree or above.

Table 5.5 Demographic information of research sample in Study 1
(Newly hired insurance agents)

Characteristic	No.	Percent
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	123	69.5%
Male	54	30.5%
<i>Age (Mean= 26.7, SD = 4.0)</i>		
<i>Organizational Tenure (Mean= 13.1 months, SD =7.2)</i>		
N=177		

5.3.4 Study 2: Newly Appointed Doctors and Nurses in the Medical Sector

In order to provide more evidence and confidence about whether the results in Study 1 could be generalized to a sample from a very different organizational context, Study 2 was conducted. However, it should be pointed out that the focus here was not on comparing the results in Study 1 and Study 2, but on understanding the proposed relationships between variables. Admittedly, such a comparison could be of interest with the research samples coming from different industries, but at this stage the primary research focus for this study was to replicate the research and to retest the proposed hypotheses described in the research model.

5.3.4.1 Study 2: Research Procedure

Through a personal network, a medical university located in southeast China showed willingness to support this study, with the questionnaire to be administered in their evening courses. A principal lecturer in that university was informed of the purpose and significance of the study.

To promote participation, questionnaire administration was conducted by that principal lecturer at the evening courses. The data were collected at two points in time. First of all, 310 questionnaires were distributed to participants coming from six evening classes when they registered in March 2009. When participants received the questionnaire, a cover letter was attached to reassure them that all responses would be used for academic research only, with no personal information revealed. Once the participants finished filling

the questionnaire, the principal lecturer collected the questionnaires and posted them back to the researcher for subsequent analysis. It was reported that participants spent around 15 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. At that time, 189 responses were collected successfully (61.0% response rate). In July 2009, by following the same procedures, 200 questionnaires were administered to participants from another four classes just before they attended an examination; 168 complete questionnaires were sent back (84.0% response rate). The data collection process was similar at both time points, as were the research samples. All participants were doctors and nurses who had working experience, and were attending the evening courses for self-improvement. Most worked in a range of hospitals in southeast China.

5.3.4.2 Study 2: Organizational Socialization in the Medical Sector

Based on the post-doc interview with the principal lecturer in that university, it is suggested that a formal orientation of newly qualified medical staff in the hospital setting is relatively short. It may only take one or two days to understand the basic work conditions, benefits and hospital regulations. Then, a newcomer is assigned to a specific department and usually works along with an experienced member from one week to several months, depending on the job role. During this period, newcomers learn mostly on the job. In some hospitals, there is an evaluation after three months to show whether newcomers have achieved the required performance standard. After that, newcomers still mainly work with experienced staff for several months, but during this period, they may try to do some additional tasks on their own under the supervision of those experience staff.

5.3.4.3 Study 2: Research Sample

Altogether, 357 questionnaires were returned from this medical university (70.0% response rate). After deleting the responses whose organizational tenure was more than two years, there were 251 responses, of which 245 were completed, which were submitted for subsequent data analysis. Among those participants, 173 (70.6%) were women and 72 (29.4%) were men, with an average age of 25.0 years ($SD=3.2$) and the average organizational tenure of 17.7 months ($SD=5.5$). Their overall education was higher than that for sample 1, up to 93.2% of participants having a college degree or higher qualification.

Table 5.6 Demographic information of research sample in Study 2
(Newly appointed doctors and nurses)

Characteristic	No.	Percent
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	173	70.6%
Male	72	29.4%
<i>Age (Mean= 25.0, SD = 3.2)</i>		
<i>Organizational Tenure (Mean= 17.7 months, SD =5.5)</i>		
N=245		

5. 4. Measures and Their Validation

In quantitative research, it is essential to ensure the quality of measurement. A question is thus raised: how do we know whether the instrument in the current research is “good”? Reliability and validity are two essential criteria (Bryman, 2005). Therefore, before describing each type of measurement used in this research, it seems necessary to start with a closer look at the concept of the reliability and validity of measurements which are briefly described in the following sections.

5.4.1 Measurement Reliability

Measurement reliability concerns the extent to which a measurement scale is internally consistent and stable within itself (Hair et al., 2006). In other words, reliability refers to the internal consistency of its measurements. One of the most widely used ways to assess the internal consistency is to use Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, the mean of all possible split-half⁵ coefficients (Cronbach, 1951). It is recommended that for each set of items, in order to provide acceptable reliability, the threshold value of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient needs to be around or above 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). To check the reliability of each measurement scale, the author used SPSS 16.0 to calculate Cronbach’s alpha for each scale.

⁵ Split-half coefficient refers to the result of correlating the score on one half of a scale’s items with the score on the other half (Cortina, 1993).

5.4.2 Measurement Validity

5.4.2.1 Content Validity

Content validity is considered as one of the most important ways to establish for a measuring instrument about the extent to which a construct item represents an intended content to be measured. Simply put, content validity is a subjective judgement checking whether a group of indicators are thought to measure the proposed construct. Two of the main criteria for checking content validity are the representative ability of the items and the appropriate methods to check the measurement (Nunnally, 1978).

This study satisfied those two requirements by first extensively reviewing the related literature and designing the initial measurement through the selection of existing items which have already been tested and validated in the literature. Also, the pilot test was conducted when developing the measurement to ensure that each item made sense in the context of China (see section 5.3.1). Therefore, it was reasonable to assume the content validity in this research was achieved.

5.4.2.2 Construct Validity

The construct validity of an instrument can be divided into two sub-types: convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is evaluated by examining whether the measurement items converge together where the theory suggests that they should. Discriminant validity tests whether there is any cross-loading of items in one hypothesized dimension on other dimensions, meaning that dimensions are expected to be fairly unrelated and there should be little cross-loading (Hair et al., 2006).

Pett et al. (2003, p. 2) suggested using factor analysis to examine construct validity. The obtained solutions from factor analysis are expected to provide evidence of the construct validity of the researched instrument. In fact, factor analysis is a common method for establishing convergent and discriminant validity applied in numerous empirical organizational studies (e.g. Eisenberger et al., 1986; Liden and Maslyn, 1998; Scandura and Graen, 1984). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are frequently applied for checking construct validity in organizational studies. EFA is understood as a common method of searching for the underlying structure, especially for the purpose of exploration, whereas CFA can be employed to validate the construct structure when the measurement instrument items have a strong theoretical basis (Hair et

al., 2006).

5.4.2.2.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis in Pilot Study

For the pilot study, a CFA was adopted because both variables were considered to be well-developed constructs and had previously been examined and validated across a variety of contexts including China. The software of LISREL 8.5 was applied for the analyses in consistent with the common practices.

To examine whether Chinese employees can distinguish POS from LMX, a one-factor model assuming that POS was the same as LMX was compared with a two-factor model assuming that POS was different from LMX. Following the suggestion of Anderson and Gerbing (1998), to test those competitive models, differences in the likelihood ratio chi-square (χ^2) values and other incremental or parsimony fit indices were assessed to demonstrate discriminant validity. When comparing models, if the change in χ^2 is significant with one degree of freedom difference, it indicates that the two-factor model provides a better fit (Anderson and Gerbing, 1998). Conversely, if the change in χ^2 is not significant, there is support for the one-factor model, indicating there is no significant difference between POS and LMX. As an example, Wayne et al. (1997) applied this method to test the discriminant validity of POS and LMX.

Browne and Cudeck (1993) also suggested the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) to estimate model fit between a one-factor model and a two-factor model. The RMSEA is known as a badness-of-fit measure, in which a lower value represents a better fit, in contrast to indices such like the comparative fit index (CFI) in which higher values are expected to present the improvement in fit by the specification of related multi-item constructs (Hair et al., 2006). In general, the value of RMSEA is expected to be below 0.08 to show an acceptable fitness (Browne and Cudeck, 1993).

In short, the values of differences in the likelihood ratio χ^2 and RMSEA were both used to assess discriminant validity of POS and LMX in the pilot study.

5.4.2.2.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis in Study 1

To examine the construct validity of other measurements which had not been examined in a Chinese sample before, a set of EFAs, one per construct based on the expected dimension of each construct, were conducted by using the software SPSS 16.0. The detailed analytical procedures are presented in the following sections.

Factorability

First of all, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was estimated and Bartlett's test of sphericity was performed to check the adequacy of doing factor analysis, following the advice of Pett et al. (2003) and Hair et al. (2006). KMO is 'a measure of sampling adequacy' that indicates the strength of the correlation-based relationships among items. High values for the KMO index are expected to indicate sampling adequacy for factor analysis. If the value of the KMO index is below 0.5, it is not considered proper to conduct factor analysis for the data (Pett et al., 2003). Bartlett's test of sphericity is used to test whether the items in the data are correlated (Pett et al., 2003). The null hypothesis is that the items are all uncorrelated, and a significant test result is expected (i.e. there is significant relationship among items).

Factor Extraction Methods

There are two methods used to extract factors, namely component analysis (also called principal component analysis) and common factor analysis. From Hair et al. (2006), the principal component analysis analyses the total variance present in a set of items, so that the extracted components or factors contain variance shared between items and variance unique to individual items; in common factor analysis, on the other hand, only the shared variance is used to extract factors. Hair et al. (2006) suggested that if unique variance is expected to be small compared to shared variance, then principal component analysis is more appropriate, otherwise common factor analysis should be used. They also commented that several empirical studies have shown the two approaches give similar results, so that a choice between the two may not be critical. Following the method used in previous organizational studies (e.g. Jones, 1986; Wayne et al., 1997; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009), the author selected principal component analysis in the present research. In other words, the total variances of the indicator were analyzed.

Rotational Method

Furthermore, in order to improve the interpretation of the extracted factors, a mathematical rotation of the factors becomes necessary (Pett et al., 2003). There are two kinds of rotations that can be applied, i.e. orthogonal rotation and oblique rotation. Compare with oblique rotation, orthogonal rotation (e.g. Varimax rotation) is far more common (e.g. Jones, 1986), possibly because it can generate easily interpretable output for

the data. However, orthogonal rotation assumes that there is no relationship between factors, and thus the axes defining the factors are maintained at 90 degrees to each other in factor space (Pett et al., 2003). Orthogonal rotation may not be appropriate for the present study as there are expected to be inter-term correlations among factors such as collective socialization tactics and content socialization tactics. If orthogonal rotation was applied, it is possible that the factor loadings could be distorted and thus the resulting factor structure may not be accurate (Pett et al., 2003). In line with those arguments, oblique rotation, which allows associations among factors, appeared to be more suitable and to provide information about the extent to which the factors were correlated with each other, and it was thus adopted in the present study.

In terms of the specific methods of conducting oblique rotation, there is no favourite method (Costello and Osborne, 2005). However, considering that it is faster to run Promax rotation than the direct Oblimin method, the method of Promax rotation was used in the present study. For the selection of a value for the Promax parameter kappa, Costello and Osborne (2005) indicated that it was acceptable to retain the default value of kappa (4) used in SPSS.

When conducting oblique rotation, both a factor pattern matrix and a factor structure matrix are produced in the SPSS output. Costello and Osborne (2005) suggested that there should be no substantive difference in the interpretations about those results. However, since Hair et al. (2006) suggested that most researchers report the results of the factor pattern matrix, it was decided to report results by presenting the factor loadings from the pattern matrix.

In order to be more confident about the construct structure of the factors investigated in this research, the author also followed the guidance of Pett et al. (2003), who suggested trying different methods and comparing the results of different factor analyses before deciding on a final solution for the extracted factors. Therefore, the widely used orthogonal Varimax rotation was used as a complementary method.

Criteria of Extracting Factors

To gain a meaningful and interpretable factor structure, the multiple criteria recommended by Pett et al. (2003) and Hair et al. (2006) were adopted. These included (1) theoretical interpretability based on prior studies with a conceptual foundation, with items retained being consistent with the content of other items loaded on the same factor; (2) the Kaiser criterion of the eigenvalues representing the amount of standardized variance of a

factor being greater than 1 (i.e. equivalent to or greater than the standardized variance of a single variable); (3) percent of variance extracted above or near to 50-60%; and (4) factor loadings greater than ± 0.4 for the target factors. An item was retained if it met the above four criteria. Pett et al. (2003) also suggested examining the scree plot of variance explained by component number when determining the extracted factors. This approach is claimed to be particularly reliable when sample sizes are large ⁶ (Gorsuch, 1983). However, in practice, the cut-off point where the scree begins is subjective and there is no consensus about this issue (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

5.4.3 Measurement in Pilot Study

5.4.3.1 Perceived Organizational Support

The six high-loading items of the survey of perceived organizational support (SPOS) scale in Eisenberger and his colleagues' (1986) measurement were considered in the pilot study, reflecting various aspects of the extent to which employees perceive organizational support. Example items are "the organization really cares about my well-being" and "the organization values my contributions to its well-being." Higher POS scores indicate greater perception of organizational support. This measurement was scored using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha was 0.86 in the pilot study.

5.4.3.2 Leader-Member Exchange

LMX was measured through the LMX-7 proposed by Scandura and Graen (1984). Example items are "my managers understand my problems and needs" and "my managers recognize my potential". Responses were scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha was 0.77 in the pilot study.

5.4.3.3 Results in Pilot Study

The descriptive results of the pilot study are presented in Table 5.7, including sample

⁶ Pett et al. (2003) suggest that 500 or more was a 'very good' or 'excellent' sample size for factor analysis, and that the sample size for the current research of around 200 was only fair-to-adequate. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), however, suggest that 300 or more is a good sample size, while smaller sample sizes as low as 150 can be adequate when some factor loadings are high and the factors are well defined.

size, mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alphas, and internal correlations between POS and LMX. As would be expected, POS was significantly and highly correlated with LMX (Pearson's $r = 0.65$).

Table 5.7 Means, standard deviations, internal correlations and measurement reliabilities (Pilot study)

	Mean	S.D.	1	2
1 Perceived organizational support (POS)	3.18	.69	(0.86)	
2 Leader-member exchange (LMX)	3.50	.55	.65**	(0.77)

N= 191, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The Cronbach's alphas for POS and LMX are presented on the diagonal.

In the confirmatory factor analysis to test the distinctiveness of POS and LMX, a one-factor model in which the loadings of all the items of POS and LMX to one factor was compared with a two-factor model where the loadings of POS and LMX items were treated as two separate factors. The result showed that the one-factor model did not fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 213.21$ ($p < .01$), $df = 65$, RMSEA = .11). In contrast, for the two-factor model, $\chi^2 = 154.48$ ($p < .01$) with 64 degrees of freedom, and RMSEA was .08, which indicated that a two-factor model reasonably fitted the data. Given those indications, it suggested that POS and LMX were perceived as two different factors in the context of China, confirming the result found in the western countries (Erdogan et al., 2004; Dulac et al., 2008; Wayne et al., 1997; Wayne et al., 2002).

In addition, the results in the pilot study showed that most of the participants selected point 2 (i.e. disagree) or point 4 (i.e. agree) for each item. This suggested that it would be important to have more points on the scale for an item to allow participants to distinguish between disagree or agree and a nearby level of agreement. It also appeared to be reasonable to allow participants to continue to have a middle choice within 'agree' and within 'disagree'. A 7-point Likert scale was thus applied in Study 1 and Study 2 to have a scale including 'moderately disagree' and 'moderately agree'.

5.4.4 Measurement in Study 1

5.4.4.1 Organizational Socialization Tactics.

Consistent with the method of Cable and Parson (2001)⁷, Jones' (1986) 12 high-loading items socialization scale was selected to measure the organizational socialization tactics. This scale has been widely used in the socialization studies (e.g. Gruman et al., 2006; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009). Participants were required to report from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Example items are: (1) In the last six months, I have been extensively involved with other new recruits in common, job related training activities; (2) There is a clear pattern in the way one role leads to another or one job assignment leads to another in this organization; (3) Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me personally.

Given the fact that this measurement had not been previously examined in the Chinese context, EFA was thus applied to check the convergent and discriminant validity of this measurement scale. The results indicated that the KMO value was 0.78, meeting Kaiser's (1974) 'middling' criteria, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was highly significant ($\chi^2 = 714.91$, $df=66$, $p<.001$). The results suggested that it was proper to precede with a factor analysis for the data. Thus, 12 items were submitted to principal component factor analysis.

In a preliminary analysis, the results produced three factors with eigenvalues over than 1.0 that explained 58.7% of the variation in the data. However, the overall structure was not clear as one item (i.e. I can predict my future career path in this organization by observing other people's experiences) which had been assumed to be grouped in the factor of content socialization tactics heavily cross-loaded on the factor of social aspect of tactics. For dealing with the multiple-loading problem, Kline (2000) suggested eliminating the multiple-loading items for the sake of reducing difficulty in interpreting the meaning of the resulting scales. Further, Pett et al. (2003) suggested checking internal consistency to solve this problem. Following their suggestions, this problematic item was first placed in the group of social aspect of tactics, when Cronbach's alpha for social aspect of tactics slightly dropped from .75 to .74. Cronbach's alpha for the group of content socialization tactics with the item was .70, and this increased to .75 when the item was removed. Therefore,

⁷ In the study of Cable and Parson (2001, p.12), they selected 12 items from the 30-item Jones' original socialization scale: 2 items from each of the six socialization tactics that loaded highest on Jones' proposed socialization factors (i.e. context, content and social aspects).

according to Pett et al.'s (2003) suggestions of selecting the items most conceptually close to each other and rejecting items that caused problems with internal consistency, it was considered appropriate to delete the item.

Then, the remaining 11 items were resubmitted for factor analysis. As presented in Table 5.8, the first factor of context tactics explained 12.3% of the variance of data, a second factor of content aspect tactics 10.3% of the variance of data, and the third factor of social aspect of tactics 38.5% of the variance of data. These three factors together emerged with the eigenvalues greater than 1.0, explaining a total of 61.1% variance of the data, and the other factors with eigenvalues below 1.0 each only explained around or below 8% variance of the data. A three-factor solution was clearly shown.

As demonstrated in Table 5.8, although all the items had primary loadings over 0.4 in their respective factors, it was also noted that one item (i.e. I have been through a set of training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of job related skills) was cross-loaded on the factor of content aspect (0.32), although it had a strong primary loading of .74 on the factor of context tactics. This suggested that the item was more conceptually related with context tactics. For further confirmation, Cronbach's alpha of the group of items was checked with and without that item. The result demonstrated that the Cronbach's alphas of the factor context tactics dropped to 0.61 if item was eliminated but was 0.72 when the item was retained. Following Pett et al. (2003), this item was kept in the following analysis. Moreover, as described in Section 5.4.2.2.2, in order to gain the confidence about the construct structure of this measurement, a Varimax rotation was applied as a complementary method. The result is presented in Appendix 3, and it demonstrated similar solutions to the use of Promax rotation. This confirmed the 3-dimension conceptualization of the organizational socialization tactics.

Table 5.8 Results of a factor analysis on organizational socialization tactics

<i>Items</i>	<i>Factors</i>		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>1 Context socialization tactics</i>			
I have been extensively involved with other new recruits in common, job related training activities.	.66	.05	.10
This organization puts all newcomers through the same set of learning experiences.	.62	-.02	.23
I have been through a set of training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of job related skills.	<u>.74</u>	<u>.32</u>	-.16
I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods.	.81	-.25	-.04
<i>2 Content socialization tactics</i>			
There is a clear pattern in the way one role leads to another or one job assignment leads to another in this organization.	-.02	.88	.00
The steps in the career ladder are clearly specified in this organization.	-.18	.93	.08
The way in which my progress through the organization will follow a fixed timetable of events has been clearly communicated to me.	.29	.57	-.09
<i>3 Social aspect socialization tactics</i>			
Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me personally.	.18	-.06	.73
My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to this organization.	.12	.01	.64
Experienced organizational members see advising or training newcomers as one of their main job responsibilities in this organization.	-.07	.20	.75
I am gaining a clear understanding of my role in this organization from observing my senior colleagues.	-.10	-.07	.78
<i>Percent of variance explained</i>	12.33%	10.26%	38.53%
<i>Cronbach's alpha for subscale</i>	0.72	0.75	0.75

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Loadings highlighted in bold indicate the factor on which the item was most associated.

Underlined values indicate a double loading on two factors.

Therefore, following the conceptualization of previous empirical studies (e.g. Jones, 1986; Cable and Parson, 2001; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009), the first factor was named as context socialization tactics, referring to the way in which an organization provides information to a newcomer. Here, the item with the highest loading (i.e. I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods) indicated that the need to become getting familiar with departmental procedures and work methods would contribute markedly to a positive score on this factor. Next came a set of training experiences specifically designed for newcomers, which meant that collective and formal tactics were likely to be related with the training experiences for newcomers. The other variables (i.e. job-related training activities with other new recruits, the same set of learning experiences) were also important in indicating collective and formal socialization tactics.

The second factor was named as content socialization tactics, standing for the content of the information that organizations provide to newcomers. For this factor, the highest loading variable was the perception of whether career steps were clearly specified. The clear communication of career development also contributed to a positive score on this factor.

The highest loading associated with the third factor of social aspect of organizational tactics was for the item on the likelihood of learning through observing more experienced colleagues, indicating that the more likely newcomers could gain access to the experienced members and learn from them, the more likely the organizational tactics were serial and investiture. The belief of whether experienced members provided support and help for newcomers increased the score on social aspect tactics. Finally, colleagues' support was also associated with the social aspect socialization tactics.

5.4.4.2 Newcomer Information Seeking

Major and Kozlowski's (1997) eight-item scale was used to measure how frequently newcomers take the initiative to seek information in a typical week. The scale covers information concerns with job related topics in general, procedures for the completion of work, how to handle problems on the job, specific work tasks, work priorities, how to use equipment and materials, quantity and quality of work, job duties and procedures. Example items are: "In a typical week, how frequently do you initiate conversations with your co-workers and supervisor about the procedures for the completion of work?", and "In a

typical week, how frequently do you initiate conversations with your co-workers and supervisor about the how to handle problems on the job?” Consistent with the previous study of Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000), items of newcomer information seeking were assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very infrequently) to 5 (very frequently). Higher scores indicate more frequency of information seeking behaviour. However, since this variable had not been tested in the context of China either, EFA was conducted.

The results revealed that the KMO value for this scale was 0.84, achieving Kaiser’s ‘meritorious’ level, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2(28) = 489.53, p < .001$), which indicated that it was proper to proceed with a factor analysis for the data.

Then, an EFA with oblique rotation was conducted. Surprisingly, the 8-item scale of Major and Kolzowski (1997) factored into two distinct factors in the Chinese sample as presented in Table 5.9. It was clear that the first five items loaded strongly in one factor accounting for 46.8% of the variance in the data, while the other three items loaded into a second factor explaining 14.8% of the variance in the data. The same result was also found using other rotation methods (e.g. Varimax rotation and Oblimin rotation). This unexpected finding may have been partly due to the fact that the three latter items (i.e. How to use equipment and materials; Quantity and quality of work; Job duties and procedures) all included two ideas that may easily create potential ambiguity and misunderstanding (Pett et al., 2003, p.39). However, since the questionnaire was administered by the local HR managers, unfortunately it was not possible to gain feedback about whether the participants had problems with the wording of the items.

The second factor did not appear to have a meaning, in terms of the meanings of the three associated items. For dealing with the unknown factor, Pett et al. (2003) suggested that, “if the researcher is having difficulty naming factors that are less meaningful or less congruent, perhaps those factors might best be considered for elimination” (p.210-211). Before making such a decision, Cronbach’s alpha for the 8-item factor and the 5-item factor were estimated. Cronbach’s alpha for the 8-item factor was 0.83 and that for the 5-item factor was 0.82, which indicated that the 5-item factor derived from the data was still internally consistent. Therefore, the three items in the second factor were discarded, and only the first five items in Table 5.9 were adopted for the subsequent analysis.

Table 5.9 Results of a factor analysis on newcomer information seeking

<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor I</i>	<i>Factor II</i>
In a typical week, how frequently do YOU initiate conversations with your coworkers and supervisor about the following topics:		
Job related topics in general	.87	-.13
Procedures for the completion of work.	.78	.13
How to handle problems on the job	.76	.02
Specific work tasks	.76	-.06
Work priorities	.67	.07
How to use equipment and materials	-.08	.80
Quantity and quality of work	.21	.66
Job duties and procedures	-.08	.89
<i>Percent of variance explained</i>	46.81%	14.75%
<i>Cronbach's alpha for subscale</i>	0.82	0.68

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Loadings highlighted in bold indicate the factor on which the item was most associated.

5.4.4.3 Perceived Organizational Support.

Consistent with that in the pilot study, POS was measured with six high-loading items of the scale developed by Eisenberger and his colleagues (1986). Participants answered those items on a seven-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). As this measurement was validated in the pilot study and previous Chinese studies (e.g. Chen et al., 2005; Cheung and Law, 2008; Hui et al., 2007; Liu, 2009), there was no need to use factor analysis here. Cronbach's alpha for the current study was 0.88.

5.4.4.4 Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-member exchange was measured by using the LMX-7 scale developed by Scandura and Graen (1984). Participants responded to those items on a seven-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Also, as this measurement had been validated in the pilot study and other previous studies had examined it in the context of China (e.g. Hui et al., 1999; Aryee and Chen, 2006; Law et al., 2000), the measurement scale was directly applied in Study 1. Cronbach's alpha of LMX for the current study was 0.80.

5.4.4.5 Newcomer Socialization Outcomes

As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.5), three typical socialization outcomes were discussed in the current research, namely social integration, task mastery and role clarity.

5.4.4.5.1 *Social Integration*

Social integration was measured via a 4-item Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree) proposed by Morrison (1993a). Example items include “I feel comfortable around my co-workers” and “The atmosphere in my immediate work group is friendly”. The alpha coefficient of this scale was .86 in the current sample.

5.4.4.5.2 *Task Mastery*

Employees’ task mastery was captured via Morrison’s (1993a) four items. Example samples included “I am confident about the adequacy of my job skills and abilities” and “I feel competent conducting my job assignments”. Participants indicated to what extent they agreed with those items on a seven-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). The alpha coefficient of this scale was .81 in the current sample.

5.4.4.5.3 *Role Clarity*

Role clarity was assessed by using the widely used Rizzo et al.’s (1970) six items, which has been examined and validated by some empirical studies (e.g. Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000; Gonzalez-Roma and Lloret, 1998). Example items include “I know what my responsibilities are” and “I feel certain about how much authority I have.” Participants responded to those items on a seven-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). The alpha coefficient of this scale was .88 in the current sample.

As noted, there were 14 items to measure social integration, task mastery and role clarity. Since these socialization outcome variables had not been examined in the context of China, EFA was used to assess the construct validity of those three outcome variables.

The results showed that the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.88, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(91) = 1422.60, p < .001$). Given these overall indicators, EFA was conducted with all 14 items. The first round result of factor analysis with oblique Promax rotation suggested that there were four factors with eigenvalues slightly greater than one, explaining up to 74.1% variance of the data. However, it was found that one item assessing role clarity (i.e. I know that I have divided

my time properly) cross-loaded with the factor of task mastery. Cronbach's alphas for the group of role clarity with that item cross-loaded was slightly increased with that item (.89) than without (.88), but the factor loading on the factor of task mastery (0.46) was also slightly higher than the loading on the factor of role clarity (0.40). Therefore, based on the suggestion of Pett et al. (2003) of only selecting the items with the most conceptual consistency, this item was excluded. One item (i.e. It seems to take me longer than planned to complete my job assignments.) was also problematic since this item only had a significant factor loading in a uninterpretable factor. Therefore, it was decided to delete this item as well.

Therefore, the remaining 12 items were resubmitted to run a second round of factor analysis. The factor loading matrix for this solution is presented in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Results of a factor analysis on socialization outcome variables

<i>Items</i>	<i>Factors</i>		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>1 Social integration</i>			
I feel comfortable around my co-workers.	.96	-.12	-.10
The atmosphere in my immediate work group is friendly.	.84	.13	-.10
People in my immediate work group help me find ways to do a better job.	.79	.08	-.03
My co-workers seem to accept me as one of them.	.84	-.16	.15
<i>2 Task mastery</i>			
I am confident about the adequacy of my job skills and abilities.	.08	.88	-.04
I feel competent conducting my job assignments.	-.16	.90	.00
I rarely make mistakes when conducting my job assignments.	.01	.83	-.00
<i>3 Role clarity</i>			
I feel certain about how much authority I have.	-.12	-.08	.89
Clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.	.24	.27	.51
Expectation is clear about what has to be done.	-.03	-.03	.93
I know what my responsibilities are.	.20	.08	.57
I know exactly what is expected of me.	-.06	.00	.92
<i>Percent of variance explained</i>	15.16%	9.51%	47.21%
<i>Cronbach's alpha for subscale</i>	0.86	0.81	0.88

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Loadings highlighted in bold indicate the factor on which the item was most associated.

The result demonstrated that 12 items were loaded significantly on the appropriate factor without cross-loading, and all items had important factor loadings over 0.4. The initial factor of social integration explained 15.2% of the variance of the data, the second factor of task mastery 9.5% of the variance of the data, and a third factor of role clarity 47.2% of the variance of the data. All together, three factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, explaining a total of 71.9% of the variance of the data.

Following a previous conceptual study (Feldman, 1981), the first factor was named as social integration, indicating the status of being a group member and getting along well with other co-workers. As shown, newcomers' perception of whether it is comfortable to be in the work group was most closely associated with the level of social integration. A friendly atmosphere in the work team and support from co-workers were also significantly reflected in this factor. In addition, the perceived treatment to newcomers as team members was also included in this factor.

Task mastery was present in the second factor, which suggested self-confidence to manage the task. The perceived ability to handle job assignments had the highest loadings. Self belief about the competency of job skills was also an important component within this factor. To what extent that individuals make mistakes in the work was also associated with individuals' task mastery. Not surprisingly, if individuals keep making mistakes, they are likely to feel stressful and have doubts about their own abilities which may further damage their self-confidence.

Role clarity, the last factor, is also concerned with job and task. This factor was associated with the extent in which individuals understand their job expectations, priorities, responsibilities, objectives and time allocation for job assignments. Among these indicators, the strongest-loading variable was awareness of expectation towards the job. Next was the concern of work authorities. The need for understanding job responsibility was also involved in this factor. The weakest-loading indicator was planned goals and objectives.

5.4.5 Measurement in Study 2

Since all the measurement scales had been examined and validated in Study 1, those measures were thus applied in Study 2. Table 5.11 presents the summary of measurements applied in both studies. Full items of each measurement are shown in Appendix 2.

Table 5.11 Summary of measurements in Study 1 and Study 2

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Original Source</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Scale</i>
Organizational socialization tactics	Jones (1986)	Cable and Parsons (2001); Takeuchi and Takeuchi (2009)	seven-point Likert scale
Newcomer information seeking	Major and Kozlowski (1997)	Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000)	five-point Likert scale
Perceived organizational support (POS)	Eisenberger et al. (1986)	Eisenberger et al. (2001); Shore and Wayne (1993); Eisenberger et al. (1997); Hui et al. (2007)	seven-point Likert scale
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	Scandura and Graen (1984)	Wayne et al. (1997); Aryee and Chen (2006); Law et al. (2000); Ferris et al. (2009); Loi et al. (2009).	seven-point Likert scale
Social integration	Morrison (1993a)	Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000); Chan and Schmitt (2000); Joksaari and Nurmi (2009)	seven-point Likert scale
Task mastery	Morrison (1993a)	Chan and Schmitt (2000)	seven-point Likert scale
Role clarity	Rizzo et al. (1970)	Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000); Gonzalez-Roma and Lloret, (1998)	seven-point Likert scale

5.4.6 Control Variables

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were used as controlling variables in the present research because a number of studies have shown that demographic variables are significantly associated with employees' characteristic perceptions, behaviours and attitudes (Tsui and O'Reilly, 1989). Specifically, the influences of gender, age and organizational tenure on newcomer socialization outcomes were often controlled for in socialization studies (e.g. Kim et al., 2005). For example, gender difference was controlled because it has been found that female employees may have less job satisfaction than males in urban China (Loscocco and Bose, 1998). Age was assessed because it was

considered that older employees, in general, may have more experience in doing the job and become more proactive (Gruman et al., 2005). Also, employees with longer organizational tenure are found to be more likely to understand organizational policy and practice (Kim et al., 2005).

On the basis of these arguments, newcomers' gender, age and organizational tenure were controlled for in the current research. The control variable of gender was included using a dummy variable, coded 0 for male and 1 for female. Participants were required to fill in their real age, and organizational tenure was measured by the exact number of months participants had worked in the current organization. The control variables were included in all subsequent analyses.

Also, since both organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking were proposed to influence socialization outcomes, newcomer information seeking was thus controlled for when analysing the impacts of organizational socialization tactics on socialization outcomes, and similarly organizational socialization tactics were controlled for when analysing the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes.

5. 5 Some Considerations about Sampling and Measures

Having discussed the research procedures, samples and measurements, it is necessary to mention two issues. The first concerns the method used for research sampling. Normally, there are two basic types of sampling technique widely used in the social research, namely 'probability' sampling and 'non-probability' sampling. The basic idea of probability sampling is that each person in the population of interest has a known chance of being part of the sample (Hair et al., 2006). A probability sample is randomly selected from lists of those in the population of research interest - a sampling frame. If there is no sampling frame available, non-probability sampling becomes an alternative choice. Although it is strongly suggested that probability sampling is used, Bryman (2005) indicated that "quite a lot of research is based on non-probability samples... due to the impossibility or extreme difficulty of obtaining probability samples" (p. 94). In the present research, since there were no complete lists of potential participants in practice to allow the use of probability sampling, non-probability sampling was used instead. Because the intention was to recruit all eligible individuals at the chosen sites at the chosen time points, the sampling method

used is known as consecutive sampling. It is considered to be a practical and suitable alternative to random sampling, because the recruited sample is likely to be representative of the underlying population (Lunsford and Lunsford, 1995).

Second, all the measurement scales were assessed using 7-point Likert scales for individual items, and thus they were ordinal data. This is inconsistent with the assumption that when assessing moderating effects, the moderating variable needs to be continuous (also called interval) (Cohen et al., 2003). Indeed, it is inconsistent with the requirement that independent variables in regression models are either continuous or binary (coded 0-1) (Cohen et al., 2003). However, Hicks (2004) commented that:

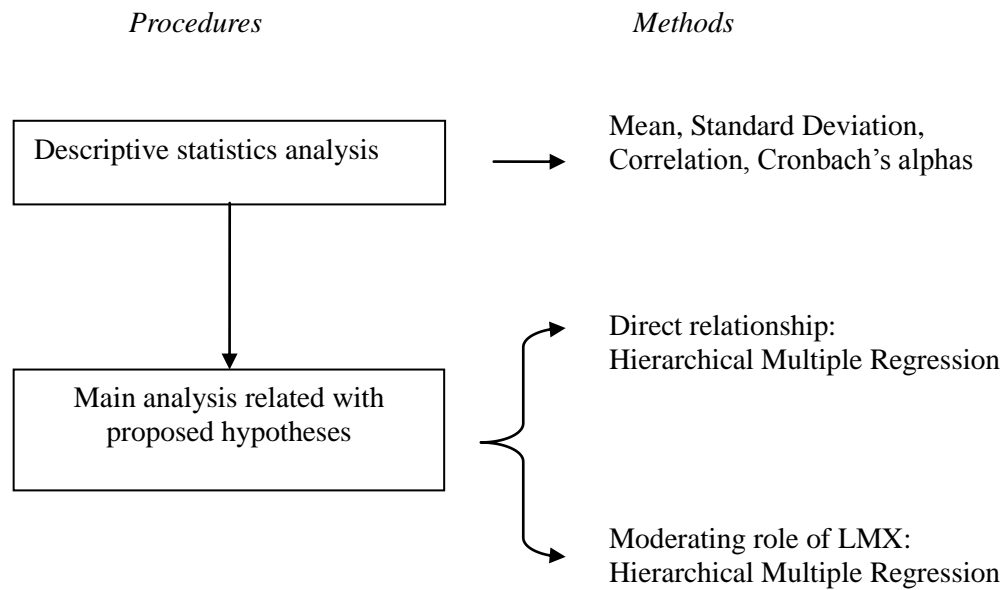
As a broad rule-of-thumb, if you construct a point scale with at least 7 points on it, and are assuming that the distances between the points are comparable, then you may wish to classify this as an interval scale for the purposes of analysis. (p. 38)

In fact, in contemporary organizational research, it is extremely common to treat ordinal variables such as 5-point or 7-point Likert scales with interval techniques. A number of socialization studies (e.g. Jones, 1986; Cable and Parson, 2001; Gruman et al., 2006; Saks et al., 2007) have shown the robustness of correlation and other parametric coefficients by using such methods. Owing to those reasons, the 7-point scale variables were treated as continuous in this research. Certainly sums and means of ordinal variables are invariably treated as being continuous (Hicks, 2004). Sums and means across subscales or components of a scale are considered to be numerical scores reflecting a quantitative response along those dimensions.

5. 6 Analytic Methods

The analytic methods related with the proposed hypotheses were performed identically in both Study 1 and Study 2. Figure 5.5 depicts the overview of the data analysis process.

Figure 5.5 Data analysis process for Study 1 and Study 2



5.6.1 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

First of all, consistent with the usual procedure in organizational studies, descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and internal correlations for the main variables will be reported as the starting point of the analyses. This will present the main features of the collected data.

5.6.2 Main Analysis

5.6.2.1 Organizational Socialization Tactics and Socialization Outcomes

Hypotheses 1a-1c reflect the hypothesized relationships between each aspect of organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes. Considering that there were three control variables, hierarchical multiple regression was appropriate for such purpose. The use of hierarchical multiple regression is a very common approach to examine the relationship between several independent variables and an outcome variable in organizational studies (e.g. Kim et al., 2005). As Cohen and Cohen (1983) suggested, the hierarchical procedure can reveal the increase in the variance of dependent variables (e.g. socialization outcomes) explained by the addition of main effects (e.g. organizational

socialization tactics), beyond the variance previously explained by the first set of variables (e.g. control variables).

To analyze the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes, the control variables (i.e. gender, age and organizational tenure) were regressed on each of the outcome variables (i.e. social integration, task mastery and role clarity) in a first step. Also, considering socialization outcomes have been also proposed to be influenced by newcomer information seeking, this construct was also controlled in the first step to minimize any spurious effects.

Then, the main effects of organizational socialization tactics were added in a second step. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the overall predictive accuracy of the model. The change in R^2 between the first and the second model was used to evaluate how much predictive power accounted for by the factor of organizational socialization tactics had been added in the step 2, beyond the control variables. If the change of R^2 is significant, it would mean that organizational socialization tactics had an effect on the outcome variable. The strength of the predictive power of the organizational socialization tactics variable is shown by the unstandardised regression coefficient (B) and the standardised regression coefficient or beta weight (β). For each independent variable, B represents the change in the outcome variable for a change of 1.0 in that variable while the other independent variables are considered to remain constant (Howell, 1997). Similarly, for each independent variable, β represents the change in standard deviations of the outcome variable for a change of one standard deviation in that variable while the other independent variables are fixed (Howell, 1997). If the null hypothesis that the regression coefficient for the variable is zero (i.e. $B=0$ or $\beta=0$) can be rejected, this indicates that the variable is significantly related to the outcome variable (Howell, 1997).

Moreover, for Hypothesis 1d, the difference in importance of the three aspects of socialization tactics (i.e. context, content and social aspect) was assessed using the size of their standardised coefficients and the associated p-values (Howell, 1997). This method has been widely applied in organizational studies (e.g. Chen et al., 2002; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009).

5.6.2.2 Organizational Socialization Tactics and Perceived Organizational Support

When examining the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and POS in the present study, as in the steps described above, the control variables (i.e. gender,

age and organizational tenure) were included in each regression model. In a first step, POS, as the dependent variable was regressed against the control variables. In a second step, POS was regressed against the control variables and the three organizational socialization tactics variables (i.e. context, content and social aspect). The change in R^2 between the first and the second model was used to evaluate how much of the predictive power was accounted for by organizational socialization tactics, while the coefficients of the organizational socialization tactics variables were examined to assess their impact on the development of POS.

5.6.2.3 Newcomer Information Seeking and Socialization Outcomes

To evaluate the relationship between newcomer information seeking and each socialization outcome, hierarchical multiple regression was applied through a two-step process. In step 1, all demographic control variables were first regressed on each of the outcome variables separately (i.e. social integration, task mastery and role clarity). Also, as it is proposed that organizational socialization tactics may also influence socialization outcomes, organizational socialization tactics variables were also controlled in the first step.

In step 2, the main effect of newcomer information seeking was added to the model in step 1. As in the analytical method used to assess the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes, the change in R^2 between the first and the second model was used to evaluate how much predictive power was accounted by the factor (i.e. newcomer information seeking) added in step 2. If the change of R^2 was significant, it would mean that newcomer information seeking does have an effect on the outcome variable beyond the effects of the demographic control variables and organizational socialization tactics.

5.6.2.4 Moderating Effect of Leader-Member Exchange

The moderating effect, also called an interactive effect, exists to affect the form of the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable by influencing the strength or direction of the relationship (Frazier et al., 2004). In terms of analytical method, Cohen and Cohen (1983) suggested that hierarchical multiple regression analysis is the most common method used to test the moderating effect. Consistent with their views, Aguinis et al. (2005) pointed out that hierarchical multiple regression strategy is an

appropriate choice widely applied to assess the interactive effect in organizational management research. By following their suggestions, hierarchical multiple regression method was also applied in this research to test the moderating effects of LMX in the relationship between newcomer information seeking behaviour and socialization outcomes.

Specifically, Aiken and West (1991) suggested that the test of a moderating effect is often performed to examine the interaction of an independent variable ('X' in the equation) and a moderator variable ('M' in the equation) in explaining a dependent variable ('Y' in the equation). The multiple regression equation estimated is:

$$Y = d + aX + bM + cXM + e$$

In the equation, *d* is the intercept, *a* is the regression coefficient for the independent variable X, *b* is the regression coefficient for the moderator variable M, *c* is the regression coefficient for the created term that reflects information about the moderation effect between X and M, and *e* reflects the residual error, a normally distributed random error (Cohen et al., 2003). To produce XM, it is suggested that the independent and moderator variables need to be first standardized in order to avoid the potential problem of multicollinearity⁸ because independent and moderating variables would be strongly correlated with their interaction terms (Frazier et al., 2004).

To assess whether the interactive effect is present, it is suggested that if the null hypothesis that the regression coefficient for the product term XM is zero (i.e. *c*=0) can be rejected, it is indicated that M moderates the relationship between X and Y, indicating that the slope of Y on X differs across values of the moderator M (Aguinis et al., 2005; Jaccard et al., 1990). To assess the strength of the interactive effects, the increase in *R*² has been widely used to indicate the additional variance that the interactive effect can account for (Champoux and Peters, 1987).

In the present study, hierarchical multiple regression analysis was applied to test the moderating role of LMX in the relationship between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes (i.e. social integration, task mastery and role clarity). Hair et al. (2006, p. 202) provided an explicit three-step process of assessing the moderating effect, including (1) Estimate the original (unmoderated) equation, which is $Y = d + aX + bM + e$; (2) Estimate the moderated relationship equation (original equation plus moderator

⁸ Multicollinearity exists when two or more independent variables in a multiple regression model are highly correlated with each other (Hair et al., 2006).

interaction term) $Y = d + aX + bM + cXM + e$; (3) Assess the change in R^2 . If the change of R^2 is statistically significant, then a significant moderator effect is present. In consist with the view of Hair et al., Cohen et al. (2003) also suggested a stepped procedure of hierarchical regression to assess the moderating effect. Following their advice, a three step procedure was applied in this research:

- (1) The control variables, such as gender, age and organizational tenure, and organizational socialization tactics were first entered to minimize the spurious effects on an outcome variable.
- (2) The main effects (i.e. newcomer information seeking and LMX) were added to the regression model in (1).
- (3) The product term representing the interaction effect (i.e. newcomer information seeking \times LMX) was added to the regression model in (2).

In addition, based on the suggestions of Cohen et al. (2003), the author plotted the regression of the dependent variable on the independent variable at two levels of the moderating variable (i.e. ± 1 SD from the mean) to evaluate how the relationship between newcomer information acquisition and socialization outcome variables varied as a function of the interaction effect of LMX.

5. 7 Concluding Remarks

This chapter presented how the research questions were expected to be answered, and provided the rationale of how the research approaches, strategy and methods were considered in this research. In addition, detailed discussions about three studies were presented, including research purpose, procedure, sample, measurement and analytical methods. The summary is demonstrated in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12 Summary of methodology

	Pilot Study	Study 1	Study 2
<i>Purpose</i>	1) Investigate the convergent validity and discriminant validity of perceived organizational support (POS) and leader-member exchange (LMX) on a Chinese sample; 2) Investigate the range of response choices.	1) Examine the construct validity of all the other constructs which have not been validated in the context of China, in a chosen organizational context; 2) Test the proposed hypotheses in that organizational context.	1) Retest the proposed hypotheses and assess whether the earlier results in Study 1 can be generalized to a different context.
<i>Procedure</i>	Web-based survey	On-site survey	On-site survey
<i>Sample</i>	191 responses collected from a variety of industries in China.	177 responses collected from a leading insurance organization in south China.	245 responses collected from a medical university in southeast China.
<i>Measurement</i>	POS and LMX.	Independent variables ¹ , POS, LMX, and dependent variables ² .	Independent variables ¹ , POS, LMX, and dependent variables ² .
<i>Analytic methods</i>	Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)	Exploratory factor analysis (EFA); Hierarchical multiple regression	Hierarchical multiple regression

¹ i.e. organizational socialization tactics, newcomer information seeking² i.e. organizational socialization outcomes (i.e. social integration, task mastery, role clarity)

Chapter 6 Results

6.1 Introduction

Having explored ‘how’ the research questions are intended to be answered, the discussion turns now to ‘what’ the answers are based on the results of the main studies, i.e. Study 1 (newly appointed insurance agents) and Study 2 (newly qualified doctors and nurses). This chapter starts with a general descriptive statistical analysis of Study 1 (section 6.2.1). Then, the results pertaining to the hypothesized relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes are presented (section 6.2.2), followed by the analyses of the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and POS in those relationships (section 6.2.3). Next, the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes are presented (section 6.2.4), followed by the results pertaining to the moderating role of LMX in such relationships (section 6.2.5). The themes and patterns of presenting the results of Study 2 are consistent with those in Study 1 (section 6.3).

6.2 Results: Study 1 – Newly Appointed Insurance Agents

6.2.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In order to present the overall features of the collected data, descriptive statistics including sample size, mean, standard deviation, Cronbach’s alphas, internal correlations between each construct are first presented (see Table 6.1).

Sample means for all three aspects of organizational socialization tactics were moderate (4.87 to 5.63), with standard deviations of around 1.0 demonstrating a reasonable amount of variation due to individual perceptions. Roughly speaking, about 95% of responses could be expected to be within ± 2 of the sample means. The three aspects of socialization tactics were significantly related with each other, correlations ranging from .47 to .62, which suggested that although organizational socialization tactics can be broadly categorized into three aspects, those three aspects were internally related. These findings are consistent with the results of Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002) and Takeuchi and Takeuchi (2009).

Furthermore, context socialization tactics (collective and formal vs. individual and informal) were significantly associated with role clarity ($r=.16$, $p=.04$). Content socialization tactics (sequential and fixed vs. random and variable) were also significantly associated with role clarity ($r=.26$, $p<.01$). In addition, the social aspect of socialization tactics (serial and investiture vs. disjunctive and divestiture) was found to be significantly related with all the socialization outcomes (social integration, $r=.55$, $p<.01$; task mastery, $r=.26$, $p<.01$; role clarity, $r=.30$, $p<.01$). Those findings provide preliminary support to the first set of hypotheses concerning the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes.

Moreover, the context, content and social aspects of organizational socialization tactics were all significantly associated with POS, but the intercorrelations were moderate (between $r=.28$ and $r=.54$, median $r=.45$). In addition, significant relationships were also found between newcomer information seeking and all the socialization outcomes though those intercorrelations were moderate, ranging from $.21$ to $.42$. Also, as is seen, the Cronbach's alphas of all the variables were above 0.7 , which indicated an acceptable internal consistency within each scale.

Table 6.1 Means, standard deviations, internal correlations and measurement reliabilities (Study 1 – newly appointed insurance agents)

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Age	30.15	6.37												
2 Gender	.69	.46	-.11											
3 Organizational tenure	13.12	7.28	.22**	-.03										
4 Context aspect of socialization tactics	5.12	1.16	.07	.11	-.08	(0.72)								
5 Content aspect of socialization tactics	4.87	1.15	.19*	.15*	-.11	.62**	(0.75)							
6 Social aspect of socialization tactics	5.63	.92	.09	.06	-.11	.47**	.55**	(0.75)						
7 Newcomer information seeking	3.78	.62	-.08	.02	.04	.03	.14	.24**	(0.82)					
8 Perceived organizational support	5.14	.96	.13	-.03	.06	.28**	.54**	.45**	.34**	(0.88)				
9 Leader-member exchange	5.23	.89	.11	-.10	.03	.29**	.29**	.44**	.35**	.40**	(0.80)			
10 Social integration	6.11	.80	.16*	.05	-.12	.39**	.43**	.55**	.21**	.41**	.61**	(0.86)		
11 Task mastery	5.92	.80	.16*	-.04	.16*	.13	.11	.26**	.32**	.22**	.40**	.45**	(0.81)	
12 Role clarity	6.11	.81	.08	.04	.17*	.16*	.26**	.30**	.42**	.47**	.33**	.45**	.58**	(0.88)

N= 177, * p<.05, **p<.01 The Cronbach's alphas for each scale are presented on the diagonal.

6.2.2 Organizational Socialization Tactics and Socialization Outcomes

Table 6.2 summarizes results involving the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes. As indicated, when controlling for gender, age, organizational tenure and newcomer information seeking, context socialization tactics had no statistically significant effects on any socialization outcomes (β from $-.00$ to $.15$). The results suggested that whether organizational socialization tactics were collective and formal was not related with newcomers' socialization outcomes in this sample. This finding did not support Hypothesis 1a. As for content socialization tactics (sequential and fixed vs. random and variable), the results did not demonstrate a significant relationship between content socialization tactics and socialization outcomes either (β from $-.13$ to $.15$). Therefore Hypothesis 1b was not supported.

Significant relationships were found between the social aspect of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer social integration ($\beta=.39$, $p<.001$) and task mastery ($\beta=.22$, $p=.014$), but there was no significant relationship with role clarity ($\beta=.15$, $p=.08$). The results indicated that newcomers who were engaged in serial and investiture socialization tactics were more likely to develop social integration and task mastery than those who experienced disjunctive and divestiture socialization tactics. Therefore, Hypothesis 1c was partially supported.

The findings suggested that, of the multiple socialization tactics provided by the organization, only the social aspect of socialization tactics significantly explained the variances of social integration and task mastery. These findings provided strong support to suggest that the social aspect would be the stronger predictor of socialization outcomes compared with the other two aspects. Therefore, Hypothesis 1d was considered to be supported.

Table 6.2 Relationship between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes (Study 1 – newly appointed insurance agents)

Testing steps	Organizational Socialization Outcomes								
	<u>Social Integration</u>			<u>Task Mastery</u>			<u>Role Clarity</u>		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Step1									
Add Control Variables:									
Gender	.12	.13	.07	-.04	.12	-.03	.07	.12	.04
Age	.03	.01	.22**	.02	.01	.15*	.01	.01	.09
Tenure	-.02	.01	-.17*	.01	.01	.11	.02	.01	.13
Newcomer information seeking	.30	.09	.23**	.43	.09	.33***	.55	.09	.42***
R ¹²		.11			.15			.21	
Adjusted R ²		.09			.13			.19	
F		5.07**			7.62***			11.14***	
Step 2									
Add Main Effect:									
Organizational Socialization Tactics									
Gender	.02	.11	.01	-.05	.12	-.03	.01	.12	.01
Age	.02	.01	.13	.02	.01	.14	.00	.01	.03
Tenure	-.01	.01	-.08	.02	.01	.14	.02	.01	.18*
Newcomer information seeking	.15	.08	.11	.38	.09	.29***	.47	.09	.36***
<i>Context aspect</i>	.10	.06	.15	.07	.06	.10	-.00	.06	-.00
<i>Content aspect</i>	.05	.06	.07	-.09	.07	-.13	.10	.07	.15
<i>Social aspect</i>	.34	.07	.39***	.19	.08	.22*	.13	.07	.15
R ²²		.35			.20			.26	
Adjusted R ²		.33			.16			.23	
$\Delta R(2-1)^2$		.25***			.05*			.06**	
F		13.23***			5.90***			8.62***	

N=177, *p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001

6.2.3 Organizational Socialization Tactics and Perceived Organizational Support

As presented in Table 6.3, context socialization tactics marginally failed to be significantly associated with POS, and thereby Hypothesis 2a was not supported ($\beta = -.15$, $p = .07$). However, there was a significant relationship between content socialization tactics and POS ($\beta = .53$, $p < .001$), which provided support to Hypothesis 2b indicating that newcomers who experienced fixed and sequential socialization tactics were more likely to develop POS than those under random and variable socialization tactics. The association between social socialization tactics and POS was also significant ($\beta = .25$, $p < .01$). This provided support to Hypothesis 2c, suggesting that newcomers who experienced serial and investiture socialization tactics were likely to report higher POS than those who experienced disjunctive and divestiture socialization tactics.

Table 6.3 Relationship between organizational socialization tactics and perceived organizational support (Study 1 – newly appointed insurance agents)

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)			
Testing steps	B	SE	β
Step 1			
Add Control Variable:			
Gender	-.03	.16	-.02
Age	.02	.01	.12
Organizational Tenure	.00	.01	.03
R ^{1 2}		.02	
Adjusted R ²		.00	
F		1.02	
Step 2			
Add Main Effect:			
Organizational Socialization Tactics			
Gender	-.22	.13	-.11
Age	-.00	.01	-.03
Organizational Tenure	.02	.01	.14*
<i>Context aspect</i>	-.12	.07	-.15
<i>Content aspect</i>	.45	.07	.53***
<i>Social aspect</i>	.26	.08	.25**
R ^{2 2}		.37	
Adjusted R ²		.35	
$\Delta R(2-1)^2$		.35***	
F		16.50***	

N= 177. *p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001

6.2.4 Relationship between Newcomer Information Seeking and Socialization Outcomes

Table 6.4 summarizes results involving the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes. As presented, gender, age and tenure were entered in step 1 as control variables, together with all three aspects of organizational socialization tactics. These variables adjust subsequent regression coefficients for theoretical confounders. The variable newcomer information seeking entered in step 2 explained an additional 8 percent of the variance in task mastery ($\Delta R^2 = .08$, $\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) and 12 percent of the variance in role clarity ($\Delta R^2 = .12$, $\beta = .36$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the level of newcomer information seeking was significantly associated with task mastery and role clarity. However, there was no significant relationship between newcomer information seeking and social integration ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\beta = .11$, $p = .08$). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was only partially supported in Study 1.

Table 6.4 Relationship between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes (Study 1– newly appointed insurance agents)

Testing steps	Organizational Socialization Outcomes								
	Social Integration			Task mastery			Role Clarity		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Step 1									
Add Control Variable:									
Gender	.02	.11	.01	-.06	.13	-.03	.00	.13	.00
Age	.01	.01	.11	.01	.01	.10	-.00	.01	-.02
Tenure	-.01	.01	-.07	.02	.01	.17*	.02	.01	.22**
Context aspect of OST	.09	.06	.13	.04	.07	.06	-.04	.07	-.06
Content aspect of OST	.06	.06	.08	-.06	.07	-.09	.14	.07	.19
Social aspect of OST	.37	.07	.42***	.26	.08	.30**	.22	.08	.24**
R ¹²		.34			.12			.15	
Adjusted R ²		.32			.09			.12	
F		14.74***			3.82**			4.89***	
Step 2									
Add Main Effect:									
Newcomer information seeking									
Gender	.02	.11	.01	-.05	.12	-.03	.01	.12	.01
Age	.02	.01	.13	.02	.01	.14	.00	.01	.03
Tenure	-.01	.01	-.08	.02	.01	.14	.02	.01	.18*
Context aspect of OST	.10	.06	.15	.07	.06	.10	-.00	.06	-.00
Content aspect of OST	.05	.06	.07	-.09	.07	-.13	.10	.07	.15
Social aspect of OST	.34	.07	.39***	.19	.08	.22*	.13	.07	.15
<i>Newcomer information seeking</i>	.15	.08	.11	.38	.09	.29***	.47	.09	.36***
R ²		.35			.20			.26	
Adjusted R ²		.33			.16			.23	
$\Delta R (2-1)^2$		.01			.08***			.12***	
F		13.23***			5.90***			8.62***	

N= 177. *p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001

OST: Organizational Socialization Tactics

6.2.5 Moderating Effect of Leader-Member Exchange

Another set of hierarchical regression models was estimated to assess the moderating role of LMX in the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes. As suggested in Chapter 5 (section 5.6.2.4), socialization outcomes (i.e. social integration, task mastery and role clarity) were first regressed on the control variables and organizational socialization tactics in step 1, the main effects of newcomer information seeking and LMX were added in step 2, and the interactive term between newcomer information seeking and LMX was added in step 3.

As shown in Table 6.5, the moderating effect of LMX in the relationship between newcomer information seeking and social integration was statistically significant, explaining an additional 2 percent of the variance ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\beta = -.14$, $p = .01$), which supported Hypothesis 4a. Concerning Hypothesis 4b of testing the moderating effect of LMX in the relationship between newcomer information seeking and task mastery, the result indicated that this hypothesis was also supported ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\beta = -.14$, $p = .046$). The interaction term accounted for additional 2 percent variance in newcomer task mastery. However, there was no statistical support for Hypothesis 4c, because the interaction term did not significantly account for any additional amount of the variance in role clarity ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $\beta = .02$, $p = .79$). In the absence of a significant interaction, the main effect of newcomer information seeking was significantly associated with role clarity ($\beta = .32$, $p < .001$) whereas that for LMX was not ($\beta = .13$, $p = .11$).

Table 6.5 The moderating effect of leader-member exchange
(Study 1 – newly appointed insurance agents)

Testing steps	Organizational Socialization Outcomes								
	<u>Social integration</u>			<u>Task mastery</u>			<u>Role clarity</u>		
	B	(SE)	β	B	(SE)	β	B	(SE)	β
Step1 Add Control Variables:									
Gender	.02	.11	.01	-.06	.13	-.03	.00	.13	.00
Age	.09	.05	.11	.08	.06	.10	-.02	.06	-.02
Tenure	-.06	.05	-.07	.13	.06	.17*	.18	.06	.22**
Context aspect of OST	.10	.07	.13	.04	.08	.06	-.05	.08	-.06
Content aspect of OST	.07	.07	.08	-.07	.08	-.09	.16	.08	.19
Social aspect of OST	.34	.06	.42***	.24	.07	.30**	.20	.07	.24**
R ¹²		.34			.12			.15	
Adjusted R ²		.32			.09			.12	
F		14.74***			3.82***			4.89***	
Step 2 Add Main Effects:									
Gender	.13	.10	.08	.01	.12	.01	.04	.12	.02
Age	.08	.05	.10	.10	.06	.12	.01	.06	.02
Tenure	-.08	.05	-.11	.10	.06	.12	.14	.06	.18*
Context aspect of OST	.07	.06	.08	.05	.07	.06	-.02	.07	-.02
Content aspect of OST	.05	.06	.06	-.10	.08	-.13	.12	.08	.14
Social aspect of OST	.20	.06	.25**	.11	.07	.13	.09	.07	.11
Information seeking	-.01	.05	-.01	.18	.06	.22**	.26	.06	.32***
LMX	.37	.05	.47***	.22	.06	.28**	.10	.06	.13
R ²		.51			.25			.27	
Adjusted R ²		.49			.21			.24	
$\Delta R(2-1)^2$		.17***			.13***			.13***	
F		21.73***			7.00***			7.95***	
Step 3 Add Interactive Effect:									
Gender	.15	.10	.09	.03	.12	.02	.04	.12	.02
Age	.07	.05	.09	.09	.06	.12	.02	.06	.02
Tenure	-.10	.05	-.13*	.08	.06	.10	.14	.06	.18*
Context aspect of OST	.06	.06	.07	.04	.07	.06	-.02	.07	-.02
Content aspect of OST	.06	.06	.08	-.09	.08	-.11	.12	.08	.14
Social aspect of OST	.18	.06	.23**	.09	.07	.12	.09	.07	.11
Information seeking	.01	.05	.01	.19	.06	.24**	.26	.06	.32***
LMX	.38	.05	.47***	.23	.06	.28***	.10	.06	.13
Information seeking \times LMX	-.11	.04	-.14*	-.11	.05	-.14*	.02	.05	.02
R ²		.53			.27			.28	
Adjusted R ²		.50			.23			.24	
$\Delta R(3-2)^2$		.02*			.02*			.00	
F		20.73***			6.77***			7.03***	

N= 177. *p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001.

OST: organizational socialization tactics; LMX: leader-member exchange

In order to demonstrate the pattern of the interaction effects for newcomer information seeking and LMX, the outcome variables (i.e. social integration and task mastery) were then respectively regressed on newcomer information seeking when LMX was at low (1 standard deviation below mean) and high (1 standard deviation above the mean) levels.

As illustrated, Figure 6.1 provides an interesting finding such that newcomer information seeking was positively related with social integration when newcomer had a low quality of LMX, but for newcomers who had a high-quality LMX, there appeared a slightly negative relationship between newcomer information seeking and social integration.

Similarly, Figure 6.2 shows the interaction effect for information seeking and LMX on task mastery. As demonstrated, task mastery was greater when both the levels of newcomer information seeking and LMX were high. In contrast, task mastery was lower when both information seeking and LMX were low. In support of Hypothesis 4b, the relationship between newcomer information seeking and task mastery was stronger (with a steeper slope) when LMX was low than when LMX was high (with a flatter slope), which indicated that a high quality of LMX may ameliorate the dysfunctional effects of low frequency of information acquisition on task mastery. In other words, newcomers who had a low level of information seeking behaviour but had a high quality LMX also reported higher levels of task mastery compared to participants who had a low level of information acquisition and low quality LMX.

To sum up, it has been found that LMX served as a significant moderator influencing the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes such as social integration and task mastery. However, it is also noted although these interactions were statistically significant, the change in R^2 in each relationship was small – at best an increase of 2%. The effect of the interaction was statistically significant but weak in size. As shown in the plots, the two lines in each figure were nearly but not quite parallel, with a steeper slope at low quality of LMX.

Figure 6.1 Interaction of newcomer information seeking and leader-member exchange (LMX) on social integration (Study 1 – newly appointed insurance agents)

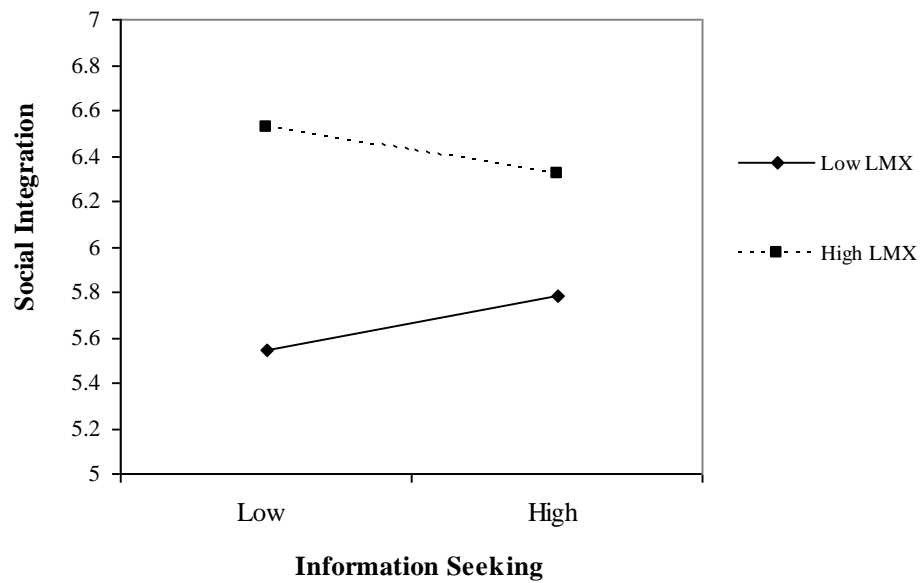
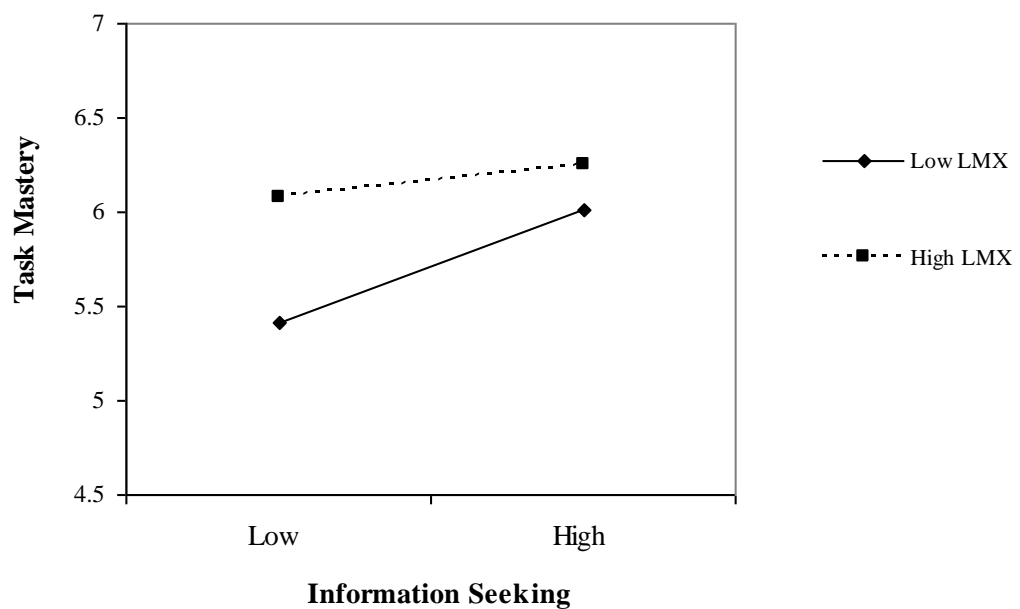


Figure 6.2 Interaction of newcomer information seeking and leader-member exchange (LMX) on task mastery (Study 1 – newly appointed insurance agents)



6. 3 Results: Study 2 – Newly Qualified Doctors and Nurses in the Medical Sector

6.3.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Following the approach used for Study 1, the descriptive statistic results of Study 2 are presented in Table 6.6. The means of three aspects of organizational socialization tactics were relatively high, above 5 out of 7. Also, there were moderate internal relationships among those three aspects of organizational socialization tactics, ranging from .48 to .66. Moreover, the context aspect of socialization tactics was significantly related to POS ($r=.42$, $p<.01$) and role clarity ($r=.38$, $p<.01$). The content aspect was also found significantly related to POS ($r=.42$, $p<.01$) and role clarity ($r=.40$, $p<.01$). The results also revealed that the social aspect of socialization tactics was significantly associated with POS ($r=.54$, $p<.01$), social integration ($r=.53$, $p<.01$), task mastery ($r=.47$, $p<.01$) and role clarity ($r=.47$, $p<.01$). These findings were similar to those in Study 1. However, the relationships between task mastery and context and content socialization tactics in Study 2 were significant, whereas they were not in Study 1.

Moreover, inspection of Table 6.6 revealed that newcomer information seeking behaviour was also significantly related to all three socialization outcomes (social integration, $r=.46$, $p<.01$; task mastery, $r=.45$, $p<.01$; role clarity, $r=.44$, $p<.01$). For the measurement reliability, the Cronbach's alphas of all the variables were above 0.7, further indicating the sound reliability of the measurement scales in the Chinese context.

Table 6.6 Means, standard deviations, internal correlations and measurement reliabilities (Study 2 – newly qualified doctors and nurses)

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Age	25.01	3.19												
2 Gender	.71	.46	-.17**											
3 Organizational tenure	17.65	5.51	.10	-.01										
4 Context aspect of socialization tactics	5.14	1.35	.15*	-.11	.02	(0.74)								
5 Content aspect of socialization tactics	5.27	1.22	.16*	.00	.02	.48**	(0.70)							
6 Social aspect of socialization tactics	5.39	1.13	.12	.01	.02	.56**	.66**	(0.75)						
7 Newcomer information seeking	3.56	.71	.08	-.01	.06	.34**	.32**	.43**	(0.81)					
8 Perceived organizational support	4.84	1.12	.01	-.10	.08	.42**	.42**	.54**	.46**	(0.81)				
9 Leader-member exchange	4.97	1.11	-.02	-.11	.03	.47**	.47**	.50**	.43**	.60**	(0.87)			
10 Social integration	5.30	1.15	.09	-.02	.02	.31**	.45**	.53**	.46**	.55**	.50**	(0.88)		
11 Task mastery	5.40	1.17	.12	-.04	-.01	.38**	.41**	.47**	.45**	.43**	.43**	.51**	(0.81)	
12 Role clarity	5.60	.94	.11	-.05	-.02	.38**	.40**	.47**	.44**	.48**	.54**	.59**	.52**	(0.83)

N= 245, * p<.05, **p<.01 The reliability (Cronbach's alphas) for each scale are presented on the diagonal

6.3.2 Organizational Socialization Tactics and Socialization Outcomes

As presented in Table 6.7, when controlling for gender, age, organizational tenure and newcomer information seeking, the context aspect of socialization tactics was not significantly associated with newcomers' role clarity ($\beta=.10$, $p=.13$), which did not support Hypothesis 1a. This result was the same as that in Study 1. Also, it was found that content socialization tactics were not significantly associated with role clarity ($\beta=.11$, $p=.14$), which suggested Hypothesis 1b was not supported. This result was the same as that in Study 1 as well.

There were significant relationships between the social aspect of socialization tactics and newcomer social integration ($\beta=.33$, $p<.001$), task mastery ($\beta=.20$, $p=.01$) and role clarity ($\beta=.22$, $p=.005$). The results indicated that newcomers who were engaged in serial and investiture socialization tactics were more likely to develop social integration, task mastery and role clarity than those who experienced disjunctive and divestiture socialization tactics. Therefore, Hypothesis 1c was supported in Study 2.

Also, as shown, the social aspect of socialization tactics was significantly associated with all three socialization outcomes, and the values of beta (β) were much larger than those for the other two aspects (i.e. context and content aspect). Therefore, this result provided evidence to support Hypothesis 1d that the social aspect of socialization tactics was perceived as the most important factors for newcomers in Study 2.

Table 6.7 Relationship between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes (Study 2 – newly qualified doctors and nurses)

Test steps	Organizational Socialization Outcomes								
	<u>Social Integration</u>			<u>Task Mastery</u>			<u>Role Clarity</u>		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Step1									
Add Control Variable:									
Gender	-.02	.15	-.01	-.06	.15	-.02	-.06	.12	-.03
Age	.02	.02	.05	.03	.02	.08	.02	.02	.07
Tenure	-.00	.01	-.02	-.01	.01	-.05	-.01	.01	-.06
Newcomer information seeking	.75	.09	.46***	.74	.10	.45***	.59	.08	.44***
R1 ²		.22			.21			.21	
Adjusted R ²		.20			.20			.19	
F		16.64***			16.05***			15.57***	
Step 2 Add Main Effect: Organizational Socialization Tactics									
Gender	-.07	.13	-.03	-.06	.14	-.02	-.06	.12	-.03
Age	.00	.02	.00	.01	.02	.03	.01	.02	.03
Tenure	-.00	.01	-.01	-.01	.01	-.04	-.01	.01	-.05
Newcomer information seeking	.47	.09	.29***	.47	.10	.29***	.38	.08	.28***
<i>Context aspect</i>	-.06	.06	-.07	.09	.06	.10	.07	.05	.10
<i>Content aspect</i>	.16	.07	.17*	.13	.07	.13	.08	.06	.11
<i>Social aspect</i>	.34	.08	.33***	.21	.08	.20*	.19	.07	.22**
R2 ²		.37			.32			.32	
Adjusted R ²		.35			.30			.30	
$\Delta R(2-1)^2$		.15***			.11***			.11***	
F		19.95***			16.10***			15.72***	
N=245 *p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001									

6.3.3 Organizational Socialization Tactics and Perceived Organizational Support

As presented in Table 6.8, POS was significantly related with context socialization tactics ($\beta=.14$, $p=.03$) and the social aspect of socialization tactics ($\beta=.41$, $p<.001$). Surprisingly, POS was not significantly related with the content aspect of socialization tactics ($\beta=.10$, $p=.16$) in Study 2. Therefore, the results only provided support to Hypothesis 2a and Hypothesis 2c, but not to Hypothesis 2b, which suggested that newcomers who experienced collective, formal, serial and investiture socialization tactics were more likely to report greater POS than those without.

Table 6.8 Relationship between organizational socialization tactics and perceived organizational support (Study 2 – newly qualified doctors and nurses)

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)			
Test steps	B	SE	β
Step 1			
Add Control Variable:			
Gender	-.24	.16	-.10
Age	-.01	.02	-.01
Organizational Tenure	.02	.01	.08
R ¹²		.02	
Adjusted R ²		.00	
F		1.23	
Step 2			
Add Main Effect:			
Organizational Socialization Tactics			
Gender	-.24	.13	-.10
Age	-.04	.02	-.10
Organizational Tenure	.04	.01	.08
<i>Context aspect of OST</i>	.12	.05	.14*
<i>Content aspect of OST</i>	.09	.07	.10
<i>Social aspect of OST</i>	.41	.08	.41***
R ²²		.34	
Adjusted R ²		.32	
$\Delta R (2-1)^2$		.32***	
F		20.06***	

N= 245. * $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

OST: organizational socialization tactics

6.3.4 Relationship between Newcomer Information Seeking and Socialization Outcomes

The result of the relationship between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes is presented in Table 6.9. As illustrated, gender, age, organizational tenure and organizational socialization tactics were entered in step 1 as control variables. As in Study 1, none of those demographic variables were significantly related to the socialization outcome variables, but they were retained to adjust subsequent regression coefficients for theoretical confounders. The variable newcomer information seeking entered in step 2 explained an additional 7 percent of the variance in social integration ($\Delta R^2 = .07$, $\beta = .29$, $p < .001$), 7 percent of the variance in task mastery ($\Delta R^2 = .07$, $\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) and 6 percent of the variance in role clarity ($\Delta R^2 = .06$, $\beta = .28$, $p < .001$). The results indicated that the frequency of newcomers' information seeking was significantly associated with their job satisfaction, social integration, task mastery and role clarity. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported in Study 2.

Table 6.9 Relationship between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes (Study 2 – newly qualified doctors and nurses)

Test steps	Organizational Socialization Outcomes								
	<u>Social Integration</u>			<u>Task Mastery</u>			<u>Role Clarity</u>		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Step 1									
Add Control Variable:									
Gender	-.07	.14	-.03	-.06	.15	-.02	-.06	.12	-.03
Age	.00	.02	.01	.01	.02	.03	.01	.02	.03
Tenure	.00	.01	.01	-.01	.01	-.02	-.01	.01	-.04
Context aspect of OST	-.02	.06	-.03	.13	.06	.14*	.10	.05	.14*
Content aspect of OST	.17	.07	.19*	.14	.07	.14	.09	.06	.12
Social aspect of OST	.43	.08	.43***	.31	.08	.30***	.26	.07	.31***
R ¹ ²		.30			.26			.26	
Adjusted R ²		.29			.24			.24	
F		17.33***			13.72***			13.56***	
Step 2									
Add Main Effect:									
Newcomer information seeking									
Gender	-.07	.13	-.03	-.06	.14	-.02	-.06	.12	-.03
Age	.00	.02	.00	.01	.02	.03	.01	.02	.03
Tenure	-.00	.01	-.01	-.01	.01	-.04	-.01	.01	-.05
Context aspect of OST	-.06	.06	-.07	.09	.06	.10	.07	.05	.10
Content aspect of OST	.16	.07	.17*	.13	.07	.13	.08	.06	.11
Social aspect of OST	.34	.08	.33***	.21	.08	.20*	.19	.07	.22**
<i>Newcomer information seeking</i>	.47	.09	.29***	.47	.10	.29***	.38	.08	.28***
R ²		.37			.32			.32	
Adjusted R ²		.35			.30			.30	
$\Delta R(2-1)^2$		.07***			.07***			.06***	
F		19.95***			16.10***			15.72***	

N= 245. *p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001

OST: organizational socialization tactics

6.3.5 Moderating Effect of Leader-Member Exchange

As in Study 1, hierarchical regression models were used to assess the moderating role of LMX in the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes (i.e. social integration, task mastery and role clarity) in Study 2. As shown in Table 6.10, the interaction between newcomer information seeking and LMX was significant for social integration ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\beta = -.14$, $p = .008$) and role clarity ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\beta = -.13$, $p = .02$), but not for task mastery ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\beta = -.10$, $p = .07$). For task mastery, the main effects of newcomer information seeking ($\beta = .23$, $p < .001$) and LMX ($\beta = .15$, $p = .03$) were significantly associated with the outcome, but their interaction was not. Therefore, the moderating effects of LMX in the relationships between information seeking and social integration and task role clarity were supported, providing evidence to support Hypotheses 4a and Hypotheses 4c, but not for task mastery in Hypotheses 4b. Interestingly, among the control variables, the social aspect of organizational socialization tactics continued to be strongly associated with each of the three outcomes when adjusted for the other variables.

As in Study 1, the socialization outcomes of social integration and role clarity were then regressed on newcomer information seeking respectively when LMX was at low (1 standard deviation below mean) and high (1 standard deviation above the mean) levels. Figure 6.3 shows the pattern of the interaction effect of newcomer information seeking and LMX on social integration. As is seen, there was almost no relationship between information seeking and social integration when newcomers had a high quality of LMX (the line is almost horizontal), while there was an obviously positive relationship between information seeking and social integration when newcomers had a low quality of LMX. This indicated that only when newcomers had a low quality of LMX, their information seeking behaviour really affected their social integration. Figure 6.4 shows the interaction effect of newcomer information seeking and LMX on role clarity. It suggested that the strength of the relationship between newcomer information seeking and role clarity was stronger when LMX is low than when LMX was high.

Table 6.10 The moderating effect of leader-member exchange
(Study 2 –newly qualified doctors and nurses)

Organizational Socialization Outcomes									
Testing steps	Social integration			Task mastery			Role clarity		
	B	(SE)	β	B	(SE)	β	B	(SE)	β
Step1 Add Control Variables:									
Gender	-.07	.14	-.03	-.06	.15	-.02	-.06	.12	-.03
Age	.01	.06	.01	.04	.07	.03	.03	.06	.03
Tenure	.01	.06	.01	-.03	.07	-.02	-.03	.05	-.04
Context aspect of OST	-.03	.08	-.03	.17	.08	.14*	.14	.07	.14*
Content aspect of OST	.21	.08	.19*	.17	.09	.14	.11	.07	.12
Social aspect of OST	.49	.09	.43***	.35	.09	.30***	.30	.08	.31***
R ¹²		.30			.26			.26	
Adjusted R ²		.29			.24			.24	
F		17.33***			13.72***			13.56***	
Step 2 Add Main Effects:									
Gender	.00	.13	.00	-.02	.14	-.01	.02	.11	.01
Age	.05	.06	.04	.06	.07	.05	.07	.05	.08
Tenure	-.02	.06	-.02	-.05	.06	-.04	-.05	.05	-.06
Context aspect of OST	-.14	.07	-.12	.08	.08	.07	.03	.06	.03
Content aspect of OST	.13	.08	.12	.11	.09	.10	.03	.07	.03
Social aspect of OST	.34	.09	.29***	.21	.09	.18*	.16	.07	.17*
Information seeking	.26	.07	.23***	.29	.07	.25***	.19	.06	.20**
LMX	.30	.07	.26***	.18	.08	.16*	.32	.06	.34***
R ²		.41			.34			.39	
Adjusted R ²		.39			.32			.37	
$\Delta R(2-1)^2$		.11***			.08***			.13***	
F		20.78***			15.01***			18.66***	
Step 3 Add Interactive Effect:									
Gender	-.01	.13	-.01	-.03	.14	-.01	.01	.11	.00
Age	.05	.06	.04	.06	.07	.05	.07	.05	.08
Tenure	-.02	.06	-.02	-.05	.06	-.04	-.06	.05	-.06
Context aspect of OST	-.14	.07	-.12	.08	.08	.07	.03	.06	.03
Content aspect of OST	.13	.08	.11	.11	.09	.09	.03	.07	.03
Social aspect of OST	.32	.08	.28***	.20	.09	.17*	.15	.07	.16*
Information seeking	.23	.07	.20**	.27	.07	.23***	.17	.06	.17**
LMX	.29	.07	.25***	.17	.08	.15*	.31	.06	.33***
Information seeking \times LMX	-.12	.05	-.14**	-.09	.05	-.10	-.09	.04	-.13*
R ²		.43			.35			.40	
Adjusted R ²		.41			.32			.38	
$\Delta R(3-2)^2$		.02**			.01			.01*	
F		19.75***			13.84***			17.48***	

N= 245. *p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001.

OST: organizational socialization tactics; LMX: leader-member exchange

Figure 6.3 Interaction of newcomer information seeking and leader-member exchange (LMX) on social integration (Study 2 – newly qualified doctors and nurses)

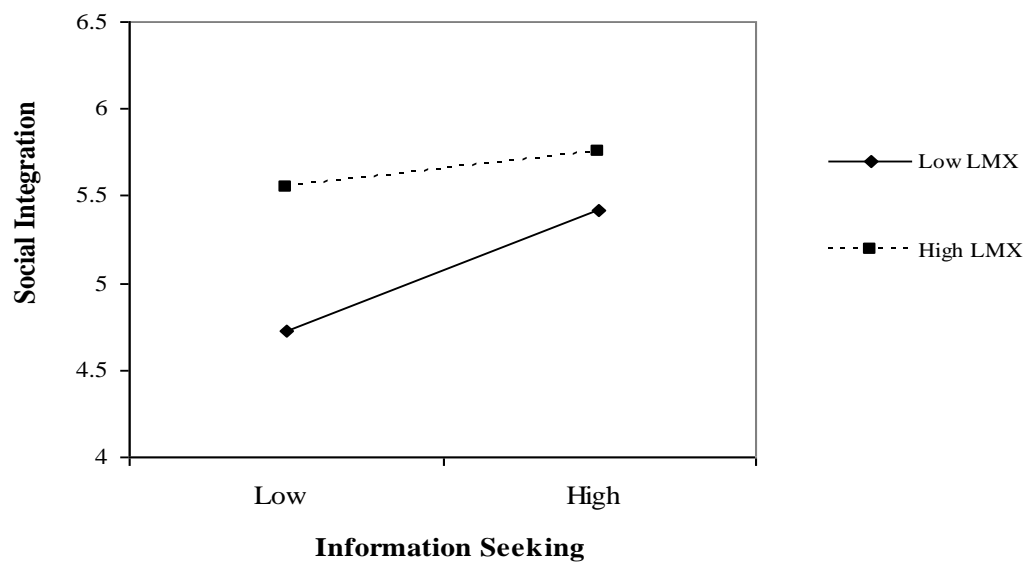
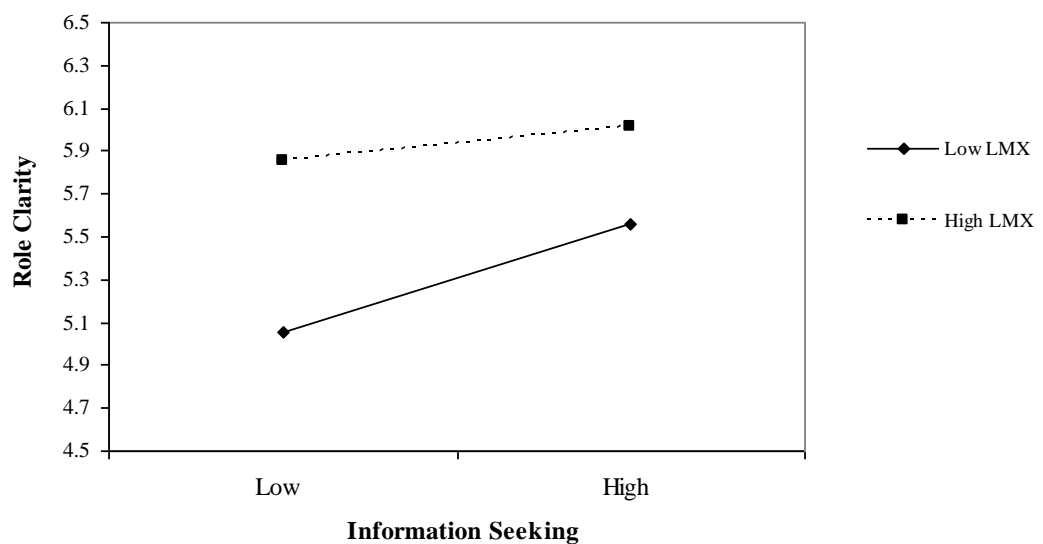


Figure 6.4 Interaction of newcomer information seeking and leader-member exchange (LMX) on role clarity (Study 2 – newly qualified doctors and nurses)



To sum up, it has been found that LMX served as a significant moderator influencing the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes. However, similar to the results in Study 1, it was also noted although these interactions were statistically significant, the change in R^2 in each relationship was small – at best an increase of 2%. As shown in the plots, the two lines in each figure were nearly but not quite parallel, with a steeper slope at a lower quality of LMX.

6. 4 Concluding Remarks

To sum up, the results of both studies are summarized in the following Table 6.11.

Table 6.11 Summary of hypothesis and findings in both Study 1 and Study 2

<i>Hypotheses</i>	<i>Findings (Study 1)</i>	<i>Findings (Study 2)</i>
H1 Relationship between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes		
<i>H1a Collective and formal (vs. individual and informal) socialization tactics are positively related to newcomer role clarity.</i>	<u>Not Supported</u>	<u>Not Supported</u>
<i>H1b Sequential and fixed (vs. random and variable) socialization tactics are positively related to newcomers' role clarity.</i>	<u>Not Supported</u>	<u>Not Supported</u>
<i>H1c Serial and investiture (vs. disjunctive and divestiture) socialization tactics are positively related to newcomers' social integration, task mastery and role clarity.</i>		
<i>Social aspect socialization tactics – social integration</i>	Supported	Supported
<i>Social aspect socialization tactics – task mastery</i>	Supported	Supported
<i>Social aspect socialization tactics – role clarity</i>	<u>Not Supported</u>	Supported
<i>H1d Of the three aspects of socialization tactics, the social aspect of socialization tactics has the strongest positive influence on newcomer socialization outcomes.</i>	Supported	Supported
H2 Relationship between organizational socialization tactics and perceived organizational support (POS)		
<i>H2a Socialization tactics that are collective and formal (i.e. context socialization tactics) are positively related to newcomers' perceived organizational support.</i>	<u>Not Supported</u>	Supported
<i>H2b Socialization tactics that are sequential and fixed (i.e. content socialization tactics) are positively related to newcomers' perceived organizational support.</i>	Supported	<u>Not Supported</u>
<i>H2c Socialization tactics that are serial and investiture (i.e. social socialization tactics) are positively related to newcomers' perceived organizational support.</i>	Supported	Supported

Hypothesis 3: Newcomer information seeking is significantly related to (a) social integration, (c) task mastery, and (d) role clarity.

Newcomer information seeking ----- Social integration	<u>Not Supported</u>	Supported
Newcomer information seeking ----- Task mastery	Supported	Supported
Newcomer information seeking ----- Role clarity	Supported	Supported

H4 The moderating role of LMX in the relationship between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes

<i>Hypothesis 4a: LMX moderates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and social integration in the context of China, such that the relationship is weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX.</i>	Supported	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 4b: LMX moderates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and task mastery in the context of China, such that the relationship is weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX.</i>	Supported	<u>Not Supported</u>
<i>Hypothesis 4c: LMX moderates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and role clarity in the context of China, such that the relationship is weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX.</i>	<u>Not Supported</u>	Supported

Note: Unsupported hypothesis highlighted with underlining.

As noticed, although there were some mixed findings towards the hypothesized relationships in both studies, the results in general supported the view that organizational socialization tactics may have some significant impacts on socialization outcomes and newcomers' POS. The results also provided some evidence to suggest the strongest positive influence of the social aspect of socialization tactics on newcomer socialization outcomes. The linkage between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes was also generally supported in those two studies. Additionally, the research provided some support for the moderating role of LMX in the linkage of newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes. The following Chapter 7 will discuss the possible explanations and implications of those results.

Chapter 7 Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

As described in Chapter 1, there has been an increasing concern in recent years on the issue of how to facilitate newcomer socialization due to the growing mobility of current employees in an age of globalization. However, in spite of research progress in this area, there are still theoretical and methodological gaps in the literature (section 1.2). Therefore, this research attempts to advance the understanding on newcomer socialization by examining two research questions: (1) Are organizational socialization tactics related to organizational socialization outcomes in the context of China, and which socialization tactics have the strongest impacts? Do different organizational socialization tactics influence newcomers' perceived organizational support? (2) Is newcomer information seeking related to newcomer socialization outcomes? If so, when does newcomer information seeking really matter to newcomer socialization outcomes, again in the context of China?

To explore these research questions, two very different research samples were collected in the context of China. One was newly hired insurance agents and the other sample was newly appointed doctors and nurses in the medical sector. The reason for involving such different research samples was to improve the generalizability of the research findings through a more comprehensive investigation (Lindsay, 1995). The methodology and research findings were presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

The primary aim of this final chapter is to discuss the findings in relation to those research questions, to present the theoretical and practical implications of the research findings, to identify several essential future research avenues and to recognise potential limitations and strengths of the current research. The chapter starts with a discussion of the first research question (section 7.2), which refers to the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes, and the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and POS. This is followed by a discussion of the results of the second research question (section 7.3), which refers to the relationship between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes, and the moderating role of LMX in such relationships. Thereafter, the methodological implications of the research are described (section 7.4), followed by a brief summary of the implications of the

present study (section 7.5). Then, avenues are discussed for future research mainly referring to organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking (section 7.6). In the final section of this chapter, both research strengths and limitations of the current research are discussed (section 7.7), followed by concluding remarks (section 7.8).

7. 2 Research Question 1: Are organizational socialization tactics related to organizational socialization outcomes in the context of China, and which socialization tactics have the strongest impacts? Do different organizational socialization tactics influence newcomers' perceived organizational support?

The present research has first attempted to explore the research question concerning the influences of organizational socialization tactics on socialization outcomes and POS. In answering this question, the understanding about organizational socialization tactics can be enhanced and the identified literature gaps are expected to be filled in. Both the theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed in the following sections.

7.2.1 Discussion of Results

7.2.1.1 Organizational Socialization Tactics and Newcomer Socialization Outcomes

Results of the current research reveal that organizational socialization tactics have some impacts on newcomer adjustment, particularly on the social aspect of socialization tactics, which indicates that under serial and investiture socialization tactics, newcomers are in general more likely to feel integrated in the group, to improve confidence to perform jobs and to enhance the levels of role clarity in the context of China. These results are consistent with findings in the western context (Ashforth et al., 1997; Bauer et al., 2007; Saks and Ashforth, 1997b; Saks et al., 2007), but still far from conclusive because of the conflicting findings of Study 1 and Study 2 regarding the influences of the social aspect of socialization tactics on newcomer role clarity. To be more explicit, serial and investiture socialization tactics were found to be positively related to newcomer role clarity with newly appointed doctors and nurses in Study 2, but the finding with newly hired insurance agents in Study 1 did not support such a positive relationship. On reflection, the absence of this linkage in Study 1 may have been due to the possibility that although newly hired insurance agents were provided access to experienced members, they spent much time

communicating with clients outside the organization at the expense of interaction with organizational colleagues. Therefore, such linkages in Study 1 were not apparent. In contrast, it is known that new doctors and nurses work alongside more experienced colleagues within teams. Serial and investiture socialization is in fact a natural part of the clarification process in the hospital setting.

In addition, the results suggested that neither the context nor the content aspects of socialization tactics were related with role clarity of newcomers in both studies, which indicated that a collective, formal socialization context or a clear and sequential timetable of training programmes did not affect the newcomers' understanding of the job role. This finding is different from the meta-analytic result of Bauer et al. (2007) who suggested that the content aspect of socialization tactics was significantly related to newcomers' role clarity. In the present research, new insurance agents in Study 1 were often required to attend a set of training sessions to learn skills of communicating with clients and to expand their knowledge of selling insurance products. The collective and formal socialization context and the planned and structured socialization content are believed to be important and meaningful to help them enhance the level of clarity in performing their jobs. Thus, it is difficult to interpret why such linkages did not exist in this sample. Further investigation is required in the future research.

As for the doctors and nurses in Study 2, one possible explanation of non-significant relationships between the context and content aspects of socialization tactics and newcomer role clarity may lie in the typical job nature of doctors/nurses in the medical sector. It is known that before being formally appointed, doctors and nurses are required to spend much time in an internship to become familiar with the job and hospital settings as it is important for doctors and nurses to perform their jobs correctly. If they do not, the health and perhaps even the lives of patients may be at stake. During such periods, doctors and nurses may have already developed a general perception about the work role. Therefore, the context or content aspect of organizational socialization tactics may be not so critical to enhance their role clarity.

The lack of support for the significant relationships between context and content socialization tactics and role clarity in both samples, however, provided evidence that the social aspect of socialization tactics had the strongest influence on newcomer socialization outcomes, which indicates that the interaction with the experienced members and the acceptance of newcomers' individual identity and personal values are particularly critical for newcomer adjustment in the context of China. This result is not surprising as China is

regarded as a typical country where supervisors often play a dominant role in the workplace (Ngo et al., 2002). In fact, it is claimed that Chinese employees prefer to be guided and directed by experienced members, usually immediate supervisors, in order to avoid mistakes (Cheng and Cascio, 2009; Morrison et al., 2004).

7.2.1.2 Organizational Socialization Tactics and Perceived Organizational Support

As referred to earlier (Chapter 1 section 1.2.1), previous socialization studies have placed an overwhelming emphasis on the impacts of organizational socialization tactics on the change of newcomers' thought and behaviour, and have overlooked how that organizational socialization tactics may help to influence newcomers' POS. To explore this issue, this research examined the relationships between each aspect of socialization tactics and POS. The results of Study 1 and Study 2 provided some support to suggest the idea that under serial and investiture socialization tactics, newcomers in the Chinese workplaces are likely to develop POS. However, the results for the relationships between context and content socialization tactics and POS in Study 1 and Study 2 were mixed: the results from Study 1 suggested that the context aspect of socialization tactics was not related to newcomers' POS for insurance agents, while this relationship was supported in Study 2 suggesting that collective and formal socialization may be likely to promote the development of POS for doctors and nurses.

One potential explanation for the unsupported relationship in Study 1 may be due to the typical characteristics of the research sample. Based on an interview with the training manager in the insurance organization, it was found that it was very common in the insurance industry to provide a set of intensive training sessions for newly hired insurance agents to learn the knowledge of insurance products and relevant communication skills. In fact, there were many types of intensive training programmes designed for newcomers. Therefore, if the collective and formal socialization tactics such as training programmes are considered to be a common organizational practice in the industry, new insurance agents may take it for granted, without recognising this as an extra effort provided by the organization, and thus it is unlikely for them to develop POS.

Also, the results suggested that there was no significant association between content socialization tactics and POS for doctors and nurses in Study 2 though this relationship was supported for insurance agents in Study 1. This result is surprising because sequential and fixed socialization tactics, such as explicit training timetable and career development plans,

are considered helpful for sending the message that the organization cares about employees' development in the organization (Cable and Parsons, 2001). This may be because the career path or related training programme in the medical sector in China is relatively explicit and fixed, and thus the impacts of the content aspect of socialization tactics on POS are not apparent.

Taken together, the discussion above in general leads to two conclusions. First, newcomer adjustment is influenced by organizational socialization tactics, particularly in the social aspect of socialization tactics, indicating that under serial and investiture tactics, newcomers are more likely to feel integrated and accepted by the group members, to feel confident about their abilities to manage job tasks and to feel clear about the work role. Second, the collective, structured and planned socialization tactics are, in general, more likely to engender POS for newcomers. The following section addresses the theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

7.2.2 Theoretical Implications

These findings extend the socialization literature in several ways. First of all, this is considered to be one of the first empirical studies to assess the influences of different aspects of organizational socialization tactics on newcomer socialization in the context of China. Although it failed to find the significant relationships between context and content aspects of socialization tactics and newcomer role clarity in two different samples, it has suggested that the social aspect of socialization tactics is the strongest predictor of newcomer adjustment in the context of China, compared with the aspects of context and content. Given the general consistency in the results of two studies, it is clear that serial and investiture socialization tactics are also welcomed in the context of a particular non-western country such as China. This finding further confirms the results of Cable and Parsons (2001), Kim et al. (2005) and Takeuchi and Takeuchi (2009).

Second, this research not only develops and extends the socialization literature, but also reveals the theoretical relevance to the POS literature by suggesting that when newcomers receive a formal, structured and planned organizational socialization tactics, they are more likely to develop POS than those who experience informal and unplanned socialization tactics. It is expected that future studies would benefit from the present results that clarify the role of newcomers' POS in newcomer socialization, especially when the

studies attempt to provide an in-depth exploration on how to maximize an organization's investment for newcomer adjustment.

Furthermore, this study essentially opens a new avenue for POS research. As widely discussed, the concept of POS is based on social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity which emphasizes an exchange ideology of 'what employees can return to the organization in a longer term' (Eisenberger et al., 2001). The existing empirical studies demonstrated that POS-related work outcomes were usually concerned about organizational commitment and turnover intention (see section 3.3.3). Therefore, based on the underlying exchange ideology, POS may be assumed to be a potential mechanism highlighting why organizational socialization tactics may influence newcomers' commitment and turnover intention. This point will be further highlighted in the later section on future research direction (see section 7.6.1).

7.2.3 Practical Implications

These findings offer employers several important practical insights. First of all, the results suggested that among those three aspects of organizational socialization tactics, the social aspect of socialization tactics (serial and investiture vs. disjunctive and divestiture) was found to be the strongest predictor of newcomer adjustment, and thus organizations are encouraged to assign an experienced member for newcomers to act as a role model, and also to encourage other experienced employees to provide support for newcomer adjustment in the Chinese workplace. For example, it may be advantageous to provide a well-designed mentoring programme or buddy system for newcomers to help them learn about the organization, to assist them in accepting the organizational rules and values, and to facilitate their adjustment (Cable and Parsons, 2001; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009).

Additionally, this result also confirms the significance of affirming the identity and personalities of the newcomers. Therefore, practitioners are encouraged to demonstrate positive regard to newcomers by respecting their personal characteristics in achieving job fit and workplace acceptance, instead of forcing them to change into a 100 % conforming organizational member. However, despite of the significance of the social aspect of socialization tactics, Saks et al. (2007) pointed out that, "on-boarding specialists should consider the expected return on investment of social, content, and context socialization tactics before placing complete emphasis on social tactics" (p. 441).

Also, as noticed in the beginning of this thesis, many practitioners in China are facing the substantial problem of managing newcomer turnover. Therefore, given that the results of the present research suggest that socialization tactics may have impacts on newcomers' POS which may subsequently influence employees' work attitudes and behaviours based on the theory of social exchange (Eisenberger et al., 1986), organizations are encouraged to make efforts to develop newcomers' POS by providing formal, planned and structured socialization tactics. In this respect, the provision of those socialization tactics can demonstrate that organizations are willing to invest in employees and to value their efforts, which may lead to the development of POS. However, although the results indicate that it is essential to improve organizational efforts to develop newcomer's POS, yet it is also acknowledged that employees' personality and demographic characteristics may influence how employees interpret organizational supportive policies and practices (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Therefore, organizations are encouraged to design proper recruitment procedures in order to select the most suitable employees if they hope to maximize the organization's investment in newcomers to gain a high return on those invested supportive practices.

Furthermore, it is noted that there were some mixed findings between insurance agents in Study 1 and doctors and nurses in Study 2. For example, social socialization tactics were found to be significantly associated with newcomers' role clarity in Study 2; while the results in Study 1 did not suggest this to be so. Moreover, newly hired insurance agents seem to benefit more from clear guidance on career development and from the support of experienced colleagues to develop POS, whereas new doctors or nurses in the medical sector are more likely to develop POS under a collective and formal socialization context with the support of experienced colleagues. These results implicitly suggest that organizational socialization tactics need to be adjusted for newcomers in different sectors and industries. When designing a socialization programme for newcomers, practitioners are encouraged to consider the typical characteristics of the settings and the type of job; just as Saks et al. (2007) suggested, more attention should be paid to tailor the socialization tactics to maximize the investment.

7. 3 Research Question 2: Is newcomer information seeking related to newcomer socialization outcomes, particularly in the context of China? If so, when does newcomer information seeking really matter to newcomer socialization outcomes, again in the context of China?

The second question in the present research deals with the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes, with a major focus on when newcomer information seeking would affect their socialization outcomes, particularly in the context of China. Furthermore, by following the research call of Major et al. (1995) for involving the role of LMX, this research tested whether LMX moderated such relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes. The discussions of the findings and associated implications are discussed as follows.

7.3.1 Discussion of Results

7.3.1.1 Newcomer Information Seeking and Socialization Outcomes

The results of the present study in general replicate the findings of Morrison's (1993a) study and show that higher frequency of information seeking behaviour was associated with higher social integration, task mastery and role clarity for newcomers in the context of China. It provides extra support to the study of Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002) by suggesting that newcomer information seeking is a vital indicator of newcomer adjustment. However, despite the importance of newcomer information seeking, it is also worth noting that it only explained a moderate amount of variance for each socialization outcome variable in both Study 1 and Study 2. This result is similar with those found in the study of Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002), but we cannot rule out the possibility that there are some other important antecedents influencing newcomer socialization outcomes, which requires further investigation in the future.

Moreover, it is necessary to note although information seeking was found positively related with all three socialization outcomes among doctors and nurses in Study 2, a significant linkage between information seeking and social integration did not exist among insurance agents in Study 1. There is no clear reason why this linkage was not supported in the sample of newly hired insurance agents, and this will require further investigation. The further discussion about the moderating role of LMX can be one potential approach to reveal under what circumstances information seeking affects social integration (section

7.3.1.2).

In addition, due to the cross-sectional research design, some doubt still remains about whether information seeking behaviour influences those socialization outcomes over time. Nevertheless, in spite of those doubts, this is still an important finding, not only because the result highlights the importance of newcomer information seeking during the socialization process but also because the results provide further confirmation on the role of information seeking in newcomer adjustment by suggesting that this link can be generalized to cultures different from western countries.

7.3.1.2 Moderating Role of Leader-Member Exchange

It is claimed that the uncertainty reduction through information seeking can be valid across national borders, but cultural factors may affect how and to what extent information seeking behaviour affects the socialization outcomes. In general, the results in both studies indicated that LMX served as an important moderator to influence the relationship between information seeking and newcomer adjustment in the context of China. To be more specific, it was found in Study 2 that the relationship between newcomer information seeking and social integration was weaker for newcomers with a high quality of LMX than those with a low quality of LMX in doctors and nurses. This result is not surprising as newcomers with high quality of LMX can expect to have access or opportunities to be involved into the group activities due to the support of leaders, and thus establish a social network with other colleagues. Therefore, the influence of their efforts of seeking information on social integration appeared weaker. However, it is necessary to note that although the results of both studies supported the interactive effect of LMX in the linkage of newcomer information seeking and newcomer social integration, interestingly a slightly negative relationship was found between information acquisition seeking and newcomer social integration for newcomers with a high quality of LMX among insurance agents in Study 1.

One possible reason for this may be due to the fact that the participants in Study 1 were insurance agents who work in a more competitive environment compared with the sample of doctors and nurses in Study 2. Therefore, they are more likely to be influenced by the concept of The Doctrine of the Golden Mean (*zhong yong* in the Confucian school), which can be understood as mediocre or ordinary talent. Under such a concept, employees who stand out in the group are likely to be disliked and invoke jealousy easily (Bond and Kwang, 1986), just as in the Chinese expression which says that ‘the fat pig gets

slaughtered.’ Hence, influenced by this psychology, it is possible that newcomers with a high quality of LMX may be perceived to be ‘eager for showing’ or a ‘shoes polisher’, which may influence the newcomer’s integration into the group. In contrast, newcomers who have a low quality of LMX may obtain sympathy from other group members, and as they cannot easily obtain access to a supervisor, they are more likely to contact group members to gain information which may indirectly influence their social integration.

In addition, a significant moderating role of LMX was found in the relationship between information seeking and task mastery for insurance agents in Study 1. This result could be explained by the fact that under high quality of LMX, supervisors may consider newcomers as in-group members, and thus share information with them and give them support. However, when newcomers have low quality of LMX, they need to depend on themselves to seek information, and therefore, build their confidence to perform tasks. Hence, their information seeking behaviour is important in relation to their task mastery. Nevertheless, even though a significant interaction effect had been found in insurance agents, it is worth noting that the interactive effect itself was weak: the interaction term explained an additional 2 percent of variance in task mastery. Relatively small interaction effects of LMX were common in previous organizational studies (e.g. Loi et al., 2006), so it is not unexpected. This and the low amount of overall variance explained for task mastery (an adjusted R^2 of 23%) perhaps indicates that there are other factors and moderators influencing such linkage besides LMX, which demand further investigation.

By contrast, there was no moderating effect of LMX found in the relationship between information seeking and newcomer task mastery in doctors and nurses in Study 2. This indicates that the strength and direction of this relationship is not influenced by the quality of LMX in the sample of newly appointed doctors and nurses. Doctors or nurses are required to attend many years’ professional training and to pass a qualified examination before being appointed in the context of China. Their confidence of mastering tasks is more likely to have come from their previous professional training and experience in their internship, instead of the relationship with superiors. Therefore, the absence of a moderating effect of LMX may not be unexpected.

A significant interaction effect for LMX in the linkage of newcomer information seeking and role clarity was supported in Study 2 but not in Study 1. On reflection, one potential explanation for this non-supported result in Study 1 may be that the insurance organization provides a clearly-written and formal job description for newcomers, which demonstrates the job goals, responsibilities and expectations for newcomers. New

insurance agents have a number of opportunities to acquire such information by attending orientation sessions and in the follow-up, on-job training in the researched organization. In addition, the nature of the insurance agent's job and its settings could be another reason explaining why LMX cannot moderate such a relationship. In spite of performance assessment and initial guidance from supervisors, insurance agents primarily need to rely on themselves to promote insurance products and to improve job performance through managing a variety of situations outside the organization in the context of China. In such work settings, the supervisory support becomes not so obvious in developing employees' job role. Thus, it is likely that no matter what the levels of the quality of LMX, the relationship between information acquisition and role clarity for those participants may not change.

However, for doctors and nurses, there must be safeguards in the way new medical staff are inducted into their new posts to guard against errors because if an insurance agent makes a mistake, either he or she fails to sell a product or mis-sells a product but no-one gets hurt; while if doctors and nurses did not perform their jobs correctly, the health of patients may be at stake. Therefore, it is compulsory for doctors and nurses to understand their jobs and responsibilities clearly. High quality of LMX thus appears important as active mentoring and supportive activities may help doctors and nurses to reduce uncertainty and perform jobs more confidently. However, under low quality of LMX, more efforts are thus needed for newly appointed medical staff to acquire information in order to enhance the awareness of how to perform jobs in the right way. The importance of information acquisition thus becomes more obvious in enhancing role clarity.

To sum up, it is suggested by this research that newcomer information seeking is crucial for newcomer adjustment in the context of China with the implication that the influence of newcomer information seeking can be generalized to other cultures outside western countries. Moreover, it is found that LMX serves as a moderating role affecting influence of newcomer information seeking on socialization outcomes. How newcomers were led would affect what newcomers could or should do to adjust. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed below.

7.3.2 Theoretical Implications

Given that the majority of studies on newcomer socialization have only involved

participants from western countries, with very few studies in an Asian context, the results of the present research were thus expected to have implications for the literature on newcomer information seeking and LMX in several ways. First of all, as expected, the results in general showed that a higher frequency of newcomer information seeking behaviour was associated with higher social integration, task mastery and role clarity for newcomers in the context of China, which replicated the findings of a number of studies conducted in Western countries (e.g. Morrison, 1993a; Bauer et al., 1998; Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002). The findings largely support the assumption that uncertainty reduction through newcomer information seeking is not culturally bound, and that the benefits of information seeking may cross-validate in the context of China.

However, although it is essential to examine the linkage between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes in a non-western context, a more important implication of this research is that individuals' efforts do not entirely control the influences of information seeking as their work relationships with supervisors also play a significant role, particularly in the context of China. This conclusion is based on both studies in this research, which in general indicated that LMX served as a significant moderator to compensate the influence of information seeking on newcomer adjustment. To illustrate, newcomers with high quality of LMX are in a position to benefit more as they can depend on supervisors to provide valued resources and information to speed up the adjustment process. However, for newcomers with low quality of LMX, their seeking behaviours thus become more relevant for their adjustment outcomes. These results help to identify the circumstances of 'when' information seeking becomes important for socialization outcomes, particularly in the context of China.

Moreover, the finding of the moderating effect of LMX in the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes also elicits some understanding of the weak relationships found in some previous empirical studies (e.g. Ashford and Black, 1996; Gruman et al., 2006). The results in the present research demonstrate that the influence of newcomer information seeking on newcomer adjustment is less obvious when newcomers have high quality of LMX with their supervisors, whereas newcomer information seeking is more important when newcomers have low quality of LMX. However, since this finding was made in the context of China where some typical features of Chinese culture are embedded in newcomer information seeking behaviour, such as relying on superiors' guidance and believing in authority (Chapter 4 section 4.6.1), it is not certain whether the finding will hold true in the context of western countries. Therefore,

although the results demonstrate the dynamics of social interactions between newcomers and supervisors in explaining the influence of newcomer information seeking on newcomer adjustment, future research should seek to further investigate the underlying influence of social interactions such as LMX in other contexts. Such investigations may help to advance the theoretical understanding of newcomer information seeking.

Additionally, the findings also have implications for the literature of LMX. As is known, the quality of LMX may affect a number of individual attitudes and behaviours, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviour (Gerstner and Day, 1997; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Schriesheim et al., 1999). Few studies, however, have been conducted to particularly examine the influence of LMX on newcomer adjustment. Those that have done so have shown that LMX is associated with work-related well-being (Rousseau et al., 2008). Therefore, the findings of the present study confirm the significant role of LMX in understanding newcomer proactive behaviours, and suggest that LMX can be a potential moderator in influencing the relationship between information seeking and newcomer adjustment outcomes, particularly in Chinese settings.

7.3.3 Practical Implications

The results can be interpreted to suggest practitioners that it would be worthwhile to rethink the methods of managing those newcomers with less proactive information seeking behaviour. Given the likelihood that the process of joining organizations is associated with lack of control (Ashforth and Black, 1996), many previous studies have indicated that anxiety and confusion might stimulate newcomers' curiosity and motivation to acquire information. However, due to the potential influence of Chinese culture embedded in information seeking behaviour, newcomers may not always take the initiative to seek information for their adjustment. Under such circumstances, supervisors are encouraged to cultivate effective work relationships, particularly with those newcomers with low information seeking behaviours. Considering the specific efforts to improve work relationships, supervisors are encouraged to put greater emphasis on promoting the fairness of performance assessment through providing a more specified and clear job description (Graen and Cashman, 1975; Folger and Konovsky, 1989). In support, Knovosky (2000) indicated that perceived procedural justice can influence leader-member relationships,

which may further influence employee behaviours. Folger and Konovsky's (1989) study also provided an explicit view by suggesting that procedural justice was significantly related to trust in a supervisor, which was considered to further influence the relationship between subordinate and supervisor. In addition, since several studies have found the impact of development opportunity in affecting employees' behaviours and attitudes (Lee and Bruvold, 2003; Shore and Shore, 1995), it is reasonable to assume that providing developmental feedback can be another approach to improve the quality of LMX (Anseel and Lievens, 2007).

However, even though it is claimed that the newcomer-supervisor work relationship is important for newcomer adjustment, particularly for those with low information seeking behaviours, this does not mean that the newcomer's own information seeking is not important at all. On the contrary, given that the results confirmed the positive linkages between newcomer information seeking and social integration, task mastery and role clarity, newcomers are still expected to take the ownership of their adjustment. Moreover, the results of this research clearly indicate that newcomers with a high frequency of information seeking and a good quality of LMX are more likely to have a higher level of social integration, task mastery and role clarity than those with a good quality of LMX but less information seeking behaviour. Therefore, although it is essential to provide social support during the newcomer socialization process, newcomer proactive information seeking behaviour is still believed to be beneficial for both newcomers and organizations. Strategies to stimulate newcomer information seeking behaviour should be aimed at increasing newcomers' awareness of the benefit of information seeking. Newcomer orientation training emphasizing information seeking tactics may be one approach to increase that awareness.

In addition, for those newcomers with low quality of LMX, it is necessary to support them to develop a strong social network outside of their supervisors. Work opportunities that provide interaction opportunities with experienced employees for newcomers including social activities such as picnics or outdoor parties, can be a complementary approach to help them build networks with other colleagues. Through the interaction with others, newcomers can learn their experiences and collect necessary information to perform the jobs, without relying too much on their own leader. However, further exploration about organizational interventions on helping newcomers to develop a social network appears necessary and useful.

Also, the results are particularly important for managers from western countries but

working with Chinese newcomers in joint venture or international companies because the western concepts of individualism and interest-oriented social interactions may be not relevant in a collective context where newcomers value clear guidance and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, an open communication channel and clear introductions become essential in such a context to ensure that the sources are perceived accessible and approachable for newcomers. Major and Kozlowski (1997) provided two methods to encourage newcomers' proactive behaviours: one is to design jobs to ensure newcomers work interdependently with other team members; the other is to provide an environment that enables newcomers to gain access to team members. They also pointed out that different learning strategies are necessary for newcomers with different levels of self efficacy.

7. 4 Methodological Implications

Besides those theoretical and practical implications, the research also adds to the current socialization literature on the aspect of methodology. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (section 1.2.2), MBA students or professional occupations such as accountants were often involved as the primary research samples in most of the existing studies. By following the suggestion of involving a more heterogeneous sample in organizational socialization studies (Saks and Ashforth, 1997a), two rarely researched samples were included in the present research. By doing this, the impacts of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information seeking can be discussed in a broader context.

There is also an increasing research interest aimed at improving understanding of work-related behaviours of newcomers in a non-western context (Kim et al., 2005; Takeuchi and Takeuchi, 2009), given that studies in developing countries and countries in transition are still largely ignored. Indeed, it has been found that most of the existing organizational socialization studies in China are still at the stage of introducing and translating western theoretical development (Wang and Ling, 2006), with only a few empirical investigations undertaken in recent years (e.g. Yi and Uen, 2006; Wang and Shi, 2006). Therefore, the present study extends the socialization literature by providing empirical evidence in this new research context.

7.5 Summary of the Implications

Taken together, a summary of theoretical, practical and methodological implications of the current research is presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Summary of the implications of this research

Theoretical Implications	1) Extending the socialization literature by discussing the influences of different aspects of organizational socialization tactics on socialization outcomes.
	2) Discovering that the social aspect of socialization tactics (serial vs. disjunctive and investiture vs. divestiture) is the strongest predictor of newcomer adjustment in the context of China, compared with the aspects of context and content.
	3) Contributing to the literature of perceived organizational support (POS) by suggesting that under collective, formal, fixed, sequential, serial and investiture organizational socialization tactics, newcomers are more likely to develop POS.
	4) Enriching the socialization literature by providing evidence to suggest that uncertainty reduction through information seeking is not culturally bounded and that the benefits of information seeking may cross-validate in the context of China.
	5) Offering a novel insight of when newcomer information seeking may influence socialization outcomes by suggesting that LMX may serve as a moderator to compensate the effects of information seeking on newcomer adjustment.
	6) Contributing to an expansion of the LMX literature by suggesting that a theoretical approach for understanding newcomer proactive behaviours in Chinese settings lies in investigating the influence of interactions with supervisors.
Practical Implications	1) Encouraging experienced employees to support newcomer adjustment as a role model or mentor.
	2) Making efforts to develop newcomers' POS by the provision of more formal, planned and structured socialization tactics.
	3) Considering the typical characteristics of the context and the type of job when designing a package of socialization programmes for newcomers, and tailoring the socialization tactics to fit for particular newcomers.
	4) Encouraging supervisors to cultivate effective work relationships particularly with those newcomers with less information seeking behaviours.
	5) Enhancing newcomers' awareness of the benefit of proactive information seeking and taking the ownership of their adjustment.
	6) Supporting newcomers to develop a strong social network especially when they have not yet developed a good relationship with supervisors.
	7) Building open communication channels to ensure that the information and resources are perceived accessible and approachable for newcomers.
Methodological Implications	1) Involving two rarely investigated research samples in the current research, namely insurance agents and doctors/nurses.
	2) Extending the socialization literature by providing two empirical studies in the context of China.

7. 6 Future Research Directions

The goal of this research has been to discuss the influences of different aspects of organizational socialization tactics on socialization outcomes and newcomers' perceived organizational support, and to explore the relationships between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes and the moderating role of LMX in such relationships. By exploring these issues, the understanding on organizational socialization is expected to be improved. However, this research may have also pointed out a number of promising areas for future research.

7.6.1 Organizational Socialization Tactics

First of all, as illustrated in Chapter 2 (section 2.3), it is acknowledged that the organizational socialization process is a kind of continuous change process. During this process, newcomers' learning needs and requirements are supposed to evolve as they become more and more familiar with the new workplace and job tasks (Katz, 1980). In the beginning, newcomers may be eager to acquire information and resources to understand the organization, and thus it is assumed that the collective and formal socialization tactics, often reflected by the formal orientation programme, may satisfy those needs by imparting the necessary knowledge and information for newcomers to help them settle down. Having gained the basic picture about the organization and job environment, newcomers are likely to pursue self enhancement by chasing developmental opportunities. At that moment, appropriate training programmes and career development advice appear significant. Meanwhile, in order to feel comfortable and settle down in the new workplace, it is also necessary for newcomers to get along well with others by establishing healthy relationships with group members. A mentoring programme and social activities may be useful in helping a newcomer fit in.

The above scenario suggests that the effects of different aspects of organizational socialization tactics may be particularly important for some newcomers at various stage of the socialization process. Most socialization studies examined the dimensions of the socialization tactics at one point of time (e.g. Gruman et al., 2006; Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002; Cable and Parsons, 2001), or particularly discussed the overall influence of socialization tactics (e.g. Kim et al., 2005). Unfortunately, very few researchers have

explored the function of specific socialization practices on the different socialization outcomes. This issue has remained largely overlooked. The present research examined the impacts of different aspects of socialization tactics on newcomer adjustment, but due to the cross-sectional research design, it is impossible to elucidate the causal relationships between socialization tactics and socialization outcomes: longitudinal research is needed to improve our understanding. Moreover, in order to maximize organizational investment, which is considered beneficial for both employers and employees, we need to understand more fully about individual needs and concerns during different socialization stages.

Second, as noted earlier in the model of Bauer et al. (2007), the overall focus of most studies on organizational impacts has been restricted to the six organizational tactics dimensions proposed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979), with only limited research targeted at other specific supportive practices, such as induction programmes (Anderson et al., 1996), and buddy systems or mentors (Broad and Newstrom, 1992; Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2006). This lack of research progress is surprising given the context in which practitioners have made calls for more understanding on which supportive practices targeted at newcomers will be effective. To illustrate, Saks et al. (2007) proposed several questions to guide future management decisions, such as ‘is socialization facilitated by one role model or multiple models?’ and ‘what kinds of socialization programmes are most likely to provide the benefits of social tactics (e.g., formal mentoring programme, buddy system, on-the-job training, social events, team assignments)?’

Furthermore, the results in the present research suggest that the social aspect of socialization tactics was found to be the strongest predictor of newcomer socialization outcomes such as social integration, task mastery and role clarity. The specific strategies and practices related to this aspect of socialization tactics appear particularly important for guiding management in the context of China. An exploration of the practical programmes thus may become necessary and important in the future studies. For example, how should an effective buddy system be designed to facilitate newcomer adjustment? How should appropriate mentors be allocated to newcomers? When the socialization context is more individualized, how should newcomers be stimulated to find their own mentor or buddy? Providing answers for these types of questions would provide more guidance for organizations to catalyze for desired socialization outcomes.

Third, as it can be seen, the findings of the current research suggest that socialization tactics may have different impacts contingent on the organizational contexts. For example, the social aspect of socialization tactics was not related to newcomer role clarity in the

insurance organization but there was a positive effect for newcomers in the medical sector. Therefore, more research is needed to explore the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes through a discussion of the potential moderator to explore under what circumstance organizational socialization tactics really affect socialization outcomes.

Additionally, the results of the present research suggest that serial and investiture organizational socialization tactics appear to be particularly suitable for newcomer adjustment in the context of China. Although this result was consistent with some findings in the western countries (Ashforth et al., 2007), it is possible that traditional Chinese values and cognitive characteristics may influence the strength of such relationships. For example, respect for older people is a central theme in Chinese societies based on the root of Confucian values. This concept has implications for the way in which newcomers' ages may moderate the relationship between the social aspect of socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment in the context of China, such that the relationship will be weaker for older newcomers compared to younger newcomers. To illustrate, if a newcomer is older than the assigned mentor under serial socialization tactics, although the mentor can share experience and provide guidance for this newcomer, the mentor may also be hesitant in providing negative feedback to help the newcomer improve and adjust, as Chinese people tend to perceive that age reflects experience and knowledge (Redding, 1980). Thus, despite the significance of serial socialization tactics such as mentoring or buddy programmes, one may not expect a strong impact of those programmes for more senior newcomers in the context of China. In this regard, future research should further examine potential moderators to advance our knowledge on the circumstances under which organizational socialization tactics impact on newcomer adjustment.

Fourth, the present research takes a step forward in discussing the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and POS by suggesting that besides those socialization outcomes (e.g. social integration, task mastery and role clarity) the structured, formal and planned socialization tactics are also likely to boost the development of perception of organizational support for newcomers. Moreover, based on the social exchange theory that employees with POS may in turn engender positive work outcomes and attitudes (Eisenberger and Fasolo, 1990; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), the door is now open to investigate whether POS could be one potential mechanism through which organizational socialization tactics can be related to newcomer distal socialization outcomes such as organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Such discussion

may shift analytical attention from ‘what’ occurs during socialization onto ‘how’ those changes occur (e.g. Bauer et al., 1998; Gruman et al., 2006; Saks and Ashforth, 1997a; Wanous and Colella, 1989).

Finally, although the construct validity and reliability of the organizational socialization tactics measurement scales were demonstrated in this research, it is important to note that the shortened measurements used may not have psychometric equivalence to the original 30-item scale. Moreover, even though the decision to use the shortened versions was consistent with the study of Cable and Parson (2001) and the results in both studies have demonstrated the consistent reliability of this construct, considering the shortened version of scales of organizational socialization tactics may reduce the comparability of our findings with those of the original scale, the generalization of this finding must be made with caution to other contexts and further research is still necessary to retest the validity of such measurement by using the full measurement with a larger research sample.

7.6.2 Newcomer Information Seeking

Newcomer information seeking has been identified as one of the most researched topics in socialization literature (Bauer et al., 2007), but several issues need to be further investigated. The first area for future research concerns newcomer information seeking tactics. Research has shown that newcomers might vary their information seeking tactics based on different types of information. In the present research, consistent with Major and Kozlowski (1997) and Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000), interest centred particularly on information seeking through open inquiry. Apparently, direct inquiry is generally considered to be efficient because it can help to clarify the messages transferring between newcomers and others, and thus reduce misunderstandings (Miller and Jablin, 1991).

However, newcomers may not always initiate conversation for the purpose of seeking information. For example, Morrison (1995) suggested that in terms of performance feedback and social feedback, newcomers are more likely to acquire them through monitoring methods rather than through direct inquiry to avoid losing face. Drawing on those previous studies, it is reasonable to propose that for different types of information, newcomers tend to use different types of tactics, which may further influence the

effectiveness of newcomer proactive behaviour. Therefore, one area of future research might be to investigate how and when newcomer information seeking under different tactics may influence socialization outcomes.

Another avenue for future research is to involve other types of newcomer proactive behaviours. As noted, previous studies have identified a variety of proactive behaviours which may influence newcomer socialization outcomes such as positive framing, negotiation of job changes and relationship building with boss (Ashford and Black, 1996; Ashforth et al., 2007), some of which have been found to be significant for newcomer adjustment. For example, in the study of Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000), they found that relationship building was positively associated with social integration, role clarity, job satisfaction and turnover intention. Ashforth et al. (2007) suggested that those proactive behaviours were beneficial for newcomers' learning. Owing to the significance of these proactive behaviours, future research is also suggested to involve more types of proactive behaviours in the organizational socialization research.

Also, in spite of increasing understanding on information seeking behaviour, the scope of information seeking research has been still narrow, mainly focusing on the discussion of the antecedents of information seeking behaviour or the impacts of information seeking behaviour on socialization outcomes. In the present research, although demographic information (e.g. gender, age and tenure) and organizational socialization tactics were included when analyzing the impacts of newcomer information seeking on the socialization outcomes, there may be other potential predictors of newcomers' adjustment such as proactive personality (Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000) and employee motivational needs (Taormina, 2009). The omission of the other influential factors may result in uncertainty about how much variance in the findings could be explained by such unmeasured variables. Hence, in order to provide a more complete picture of the role of newcomer information seeking in the process of organizational socialization, a much broader range of predictive factors are needed to be involved in future studies.

Furthermore, since this research was conducted in the context of China with different cultural norms compared to western countries, it is not wise to rule out the possibility that LMX may enhance the relationships between information seeking and socialization outcomes in contexts in which newcomers are more likely to rely on themselves to adapt to the new workplace if the job or work environment encourages individual innovation, and tends to tolerate mistakes. Therefore, considering the influences of individual efforts and effective work relationships with supervisors, it is reasonable to assume that the

relationships between information seeking and socialization outcomes can be stronger when newcomers have a high quality of LMX rather than a low quality of LMX.

Also, considering the interaction effect was relatively weak in the present research, it would be interesting to continue this line of research and analyse other moderating variables, such as peer support or team support during the socialization process. Louis et al. (1983) emphasized the significance of daily interactions with peers for newcomer adjustment and reported that newcomers who gained support provided by peers were more likely to develop higher job satisfaction and commitment, and thus reduce intention to turnover. Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) also suggested that peers' support and help were essential for newcomers to integrate into the work group. Therefore, considering the importance of peers' support on newcomer socialization, further research is encouraged to add the construct of perceived peer support into the current model in order to provide a more comprehensive picture about the influence of social support for newcomer adjustment. Moreover, variables concerned with an individual's own belief, such as self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-expectation, can be also involved in future studies in order to examine to what extent the relationship between newcomer proactive behaviours and socialization outcomes can be moderated.

Last but not least, the results of this research suggest that it is particularly important for supervisors to develop high quality relationship with those newcomers who are not proactively seeking information to adjust, which leaves a significant question for future studies: how can managers develop these high quality relationships with those newcomers, particularly if they have not had the time or energy to do so?

7.7 Research Limitations and Strengths

The contributions and implications discussed above from the results of this research must be interpreted in light of a number of limitations. First of all, the present study is unable to draw conclusive causal relationships due to the fact that it is based on a cross-sectional survey design. Therefore, although the predictions are based on the literature, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the relationships may work the other way around. For example, after a period of time, when newcomers feel that they have been accepted as group members by actively attending social activities within the team, they may feel more at ease and comfortable in approaching peers or supervisors to acquire information.

Therefore, social integration may affect the frequency of newcomer information seeking later on. An additional comment needs to be made regarding the dynamics underlying the concepts of POS and LMX. Specifically, given that all the data were collected at one point of time, it was not possible to investigate how POS and LMX emerge and develop over time, which may also limit confidence in making definitive claims about causal relationships. Therefore, although the present analyses were based on the logic and contributions of previous research, a longitudinal study is necessary for clarifying the direction of causality in this respect.

In addition, due to the reliance on self-reports to measure employees' attitudes and perceptions, the examined relationships may suffer from potential problems of common method variance or inflated bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, previous socialization studies do provide support for the adopted research design. For example, Saks and Ashforth (1997a) explicitly stated that "self-reports might be appropriate when one is mostly concerned with perceived experiences", and pointed out that most of existing socialization research relies primarily on self-report. Similarly, Bauer and Green (1994) suggested that, "when individual perceptions and attitudes are determining employees' responses to work, self-reports should be a valid and useful source of data" (p. 220).

Also, some confidence can be placed on the present results because 'one-factor test' is applied to assess the potential bias based on the suggestion of Zhou and Ferris (1995). This method is also applied in the study of O'Connor and Morrison (2001). For this test, all the variables in the current research were simultaneously analysed by using the maximum-likelihood approach which yield a chi-square and degrees of freedom. If a chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio is less than 2.00:1, it suggests that the common-method bias does present a serious problem. However, if the ratio is larger than 2.00:1, it suggests that common-method bias is not a substantial problem in the research. In the present research, the chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio in Study 1 was 7.27:1, and the chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio in Study 2 was 6.96:1. Therefore, common-method bias may be not a major limitation within this research. Nevertheless, it may still be useful to involve responses from other stakeholders such as managers and supervisors through a multi-sourced research design to provide a more comprehensive examination of the hypotheses proposed in this research.

Further, most of the participants in the study had been with their organization for a period of more than one year but less than two years, and all were full-time employees, instead of graduates or university co-op students like the samples in the study of Gruman et

al. (2006). It is not clear whether the results gained in the present research can be generalized to other samples with less work experience, and this would require a new research study. It is possible that the results may be based on research samples that are not truly representative of underlying populations if there is any response bias present. However, since there is usually no sampling framework available and with the practical restrictions of time and budget, very few studies have used random samples to discuss newcomers' attitudes and behaviours during the socialization process. Indeed, most existing studies used business school graduates, MBA students and alumni as research samples (e.g. Ashforth and Saks, 1996; Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman et al., 2006). While this may be convenient from a practical point of view, it is hardly good research practice. It is strongly recommended that larger and more diversified research samples should be incorporated in future research to replicate the present study and to provide more confidence in hypotheses testing.

Moreover, when discussing the moderating effect of LMX in the relationship between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes, it was assumed that there were some typical characteristics of information seeking behaviours among Chinese newcomers based on the Chinese social context such as collectivism and Confucianism. It is noted that some Chinese employees may follow the traditional role, while some may act in a more western way. However, although it is claimed that some of those inherent characteristics may have weakened or transformed when Chinese society has evolved through the twentieth century, Chen et al. (2002) have argued that, "sensitivity to social roles and their accompanied obligations remain a major characteristic of the contemporary Chinese" (p. 341). Moreover, the research samples in these two studies were collected in relatively developing areas of the country. Therefore, employees may still be likely to show more traditional Chinese behaviour than others in the more developed areas of China like Shanghai and Shenzhen. However, there exists the need to involve the assessment of cultural variables such as collectivism and Confucianism in future studies to provide a deeper understanding about how cultural variables influence newcomer information seeking behaviours.

Also, as noticed, three typical demographic variables (i.e. gender, age and organizational tenure) were controlled in analyzing the impacts of organizational socialization tactics and newcomer information on socialization outcomes. Although the author attempted to involve those most likely influential variables as controlling variables based on the literature (Kim et al., 2005), it is true that social reality is much more complex

than we think. There may be other variables around that could be important such as some organizational factors such as organizational size and HR policies. Typically in a survey, there are many unmeasured confounding variables and unmeasured explanatory variables that might help with the explanation, but what is examined in the regression models is a simplified version of what might be happening in reality in order to obtain a better understanding of the relationships between the key selected variables.

What is more, although “successful replication in the social sciences is widely thought to be unlikely or at least difficult” (Lindsay and Ehrenberg, 1993, p. 217), there were some mixed findings from the two studies, and it would be meaningful and interesting to retest the proposed hypotheses in other contexts.

However, despite these limitations, there are some positive aspects within this research. First of all, it is noted that two separate surveys were conducted in the context of China by using two very different research samples. Lindsay (1995) suggested that, “replication provides the crucial test of the reliability and validity of facts, hypotheses and theories” (p. 35). Based on his argument, the replicated survey (i.e. Study 2) was expected to provide us with a strong robustness about the proposed relationships in the research model because it examined the generalizability of previous empirical findings in Study 1 in a very different setting.

Additionally, in order to ensure the quality of the translated instrument, great care was taken with the process of translation through the use of the forward-backward method suggested by Brislin (1986), and native speakers were invited to compare the initial instrument and back-translated instrument using an evaluation form. Also, a pilot test was conducted to examine whether the instrument was understandable and meaningful in the context of China. Moreover, for those constructs which had been validated in the west but not in China, factor analysis was used to demonstrate their construct validities before starting the main analysis of the hypothesized relationships.

What is more, before testing the hypotheses in the main studies, a pilot study was performed to examine the construct validity of POS and LMX in the Chinese samples. This provided some clarification that these key constructs were perceived as two distinct variables and could be applied in the context of China. Also, close links were developed with local contacts to facilitate the data collection process in the main studies. The final response rates were respectable with very few incomplete questionnaires. Moreover, in the process of data analysis, established statistical methods were carefully applied with reference to other empirical studies.

Further, although there were some conflicting findings from these two different samples, yet the results by and large could be interpreted and understood given the research context and the characteristics of the research samples. What is more, the findings point out the importance of tailoring socialization tactics in different contexts, and it opens up an exciting avenue for further research – how should socialization tactics for newcomers be adjusted in different industries, and are there any principles to follow in doing so?

7.8 Concluding Remarks

To conclude, the present research examined the relationships between organizational socialization tactics and socialization outcomes in a non-western context, specifically mainland China, by using two rarely researched samples, namely newly hired insurance agents and newly appointed doctors and nurses. The results ascertain the applicability of organizational socialization tactics to Asian contexts, and demonstrated that serial and investiture socialization tactics was most strongly associated with newcomer adjustment, which has important implications for both researchers and practitioners in the context of China. Further, the results indicate that the institutional socialization tactics characterised as formal, structured and planned may be more likely to make newcomers develop perceptions of organizational support.

What is more, consistent with some extant studies in western contexts (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002; Morrison, 1993a), the results imply that newcomer information seeking is positively related to newcomer socialization outcomes, indicating that the benefits of information seeking may still hold true in a non-western context. With respect to the moderator in the relationship between newcomer information seeking and socialization outcomes, it is found that LMX serves as a typical moderator to adjust the effects of information seeking on socialization outcomes, such that the relationships are weaker at a high quality of LMX than at a low quality of LMX. In other words, newcomer information seeking really matters to socialization outcomes when newcomers have a low quality of LMX, particularly in the context of China.

As can be seen, the present research contributes to the filling of a gap in the literature and offering potential directions for future research. Most of all, a novel theoretical implication of this research lies in its emphasis on the role of social exchange concepts (i.e. POS and LMX) in the socialization process. The findings shed light on the important

question of why organizational socialization tactics are crucial in shaping newcomers' perceptions of the organization, and also refined the existing literature of newcomer information seeking by pointing out the critical influence of the leader-member relationship in this process. Moreover, given how much growth is happening in China and the urgent need to integrate employees into organizations quickly, this research opens a new avenue of organizational socialization research through an in-depth analysis of cultural underpinnings embedded in the newcomers' proactive behaviour. The author expects to stimulate this line of research in order to further improve the understanding of newcomer adjustment in the context of China. This is a potentially exciting research area with important implications for both managers and scholars.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Questionnaire for Evaluating the Translation of the Instrument

Instructions:

In this instrument, there are two criteria: **Comparability of Language** and **Similarity of Interpretability**.

Comparability of Language refers to the formal similarity of words, phrases, and sentences (Not at all comparable=1 to Very comparable=5). Specifically, this criterion focuses on comparing the wordings and phrasings of the sentences.

Similarity of Interpretability refers to the degree to which the two sentences would be interpreted as having the same meaning and participant response, even if the wording is not the same (Not at all similar=1 to Very similar=5). Specifically, this criterion focuses on comparing the meanings and participative responds of the sentences. Please read the two sentences from the left and rate its comparability and interpretability to your right for each question. And tick the appropriate box with “√”.

(The method is adapted from the source: Chen (2003))

Example:

			Comparability of Language (Form)					Similarity of Interpretability (Meaning)				
			Not at all comparable=1 Moderately comparable=3 Very comparable=5					Not at all similar=1 Moderately similar=3 Very similar=5				
1	I know that organizational support is important for employee development.	I am aware that organizational support is important for employee development.	1	2	3	4	5 √	1	2	3	4	5 √
2	I know that organizational support is important for employee development.	I understand that organizational support is valuable for employee development.	1	2	3	4 √	5	1	2	3	4 √	5
3	I know that organizational support is important for employee development.	Organizational support is substantial for developing employee expertise in my perspective.	1	2	3 √	4	5	1	2	3 √	4	5
4	I know that organizational support is important for employee development.	Organizational support is good for developing employee expertise in my opinion.	1	2	3 √	4	5	1	2	3 √	4	5
5	I know that organizational support is important for employee development.	Organizational support is important for employee development in my knowledge.	1	2	3	4 √	5	1	2	3	4	5 √

			Comparability of Language (Form)					Similarity of Interpretability (Meaning)				
			Not at all comparable=1 Moderately comparable=3 Very comparable=5					Not at all similar=1 Moderately similar=3 Very similar=5				
1	I have been extensively involved with other new recruits in common, job related training activities.	I took part in job-related training activities with other newcomers together.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2	This organization puts all newcomers through the same set of learning experiences.	All the newcomers within the organization are required to attend the same set of training activities.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3	I have been through a set of training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of job related skills.	I attend a set of job-related training activities, which are particularly designed to provide information and knowledge for newcomers.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4	I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods.	I am not required to perform any job responsibilities when I am not familiar with the departmental setting and the work procedures.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5	There is a clear pattern in the way one role leads to another or one job assignment leads to another in this organization.	The ways of being promoted and developed are clear in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6	The steps in the career ladder are clearly specified in this organization.	The steps to develop career is clearly demonstrated in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7	The way in which my progress through the organization will follow a fixed timetable of events has been clearly communicated to me.	The organization provides a fixed training timetable with planned events, and has already clearly informed me.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8	I can predict my future career path in this organization by observing other people's experiences.	Based on the observation of other colleagues, I can see my career development within this organization in the future.										
9	Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me personally.	Most of my colleagues are supportive.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

			Comparability of Language (Form)					Similarity of Interpretability (Meaning)				
			Not at all comparable=1 Moderately comparable=3 Very comparable=5					Not at all similar=1 Moderately similar=3 Very similar=5				
10	My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to this organization.	My colleagues are trying their best to help me adjust into the new work place.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11	I am gaining a clear understanding of my role in this organization from observing my senior colleagues.	I become clearer about my job role after observing the experienced colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12	Experienced organizational members see advising or training newcomers as one of their main job responsibilities in this organization.	Within this organization, the experienced workers see helping newcomer adjust as one of their own job responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13	The organization takes pride in my accomplishments.	The organization is proud of my achievement.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14	The organization really cares about my well-being.	The organization concerns my physical and mental health sincerely.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15	The organization values my contributions to its well-being.	The organization values my contribution to its development.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16	The organization strongly considers my goals and values.	The organization seriously considers my target and values.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17	The organization shows little concern for me.	The organization does not care about me.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18	The organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor.	The organization is willing to help me if I need special help.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19	I usually know where I stand with my manager. (I usually know how satisfied my immediate supervisor is with what I do)	I usually know how my manager thinks about me, and whether he/she is satisfied with my work.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

			Comparability of Language (Form)					Similarity of Interpretability (Meaning)				
			Not at all comparable=1 Moderately comparable=3 Very comparable=5					Not at all similar=1 Moderately similar=3 Very similar=5				
20	I have enough confidence in my supervisor that I would defend and justify his/her decisions if he/she was not present to do so.	I have enough confidence on my supervisor. If he or she is not in present, I will justify for his or her decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21	My working relationship with my manager is effective.	At work, the relationship between my manager and me can help me to conduct job effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22	My manager understands my problems and needs.	My manager understands my problems and demands.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23	I can count on my manager to 'bail me out', even at his or her own expense, when I really need it.	When I really need help, I can rely on my managers to help me out and solve the problems, even on his (her) cost.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24	My manager recognizes my potential.	My manager recognizes that I have potentials.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25	Regardless of how much power my manager has built into his or her position, my manager would be personally inclined to use his/her power to help me solve problems in my work.	No matter how powerful he/she has in his/her position, he/she would like to use power to help me solve the problems.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
26	I feel comfortable around my co-workers.	I feel relaxed and happy to get along with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
27	The atmosphere in my immediate work group is friendly. (Your immediate work group consists of the people you see most often while at work).	The atmosphere is friendly within the work team. (Your work team includes the colleagues you meet most frequently).										
28	People in my immediate work group help me find ways to do a better job.	The colleagues in work team help me to seek for ways of completing my tasks much better.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
29	My co-workers seem to accept me as one of them.	It seems that my colleagues accept me to be one of them.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

			Comparability of Language (Form)					Similarity of Interpretability (Meaning)				
			Not at all comparable=1 Moderately comparable=3 Very comparable=5					Not at all similar=1 Moderately similar=3 Very similar=5				
30	I am confident about the adequacy of my job skills and abilities.	I am confident about my skills and abilities for the job.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
31	I feel competent conducting my job assignments.	I feel I am competent to do the assigned tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
32	It seems to take me longer than planned to complete my job assignments.	It seems that it takes longer to finish my task than planned.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
33	I rarely make mistakes when conducting my job assignments.	I seldom make mistakes during the process of doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
34	I feel certain about how much authority I have.	I clearly understand my authority.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
35	Clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.	I clearly know my work objective and goals.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
36	Expectation is clear about what has to be done.	I know what is expected of me.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
37	I know what my responsibilities are.	I am clear about my job responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
38	I know exactly what is expected of me.	I know the expectations for me.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
39	I know that I have divided my time properly.	I know how to manage my time properly.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Thanks very much for your kind support!

Appendix 2: Survey Measures and Instrument

Organizational Socialization Tactics (Jones, 1986)

Context aspect of socialization tactics

I have been extensively involved with other new recruits in common, job related training activities.

This organization puts all newcomers through the same set of learning experiences.

I have been through a set of training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of job related skills.

I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods.

Content aspect of socialization tactics

There is a clear pattern in the way one role leads to another or one job assignment leads to another in this organization.

The steps in the career ladder are clearly specified in this organization.

I can predict my future career path in this organization by observing other people's experiences.

The way in which my progress through the organization will follow a fixed timetable of events has been clearly communicated to me.

Social aspect socialization tactics

Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me personally.

My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to this organization.

Experienced organizational members see advising or training newcomers as one of their main job responsibilities in this organization.

I am gaining a clear understanding of my role in this organization from observing my senior colleagues.

Newcomer Information Seeking (Major and Kozlowski, 1997)

In a typical week, how frequently do YOU initiate conversations with your coworkers and supervisor about the following topics:

Job related topics in general

Procedures for the completion of work.

How to handle problems on the job

Specific work tasks

Work priorities

How to use equipment and materials

Quantity and quality of work

Job duties and procedures

Newcomer Socialization Outcomes

Social integration (Morrison, 1993a)

I feel comfortable around my co-workers.

The atmosphere in my immediate work group is friendly.

People in my immediate work group help me find ways to do a better job.

My co-workers seem to accept me as one of them.

Task mastery (Morrison, 1993a)

I am confident about the adequacy of my job skills and abilities.

I feel competent conducting my job assignments.

I rarely make mistakes when conducting my job assignments.

It seems to take me longer than planned to complete my job assignments.

Role clarity (Rizzo et al. , 1970)

I feel certain about how much authority I have.

Clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.

Expectation is clear about what has to be done.

I know what my responsibilities are.

I know exactly what is expected of me.

I know that I have divided my time properly.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) (Eisenberger et al., 1986)

The organization takes pride in my accomplishments.

The organization really cares about my well-being.

The organization values my contributions to its well-being.

The organization strongly considers my goals and values.

The organization shows little concern for me.

The organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) (Scandura and Graen, 1984)

I usually know where I stand with my manager.

I have enough confidence in my supervisor that I would defend and justify his/her decisions if he/she was not present to do so.

My working relationship with my manager is effective.

My manager understands my problems and needs.

I can count on my manager to 'bail me out', even at his or her own expense, when I really need it.

My manager recognizes my potential.

Regardless of how much power my manager has built into his or her position, my manager would be personally inclined to use his/her power to help me solve problems in my work.

新员工适应情况调查问卷

您好，为了解新员工对公司整体环境的适应程度及其影响因素，特制作了这套问卷。我们期望了解您的真实想法和意见。您所填写的任何资料仅供研究用途，故请不要有任何顾虑。谢谢您的协助！

第一部分：请填写以下个人基本情况，在相应横线处打“√”或直接填写。

产业类别： 金融保险____, IT 资讯____, 制造业____, 行政事业____, 医疗卫生____, 其他____	性别： 男____, 女____	教育程度： 高中（职）或以下____, 大专____, 本科____, 研究生或以上____, 其他____
在该公司任职时间： _____（月）	年龄： _____	

第二部分：请回忆您刚入职时的情况，回答以下问题，在相应空格里打“√”。

1=完全不同意； 2=基本不同意； 3=倾向不同意； 4=既不同意也不反对； 5=倾向同意； 6=基本同意； 7=完全同意。

编号	事项	完全不同意	基本不同意	倾向不同意	既不同意也不反对	倾向同意	基本同意	完全同意
1	刚入职时，我与新同事一起参加了工作相关的培训。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	公司里所有新员工都要接受一系列相同的培训活动。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	我参加了专为新员工设计的技能培训。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	在未熟悉部门情况和工作流程前，我无需开始正式工作。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	我的大部分同事都很支持我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	我的同事会尽力帮我适应这个公司环境。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	公司对于晋职晋升的规定很清楚。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	公司内晋职晋升的途径很清楚。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	在这个公司中，有经验的老员工把带新员工看成是自己的本份工作。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	对老同事多加观察后，我会更清楚的了解自己的工作。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	从同事的经历中，我可以看到我在这个公司将来的发展。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	公司有固定的培训安排时间表，并已清楚的通知我了。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

第三部分：您刚进入公司工作时，会与同事和主管主动讨论下面的事情么？在相应空格里打“√”。

1=极少； 2=较少； 3=一般； 4=经常； 5=很经常。

编号	事项	极少	较少	一般	经常	很经常
1	与工作相关的问题。	1	2	3	4	5
2	开展工作的程序。	1	2	3	4	5
3	如何解决工作中的问题。	1	2	3	4	5
4	特定的工作。	1	2	3	4	5
5	工作重点。	1	2	3	4	5
6	如何使用设备和材料。	1	2	3	4	5
7	工作的质与量。	1	2	3	4	5
8	工作职责和程序。	1	2	3	4	5

第四部分： 以下问题是想了解您的组织支持感，与主管的关系及您的适应程度。请结合自身情况回答以下问题，在相应空格里打“√”。1=完全不同意； 2= 基本不同意； 3=倾向不同意； 4=既不同意也不反对； 5=倾向同意； 6=基本同意； 7=完全同意。

编号	事项	完全不同意	基本不同意	倾向不同意	既不同意也不反对	倾向同意	基本同意	完全同意
1	公司真切关心我的身心健康。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	公司认真考虑我的目标和价值观。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	公司并不怎么关心我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	如果我需要特别帮助，公司乐意伸出援手。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	公司重视我对其健康发展做出的贡献。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	公司为我的成就感到骄傲。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	我通常明白我的主管是如何看待我的。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	我对我主管有充分的信心，所以当他不在场时，我会为他的决策辩护。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	我和主管的工作关系可以使我的工作更有成效。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	我的主管了解我的问题和需要。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	当我真的需要帮助时，我可以依赖我的主管来帮我解决麻烦，哪怕他自己会有损失。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	我主管认同我是有潜力的。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	不管我主管在他（她）岗位上的权利有多大，他（她）都会愿意运用自己的权利来帮我解决工作上的问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	我感觉和同事一起共事轻松愉快。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	工作团队的气氛是友善的。（你的工作团队包括你工作时最常见到的同事）	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	团队中的同事会帮助我寻求途径来更好的完成工作。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	我的同事似乎接受我为他们中的一员。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	我清楚自己的权限。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	我清楚自己的工作计划和目标。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	我了解对自己的工作期望是什么。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	我知道自己的工作责任。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	我懂得合理安排工作时间。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	我明白对自己的工作期望是什么。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	我对自己的工作技巧和能力有信心。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	在完成工作任务的过程中，我很少犯错。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	我觉得可以胜任委派给我的工作。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	我要花比预期更长的时间来完成工作任务。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

本问卷到此结束。再次感谢您热心填答！

Appendix 3: Results of A Factor Analysis on Organizational Socialization Tactics

<i>Items</i>	<i>Factors</i>		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>1 Context socialization tactics</i>			
I have been extensively involved with other new recruits in common, job related training activities.	.66	.19	.24
This organization puts all newcomers through the same set of learning experiences.	.64	.15	.34
I have been through a set of training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of job related skills.	.73	<u>.40</u>	.07
I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods.	.73	-.10	.06
<i>2 Content socialization tactics</i>			
There is a clear pattern in the way one role leads to another or one job assignment leads to another in this organization.	.12	.84	.21
The steps in the career ladder are clearly specified in this organization.	-.00	.87	.27
The way in which my progress through the organization will follow a fixed timetable of events has been clearly communicated to me.	.35	.58	.11
<i>3 Social aspect socialization tactics</i>			
Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me personally.	.30	.13	.72
My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to this organization.	.24	.17	.64
Experienced organizational members see advising or training newcomers as one of their main job responsibilities in this organization.	.11	.34	.76
I am gaining a clear understanding of my role in this organization from observing my senior colleagues.	.04	.08	.71
Percent of variance explained	12.33%	10.26%	38.53%
Cronbach's alpha for subscale	0.72	0.75	0.75

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Loadings highlighted in bold indicate the factor on which the item was most associated.

Underlined values indicate a double loading on two factors.