

## A Review of Proactive Socialization Behavior of Newcomer

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**Keywords:** proactive social behavior, antecedent variable, consequence variable

**Abstract:** Early work in the socialization field focused on how organizations socialize newcomers, focusing on what the organization does. But socialization is a process involving organizations and employees. Therefore, in addition to studying organizational strategies, we should also pay attention to the personal strategies of employees in the process of socialization. This paper mainly reviews the proactive behaviors that new employees may take when they join the job, and then summarizes the factors that affect the proactive behavior of employees and the results of proactive behaviors, hoping to promote research for newcomer's proactive behavior in the future.

### 1. Introduction

Newcomer, the main driver of organizational development, have always been concerned by organizational management research and practice, especially the incentives and retention of newcomer. Because for new employees who are just entering the organization, entering a new organization is a moment of excitement and uncertainty. They lack understanding of the new environment, new organizations, new jobs, and face a high degree of uncertainty, often resulting in a lot of anxiety[1]. Newcomer who are nervous for a long time may find it difficult to adapt to the organization and realize the transition from outsiders to insiders.

Organizational socialization is an effective means of helping newcomer quickly adapt to the organization and is often adopted by managers. Early research on organizational socialization focused on organizational efforts to promote newcomers [2]. In the 1990s, scholars began to pay attention to another subject-employee in the process of socialization. In the early stage of entering the organization, new employees will reduce their anxiety and improve their happiness through proactive behavior [3]. Specifically, newcomers will actively establish relationships with colleagues and supervisors, form a social network, and acquire the knowledge, abilities, and skills that should be possessed by formal members of the organization through various strategies. However, these behaviors will vary depending on the personal and contextual factors of the employee and will change over time.

Scholars have fully analyzed the specific types of proactive behaviors, factors affecting proactive behaviors, and the possible impacts of active behaviors. They have made many brilliant achievements in the proactive socialization of employees, but they are still fragmented and lacking. Therefore, this paper reviews the factors of proactive socialization of newcomer and the proactive behaviors of newcomer and the results of socialized behaviors in the process of organizational socialization. Finally, based on the above review, we provide some suggestions for the future research direction of the proactive socialization of newcomer in the process of socialization, and hope to contribute a little to the future research.

### 2. Proactive Socialization Behavior

The earliest literature on the proactive behavior of newcomer in the process of organizational socialization appeared in the 1990s [4-6]. One of the more classic studies is that Ashford and Black propose that there are four main types of active behavior for new employees [6]. The first category

is sense-making, including information seeking and seeking feedback. Sense-making is considered to be the conscious thinking of newcomers when they first enter the organization, and the information seeking to serve this idea. The second category is relationship building, including daily social interaction, interpersonal network construction, and good relations with superiors. The third category is a positive Framing. Positive framing means that individuals are trying to change their understanding of situations by controlling their cognitive framework of situations. This is a particularly effective cognitive self-management strategy. The fourth category is job-change negotiation. Individuals entering a new work environment are thought to be able to change their work or change themselves in order to create a better fit between them and new jobs, while job change negotiation refers to actively promoting work change to create the work which can well adapt to their skills and abilities.

Based on summarizing previous studies, Griffin and Colella propose that proactive social strategies can be divided into: feedback and information seeking, relationship building, informal mentoring, job change negotiation, positive framing, participating in work-related activities, behavior self-management and observation / modeling [7]. Cooper-Thomas, Anderson and Cash pointed out that there are 19 kinds of proactive behaviors of newcomers with work experience, divided into 3 categories, the first category is common development, such as daily social interaction; the second category is to change oneself, such as seeking Feedback; the third category is to change roles or environments, such as changing work procedures [3]. Based on previous studies, Cooper-Thomas and Paterson highlighted the proactive behavior of newcomer, namely, seeking feedback, daily social interaction, relationship building with superiors, positive framing, reading, monitoring, direct inquiry, network building, role modeling, changing work procedures [8].

Due to cultural differences, the behavior of newcomer in the Chinese cultural context is different from that in the West. The proactive behavior of newcomer researched by Western scholars may not appear in China. The high power distance makes the new employees in China maintain a greater emotional distance from their superiors, and therefore less interaction with their superiors, and less objections or questions from their superiors, tend to accept top-down management [9]. Therefore, the research by Wang and Kim shows six dimensions of active behavior of new employees in China: information search, seeking feedback, daily social interaction, interpersonal network construction, relationship building with superiors, and development relationship [10]. The proactive social behavior adopted by newcomer has different trends over time as the organization enters. Newcomers have increased their use of feedback seeking, but have reduced their use of work change negotiations over time [11].

### **3. Predictor of Proactive Socialization Behavior**

Some studies have found that the Big Five personality has value-added validity when predicting three proactive socialization behaviors. The extraversion is related to seeking feedback and relationship construction, and the openness of experience is related to seeking feedback and positive framing [12]. Extroversion is associated with high daily social and interpersonal network behavioral intentions, demonstrating that newcomers with high extroversion are more willing to engage in socially active behaviors; agreeableness is associated with high daily social behavioral intentions, proving , employees with high agreeableness are more inclined to avoid conflicts and are willing to actively interact with others, Because of their courtesy, compassion, friendliness and willingness to cooperate [13]. Kammeyer et al. also showed that highly extroverted employees have more active adjustment and adaptation behaviors in organizational socialization, while proactive personality also predicts new employees' active behaviors, and proactive personality and Several socialization results (task mastery, work team integration, political knowledge) are relevant [1]. Tang et al. further pointed out that employees with high proactive personality are more willing to conduct interpersonal network construction, but they rarely ask or observe directly[14]. The reason may be that they will first try to take action through their own efforts to solve problems instead of asking for help or spending time observing other people. An empirical study by Gruman found that new employees with new self-efficient trend to seek feedback, information search, daily social

interaction, relationships with superiors, and interpersonal network construction. Curiosity is an important feature that is related to newcomers' information seeking and positive framework construction behavior, which in turn is related to performance outcomes [15].

In addition to the employee's own factors will affect the proactive behavior of employees, the insiders of the organization also play an important role in the socialization process of newcomers. Newcomers hope to get good job performance by adapting to the environment that is most critical to their success. These most critical environments include their organizations, jobs, colleagues, and new executives who may influence their careers through job assignments, responsibilities, compensation, and promotion [16]. Morrison's research found that positive relationships are vital in socialization, and good relationships with insiders promote social progress. Individuals seek more information from people they feel close to. Conversely, conflicts with others may reduce the amount of information sought from others. Griffin found that the relationship between new employees and colleagues is negatively related to seeking information from colleagues [17]. This relationship is mediated by social anxiety with colleagues, so relationship conflicts are positively related to social anxiety. The feelings accepted by the insiders of the organization are positively related to the information seeking of newcomers [18]. Supervisor warm mode and ability mode also affect their information search and adaptation in the process of socialization [19]. The type of socialization strategy adopted by the organization will influence the possibility of new people's proactive socialization strategies and the effectiveness of new people's proactive socialization behavior [7].

#### **4. The result of proactive social behavior**

Feedback seeking and relationship building are the most important behaviors for social integration, role clarity and turnover. These relationships can help newcomer socialize by providing information, advice, social support, stress reduction and skills and role behavioral guidance. Empirical studies have shown that the efforts of newcomers to establish relationships with their peers and superiors are important to the socialization process [6]. New employees may also establish relationships with other insiders who are informal mentors. A large number of studies have pointed out the positive impact of guidance on newcomers' adaptation, and information seeking, indicator information and evaluation information are related to most adaptation indicators. All three aspects of information search are significantly related to satisfaction and willingness to stay. Only the assessment aspect is significantly related to organizational commitment. None of the information search has a significant correlation with performance or turnover rate [18]. Zou, Tian and Liu further found that role clarity, social integration plays a mediating role between new employee information search and organizational emotional commitment [20]. Zou conducted a survey of new employees in five-star hotels in southern China and Macau [21]. The study found that information search affects the socialization results of new employees. The frequency of information search is its organizational commitment, task performance, role clarity and society Integration has a positive effect.

#### **5. Discussion**

In recent years, the socialization research of newcomers has received extensive attention. Especially in the proactive and interactive perspective, many scholars have begun to study the impact of new employees' proactive behavior on their socialization. Socialization involves the interaction between people inside the organization and newcomer, which may symbolize the common understanding of both parties. Socialization is not just about what organizations do in terms of processes, strategies, or directions, but also about new employees and their efforts. Although scholars have achieved fruitful results in the research of newcomers' proactive behaviors, from the existing research, there are still some areas that need to be improved and in-depth research.

Newcomers not only passively accept the socialization of the organization, but also take the initiative to take certain actions to speed up the socialization process. In the past, many studies have

shown that proactive socialization is related to many favorable outcomes. Socialization can reduce uncertainty and cultivate employees into people who meet organizational expectations. However, some studies have found that the level of socialization is negatively related to role innovation. Some organizations may even be interested in the degree of human-organizational mismatch to achieve desired outcomes such as innovative behavior. It seems that more research is necessary to test the role of innovation. Given the importance of innovation for some organizations, more research focusing on the negative effects of socialization is needed.

It is recommended to study more deeply the interaction between the proactive social behavior of new employees, such as relationship building and information seeking. The relationship with superiors and colleagues will affect the information seeking behavior of new employees, and the behaviors sought by information will change the relationship. Empirical studies have found that conflicts with colleagues can lead to social anxiety to colleagues, thereby reducing the information obtained from colleagues; but conflicts with colleagues will promote new employees to establish relationships with superiors (substitute) and increase information obtained from superiors. The proactive actions taken by new employees will change as the time of entry changes, and the effects of previous actions will affect the likelihood of subsequent actions. There are some behaviors that interact with each other. It may be an increase in the spiral or a decrease in the spiral.

The effectiveness of active behavior is also influenced by the attribution of colleagues and supervisors. If the supervisor believes that this initiative of the employee is driven by performance-enhancing motivation, the supervisor tends to view the subordinate as an achievement-focused and intends to achieve high standards in completing the task. Empirical studies have shown that executives tend to appreciate subordinates' performance-centered efforts, which are likely to be rewarded by providing support, special benefits, and career development opportunities. The situation is different if the supervisor interprets the proactive behavior as being driven by impression management motivation or as a strategy used by employees to enhance their personal image. Subordinates involved in impression management may be considered untrue, unreliable, and computational. Their initiative may also be seen as manipulative and intended to be rewarded. Therefore, when studying the role of employees' active behavior in the socialization process, it should consider the attribution of such behavior by people around them, whether it is performance improvement or impression management. The former may help employees adapt to the organization, and the latter will hinder the adaptation of employees.

In short, there are still many gaps in the research on the newcomers' proactive behavior and its impact on socialization, and future research is to be thoroughly explored and resolved. The organizational socialization research of newcomers has very important theoretical and practical significance. Therefore, scholars need to invest more attention and carry out more abundant, systematic and in-depth theoretical and empirical research.

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