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The Organizational Socialization of K–12 Classified Employees

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The Organizational Socialization of K–12 Classified Employees

A Dissertation by

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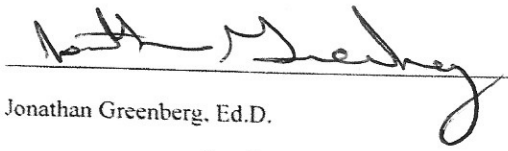

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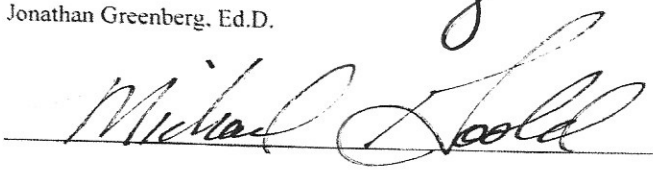

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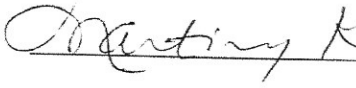

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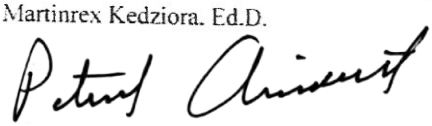

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ABSTRACT

The Organizational Socialization of K–12 Classified Employees

by Steven Dunlap

Purpose: The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify to what extent newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational tactics (content, context, and social) to support their socialization process during the 1st year of employment (G. R. Jones, 1986). In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization to their new role (role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery).

Methodology: This study used a sequential explanatory mixed methods design to engage 70 newly employed K–12 classified staff members to identify to what extent they experience organizational socialization tactics during the 1st year of employment. Eight participants from the quantitative portion of the study were interviewed to understand further their perception concerning the effectiveness of organizational socialization tactics used by K–12 organizations to support their role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery.

Findings: The findings of this study revealed that newly employed K–12 classified staff experience individualized content and context tactics and institutionalized social tactics categorized by G. R. Jones (1986). The findings also demonstrated that newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations do not perceive organizational socialization tactics used by their districts and schools to be effective in supporting their role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery during the 1st year of employment.

Conclusions: Several conclusions were identified through the data analysis and major findings of this study. These conclusions provide a deeper understanding of the organizational socialization tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff and their perception concerning the effectiveness of these tactics in supporting their role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery.

Recommendations: Several recommendations were made based on the major findings and conclusions presented in this study. The recommendations address the need for K–12 organizations to use institutionalized content, social, and context tactics to provide intentional support for newly employed classified staff in the areas of role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

> The most important resource in any economy or organization is its human capital. (Madgavkar et al., 2022, p. 1)

Several factors play into the success of highly effective organizations. Among these contributing factors are the employees (human capital) who attend to the organization's mission, vision, and goals. Despite how they are described (e.g., human capital, intellectual capital, and people), employees and the manner in which they are organized play a critical role in an organization's overall success (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2007). To attend to this critical factor, organizations invest in the sourcing, recruiting, and hiring of highly qualified employees (Ellis & Bauer, 2020). To protect this investment, organizations use strategies to ensure their employees' long-term growth and development (Ellis & Bauer, 2020). Although the growth and development of employees can be seen throughout their time in an organization, they are essential during organizational entry.

Organizational entry has been described as the movement of an individual from an organizational outsider to an organizational insider (Wanous, 1992). This process involves both the organization and the newcomer and is described by Wanous (1992) in four distinct phases: recruitment, selection, orientation, and socialization. The recruitment, selection, and orientation phases require heavy investment by the organization and have been shown to reduce employee turnover (Bauer & Erdogan, 2014). Although the first three phases of organizational entry are essential, the fourth phase, socialization, is seen as the most complex and vital for employees learning their new roles and organizational values (Wanous, 1992).

Organizational socialization is the process of newcomers gaining the "social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 3). As with organizational entry, organizational socialization involves both the organization and the newcomer. Through this process, organizations employ several tactics to help socialize the newcomer (G. R. Jones, 1986; Van Maanen, 1979), and in turn, the newcomer takes proactive steps to become an organizational insider (Ashford & Black, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; Louis, 1980; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Through an effective organizational socialization process, employees are more likely to adopt the existing norms and internalize the organization's values (Cable & Parsons, 2001).

Numerous studies have identified the importance of organizational socialization and its impact on organizations (e.g., Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007; Bauer et al., 1998; Gruman et al., 2006; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b). The socialization of newcomers plays an essential role in the overall success of an organization as well as the success of the newcomer. Successful organizations invest time, money, and resources into the components that contribute to their overall success (Ellis & Bauer, 2020). Human capital has been identified as a critical component of an organization (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2007). This investment in human capital begins with the initial phases of organizational entry and is continued through the organizational socialization process (Wanous, 1992). To ensure that newcomers are successful in their new roles, it is essential for organizations to consider the organizational socialization process and its impact.

Background

Foundations of Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization is generally known as the process by which newcomers are brought into an organization and obtain the skills and knowledge needed to engage in their new role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The period that follows organizational entry in which newcomers adapt to tasks, roles, and social transitions is known as newcomer adjustment (Fisher, 1986). Much of the organizational socialization literature concerning newcomer adjustment has focused on two distinct areas: the role of the newcomer and the organizational tactics used during the organizational socialization process (Ashford & Black, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2005; Kowtha, 2018; Lapointe et al., 2014; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Furthermore, several studies have focused on what is referred to in the literature as the proactivity of the newcomer within the organizational socialization process (Ashford & Black, 1996; Fang et al., 2011; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

Historical Perspective of Organizational Socialization

Early studies concerning organizational socialization focused on creating a foundation for the organization's role in the socialization process. In their seminal work "Toward a Theory of Organizational Socialization," Van Maanen and Schein (1979) proposed six bipolar dimensions of organizational tactics used by organizations during the newcomer entry phase. This early work and the six dimensions—collective versus individual, formal versus informal, sequential versus random, fixed versus variable, serial versus disjunctive, and investiture versus divestiture—acted as a starting point for much of the future research concerning the role of the organization during the organizational

socialization process. Later, G. R. Jones (1986) further refined the six dimensions into three distinct categories (content tactics, social tactics, and context tactics) and provided a base for subsequent research.

As the study of organizational socialization continued, research began to focus more on the role of the newcomer in the socialization process. Many studies have pointed to newcomer proactivity as a critical factor in the organizational socialization process (Ashford & Black, 1996; Kim et al., 2005; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). These studies on newcomer proactivity have played a significant part in further research concerning the role of the newcomer in the organizational socialization process.

Individual Socialization—Newcomer Proactivity

Newcomer proactivity refers to the actions newcomers take when adjusting to their new role and organization (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). Studies have shown that newcomer proactivity is beneficial for productive newcomer adjustment (Bauer et al., 2007). Ashford and Black (1996) identified four proactive socialization behaviors of newcomers that can lead to more significant newcomer adjustment: sensemaking, relationship building, job-change negotiation, and framing. In this study, job-change negotiation is not discussed because of the low occurrence of this behavior by newcomers (Ashford & Black, 1996; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

Sensemaking

Sensemaking is a mix of information seeking and the desire to receive feedback. Through sensemaking, newcomers access organizational information to help them reduce "uncertainty about appropriate behaviors" and seek feedback to gain "information about how to alter their behaviors" (Ashford & Black, 1996, p. 201). This gathering of

information by the newcomer can take many forms, such as information gathering from organizational insiders (coworkers, supervisors, mentors, etc.) or through written material and observations (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Through this process, organizational insiders act as what Louis (1980) called "sounding boards" (p. 243) for newcomers and assist them in dealing with surprises they encounter during organizational entry.

Relationship Building

Relationship building is the act of engaging in social interactions with other employees initiated by the newcomer (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Engaging in the process of relationship building allows newcomers to build internal networks to help support their transition into the organization (Ashford & Black, 1996). Fang et al. (2011) pointed to the role of relationship building in the organizational socialization process as "the strongest indicator of newcomers' abilities to build and expand their networks of communication relationships with various organizational insiders" (p. 139). These relationships with colleagues and managers have been shown to positively affect job satisfaction (Ashford & Black, 1996; Fisher, 1985).

Positive Framing

Positive framing is the cognitive act by the newcomer to positively frame "situations as an opportunity rather than a threat" (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000, p. 375). Through this process, newcomers engage in self-control and self-management concerning their new role to reduce stress and uncertainty (Ashford & Black, 1996). Ashford and Black (1996) demonstrated in their research that tested seven different

proactive socialization tactics that positive framing was the tactic engaged in most by organizational newcomers.

Newcomer Adjustment in the Socialization Process—Outcomes

Throughout the organizational socialization literature, several studies have focused on identifying the outcomes associated with the organizational socialization process. Although some studies have focused on proximal outcomes (Adkins, 1995; Bauer & Green, 1994; Bauer et al., 2007; Ellis et al., 2015; Gruman et al., 2006), those that are short-term in nature, others have focused on distal outcomes (Ellis et al., 2015; Feldman, 1989; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Saks et al., 2007), those that are long-term in nature.

Proximal Outcomes

Three prominent proximal outcomes concerning organizational socialization have been identified in several studies: role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery (Adkins, 1995; Bauer & Green, 1994; Bauer et al., 2007; Ellis et al., 2015; Gruman et al., 2006). These proximal outcomes have been shown to positively impact the organizational newcomer. For example, Frögéli et al. (2022) found that role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery resulted in reduced stress and strain on newcomers.

Distal Outcomes

In addition to proximal outcomes, research has demonstrated a number of long-term outcomes associated with organizational socialization. Distal outcomes include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, reduction in turnover, and performance (Ashford & Black, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). These distal

outcomes have been shown to reduce the uncertainty of newcomers in the organizational socialization process (Bauer et al., 2007).

Theoretical Foundations of Organizational Socialization

Uncertainty Reduction Theory

The uncertainty reduction theory (URT) has played a significant role in much of the organizational socialization literature. URT was initially constructed as an interpersonal communication theory and has been used as a framework in organizational socialization research (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). The basic premise of the theory is concerned with the uncertainty that exists between individuals. This "lack of predictability" can be reduced through information seeking and lessen the discomfort for the newcomer (Kramer, 2010, p. 11). This theory has been used in organizational socialization research to address newcomer uncertainty and to demonstrate the information seeking required to reduce that uncertainty (Morrison, 1993).

Social Exchange Theory

Another theory used to examine organizational socialization is the social exchange theory (SET), which finds its roots in the sociology and psychology literature. According to Emerson (1976), SET is not in itself a theory but a convergence of many theories addressing social interactions between individuals. Although a number of scholars have contributed to the understanding of SET, it is generally seen as interactions between individuals that generate interpersonal obligations (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) and the perceived rewards for interacting with others (Homans, 1958). SET has been used in organizational socialization research to examine the social aspects of organizational entry (Jablin & Putnam, 2001; Kramer, 2010).

Sensemaking Model of Organizational Entry

The sensemaking model of organizational entry has been used in organizational socialization research regarding information seeking and acquisition (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Through this model, Louis (1980) posited three features of the newcomer experience: change, contrast, and surprise. Louis described change as the process of difference between old and new settings and the adjustments necessary for the individual. Contrast is what the newcomer experiences on entry in identifying differences between new realities (dress, physical setting, etc.) and previous experiences in organizational roles. Finally, surprise is described as the unexpected difference between what was expected by the newcomer and what reality exists within the organizational entry process. The sense making model of organizational entry has been used throughout the organizational socialization literature to address the cognitive shock that newcomers experience when entering a new role or organization (Kim et al., 2005).

Stage Models of Organizational Socialization

Throughout the organizational socialization literature, different authors have proposed various stage models for the socialization process. Although each model uses different words to describe each process, similarities exist within the basic meaning behind each stage. For this study, the titles used to describe each section follow those suggested by Ashforth, Sluss, and Harrison (2007): anticipatory stage, encounter stage, adjustment stage, stabilization stage, and exit stage.

The initial stage, described as anticipation, is the time before organizational entry, in which preemployment learning begins (Kramer, 2010). Feldman (1976) described this stage as one in which individuals create expectations and make decisions about

employment. The encounter stage is when an individual begins work and transitions from an organizational outsider to an organizational newcomer (Louis, 1980). It is during this phase that newcomers are faced with new realities of their role and organization and must engage in learning to adjust (Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007). The third stage, adjustment, is defined as the period in which the newcomer settles the demands of the new role and becomes integrated into the organization (Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007). The stabilization stage is seen as the stage in which the newcomer becomes an authentic organizational insider (Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007). Finally, the exit stage is the stage in which an individual leaves an organization, which can have profound impact on both the organization and the individual (Anderson et al., 1999; Jablin, 1987; Moreland & Levine, 2006).

Organizational Tactics—The Role of the Organization in the Socialization Process

Organizational tactics are described as the steps taken by the organization to introduce the newcomer into the organization. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) identified six dimensions of tactics used by organizations to bring new employees into the organization. G. R. Jones (1986) later refined these six into three categories: context tactics, social tactics, and content tactics. These organizational tactics vary in implementation and execution depending on the organization; however, their importance in the organizational socialization process is significant.

The socialization tactics posed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) have been used throughout the literature as a base for the role of the organization in the socialization process. Van Maanen and Schein identified six bipolar tactics that organizations use to socialize newcomers: collective versus individual, formal versus informal, sequential

versus random, fixed versus variable, serial versus disjunctive, and investiture versus divestiture. These different tactics have been used in many studies over the past several decades and have shown different levels of impact on the organizational socialization process.

Theoretical Framework—Jones's Refinement of Van Maanen and Schein's Model of Socialization Tactics

Following the work of Van Maanen and Schein (1979), G. R. Jones (1986) refined the six bipolar organizational tactics. In the reframing of these tactics, G. R. Jones grouped the six bipolar tactics into three categories: context tactics, social tactics, and content tactics. In addition, G. R. Jones further categorized the opposing ends of these bipolar tactics into two distinct categories: institutionalized tactics (collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture) and individualized tactics (individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture). This reframing of organizational tactics has been used in several studies measuring the impact of tactics in the socialization process (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002; Gruman et al., 2006).

Context tactics are those tactics used by organizations to provide information to the newcomer regarding the organization. These context tactics allow the organization to communicate organizational values and information to organizational newcomers (Cable & Parsons, 2001). Social tactics include the mentoring and guidance by organizational insiders. Through these experiences, newcomers receive the necessary support and counsel needed to make the transition into their new role (Kowtha, 2018). Content tactics lay out the steps needed by the newcomer to become a member of the organization. These

may include timelines and sequential learning opportunities to support the newcomer in adjusting to the new role. Bauer et al.'s (2007) and Saks et al.'s (2007) meta-analysis studies demonstrated the benefits of social and content tactics' role in positive newcomer adjustment.

Support Staff in K–12 Education

Most public education organizations comprise three main employee classifications: administrators or managers, teaching or certificated staff, and support or classified staff. Support staff in K–12 organizations comprise a number of different job classifications, including custodial and maintenance staff, food and nutrition staff, clerical staff, safety and security staff, technical staff, and instructional aides (Bako, 2020). Classified employees in California public educational institutions are those staff who do not hold a certificated credential from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). These individuals play a significant role in the day-to-day function of a school district and impact the learning environment (Feuerborn et al., 2018).

As has been demonstrated through the organizational socialization literature, outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, reduction of turnover, and performance can benefit both the organization and the newcomer. Public educational organizations and their employees value these outcomes in a similar manner to other organizations. As public institutions, K–12 school districts are held to a high standard of fiscal accountability and performance. Because of the significant role classified staff play in the overall operation of a K–12 school district, it is important for these organizations to attend to the organizational socialization process.

Statement of the Research Problem

In 2021, nearly 47 million workers in the United States quit their jobs (Penn & Nezamis, 2022). This increase in the quit rate was the highest since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began tracking the data in December 2000 (Penn & Nezamis, 2022). Some have suggested that this increase in the quit rate, known as the *great resignation*, is more accurately described as a *great reshuffle* (Ferguson, 2023). This assertion is based on the fact that U.S. hire rates have outpaced quit rates since November 2020 (Ferguson, 2023). Regardless of how it is described, large movements in voluntary attrition create competition for human capital (De Smet et al., 2022). Although specific sectors are more impacted by such factors, the acquisition of human capital is essential to all successful organizations.

Public organizations, including public educational institutions serving students in grades K–12, are not immune from the fluctuating labor market and want to attract the best talent. According to the most recent data from the California Department of Education (CDE, 2023), California K–12 public schools employ 282,800 classified employees. As with other sectors, public K–12 school districts have recently experienced challenges concerning staffing. In a 2021 *EdWeek* Research Center survey, about 62% of responding principals and school leaders indicated a shortage of staffing (Lieberman, 2021). This included both teaching staff and support staff, sometimes referred to as classified staff (Lieberman, 2021). In the state of California, these staff members play a critical support role in the education of over 6 million students enrolled in public schools statewide.

Although a great deal of research has been conducted regarding organizational socialization, most has focused on its role within private organizations (Ashford & Black,

1996; Bauer et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2005; Kowtha, 2018; Lapointe et al., 2014; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Few studies have focused on public organizations and the impact of organizational socialization. Specifically, few studies have been conducted in the field of public education. Those studies that have examined the role of organizational socialization in public schools have tended to focus on school administrators, such as principals or classroom teachers (Grodzki, 2011; Hurley, 1990; Kadi, 2015; Montgomery, 2020). No study has focused on the role of organizational socialization of noncertificated staff in public schools, specifically in California. To better understand the role of organizational socialization and its potential impact on the overall success of classified employees and their organizations, it is necessary to pursue further research with this specific population.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify to what extent newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational tactics (content, context, and social) to support their socialization process during the 1st year of employment (G. R. Jones, 1986). In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization to their new role (role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery).

Research Questions

1. To what extent were organizational tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

a. To what extent were content tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
b. To what extent were social tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
c. To what extent were context tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

2. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment into their new role?
    a. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their role clarity?
    b. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their social acceptance?
    c. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their task mastery?

Significance of the Problem

The mission of K–12 school districts in California is to provide high-quality public education for their students. A significant factor in delivering this experience is the employees who contribute to the organization's success (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2007). While those who instruct students are generally seen as the main contributors to this

mission, a great deal of work is done behind the scenes by those in a nonteaching role, commonly referred to as classified employees (Bako, 2020). The critical role these individuals play is necessary for the day-to-day operations of K–12 organizations (Feuerborn et al., 2018). Therefore, K–12 organizations need to invest in these individuals' recruitment, training, and retention.

One way to accomplish this is to examine the role of the organizational socialization process in K–12 organizations, specifically with classified employees. The literature has demonstrated that outcomes related to organizational socialization, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, reduction of turnover, and performance, can benefit both the organization and the newcomer (Ashford & Black, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). These outcomes, coupled with the crucial role of classified staff, provide an urgency for K–12 organizations to attend to the organizational socialization of their nonteaching staff.

Despite a large body of research indicating the benefits of organizational socialization, little is known about the specific process in public education and, more precisely, with classified employees. This study was designed to assist in understanding the impact of the organizational socialization process on K–12 classified employees in California. Specifically, this study aimed to determine the different organizational tactics used by K–12 school districts in Southern California and how those tactics contributed to the adjustment of newly employed classified staff.

As previously indicated, the literature concerning organizational socialization is extensive and has explored the role of organizational socialization in various sectors. This study contributes to the current literature regarding organizational socialization in that it

focuses on a population, K–12 classified staff, that has yet to be addressed in previous research. With additional research addressing K–12 classified employees, practitioners in the field can better understand the impact of organizational socialization on these new employees. Such research can identify best practices for K–12 organizations regarding organizational tactics to introduce new employees into their organizations. In addition, this research will inform K–12 human resource practitioners regarding the proactive behaviors of newcomers and how their organizations can support these behaviors.

The results of the study can also provide valuable information to both K–12 classified staff and the managers who support them. The study results can provide K–12 managers with effective strategies concerning the organizational socialization of their classified employees. In addition, classified employees and, more specifically, organizations that represent these employees such as the California School Employees Association (CSEA) can glean insight from this study concerning the vital role organizational socialization plays in the organizational entry process. Ultimately, this study was meant to add to the body of literature concerning organizational socialization and to provide additional information to K–12 organizations concerning the organizational socialization of newly employed classified staff.

Definitions

Content Organizational Tactics. Content tactics deal with the content that is communicated to newcomers during the organizational socialization process.

Context Organizational Tactics. Context tactics are those organizational tactics that demonstrate the way in which organizations communicate information to newcomers.

Individualized Organizational Tactics. Individualized organizational tactics are tactics describing the proactive actions taken on behalf of a newcomer to assist in the newcomer's socialization.

Institutionalized Organizational Tactics. Institutionalized organizational tactics are tactics describing the actions taken on behalf of an organization that attempt to socialize the newcomer.

K–12 Classified Employee. Classified employees in California public educational institutions are those staff who do not hold a certificated credential from the CTC.

Newcomer. Newcomer is the term used throughout the organizational socialization literature to describe new employees entering an organization.

Organizational Socialization. Organizational socialization is the process by which new employees are brought into the organization. It is the process through which newcomers gain the "social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 3).

Role Clarity. Role clarity involves understanding the tasks, priorities, and time allocation needed to be performed by the newcomer (Bauer et al., 2007).

Six Bipolar Tactics. The six bipolar tactics are the most recognized typology of organizational tactics used in organizational socialization research. First proposed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979), the six bipolar tactics are organized into opposite sides of a spectrum.

Social Acceptance. Social acceptance is the extent to which the newcomer feels "a part of, and integrated into, the social fabric of the environment" (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 314).

Social Organizational Tactics. Social tactics are organizational tactics that include interaction between newcomers and other employees, including other newcomers, veteran employees, and supervisors.

Task Mastery. Task mastery is defined as "learning the tasks of the new job, and also gaining self-confidence and attaining consistently positive performance levels" (Feldman, 1981, p. 310).

Delimitations

This study was delimited to newly employed classified employees in four school districts in Riverside County, California. For this study, newly employed classified staff members were employees of the organization who maintained the following characteristics:

- They were employed in public school districts in Southern California.
- They were employed as a classified staff member as defined by the CDE.
- They were employed for more than 3 months but less than 2 years.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I of this study provided information regarding the background of the study and introduced the research problem and the purpose statement, followed by the research questions and significance of the research. Chapter II contains a review of the literature concerning organizational socialization and K–12 classified employees. Chapter III lays out the research methodology and describes the manner in which the

study was conducted. Chapter IV includes the research findings accompanied by tables and narrative analysis. Finally, Chapter V presents the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations for further research, and the researcher's reflections.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Foundations of Organizational Socialization

The study of organizational socialization finds its roots in both the broad study of human resource management and the study of socialization. Human resource management is an evolving field of study and one of the cornerstones of many organizations (Lopez-Cabrales & Valle-Cabrera, 2019). At its root, human resource management involves the people who contribute to the success or failures of organizations (Singh et al., 2021). An essential aspect of human resource management is the manner in which new employees, or newcomers, are brought into the organization and introduced to their new roles. This is done through a process called organizational socialization.

Organizational socialization is the process through which newcomers gain the "social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 3). Research concerning organizational socialization covers a broad range of subtopics and spans nearly 6 decades. Through numerous studies, proposed theories, and constructed models, researchers have demonstrated the benefits and challenges of organizational socialization for both the newcomer and the organization. In addition, researchers have established the importance of examining organizational socialization from a theoretical and practical standpoint.

Ashforth, Sluss, and Saks (2007) posited three reasons concerning the importance of organizational socialization. First, the organizational socialization process provides the newcomers with an understanding of the organization's purpose and their role in that

purpose (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). Second, through the process of socialization, the organization provides opportunities for the newcomer to become a contributing member of the organization and in turn "replenishing if not rejuvenating the organization as a system" (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007, p. 2). Last, socialization experienced during the early part of organizational entry has been shown to have a significant impact on the long-term adjustment of the newcomer (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). Schein (1968), one of the preeminent researchers in the field of organizational socialization, summed up the importance of the subject:

> The process is so ubiquitous, and we go through it so often during our total career that it is all too easy to overlook it. Yet it is a process which can make or break a career and which can make or break an organizational system of manpower planning. The speed and effectiveness of socialization determine employee loyalty, commitment, productivity, and turnover. The basic stability and effectiveness of organizations, therefore, depends upon their ability to socialize new members. (p. 2)

Historical Perspective of Organizational Socialization

Socialization

The concept of socialization encompasses the life span of an individual from childhood through adulthood. Maccoby (2007) defined socialization as the "processes whereby naive individuals are taught the skills, social understandings, and emotional maturity needed for interaction with other individuals to fit in with the functioning of social dyads and larger groups" (p. 13). According to Clausen (1968), the study of

socialization in the United States has occurred in three distinct disciplines: anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

Clausen (1968) pointed out that the study of socialization in the field of anthropology is linked to the concept of enculturation or the transmission of culture. In citing Brim and Wheeler (1966), Clausen (1968) posited that sociology's contribution to the field of socialization research has mainly focused on adolescent and adult socialization, specifically in the area of role learning in the context of institutions or organizations. Finally, the field of psychology has focused on the "immediate relationship between agent and inductee" (Clausen, 1968, p. 50) and given greater importance to the process that mediates behavior and socialization practices. Despite great interest from psychologists concerning socialization, much of the research conducted before 1960 focused on the child or adolescent with only a narrow focus on adult socialization (Clausen, 1968).

Adult Socialization

The concept of adult socialization emerged in academic studies during the 1960s (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978). Before this time, much of the socialization literature focused on the process during childhood and adolescence (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978). The limited studies focusing on adult socialization before the 1960s focused on three areas: socializing those convicted of committing a crime, socializing those addicted to drugs and alcohol, and socializing those with mental illness (Brim, 1968). Beyond these early focuses on adult socialization, Brim (1968) suggested that most adult socialization is focused on the impact of family, work, and community.

The study of socialization has regarded childhood socialization as primary socialization, impacting "personality development," and adult socialization as secondary socialization, impacting "social identities" (Chao, 2012, p. 580). According to Mortimer and Simmons (1978), adult socialization occurs "after the completion of general education, either after secondary school or after college" (p. 422). Brim (1968) pointed out that socialization is a continual process that one engages in throughout one's lifetime, including childhood and adulthood. As individuals move from childhood and adolescence to adulthood, they tend to "find new models or develop new styles of life" (Brim, 1968, p. 184) not consistent with their predecessors. Conversely, as adults age, they must adapt to the challenges posed by the swift pace of ideological and technological advancements (Brim, 1968). One central theme in the literature concerning adult socialization is the process by which individuals are socialized within the workplace, known as organizational socialization.

Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization first appeared in academic literature in the early 1960s as a part of the larger concept of adult socialization (Chao, 2012). Much of the early literature concerning organizational socialization focused on stage models (Feldman, 1976; Merton, 1957; Porter et al., 1975; Schein, 1962, 1968; Van Maanen, 1976). These studies worked to identify stages experienced by individuals from the time before organizational entry through organizational exit. Fisher (1986) critiqued early organizational socialization research as being "fragmented, largely nonempirical, and much less productive than one might have hoped" (p. 101).

As the study of organizational socialization continued, researchers began to focus on and define the role of the organization in the socialization process. The work of Van Maanen and Schein (1979) set the stage for future research because they identified six bipolar tactics organizations use to socialize newcomers. These six tactics continue to play a significant role in organizational socialization research. The six bipolar tactics were reframed by G. R. Jones (1986) into two distinct bipolar classifications: institutionalized tactics and individual tactics. G. R. Jones further classified the six bipolar tactics into three categories: content, context, and social. Although studies since G. R. Jones and Van Maanen and Schein (1979) have explored other typologies of organizational tactics, the classification by Van Maanen and Schein and G. R. Jones (1986) remains the dominant construct by which organizational tactics are viewed in organizational socialization research.

Starting in the mid-1980s, research concerning organizational socialization began to examine seriously the proactive role of the newcomer in the process. Prior to this, much of the research viewed the newcomer as passive and reactive in the organizational socialization process (Crant, 2000). G. R. Jones (1986) proposed an interactionalist model of organizational socialization that examined the individual differences of newcomers and the impact those differences have on the organizational socialization process. This concept of newcomer proactivity, coupled with the impact of organizational tactics, has remained a focus in the organizational socialization literature over the past 4 decades.

Theoretical Foundations of Organizational Socialization

Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Uncertainty reduction theory (URT) has been a significant foundation throughout the organizational socialization literature. The theory was first proposed by Berger and Calabrese (1975) to address interpersonal communication. Berger and Calabrese posited that uncertainty is present between two individuals when they first meet. This uncertainty is described as the manner in which each individual might behave during the initial encounter and how each individual will react. In addition, the theory addresses what Berger and Calabrese referred to as "the problem of retroactively explaining the other's behavior" (p. 101). This uncertainty arises when words or actions by one individual are not clearly understood by the other individual involved in the encounter. The individual is in a state of attempting to make sense of words or actions after the fact.

Drawing on previous research (Heider, 1958; House & Rizzo, 1972; Kelley, 1967, 1973), Berger and Calabrese (1975) posited that in uncertainty, individuals experience both prediction and explanation during encounters. Individuals make predictions about their own communication behavior and the communication behavior of others. In turn, individuals attempt to explain their communication behavior and the communication behavior of others in light of the predictions made. With this in mind, Berger and Calabrese pointed out that to understand an individual's communication behavior, it is crucial to have "a knowledge of the kinds of predictions and explanations the individual has for the behavior of the person with whom he is interacting" (p. 101).

Berger and Calabrese (1975) identified six axioms in their URT. These axioms describe both verbal and nonverbal communication within relationships or encounters and how that communication impacts the individual. Axioms 1 and 2 address verbal and nonverbal communication and the role they play in reducing the level of uncertainty between individuals. Axioms 3 through 5 address the impact of uncertainty on behavior, stating that high levels of uncertainty cause an increase in information seeking, a decrease in intimacy within relationships, and an increase in reciprocity. Axiom 6 addresses the role similarities and differences between individuals play in the level of uncertainty; similarity between individuals decreases uncertainty, and differences between individuals increase uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

URT has been used throughout the organizational socialization literature to examine the organizational socialization process and its role in reducing newcomer uncertainty. More specifically, URT has been used to describe the period of organizational entry as newcomers assume their role within the organization. Aspects of organizational socialization, such as organizational tactics (Falcione & Wilson, 1988; G. R. Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) and newcomer proactivity (Comer, 1991; Feij et al., 1995; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993), assist in reducing uncertainty among newcomers. According to Bauer et al. (2007), socialization in itself is the process of uncertainty reduction, and Berger (1986) indicated the usefulness of URT in addressing organizational socialization.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory is seen throughout the organizational socialization literature as a foundation for individual and group identity and interaction. According to J. C. Turner et al. (1994), social identity is the "social categorization of self and others, self-categories that define the individual in terms of his or her shared similarities with members of certain social categories in contrast to other social categories" (p. 454). In social identity theory, social categorization serves two purposes. First, it provides a cognitive framework for the individual to make sense of the social environment and define others in the environment. Second, it provides an opportunity for individuals to define themselves in the social environment (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Social identity theory contends that the concept of self is made up of one's personal identity and social identity. According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), social identification is the "perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate" (p. 21). Personal identity points to the "self-categories" that define an individual as unique in relation to a group (J. C. Turner et al., 1994, p. 454). Social identity, on the other hand, points to the self-categories that define the individual in terms of similarities to the group (J. C. Turner et al., 1994). In referencing J. C. Turner et al. (1994), Chao (2012) further defined social identity "in relational and comparative terms to help us identify who we are, and who we are not (us versus them)" (p. 585). This group identification is where social identity theory intersects with organizational socialization.

In terms of organizational socialization, Chao (2012) proposed a connection between uncertainty reduction and social identity, more specifically organizational identity. Chao indicated that a newcomer's desire to reduce uncertainty is linked to, and may be accomplished by, the newcomer's ability to establish an organizational identity. Organizational identities include aspects such as organizational mission, performance objectives, core values, primary strategies, and organizational traditions and provide a psychological framework for organizational members (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). Newcomers with strong positive organizational identities demonstrate unity among organizational members, adopt organizational values, and uphold organizational culture (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Ashforth and Johnson (2001) indicated that organizational members may encounter and ascribe to a number of identities within the organization. This is especially true in large organizations that contain departments, divisions, workgroups, and so forth (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001).

Social Exchange Theory

The origin of social exchange theory (SET) is found in the study of sociology and social psychology. Emerson (1976) pointed to the work of prominent researchers George Homans, John Thibaut, Harold Kelly, and Peter Blau as the origins of SET. Despite the name of this theory, Emerson argued that it is not a theory but instead a "frame of reference within which many theories, some micro, and some macro, can speak to one another, whether in argument or in mutual support" (p. 336).

SET is rooted in the fields of behavioral psychology and microeconomics (Homans, 1961). The basic premise behind SET includes exchange, cost, reward, and

inequity (Redmond, 2015). Within a social interaction, an individual engages in an exchange that costs the individual something. Similarly, there are rewards to gain from social exchange, and the individual considers both cost and reward in the individual's interactions (Redmond, 2015).

Sensemaking Model of Organizational Entry

Louis (1980), who was concerned with the inadequate approaches to organizational entry for newcomers, proposed a model for describing the stages newcomers experience when they enter a new organization. The sensemaking model of organizational entry lays out the various stages newcomers experience upon organizational entry (Louis, 1980). The purpose of the model is to provide clarity to organizational insiders on the experience of newcomers and to provide opportunities to ease the entry experience of those newcomers. This model of organizational entry is arranged into three categories: change, contrast, and surprise.

Change

Change is defined by Louis (1980) as "an objective difference in a major feature between new and old settings" (p. 235). To further explain the category of change, Louis credited Schein (1971) who identified three boundaries newcomers face when entering a new organization: functional, hierarchical, and inclusionary. Louis (1980) pointed out that newcomers experience a functional boundary change when entering a new organization. In this functional change, newcomers take on new tasks and responsibilities and must learn how to achieve them. In addition, Louis pointed to hierarchical boundary changes experienced by the newcomer when entering a new organization. This hierarchical change assumes a change in position for the newcomer. The newcomer is

entering a new position that constitutes a higher position than the one previously held (Louis, 1980). Finally, inclusionary boundaries are those that the newcomer faces related to "one's position in the informal information and influence networks" of an organization (Louis, 1980, p. 236). When entering a new organization, individuals have little influence and information access regardless of whether or not they held these in previous positions or organizations (Louis, 1980). Although the newcomers may gain influence and information access over time, they enter the organization as an outsider in these terms (Louis, 1980).

Contrast

When newcomers enter a new organization or role, they are presented with a contrast between their new setting and the setting they experienced in previous roles (Louis, 1980). This is described as a difference in both setting and characteristic between previous work experiences and the new role or organization the newcomer is entering (Louis, 1980). Louis (1980) further explained that contrast is highly individual in that two persons entering the same organization and the same role may not experience contrast in the same manner. Louis used the example of attire as a feature that may promote contrast in one newcomer but not another. Depending on the previous experience of the individual, aspects such as attire may invoke contrast for one but not for the other. The newcomer's prior experience will have an influence on the presence of contrast in the situation.

Surprise

Prior to entering a new organization or role, newcomers experience an anticipatory stage in which they develop expectations and build a schema of what their

new role or organization will look and be like. Upon entering the new role or organization, the newcomer is faced with what Louis (1980) called "surprise" because the reality of the new role or organization does not match the expectations or anticipations of the newcomer.

Louis (1980) posited five different forms of surprise that can be experienced by the newcomer. The first form of surprise involves conscious, unmet expectations on the part of the newcomer. These unmet expectations are generally realized early in the entry phase of the newcomer. The second form of surprise can occur when both conscious and unconscious expectations of one's self are not met during the entry phase. Louis pointed out that the "choice of the new organization is often based on assumptions about one's own skills, values, needs, etc." (p. 238). Louis further explained that during entry, newcomers may face errors in their assumptions concerning their previous self-perception and need to cope with that conscious realization.

The third form of surprise proposed by Louis (1980) "occurs when unconscious job expectations are unmet or when features of the job are unanticipated" (p. 238). This form of surprise is brought on by the presence or absence of features not previously considered by the newcomer. The fourth type of surprise comes from the newcomers' ability to accurately predict their own reaction to new situations in their new role (Louis, 1980). Louis explained this in terms of cognition, "knowing about," and experience, "acquainted with" a particular situation (p. 238). The example provided by Louis considers an employee who knows that a new position will include some overtime but is surprised by the amount and the impact it has on the employee. The fifth form of surprise proposed by Louis is rooted in the cultural assumptions made by newcomers. Louis

pointed out that newcomers experience surprise when they attempt to use cultural assumptions from a previous setting, and the application of those assumptions is not successful in the new setting.

Sensemaking

Louis (1980) pointed out that in the categorization of organizational entry, newcomers are faced with a number of cognitive challenges as they attempt to adjust to their new role or organization. To cope with these cognitive challenges, newcomers use cognitive processes to make sense of the change, contrast, and surprise they encounter in their new setting. Louis (1978) presented a cyclical model describing the process individuals experience as they interpret surprise. This process occurs over time and is meant to describe the "more rationale elements in sensing making" and to "represent general stages in understanding one's experience, rather than the literal process by which all individuals respond to each experience" (Louis, 1980, p. 241). The cycle starts with the individual making predictions about future events. The individual then encounters experiences that may be in contrast to previous predictions. This contrast creates a need for explanation or interpretation to understand the discrepancy experienced. This leads to a behavioral response and a change in prediction concerning future events.

Stage Model of Organizational Socialization

Throughout the organizational socialization literature, a number of studies have attempted to construct stage models of organizational socialization. These models lay out the different stages newcomers experience as they engage in the organizational socialization process. Stage models were prevalent in the early research concerning organizational socialization (Feldman, 1976; Merton, 1957; Porter et al., 1975; Schein,

1962, 1968; Van Maanen, 1976) but have had little attention for the past 30 years. Ashforth, Sluss, and Saks (2007) attributed this to "mixed empirical support, the ascendance of other socialization perspectives (particularly socialization tactics and newcomer proactivity), and the pessimistic evaluation they received in Fisher's (1986) influential review" (p. 9).

The various stage models throughout the organizational socialization literature use different titles to describe the stages (see Table 1). However, a number of studies have agreed that the stages fall into five broad categories: anticipation, encounter, adjustment, stabilization, and exit (Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007; Fisher, 1986; Kramer, 2010; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). These category titles are used to provide a general overview of the various proposed stage models found in organizational socialization research.

Anticipation

Feldman (1976) described the anticipatory socialization stage as the period before a newcomer enters the organization (see also Brim & Wheeler, 1966; Clausen, 1968; Van Maanen, 1975). This stage includes the newcomer learning about the organization, setting expectations about the organization, and communicating between the newcomer and the prospective organizational insiders (Feldman, 1976). During this stage, organizations can increase the likelihood of the newcomers' adjustment by initiating contact with them prior to employment and "involving them in social events and introducing them to members of the organization" (Saks & Gruman, 2018, p. 23).

Table 1

Organizational Socialization Stage Model

Source	Anticipation	Encounter	Adjustment	Stabilization	Exit
Schein, 1978		Entry	Socialization	Mutual acceptance	
Feldman, 1976	Anticipatory Socialization	Accommodation	Role management		
Porter et al., 1975	Prearrival	Encounter	Change and acquisition		
Moreland & Levine, 2006	Investigation	Socialization	Maintenance	Resocialization	Remembrance
Van Maanen, 1976	Organizational choice and anticipation	Entry–encounter	Continuance–metamorphosis		
Falcione & Wilson, 1988	Anticipatory Socialization	Encounter	Metamorphosis		
Bauer et al., 1998	Anticipatory Socialization	Accommodation/ confrontation	Adaption/ metamorphosis		
Graen, 1976	Initial confrontation	Working through	Integrating		
Jablin, 1987; Jablin & Putnam, 2001		Entry	Assimilation	Exit	

Encounter

During the accommodation stage, the newcomer learns what it means to be a part of the organization and how to fit in. According to Feldman (1976), the accommodation stage comprises two components: initiation to the task and initiation to the group. Feldman further identified four activities that newcomers engage in during this phase: learning new tasks, establishing new interpersonal relationships with coworkers, clarifying their role within the organization, and evaluating their progress within the organization.

Van Maanen (1976) described the encounter phase as one in which the newcomer may be confronted with a lack of congruency in seeing the role they anticipated versus the reality of their new role. If the expectations during the anticipatory stage are met during the encounter stage, the newcomer is provided affirmation. Conversely, if the newcomer's anticipation does not meet the reality of role requirements, "the socialization process must first involve a destructive phase which serves to detach the individual from his former expectations" (Van Maanen, 1976, p. 84).

Porter et al. (1975) described the encounter phase as the newcomer experiencing day-to-day confirmation or rejection of behaviors. These behavioral cues are provided by the organization and its members. Porter et al. suggested three possible reinforcement tactics that organizations and their members use in communicating behavioral cues to newcomers: reinforcement and confirmation, nonreinforcement, and negative reinforcement. If the behaviors exhibited by the newcomer are congruent with the organizational culture, those behaviors can be reinforced through various positive means.

If the behaviors of the newcomer are incongruent with the organizational culture, the organization and its members can ignore such behaviors, indicating but not clearly communicating the conflicting behavior. Finally, if the behavior of the newcomer displayed is incongruent with the organizational culture, the organization and its employees can negatively reinforce such behaviors. This is displayed in an overt manner to indicate to the newcomer that the behavior exhibited does not match the organizational culture. Porter et al. indicated that these three tactics can be used by the organization and its employees and can occur in both formal and informal manners.

Adjustment

According to Ashforth, Sluss, and Harrison (2007), the adjustment stage "involves individuals resolving the demands of their new reality, such as becoming integrated into interpersonal networks and changing one's self-image, as well as insider and organizational activities designed to foster newcomer adaptation" (p. 9). Feldman (1976) used the term role management to describe this stage in the organizational socialization process. He defined this as the stage in which newcomers navigate the balance between working within their own group and meeting the demands of other groups (Feldman, 1976). Feldman described this as the need for the newcomer to negotiate the demands made of the newcomers by their own work group and other work groups within the organization as well as the demands of their personal life.

Van Maanen (1976) used the term metamorphosis to describe the adjustment stage of organizational socialization. According to Van Maanen, during metamorphosis, the newcomer experiences a number of transitions that show that the newcomer "now has

the skills, knowledge, and motivation to occupy a particular role" (p. 101). Porter et al. (1975) described this stage as one of change and acquisition in which the newcomer "proceeds to learn and develop modified ideas and behaviors" (p. 165).

Porter et al. (1975) pointed to the work of Caplow (1964), who identified four acquisition requirements for achieving the adjustment stage: a new self-image, new involvements, new values, and new accomplishments. A new self-image gradually occurs for the newcomer as they assume their new role. Caplow indicated that this is accomplished when the newcomer "has fallen into fixed habits" (p. 170) and now mirrors the organization, including organizational values. New involvements indicate a change in social interactions and group involvement. According to Caplow, it is through these new involvements that organizational values are communicated, and the newcomer's behavior is altered to conform to the organization. Caplow pointed out that through this stage, newcomers adopt new values consistent with the organization. These values are communicated by the organization, accepted by the newcomer, and then internalized by the newcomer. Finally, new accomplishments are identified as the fourth acquisition requirement identified in this stage. Caplow indicated that newcomers must demonstrate accomplishment of task, including "the learning of skills with tools and techniques and of a special vocabulary for the matters to be communicated" (p. 172). Caplow posited that these four requirements must be met for the newcomer to become a successful incumbent in the organization.

Stabilization

The stabilization stage takes place when the newcomer transitions from an organizational outsider to an organizational insider. This stage is also referred to as the assimilation stage in which the newcomer fully integrates into the organizational culture. Anderson et al. (1999) described the assimilation stage as a time in which "newcomers become comfortable in a group or begin to communicate ideas and engage more assertively in behaviors affecting the development of group goals, tasks, procedures, and relationships" (p. 152). Schein (1978) used the term "mutual acceptance" to describe this stage and explained this is the point at which newcomers cross new boundaries, gain a "higher degree of acceptance," and move closer "to the inner circle of the organization" (p. 112). Schein went on to point out that the process of mutual acceptance is accomplished through mutual agreement on the part of the newcomers and the organization concerning two sets of feelings and perceptions. First, the newcomers conclude that they are able to perform the duties and responsibilities of their role, that those tasks and duties are satisfying, and that their personal values are compatible to the organizational culture (Schein, 1978). Second, the organization must decide that the newcomers have the right skills and knowledge to perform in the role they have been hired and that their personality and values are consistent with the organization (Schein, 1978).

Exit

Of the stages identified in the organizational socialization research, the exit stage has been examined the least. Jablin (1987) proposed two reasons for the lack of attention

by researchers to the exit phase. First, research concerned with organizational socialization and communication typically centers on the correlation between communication and both job satisfaction and performance, often overlooking alternative outcome measures. Second, the challenge of determining the cause of organizational or group exit is complex and difficult to identify. Despite the lack of research in comparison to other organizational socialization stages, several studies have pointed to the importance of understanding the exit stage and its impact on both the organization and the individual (Anderson et al., 1999; Jablin, 1987; Moreland & Levine, 2006).

Moreland and Levine (2006) described organizational or group exit as a period in which the group reflects on the contributions of the individual, and the individual reflects on the group's impact on his or her satisfaction. During this time of exit, the contributions of the individual may provide lasting impact and be incorporated into group traditions (Moreland & Levine, 2006). The manner in which exit occurs also impacts the individual and the individual's future group or organizational membership. When individuals voluntarily exit groups or organizations, and the experience is positive, it is likely to positively impact their future group or organizational entry and be more receptive to the socialization process (Anderson et al.,1999).

Stage Model Critiques

Despite the presence of stage models in much of the early organizational socialization research, a number of critiques exists in relation to their use in describing the organizational socialization process. Fisher (1986) was one of the first to levy a strong critique against the use of stage models. Through her critique, she conducted a

comprehensive review of stage models and concluded that many lacked empirical evidence to support their claims. Bauer et al. (1998) pointed out that these stage models "were not true 'process' models in that they focused on the sequence of what occurs during socialization, yet paid relatively little attention to how those changes occur" (p. 153).

In addition, critiques have been made concerning the generalizability of stage models. Some have argued that stage models do not take into account individual differences and how they impact the stages of socialization (Kramer, 2010). Others have pointed out that not all newcomers experience socialization in the same manner, and their impact may vary. Fisher (1986) provided the example of a new CEO brought into an organization to make sweeping changes. The new CEO is expected to make changes and have an immediate impact on the organization, a role that is generally seen in later stages of socialization after a significant amount of time has passed. Although distinct stage models no longer dominate the research concerning organizational socialization, the contributions made by early organizational socialization researchers concerning stage models continue to impact the field today

Organizational Tactics—The Role of the Organization in the Socialization Process

Organizational tactics refer to the intentional or unintentional actions taken by organizations during the organizational socialization process. The study of organizational tactics is seen throughout the organizational socialization literature as a major contributor to the overall process. The importance of these tactics in the organizational socialization process is highlighted in two meta-analyses of the organizational socialization literature

conducted by Bauer et al. (2007) and Saks et al. (2007). These meta-analyses demonstrate a positive relationship between organizational tactics and both proximal and distal outcomes related to the organizational socialization process (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007).

Van Maanen and Schein's Six Bipolar Tactics

The most recognized typology of organizational tactics was proposed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) in their seminal work "Toward a Theory of Organizational Socialization." Through their work, Van Maanen and Schein identified six bipolar tactics used by organizations in the socialization process: collective versus individual, formal versus informal, sequential versus random, fixed versus variable, serial versus disjunctive, and investiture versus divestiture. They explained that their theory of organizational socialization and the tactics that accompany it resides in "what people learn about their work roles in organizations is often a direct result of how they learn it" (p. 209). In essence, their theory emphasizes the role the organization plays in the organizational process in terms of preparing newcomers for their new roles.

Collective tactics are ones in which newcomers are put through a similar process in a group of other newcomers. These are processes and experiences that are shared by all newcomers. On the other hand, individual tactics are those that are unique to the newcomer and experienced in isolation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Formal tactics are experiences tailored to the newcomer and experienced away from organizational insiders. Informal tactics are those in which the newcomer is placed with organizational insiders, and learning is conducted through trial and error (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Sequential tactics refers to tactics that are intentionally designed for the newcomer to experience in a predetermined manner. Random socialization tactics are not intentional, and the steps and process are ambiguous to the newcomer. Fixed socialization tactics are time bound and must be completed in a predetermined manner. These predetermined timelines are recognized and upheld within the organization and communicated to the newcomer clearly. Variable socialization tactics are tactics that do not adhere to timetables, and both organizational insiders and newcomers are not clear on the time-bound expectations of tactics.

Serial socialization tactics involve organizational insiders preparing newcomers to assume their positions within the organization. Disjunctive tactics are those in which the newcomer does not "follow the footsteps" of a previous organization insider (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 60). Finally, investiture tactics view the unique characteristics brought by the newcomer as useful and viable (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In other words, the organization recognizes the value of the individual and the individual's potential contribution and does not intend to change them to fit the organization. Divestiture tactics intend to remove and minimize the personal characteristics of the newcomer.

The importance of the six bipolar tactics identified by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) cannot be overstated in the study of organizational socialization. It has remained the dominant typology concerning the role of the organization in the overall process. Although Van Maanen and Schein did not claim their list of tactics to be exhaustive, it has served as the basis for a majority of the empirical research concerning organizational socialization for over 4 decades (Chao, 2012).

Theoretical Framework—Jones's Refinement of Organizational Tactics

Following the work of Van Maanen and Schein (1979), G. R. Jones (1986) refined the six bipolar organizational tactics. Through his refinement, he organized the bipolar tactics into two distinct overarching categories: institutionalized and individualized. In addition, he organized the tactics into three categories: content, context, and social (see Table 2). This refinement of the six bipolar tactics has been used in much of the research concerning organizational socialization in the past 3 decades.

Table 2

G. R. Jones's Classification of Organizational Socialization Tactics

Tactic category	Institutionalized	Individualized
Context	Collective and formal	Individual and informal
Content	Sequential and fixed	Random and variable
Social	Serial and investiture	Disjunctive and divestiture

Note. Adapted from "Socialization Tactics, Self-Efficacy, and Newcomers' Adjustments to Organizations," by G. R. Jones, 1986, *Academy of Management Journal*, *29*(2), p. 263. Copyright 1986 by the Academy of Management Journal.

Institutionalized Versus Individualized

G. R. Jones (1986) proposed a way to categorize the bipolar tactics on the opposite sides of a spectrum: institutionalized versus individualized tactics. He argued that tactics in the institutionalized category would produce custodial role orientations of newcomers. Custodial role orientation is one in which the newcomer accepts the new role as presented by the organization and understood by organizational insiders (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). A custodial role has also been described as maintaining the status quo in a group or organization (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). G. R. Jones (1986) contended that collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics can be categorized as

institutionalized tactics and lead to custodial role orientation. Conversely, individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture tactics can be categorized as individual tactics and lead to an innovative role orientation. Innovative role orientation is one in which newcomers may reject or redefine their role and even their mission within the organization (G. R. Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Through the refinement of organizational tactics, G. R. Jones (1986) demonstrated that institutionalized tactics lead to custodial role orientation for newcomers. He showed the connection between institutionalized tactics and outcomes that lead to uncertainty reduction among newcomers, and he indicated that institutionalized tactics lead to higher levels of "job satisfaction and commitment, and lower intention to quit" (G. R. Jones, 1986, p. 272). Additional studies have shown the link between institutionalized tactics and organizational commitment (N. J. Allen & Meyer, 1991; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). In a study of undergraduate and graduate students, N. J. Allen and Meyer (1991) concluded that "institutionalized tactics tend to be associated with higher levels of commitment" (p. 853).

Further studies have shown a positive link between institutionalized tactics and job satisfaction (King & Sethi, 1998; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b). In a longitudinal study of British Army recruits, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002) showed that a pattern of institutionalized tactics was "a significant predictor of job satisfaction" (p. 429).

Context Tactics

G. R. Jones (1986) classified collective versus individual tactics and formal versus informal tactics as context tactics. The bipolar tactics classified as context

demonstrate the way in which organizations communicate information to newcomers (G. R. Jones, 1986). With collective tactics, newcomers are exposed to a standard set of learning experiences with other newcomers. These learning experiences are created to provide standardization to newcomers; thus, information communicated by the organization is consistent and provided in the same manner to all newcomers (G. R. Jones, 1986). Conversely, communication through individual tactics does not occur in a group of newcomers. Instead, information is provided individually, and newcomers are expected to learn on the job (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Formal tactics provide opportunities for newcomers to learn about their new roles apart from organizational insiders. This allows the organization to communicate information regarding the newcomer's role prior to engaging in the actual work. Informal tactics do not provide this type of intentional separation; instead, newcomers are expected to learn on the job. G. R. Jones (1986) indicated that the combined use of collective and formal tactics during the organizational socialization process can increase "the degree to which newcomers will share common norms, values, and attitudes, and develop custodial orientations" (p. 264).

Content Tactics

G. R. Jones's (1986) second classification for the six bipolar tactics was content tactics. Two sets of bipolar tactics make up the content category: sequential versus random and fixed versus variable. Although context tactics address the manner in which information is communicated to newcomers, content tactics deal with the content that is communicated (G. R. Jones, 1986). Sequential tactics explicitly communicate the order in which newcomers will experience different activities as they go through the

organizational socialization process. Further, fixed tactics communicate timelines for when each stage of the process will take place. On the other hand, random and variable tactics provide little information on the sequence and timeline of socialization processes. According to G. R. Jones, this lack of information increases the newcomer's level of uncertainty and stress.

Social Tactics

The final classification proposed by G. R. Jones (1986) concerning the six bipolar tactics was social tactics. He identified serial versus disjunctive and investiture versus divestiture as the bipolar tactics in the social tactics category. Serial and investiture tactics include intentional interactions between newcomers and organizational insiders. Serial tactics provide opportunities for newcomers to engage with other organizational insiders in a role model-type experience. Disjunctive tactics are those in which no role model is made available to the newcomers; thus, they are left to seek out information of their role on their own. Investiture tactics involve receiving positive social support from organizational insiders. Conversely, divestiture tactics involve little to no social support for newcomers.

Individual Socialization—Newcomer Proactivity

Throughout the organizational socialization, research studies have focused heavily on the role the organization plays in the process as well as the role of the newcomer. Specifically, the proactive behaviors exhibited by newcomers to enhance their socialization experience emerged in organizational socialization research beginning in the mid-1980s (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Newcomer proactive behaviors are seen as a way in which newcomers can mitigate uncertainty and gain a feeling of control "in order to

maximize their performance and increase satisfaction" (Ashford & Black, 1996, p. 200). Although not the first to research newcomer proactivity, Ashford and Black (1996) identified four proactive behaviors exhibited by newcomers to assist in their socialization process: sensemaking, relationship building, positive framing, and job-change negotiating. Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller's (2000) study examined three of the four behaviors, dropping the job-change negotiating behavior because of "the low incidence of this behavior among organizational newcomers" (p. 374). Further studies concerning newcomer proactivity have shown job-change negotiation to be weakly related to newcomer proactive behaviors (Dong, 2022; Gruman et al., 2006).

Sensemaking

Organizational newcomers are faced with some level of uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) and surprise (Louis, 1980) when entering a new organization. To reduce uncertainty and mitigate surprise, newcomers engage in sensemaking and information seeking (Ashford & Black, 1996). The literature concerning sensemaking differs in the exact definition of the concept (Weick, 1995). In terms of sensemaking within organizations, Louis (1980) described it "as a recurring cycle comprised of a sequence of events occurring over time" (p. 241). During this cycle, individuals form anticipations and assumptions that act as predictions of the future (Louis, 1980). These anticipations and assumptions are met with actual experiences that create discrepancies (Louis, 1980). These discrepancies, or as Louis describes them, "surprises," need explanation (p. 241).

Relationship Building

Another proactive behavior demonstrated by newcomers is relationship building. Drawing on the work of Reichers (1987) and Morrison (1993), Ashford and Black (1996)

described relationship building as proactive behaviors in which newcomers seek out opportunities to interact with colleagues in various forms, which leads to a sense of situational identity and awareness of skills and role behaviors. Through these interactions, newcomers gain access to and build social networks, which in turn reduce uncertainty and bring a sense of control to the individual (Ashford & Black, 1996). Kim et al. (2005) linked the use of institutionalized tactics and relationship building in that these tactics encourage "a sense of community and information sharing" (p. 235) so that they positively impact the newcomer. Building relationships has been shown to be an important proactive behavior newcomers can use to reduce uncertainty and better adjust to their new environment and role (Ashford & Black, 1996; Bauer et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2005; Reichers, 1987). The quality of social interactions and relationships formed during the socialization process can strengthen or hinder the organizational entry experience of the newcomer (Korte, 2007).

Positive Framing

Positive framing is another proactive behavior of newcomers identified in the organizational socialization literature. Ashford and Black (1996) were the first to suggest the concept of positive framing as a proactive behavior. Ashford and Black built upon the concepts of behavioral self-management to include cognitive self-management to define positive framing. Whereas behavioral self-management is the self-directed influence people exert to behave in a certain way (Manz & Snyder, 1983), cognitive self-management is an effort to change one's "understanding of a situation by explicitly controlling the cognitive frame they place on the situation" (Ashford & Black, 1996, p. 202).

Through positive framing, newcomers exert proactive behaviors to assist in the adjustment process. The newcomer, faced with new challenges and a level of uncertainty, may choose to view the situation in a positive light and reframe situations and experiences as opportunities rather than threats (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). This positive reframing of situations and experiences can enhance the organizational socialization process for newcomers and for the organization. Kim et al. (2005) showed that positive framing behaviors in newcomers enhanced the entry experience for those organizations that used institutionalized organizational tactics.

Newcomer Adjustment in the Socialization Process—Outcomes

Proximal Outcomes

A number of short-term or proximal outcomes have been identified throughout the organizational socialization literature. The three most common proximal outcomes identified are role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery, sometimes referred to as self-efficacy (Adkins, 1995; Bauer & Green, 1994; Bauer et al., 2007; Ellis et al., 2015; Frögéli et al., 2022; Gruman et al., 2006). These proximal outcomes are a result of the organizational socialization process and contribute to distal outcomes discussed in the next subsection.

Role Clarity

Understanding one's role in a group or organization is an important component of the socialization process. Brim (1968) stated that "role acquisition is an extremely important, if not the most important, component of adult socialization" (p. 186). Role clarity is presented as a proximal outcome of the organizational socialization process in

much of the research. Role clarity involves understanding the tasks, priorities, and time allocation needed to be performed by the newcomer (Bauer et al., 2007). In essence, role clarity is clearly understanding one's organizational role. Several studies have indicated role clarity as a proximal outcome in reducing uncertainty (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; G. R. Jones, 1986; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Saks et al., 2007). These studies pointed to role ambiguity as contributing to uncertainty and thus role clarity as a mitigating factor in reducing uncertainty.

In a meta-analysis of organizational socialization outcomes, Bauer et al. (2007) found that role clarity positively impacts distal outcomes such as performance, job satisfaction, and intent to remain. Role clarity has also been shown to reduce stress and burnout among newcomers. In a study of graduates from 12 universities in Sweden about to enter their first professional career, Frögéli et al. (2022) found that organizations that support role clarity and other factors can help reduce stress and potential burnout for new professionals. Role clarity is linked to positive citizenship behavior in organizations (Adil et al., 2023), better job performance and satisfaction (Brief et al., 1979; House & Rizzo, 1972), and a reduction in an employee's intent to leave the organization (Bauer et al., 2007).

Several factors in the organizational socialization process lead to higher levels of role clarity. Organizational tactics, as described by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and G. R. Jones (1986), have been identified as contributing factors to higher levels of role clarity (Gruman et al., 2006). King and Sethi (1998) showed that social tactics, specifically those that included a mentor, lead to higher levels of role clarity in

newcomers. Kowtha (2018) demonstrated that social and content tactics lead to higher levels of role clarity for newcomers, specifically for those with lower professional education. Some studies have found a positive relationship between newcomer proactivity and increased role clarity (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Miller & Jablin, 1991). Miller and Jablin (1991) indicated that proactive behaviors, such as information seeking, lead to higher levels of role clarity among newcomers. However, in a study of 589 new employees across several sectors, including manufacturing, food distribution, healthcare, and education, Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) found that newcomer proactivity was unrelated to increased role clarity.

Social Acceptance

Social acceptance, sometimes referred to in the literature as social integration, is the extent to which the newcomer feels "a part of, and integrated into, the social fabric of the environment" (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 314). A number of factors contribute to the social acceptance or integration of newcomers, including actions on the part of the organization as well as actions on the part of the individual. Bauer et al. (2021) suggested that social resources, such as social supports and social networks made available to the newcomer, promote higher levels of acceptance during organizational entry and thus contribute to additional newcomer adjustments over time. Social tactics, as categorized by G. R. Jones (1986), lead to higher levels of social acceptance (Bauer et al., 2007).

Social acceptance is tied to newcomer proactive behaviors, specifically information-seeking behaviors (Morrison, 1993). In addition, proactive behaviors such as relationship building can lead to higher levels of social acceptance (Chan & Schmitt,

2000; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). In a meta-analysis concerning organizational socialization, Bauer et al. (2007) found that social acceptance was related to distal outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and a reduction in turnover.

Task Mastery

Task mastery has been identified as a proximal outcome of the organizational socialization process. Task mastery is defined as "learning the tasks of the new job, and also gaining self-confidence and attaining consistently positive performance levels" (Feldman, 1981, p. 310). The newcomer's ability to learn the tasks associated with the newcomer's new position contributes to what Feldman (1981) called "internal work motivation" (p. 316). There are several contributing factors identified through research that lead newcomers to higher levels of task mastery, including organizational actions, as well as proactive behaviors on the behalf of newcomers.

Organizational actions that lead to higher levels of task mastery include providing opportunities for newcomers to engage in internal social networks to seek out peers who can provide information regarding roles and tasks (Hatmaker, 2015). In addition, organizations can encourage managers and leaders to promote "role-model behaviors and communicate role expectations and norms" (Hatmaker, 2015, p. 1159). Lapointe et al. (2014) pointed out that organizations that use fixed and sequential tactics provide opportunities for newcomers to understand better the path of activities that lead to task mastery and thus reduce anxiety and uncertainty regarding role tasks.

Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) showed that task mastery is influenced by information seeking on the part of the newcomer. They further indicated that this knowledge of task is acquired through observation of supervisors and peers (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Ellis et al. (2017) indicated a positive relationship between manager feedback and newcomer task mastery, among other factors. Frögéli et al. (2022) found that task mastery positively contributed to reducing stress and strain for newcomers during the 1st year of employment.

Distal Outcomes

Throughout the study of organizational socialization, a number of long-term or distal outcomes have been identified. The most prominent distal outcomes identified are job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and reduction in turnover. These distal outcomes result from the actions taken on behalf of the organization, the organizational tactics, and the proactive behaviors exhibited by newcomers during the socialization process (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007; De Vos & Freese, 2011; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b). In themselves, these distal outcomes are seen as essential aspects that benefit both the organization and the newcomer.

Job Satisfaction

According to Locke (1969), job satisfaction is "a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it as offering" (p. 316). The research concerning job satisfaction maintains two different perspectives: situational factors and dispositional factors (Boswell et al., 2009). Examples of situational factors include changes in employer, occupation, pay, and status (Gerhart,

1987) and job security, peers and coworkers, supervision, and opportunities for personal growth and development (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

A dispositional perspective of job satisfaction maintains that satisfaction is relatively stable over time and in different situations (Boswell et al., 2009). The dispositional perspective recognizes the influence of situational factors but points out that newcomers do not join organizations as "blank slates, ready to be influenced by the slightest set of external cues" (Staw & Ross, 1985, p. 471). Instead, newcomers bring dispositions, or attitudes toward work, to the organization, which are consistent over time and across situations (Staw & Ross, 1985). Boswell et al. (2009) suggested viewing job satisfaction as a combination of both situational and dispositional factors, indicating that one's experiences may cause changes in one's attitudes toward work but over time will level off, and attitudes toward work will become more stable.

During organizational entry, socialization tactics can play an important role in the newcomers' job satisfaction and overall attitude toward work (Boswell et al., 2009). In a meta-analysis of studies concerning organizational socialization, Bauer et al. (2007) demonstrated that all six bipolar organizational tactics, as described by Van Maanen and Schein (1979), were significantly correlated with job satisfaction. When examining specifically institutionalized tactics, as described by G. R. Jones (1986), several studies have shown a positive correlation between institutionalized tactics and job satisfaction (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; R. Z. Baker, 1990; H. E. Baker & Feldman, 1990). Ashforth, Sluss, and Saks (2007) found that investiture tactics specifically were directly related to job satisfaction. In addition, proximal outcomes influenced by organizational

socialization, such as role clarity, have a positive effect on job satisfaction among newcomers (Kahn et al., 1964).

Organizational Commitment

The concept of organizational commitment is an entire field of study itself. Within this field, there is no single agreed upon definition of organizational commitment. However, Meyer (1997) identified two distinct approaches to defining the relationship between the employee and the organization: the nature of commitment and the focus of commitment.

Meyer (1997) pointed to the work of Meyer and Allen (1991) to articulate the nature of commitment. The model proposed by Meyer and Allen identified three components of commitment: affective, continuance, and normative. The affective commitment component is described as relating to the emotional attachment on the part of the employee toward the organization (Meyer, 1997). This attachment produces a desire to remain with and work on behalf of the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Continuance commitment refers to anything that "increases the cost associated with leaving an organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 77). Continuance commitment weighs the potential cost of leaving an organization, which in turn produces a commitment to remain. Normative commitment is rooted in an obligation to remain with an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Normative commitment may be the result of "familial, cultural or organizational origins" (N. J. Allen & Meyer, 1991, p. 77), such as a duty to show loyalty to an organization. This type of commitment may also stem from a reciprocal concept of exchange (Meyer & Allen, 1991). For example, an organizational member may feel a

level of commitment to the organization based on what the organization has provided the member in the way of training, investment, or favors.

The second approach to defining organizational commitment is what Meyer (1997) called the focus of commitment. According to Reichers (1985), in many cases, organizations are seen as singular entities that "elicit an identification and attachment on the part of individuals," yet in reality, organizations are made up of "coalitions and constituencies, each of which espouses a unique set of goals and values that may be in conflict with the goals and values of other organizational groups" (pp. 469–470). This indicates that organizational commitment is not singular in nature but is made up of multiple commitments, or what Reichers (1986) called multiple constituencies and Becker (1992) referred to as the multifoci of commitment.

The organizational socialization process, specifically the use of institutionalized tactics, plays an important role in developing one's organizational commitment (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; H. E. Baker, 1992; Laker & Steffy, 1995; Mignerey et al., 1995; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). N. J. Allen and Meyer's (1991) longitudinal study of MBA graduates entering new organizations found a significant correlation between all six of the bipolar tactics identified by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and organizational commitment. G. R. Jones (1986) found that all but two of the bipolar tactics, collective versus individual and formal versus informal, had a significant correlation to organizational commitment. Newcomer proactive behaviors, such as information seeking or sensemaking, lead to higher levels of organizational commitment (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

Reduction of Turnover

A final distal outcome identified in the organizational socialization research is a reduction in turnover. In many cases, employee turnover is most prevalent with new employees (D. G. Allen, 2006; Farber, 1994; Wanous, 1992). Turnover is costly to organizations in that they have likely invested in recruitment, selection, and training before getting a return on those investments (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003). Peltokorpi et al. (2022) proposed two explanations for high turnover rates. First is the need for newcomers to adjust to the organization, which is seen through adjustment indicators such as role clarity, task mastery, and social acceptance (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003). When these adjustments are met, newcomers are less likely to leave the organization (Bauer et al., 2007). Second is the concept of job embeddedness (Peltokorpi et al., 2022). Job embeddedness pertains to how deeply an individual becomes intertwined within a network of diverse influences that link the individual to both a job and an organization (D. G. Allen, 2006). Peltokorpi et al. (2022) posited that individuals will be less likely to leave an organization if they are required to give up specialized knowledge and training, social links, and benefits. This idea of being embedded or enmeshed (D. G. Allen, 2006) provides a number of reasons for an individual to stay in an organization; thus, the lack of job embeddedness acts as an explanation for higher employee turnover (Peltokorpi et al., 2022).

The role of organizational socialization in the reduction of employee turnover is well documented (R. Z. Baker, 1990; Bauer et al., 2007; Cable et al., 2013). When newcomers adjust to their new roles, gain clarity concerning their role in the organization, and achieve mastery of task, they are more likely to remain with the

organization, resulting in lower turnover rates (Bauer et al., 2007). Cable et al. (2013) showed that organizations that focused on newcomers' "unique perspectives and strengths" (p. 16) during socialization had lower rates of turnover compared to those that emphasized organizational affiliation. R. Z. Baker (1990) suggested that organizations with high turnover costs should focus on institutionalized tactics because of the efficiency of such programs. Conversely, Riordan et al. (2001) revealed that collective tactics, categorized as institutionalized tactics, were positively related to turnover. They further speculated that because of the nature of high turnover positions, organizations may turn "to collective socialization practices in the interest of efficiently training new employees" (Riordan et al., 2001, p. 173). This is similar to what Van Maanen and Schein (1979) posited in their examination of collective tactics, that newcomers put through collective socialization tactics may collectively rebel against the standards set by the organization.

Support Staff in K–12 Organizations

Organizational Role

Most K–12 public institutions comprise three classifications of employees: administrators/managers, certificated staff, and classified staff, also known as support staff. In California, certificated staff, who are certified by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), include those required to teach in a general education classroom and possess both multiple- and single-subject credentials as well as to teach in special education environments. For most certificates issued by the CTC, an applicant must have a degree from a 4-year college or university and have completed an accredited preparatory program.

Classified or support staff do not have the same requirements for employment as certificated employees. According to the CDE (n.d.), classified or support staff include "paraprofessionals, office/clerical staff, as well as other classified staff, such as custodians, bus drivers, and business managers" (para. 1). In their different roles, classified employees interact with students in a variety of ways, most of which are seen on a daily basis (Feuerborn et al., 2018). Classified staff in K–12 public schools serve as the backbone of school operations.

Organizational Socialization of K–12 Support Staff

Despite the important role classified staff play in K–12 schools, as of the time of this study, no empirical studies have addressed the organizational socialization process of these individuals. In fact, very few studies exist that specifically identify K–12 classified staff as the study population. This lack of study may be rooted in an overall view that the work of classified staff in K–12 schools is less important concerning the overall mission of such organizations. According to Odden (2011), classified and other noninstructional staff are not considered key staff in fulfilling the desire to improve educational institutions. However, other researchers in the field of K–12 human resource management contend that noninstructional staff provide critical support in achieving the mission of the organization (Poston et al., 1992; C. S. Turner, 2002; Welch & Daniel, 1997).

Summary

This chapter examined the literature concerning organizational socialization, its origins, theoretical frameworks and models, the contributions by the organization as well

as the newcomer, and the outcomes associated with the process. The chapter concluded with a brief description of the role of classified staff in K–12 public schools and pointed out the lack of research concerning these individuals, specifically in the areas of organizational socialization. Through this chapter, the importance of the organizational socialization process was presented. In addition, the chapter presented the important role classified staff play in K–12 organizations. With this in mind, it is logical to conclude that exploring the organizational socialization of K–12 classified staff would benefit both the organizations that hire these individuals and the individuals themselves.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the study to address the purpose statement and research questions. The chapter begins by restating the study's purpose and the research questions. Next, the researcher describes and provides justification for the research design, population, sample, and instrumentation. The chapter continues by discussing the data collection and data analysis process. The chapter concludes with limitations identified by the researcher and a summary of the research methodology.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify to what extent newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational tactics (content, context, and social) to support their socialization process during the 1st year of employment (G. R. Jones, 1986). In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization to their new role (role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery).

Research Questions

1. To what extent were organizational tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

a. To what extent were content tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
b. To what extent were social tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
c. To what extent were context tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

2. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment into their new role?
   a. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their role clarity?
   b. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their social acceptance?
   c. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their task mastery?

Research Design

A research design is a plan that the researcher establishes to conduct a study. According to Creswell (2009), the research design "involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods" (p. 5). Creswell further explained three distinct categories that help define the reason a specific design was used; the

specific procedures chosen; and the methods used to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Ultimately, the research design selected is influenced by the study's purpose (Roberts, 2010).

Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design

The research design used for this study was a sequential explanatory mixed methods design. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the data collected during a sequential explanatory design is conducted in two phases: quantitative followed by qualitative. A sequential explanatory design was chosen because of the nature of the study and the research questions posed by the researcher. The intent of the first research question was to provide data concerning the extent to which newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational tactics used to support their socialization process. The data were collected through quantitative methods. The second research question provided information on newly employed classified staff's perception of the effectiveness of the organizational tactics. The data were collected through qualitative methods.

Quantitative

Quantitative data are gathered and analyzed during the first phase of the sequential explanatory mixed methods design (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A quantitative research design is objective and focuses on describing phenomena through statistical analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Several nuanced research designs exist in quantitative research; however, they are generally placed in two broad categories: experimental and nonexperimental (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

A nonexperimental design was selected for the quantitative portion of this mixed methods research study to demonstrate to what extent organizational tactics were experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process. A nonexperimental design was used based on the purpose of the study and to address Research Question 1 posed in the study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), nonexperimental quantitative designs "describe phenomena and examine relationships between different phenomena without any direct manipulation of conditions that are experienced" (p. 22). There are six subcategories of design that exist within the broad category of nonexperimental design: descriptive, comparative, correlational, survey, ex post facto, and secondary data analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

For this study, the researcher used a nonexperimental survey design for the quantitative portion of the mixed methods study. Creswell (2009) described a survey design as "a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 145). Because this study aimed to identify the extent to which organizational tactics were experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process, the use of a survey design was appropriate.

Qualitative

A qualitative research design involves "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Qualitative research is used when the research purpose and questions seek to understand

the experience of people or a people group, and data can be collected through various mechanisms, including surveys, interviews, and observation. The data explain why something is happening in a particular situation or set of circumstances (Patten & Newhart, 2018). A researcher who aims to understand why a phenomenon is happening can use qualitative methods, such as open-ended interviews, observations, or document analysis, to dig deeper into the why behind such a phenomenon (Patton, 2015). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) identified five qualitative designs differentiated into two categories. In the first category are those designs that address the individual lived experiences, including phenomenology, case study, and grounded theory. The second category includes the qualitative designs that address society and culture, including ethnography and critical studies.

For this study, the researcher used a phenomenological design for the qualitative portion of the mixed methods study. Phenomenological research concerns the human experience with a particularly identified phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). This design generally involves a small number of subjects and is focused on understanding the essence of the subjects' lived experience, captured through prolonged encounters such as interviews (Creswell, 2009; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Population

McMillian and Schumacher (2010) described a population as "a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of research" (p. 129). The population for this study was newly employed classified staff members in K–12 public school districts

in Southern California. For this study, newly employed classified staff members were employees of the organization for more than 3 months but less than 2 years. According to the CDE (n.d.), classified employees are "employees of a school, district, or county office of education who are in a position not requiring certification" and "include paraprofessionals, office/clerical staff, as well as other classified staff, such as custodians, bus drivers, and business managers" (para. 1). At the time of this study, no database existed that reports the number of newly employed classified employees in California K–12 public schools. However, according to the most recent data available from the CDE (n.d.), California K–12 public schools employ 282,800 full-time classified employees.

Target Population

The target population is "the population to which the researcher wants to be able to generalize the results" (Patten & Newhart, 2018, p. 71). Creswell (2008) defined the target population as the "actual list of sampling units from which the sample is selected" (p. 393). In this study, the target population was newly employed classified staff members in K–12 school districts in Riverside County, California. It was not feasible to include all newly employed classified staff in the state of California; therefore, the researcher chose to focus on newly employed classified staff in one of California's 58 counties. According to the most recent data available from the CDE (2023), 18,825 full-time classified employees were employed in Riverside County during the 2022–2023 school year.

Sample

In research, a sample is used to study a segment of the larger population identified and then generalize those findings to a larger population (Creswell, 2008). The sample for the quantitative portion of this study used purposive random sampling. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), purposive sampling occurs when the "researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest" (p. 138). For the quantitative portion of this mixed methods study, the researcher engaged four school districts in Southern California and requested the opportunity to survey all newly employed classified staff members hired in the past 2 years.

For the quantitative portion of the study, the researcher used purposive sampling. Participants were identified based on the following criteria:

- They were employed in public school districts in Southern California.
- They were employed as a classified staff member as defined by the CDE.
- They were employed for more than 3 months, but less than 2 years.

The qualitative phase of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study used interviews to determine the degree to which newly employed classified staff perceived the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment into their new role. For the qualitative portion of the study, random sampling was used. A question on the quantitative survey asked participants to indicate whether they would be willing to participate further in the interviews. From those affirmative answers, the researcher used random sampling to identify 10 participants to include in the qualitative interviews.

Instrumentation

The researcher used a sequential explanatory mixed methods design to address the research questions posed in this study. In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected through appropriate instrumentation to address the stated research questions.

Quantitative Instrumentation

Throughout the organizational socialization literature, researchers have developed surveys and scales to measure a variety of variables (Chao et al., 1994; Haueter et al., 2003; Taormina, 1994). For this study, a survey was developed using socialization scales developed by G. R. Jones (1986). This survey was used to measure the organizational socialization tactics experienced by newly employed K–12 classified employees. G. R. Jones's scale has been used in a number of studies over the past 30 years. In some cases, researchers have removed or modified survey items because of inadequate loading (e.g., Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Black & Ashford, 1995; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Kim et al., 2005; King & Sethi, 1998; Riordan et al., 2001). For this study, all 30 of G. R. Jones's (1986) original items were used to collect quantitative data (Appendix A). Minor modifications were made to some items; changing the term *newcomer* to *new employee* was done to provide clarity to survey participants. The researcher attempted to contact the survey author but was not successful in obtaining contact information because the individual has since retired. Ultimately, permission to use and slightly modify the survey was obtained from the Academy of Management Journal, which holds the copyright for the original article in which the survey appears.

The survey was populated using SurveyMonkey, an online platform. The first section of the survey asked participants to complete demographic information, including age, gender, school district affiliation, length of employment in their current school district, current position in the school district, and whether they worked at a school site or for a district department. The second section of the survey consisted of 10 items addressing the context tactics (sequential versus random and fixed versus variable) experienced by the participants during their employment. The third section of the survey consisted of 10 items addressing the social tactics (investiture versus divestiture and serial versus disjunctive) experienced by the participants during their employment. The fourth section of the survey consisted of 10 items addressing the content tactics (collective versus individual and formal versus informal) experienced by the participants during their employment. Participants were asked to rate these 30 statements on a 7-point Likert scale.

Qualitative Instrumentation

In a sequential explanatory design, qualitative methods are used to further understand and explain quantitative results (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative data are collected through various formats, including observation, in-depth interviews, document and artifact collection, and field observations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study used semistructured interviews to understand the degree to which newly employed classified staff perceived the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment into their new role. The interview questions were predetermined and asked in the same manner for each participant.

The interview questions were divided into three sections, each addressing Research Questions 2a, 2b, and 2c. The first section focused on the degree to which the organizational tactics experienced by the participants impacted their role clarity during the 1st year of employment. The second section focused on the degree to which the organizational tactics experienced by the participants affected their social acceptance during the 1st year of employment. Finally, the third section focused on the degree to which the organizational tactics experienced by the participants impacted their task mastery during the 1st year of employment. Role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery were identified as proximal outcomes of organizational socialization (Adkins, 1995; Bauer & Green, 1994; Bauer et al., 2007; Ellis et al., 2015; Gruman et al., 2006). A panel of experts was used to provide content validity to the interview protocol and questions.

An interview protocol and field test were used with three participants who possessed the criteria for the study. The responses of these field-test participants were not included in the final study. Participants were asked to provide feedback after the field-test interview (Appendix B). During the field test, an expert observer was present to give feedback on the interview questions and the interview process and to help identify bias the researcher may have presented. The researcher then met with the expert observer to discuss this person's observations (Appendix C). The feedback from both the participants and the expert observer was used to modify the original interview protocol and questions (Appendix D). The researcher completed alignment of the interview questions to the research questions (Appendix E).

Validity

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), validity is "the degree to which scientific explanations of phenomena match reality" (p. 104). Patterson and Newhart (2018) stated that a measure is valid when "it measures what it is designed to measure and accurately performs the function(s) it is purposed to perform" (p. 123). For this study, validity for the quantitative and qualitative sections was established by consulting a panel of experts with expertise in human resources and organizational socialization.

Quantitative Validity

The validity of the quantitative instrument used was based on the use of the instrument in several previous studies (e.g., Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Black & Ashford, 1995; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Kim et al., 2005; King & Sethi, 1998; Riordan et al., 2001). The researcher consulted a panel of experts with experience in organizational socialization and K–12 classified human resources. Prior to the collection of data, the survey was provided to the expert panel, and feedback was given concerning the survey construction and questions addressed. The panel provided the purpose statement and research questions to confirm the alignment between those items and the survey. Feedback from the expert panel was used to make adjustments to the survey prior to field testing.

Qualitative Validity

The validity of the qualitative interview protocol was established by engaging the same panel of experts used in the quantitative section. The panel was asked to provide feedback on the interview protocol and the interview questions to ensure alignment with

the research purpose statement and Research Question 2. The researcher was then given the feedback provided by the panel, and adjustments to the protocol were made prior to field testing and use with study participants.

Data Collection

Quantitative Data Collection

A survey using the socialization scale proposed by G. R. Jones (1986) was used to collect quantitative data. The researcher contacted human resource directors of school districts in Southern California and asked for their staff's participation in the survey. Once confirmed, an official letter was sent to the district. Upon district approval, formal letters (Appendix F) were sent via email to the participants, and a follow-up email was sent confirming each person's involvement. Letters of consent (Appendix G) were then collected to finalize respondent participation.

After the researcher received the consent letters, participants were emailed a link to an online survey. The online survey (Appendix H) was delivered through a secure survey platform, SurveyMonkey (http://www.surveymonkey.com). Confidentiality in the survey was reinforced to all of the participants.

Qualitative Data Collection

The surveys for collecting quantitative data included a request for the participants to volunteer for possible follow-up interviews. Those respondents who volunteered were then contacted via email to schedule an interview. Interviews were conducted via the Zoom virtual meeting platform. Details of the interview meetings were established and confirmed with each participant. Digital recordings through the Zoom platform of each

interview were taken during the process with the participant's permission (Appendix I). At the conclusion of the interviews, each participant was sent a copy of the interview transcript to review and clarify any responses.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data gathered from surveys completed by each participant. Data were gathered to identify the extent to which organizational tactics were experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process. More specifically, the survey was used to understand the degree to which employed classified staff in K-12 organizations experienced what G. R. Jones (1986) categorized as context tactics, social tactics, and content tactics. These areas were addressed through six different five-item scales developed by G. R. Jones (1986). All survey responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). Quantitative data analysis was performed on the results of this survey to find the mean and standard deviation of each of the five-item scales. Additionally, reliability analysis was performed on each of the five-item scales.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The interview questions used to collect qualitative data were written to elicit the degree to which newly employed classified staff perceive the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment into their new role. Open-ended questions were used during the interview to gain insight into how organizational tactics used by school districts contributed to participants' role clarity, social acceptance, and

task mastery. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for use during the data analysis process.

Patton (2002) indicated that raw interview transcripts are the "undigested complexity of reality" and that classifying and coding such complexities is "the first step in analysis" (p. 463). The raw interview transcripts were coded to determine themes and patterns from the interviews. The interviews were coded using a software application (NVivo) to store and code the data. Through the reading of the transcripts, researchers identify segments, words, sentences, or lines of text to analyze and develop codes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Through further analysis, the identified codes are grouped, based on frequency, to produce themes from the interviews.

To help ensure the reliability of the qualitative data analysis for this study, the researcher employed a process called interrater reliability. This is achieved when two or more researchers analyze the same datasets and compare results to combat researcher bias (Roberts, 2010). An independent researcher was used to provide interrater reliability by coding 10% of the data collected during the qualitative phase of this mixed methods study. This allowed for an increase in validity concerning the analysis process and findings by limiting researcher bias.

Limitations

According to Creswell (2008), limitations are "potential weaknesses or problems identified by the researcher" (p. 207). For this study, a number of limitations were identified. A key limitation was the geographic limitation of the target population. This limits the generalizability of the results to the larger population of all newly employed

classified staff in K–12 schools in California. Another limitation the researcher identified was the instrumentation used for the qualitative data collection. The qualitative interview protocol was another limitation the researcher identified. Despite the researcher's efforts to provide validity and reliability through the engagement of an expert panel and an external observer, there was the possibility of researcher bias.

Summary

Chapter III established the methodology for this study and stated the research questions. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify to what extent newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational tactics (content, context, and social) to support their socialization process during the 1st year of employment (G. R. Jones, 1986). In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization to their new role (role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery/self-efficacy). Quantitative data were gathered through an online survey, and qualitative data were collected through interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. Qualitative data were coded and analyzed for themes and trends to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization to their new role. Limitations for the study were also noted.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This research study examined the organizational socialization tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff members in K–12 school districts in Southern California and the degree to which those tactics were effective. Chapter IV provides an overview of the study, restatement of the purpose, research questions, research methods, and data collection procedures. The chapter continues by repeating the population, sample, and instrumentation. Next, participant demographic data are presented for both phases of the study. In addition, the chapter includes a detailed presentation and analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data collected and concludes with a chapter summary.

This study was conducted to address the experience of newly employed classified staff in terms of the organizational socialization tactics used by K–12 school districts. The study examined the six bipolar organizational tactics first identified by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and further refined and categorized by G. R. Jones (1986).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify to what extent newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational tactics (content, context, and social) to support their socialization process during the 1st year of employment (G. R. Jones, 1986). In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization to their new role (role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery).

Research Questions

1. To what extent were organizational tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
    d. To what extent were content tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
    e. To what extent were social tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
    f. To what extent were context tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
2. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment into their new role?
    d. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their role clarity?
    e. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their social acceptance?
    f. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their task mastery?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

A sequential explanatory mixed methods design was used for this study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the data collection during a sequential explanatory design is conducted in two phases: quantitative followed by qualitative. A sequential explanatory design was chosen because of the nature of the study and the research questions posed by the researcher.

A nonexperimental design was selected for the quantitative portion of this mixed methods research study to demonstrate to what extent organizational tactics were experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process. For this study, the researcher used a nonexperimental survey design for the quantitative portion of the mixed methods study. The survey was designed using items developed by G. R. Jones (1986) to address organizational socialization tactics. In addition, the survey collected demographic data from study participants.

For this study, a phenomenological design was used to collect qualitative data. Phenomenological research concerns the human experience with a particularly identified phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Survey participants who agreed to participate in follow-up interviews were randomly selected to participate. These semistructured interviews and questions were designed to elicit the perceived effectiveness of organizational tactics used by school districts to support newly employed classified staff's adjustment to their new role.

Population

Newly employed classified staff members in K–12 public school districts in California made up the population of this study. For this study, newly employed classified staff members had been employed by their school district for more than 3 months but less than 2 years. According to the CDE (n.d.), classified employees are "employees of a school, district, or county office of education who are in a position not requiring certification" and "include paraprofessionals, office/clerical staff, as well as other classified staff, such as custodians, bus drivers, and business managers" (para. 1). At the time of this study, no publicly available database existed that reported the number of newly employed classified employees in California K–12 public schools. However, according to the most recent data available from the CDE, California K–12 public schools employ 282,800 full-time classified employees.

Sample

For the quantitative portion of this mixed methods study, the researcher engaged four school districts in Southern California and requested the opportunity to survey all newly employed classified staff members hired in the past 2 years.

For the quantitative portion of the study, the researcher used purposive sampling. Participants were identified based on the following criteria:

- They were employed in public school districts in Southern California.
- They were employed as a classified staff member as defined by the CDE.
- They were employed for more than 3 months but less than 2 years.

The qualitative phase of this sequential, explanatory mixed methods study used interviews to determine the degree to which newly employed classified staff perceived

the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment ~~in~~to their new role. For the qualitative portion of the study, random sampling was used. A question on the quantitative survey asked participants to indicate whether they would be willing to participate further in the interviews. From those affirmative answers, the researcher used random sampling to identify 10 participants to include in the qualitative interviews.

Instrumentation

The researcher used a sequential, explanatory mixed methods design to address the research questions posed in this study. This design collects quantitative and qualitative data through appropriate instrumentation.

Quantitative Instrumentation

Throughout the organizational socialization literature, researchers developed surveys and scales to measure a variety of variables (Chao et al., 1994; Haueter et al., 2003; Taormina, 1994). For this study, a survey was created using the socialization scale developed by G. R. Jones (1986). This survey measured the organizational socialization tactics experienced by newly employed K–12 classified employees. G. R. Jones's scale has been used in several studies over the past 30 years. In some cases, researchers removed or modified survey items because of inadequate loading (e.g., Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Black & Ashford, 1995; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Kim et al., 2005; King & Sethi, 1998; Riordan et al., 2001). For this study, all 30 of G. R. Jones's (1986) items were used to collect quantitative data (Appendix A). Minor modifications were made to some items; changing the term *newcomer* to *new employee* was done to provide clarity to survey participants. The researcher attempted to contact the survey author but was not successful in obtaining contact information because the individual has since retired. Ultimately,

permission to use and slightly modify the survey was obtained from the Academy of Management Journal, which holds the copyright for the original article in which the survey appears.

The survey was distributed using SurveyMonkey, an online platform. The first section of the survey asked participants to complete demographic information, including age, gender, school district affiliation, length of employment in their current school district, current position in the school district, and whether they worked at a school site or for a district department. The second section of the survey consisted of 10 items addressing the context tactics (sequential versus random and fixed versus variable) experienced by the participants during their employment. The third section of the survey consisted of 10 items addressing the social tactics (investiture versus divestiture and serial versus disjunctive) experienced by the participants during their employment. The fourth section of the survey consisted of 10 items addressing the content tactics (collective versus individual and formal versus informal) experienced by the participants during their employment. Participants were asked to rate these 30 statements on a 7-point Likert scale.

Qualitative Instrumentation

In a sequential, explanatory design, qualitative methods are used to further understand and explain quantitative results (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative data are collected through various formats, including observation, in-depth interviews, document and artifact collection, and field observations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study used semistructured interviews to understand the degree to which newly employed

classified staff perceived the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment to their new role. The interview questions were predetermined and asked in the same manner for each participant.

The interview questions were divided into three sections, each addressing Research Questions 2a, 2b, and 2c. The first section focused on the degree to which the organizational tactics experienced by the participants impacted their role clarity during the 1st year of employment. The second section focused on the degree to which the organizational tactics experienced by the participants affected their social acceptance during the 1st year of employment. Finally, the third section focused on the degree to which the organizational tactics experienced by the participants impacted their task mastery during the 1st year of employment. Role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery were identified as proximal outcomes of organizational socialization (Adkins, 1995; Bauer & Green, 1994; Bauer et al., 2007; Ellis et al., 2015; Gruman et al., 2006). A panel of experts was used to provide content validity to the interview protocol and questions.

An interview protocol and field test were used with three participants who met the criteria for the study. The responses of these field-test participants were not included in the final study. Participants were asked to provide feedback after the field-test interview (Appendix B). During the field test, an expert observer was present to give feedback on the interview questions and the interview process and to help identify bias the researcher may have presented. The researcher then met with the expert observer to discuss this person's observations. The feedback from both the participants and the expert observer was used to modify the original interview protocol and questions (Appendices C & D).

The researcher completed alignment of the interview questions to the research questions (Appendix E).

Demographic Data

During the first phase of this mixed methods study, a survey was sent to 95 respondents from four school districts in Riverside County. Of the 95, 90 engaged in the survey, and 84 completed the survey. Of the 84 who completed the survey, 70 met the qualifications for participation. The 14 participants who did not meet the qualifications for the study were employed for less than 3 months or more than 2 years in their current positions. Table 3 contains the demographic data for the 70 survey participants. For Phase 1, the 70 participants who met the qualifications comprised 91.3% female and 8.6% male. Participant age range was as follows: 18–24 years of age (5.7%), 25–34 years of age (21.4%), 35–44 years of age (41.4%), 45–54 years of age (24.3%), 55–64 years of age (5.7%), and 65+ years of age (1.4%).

For Phase 1, 55.7% of participants were from District A, 27.1% were from District B, 8.6% were from District C, and 8.6% were from District D. A total of 77.1% of participants indicated that they work at a school site as part of the staff of that school site. The remaining 22.9% indicated that they work for a department/division that supports multiple school sites or the district as a whole.

Of the 70 participants, a majority, 42.9%, indicated that their current position most closely aligned with a paraprofessional/instructional aide. The remaining roles identified were as follows: 12.9% nutrition or food services; 14.3% front office assistance (secretary, registrar, etc.); 8.6% health services; 5.7% business services; 5.7% campus

security; 2.9% human resources; 2.9% maintenance, operations, and facilities; 2.9% transportation; and 1.4% technology support.

Ten participants were randomly selected to participate in the qualitative Phase 1 portion of the study. Of the 10 participants selected, all confirmed interview times; however, only eight participants ended up participating in the interviews. Two participants did not show up for the scheduled interviews. Several attempts were made to reach these participants to reschedule, which was not achieved.

For the qualitative Phase 2 portion of the study, 87.5% of participants were female, and 12.5% were male. In addition, 25% of interview participants were aged 25–34, 25% were aged 35–44, 37.5% were aged 45–54, and 12.5% were aged 55–64. No interview participants were in the 18–24 or 65+ age ranges. For phase two, 50% of interview participants were employed by District A, 37.5% by District B, and 12.5% by District D. No interview participants were employed by District C. Regarding current role, 37.5% were employed as a paraprofessional/instructional aide, 25% as a front office assistant, 12.5% in health services, 12.5% in business services, and 12.5% in technology support. No interview participants were employed in nutrition or food service, campus security, transportation, or maintenance and operations. Finally, 25% of interview participants had been employed in their current role between 3 and 6 months, 12.5% between 6 and 9 months, 25% between 9 and 12 months, 25% between 12 and 18 months, and 12.5% between 18 and 24 months.

Table 3

Demographic Data Qualitative Phase 1 and Phase 2

Demographic data	Phase 1		Phase 2	
	n	%	*n*	%
Gender				
Female	64	91.3	7	87.5
Male	6	8.6	1	12.5
Current age				
18–24 years	4	5.7		
25–34 years	15	21.4	2	25.0
35–44 years	29	41.4	2	25.0
45–54 years	17	24.3	3	37.5
55–64 years	4	5.7	1	12.5
65+ years	1	1.4		
School district				
District A	39	55.7	4	50.0
District B	19	27.1	3	37.5
District C	6	8.6		
District D	6	8.6	1	12.5
Current role				
Paraprofessional/ instructional aide	30	42.9	3	37.5
Nutrition or food services	9	12.9		
Front office assistant	10	14.3	2	25.0
Health services	6	8.6	1	12.5
Business services	4	5.7	1	12.5
Campus security	4	5.7		
Transportation	2	2.9		
Maintenance, operations, and facilities	2	2.9		
Human resources	2	2.9		
Technology support	1	1.4	1	12.5
Length of employment in current position				
3–6 months	15	21.4	2	25.0
6–9 months	8	11.4	1	12.5
9–12 months	14	20.0	2	25.0
12–18 months	23	32.9	2	25.0
18–24 months	10	14.3	1	12.5

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This mixed methods study was conducted in two phases. First, quantitative data were collected, and second, qualitative data were collected. This section presents the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data collected from newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California. Data were collected through an electronic survey (Appendix H) and semistructured interviews via a virtual conferencing platform (Appendix C).

Data Analysis

This sequential explanatory design collected quantitative data through an online platform, Survey Monkey. The survey collected demographic data of the participants. The survey, developed using items from G. R. Jones (1986), helped the researcher understand the degree to which newly employed classified staff had experienced organizational socialization tactics used by the school districts that hired them. More specifically, the survey examined the organizational socialization tactics experienced by participants in terms of where those experiences land on the continuum of tactics (G. R. Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Survey results were downloaded and entered into the software program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for further analysis. All survey responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale: 7 (*strongly agree*), 6 (*agree*), 5 (*somewhat agree*), 4 (*neither agree nor disagree*), 3 (*somewhat disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), and 1 (*strongly disagree*). The researcher used SPSS software to perform a reliability test on the survey results. In addition, the researcher used SPSS software to produce descriptive statistics

for the survey items, which included the mean and standard deviation of each five-item scale.

Included in the survey was a question asking participants whether they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Of the 70 survey participants, 41 were willing to participate in the follow-up interviews. Ten participants from the 41 were randomly selected to participate in the interviews. Ultimately, eight participants engaged in the interview process. The interviews were held via online conference software, and audio of the conversation was recorded. The recordings were uploaded to a web-based transcription platform, Rev.com, for initial interview audio transcription. The researcher then listened to the audio and made minor corrections to the transcript. A copy of the transcript was provided to participants to check for accuracy. The interview transcripts were then themed and coded by the researcher. The use of NVivo software assisted in organizing the themes and identifying frequencies.

Quantitative Data Results

The quantitative results were gathered through a survey using scales developed by G. R. Jones (1986). The purpose of the survey was to answer Research Question 1 concerning the degree to which newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations experienced organization tactics. More specifically, the survey was used to understand the degree to which employed classified staff in K–12 organizations experienced context tactics, social tactics, and content tactics through six different five-item scales (G. R. Jones, 1986).

Context tactics were addressed through the first two five-item scales. The first scale addressed sequential versus random (SR) tactics through Items SR1 through SR5.

The second scale addressed fixed versus variable (FV) tactics through Items FV1 through FV5_R. The third and fourth sets of scales addressed the social tactics categorized by G. R. Jones (1986). The third addressed investiture versus divestiture (ID) tactics through Items ID1 through ID5_R. The fourth scale addressed serial versus disjunctive (SD) tactics through Items SD1 through SD5_R. The fifth and sixth sets of scales addressed content tactics. The fifth scale addressed collective versus individual (CI) tactics through Items CI1 through CI5. The sixth five-item scale addressed formal versus informal (FI) tactics through Items FI1 through FI5_R.

All survey responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Quantitative data analysis was performed on the results of this survey. Using the software SPSS, data analysis was performed to find the mean and standard deviation of each of the five-item scales. Higher mean scores on the scales would indicate that overall institutionalized tactics were experienced, and lower scores would indicate that overall individualized tactics were experienced (G. R. Jones, 1986). In addition, SPSS was used to perform reliability analysis on the survey item results. Through the reliability analysis, the following Cronbach's Alpha scores were achieved: collective versus individual (.70), informal versus formal (.51), investiture versus divestiture (.86), serial versus disjunctive (.85), sequential versus random (.84), and fixed versus variable (.81).

Research Question 1

To what extent were organizational tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

Research Question 1 was informed by three similar subresearch questions that addressed the extent to which newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts experienced organizational tactics, specifically those identified by G. R. Jones (1986) as content, context, and social tactics. G. R. Jones's categorization of organizational tactics was based on the six bipolar organizational tactics identified by Van Maanen and Schein (1979).

Drawing on the work of Van Maanen and Schein (1979), G. R. Jones (1986) proposed a way to categorize the bipolar tactics on the opposite sides of a spectrum: institutionalized versus individualized tactics. G. R. Jones contended that collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics can be categorized as institutionalized tactics and lead to custodial role orientation. Custodial role orientation is one in which the newcomer accepts the new role as presented by the organization and understood by organizational insiders (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Conversely, individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture tactics can be categorized as individualized tactics and lead to an innovative role orientation. Innovative role orientation is one in which newcomers may reject or redefine their role and mission within the organization (G. R. Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Research Question 1a

To what extent were content tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

Items SR1 through SR5 and FV1 through FV5_R on the survey addressed the area of content tactics (G. R. Jones, 1986). The content tactics category comprises

sequential versus random tactics and fixed versus variable tactics (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Items SR1 through SR5 addressed sequential versus random tactics. Sequential tactics explicitly communicate the order in which newcomers experience different activities as they go through the organizational socialization process. On the other hand, random tactics provide little information on the predictable sequence of socialization processes.

Items FV1 through FV5_R addressed fixed versus variable tactics. Fixed tactics communicate timelines for when each stage of the process will take place. Variable tactics provide little information on the timeline of socialization processes.

Sample items for this section included the following:

- There is a clear pattern in the way one role leads to another or one job assignment leads to another in this organization (sequential vs. random).
- The steps in the career ladder are clearly specified in this organization (sequential vs. random).
- I have a good knowledge of the time it will take me to go through the various stages of the training process in this organization (fixed vs. variable).
- Most of my knowledge of what may happen to me in the future comes informally, through the grapevine, rather than through regular organizational channels (fixed vs. variable).

Table 4 shows the number of participants, range, mean, and standard deviation for sequential versus random and fixed versus variable. A mean score of 3.93 was produced for sequential versus random tactics. A mean score of 3.85 was produced for fixed versus

variable tactics. Questions SR4_R, FV4_R, and FV5_R were reverse-scored based on the original survey items developed by G. R. Jones (1986).

Table 4

K–12 Classified Employees—Organizational Socialization Survey of Content Tactics

Content tactics	Range	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Sequential versus random	1–7	3.93	1.26	70
Fixed versus variable	1–7	3.85	1.33	70

A higher mean score for sequential versus random would indicate that participants experienced more sequential tactics; therefore, their experience was on the institutionalized end of the socialization continuum. A lower mean score would indicate participants experienced more random tactics; therefore, their experience was on the individualized end of the socialization continuum. In addition, a higher mean score on fixed versus variable tactics would indicate that participants experienced more fixed tactics; therefore, their experience was on the institutionalized end of the socialization continuum. A lower mean score would indicate participants experienced more variable tactics; therefore, their experience was on the individualized end of the socialization continuum.

Overall, study participants showed more experience with random tactics versus sequential tactics ($M = 3.93$) and variable versus fixed tactics ($M = 3.85$), which would in turn indicate more exposure to individualized content tactics versus institutionalized content tactics (G. R. Jones, 1986).

Research Question 1b

To what extent were social tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

Items ID1 through ID5_R and SD1 through SD5_R addressed the area of social tactics (G. R. Jones, 1986). Social tactics are addressed by investiture versus divestiture and serial versus disjunctive tactics (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Items ID1 through ID5_R specifically addressed investiture versus divestiture tactics. Investiture tactics involve receiving positive social support from organizational insiders. Divestiture tactics involve little to no social support for newcomers.

Survey items SD1 through SD5_R addressed serial versus disjunctive tactics. Serial tactics provide opportunities for newcomers to engage with other organizational insiders in a role model-type experience. Disjunctive tactics provide no role model to the newcomers; thus, they are left to seek out information about their role on their own.

Sample items for this section included the following:

- I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in this organization (investiture vs. divestiture).
- My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to this organization (investiture vs. divestiture).
- Experienced organizational members see advising or training newcomers as one of their main job responsibilities in this organization (serial vs. disjunctive).
- I have been generally left alone to discover what my role should be in this organization (serial vs. disjunctive).

Table 5 shows the number of participants, range, mean, and standard deviation for investiture versus divestiture and serial versus disjunctive. A mean score of 5.16 was produced for investiture versus divestiture tactics. A mean score of 4.30 was produced for serial versus disjunctive tactics. Questions ID3_R, ID4_R, SD3_R, SD4_R and SD5_R were reverse-scored based on the original survey items developed by G. R. Jones (1986).

Table 5

K–12 Classified Employees—Organizational Socialization Survey of Social Tactics

Social tactics	Range	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Investiture versus divestiture	1–7	5.16	1.40	70
Serial versus disjunctive	1–7	4.30	1.46	70

A higher mean score for investiture versus divestiture would indicate that participants experienced more investiture tactics; therefore, their experience was on the institutionalized end of the socialization continuum. A lower mean score would indicate participants experienced more divestiture tactics; therefore, their experience was on the individualized end of the socialization continuum. In addition, a higher mean score on serial versus disjunctive tactics would indicate that participants experienced more serial tactics; therefore, their experience was on the institutionalized end of the socialization continuum. A lower mean score would indicate participants experienced more disjunctive tactics; therefore, their experience was on the individualized end of the socialization continuum.

Overall, study participants showed more experience with investiture tactics versus divestiture tactics ($M = 5.16$) and serial versus disjunctive tactics ($M = 4.30$), which

would in turn indicate more exposure to institutionalized social tactics versus individual social tactics (G. R. Jones, 1986).

Research Question 1c

To what extent were context tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

Research Question 1c was addressed by Items CI1 through CI5 and FI1 through FI5. These items focused on the context tactics described by G. R. Jones (1986). Specifically, this survey section addressed two organizational tactics proposed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979): collective versus individual and formal versus informal.

Items CI1 through CI5 addressed the collective versus individual organizational tactics. With collective tactics, new employees are provided a standard set of learning experiences with other new employees. These learning experiences are created to provide standardization to newcomers; thus, information communicated by the organization is consistent and provided in the same manner to all newcomers (G. R. Jones, 1986). Conversely, communication through individual tactics does not occur in a group of newcomers. Instead, information is provided individually, and newcomers are expected to learn on the job (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Items FI1 through FI5 addressed formal versus informal organizational tactics. Formal tactics allow newcomers to learn about their new roles apart from organizational insiders. This enables the organization to communicate information regarding the newcomer's role prior to engaging in the actual work. Informal tactics do not provide this type of intentional separation; instead, newcomers are expected to learn on the job.

G. R. Jones (1986) indicated that the combined use of collective and formal tactics during the organizational socialization process can increase "the degree to which newcomers will share common norms, values, and attitudes, and develop custodial orientations" (p. 264).

Sample items for this section included the following:

- In the first 6 months on the job, I was extensively involved with other new employees in common, job-related training activities (collective vs. individual).
- This organization puts all new employees through the same set of learning experience (collective vs. individual).
- I have been through a set of training experiences that are specifically designed to give new employees a thorough knowledge of job-related skills (formal vs. informal).
- Much of my job knowledge has been acquired informally on a trial-and-error basis (formal vs. informal).

Table 6 shows the number of participants, range, mean, and standard deviation for collective versus individual and formal versus informal. A mean score of 3.83 was produced for collective versus individual tactics. A mean score of 3.38 was produced for formal versus informal tactics. Questions CI4_R and FI_R were reverse-scored based on the original survey items developed by G. R. Jones (1986).

Table 6

K–12 Classified Employees—Organizational Socialization Survey of Context Tactics

Context tactics	Range	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Collective versus individual	1–7	3.83	1.32	70
Formal versus informal	1–7	3.38	1.03	70

A higher mean score for collective versus individual would indicate that participants experienced more collective tactics; therefore, their experience was on the institutionalized end of the socialization continuum. A lower mean score would suggest that participants experienced more individual tactics; therefore, their experience was on the individualized end of the socialization continuum. In addition, a higher mean score on informal versus formal tactics would indicate that participants experienced more formal tactics; therefore, their experience was on the institutionalized end of the socialization continuum. A lower mean score would indicate participants experienced more informal tactics; therefore, their experience was on the individualized end of the socialization continuum.

Overall, study participants showed more experience with individual tactics versus collective tactics ($M = 3.83$) and informal versus formal tactics ($M = 3.38$), which would in turn indicate more exposure to individualized context tactics versus institutionalized context tactics (G. R. Jones, 1986). This would suggest that, in terms of context tactics, study participants had a more individualized experience.

Qualitative Data Results

Phase 2 of this mixed methods study involved the collection of qualitative data. The data were collected through semistructured interviews conducted by the researcher

with eight survey respondents from Phase 1 of the study. Interviews were conducted via a web-conferencing platform, and audio was recorded for accuracy. Audio recordings were transcribed, and a copy of the transcript was sent to each participant to confirm its accuracy.

The researcher reviewed the transcripts and used qualitative coding methods to determine themes and patterns from the interviews. The interviews were coded using a software application (NVivo) to store and code the data. Through further analysis, the identified codes were grouped, based on frequency, to produce themes from the interviews.

To ensure the reliability of the qualitative data analysis for this study, an independent researcher was used to provide interrater reliability by coding 10% of the data collected during the qualitative phase of this mixed methods study. This allowed an increase in validity concerning the analysis process and findings by limiting researcher bias.

Research Question 2

To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment into their new role?

Research Question 2 was informed by three similar subresearch questions that addressed the perceived effectiveness of organizational socialization tactics in supporting three proximal outcomes: role clarity, task mastery, and social acceptance.

Research Question 2a

To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their role clarity?

The responses of the newly employed classified staff produced five themes related to Research Question 2a, shown in Table 7. The theme with the highest number of respondents (eight) and highest frequency (46) was lack of orientation or initial training. The theme with the lowest number of respondents (three) and a frequency of 10 was supportive colleagues.

Table 7

Perceived Effectiveness of Organizational Tactics Supporting Newcomer Role Clarity

Theme	Number of respondents	Frequency
Lack of orientation or initial training	8	46
Learn on the job	7	21
Learning by watching or asking others	5	9
Role ambiguity	4	21
Supportive colleagues	3	10

Lack of Orientation or Initial Training. All eight participants spoke about orientations or initial training programs. Although there was some indication of informal and unplanned orientations, all eight indicated that they did not experience a formal and intentional orientation of initial training. In addition, all eight participants indicated that an absence of a formal orientation or initial training was ineffective in supporting their role clarity. Through the interviews, participants indicated a desire for some type of initial training in a formal capacity. Participants identified the impact of an absence of formal orientation or initial training in the following areas: (a) unknown expectations for the role, (b) unknown procedures for the role, and (c) absence of a job description for the role.

Participant P085 referenced a lack of expectations stemming from an absence of training or orientation:

> This is what we want, we expect for you, this is what you need to be doing, how to lay it out for us, how to do examples of what we need to do, how to format the papers, how to do anything. None of that was provided at all.

Participant P085 continued, "It's like you're thrown to the wolves, and here you go, you figure it out. And I didn't like that feeling." Participant P079 referenced a lack of expectations: "Nobody's given me any training. It's very like, oh, you should just figure it out. Yeah, I'm my own island for sure."

Participant P079 stated that role clarity is "very trial and error … and I came in with 6 years of knowledge, so I am just kind of like, I'm trying to figure out the procedures here, kind of just on my own." Participant P079 added, "I would love information about that so we're all doing standard practices of procedures kind of thing." Participant P040 stated, "Since there's no SOPs [Standard Operating Procedures] in place, everybody kind of does [the role] different[ly]. … Actually get some SOPs in place so everybody's on the same page and there's no miscommunication, I think that would be highly benefi[cial]."

Four of the eight interview participants indicated that they did not receive a formal job description upon hire. Participant P087 indicated, "Job description itself the 1st day that would've been helpful." Participant P051 expressed that a lack of job description caused confusion about the role and that "having a job description [would] make it more black and white … what is my actual job."

Learn on the Job. Throughout the interviews, the theme of learning on the job emerged. Seven (88%) participants with a frequency response of 21 indicated that an informal learn-on-the-job model was in place during their 1st year of employment to assist in gaining role clarity. All seven respondents who referenced this type of experience indicated that it was ineffective in supporting their role clarity. Participants P093, P051, and P079 described the informal process of gaining role clarity as trial and error. Participant P079 discussed this trial-and-error process being used to learn the software crucial for the role: "I [had] no idea what I [was] doing. And they [were] just like, 'Just play around with it, you'll be okay, just click around.'" Participant P051spoke about the impact of an informal learn-as-you-go model: "Coming in as a new person and not knowing what certain acronyms mean and different things is kind of like trial by error … it doesn't make you feel very confident as a new employee."

Learning by Watching or Asking Others. A third theme that emerged during the interview concerning the perceived effectiveness of organizational tactics to support role clarity was the concept of learning by asking or watching others. Five of the eight interview participants indicated an informal process of learning about their role by asking or watching other colleagues.

Participant P093 spoke about the informal nature of learning about the role: "Most of the support that I got about understanding my role, I want to say, came from my peers, but they didn't come with any direction that they were to train me or anything like that." Participant P022 stated, "I feel like it was more of just the on-the-job training. So just learning how to do things from [how others] have done this before."

Role Ambiguity. Participants indicated that a consequence of ineffective practices, such as a lack of orientation or formal training and learn-as-you-go strategies, produced role ambiguity in newcomers. These ineffective practices led participants to express fear and frustration in knowing and understanding their role. Participant P085 stated that they were "second-guessing [themselves]" and asking, "Am I doing the right thing? Am I not getting in trouble? Am I doing it the legal way so I won't get in trouble?" Participant P051 stated that they "didn't know what the expectations were" and that they "didn't know what [was] correct, what [was] not correct" and that "[there are] still some things where [they are] still unsure [about] 10 months later." Participant P093 stated that they "had difficulties immersing [themselves] in [their] role" as a result of ineffective practices to support role clarity. Participant P079 expressed frustration with these ineffective practices: "Especially when I don't know what I'm doing. So I'm constantly like, oh, God, please don't mess up."

Supportive Colleague. Three (38%) of the eight participants sighted some level of interaction with a colleague that was effective in helping them achieve role clarity. Of the three participants who identified this, two indicated that the interactions were intentional and preplanned. Participant P017 pointed out that their manager provided specific information regarding their role in the organization. In addition, participant P017 stated that they were provided the opportunity to shadow two experienced colleagues who demonstrated "how to tackle some of the tasks and incidents that arise and [came] in and just gave [P017] an understanding of what [their] role would be." Participant P022 stated that they met with a manager on their 1st day and were provided information

concerning their role. P022 noted that the strategy "definitely was helpful because going into it, [I] didn't know much about the program or specifically what [I] would be doing."

Participant P051 also indicated the support of colleagues as an effective strategy for addressing role clarity but stated that it was informal and only occurred when they had a question about their role. P051 noted that their supervisor "is a good support in that she is always there to answer those questions, and she doesn't make you feel like you're bothering her if you come up with 10 million questions in a day."

Research Question 2b

To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their social acceptance?

The responses of the newly employed classified staff produced three themes related to Research Question 2b. The participant responses produced three themes as shown in Table 8. The theme with the highest number of respondents (seven) and highest frequency (30) was the absence of a formal introduction. The theme with the lowest number of respondents (three) and smallest frequency (five) was formal introduction after several weeks.

Table 8

Perceived Effectiveness of Organizational Tactics Supporting Social Acceptance

Theme	Number of respondents	Frequency
Absence of a formal introduction	7	30
Informal introduction	6	9
Formal introduction after several weeks	3	5

The Absence of a Formal Introduction. Seven of the eight interview participants indicated that the absence of a formal introduction to colleagues was ineffective in supporting their social acceptance during the 1st year of employment. Participant P079 stated, "You're on your own. So I've just kind of had to navigate that. And it's only now that I'm really learning everybody's name." P079 added, "I still don't know what everybody's job is." Participant P085 stated, "There wasn't any. When I first got there, I showed up and took the initiative. Basically, I went to the school and [introduced myself]." Participant P087 stated, "No, there wasn't like any opportunity for me to actually get to know [my colleagues]."

In addition, Participant P040 stated, "Well, there was no support. They didn't really like us being friendly with each other." Participant P040 added, "I personally had to go back and was like, sorry, what's your name again? What do you do? How long have you been here?"

Participant P085 spoke about why the absence of a formal introduction was ineffective: "[I] felt excluded from everything; basically, I felt like I wasn't welcomed and I didn't belong." Participant P093 expressed that it took time: "For me to warm up to people, for people to warm up to me. I know at the beginning, first couple months, I just take my lunch alone." Participant P087 stated,

> It would've been really helpful to kind of get to know the staff on like maybe the 1st or 2nd day or, and then to kind of like compared to how I had to do it, where it was like I kind of got to know them after being there for a while.

Informal Introduction. Although seven of the eight participants did not experience a formal introduction, six participants identified an informal introduction as something they experienced at the outset of employment and shared a similar experience during their first few days on the job. They experienced an informal introduction to individuals they would be working with or interacting with on a regular basis. The introductions were brief and unstructured. A common experience among the interview participants was being walked around their workspace by a colleague and being informally introduced to those present. Participants who had this experience did not indicate whether this tactic effectively supported their social acceptance during the 1st year of employment.

Formal Introduction After Several Weeks. Two of the eight participants indicated they received a formal introduction to colleagues, but this occurred several weeks after starting the position. They explained that they were formally introduced to their colleagues in a staff meeting by a higher level manager. Each participant responded differently to the effectiveness of this tactic in supporting social acceptance. Participant P093 indicated that the tactic was helpful: "It was a couple [of] months later. So, at that point, I had already gotten to know everybody, but it did help also." Participant P087 explained that a formal introduction was appreciated, but

"there wasn't like any opportunity for me to actually get to know them. It was more of, you know, me being introduced to them like, oh, hi, this is our new [staff member]."

Research Question 2c

To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their task mastery? The responses of the newly employed classified staff produced two themes related to Research Question 2c as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Perceived Effectiveness of Organizational Tactics Supporting Task Mastery

Theme	Number of respondents	Frequency
Absence of task information	7	30
Shadowing opportunities	4	6

Absence of Task Information. Seven of the eight participants, with a frequency of 27, expressed an absence of task information as ineffective in supporting their task mastery during the 1st year of employment. Through the interviews, participants cited instances during their 1st year of employment in which they faced challenges and failures that, from their perspective, could have been avoided had they been provided accurate task information. Participants P085, P079, P017, and P051 spoke of instances in which they found out about a report or project deadlines just days before they were due. In each instance, they described the negative feelings that came with this absence of task information.

Participant P079 spoke of feeling unaware of critical task functions that resulted in significant errors and missing information on a report for the State of California. Participant P051 described an instance in which significant errors concerning payroll could have been avoided if proper task information had been provided. Participant P051 explained how task information would have helped in this situation:

> I think it would help me greatly, just because that's the way that I learn by number one, let me know what it is, show me how to do it, let me see it, and then let me do it for myself. But if you explain it to me, and then I can kind of process it.

Shadowing Opportunity. The opportunity, or lack of opportunity, to shadow a colleague was another theme from the interviews. Four of the eight participants spoke of shadowing opportunities, three of whom saw a lack of opportunity as ineffective in helping to achieve mastery, and one cited the presence of shadowing as effective. In response to Interview Question 10, "If you were not provided information regarding the tasks you were to perform, would you have liked to receive this information, and would it have been helpful for you in understanding your role in the organization?," Participants P079, P087, and P040 indicated the desire for an opportunity to shadow another colleague to help support their task mastery. Each suggested that given this opportunity, they could have been more effective in supporting their overall task mastery during the 1st year of employment.

Summary

This mixed methods study aimed to identify to what extent newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational

tactics (content, context, and social) to support their socialization process during the 1st year of employment (G. R. Jones, 1986). In addition, this study aimed to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization in their new role (role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery). Through a mixed methods design, this study administered a quantitative instrument to 70 participants to discover the degree to which newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations experienced organization tactics, specifically content, context, and social tactics. Following the survey, eight participants were randomly selected from the pool of consenting survey participants to engage in qualitative semistructured interviews. Interview participants were asked a series of questions to elicit their perception of the effectiveness of their district's organizational tactics in supporting the adjustment into their new role. Chapter IV provided the purpose of the study, methodology, and quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Chapter V presents a summary of major findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Chapter V summarizes the purpose, research questions, methodology, data collection procedures, and the population sample. The demographic data of the 70 newly employed K–12 classified staff who participated in the study are also reiterated. In addition, the chapter presents major findings and conclusions. Chapter V concludes with implications for action, recommendations for further research, and closing remarks and reflections.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify to what extent newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational tactics (content, context, and social) to support their socialization process during the 1st year of employment (G. R. Jones, 1986). In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization to their new role (role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery).

Research Questions

1. To what extent were organizational tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
    a. To what extent were content tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

b. To what extent were social tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

c. To what extent were context tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

2. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment into their new role?

   a. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their role clarity?

   b. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their social acceptance?

   c. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their task mastery?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

Because of the nature of the study and the research questions posed by the researcher, a sequential explanatory mixed methods design was used. This included the collection of quantitative data followed by the collection of qualitative data.

A nonexperimental design was selected for the quantitative portion of this mixed methods research study to demonstrate to what extent organizational tactics were experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process. A phenomenological design was used to

collect qualitative data. Survey participants who agreed to participate in follow-up interviews were randomly selected. These semistructured interviews and questions were designed to elicit the perceived effectiveness of organizational tactics used by school districts to support newly employed classified staff's adjustment to their new role.

Population

Newly employed classified staff members in K–12 public school districts in California made up the population of this study. For this study, newly employed classified staff members were employees who had been employed by their school district for more than 3 months but less than 2 years. According to the CDE (n.d.), classified employees are "employees of a school, district, or county office of education who are in a position not requiring certification" and "include paraprofessionals, office/clerical staff, as well as other classified staff, such as custodians, bus drivers, and business managers" (para. 1). At the time of this study, no publicly available database existed that reported the number of newly employed classified employees in California K–12 public schools. However, according to the most recent data available from the CDE, California K–12 public schools employ 282,800 full-time classified employees.

Sample

For the quantitative portion of this mixed methods study, the researcher engaged four school districts in Southern California and requested the opportunity to survey all newly employed classified staff members hired in the past 2 years. The researcher used purposive sampling. Participants were identified based on the following criteria:

- They were employed in public school districts in Southern California.
- They were employed as classified staff members as defined by the CDE.

- They were employed for more than 3 months but less than 2 years.

The qualitative phase of this sequential, explanatory mixed methods study used interviews to determine the degree to which newly employed classified staff perceived the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment into their new role. For the qualitative portion of the study, random sampling was used. A question on the quantitative survey asked participants to indicate whether they would be willing to participate further in the interviews. From those affirmative answers, the researcher used random sampling to identify 10 participants to include in the qualitative interviews.

Major Findings

Major Finding 1

Research Question 1a asked, "To what extent were content tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?" This research question guided the researcher to understand the degree to which newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts experienced content tactics to support organizational socialization. Scales developed by G. R. Jones (1986) were used to determine whether the content tactics experienced were more individualized or institutionalized. Specifically, scales addressing sequential versus random tactics and fixed versus variable tactics were used. Higher mean scores for these scales indicate more experience with sequential and fixed tactics, which in turn demonstrate more experience with institutionalized tactics. Lower mean scores for these scales indicate more experience with random and variable tactics, which in turn demonstrate more experience with individualized tactics.

According to the data collected during the quantitative phase of this study concerning content tactics, study participants experienced more individualized content tactics than institutionalized content tactics. This finding is supported by low mean scores for sequential versus random tactics ($M = 3.93$) and fixed versus variable tactics ($M = 3.85$).

This finding would suggest that newly employed classified staff experience random and variable tactics providing little information on the sequence and timeline of socialization processes. This lack of information and timeline can lead to increased uncertainty and stress (G. R. Jones, 1986). Results of this study indicated that newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts are presented with unclear expectations and ambiguous processes during the 1st year of employment.

Major Finding 2

Research Question 1b asked, "To what extent were social tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?" This research question guided the researcher to understand the degree to which newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts experienced social tactics to support organizational socialization. Scales developed by G. R. Jones (1986) were used to determine whether the social tactics experienced were more individualized or institutionalized. Specifically, scales addressing investiture versus divestiture tactics and serial versus disjunctive tactics were used. Higher mean scores for these scales indicate more experience with investiture and serial tactics, which in turn demonstrate more experience with institutionalized tactics. Lower mean scores for these

scales indicate more experience with divestiture and disjunctive tactics, which in turn demonstrate more experience with individualized tactics.

According to the data collected during the quantitative phase of this study concerning social tactics, study participants experienced more institutionalized social tactics than individualized social tactics. This was seen more in investiture versus divestiture tactics ($M = 5.16$). Serial versus disjunctive tactics ($M = 4.30$) produced a mean score lower than investiture versus divestiture but is still considered high on the continuum.

This finding would suggest that newly employed classified staff experience high levels of investiture tactics during the 1st year of employment. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) described investiture tactics as those that view the unique characteristics brought by the new employee as valuable and viable. In addition, investiture tactics involve receiving positive social support from veteran employees. This is consistent with qualitative data collected through semistructured interviews in which participants pointed to the support of other colleagues in encouraging their role clarity. These findings suggest that newly employed classified staff feel valued by their organizations during the 1st year of employment. Ashforth, Sluss, and Saks (2007) found that investiture tactics were directly related to job satisfaction.

Although newly employed classified staff in this study demonstrated high levels of investiture tactics, serial tactics were experienced less often. Serial tactics provide opportunities for newcomers to engage with other organizational insiders in a role model-type experience. This would suggest that although newly employed classified staff feel

support from the organization, specifically from veteran employees, they are less often provided formal opportunities to engage in a mentor–mentee relationship.

Major Finding 3

Research Question 1c asked, "To what extent were context tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?" This research question guided the researcher to understand the degree to which newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts experienced context tactics to support organizational socialization. Scales developed by G. R. Jones (1986) were used to determine whether the context tactics experienced were more individualized or institutionalized. More specifically, scales addressing collective versus individual tactics and formal versus informal tactics were used. Higher mean scores for these scales indicate more experience with collective and formal tactics, which in turn demonstrate more experience with institutionalized tactics. Lower mean scores for these scales indicate more experience with individual and informal tactics, which in turn demonstrate more experience with individualized tactics.

According to the data collected during the quantitative phase of this study concerning context tactics, study participants experienced more individualized context tactics than institutionalized context tactics. This finding is supported by low mean scores for collective versus individual tactics ($M = 3.83$) and formal versus informal tactics ($M = 3.38$).

Individual tactics are generally unique to the new employee and experienced in isolation from other new employees (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This experience is the opposite of collective tactics, in which new employees are grouped together to engage

in learning experiences before starting their daily work. This would indicate that newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts are less likely to experience situations in which they learn alongside other new employees before beginning their day-to-day activities.

This finding also demonstrates higher levels of experience with informal tactics. In experiencing high levels of informal tactics, information is communicated individually, and new employees are expected to learn on the job (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This would indicate that newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts are more likely to experience tactics that provide information informally and experience situations in which formal training is unavailable. Instead, newly employed classified staff are more likely to experience tactics that promote learning on the job. This finding is also supported by qualitative data collected during interviews with participants. Interview participants identified a lack of formal orientation or training as a tactic that did not support them during the 1st year of employment. In addition, seven of the eight interview participants experienced learn-as-you-go methods during the 1st year of employment.

Major Finding 4

Research Question 2a asked, "To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their role clarity?" This research question guided the researcher to understand the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw organizational socialization tactics as effective in supporting their role clarity. Data were collected through semistructured interviews conducted with eight participants who also engaged in the quantitative portion of the study. Through a series of questions to elicit the perceived effectiveness of organizational

socialization tactics on their role clarity, participants indicated that, overall, tactics used by K–12 school districts were ineffective in supporting their role clarity. More specifically, the qualitative data show that participants experienced high levels of role ambiguity because of the organizational socialization tactics used by K–12 school districts. This finding is supported by the qualitative data gathered during the interviews.

At its most basic, role clarity is clearly understanding one's organizational role. This involves understanding the tasks, priorities, and time allocation needed to be performed by the newcomer (Bauer et al., 2007). Several studies have identified role clarity for new employees as a proximal outcome of the organizational socialization process that has been shown to reduce uncertainty and role ambiguity (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; G. R. Jones, 1986; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Saks et al., 2007). The findings from this study demonstrate a lack of role clarity for newly employed classified staff in K–12 school districts and higher levels of role ambiguity brought on by a lack of initial training or orientation and learn-as-you-go tactics used by K–12 organizations.

A lack of initial training or orientation was a significant contributor to participants' role ambiguity. Of the coded data for Research Question 2a, 43% was categorized in the theme of lack of initial training or orientation. Seven of the eight interview participants pointed to a lack of initial training as a contributing factor to uncertainty and role ambiguity during the 1st year of employment.

Major Finding 5

Research Question 2b asked, "To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their social

acceptance?" This research question guided the researcher to understand the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw organizational socialization tactics as effective in supporting their social acceptance. Data were collected through semistructured interviews conducted with eight participants who also engaged in the quantitative portion of the study. Through a series of questions to elicit the perceived effectiveness of organizational socialization tactics on their social acceptance, participants indicated that, overall, tactics used by K–12 school districts were ineffective in supporting their social acceptance.

Social acceptance is the extent to which the newcomer feels "a part of, and integrated into, the social fabric of the environment" (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 314). Bauer et al. (2007) suggested that this integration can be achieved when organizations use social tactics. Social tactics, specifically investiture and serial tactics, involve intentional actions by the organization or organizational insiders to provide social support to new employees. Quantitative results of this study demonstrated higher levels of investiture tactics and moderately high levels of serial tactics. However, the qualitative data collected indicate a lack of intentional organizational tactics used to support newly employed classified staff.

Major Finding 6

Research Question 2c asked, "To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their task mastery?" This research question guided the researcher to understand the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw organizational socialization tactics as effective in supporting their task mastery. Data were collected through semistructured interviews

conducted with eight participants who also engaged in the quantitative portion of the study. Through a series of questions to elicit the perceived effectiveness of organizational socialization tactics on their task mastery, participants indicated that, overall, tactics used by K–12 school districts were ineffective in supporting their task mastery.

Task mastery is defined as "learning the tasks of the new job, and also gaining self-confidence and attaining consistently positive performance levels" (Feldman, 1981, p. 310). Task mastery during the 1st year of employment has been shown to reduce stress and strain on new employees (Frögéli et al., 2022). Although this study was not to examine whether or not participants achieved task mastery during the 1st year of employment, it did examine the perceived effectiveness of organizational tactics in supporting new employees' task mastery. For Research Question 2c, 83% of the coded data had the theme of absence of task information. Participants reported instances of unnecessary stress related to a lack of task information. This stress could have been avoided had they been provided with necessary task information beforehand.

This perceived ineffectiveness of organizational tactics to support task mastery may be related to Major Finding 1. Lapointe et al. (2014) explained that organizations using fixed and sequential tactics provide opportunities for new employees to understand better the path of activities that lead to task mastery and thus reduce anxiety and uncertainty regarding role tasks. Major Finding 1 demonstrated that study participants experienced more variable and random tactics than fixed and sequential tactics.

Conclusions

The results of the study, coupled with the major findings, produced several conclusions that provide a deeper understanding of the organizational socialization tactics

experienced by newly employed classified staff and their perception concerning the effectiveness of these tactics to support their role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery. The conclusions of the study align with the aforementioned major findings and are discussed in the next sections.

Conclusion 1

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations experience individualized content tactics more often than institutionalized content tactics, which tends to be random and variable and can lead to increased uncertainty and stress for newly employed classified staff. This is supported by the quantitative data showing lower mean scores for two of the six scales developed by G. R. Jones (1986): sequential versus random ($M = 3.93$) and fixed versus variable ($M = 3.85$). The data suggest that newly employed classified employees face more variable and random tactics that provide little structured guidance in how they will progress through the initial stages of their employment. With this lack of guidance, newly employed classified staff are more likely to face uncertainty and stress concerning their new role.

Conclusion 2

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations experience institutionalized social tactics more often than individualized social tactics; however, the tactics experienced are not necessarily formalized but the result of other circumstances. This is supported by the quantitative data collected concerning two of the six scales developed by G. R. Jones (1986): investiture versus divestiture ($M = 5.16$) and serial versus disjunctive ($M = 4.30$). The data suggest that newly employed classified staff feel valued by their colleagues and

organization during the 1st year of employment. This is seen through the high mean score concerning investiture versus divestiture tactics. In addition, newly employed classified staff are more likely to have someone in the organization to provide mentoring support. This is seen through the mean score for serial versus disjunctive.

Although the mean score for serial versus disjunctive is considered high, the data may be slightly misleading. Serial tactics are tactics in which "experienced organizational members act as role models for new recruits" (G. R. Jones, 1986, p. 265). On the other hand, disjunctive tactics are those in which new employees "must develop their own definitions of situations because no other or prior role incumbents are available" (G. R. Jones, 1986, p. 265). The data from the quantitative survey would suggest that serial tactics are used by K–12 organizations; however, this is not consistent with the findings of the qualitative portion of the study.

According to the qualitative data collected, study participants experienced situations in which veteran colleagues informally took on the mentor role. However, in some cases, study participants felt isolated and were not provided even informal opportunities to learn from colleagues.

Conclusion 3

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations experience individualized context more than institutionalized context tactics. K–12 organizations do not consistently provide institutionalized context tactics to support new classified staff during the 1st year of employment. This is supported by the quantitative data showing low mean scores for two of the six scales developed by G. R. Jones (1986): collective versus individual (M = 3.83) and formal

versus informal (M = 3.38). The data suggest that newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations experience more individual and informal tactics that provide little to no opportunity to learn about one's role in the organization before starting the work. Thus, classified staff in K–12 organizations are more likely to learn on the job through trial-and-error methods. In addition, classified employees in K–12 organizations are more likely not to experience formal training during the 1st year of employment.

Conclusion 4

Based on the study findings, the researcher concludes that newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations do not perceive organizational tactics used by their school districts as effectively supporting their role clarity during the 1st year of employment. This is due to a lack of initial training or orientation, learning about one's role on the job, and learning by watching others. These factors lead to a lack of clear expectations and knowledge concerning organizational practices and procedures. This further contributes to increased role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is the lack of role clarity. This is supported by the qualitative data collected.

Role clarity is clearly understanding one's role within an organization. Role clarity has been shown to reduce stress and uncertainty among new employees. As a proximal outcome of the organizational socialization process, role clarity contributes to distal outcomes, including positive citizenship behavior in organizations (Adil et al., 2023), better job performance and satisfaction (Brief et al., 1979; House & Rizzo, 1972), and a reduction in an employee's intent to leave the organization (Bauer et al., 2007).

The results of this study demonstrated that study participants perceived organizational tactics used by their districts as experiencing a lack of role clarity and, thus, increased role ambiguity.

Conclusion 5

Based on the study findings, the researcher concludes that newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations do not perceive organizational tactics used by their school districts as effectively supporting their social acceptance during the 1st year of employment. Although informal social interactions occurred during the first few days of employment, study participants were not provided formal introductions or the ability to get to know their colleagues in a formal setting. The proximal outcome, social acceptance, has been shown to lead to further distal outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and a reduction in turnover (Bauer et al., 2007). These distal outcomes benefit both the new employee and the organization and provide merit to the organization's need to consider organizational socialization tactics that support a new employee's social acceptance. While this study aimed not to determine whether or not study participants experienced social acceptance during the 1st year of employment, it was the study's design to determine the effectiveness of the organizational tactics used by districts to support newly employed classified staff to support their social acceptance.

Conclusion 6

Based on the study findings, the researcher concludes that newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations do not perceive organizational tactics used by their school districts as effectively supporting their task mastery during the 1st year of

employment. The qualitative portion of this study identified the following contributing factors: an absence of task information and lack of shadowing opportunities. Task mastery is seen as a proximal outcome of the organizational socialization process and has been shown to support new employees in reducing uncertainty, anxiety, and stress (Frögéli et al., 2022; Lapointe et al., 2014). The absence of resources and tactics supporting task mastery for newly employed classified staff can negatively impact the new employee and the organization. This negative impact was demonstrated through the qualitative interviews in which study participants indicated high-stress levels during the 1st year of employment due to the lack of resources and tactics to support their task mastery.

Implications for Action

The mission of K–12 school districts in California is to provide high-quality public education for their students. The staff who support the district's day-to-day function play a critical role in achieving this mission. More specifically, classified staff in school districts ensure the effective and efficient running of the organization so that this mission can be fulfilled. To recruit, train, and retain high-quality, classified staff, K–12 school districts need to examine the role and benefits of the organization socialization process.

The literature demonstrated that outcomes related to organizational socialization, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, reduction of turnover, and performance, can benefit both the organization and the newcomer (Ashford & Black, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). These outcomes, coupled with the

crucial role of classified staff, provide an urgency for K–12 school districts to attend to the organizational socialization of their nonteaching staff.

This study provided findings and conclusions that can assist K–12 classified employees, district human resource professionals, and employ advocacy groups to better understand the impact of organizational socialization on newly employed classified staff. The following implications for action are explicitly aimed at school districts and the human resources professionals who support them.

Implication for Action 1

Based on the findings and conclusion presented in this study, newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations are more likely to experience individualized content tactics than institutionalized content tactics. Despite the evidence demonstrating the benefits for both the new employee and the organization, K–12 school districts do not use institutionalized content tactics to support newly employed classified staff. To provide guidance and structure to newly employed classified staff and to reduce their uncertainty and stress, K–12 organizations must examine their current practices related to content tactics. Content tactics that provide intentional support to newly employed classified staff would fall into fixed and sequential tactics. Through these tactics, K–12 organizations can provide newly employed classified staff opportunities to better understand the steps in learning their new role and the sequence in which that learning will occur. This intentional work on the part of the organization can also contribute to increased task mastery and reduce uncertainty for the new employee.

Implication for Action 2

The study's findings and conclusions showed the use of institutionalized social tactics by K–12 organizations to support newly employed classified staff. Furthermore, it was shown that these tactics were not necessarily used intentionally. The literature review showed that the intentional use of social tactics, specifically investiture and serial tactics, lead to proximal outcomes, such as increased social acceptance and role clarity. Thus, K–12 organizations must examine their current practices to identify what intentional social tactics are being used to support newly employed classified staff. If no such practice exists, K–12 organizations should explore implementing intentional tactics such as mentor–mentee programs that pair veteran organizational members with new employees to assist in guiding them to assume their new roles. Such programs currently exist for certificated members of K-12 organizations in California through the Beginning Teachers Support and Assessment (BTSA) program. K-12 organizations must consider similar programs to support newly employed classified staff members.

Implication for Action 3

The findings and conclusions of the study point to a lack of institutionalized context tactics used by K–12 school districts to support newly classified staff during the 1st year of employment. Despite the overwhelming evidence that such intentional tactics have positive benefits for both the new employee and the organization, the intentional use of such tactics is absent. To better support newly employed classified staff during the 1st year of employment, K–12 school districts must consider the benefit of institutionalized context tactics, explicitly focusing on collective and formal tactics. These tactics call for opportunities to provide training to new employees prior to starting their positions

separately from organizational veterans. Although implementing this recommendation will require K–12 organizations to allocate more funding to support newly employed classified staff, the long-term benefit will likely outweigh the cost of implementing such tactics.

Implication for Action 4

The qualitative results of this study demonstrated that newly employed K–12 classified staff do not see organizational tactics used by school districts as effective in supporting their role clarity. This study showed that organizational tactics lead to role ambiguity during the 1st year of employment. To better support role clarity, K–12 organizations must examine their current practices related to onboarding or initial training of new classified staff. Based on the qualitative data, a lack of initial training or orientation was the most significant barrier to role clarity. To remedy this issue, K–12 organizations must begin implementing basic orientation processes that provide critical information for newly employed classified staff. As these processes become more formalized, K–12 organizations should offer more specific training opportunities tailored to specific job classifications to provide role clarity to newly employed classified staff.

Implication for Action 5

The qualitative results related to social acceptance demonstrated that newly employed classified staff do not perceive their district organizational tactics as effective in supporting their social acceptance. The results showed that informal social tactics are used by K–12 organizations to support their newly employed classified staff. However, these are not perceived as effective. To better support social acceptance among newly employed classified staff, school districts must implement common expectations between

schools and departments concerning formal introductions of new staff and intentional opportunities for new staff to engage with existing employees socially.

Implication for Action 6

According to the qualitative results of this study, newly employed K–12 classified employees did not perceive organizational tactics used by their organizations as effective to support their task mastery. Study participants indicated that a lack of task information negatively contributed to their sense of task mastery and, in turn, caused undue stress and anxiety during the 1st year of employment. Despite the benefits of task mastery among newly employed staff, K–12 organizations do not intentionally use organizational socialization tactics to support such mastery. To better support newly employed classified staff, K–12 organizations must examine how task information is communicated and whether it is consistent throughout the organization. Human resource professionals in K–12 organizations should work with other organizational leaders to produce resources to support task mastery for newly employed classified staff. These resources could include but would not be limited to training manuals, process and procedure documentation, additional job aides, interactive videos or coursework, and training opportunities. These resources might not ensure task mastery among newly employed classified staff but would provide the necessary tools to increase the likelihood of task mastery.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations for further research are proposed. To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study in the area of organizational socialization that focuses explicitly on newly employed classified staff in K–12 organizations. Based on this, broader and more in-depth research is needed to

understand organizational socialization in K–12 public institutions better. The seven recommendations are intended to expand the body of knowledge concerning organizational socialization, specifically in K–12 organizations.

Recommendation 1: Broader Sample

It is recommended that a future study be conducted with a larger sample to confirm the quantitative results of this study. Although this study's sample focused on newly employed classified staff in four school districts in Riverside County, California, it would be pertinent to expand the sample to more districts within the county or across multiple counties in the state. This study included 70 participants who completed the quantitative portion.

Recommendation 2: Impact of Organizational Socialization Tactics

It is recommended that a future study be conducted to examine the relationship between the organizational tactics used by K–12 school districts and the proximal outcomes of role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery. This study focused on the degree to which newly employed classified staff experienced organizational tactics, specifically content, social, and context tactics. A future study should look beyond the degree to which these tactics were experienced and examine the degree to which these tactics impact both proximal and distal outcomes of the organizational socialization process.

Recommendation 3: Perceptions of the Organization

It is recommended that a future study be conducted that focuses on the perception of organizational leaders, namely human resource professionals, to examine their perspective concerning the organization's use of socialization tactics with newly

employed classified staff. This study examined the perception of newly employed classified staff concerning the organizational tactics used by school districts to support their role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery.

Recommendation 4: Focus on Certificated and Management Staff

It is recommended that a future study be conducted to replicate this study's methodology and data collection with K–12 certificated staff or with K–12 management, specifically focusing on the organizational socialization process in K–12 organizations. This study specifically examined the experience of newly employed K–12 classified staff to add to the existing body of knowledge concerning organizational socialization and the tactics used in this process.

Recommendation 5: Replicate Study in Different Geographic Regions

It is recommended to replicate the study in Northern California versus Southern California. This study focused specifically on Riverside County, California. Expanding the study into other regions in California might reveal whether any variation between regions exists concerning the organizational socialization process in K–12 organizations. Although this study did not focus on demographic differences among participants, it would be interesting to examine if replicating the study in another region with different demographics would impact the results.

Recommendation 6: Comparative Analysis Among School Districts

It is recommended that a future study examine organizational tactics used by school districts and their perceived effectiveness with further analysis examining any differences among the school districts. This study did not run a comparative analysis among the participating school districts. A future study could run a comparative analysis

among school districts to examine whether any significant difference exists. A future study could also use different qualitative measures to examine those differences further.

Recommendation 7: Comparative Analysis Among Job Classifications

It is recommended to conduct a future study that could run a design similar to this study but run a comparative analysis of job classifications. This would help uncover what difference exists, if any, in experience and perception of organizational tactics among classified job classifications. The current study did not examine comparisons among different job classifications concerning the organizational socialization tactics experienced and the perceived effectiveness of those tactics.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

K–12 organizations in California and throughout the nation share a common goal of providing a high-quality education to Grades K–12 students. As with most organizations, public K–12 schools and districts depend on the human capital that makes up their organization: teachers to deliver instruction in the classroom, counselors to assist students with academic and social-emotional guidance, and principals and managers to provide guidance and leadership to ensure the organization's mission is achieved. In addition, classified employees are present to provide the necessary support in running the critical components of the organization; nutrition services workers to plan, prepare, deliver, and serve healthy meals to students; maintenance works to ensure that critical infrastructure, such as water and electricity, is in place and functioning; custodial staff to provide clean and healthy environments for students; and information technology staff to provide support to ensure that computers, phones, and network infrastructure are working

properly. A long list of additional classified positions are needed to ensure schools and districts are running effectively and efficiently.

K–12 organizations desire to employ the best and most effective employees to provide the best possible environment for students to learn. The hiring, training, and retaining of high-quality staff is a critical function of a school district. Without a focus on these crucial elements, a school or district would be hard-pressed to hire the best employees and ensure they remain with the organization. This critical function has become more challenging for the U.S. labor force since the COVID-19 pandemic. Fluctuations in the labor market have created more competition for workers. Companies and organizations in all sectors are searching for ways to engage new employees and ensure they become high-functioning members of the organization.

Because of this increased competition, schools and districts must make a concerted effort to attract, hire, train, and retain high-quality staff. Thus, it is increasingly vital for K–12 organizations to consider the organizational socialization process and its impact on new employees. Based on the findings of this study, it is apparent that the organizational socialization process has not been a priority of K–12 organizations, specifically in terms of newly employed classified staff.

This study examined the organizational socialization landscape of K–12 organizations, specifically focusing on the experience of classified staff and their perception of organizational tactics. The researcher hopes this study will be the first of many such studies that focus on the organizational socialization process in K–12 organizations. To ensure that schools and districts hire and retain the best, it is crucial that the organizational socialization process continue to be examined in terms of K–12

organizations. A school or district is only as successful as the human capital it relies on to make it function. Without high-quality staff and the proper resources to support them during their tenure, especially in the 1st year of employment, schools and districts will be hard-pressed to achieve their mission of providing high-quality education to all students.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Jones' (1986) Scales Measuring Socialization Tactics

Scales Measuring Socialization Tactics

Collective versus individual:

CI1 In the last six months, I have been extensively involved with other new recruits in common, job related training activities.
CI2 Other newcomers have been instrumental in helping me to understand my job requirements.
CI3 This organization puts all newcomers through the same set of learning experiences.
CI4 Most of my training has been carried out apart from other newcomers. (R)
CI5 There is a sense of "being in the same boat" amongst newcomers in this organization.

Formal versus informal:

FI1 I have been through a set of training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of job related skills.
FI2 During my training for this job I was normally physically apart from regular organizational members.
FI3 I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods.
FI4 Much of my job knowledge has been acquired informally on a trial and error basis. (R)
FI5 I have been very aware that I am seen as "learning the ropes" in this organization.

Investiture versus divestiture:

ID1 I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in this organization.
ID2 Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me personally.
ID3 I have had to change my attitudes and values to be accepted in this organization. (R)
ID4 My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to this organization.
ID5 I feel that experienced organizational members have held me at a distance until I conform to their expectations. (R)

Sequential versus random:

SR1 There is a clear pattern in the way one role leads to another or one job assignment leads to another in this organization.
SR2 Each stage of the training process has, and will, expand and build upon the job knowledge gained during the preceeding stages of the process.
SR3 The movement from role to role and function to function to build up experience and a track record is very apparent in this organization.
SR4 This organization does not put newcomers through an identifiable sequence of learning experiences. (R)
SR5 The steps in the career ladder are clearly specified in this organization.

Serial versus disjunctive:

SD1 Experienced organizational members see advising or training newcomers as one of their main job responsibilities in this organization.
SD2 I am gaining a clear understanding of my role in this organization from observing my senior colleagues.
SD3 I have received little guidance from experienced organizational members as to how I should perform my job. (R)
SD4 I have little or no access to people who have previously performed my role in this organization. (R)
SD5 I have been generally left alone to discover what my role should be in this organization. (R)

Fixed versus variable:

FV1 I can predict my future career path in this organization by observing other people's experiences.
FV2 I have a good knowledge of the time it will take me to go through the various stages of the training process in this organization.
FV3 The way in which my progress through this organization will follow a fixed timetable of events has been clearly communicated to me.
FV4 I have little idea when to expect a new job assignment or training exercise in this organization. (R)

FV5 Most of my knowledge of what may happen to me in the future comes informally, through the grapevine, rather than through regular organizational channels. (R)

APPENDIX B

Field-Test Participants Feedback

While conducting the interview, the interviewer should take notes of their clarification request or comments about not being clear about the question. After you complete the interview ask your field test interviewee the following clarifying questions. **Try not to make it another interview; just have a friendly conversation**. Either script or record their feedback so you can compare with the other two members of your team to develop your feedback report on how to improve the interview questions.

1. How did you feel about the interview? Do you think you had ample opportunities to describe yourself?
2. Did you feel the amount of time for the interview was ok? Was the pace okay?
3. Were the questions by and large clear or were there places where you were uncertain what was being asked?
4. Can you recall any words or terms being asked about during the interview that were confusing?
5. And finally, did I appear comfortable during the interview?

APPENDIX C

Interview Feedback Reflection Questions for Both the Interviewer and the Observer

Conducting interviews is a learned skill and research experience. Gaining valuable insight about your interview skills and their affect with the interview will support your data gathering when interviewing the actual participants. Complete the form independently from each other, then discuss your responses. Sharing your thoughts will provide valuable insight into improving the interview process.

1. How long did the interview take? Did the time seem to be appropriate? Did the respondents have ample opportunities to respond to questions?

2. Were the questions clear or were there places where the interviewees were unclear?

3. Were there any words or terms used during the interview that were unclear or confusing to the interviewees?

4. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous? For the observer: How did the interviewer appear during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous?

5. Did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared? For the observer: From your observation did the interviewer appear prepared to conduct the interview?

6. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that was the case?

7. What parts of the interview seemed to struggle and why do you think that was the case?

8. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be and how would you change it?

9. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

10. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be and how would you change it?

11. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol and Questions

Hi, my name is Steven Dunlap, and I am a doctoral candidate at UMass Global in the area of Organizational Leadership.

First and foremost, I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Your answers will help fill a gap in research concerning the organizational socialization of K-12 classified employees

I am conducting a study to better understand the organizational socialization experience of newly employed K-12 classified employees. I am especially interested in hearing about the support that was provided to you by your school district after you were hired. Additionally, I want to understand how those supports contributed to your adjustment to your new role.

I am conducting 10 interviews with newly employed K-12 classified employees like yourself. The information you provide will help to inform school district leaders across the State of California on how to best support newly employed classified staff in California K-12 school districts.

I will be reading most of what I say. The reason for this is to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating school social workers will be conducted in the most similar manner possible.

Informed Consent (required for Dissertation Research)

I would like to remind you that any information obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported without reference to any individual(s) or any institution(s). After I record and transcribe the data, I will send it to you via electronic mail to check that I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas.

You received the Informed Consent and UMass Global Bill of Rights in an email and responded with your approval to participate in the interview. Before we start, do you have any questions or need clarification about either document?

We have scheduled an hour for the interview. At any point during the interview, you may ask that I skip a particular question or stop the interview altogether. However, I will record our conversation as indicated in the Informed Consent to ease our discussion and accuracy.

Prior to this interview, you received information concerning the purpose of the research, a copy of the interview questions, a copy of the definitions key terms including Jones (1986) Socialization Scale, Role Clarity, Task Mastery, and Social Acceptance, the UMass Global's Participant's Bill of Rights, and the Informed Consent

form. After reviewing the protocols, you were offered an opportunity to ask questions concerning the research and the consent process. At that time, you provided verbal consent to be a participant in the interview. For purposes of verifying your consent, would you again provide a verbal yes as to your consent that will be included in the recording of this interview? Thank you.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Let us get started then, and thank you again for your time.

Interview Questions

Role Clarity

1. Please describe your role in the district. What were you hired to do?
2. Please describe your experience during the first year of employment concerning the support you received from the district in understanding the role you were hired to fulfill.
3. Did anyone in the organization provide you with specific information regarding the role you were hired to assume? If so, who provided this information, and how was this information communicated?
4. If you were provided information regarding the role you were hired to assume, was this information helpful to you or not? Please explain.
5. If you were not provided information regarding the role you were hired to assume, would you have liked to receive this information, and would it have

been helpful for you in understanding your role in the organization? Please explain.

Task Mastery

6. Please describe some of the major tasks you perform in your current role.
7. Please describe your experience during the first year of employment concerning the support you received from the district in understanding the tasks involved in your job.
8. Did anyone in the organization provide you with specific information regarding the tasks you were to perform in your new role? If so, who provided this information, and how was this information communicated?
9. If you were provided information regarding the tasks you were to perform, was this information helpful to you or not? Please explain.
10. If you were not provided information regarding the tasks you were to perform, would you have liked to receive this information, and would it have been helpful for you in understanding your role in the organization? Please explain.

Social Acceptance

11. Please describe your experience during the first year of employment concerning the support you received from the district concerning getting to know your colleagues and others in the organization.

12. Did anyone in the organization provide you with opportunities to get to know your colleagues or others in the organization?
13. If you were provided opportunities to get to know your colleagues or others in the organization, were these opportunities helpful to you or not? Please explain.
14. If you were not provided opportunities to get to know your colleagues or others in the organization, would you have liked to receive these opportunities, and would it have been helpful for you feel? Please explain.

APPENDIX E

Alignment of Interview Questions and Research Questions

Research Study Title

The Organizational Socialization of K-12 Classified Employees

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify to what extent newly employed classified staff in K-12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational tactics (content, context, social) to support their socialization process during the first year of employment (Jones, 1986). Additionally, it was the purpose of this study to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization to their new role (role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery).

Research Questions

1. To what extent were organizational tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K-12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
    - 1A: To what extent were content tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K-12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

- 1B: To what extent were social tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K-12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?
- 1C: To what extent were context tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K-12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?

2. To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's organizational tactics to be effective in supporting the adjustment into their new role?
   - 2A: To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their role clarity?
   - 2B: To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their social acceptance?
   - 2C: To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their task mastery?

Research Question	Survey Question	Interview Question
To what extent were content tactics experienced by newly	27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36	N/A

employed classified staff in K-12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?		
To what extent were social tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K-12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?	17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26	N/A
To what extent were context tactics experienced by newly employed classified staff in K-12 school districts in Southern California to support their socialization process?	7, 8, 9 ,10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16	N/A
To what degree do newly employed classified staff	N/A	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their role clarity?		
To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their social acceptance?	N/A	6, 7, 8, 9, 10
To what degree do newly employed classified staff perceive the district's socialization tactics to be effective in supporting their task mastery?	N/A	11, 12, 13, 14, 15

APPENDIX F

Participant Email Invitation

THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION OF K-12 CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

October 2023

Dear Prospective Study Participant:

You are invited to participate in a mixed methods study concerning the organizational socialization of newly employed K-12 classified employees. The main investigator of this study is Steven Dunlap, a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Massachusetts Global Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program. You were chosen to participate in this study because you are a newly employed classified staff member in a K-12 school district located in the County of Riverside, CA, who met the criteria for this study.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify to what extent newly employed classified staff in K-12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational tactics (content, context, social) to support their socialization process during the first year of employment (Jones, 1986). Additionally, it was the purpose of this study to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization to their new role (role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery).

PROCEDURES: If you decide to participate in the study, you will be sent an email with a link to a survey. The survey will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. As a part of the survey, you will be asked if you would be willing to participate in a follow up interview with the researcher. The purpose of these interviews is to gain further insight into the organizational socialization process experienced by newly employed K-12 classified employees. If you agree to participate in a follow-up interview, a virtual interview (via a teleconferencing platform) will be scheduled and last for approximately 30-60 minutes. The interview session will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

RISKS, INCONVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are minimal risks to your participation in this research study. It may be inconvenient for you to arrange time for the interview questions, so for that purpose, enough time will be given to you to schedule the interview according to your availability.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participation, but your feedback could help identify the supports needed by newly hired K-12 classified employees and provide valuable information to state and local leaders concerning these supports. The information from this study is intended to inform researchers, policymakers, and educators.

ANONYMITY: Records of information that you provide for the research study and any personal information you provide will not be linked in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study.

You are encouraged to ask questions, at any time, that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. You may contact me by email at sdunlap1@mail.umassglobal.edu. You can also contact Dr. Jonathan Greenberg, dissertation chair by email at greenber@umassglobal.edu. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study or your rights as a study participant, you may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMass Global, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (928) 246-5268.

Respectfully,

Doctoral Candidate, UMass Global

APPENDIX G

Letter of Consent

RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: The Organizational Socialization of K-12 Classified Employees

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Steven Dunlap, Doctoral Candidate

TITLE OF CONSENT FORM: Research Participant's Informed Consent Form

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Steven Dunlap, a doctoral student from the Organizational Leadership program at the University of Massachusetts Global. The purpose of this mixed-method study is to identify to what extent newly employed classified staff in K-12 school districts in Southern California experienced organizational tactics (content, context, social) to support their socialization process during the first year of employment (Jones, 1986). Additionally, it is the purpose of this study to identify and describe the degree to which newly employed classified staff saw these tactics as effective in supporting their socialization to their new role (role clarity, social acceptance, and task mastery).

By participating in this study, I agree to complete an electronic survey using Survey Monkey or I may choose to complete a paper survey. I understand the survey will take approximately 10 – 15 minutes to complete. Additionally, I have the option to participate in the second phase of research, which I understand is an interview with the researcher conducted through a teleconferencing platform (e.g. Zoom, Google Meet, etc.). I understand the interview may take approximately 30 - 60 minutes and will be audio-recorded. During this interview, I will be asked a series of questions designed to

allow you to share your experiences as a newly employed classified employee in a K-12 school district.

I understand that:

1. There are no known major risks or discomforts associated with this research. The session will be held via a video conferencing platform. Some interview questions may cause me to reflect on barriers and support systems that are unique to my lived experience and sharing my experience in an interview setting may cause minor discomfort.
2. There are no major benefits to me for participation, but a potential benefit may be that I will have an opportunity to share my lived experiences as a classified K-12 employee in California. The information from this study is intended to inform researchers, policymakers, and school district leaders across the State of California.
3. Money will not be provided for my time and involvement.
4. Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be answered by Steven Dunlap, UMass Global Doctoral Candidate. I understand that Mr. Dunlap may be contacted by phone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or by email at sdunlap1@mail.umassglobal.edu.
5. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time.
6. I understand that the study will be audio-recorded, and the recordings will not be used beyond the scope of this project.

7. I understand that the audio recordings will be used to transcribe the interview. Once the interview is transcribed, the audio, and interview transcripts will be deleted.
8. I also understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may contact this study's dissertation chair, Dr. Jonathan Greenberg, greenber@umassglobal.edu or phone (xxx) xxx-xxxx. Additionally, you may write or call the office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMass Global, and 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the Research Participant's Bill of Rights.

I have read the above and understand it and hereby voluntarily consent to the procedures(s) set forth.

Signature of Participant or Responsible Party	**Date**
Signature of Witness (if appropriate)	**Date**
Signature of Principal Investigator	**Date**

UMass Global IRB October 2023

APPENDIX H

Participant Survey

Demographic Details

In this section, please complete your demographic data.

* 1. First Name

* 2. Last Name

* 3. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to state

* 4. Current Age

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

* 5. Current Employer

- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]

* 6. How long have you been employed with this district?

- ◯ 0-3 months
- ◯ 3-6 months
- ◯ 6-9 months
- ◯ 9-12 months
- ◯ 12-18 months
- ◯ 18-24 months
- ◯ More than 24 months

* 7. Which of the following best describes your current employment situation

- ◯ I work at a school site as part of the staff of that school site.
- ◯ I work for a department/division that supports multiple school sites or the district as a whole.
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* 8. Which of the following best describes the area in which you work for the school district or school site?

- ◯ Business Services (accounting, payroll, budget, etc.)
- ◯ Nutrition or Food Services
- ◯ Maintenance, Operations, and Facilities
- ◯ Human Resources
- ◯ Transportation
- ◯ Health Services
- ◯ Technology Support
- ◯ Paraprofessional/ Instructional Aide
- ◯ Front Office Assistance (secretary, registrar, etc.)
- ◯ Campus Security
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* 9. After completing this survey, would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview with the researcher to discuss more about your experience as a new employee?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

In the following sections, you will be asked to rate your level of agreement with several statements. These statements refer to your experience as a newly hired classified employee within your school district. In many of the questions, the word "organization" is used. When this word is used, it is referring to your school district or school site.

* CI1. In the first six months on the job, I was extensively involved with other new employees in common, job-related training activities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* CI2. Other new employees have been important in helping me to understand my job requirements.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* CI3. This organization puts all new employees through the same set of learning experiences.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* CI4_R. Most of my training has been carried out apart from other new employees.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* CI5. There is a sense of "being in the same boat" amongst new employees in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* FI1. I have been through a set of training experiences which are specifically designed to give new employees a thorough knowledge of job related skills

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* FI2. During my training for this job I was normally physically apart from regular organizational members.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* FI3. I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* FI4_R. Much of my job knowledge has been acquired informally on a trial and error basis.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* FI5. I have been very aware that I am seen as "learning the ropes" in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* ID1. I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* ID2. Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me personally.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* ID3_R. I have had to change my attitudes and values to be accepted in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* ID4. My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* ID5_R. I feel that experienced organizational members have held me at a distance until I conform to their expectations.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* SD1. Experienced organizational members see advising or training newcomers as one of their main job responsibilities in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* SD2. I am gaining a clear understanding of my role in this organization from observing my senior colleagues.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* SD3_R. I have received little guidance from experienced organizational members as to how I should perform my job.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* SD4_R. I have little or no access to people who have previously performed my role in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* SD5_R. I have been generally left alone to discover what my role should be in this organization

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* SR1. There is a clear pattern in the way one role leads to another or one job assignment leads to another in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* SR2. Each stage of the training process has, and will, expand and build upon the job knowledge gained during the preceding stages of the process.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* SR3. The movement from role to role and function to function to build up experience and a track record is very apparent in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* SR4_R. This organization does not put newcomers through an identifiable sequence of learning experiences

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* SR5. The steps in the career ladder are clearly specified in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* FV1. I can predict my future career path in this organization by observing other people's experiences.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* FV2. I have a good knowledge of the time it will take me to go through the various stages of the training process in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* FV3. The way in which my progress through this organization will follow a fixed timetable of events has been clearly communicated to me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* FV4_R. I have little idea when to expect a new job assignment or training exercise in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* FV5_R. Most of my knowledge of what may happen to me in the future comes informally, through the grapevine, rather than through regular organizational channels.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

APPENDIX I

Audio Recording Release & Consent Form

INFORMATION ABOUT: The Organizational Socialization of K-12 Classified Employees

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Steven Dunlap, Doctoral Candidate

RELEASE: I understand that as part of this study, I am participating in an interview which will be audio recorded as a digital file, per the granting of my permission.

I do not have to agree to have the interview audio recorded. In the event that I do agree to have myself audio recorded, the sole purpose will be to support data collection as part of this study.

The digital audio recording will only be used for this research. Only the researcher and the professional transcriptionist will have access to the audio file. The digital audio file will be destroyed after three years. The written transcription of the audio file will be stored in a locked file drawer and destroyed three years following completion of this study.

I understand that I may refuse to participate in or I may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time. I also understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent obtained.

I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs, UMass Global, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618 Telephone (949) 341-7641.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the Research participant's Bill of Rights.

CONSENT: I hereby give my permission to Steven Dunlap to use audio-recorded material taken of me during the interview. As with all research consent, I may at any time withdraw permission for the audio recording of me to be used in this research study.

Signature of Participant: _____Date: _____

Signature of Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____