

การศึกษาถึงแหล่งข้อมูลข่าวสารที่พนักงานใหม่ต้องการเข้าถึง
ในช่วงระหว่างกระบวนการขัดเกลาทางสังคมขององค์กร
A Study of Information Targets that New Employees
Need to Approach during the Socialization Process

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้ต้องการศึกษาถึงสิ่งที่พนักงานใหม่ภายในองค์กรไทยระบุว่าเป็นแหล่งข้อมูลข่าวสารหลักหรือสำคัญ สำหรับข้อมูลหลากหลายประเภทที่มีอยู่ในองค์กร รวมถึงศึกษาว่าแหล่งข้อมูลข่าวสารเบื้องต้นใดที่พนักงานใหม่ต้องการเข้าถึงเพื่อสอบถามเกี่ยวกับข้อมูลที่เกี่ยวข้องกับองค์กร โดยกำหนดกลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นพนักงานใหม่ ซึ่งพิจารณาจากระยะเวลาที่ทำงานอยู่ในองค์กรน้อยกว่า 18 เดือน มีจำนวนทั้งสิ้น 255 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้คือ แบบสอบถาม และใช้ Repeated Measurement ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลทางสถิติ ผลการศึกษา พบว่า แหล่งข้อมูลข่าวสารที่พนักงานใหม่ต้องการเข้าถึงเพื่อที่จะสอบถามถึงข้อมูลต่างๆ ภายในองค์กร คือ เพื่อนร่วมงานและหัวหน้างาน ซึ่งอาจจะเกิดจากการปฐมนิเทศ หรือการจัดอบรมพนักงานใหม่ เป็นไปได้ว่าพนักงานใหม่เหล่านี้มีโอกาที่จะพบ และพูดคุย กับเพื่อนร่วมงาน และผู้บังคับบัญชาในช่วงของการปฐมนิเทศ หรือการจัดอบรมพนักงานใหม่ ซึ่งก็เป็นจุดเริ่มต้นของการสื่อสารกับทั้งสองกลุ่ม ดังนั้น พนักงานใหม่พยายามที่จะสร้างเครือข่ายในการติดต่อสื่อสารกับเพื่อนร่วมงานในช่วงกระบวนการขัดเกลาทางสังคมในองค์กร จะเห็นได้อย่างชัดเจนว่า เพื่อนร่วมงานจะเป็นแหล่งข้อมูลข่าวสารหลักสำหรับพนักงานใหม่มากกว่าผู้บังคับบัญชา เมื่อพวกเขามีคำถาม ไม่ว่าจะเป็นคำถามที่เกี่ยวข้องกับงาน (เช่น การอ้างอิง หรือ การประเมิน) เพื่อนร่วมงานจะเป็นแหล่งข้อมูลข่าวสารที่สำคัญสำหรับข้อมูลประเภทนี้ นอกจากนี้ การศึกษายังพบว่าพนักงานใหม่มีการสอบถามข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับองค์กรจากแหล่งข้อมูลข่าวสารประเภทบุคคลภายนอก (เพื่อนลูกค้าและ สมาชิกในครอบครัว) และสื่อ ทุกประเภทย่อยมาก ยกเว้น ข้อมูลทางเทคนิคและ ทางการเมืองที่เกิดขึ้นภายในองค์กร

คำสำคัญ: กระบวนการขัดเกลาทางสังคมขององค์กร แหล่งข้อมูลข่าวสาร พนักงานใหม่

Abstract

The purpose of this study examines what new employees within Thai organization identifying as being their sources for different categories of information, and the information sources that new employees within a Thai organization report as being their primary sources for organizationally relevant information. Participants in the study were 255 “new” employees at private sector organization which considers employees whose length of stay with the organization has been less than 18 months as new employees. Questionnaires were administered to all of the new employees to obtain the data for this study. Repeated measures analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings indicated that new employees reported approaching co-workers at the same rate as supervisors. This result might be due to the orientation program for new employees. It is possible that the new employee orientation program plays a role in explaining these finding, new employees have a chance to meet and talk with co-workers as well as supervisors, thus establishing lines of communication with both groups. Those lines of communication might have enabled the new employees to establish a network of co-workers contacts early within the socialization process. As co-workers might be seen as more accessible than supervisors when questions arise, then even when the questions are job related (i.e referent or appraisal) co-workers emerge as a primary target for information. New employees reported having at least slight level of contact with outsiders (friends, customers, and family members) and media for all types of information, except technical and political information.

Keywords: socialization process, Information target, new employees

Introduction

Upon entering an organization, new employees typically experience some degree of surprise (Louis, 1980) or role shock (Van Maanen, 1975). Faced with learning the formal and informal requirements of a new role within the organization, this boundary passage event is often associated with high levels of uncertainty. Information transmitted from various organization sources during the entry or encounter stage (Van Maanen, 1975) of socialization process is intended to help new employees cope with the surprise and the uncertainty they might experience. In particular, message from management, supervisors, and co-workers during the encounter period are usually designed to clarify new employees' roles, to indoctrinate new employees into organizational practices, to ease new employees into membership in the work groups, and to help new employees begin to develop new self-image in keeping with their new roles and organizations (Jablin, 1987).

Despite an organization's attempts to provide new employees with information that is relevant to their new roles. There might be inadequacies in the nature and scope of the information presented. In fact, one study has shown that, during the encounter period, new employees perceive that they receive less

information from those around them than they believe is need (Jablin, 1984). Source for information adequacy might be found in the passing of a honeymoon period (Ziller, 1965). Old-timer who might have once gone out of their way to make new employees feel like guests and who were open sources of inside knowledge can gradually become closed to new employees' inquires.

Information adequacy can also stem from the new employee's inability to interpret (i.e., decode) messages sent by incumbents. Though incumbents might intend that their messages be helpful, new employees might instead experience overload (i.e., receive more message that can be processed), have an insufficient context specific dictionary by which to decipher jargon, and/or be unable to discriminate between "ambient" and "discretionary" messages (Jablin, 1987, p.694). Thus, new employees who experience information decoding problems might need assistance in recalling, clarifying, amplifying, or discounting received messages.

During the encounter phase of socialization process, new employees depend upon information from others for developing role clarity. Although new employees receive role-related information, the information they receive is frequently perceived as inadequate;

hence, they usually experience fairly high levels of uncertainty (Jablin, 1982; Louis, 1980; Salanick & Pfeffer, 1978). This uncertainty is reflected in the levels of role ambiguity and role conflict which new employees experience and is of importance because it can have an impact on an employee's job satisfaction, productivity, and ultimately, job tenure (Asford & Cummings, 1985; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Thus, it is no surprise that new employees are often advised to reduce their uncertainty by "seeking out the help and information they need to do their work effectively" instead of waiting or wishing for their bosses to provide it"

This research provides an examination of the ways that new employees interact information targets as those new employees through the socialization process. During a socialization process, new employees seek information in order to adjust themselves to their organization's culture. New employees need information to reduce their uncertainty regarding organization entry. Although most organizational researchers acknowledge that individual and situational factors have an effect on successful organizational entry, few have generated theories or researched socialization as a process involving both influences. One notable exception has been the theory building and research by

Jones (1983, 1986) who argued for an interactionist approach to explain the socialization experience. Falcione and Wilson (1988) suggest that the interactionist approach, which views the reciprocal impact of the new employee's psychological orientation and organizational influence as antecedents to successful socialization, best explains current notions of the socialization process. Although this approach effectively explains the impact of individual and situational elements, the interactionist perspective fails to clarify the function and outcomes of communication in the entry process. Unless resulting communication behavior can be identified, explained, and based on an established communication theory, such a perspective remains incomplete and inadequate as a conceptualization of the dynamic process of organizational assimilation (Gorden, Mignerey, & Rubin, 1995). Commonly, explanations of the socialization process have focused on those issue thought to influence the communication between a superior and subordinate.

Most previous research on socialization in Thailand has involved new employees who were quite distinct from the "host" group in terms of such characteristics as language, race, culture, or religion. Unfortunately, there have been no studies to date focusing on the

organizational socialization of new employees in Thailand. Also, the tendency in past socialization research in other countries has been to consider socialization as an end state. In this view, a person either becomes socialized or he/she does not.

This research tries to address the problem of the socialization new employees into Thai organizations. There might be many problems that new employees do not understand and they experience as they try to adjust themselves to an organization. The socialization process in an organization has a major influence on the performance of individuals, and thus affects group and organizational performance as well. Regardless of whether it is consciously planned and managed or whether it occurs informally, socialization provides new employees with considerable information about appropriate roles and behaviors. Socialization is the process of what Schein (1968) referred to as “learning the ropes.”

While few would deny that the socialization process is part of organizational life, the specific relationship between socialization activities and subsequent employees attitudes not well known. Louis (1980) suggests that when new employees either an organization they are faced with learning a new culture. New employees must socialize the unofficial

rules for sorting, labeling, and interpreting experience in the organization. These unwritten rules provide important clues for how to become an effective organizational member.

Thai organizations spend a great deal of time and money to orient new employees. Usually the direct costs for indoctrination programs are substantial. However, there are indirect costs as well. For example, new employees generally work below capacity while they learn their job and adjust to their new surroundings. The possibility of reducing costs provides an important incentive for organizations to learn more about ways to improve orientation and socialization programs.

Most interactions in organizations involve information seeking. Researchers have taken the position that information seeking is particularly important and somewhat unique during organizational entry (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Organizational entry might represent the most critical time of employee role learning. The ease and quickness with which new employees learn their roles are likely to affect their relationships with members of their role set and have an impact on their career paths (Gomersall & Myers, 1966). At the same time, new employees are likely to experience considerably higher levels of role-related and career uncertainty when entering

a new environment than at any other time during their organizational tenure. In addition, new employees in comparison to old-timers are likely to seek information in relatively more “mindful” as opposed to “mindless” way (Langer, 1978, pp. 36-38). In other words, their heightened sense of uncertainty leads new employees (1) to be conscious of values and behaviors to be learned and (2) to often think about what they do not know and how to obtain the information they desire. As a consequence, when individuals are new to an organization they might seek information in a far more deliberate manner than when they have grown accustomed to their organizational environment (Ashford & Cummings, 1985).

Types of information needed and information sources are perhaps the two most widely studied determinants of new employee information seeking (Comer, 1991; Miller, 1989; Morrison, 1991; 1993; Teboul, 1994). They are seven types of information that new employees obtain during the organizational socialization period. These are technical information, referent information, social information, appraisal information, normative information, organizational information, and political information. New employees have to obtain these types of information during the organizational socialization period in order to reduce uncertainty

(Jablin, 1982).

In an organizational socialization period, new employees also turn to readily available information sources. The potential sources include their immediate supervisors, co-workers, subordinates, media-related message from management, and any client with whom the new employees might work. These sources of information have a major impact upon new employees’ reactions (Miller & Jablin, 1991). This research is therefore limited to applying results from US researchers to the Thai culture. The turnover rate and dissatisfaction in Thai organizations have been found to increase without proper socialization. This research tries to discover the processes by which socialization can be effectively achieved.

The objectives of study

1. The research sought to identify what new employees within Thai organization identifying as being their sources for different categories of information.
2. The research sought to identify the information sources that new employees within a Thai organization report as being their primary sources for organizationally relevant information.

Literature review

Socialization process

Van Mannen (1975, p.67) suggests the following definition of organizational socialization: “the process by which a person learns the values and norms and acquires behaviors which permit him or her to participate as a member of the organization” Moreover, it should be noted that organization is not a temporary process that concludes after the first few months a new employee is on the job but, rather, is a continuous process that will “change and evolve as the individual remains longer with the organization” (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975, p. 161).

When an individual enters into an organization, he or she begins the “encounter” phase of socialization (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975). Sometimes this encounter can be a “reality” (Hughes, 1958) or “role shock” (Minkler & Biller, 1979), but more often than not the encounter “involves a pattern of day-to-day experiences in which the individual is subjected to the reinforcement policies and practices of the organization and its members” (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975, p.164). Essentially if the new employee’s expectations resulting from anticipatory socialization conform with the reality of organization life, the encounter stage is one of reaffirmation, reinforcement, and confirmation. However, if the

newcomer has not accurately anticipated his or her role in the organization, the “role shock” can be intense and involve a “destructive phase which serves to detach the individual from his or her former expectation” (Van Mannen, 1975, p. 84). The final major stage in the organizational socialization process has been termed “metamorphosis” (Van Mannen, 1975) or the “change and acquisition” phase (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975). During this stage, as a result of a newcomer’s various “encounters,” he or she attempts to become an accepted, participating member of the organization by learning new attitudes and behaviors and/or modifying existing ones to be consistent with organizational expectations (Jablines, 1982).

The Information that new employees need

Upon entering an organization, new employees typically experience some degree of surprise (Louis, 1980) or role shock (Van Mannen, 1975). Faced with learning the formal and informal requirements of a new role within the organization, this boundary passage event is often associated with high levels of uncertainty. Information transmitted from various organizational sources during the encounter stage (Van Mannen, 1975) of organization socialization is intended to help new employees cope with the

surprise and the uncertainty they might experience. In particular, message from management, supervisors, and co-workers during the encounter period are usually designed to clarify new employees' roles, to indoctrinate new employees to organizational practices, to ease new employees into membership in their work groups, and to help new employees begin to develop new self-images in keeping with their new roles and organizations (Jablin, 1987).

Despite an organization's attempts to provide new employees with the information that is relevant to their new roles, there might be inadequacies in the nature and scope the information presented. In fact, one study has shown that, during the encounter period, new employees perceive that they receive less information from those around them than they believe is needed (Jablin, 1984). Source for information adequacy might be found in the passing of a honeymoon period (Ziller, 1965). Old-timers who might have once gone out of their way to make new employees feel like guests and who were open sources of inside knowledge can gradually become closed to new employees' inquiries.

Information adequacy can also stem from the new employee's inability to interpret (i.e., decode) message sent by incumbents. Through incumbents might

intend that their messages be helpful, new employees might instead experience overload (i.e., receive more messages that can be processed), have an insufficient context-specific dictionary by which to decipher jargon, and/or be unable to discriminate between "ambient" and "discretionary" message (Jablin, 1987, p. 694). Thus, new employees who experience information decoding problems might need assistance in recalling, clarifying, amplifying, or discounting received messages.

Information targets

Several researchers have found that the most often cited targets of information are co-worker and one's immediate supervisor (Falcione & Wilson, 1988; Jablin & Sussman, 1983; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993; Teboul, 1992). In their summary of the significance of communication within the work group, Jablin and Sussman (1983) suggested that this interaction benefits new employees by providing feedback concerning the new employee's self-concept, reducing organizational uncertainty, satisfying affiliation needs, developing sense-making consensus, and facilitating task accomplishment.

Communication between a newcomer and his or her immediate supervisor is also a frequently cited targets

of critical information. Graen (1976) argued that one's first supervisor in an organization was critical in supplying role-related information, awareness of organizational expectations and performance appraisal feedback. Many new employees report a desire for a meaningful relationship with their supervisor that builds trust and openness (Infante & Gorden, 1987; Jablin, 1982) and invites communication exchanges.

Other targets of relevant information identified by Teboul (1992) in his study of neophyte information seeking behavior included co-worker, supervisors, friends, romantic partner, family, and subordinates. Morrison (1993) suggested that an additional category be added to the information target taxonomy to account for impersonal information sources like manuals, reports, memos. Management generated literature has been identified as a source of anticipated socialization but has not often been included in lists of information targets after organizational entry.

Information-seeking targets

During organization encounters, new employees might attempt to reduce uncertainty by seeking information from a number of different sources (Jablin, 1987). Within the organization, newcomers typically turn to role set member (i.e.,

immediate supervisor, co-workers and subordinates) or other company acquaintances (i.e., managers, same- or lower-level employees affiliated with other departments) for information. Supervisors and co-workers have consistently been found to be the most helpful of these information targets (i.e., Falcoine & Wilson, 1988; Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983; Morrison, 1991, 1993b). This target reliance pattern is expected under conditions of new hire uncertainty.

Recent newcomer information seeking research suggests that information target reliance patterns vary with type of information being sought. However, findings appear to be contradictory. Comer (1991), for instances, suggests that peers are preferred to supervisors as sources of technical information. Morrison (1991, 1993), on the other hand, reveals that new employees actually rely more on supervisors than on peers for technical information. In addition, Morrison (1991, 1993) found that newcomers prefer to obtain normative and social information from peers while obtaining referent and performance information from supervisors.

It appears that only Miller (1989) has examined the relationship between information target and information seeking strategy preferences. Miller (1989) found that new employees use different information seeking strategies with

supervisors and co-workers. Specifically, when seeking referent information, new employees relied on someone other than their supervisors so as not to disturb their source. Miller (1989) does not offer an account of which third-party targets new employees resort to most.

In an effort to make sense out of their entry experiences, newcomers turn to available information sources. Potential source include (1) official, downward, media related messages from management, (2) members of the new employees' role set (i.e. immediate supervisor, co-workers, and subordinates), (3) other organizational members (i.e. secretaries, acquaintances in different departments), (4) extra-organizational sources (i.e. clients), and (5) the other's reaction (Greller & Herold, 1975; Herold & Parsons, 1985; Jablin, 1982; Louis, Posner & Powell, 1983; Posner & Powell, 1985). According to Katz (1980, p.95), the "new employees reduce" uncertainty primarily through interpersonal and feedback processes and interaction" (p. 95). As such, new employees' information seeking efforts are likely to be focused on their supervisors and co-workers because the other sources are usually neither equally available nor helpful to new employees. In addition, supervisors are often identified as an important source of socialization because new employees must ultimately

gain their approval from role negotiation (Graen, 1976; Jablin, 1979). New employees are also likely to identify supervisors as the chief sources for determining job requirements and consider them more reliable than co-workers as a source for information (Hanser & Muchinsky, 1978).

Co-workers, on the other hand, were identified by recent MBA graduates as more available as sources than supervisors, and their availability has been linked to new employees' job satisfaction, retention, and commitment (Louis, Posner & Powell, 1983). In addition, new employees report their daily interactions with peers as being more helpful than their interactions with supervisors or fellow recruits with respect to making the transition into their new jobs (Posner & Powell, 1985). Although these studies identifying supervisors and co-workers as important information sources for new employees are interesting initial explorations, it should be recognized that they fail to measure the content and frequency of each source's interactions with new employees.

Other research (Asford, 1986) exploring new employees' information seeking behavior has also identified supervisors and co-workers as important source, but has been remiss in considering how new employees' information seeking

behaviors can vary among sources. For example, Asford and Cummings (1985) and Asford (1986) did not examine whether new employees prefer certain information seeking tactics with supervisors and other tactics with co-workers. This omission seems surprising because new employees' choices of tactics appear to be based partly on the perceived social costs of interacting with a particular source (Roloff, 1981). Give differences between supervisors and co-workers in terms of power, new employees would seem likely to vary their information seeking tactics between sources (Walther, 1978).

Methodology

This part is to explicate the procedures employed the information targets that new employees rely on during the organizational socialization period. All of the work here has been conducted in Western organizations. The study reported in this paper provides a shift in focus as this research was conducted in a Thai organization. Specifically, the research reported in this paper examined:

Hypothesis: New employees will distinguish among the individuals they approach for information
Hypothesis (a): New employees will approach supervisors with respect to technical, referent, and appraisal

information.

Hypothesis (b): New employees will approach co-workers with respect to social and political information

Sample

The sample in this research was obtained through systematic random sampling procedures. The researcher obtained a list of new employees from the Human Resources Department of a private sector organization. The researcher selected 300 employees who had worked no more than 18 months in each department. The researcher asked for assistance from the Director of Human Resource in identifying eligible employees and in distributing the questionnaires. The respondents for this study were all considered permanent employees of the organization.

Demographic Information Analysis

A total of 255 usable questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 85.0%. Generally, the sample characteristics were compatible with the characteristic of the population. Most of respondents are female (n = 135; 52.9%), between 26 and 39 years of age (n = 169; 66.2%), with a monthly salary ranging from 10,001 baht to 15,000 baht (n = 142; 55.6%). Their modal education is a bachelor's degree (n = 243; 99.3 %).

Data gathering instrument

The questionnaire focused on information targets. This section was based on Ashford's (1986) measures of feedback seeking behavior. There were seventy-seven items. Covering four information target: supervisors, co-workers, person outside the firm (client, friend, and family member, and media). The scale range from 1 to 5, by which 1 means "never", 2 means "seldom", 3 means "sometimes", 4 means "often", 5 means "always". Means score of "low level" range from 1-2, "moderate level" is 3, and "high level" ranges from 4 to 5. Morrison (1993) reports reliability coefficients ranging from .60 to .65 for these items.

Reliability test was conducted for the scale to investigate the internal consistency among the items. Alpha coefficients were .9528 for information target scale. The pretest results indicated that the information target scale was sufficiently reliable for use in the actual study. This testing also revealed that there was no cultural differences serving to on validate the questionnaire. The translated questionnaire could be employed in Thailand.

A repeated measures analysis was performed in order to examine the information targets approach. This hypothesis focuses on four measures of information targets. The minimum sample

size needed is approximately 27 for a correlation at .50. The researcher estimated the effect size for this project as .35 with an alpha level of .05 and four repeated measures (Steven, 1996).

Results

Hypothesis predicted that new employees will distinguish among the targets they approach for information. Two corollaries to this hypothesis were also offered. The first predicted that new employees will report approaching supervisors more than other sources with respect to job information (technical, referent, and appraisal information). According to the second corollary, newcomers will report approaching co-workers more than other targets with respect to social and political information.

The hypothesis was partially supported. With respect to each types of information examined (technical, referent, appraisal, normative, social, organizational, and political information), supervisors and co-workers were rated by the employees as being the most significant of information target while outsiders were perceived as more significant information targets than media. The multivariate analysis presented in Table 1 reveals that new employees draw significant distinctions among information targets when the new employees are in need of technical information ($F_{(3,244)} = 264.788, p < .001$).

Table 1: Multivariate Tests for Target of Technical Information

Effect	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Observed Power ^a
INFOWT					
Phillai's Trace	264.788	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Wilk's Lambda	264.788	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Hotelling's Trace	264.788	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Roy's Largest Root	264.788	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000

^aComputer using alpha = .05

Technical information

New employees reported approaching both their supervisors and their co-workers about equally for technical information. They find supervisors the most useful target for technical information ($\bar{X} = 3.5317$). Next, they approached co-worker ($\bar{X} = 3.4891$) followed by outsiders ($\bar{X} = 2.3563$) then media ($\bar{X} = 2.0061$). As shown by the mean values, new employees report a moderate to low level of technical information seeking activity (see table 2).

In sum, new employees approached supervisors and co-worker at almost the same rate of frequency. Outsiders (customers, friends, and family members) and media (memos, annual report, e-mail, and Internet) are perceived by newcomers as playing a minor role in providing technical information

Table 2: Means for Target of Technical Information

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Information from Supervisors	3.5317	.7512	247
Information from Co-workers	3.4891	.6225	247
Information from Outsiders	2.3563	1.0214	247
Information from Media	2.0061	.9419	247

Referent Information

Multivariate repeated measures analysis revealed significant differences in new employees' report referent information seeking behavior ($F_{(3,244)} = 307.249$, $p < .001$, see Table 3). Examination of the means (see Table 4) revealed that new employees reported co-workers

as the most approached target for referent information ($\bar{X} = 3.5279$), followed by supervisors ($\bar{X} = 3.3468$), outsiders ($\bar{X} = 2.5668$), and media ($\bar{X} = 1.8117$), respectively. New employees reported approaching all targets at a moderate frequency for referent information.

Table 3: Multivariate Tests for Target of Referent Information

Effect	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Observed Power ^a
Referent Information					
Phillai's Trace	307.249	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Wilk's Lambda	307.249	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Hotelling's Trace	307.249	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Roy's Largest Root	307.249	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000

^aComputer using alpha = .05

Table 4: Means for Target of Referent Information

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Information from Supervisors	3.5279	.7517	247
Information from Co-workers	3.3468	.9668	247
Information from Outsiders	2.5668	1.1381	247
Information from Media	1.8117	.9129	247

Appraisal Information

Multivariate repeated measures analysis reveals that new employees reported significant differences in the extent to which they approached co-workers, supervisors, outsiders, and the media for appraisal information ($F_{(3,244)} = 274.007, p < .001$, see Table 5). The means

(see Table 6) indicated that new employees find coworkers the most useful target for appraisal information ($\bar{X} = 3.4445$), followed by supervisors ($\bar{X} = 3.2537$), outsiders ($\bar{X} = 2.2794$), and media ($\bar{X} = 1.1654$). New employees perceived themselves as approaching all target at a moderate level of frequency for appraisal information.

Table 5: Multivariate Tests for Target of Appraisal Information

Effect	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Observed Power ^a
Appraisal Information					
Phillai's Trace	247.007	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Wilk's Lambda	307.249	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Hotelling's Trace	307.249	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Roy's Largest Root	307.249	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000

^aComputer using alpha = .05

Table 6: Means for Target of Appraisal Information

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Information from Supervisors	3.4445	.7406	247
Information from Co-workers	3.2537	.9029	247
Information from Outsiders	2.2794	1.1257	247
Information from Media	1.6154	.7742	247

Social Information

Multivariate repeated measures analysis revealed that new employees distinguished in significant ways among their possible target for social information ($F_{(3,244)} = 232.129$, $p < .001$, see Table 7). The comparison of means (see Table 8) indicated that new employees find

co-workers the most frequently approached target for social information ($\bar{X} = 3.5895$). In order they next approached supervisors ($\bar{X} = 3.2713$), followed by outsiders ($\bar{X} = 2.9312$), and then media ($\bar{X} = 1.5567$). New employees reported approaching all targets at a moderate to low level of frequency for social information.

Table 7: Multivariate Tests for Target of Social Information

Effect	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Observed Power ^a
Social Information					
Phillai's Trace	232.129	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Wilk's Lambda	232.129	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Hotelling's Trace	232.129	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Roy's Largest Root	232.129	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000

^aComputer using alpha = .05

Table 8: Means for Target of Social Information

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Information from Supervisors	3.5895	.7660	247
Information from Co-workers	3.2713	.9612	247
Information from Outsiders	2.9312	1.0589	247
Information from Media	1.5567	.8257	247

Political information

Multivariate repeated measures revealed that new employees reported significant differences in the frequency with which they approach various targets for political information $F_{(3,244)} = 151.710$, $p < .001$, see Table 9). The comparison of

means (see Table 10) indicated that new employees approach co-workers the most frequently ($\bar{X} = 3.3757$). Next, they approach supervisors ($\bar{X} = 3.3225$), followed by outsiders ($\bar{X} = 2.4818$), and then media ($\bar{X} = 2.1012$), respectively.

Table 9: Multivariate Tests for Target of Political Information

Effect	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Observed Power ^a
Political information					
Phillai's Trace	151.710	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Wilk's Lambda	151.710	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Hotelling's Trace	151.710	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000
Roy's Largest Root	151.710	3.000	244.000	.000	1.000

^aComputer using alpha = .05

Table 10: Means for Target of Political Information

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Information from Supervisors	3.3757	.7245	247
Information from Co-workers	3.3225	.8070	247
Information from Outsiders	2.4818	1.1292	247
Information from Media	2.1012	1.0270	247

Conclusion

This research attempts to examine the information targets during the socialization process. Repeated measure analyses were used to reveal the various forms of information that new employees acknowledge receiving. The data were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science.

Hypothesis was partially supported. Both supervisors and co-workers were preferred in comparison to outsiders and media as targets for all types of information. Co-workers were reported as being approached more than supervisors when the new employees sought referent, appraisal, and social information. Superior and co-workers were reported as being approached with equal frequency for technical, and political information.

The findings indicated that new employees reported approaching co-workers at the same rate as supervisors. This result might be due to the orientation

program for new employees. It is possible that the new employee orientation program plays a role in explaining these findings, new employees have a chance to meet and talk with co-workers as well as supervisors, thus establishing lines of communication with both groups. Those lines of communication might have enabled the new employees to establish a network of co-workers contacts early within the socialization process. As co-workers might be seen as more accessible than supervisors when questions arise, then even when the questions are job related (i.e referent or appraisal) co-workers emerge as a primary target for information. New employees reported having at least slight level of contact with outsiders (friends, customers, and family members) and media for all types of information, except technical and political information.

New employees reported approaching both supervisors and co-workers for political information.

This information is quite important for any new employees. They need to know who makes the important decisions within the organization and who has authority over whom in the organization. According to the participants in this research, the best targets for this information are supervisors and co-workers. By comparison, outsiders do not know much about operating practices internal to the organization.

Discussion

This study focused on the way that new employees employ information targets as those new employees progress through the socialization process. Repeated measure analyses were used to reveal the various forms of information targets that new employees indicate to seek.

The hypothesis stated that new employees will distinguish among the individuals they approach for information. A corollary to this hypothesis predicted that new employees will prefer superiors when in search of job information (technical, referent, and appraisal information). Another corollary predicted that new employees will prefer co-worker when in search of social and political information.

The hypothesis was partially supported. Both superiors and co-workers were preferred in comparison to outsiders

and media as targets for all types of information. Co-worker were reported as being approached more than superiors when the new employees sought referent, appraisal, social, and organizational information. Superiors and co-workers were reported as being approached with equal frequency for technical, normative, and political information. New employees reported approaching all sources differently for each type of information.

The findings indicated that new employees reported approaching co-workers at the same rate as superiors. This result might be due to the orientation program for new employees. It is possible that the new employee orientation program plays a role in explaining these finding, new employees have a chance to meet and talk with co-workers as well as superiors, thus establishing lines of communication with both groups. Those lines of communication might have enabled the new employees to establish a network of co-worker contacts early within the socialization process. As co-workers might be seen as more accessible than superiors when questions arise, then even when the questions are job related (i.e. referent or appraisal) co-workers emerge as a primary target for information. Newcomers reported having at least a slight level of contact with outsiders (friends, customer, and family

members) and media for all types of information, except technical information, organizational information, and political information.

Even though new employees have the option to access normative and organizational information through printed material and the Internet, the newcomers participating in this study indicated that they tend not to rely on either printed materials or, especially, the media for normative or organizational information. It is possible that written materials and mediated information targets (i.e., Internet), while providing organizationally-relevant information, are not devoted to the type of normative and organizational information referenced in the questionnaire used to gather data for this project. A second possibility is that new employees prefer personal targets of information to mediated targets when they find themselves with questions in these areas. A third possibility is that mediated targets are consulted just as frequently as are colleagues and superiors; however, as a mundane activity, the process of obtaining information from mediated target is much less memorable than conversations with the significant others and, thus, suffers from underreporting.

Newcomers reported approaching both superiors and co-workers for political information. This information is quite

important for any new employees. They need to know who makes the important decisions within the organization and who has authority over whom in the organization. According to the participants in the study, the best targets for this information are superiors and co-workers. By comparison, outsiders do not know much about operating practices internal to the organization. As was suggested with respect to normative and organizational information, it seems reasonable to assume that mediated information targets would not focus their attention on the political side of the organization.

Future Research

Future research would also attempt to validate the results of the present research. One way to confirm these finding, based solely on new employees' self-reports, would involve using co-workers as data points. Specifically, co-workers' perceptions of and motivations for serving as information targets for new employees could be explored. For instance, Are co-workers aware of their impact on new employees? What kinds of information do co-workers try to impact? New employees who have worked in their organizations for more than eighteen months could be asked to think about the information gleaned from their co-workers and judge its accuracy and usefulness.

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