

An Investigation of the Mediating Role of Person-organisation Fit  
in Newcomer Adjustment

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed by: Nadi Linlett

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## **Abstract**

Subsequent to adjusting to a new organisation through learning, new employees, or newcomers, develop a perception of their own person-organisation fit, that is, of how well their values and the values of the organisation match. Higher person-organisation fit has been linked with a number of benefits for newcomers and organisations, including higher job satisfaction, greater career prospects, and lower intent to quit. The purpose of this study is to extend this prior research to investigate whether newcomers' perceptions of person-organisation fit also mediate the relationship between newcomer learning and distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment, namely job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit. Based on an archival data sample ( $N = 550$ ), this study's findings show support for the mediating role of person-organisation fit in the relationship between newcomer learning and distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment (i.e., job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit). Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

## 1. Introduction

Over the last five years, the number of paid employees in New Zealand grew at an average rate of 3.9 percent to approximately 2.2 million (Statistics New Zealand, 2018). Looking at this in detail for the most recent years, from a 2016 base of 2.1 million paid employees, the number of new employees increased by approximately 56,700 to February 2017 (2.7 percent increase) and 72,600 to February 2018 (3.3 percent increase; Statistics New Zealand, 2018). Newcomers are adding to the workforce of New Zealand with estimate projection of 16,000 each year and hence, newcomers adjust to the new organisation are becoming more important than ever with the continual growth of New Zealand business enterprises. The workforce becomes diverse and organisational socialisation processes are vital for both newcomers and organisations. A substantial volume of organisational socialisation research has been conducted on newcomer adjustment (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005; Gruman, Saks, & Zweig, 2006; Thomas & Anderson, 1998). Organisational socialisation is the continuous process whereby individuals enter a workplace and learn and develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours required to understand and work effectively as long as they remain members of an organisation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The organisational socialisation process continues throughout an employee's employment, especially when an employee's role changes (Klein & Heuser, 2008). This process is particularly important in newcomer adjustment because the stability and productivity of any organisation depends upon the ways newcomers carry out their tasks (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Moreover, the passing of job positions to newcomers needs to be executed smoothly with minimal disruption and continuity in performance so the organisation can maintain a stable environment and achieve its mission (Kim, Hon, & Grant, 2009; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

When newcomers first enter an organisation, they need to make sense of the organisation and its environment (Louis, 1980; Weick, 2008). Learning reduces tension and stress that arises from joining a new, unfamiliar organisation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Although most newcomers go through a similar adjustment process, newcomers vary in terms of how they adjust, how long it takes them to adjust, what their adjustment outcomes are, and whether adjustment is achieved or not achieved (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Newcomers discover what information they need to

learn, such as what they need to do and how such tasks are typically done in the organisation, in order to know how to do their jobs properly, and they may differ in how they go about getting this information. For example, to learn about process and procedures in a new organisation, some newcomers may approach colleagues and ask questions, whilst others may find answers themselves by looking at an organisation's process and procedures manual. In all situations, newcomers learn the rules, norms, procedures, and processes of the organisation to understand how they can use these guidelines to achieve successful performance; thus, learning is central to organisational socialisation (Klein & Heuser, 2008), and newcomers are vital to the organisation because their learning and performance contributes to the organisation's ongoing success.

Newcomers' learning is broadly important to achieving newcomer adjustment (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007; Bauer & Erdogan, 2012; Bretz & Judge, 1994; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002; Kim, Cable, & Kim, 2005; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Kristof, 1996; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b) and especially important when it comes to person-organisation fit (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Specifically, one particularly valuable outcome of learning is that it enables newcomers to determine how well they fit in the organisation in terms of value congruence (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007). Newcomers perceive greater value congruence and are a good fit in the organisation when their values and the organisation's values match (Vogel, Rodell, & Lynch, 2016). Newcomers who are able to learn about an organisation upon entry and find that they fit in with the organisation in terms of sharing similar values, are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, more likely to see future career opportunities for themselves in the organisation, and thereby are less likely to quit the organisation (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012; Kristof, 1996). Such future career opportunities are referred as future prospects by Taormina (2004); employees who rate themselves as having high future prospects perceive they have a high likelihood of developing a good career in the organisation.

Individuals can achieve positive outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and reduced likelihood of leaving an organisation, to the extent that the organisational socialisation process results in person-organisation fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Kristof, 1996). Hence, person-organisation fit is relevant to

newcomers as well as organisations, because newcomers who feel that they fit obtain satisfaction from their roles, promote positive attitudes in the organisation, and help organisations reduce the costs of employees turnover (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Judge, Kammeyer-Mueller, Weiss, & Hulin, 2017; Saari & Judge, 2004; Saks et al., 2007).

Two types person-organisation fit can be distinguished: Perceived fit and actual fit; the former relates to employees' own perceptions of fit, whereas the latter relates to the relationship between two independent measures of fit, usually taken from the individual employee and the organisation respectively (Kristof, 1996). In one study, newcomers' were assessed upon entry and after four months using measurements of both perceived fit and actual fit, and findings revealed that socialisation tactics influence perceived fit, but not actual fit (Cooper-Thomas, Van Vianen, & Anderson, 2004). In a review of person-organisation fit, perceived fit was shown to be more relevant measure to newcomers when they join the new organisation (Kristof, 1996) because fit is relevant measure of an individual's judgement on how well he or she fits well in an organisation. Moreover, Kristof (1996) reported that organisational socialisation processes lead to learning, which in turn leads to increases in person-organisation fit. Newcomer learning is thus likely to bring about changes in person-organisation fit and, thereby, on proximal outcomes of person-organisation fit such as job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit. By the same token, distal outcomes of learning such as job attitudes may impact newcomers' performance, and their likelihood of remaining or leaving their new organisation (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012). Distal outcomes of newcomer learning are also likely to change over time from the effects of both learning and person-organisation fit.

In turn, person-organisation fit can be seen as an outcome as well as a predictor (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012). Moreover, person-organisation fit may mediate between newcomer learning and distal outcomes of learning such as job attitudes newcomers develop (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012). That is, newcomers who experience a higher level of person-organisation fit may also, in turn, have greater job satisfaction, perceive greater future prospects, and have reduced intent to quit. Following this, this study proposes and analyses a model of newcomer adjustment that illustrates the mediating role of person-organisation fit between newcomer learning and selected distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment: Job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit. The proposed model of newcomer adjustment is shown in Figure 1.

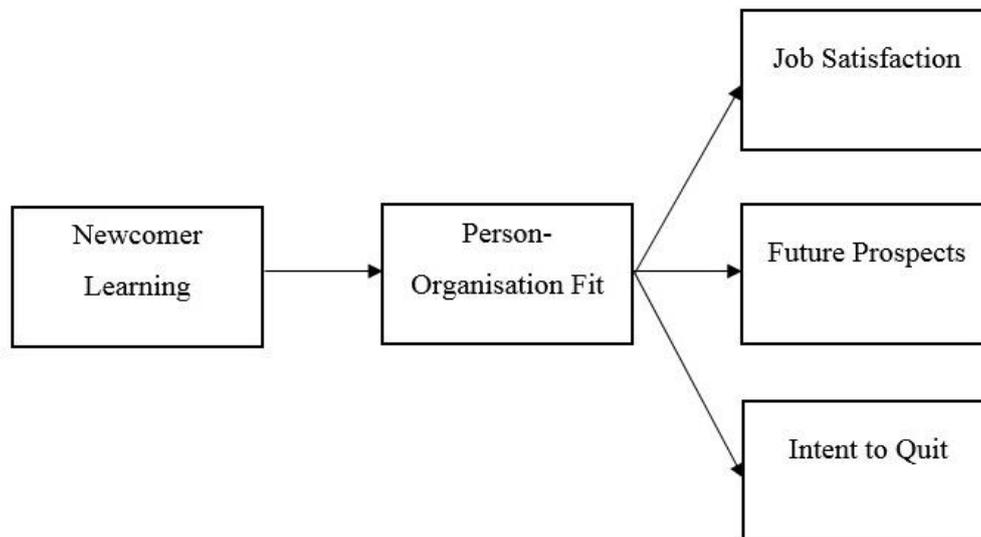


Figure 1: Model of newcomer adjustment

This study makes four contributions to the literature. First, when compared with previous studies with sample sizes ranging from 105 to 600 participants (Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer & Erdogan, 2012; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004), this study provides a relatively large sample of newcomers ( $N = 550$ ). A large sample size has a lower margin of error because it better represents the population the data has been sampled from and it yields more meaningful results compared with a small sample size. This ensures more confidence in the robustness of findings. Second, the present study provides data from participants with diverse backgrounds as represented across the demographic variables, for example, age ranged from 18 to 65 years with an average age of 35.55 years and average work experience ranged from 1 to 30 years with the average being 13 years. Research conducted with a large and diverse sample increases the generalisability of results, such that the findings of the present study are more likely to be transferrable to other samples of newcomers. Third, the study met the criteria of reducing social desirability biases because anonymity and confidentiality was assured throughout the research process (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Specifically, no uniquely identifying data were collected, and the responses cannot be linked back to individual respondents, decreasing any pressure on respondents to answer in a socially desirable way, which can otherwise be a source of common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff et al., 2012).

Fourth, the present study represents an important extension of literature because it investigates the mediating effects of person-organisation fit for three variables: Job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit. In addition, numerous organisational socialisation studies have investigated newcomer learning outcomes and perceptions, with job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and intent to quit being common measures (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Wanous, 1977). Prior research has particularly focused on traditional distal socialisation outcomes such as job satisfaction and intent to quit (Bauer et al., 2007; Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994a). The present study acknowledges traditional distal socialisation outcomes of newcomers' adjustment (i.e., job satisfaction and intent to quit) and takes a further step in including future prospects as a distal outcome. Those three distal outcomes are presented in chronological order from the predictor variable of newcomer learning, through a mediator variable of person-organisation fit; illustrated in Figure 1.

## **2. Literature Review**

This section provides a critical review of prior research on organisational socialisation, focusing on newcomer learning and person-organisation fit as antecedents of newcomer adjustment. Weick's (2008) theory of sensemaking underpins the research, focusing on newcomers learning how to interpret their new environment through sensemaking, and in turn enabling newcomers to attain fit into that organisation. These arguments lead into hypotheses that provide the framework for the present study.

### **2.1. Theory of sensemaking**

Newcomers learn to understand the organisation and the industry the organisation operates in to make sense of the way the company works (Rollag, 2004). Sensemaking is defined as a rationalisation process whereby people search for meaning in situations such as continuous change or decision creation which involve ongoing development, and through this are able to clarify and justify events (Weick, 2008). Sensemaking occurs in a cyclical manner and constitutes a sequence of events over time (Weick, 2008). Moreover, sensemaking is not about getting it right but about finding information and having a working model that allows understanding of ongoing events in the organisational environment (Weick, 2008). The organisational environment involves numerous processes and stakeholders. Therefore, people are always trying to make sense of the way the organisation does things in different circumstances that involve technical jargon, language, and culture. In other words, an ongoing learning process is inevitable in the work environment. Newcomers to organisations have to make sense of their new environment, and the seminal work of Louis (1980) provides an approach to understanding the issues they face in regard to their expectations and actual experiences of the environment.

Early work by Louis (1980) emphasises the importance of learning in order to accurately interpret various types of differences that exist between newcomers' expectations and actual experiences of the environment. Louis identified change, contrast, and surprise as three such types of difference. Change refers to external objective differences such as physical location, title, and salary. Contrast represents newcomers' subjectively perceived differences between the old and new setting. Surprise refers to differences between newcomers' expectations and actual experiences

when entering the new organisation. Such expectations, such as cultural assumptions, may be formed before or after entering the organisation. Newcomers need help in developing situation- or culture-specific interpretations to make sense of what is happening in the work environment (Louis, 1980).

Integrating these ideas leads to defining sensemaking during socialisation as a cognitive process in which newcomers are surprised by events and then try to interpret and look for the underlying meanings of these surprises through interactions and observations of the organisational environment (Louis, 1980; Weick, 2008). In applying the sensemaking process to newcomers, Saks and Ashforth (1997a) proposed that the sensemaking process directly influences information acquisition, thereby reducing newcomers' uncertainty and increasing the effects of learning in various socialisation dimensions such as performance proficiency, people, politics, language, history, and organisational goals and values. Likewise, Bauer et al. (2007) noted that sensemaking is critical for newcomers when diagnosing and interpreting surprises, and newcomers use background information provided by organisational insiders to enable sensemaking. Saks and Ashforth (1997a) also proposed a model that organisational socialisation is primarily a learning process for newcomers, which is consistent with prior research (Chao et al., 1994a). Through learning about their role and organisation, newcomers strive to achieve a working model that enables them to successfully navigate their new organisation (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a).

## **2.2. Person-organisation Fit**

Related to this idea of learning about and understanding the work environment is the concept of how well a newcomer fits in with the organisation and the subsequent effects this fit can have. The theory of work adjustment emphasises the interdependence of employees and work environments (Bretz & Judge, 1994). It proposes that an individual achieves job satisfaction if his or her needs are met by the environment, and there is a relationship between fit in terms of individual and organisational characteristics exerting influence on job satisfaction (Bretz & Judge, 1994). The theory of work adjustment also suggests that individuals who fit with the organisation should achieve high levels of success over time (Bretz & Judge, 1994). The success leads to pay increases, promotions to advanced job levels, and the individual is more likely to encounter more

supportive working environments than those who do not fit with the organisation (Bretz & Judge, 1994).

Also related to how well newcomers fit in with organisations is the attraction-selection-attrition framework developed by Schneider (1987). This framework posits that “organisations are the people in them: That the people make the place” (p. 450). Schneider described that in the attraction process, people are differentially attracted to organisations based on their own interests and personalities. For example, similar types of individuals are attracted not only to specific types of jobs, but also to specific types of organisations. On the other hand, organisations need people with specific kinds of competencies that fit organisations best and achieve this fit through the selection process. Subsequently, people leave the organisation through attrition if they do not feel a sense of fit with the organisation, which may be due to either the individual or the organisation or both changing over time.

Two other types of fit described in organisational socialisation literature are person-vocation fit and person job-fit. Person-vocation fit applies to the broadest level of work environment, and it suggest that people select occupations based on congruence (Kristof, 1996). Person-job fit applies more narrowly to a specific job, as it is focused on the fit between job tasks and individuals, rather than on fit between individuals and the organisation as a whole (Kristof, 1996). Whilst organisational socialisation literature describes various types of fit between employees and aspects of the work environment, person-organisation fit has broad relevance to newcomers in different settings because person-organisation fit does not depend on whether newcomers work alone or in shifting groups (Kristof, 1996).

Person-organisation fit is defined by Kristof (1996) as “the comparability between people and organisations that occurs when (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both” (p. 4). The focus of the present study is person-organisation fit theory, which proposes that employees whose values match or fit those of the organisation achieve more positive outcomes, including higher job satisfaction and lower turnover (Cable & Parsons, 2001).

Expanding on Kristof (1996)'s definition above, two conceptualisations of person-organisation fit identified in the literature are supplementary versus complementary fit and needs-supplies versus demands-abilities. The first conceptualisation, supplementary versus complementary fit, has features similar to those of the attrition phase in Schneider (1987) attraction-selection-attrition framework. Individuals may supplement or possess characteristics which are similar to other individuals in the organisation, or they may have characteristics which complement or add to the organisation something that is missing in relation to outcomes of value congruence (Edwards & Cable, 2009). The second conceptualisation, needs-supplies versus demands-abilities, includes two-way interactions of supply and demand between individuals and organisations. Organisations demand contributions from their employees, and therefore, employees supply their abilities to the organisation as demanded (Kristof, 1996). Due to the various conceptualisations and operationalisations of the nature of fit, "fit" has considerable ambiguity in its lack of correct measurement (Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995; B. Schneider, 2001). Having discussed other perspectives of fit, person-organisation fit is achieved when both the employee and the organisation have the same values that guide employees' behaviour, and in turn contribute to and reflect the organisational climate (Kristof, 1996). Organisations recruit individuals during the selection process primarily on the basis of person-organisation fit (Kristof, 1996). Whilst person-organisation fit encompasses a range of conceptualisations, the present study adopts the need-supplies perspective because fit occurs when both entities contribute to each other and add value to achieve the organisation's mission.

Person-organisation fit can be seen as an outcome of organisational socialisation (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012; Gruman et al., 2006). In fact, it has been shown that socialisation tactics have positive socialisation outcomes including person-organisation fit, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment because those tactics provide newcomers with information reducing uncertainty at entry (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012). Two other types of fit are perceived fit and actual fit used by organisational representatives to measure fit either directly or indirectly, with perceived fit being a direct measurement and actual fit being an indirect measurement. (Kristof, 1996). Perceived fit relates to employees' attitudes and perceptions of fit, and actual fit, which relates to whether employees actually fit in the job and achieve performance outcomes

(Kristof, 1996). In a study assessing newcomers' person-organisation fit over time, Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004) found that organisational socialisation tactics influence perceived fit, but do not influence actual fit, suggesting that newcomers do not change their own values in the first months of socialisation; moreover, perceived fit and actual fit became more congruent over time due to newcomers' fit perceptions at entry were more positive and decreased after a few months of entry. In addition, when an individual perceives that he or she fits well in the organisation, it is likely to result job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and lower intent to quit (Kristof, 1996). Therefore, person-organisation fit has been shown to be both predictor and outcome of the organisational socialisation process (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Kristof, 1996), and is central in the organisational socialisation process.

### **2.3. Newcomer learning**

A newcomer is defined as an employee who has joined an organisation recently, although the actual post-entry tenure has been debated. Some studies argue that newcomers retaining this title for an average tenure of 9 up to 15 months, depending on the number of new hires entering subsequently (Rollag, 2004), whilst other researchers refer to newcomers as employees in their first year post-entry (Bauer et al., 2007). Individuals entering organisations as newcomers feel stressed due to their uncertainty about the environment (Louis, 1980). Thus, newcomers try to reduce this uncertainty and make sense of the new environment by learning about the organisation and how to fit in (Chao, Kozlowski, Major, & Gardner, 1994b; Klein & Heuser, 2008; Louis, 1980; Weick, 2008). This process of sensemaking, uncertainty reduction, learning, and assimilation is fundamental to organisational socialisation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Thus, organisational socialisation can be described as the learning process wherein individuals adjust to a new or changed role within the organisation (Chao et al., 1994a).

Newcomer learning is an informal role development process within the overall organisational socialisation context that reflects newcomers attempts to understand and assimilate to the salient features, approaches, and events that define the new setting, to resolve their confusion and uncertainty, and to integrate into the social and organisational work context (Chao et al., 1994b). Newcomers are proactive learning agents in organisational socialisation literature (Chao et al., 1994b; Thomas &

Anderson, 1998). Organisational socialisation views the learning process as an effective way for newcomers to acquire the information, attitudes, and behaviours to become successful organisation members (Chao et al., 1994a).

Newcomers need to learn to achieve successful newcomer adjustment (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Antecedents of newcomer adjustment, specifically information seeking and organisational socialisation tactics, have been shown to be correlated with indicators of newcomer adjustment such as role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance (Bauer et al., 2007). Consistent with these results, Saks and Ashforth (1997a) found that information seeking plays an important role in uncertainty reduction. When the role requirements are unclear, newcomers need to be proactive in order to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty (Gruman et al., 2006).

After an individual enters the organisation, the individual's person-organisation fit is influenced by both individual behaviours and organisational socialisation practices (Kristof, 1996). In addition, organisational socialisation leads to learning which in turn leads to increases in person-organisation fit (Kristof, 1996). Because learning predicts person-organisation fit, newcomers adjusting to accept organisational values which is an essential component of theory of work adjustment (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Newcomers learn from experienced organisation members through formal organisational socialisation processes; these processes provide learning that reduces newcomer uncertainty and enables greater person-organisation fit (Cable & Parsons, 2001). Formal organisational socialisation processes increase the congruence between newcomers' values and perceptions of existing organisational values (Cable & Parsons, 2001). Newcomer learning of organisational socialisation content impacts perceptions of fit, making person-organisation fit a proximal outcome of learning (Klein & Heuser, 2008). A study of 198 newcomers at global professional services firm over a 6-month period found that newcomers' socialisation had stronger positive person-organisation fit after the first 4 months of socialisation than at organisational entry (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004). Similarly, research with 129 university graduates following them up after 6 months and 2 years after organisation entry revealed that newcomers who experienced stronger socialisation showed greater person-organisation fit perceptions (Cable & Parsons, 2001). In addition, of those 129 newcomer respondents, 32 had left between 6 months and 2 years and 6 months of organisation entry and these 32 newcomers had low value congruence and they did not perceive a good fit with their organisation.

Therefore, it is consistent with Schneider (1987) theory of attraction-selection-attrition, that when employees do not achieve person-organisation fit with their organisation, they are more likely to leave (Cable & Parsons, 2001).

Research has recognised the central role newcomer learning plays in facilitating newcomer adjustment and has recognised what newcomers need to learn in the organisational socialisation process (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Content Areas of Socialisation (CAS) presents six domains of learning developed by Chao et al. (1994a) allowing researchers to comprehend newcomer learning domains across different levels within the organisation. Newcomers learn organisational values throughout the organisational socialisation process (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Understanding organisational values allows employees to complete their tasks in ways that align with these values, contributing to the overall success of the organisation. This often links to motivation, as well as achieving organisationally-relevant outcomes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, retention, and performance (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Newcomers must learn organisations' expectations through the adjustment process (Bauer et al., 2007), including the customs, rituals, history, language, and values (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Newcomers learn their roles through work relationships with other organisational members within the organisation and even socialise with coworkers in nonwork-related matters based on their interests and behaviours (Chao et al., 1994a). When newcomers identify knowledgeable people in the organisation who are willing to share their knowledge, the subsequent learning by newcomers can result in their more efficient adjustment. For example, newcomers receive immediate and accurate information in the event of seeking information on a particular task. The CAS measure is used in this study because it is robust in providing a comprehensive coverage of the learning domains in newcomer adjustment and has become a commonly used measure for studies in organisational socialisation (Chao et al., 1994a, Klein & Heuser, 2008). Thus, the present study will explore the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Newcomer learning is positively associated with person-organisation fit.

## **2.4. Job satisfaction**

Newcomers learn about a new organisational context through the process of organisational socialisation, and their resulting job attitudes can be based on experiences perceived as either good or bad (Boswell, Shipp, Payne, & Culbertson,

2009). Nowadays, the need to measure, understand, and improve employees' job attitudes is important for organisations (Saari & Judge, 2004) because job attitudes have influence on employee performance and intent to stay with or leave the organisation (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012).

A particularly important job attitude is job satisfaction, because of its link with employee performance (Saari & Judge, 2004). In addition, having satisfied employees who enjoy their work links not only to performance, but also to happiness, an outcome which has significant value and consequences for both individuals and organisations (Fisher, 2010). Saari & Judge (2004) describe job satisfaction as an employee's viewpoints or attitudes towards his or her job, career, and organisation. Job satisfaction has also been defined as an employee's overall evaluation of a job which can range from positive to negative (Judge et al., 2017). Amongst newcomer attitudes that have been studied, job satisfaction is most commonly used as a distal indicator of how successful socialisation has been (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Moreover, job satisfaction has been considered as a long-term indicator of newcomer adjustment in several studies (Boswell et al., 2009; Judge et al., 2017; Thomas & Anderson, 1998).

Employee perceptions develop over time as part of the sensemaking process of organisational socialisation. Person-organisation fit reflects sensemaking when newcomers feel they are integrated into their new environment; when employees do not have clear roles or are uncertain about their roles, they have lower job satisfaction and are more likely to leave (Bauer et al., 2007), whereas newcomers with higher person-organisation fit are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Therefore, sensemaking processes enables newcomers to learn the ropes of new organisation, and in turn learning reflects person-organisation fit to help facilitate newcomer adjustment, and distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment such as job satisfaction (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012).

Individuals who meet some minimum level of person-organisation fit will be more satisfied with their jobs, will stay longer, and will have a view on their future prospects in the organisation (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Schnedier et al., 1995). Therefore, job satisfaction is predicted by proximal outcomes of newcomer learning and person-organisation fit (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Saks & Ashforth,

1997a). Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) found that person-organisation fit had strong correlations with job satisfaction (.44) and intent to quit (-.35). In other words, person-organisation fit is likely to have a direct effect on job satisfaction. Thus, the present study will examine the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Person-organisation fit is positively associated with job satisfaction.

In addition, newcomer learning has also been linked with job satisfaction, as newcomers who learn about their role and know more about their company have higher job satisfaction (Boswell et al., 2009; Taormina, 1999) Through learning, newcomers can feel competent and understand their roles, thereby being more satisfied. This is important in supporting a learning content approach to organisational socialisation because learning content provides a link between organisational socialisation and learned job attitudes such as job satisfaction (Chao et al., 1994b). Similarly, positive attitudinal outcomes have been accepted as distal outcomes for both newcomers and organisations (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002). The present study is focused on job satisfaction as a distal indicator of newcomer adjustment that is achieved through newcomer learning.

Considering that learning influences fit perceptions and, subsequently, other outcomes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and intent to quit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Kristof, 1996), both newcomer learning and person-organisation fit can be expected to predict job satisfaction, with person-organisation fit also mediating the relationship between newcomer learning and job satisfaction. Thus, the present study will explore the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Newcomer learning has a positive indirect effect on job satisfaction via person-organisation fit.

## **2.5. Future prospects**

Future prospects refers to the employees' long-term view of their future career opportunities with the organisation (Taormina, 1994). Future prospects is one of four domains that Taormina (1994) theorised in the Organisational Socialisation Inventory (OSI). It is an important distal outcome of newcomer learning as employees who feel they have positive career opportunities in the organisation are likely to remain with the organisation and have successful careers (Taormina, 1994).

Employees who have greater value congruence with their organisation, that is, they have greater person-organisation fit, are consequently likely to perceive more positive future career opportunities (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Saks and Ashforth (1997a) discussed that newcomers' learning of organisational goals and values is strongly related to person-organisation fit, which in turn affects newcomers' career effectiveness. In a similar vein, Bretz and Judge (1994) stated that employees who do not have fit with their organisation may be limited in their future career prospects. Thus, the present study will explore the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Person-organisation fit is positively associated with future prospects.

Employees must learn and understand various aspects of an organisation to be effective in their career which, in aggregate, creates a motivated workforce for the organisation (Tabvuma, Georgellis, & Lange, 2015). Training enables employees' learning about their roles and in turn, enables them to adjust to organisational norms (Taormina, 1999). Training is a way of upgrading an individual's job skills and when provided by the organisation, encourages employees to perform their tasks (Taormina, 1999). Similarly, training especially orientation training that focuses on newcomers' learning improves understanding their new workplace and in addition, training leads to increase skills and thereby, newcomers foresee career prospects in the organisation (Tabvuma et al., 2015). Their empirical analysis from British Household Panel Survey from 1999 to 2008 suggested that training provides newcomers learning that enables them to improve their career development plans and increase their opportunities for promotion.

Such future prospects within the employing organisation has been a focus of Taormina's work (Taormina, 1994, 1999, 2004); however, it is not a common feature in other newcomer studies. Future prospects is related to organisational commitment, in that employees are willing to commit their time and effort when their employing organisation provides them with positive future prospects (Taormina, 1999, 2004). Therefore, arguments are extrapolated for future prospects based on research into organizational commitment. In a study of 247 newcomer casino dealers (Kuok & Taormina, 2015), future prospects was strongly positively correlated with affective organizational commitment. Thus, when new employees believe they have good future prospects in that organisation, they have a stronger emotional attachment. Past research

has shown that person-organisation fit is associated with organisational commitment. In an empirical study of changes in person-organisation fit for 198 newcomers in a global professional services company based in London, Cooper-Thomas et al., (2004) showed that newcomers changed their perceptions of their person-organisation fit from organisational entry through to four months post-entry, reflecting their learning about the organisation. Moreover, across these four months, PO fit became more strongly correlated with organisational commitment, which is akin to future prospects. Thus, when newcomers learned about the organisation, they perceived better PO fit, and concurrently reported greater loyalty and intention to pursue their career within their organisation. Similarly then, learning is likely to be associated with higher levels of future prospects; and further, it is proposed that this process is mediated by PO fit.

As explained earlier, newcomers' learning is likely to have impact on changes in person-organisation fit and thereby, on proximal outcomes of person-organisation fit such as job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit. Therefore, distal outcomes of newcomer learning are also likely to change over time from the effects of both learning and person-organisation fit. Hence, newcomer learning may also influence distal outcomes through person-organisation fit. Overall, future prospects are foreseen to be predicted both by newcomer learning and person-organisation fit, with person-organisation fit also mediating the relationship between learning and future prospects. Thus, the present study will explore the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: Newcomer learning has a positive indirect effect on future prospects via person-organisation fit.

## **2.6. Intent to quit**

Many factors have been attributed to increasing intent to quit with newcomers potentially more vulnerable to thoughts of learning. In previous decades, researchers have addressed the question of whether newcomers who experience unmet expectations are more likely to voluntarily leave an organisation (Louis, 1980). There is a long history of evidence suggesting that when newcomers experience unmet expectations, this can lead to intent to quit and to actually quitting (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006; Louis, 1980; Wanous, 1977). Researchers who investigated discontinuation events that triggered turnover found that when employees experienced critical work events, such as interpersonal conflicts with co-workers or supervisors, it

predicted quitting (Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, & Ahlburg, 2005). Intent to quit is an important measure for organisations to gauge whether employees intend on leaving the organisation in the near future, and it is moderately positively correlated with actual turnover (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006; Sager & Griffeth, 1998).

Intent to quit is a common measure of the success of organisational socialisation. Ideally, following an investment in terms of time and money in recruitment and selection processes made by both newcomers and organisations, newcomers will intend to stay with an organisation. Post-entry, both organisations and newcomers try to build a productive work relationship that is reflected in higher person-organisation fit. Newcomers who have learned about their organisation and achieve person-organisation fit report a lower intent to quit (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Person-organisation fit also predicts lower level of turnover and lower intention to leave (Chao et al., 1994b). Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) showed that person-organisation fit had a moderate negative correlation with intent to quit (-.35). Moreover, Bretz and Judge (1994) found that tenure in an organisation was strongly affected by person-organisation fit. More specifically, the better fit the newcomer perceives with the organisation, the less likely he or she is to leave the organisation. In other words, there is a negative relationship between person-organisation fit and the desire to leave. Thus, the present study will explore the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: Person-organisation fit is negatively associated with intent to quit.

As intent to quit is a distal and undesirable outcome of newcomer adjustment, newcomer learning has a negative relationship with intent quit (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005). Intent to quit is therefore a distal outcome of newcomer learning predicted by proximal outcomes including person-organisation fit (Bauer et al., 2007; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Wanous, 1977). Saks et al. (2007) showed that perceived person-organisation fit mediated between socialisation tactics and distal socialisation outcomes such as intent to quit and job satisfaction. Similarly, turnover is also one of distal outcomes in Saks and Ashforth (1997a)'s process model of organisational socialisation. In other words, perceived fit is a proximal outcome of organisational socialisation tactics, whilst intention to quit is a distal outcome of organisational socialisation. As was pointed out in the introduction of this paper, learning is vital to socialisation, and therefore, a mediation effect of person-organisation fit is likely to

exist between newcomer learning and intent to quit. Thus, the present study will explore the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7: Newcomer learning has a negative indirect effect on intent to quit via person-organisation fit.

In summary, intent to quit is a common measure of the success of socialisation and, as a distal outcome, has been found to be predicted by both learning and person-organisation fit, with person-organisation fit also mediating the relationship between tactics and intent to quit (Saks et al., 2007). The present study will investigate the relationship between person-organisation fit and intent to quit, and also explore the mediating role of person-organisation fit between newcomer learning and intent to quit. Bauer et al. (2007)'s meta-analysis investigates distal outcomes such as performance, job attitudes, and intentions to remain. They found that when newcomers experience a better socialisation process, they perform better, enjoy their work more, and wish to stay in their new organisation. Distal outcomes are important as indicators of the ultimate outcomes of organisational socialisation, indicating the effect of newcomer organisational socialisation to enable understanding of newcomer performance and intentions to leave the new organisation (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012).

### **3. Method**

This section briefly describes epistemology and ontology followed by the theoretical perspective upon which research assumptions were grounded. It then discusses and justifies the methodology and methods selected to gather and analyse data for hypothesis testing.

#### **3.1. Methodology**

Epistemology provides a philosophical background for deciding what kinds of knowledge are adequate and legitimate (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2014). Crotty (1998) suggests that epistemology is “how we know what we know” (p. 8). Ontology, according to Gray (2014), is concerned with what it means to know, and two kinds of ontological beliefs are “being” and “becoming.” Crotty (1998) holds the view that epistemology informs theoretical perspectives and that a paradigm is a basic set of beliefs that guides action. One of the main research paradigms is positivism, which emphasises people in an organisation as the object of study and dictates that the researcher or observer maintains an independent stance from the subject of study so as to be able to propose cause and effect for a situation (Crotty, 1998). In other words, in positivism, the researcher is independent, focused on facts, and distanced from participants, and from this position can find patterns, predict outcomes, and test hypotheses. The present study is firmly rooted within an ontological stance of “being” or “realism” and an epistemological stance of “objectivism” with positivism as the research paradigm (Gray, 2014).

The researcher develops methodology to achieve his or her research objectives (Crotty, 1998). The choice of research methodology is influenced by several factors such as the objective of the research, which may involve discovering truth in the real world or exploring people’s behaviours in natural field settings (Gray, 2014). The choice of research methodology is also affected by the researcher’s beliefs and attitudes towards the research which start with the researcher’s theoretical perspective. The researcher can usually either take a deductive approach, wherein theory is tested in a particular setting, or an inductive approach, wherein models or understanding emerge from the data (Gray, 2014). The research methodology chosen for the present study is the deductive approach with quantitative data collection and analysis.

## **3.2. Participants, Procedure, and Measures**

U.S. newcomers who had been working in a company for up to 9 months were invited to participate in an online survey. Participants were recruited via an online sample provider. The 550 participants were almost evenly split in terms of gender (49.6% female) and were aged 18 to 65 years with an average age of 35.55 years. Participants' average tenure was 6 months, and average work experience ranged from 1 to 30 years with the average being 13 years. Responses were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 representing *strongly disagree* and 7 representing *strongly agree*.

### **3.2.1 Newcomer Learning**

Newcomer learning was measured using an aggregated measure covering the six CAS dimensions (Chao et al., 1994a). This measure was chosen not only because it is considered the most reflective of the areas of learning, but also because it may be generalisable across industries and occupations (Chao et al., 1994a).

The survey consisted of five items for history, five items for language, five items for people, six items for the performance, six items for the politics, and seven items for organisational goals and values. All survey items are presented in Appendix section. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Example item includes "I have learned how to successfully perform in an efficient manner."

### **3.2.2 Person-Organisation Fit**

Person-organisation fit was measured using Cable and Parsons (2001)'s person-organisation fit scale which measures employees' subjective perceptions. The scale included four 7-point Likert scale items, for example, "The values of the organisation are similar to my own values."

### **3.2.3 Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction was measured using one item: "In general, I am satisfied with my job." As with other measures, responses were scored on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Using a single-item measure was justified as Scarpello and Campbell (1983) revealed single-item global measures of job satisfaction to be acceptable. On the other hand, Bretz and Judge (1994) claim that single-item measures of job satisfaction raise the concern of reliability. However, prior research has

shown the particular single-item measure that was used for the present study to be adequate when compared with different measures of job satisfaction (Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997).

### **3.2.4 Future Prospects**

Future prospects was measured using one of the four domains from Taormina (1994)'s Organisational Socialisation Inventory (OSI), which measures employees' views on the future of the organisation as well as their future career opportunities within the organisation. The survey used five 7-point Likert scale items with possible responses ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) including "There are many chances for a good career within this organisation."

### **3.2.5 Intent to Quit**

Intent to quit measures whether employees expect to leave the organisation in the near future (Sager & Griffeth, 1998). Intent to quit was measured using a single item: "I intend to leave the organisation within two years." Responses were rated on a 7-point Likert scale with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 7 being *strongly agree*. This single item measure was used instead of a multiple-item measure because a single item measure is reliable in determining newcomers' intentions to leave the organisation once they have been employed for nine months (Scarpello & Campbell, 1983).

## **3.3. Analysis**

Data collected for CAS dimensions, person-organisation fit, job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit were entered into IBM® SPSS® Statistics (Version 24) and screened for accuracy, missing values, and fit between their distributions and the assumptions of multivariate analysis. First, univariate descriptive statistics were inspected to identify skewness and kurtosis with univariate outliers. Second, internal consistency reliabilities and intercorrelations of all study variables were examined using pairwise plots for nonlinearity and heteroscedasticity. Third, univariate outliers were corrected. Fourth, three types of logarithmic transformation for variables with skewness and kurtosis were assessed but ultimately were not used as they did not consistently improve normality across all variables. Finally, bootstrapping was carried out in each step of correlation analysis for Hypotheses 1 to 4 and mediation analysis was carried out to test Hypotheses 3,5, and 7 for significance of regression, total effects, direct effects, and indirect effects using the PROCESS macro for SPSS, Version 3.0 (Hayes, 2018).

Two data sets, one with and one without outliers corrected, were compared throughout the analyses. Comparisons across analyses showed minimal differences, and therefore the current study used data set after replacing outliers. Prior to mediation analysis, a cautious approach was taken due to strong or weak correlations of all model variables and the likelihood of nonsignificant paths being detected. Baron and Kenny (1986) suggested that three conditions must be met for mediation analysis. First, the predictor variable must affect the mediator variable (path a in Figure 1). Second, the predictor must be shown to affect the outcome variable (path c in Figure 1). Third, the mediator variable must affect the outcome variable (path b in Figure 1). Hayes (2009) and Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010) argue that when significant paths linking predictor to mediator or mediator to outcome are found, mediation exists. Baron and Kenny (1986) posit that all variables need to be related, in other words, full mediation is required, whereas Hayes (2009) and Zhao et al. (2010) reveal that partial or joint correlation is significant enough in determining indirect or mediated effect despite no direct effect when carrying out mediation analysis. The latter approach is taken in the present study: When partial correlation is found in mediation analysis, this is taken to show that mediation exists between path a and path b, from predictor to outcome, through the mediator variable even when the direct effect from predictor variable to outcome variable (path c) is not found (see Figure 2).

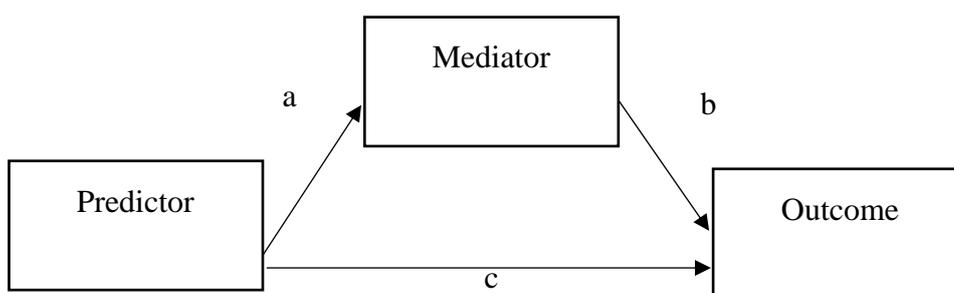


Figure 2: Diagram shows direct (path c) and indirect (paths a, b) effects

## 4. Results

Descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliabilities, and intercorrelations of all study variables are presented in Table 1. Internal reliabilities measures  $\alpha$  for variables concerned ranged from .83 to .93 for multiple items and correlations are shown along the diagonal ranged from -.01 to .82 for intent to quit and work experience in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliabilities, mean, standard deviation and intercorrelations of the scales are used.

Variables	$\alpha$	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age		18.55	11.75								
2. Gender		1.50	.50	-.06							
3. Work experience (years)		12.92	9.69	.82	-.06						
4. Newcomer learning	.83	4.82	.60	-.09	-.19	-.10					
5. Person-organisation fit	.90	5.67	1.12	-.04	-.06	-.04	.53				
6. Job satisfaction		5.96	.90	-.02	-.05	.03	.41	.68			
7. Future prospects	.93	5.59	1.23	-.08	-.10	-.08	.52	.73	.57		
8. Intent to quit		3.63	1.96	-.15	-.01	-.14	.07	-.38	-.31	-.36	

*Note.* Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) on reliabilities measures are reported for multiple items variables. Age ranged from 18 to 65 years with average age of 35.55 years,  $M = 35.55$ . Gender is coded 1 = male, 2 = female. All correlations equal to or greater than +/- .21 are reported along the diagonal and statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

As Table 1 shows, Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, and 6 are supported. Newcomer learning has a strong positive relationship with person-organisation fit,  $r = .53$ ,  $p < .05$  (Hypothesis 1). Person-organisation fit has strong positive association with job satisfaction,  $r = .68$ ,  $p < .05$  (Hypothesis 2). Person-organisation fit has strong positive correlation with future prospects,  $r = .73$ ,  $p < .05$  (Hypothesis 4). Person-organisation fit has strong negative association with intent to quit,  $r = -.38$ ,  $p < .05$  (Hypothesis 6). However, it is interesting to note that newcomer learning is not significantly correlated with intent to quit,  $r = .07$ ,  $p > .05$ , whilst newcomer learning is significantly correlated

with other two dependent variables: Job satisfaction,  $r = .41, p < .05$  and future prospects,  $r = .52, p < .05$ .

Mediation analysis was conducted to investigate if newcomers' perceptions of person-organisation fit mediated the relationship between newcomer learning and distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment, that is job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit. The results of the direct effect model are effectively regression results, with each outcome predicted from newcomer learning with the presence of person-organisation fit in the model. However, the direct effect model only reveals the relationship between the predictor variable (newcomer learning) and the outcome variables (job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit). On the other hand, the indirect effect model considers the path from the predictor variable (newcomer learning) to the mediator variable (person-organisation fit) as well as the path from the mediator variable (person-organisation fit) to each outcome variable (job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit).

Table 2 presents the mediation results of job satisfaction predicted from newcomer learning via person-organisation fit, whilst Figure 3 presents the diagram of newcomer learning through person-organisation to job satisfaction.

Table 2. Mediation results of job satisfaction predicted from newcomer learning and person-organisation fit

Variables	Model	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Person-organisation Fit	Direct effect	.63	.04	17.36	.000	.56	.70
Newcomer Learning	Direct effect	.14	.07	2.21	.028	.02	.27
Newcomer Learning via Person-Organisation Fit	Indirect effect	.59	.06			.48	.71
Newcomer Learning	Total effect	.73	.07	10.60	.000	.59	.86

*Note.* LLCI = Lower Level of Confidence Interval; ULCI= Upper Level of Confidence Interval based on 1,000 bootstrap samples at 95% confidence interval.

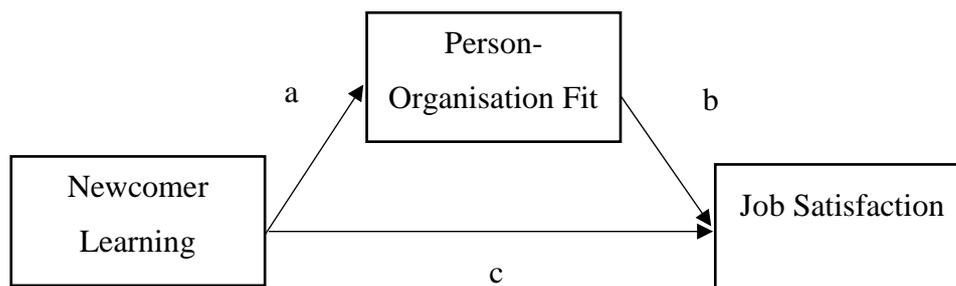


Figure 3: Diagram of newcomer learning through person-organisation to job satisfaction

As shown in Table 2, the direct effect results of job satisfaction predicted from person-organisation fit (path b in Figure 3) are  $b = .63$ ,  $se = .04$ , 95%  $CI [.56, .70]$ ,  $t = 17.36$ ,  $p < .01$ . There is a significant direct effect of person-organisation fit on job satisfaction,  $F(2,547) = 237.57$ ,  $p < .01$ . The direct effect model explains 47% of the variance in job satisfaction,  $R^2 = .47$ .

Next, I investigated the mediation model with the direct effect of learning on job satisfaction (path c in Figure 3), as well as the indirect effect via person-organisation fit. The results are presented in Table 2. In this mediation model, newcomer learning had a direct effect on job satisfaction,  $b = .14$ ,  $se = .07$ , 95%  $CI [.02, .27]$ ,  $t = 2.21$ ,  $p < .05$ . The positive  $b$  value for newcomer learning indicates that as learning increases, job satisfaction also increases. These relationships are in the direction predicted in the model in Figure 3. The indirect effect was significant also,  $b = .59$ ,  $se = .06$ , 95%  $CI [.48, .71]$ .

The final line in Table 2 shows the total effect of newcomer learning (predictor) on job satisfaction (outcome) if person-organisation fit is not in the model (path c in Figure 3). The total effect model reveals that newcomer learning significantly predicted job satisfaction,  $b = .73$ ,  $se = .07$ , 95%  $CI [.59, .86]$ ,  $p < .01$ . The total effect model shows the main effect of newcomer learning on job satisfaction,  $F(1,548) = 112.28$ ,  $p < .01$ , and accounts for 17% of the variance in job satisfaction,  $R^2 = .17$ . As is the case when person-organisation fit is included in the model, newcomer learning has a positive relationship with job satisfaction as shown by the positive  $b$  value. Overall, these results support Hypothesis 3 that the significant indirect effect is found from newcomer learning to job satisfaction via person-organisation fit. Note that the results were

replicated with the data where outliers had not been replaced, and similar results were obtained as per Table 2.

Table 3 presents the mediation results of future prospects predicted from newcomer learning and person organisation fit, whilst Figure 4 shows the diagram of newcomer learning through person-organisation fit to future prospects.

Table 3. Mediation results of future prospects predicted from newcomer learning and person-organisation fit

Variables	Model	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Person-organisation Fit	Direct effect	.78	.04	18.56	.000	.70	.86
Newcomer Learning	Direct effect	.45	.08	6.06	.000	.31	.60
Newcomer Learning via person-Organisation Fit	Indirect effect	.72	.07			.58	.87
Newcomer Learning	Total effect	1.18	.08	14.45	.000	1.02	1.34

*Note.* LLCI = Lower Level of Confidence Interval; ULCI= Upper Level of Confidence Interval based on 1,000 bootstrap samples at 95% confidence interval.

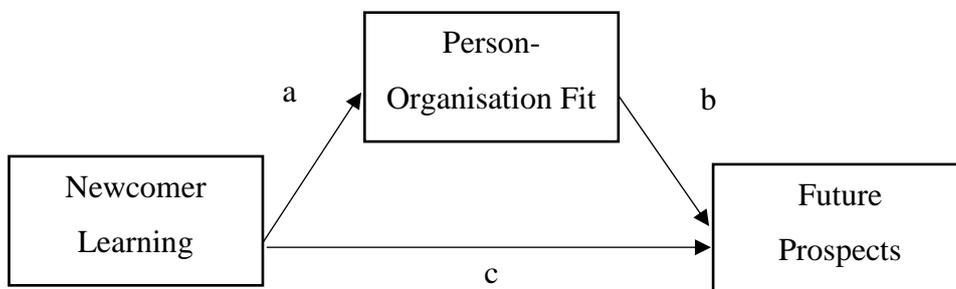


Figure 4: Diagram of newcomer learning through person-organisation fit to future prospects

As shown in Table 3, direct effect analysis results reveal that person-organisation fit significantly predicts future prospects (path b in Figure 4),  $b = .78$ ,  $se = .04$ , 95% *CI* [.70,.86],  $t = 18.56$ ,  $p < .01$ . Person-organisation fit predicts future prospects,  $F(2,547) = 341.95$ ,  $p < .01$ . The direct effect model accounts for 56% of the variance in future prospects,  $R^2 = .56$ .

The indirect effect in Figure 4 presents the mediation model with the direct effect of learning on future prospects (path c in Figure 4) and indirect effect via person-

organisation fit. Table 3 shows the mediation results of future prospects predicted from newcomer learning and person-organisation fit. Newcomer learning had a direct effect on future prospects,  $b = .45$ ,  $se = .08$ , 95%  $CI [.31,.60]$ ,  $t = 6.06$ ,  $p < .01$ . The relationships between newcomer learning and future prospects are provided as positive  $b$  value in the predicted direction in Figure 4. The relationships of all variables in the model from newcomer learning (predictor) through person-organisation fit (mediator) to future prospects (outcome) (paths a+b in Figure 4). There was a significant indirect effect of newcomer learning on future prospects through person-organisation fit,  $b = .72$ ,  $se = .07$ , 95%  $CI [.58,.87]$ .

In terms of the total effect of newcomer learning (predictor) on future prospects (outcome) shown as final line in Table 3, newcomer learning significantly predicted future prospects when person-organisation fit is not in the model (path c in Figure 4),  $b = 1.18$ ,  $se = .08$ , 95%  $CI [1.02,1.34]$ ,  $p < .01$ , explaining 28% of the variance in future prospects,  $R^2 = .28$ . The positive  $b$  value represents that newcomer learning has a positive relationship with future prospects if person-organisation fit is included in the model. The effect of newcomer learning on future prospects with the absence of person-organisation fit is,  $F(1,548) = 208.82$ ,  $p < .01$ . Hence, Hypothesis 5 is supported because significant indirect effect is evident from newcomer learning to future prospects through person-organisation fit. The results from data without outliers corrected were equivalent to the results shown in Table 3.

Table 4 presents the mediation results of intent to quit predicted from newcomer learning and person-organisation fit, whilst Figure 5 presents the diagram of newcomer learning through person-organisation fit to intent to quit.

Table 4. Mediation results of intent to quit predicted from newcomer learning and person-organisation fit

Variables	Model	$b$	$se$	$t$	$p$	$LLCI$	$ULCI$
Person-organisation Fit	Direct effect	-1.06	.08	-13.13	.000	-1.22	-.90
Newcomer Learning	Direct effect	1.22	.14	8.52	.000	.94	1.51
Newcomer Learning via Person-Organisation Fit	Indirect effect	-.98	.11			-1.21	-.77
Newcomer Learning	Total effect	.24	.14	1.72	.087	-.03	.52

*Note.* LLCI = Lower Level of Confidence Interval; ULCI= Upper Level of Confidence Interval based on 1,000 bootstrap samples at 95% confidence interval.

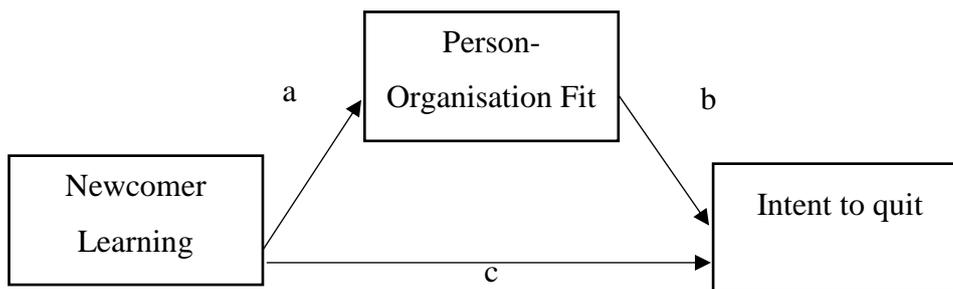


Figure 5: Diagram of newcomer learning through person-organisation fit to intent to quit

As shown in Table 4, person-organisation fit significantly predicts intent to quit (path b in Figure 5),  $b = -1.06$ ,  $se = .08$ , 95%  $CI [-1.22, -.90]$ ,  $t = -13.13$ ,  $p < .01$ . The direct effect model reveals that person-organisation fit significantly predicts intent to quit,  $F(2,547) = 88.19$ ,  $p < .01$ . The direct effect model explains 24% of the variance in intent to quit,  $R^2 = .24$ . The negative  $b$  value for person-organisation fit indicates that when person-organisation increases, intent to quit declines (and vice versa).

Next, the mediation model with the direct effect model of learning on intent to quit (path c in Figure 5). The indirect effect via person-organisation fit results are also presented in Table 4. The mediation model demonstrates that newcomer learning had a direct effect on intent to quit,  $b = 1.22$ ,  $se = .14$ , 95%  $CI [.94, 1.51]$ ,  $t = 8.52$ ,  $p < .01$ . It can be seen that newcomer learning predicted intent to quit even with the presence of person-organisation fit in the model. In addition, positive  $b$  value for newcomer learning indicates that as learning increases, intent to quit also increases. The most interesting aspect of Table 4 is that there is a significant indirect effect of newcomer learning on intent to quit through person-organisation fit (paths a+b in Figure 5),  $b = -.98$ ,  $se = .11$ , 95%  $CI [-1.21, -.77]$ . In other words, person-organisation fit plays a mediator role between newcomer learning (predictor) and intent to quit (outcome).

What stands out in Figure 5 is that the total effect of newcomer learning (predictor) on intent to quit (outcome) when person-organisation fit is not in the model (path c in Figure 5). The total effect model predicted from newcomer learning on intent to quit is nonsignificant shown as final line in Table 4,  $b = .24$ ,  $se = 1.14$ , 95%  $CI [-.03, .52]$ ,  $p > .05$ . It is interesting to note that newcomer learning does not predict intent to quit,  $F(1,548) = 2.94$ ,  $p > .05$ . The total effect model accounts for 1% of the variance in intent to quit,  $R^2 = .01$ . As is the case when person-organisation fit is included in the

model, newcomer learning has a positive relationship with intent to quit as shown by the positive  $b$  value. A nonsignificant test result infers that newcomer learning does not significantly affect intent to quit for employees who have been with an organisation for up to nine months. This result is consistent with correlation analysis between newcomer learning and intent to quit set out in Table 1,  $r = .07$ ,  $p > .05$ . Although total effect is nonsignificant as discussed above, it is appropriate to test indirect effect because a significant correlation exists between person-organisation fit (mediator) and intent to quit (outcome) (Hayes, 2009; Zhao et al., 2010). Thus, Hypothesis 7 is supported. Despite the nonsignificant total effect between newcomer learning and intent to quit, the indirect effect of newcomer learning to intent to quit through person-organisation fit was significant because the confidence interval does not contain zero; hence, mediation has occurred. Similar results were obtained before outliers corrected and after outliers corrected shown in Table 4.

## 5. Discussion

The objective of this study was to investigate the mediating role of person-organisation fit in newcomer adjustment. Consistent with previous findings, the hypothesis that newcomer learning is positively associated with person-organisation fit was supported (Kim et al., 2009; Thomas & Anderson, 1998). Support was also found for the hypotheses positing that person-organisation fit is positively associated with job satisfaction and future prospects as well as for the hypothesis that person-organisation fit is negatively associated with intent to quit. This is consistent with previous research findings that person-organisation fit predicts distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment (Chao et al., 1994b) in this case of job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit. Mediation analysis results provided support for the hypotheses positing that person-organisation fit mediates the relationships between newcomer learning and job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit. This is also consistent with prior research suggesting person-organisation fit mediates the relationship between newcomer learning and distal outcomes including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). New employees adjust to new work contexts through learning, which in turn enables them to assess how well they fit with an organisation in terms of value congruence (Edwards & Cable, 2009). Subsequently, higher person-organisation fit coincides with greater job satisfaction. (Boswell et al., 2009; Chao et al., 1994b). Moreover, when newcomers perceive more positive long-term career prospects in the organisation, they have less intention to leave the organisation (Bretz & Judge, 1994).

### 5.1 Theoretical and practical implications

The current findings concur with prior research showing that learning predicts person-organisation fit and employees' attitudes (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Kristof, 1996; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b). Person-organisation fit is achieved when individuals try to reduce uncertainty during the early stages of entry and make sense of a job by learning about their roles, their colleagues, and the organisation (Boswell et al., 2009; Weick, 2008). This coincides with other organisational research that accounts person-organisation fit a significant role in enabling newcomer learning and adjustment in the organisation (Bauer et al., 2007; Bretz & Judge, 1994; Lee, Reiche, & Song, 2010; Saks et al., 2007). Moreover, there is robust empirical evidence that newcomer learning is

associated with the outcomes of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and intent to quit (Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer & Erdogan, 2012; Chao et al., 1994b; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005).

Newcomers make sense of an organisation's values and learn about their roles and the organisation through acquiring and making sense of relevant information (Louis, 1980; Weick, 2008). Related to this importance of learning, the theory of work adjustment examines individual-organisation interactions emphasising the interdependence of employees and the work environments (Bretz & Judge, 1994). Person-organisation fit theory suggests that employees and organisations are compatible when they share similar fundamental characteristics and provide for each other's needs in their organisational socialisation practices (Kristof, 1996). In addition, person-organisation fit theory proposes that employees whose values match or fit with the organisation achieve more positive outcomes, including higher job satisfaction, and lower turnover (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004). In other words, optimal person-organisation fit is achieved when an employee's needs are fulfilled by the organisation, and vice versa, and when both parties share similar characteristics such as goals and values. Although various types of fit exist under the broad umbrella of person-environment fit, such as person-vocation fit and person-job fit, person-organisation fit was chosen for this research because it has broad relevance for newcomers in different settings as it does not depend on whether they work alone or in shifting groups (Kristof, 1996). Much empirical research on socialisation tactics has revealed person-organisation fit is not culture-bound, and there are general similarities across countries in relation to the effects of person-organisation fit on outcomes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment (Bauer et al., 2007; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Kim et al., 2005). The present study revealed that person-organisation fit is a significant predictor of distal outcomes of newcomer learning, namely job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit, as well as the proximal outcome of newcomer learning.

Newcomer perception of person-organisation fit has been broken down into two types of fit involving the match between employee perceptions and organisational values: Subjective or perceived fit and objective or actual fit (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Edwards & Cable, 2009). Whilst Cable and Parsons (2001) argued that institutional socialisation tactics have similar effects on both perceived and actual fit, they also indicated that the two types of fit became more congruent over time as newcomers'

initial fit perceptions change depending on their ongoing experiences with socialisation tactics. Similarly, when perceived fit and actual fit become more congruent over time, this indicates that newcomers' subjective perceptions of fit towards the organisation shift (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004).

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the outcomes of newcomer adjustment, especially focusing on job satisfaction and intent to quit, as well as other related constructs such as organisational commitment and work engagement (Bauer et al., 2007; Boswell et al., 2009; Chao et al., 1994b; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005; Gruman et al., 2006). Thus, newcomers who learn about their roles and know more about the organisation achieve higher job satisfaction and are more likely to stay in the organisation (Bauer et al., 2007; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005; Kim et al., 2009; Taormina, 1999). This supports a link between newcomers learning and distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment. In the same vein, Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) noted that person-organisation fit has strong correlations with job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as a moderate relationship with intent to quit, providing evidence of a link between person-organisation fit and proximal outcomes of person-organisation fit. Moreover, Bretz and Judge (1994) found a relationship between person-organisation fit and job satisfaction, tenure, and career success. Their results suggested that the indirect effects of person-organisation centre on job promotions, which appear to be long-term consequences; in other words, fits seems to link indirectly to career success, whilst direct effects from person-organisation fit are to job satisfaction and tenure. This makes sense considering that the theory of work adjustment implies an individual is satisfied with work when his or her needs are fulfilled by the organisational environment (Kristof, 1996). The results of the present study support this proposition that person-organisation fit leads to higher levels of job satisfaction in newcomer adjustment.

Learning can predict future prospects, a distal outcome of newcomer adjustment, which can be obtained from continuous learning and development in an organisation. When newcomers feel more fit to the organisation, they perceive they have opportunities for future career development within an organisation and their attitudes regarding future prospects are positive (Bretz & Judge, 1994). Similarly, Cable and Parsons (2001) revealed that newcomers were more likely to report positive person-organisation fit when they understood the timing of their career stages. The present

study revealed that future prospects is predicted both by learning and by person-organisation fit, with person-organisation fit also mediating the relationship of newcomer learning with future prospects.

The distal outcome of newcomer adjustment, intent to quit, is predicted by proximal outcomes such as person-organisation fit (Wanous, 1977). Individuals are more likely to leave their organisations when they do not perceive fit with their organisations (Cable & Parsons, 2001). Previous research has reported that increased learning is associated with improved outcomes such as job satisfaction, performance, and lower intent to quit (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Similarly, Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) revealed that multiple types of fit such as person-job fit, person-organisation fit, and person-environment fit influence intent to quit, tenure, and turnover. However, empirical evidence for this research area varies depending on research content areas and research design. On the other hand, Chao et al. (1994a) suggested that individuals with high intent to quit have not been highly socialised to an organisation's goals and values, nor history. In line with this finding, the present study found that although there is a nonsignificant total effect of newcomer learning on intent to quit, there is a significant indirect effect of newcomer learning on intent quit through person-organisation fit. In other words, intent to quit is predicted by person-organisation fit, and person-organisation fit mediates the relationship between learning and intent to quit.

Overall, the current findings align well with the theories of person-organisation fit and sensemaking, revealing that person-organisation fit plays a mediating role between newcomer learning and distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment of job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit. In other words, learning predicts distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment through person-organisation fit. In spite of the importance of learning, person-organisation fit also plays a vital role in enabling newcomers to achieve positive distal outcomes.

## **5.2 Contributions and limitations of the present study**

The present study contributes to the literature on newcomer learning in four ways. First, the main strength of this research is the large sample size with 550 participants. Since the large sample size helps in providing more stable average values, in other words, the mean value of a quality among samples which has lower margin of error and is more

precise than small data set. Large sample data set better represents the population the data they came from and yields more meaningful results compared with a small sample size. Thus, I can be more confident in the robustness of findings. Second, the sample consisted of employees with diverse backgrounds and different demographic variables such as gender was almost evenly split between male and female, age ranged from 18 to 65 years with an average age of 35.55 years and work experience ranged from 1 to 30 years with the average being 13 years. Diverse sample is likely to increase the potential of generalisability and yields possible transferrable results. Although it is sample data set from United States, it is possible to be more generalised only in that country. It would therefore need to be examined first through research if used in other countries. Third, anonymity and confidentiality was assured throughout the research process, which reduces the potential impact of social desirability (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Reducing social desirability increases the likelihood that respondents feel that they are able to respond accurately, thus the possibility of common method bias is also partly reduced (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff et al., 2012; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b). Hence, the participants are less likely to respond in social desirable way (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Fourth, the present study represents an important extension of the literature because it acknowledges the mediating effect of person-organisation fit on three learning and socialisation outcomes – job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit – with one of these, future prospects, being a relatively underexplored outcome. Previous research mainly focused on outcomes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and intent to quit (Bauer et al., 2007; Boswell et al., 2009; Chao et al., 1994b; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005; Gruman et al., 2006). Although several studies have examined relationships between newcomer adjustment, person-organisation fit, and newcomer learning outcomes (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Kim et al., 2005), those studies did not test the mediating role of person-organisation fit in the relationship between newcomer learning and the specific combination of distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment explored in this study. For example, whilst there is some evidence that newcomer learning is positively associated with person-organisation fit and job satisfaction (Bauer et al., 2007; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005; Kim et al., 2009), and there is some research linking person-organisation fit with outcomes including job satisfaction and intent to quit (Bauer &

Erdogan, 2012; Kristof, 1996; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a), few have explored the link with future prospects, and none have investigated mediation by person-organisation fit.

Nonetheless, the current study has a number of limitations. First, whilst the use of an online panel survey provider is generally considered more objective, it is not necessarily more accurate (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Despite the advantage of anonymity in online surveys, they can run the risk of manipulation of data, dishonest responses, and repeated participation due to the lack of face-to-face interaction between researchers and respondents (Buhrmester, Talaifar, & Gosling, 2017; Cheung, Burns, Sinclair, & Sliter, 2017). The rise of survey automation techniques such as survey bots and automated form fillers can distort the research objectives in many ways, including yielding a more diverse sample that is not representative of a population or the workforce of a particular industry (Buchanan & Scofield, 2018).

Second, the present study used one data source, a self-report survey, which can lead to potential common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, despite self-report being important to collecting data on newcomers' perceptions, there may still be concerns about the validity of self-reports. Also, the perception of fit explored in this study was subjective, meaning that participants may have perceived they fit with the organisation when in actuality they may not have fitted. In contrast, participants may have felt that they did not fit with the organisation, but from the organisation's perspective they may fit very well. Since the sample was from individual employee as opposed to work group level or organisation level, the responses do not provide the big picture of person-organisation fit on how well newcomers fit with the organisation from organisational perspective. In addition, responses in this study were not recorded from discussion between newcomers and senior personnel during an appraisal process to get both perspectives. Therefore, the responses to questions were one-sided. Although there is no perfect measure identifying true validity of fit in the newcomer adjustment research, all of the measures in this study are subjective because they are valid as representations of what an individual thought at the moment in time and decided to report on subjective perceived fit. Perceived fit is different to actual fit (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004), and the possibility of common method bias in this instance could be reduced with a combination of data sources, such as a self-report survey and face-to-face interviews.

A third limitation was the sample distribution. Some variables in the data sample: Age and work experience were positively skewed, the CAS showed normal distribution whilst person-organisation fit, job satisfaction, and future prospects were negatively skewed. Whilst skewness is not uncommon in applied research (Buchanan & Scofield, 2018), these results should be treated with caution. Notably, this study successfully replicated the relationships between some previously tested constructs (Chao et al., 1994b; Judge et al., 2017). The present study implies that at least skewness did not bias replicated findings. Replication of novel findings is recommended (Wright & Sweeney, 2016). Moreover, a longitudinal design would be informative, with newcomers likely to report changes in person-organisation fit over time along with changes to distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2009). If socialisation was a successful experience, changes would be positive.

A fourth limitation is the use of single item measures for job satisfaction and intent to quit. Despite justification for using a single-item measure and the conclusion that there is no empirical reason to reject the use of a single-item measure (Scarpello and Campbell (1983), Bretz and Judge (1994) have argued that the use of single item measures for job satisfaction raises the concern of reliability. Single item measures may yield different results than multiple measures when investigating distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment, especially with regard to other related factors (Bretz & Judge, 1994). A further disadvantage of using a single-item measure for job satisfaction cannot reveal specific reasons newcomers are satisfied with their jobs.

Job satisfaction is one of the distal outcomes of newcomer learning that is achieved through socialisation and getting along with or building relationships with colleagues and managers (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). Newcomers may contribute job satisfaction to getting along with their colleagues, being happy with their line manager, feeling that their input is acknowledged by a greater group of people, or being proud to be an employee of the organisation. Future research could include multiple-item measures to explore this more fully.

Finally, this study used data collected at a single point in time, which raises questions about the direction of causality. Newcomer learning would affect person-organisation fit, but there is a possibility that newcomers who have higher person-organisation fit perceive continuous learning as an outcome of person-organisation fit.

For example, newcomers' fit perceptions change over time as a result of their experiences in the organisation, and this was not addressed in the present study. In line with this limitation, research undertaken by Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004) found that after four months of socialisation, perceived fit and actual fit become more congruent and the mediating influence of perceived fit on job satisfaction, and organisational commitment were significant. As noted above, longitudinal research would be helpful to establish perceptions of fit at entry and after a few months' socialisation from newcomers' perspective. In addition, managers' perceptions of fit are considered upon entry and after a number of months with the organisation in order to find out value congruence over time, suggesting a shift in newcomers' perceptions as well as managers' perceptions of the organisation.

### **5.3 Future research**

The current study advances extant literature on the role of person-organisation fit in newcomer adjustment; however, several research avenues are yet to be explored. First, the present study investigated newcomers' perceptions of person-organisation fit and the associated distal outcomes of their learning. However, behavioural or emotional responses of newcomers were not examined in this current study. These have been shown to be important triggers for both newcomers and their employing organisations. For example, Cooper-Thomas, Patterson, Stadler, and Saks (2014) showed that different proactive behaviours differently predict newcomer learning, well-being, and work engagement. That is, newcomers' proactive behaviours were related to learning and socialisation outcomes. Kim et al. (2009) found that employee creativity mediates between proactive personality and outcomes such as job satisfaction and career opportunities. Integrating these ideas of learning, person-organisation fit, and distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment, it highlights the importance of person-organisation fit mediating newcomers' learning and distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment.

Most newcomers do not enter in positions where they can strongly influence the organisation because they do not hold top management position of the organisation. Therefore, they are likely to emphasise adjusting personally to fit in, since they can more easily do that than change the work environment (Kim et al., 2009). This can be seen as a realistic situation to enhance person-organisation fit instead of quitting. In addition, the reciprocal relationship between outcomes can be explored to determine

whether job satisfaction predicts or perhaps mediates future prospects and intent to quit. For example, it is possible that newcomers who perceive greater career prospects in their organisation, in turn are more satisfied, and thus less likely to leave the organisation. However, other organisational factors may be important, such as personality, age, demographics, and type of role. For example, some newcomers may be nearing retirement such that future prospects are not relevant, whilst others may have already reached the top of the organisational hierarchy in their roles but are satisfied with their jobs despite a lack of career prospects in the organisation.

Second, as learning increases, person-organisation fit as well as outcomes can shift over time. Newcomers have been shown to have higher job satisfaction at their current job than their previous one, but job satisfaction has also been shown to decline during the first year of employment (Boswell et al., 2009). According to Boswell et al. (2009), it appears that future prospects are likely to have a similar effect to this “honeymoon followed by hangover” (p. 849). There is a need to conduct longitudinal research in this area. Thus, it is recommended that organisations and practitioners take a proactive role in promoting and supporting future research with newcomers possessing different levels of person-organisation fit as this has an impact on organisational development. Person-organisation fit plays a pivotal role in newcomer adjustment and in selecting potential candidates for entry to the organisation (Allen, Eby, Chao, & Bauer, 2017; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005); therefore, further studies on managers’ perceptions of newcomers’ person-organisation fit are recommended. Furthermore, organisational support of newcomer learning research would allow better tracking of individuals over long periods of time as their job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit within an organisation unfold.

Third, future research could explore technology use to determine how person-organisation fit is related to this area and how it may shape newcomer learning and outcomes from both individual and organisational perspectives (Allen et al., 2017; Schneider, 1987). Survey questions could be designed to collect data on newcomers’ IT skill level through indicators such as basic, intermediate, or advanced level in common programmes (e.g., Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel). This could be used to find out if level of person-organisation fit has an impact on newcomers’ IT savvy attitudes. It is important to investigate if person-organisation fit is related to IT skills and whether person-organisation fit depends on IT skill level from

the point of view of both newcomers and organisations. For example, healthcare sector organisation newcomers with IT skills are more likely to fit in with the organisation quicker than those who do not have IT skills because of the increasing reliance on software or applications (Allen et al., 2017). Online surveys are cost- and time-effective.

Fourth, a different research design or analysis approach could be used to reduce the possibility of common method variance. One such variation could be to reduce same-source biases by incorporating multiple data sources from the same participants such as face-to-face interviews or panel interviews as well as questionnaires to measure distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment and the perception of fit. Due to the increasing risk and concern over online survey data quality, future research could use algorithms to catch non-human participants on online data collection platforms (Buchanan & Scofield, 2018). Yet another variation could be to explore the measures of newcomers' performance from sources such as organisational records or through taking advantage of software such as 360 degree feedback software or performance management software. Employee performance review information could be used to investigate person-organisation fit and distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment from the organisation's point of view whilst also collecting data on the same measures from the employee's point of view through survey, but then combining the data sets from each source of analysis but looking at different effects when conducting data analysis. Another variation could be to use structural equation modelling to test the hypothesised relationships for common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Further analysis can also be conducted on employees' performance reviews at three months, at six months, and at one year after joining the organisation to provide insight for investigating possible common method variance using structural equation modelling with longitudinal design (Podsakoff et al., 2003); monitoring newcomers' performance improvements over time to have extensive validation between expectations of newcomers versus managers and performance (Allen et al., 2017).

Fifth, the strength of person-organisation fit may be dependent on occupation and industry. Other researchers have suggested assessing how well newcomers adjust compared to others with similar backgrounds or in similar roles within a respective industry sector (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002). For example, senior roles might have higher person-organisation fit than junior roles because selecting candidates for senior roles involves a more thorough process wherein hiring managers emphasise fit

with the team and the organisation. Position level could clearly impact the fit profile required of newcomers to ensure the successful adjustment with the organisation (Klein & Heuser, 2008). In addition, a different learning process may be influenced by level of position and type of position as well as by organisation size, and thereby influence a different person-organisation fit. For instance, learning process differs between the type of role such as retail assistant in grocery shop versus health care assistant in a hospital. The former involves less health and safety compliance but greater commercial awareness, whereas the latter requires comprehensive health and safety training and ongoing vigilance, yet no commercial awareness. Thus, the learning processes and subsequent person-organisation fit will differ across these roles; for more complex roles, such as that of the health care assistant, learning is greater and newcomer adjustment may take longer as the newcomer adapts to the environment and figures out how things are handled. Therefore, further research is needed with samples of newcomers from different industries to explore whether person-organisation fit is higher in certain industries than in others as well as how well person-organisation fit predicts more distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment. In addition, comprehensive analysis from both an organisational and an individual perspective would offer more insights to assess the degree to which person-organisation fit predicts distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment beyond a single source of data collection.

Sixth, research so far has shown that these interesting relationships may change over time; therefore, longitudinal research is needed for a more rigorous test of this study's findings. The investigation could also be extended to include objective fit measures, as actual fit was not measured in this study. Moreover, it is not clear from the present study if newcomers have developed greater value congruence because of extended exposure to organisational socialisation tactics; hence it would be useful to measure tactics also. In the same way, the present study does not offer information about whether newcomers' perception of fit changes over time or if congruence between perceived fit and actual fit increases over time. For example, newcomers may either increase or decrease their person-organisation fit upon entry, as they adjust to the organisation. This might be similar to the honeymoon effect found for job satisfaction (Boswell et al., 2009), whereby newcomers experience high job satisfaction within a few months after entry and then their attitudes on job satisfaction decline after six months and one year. This could be investigated by measuring newcomers when they

enter and when they have either stayed at the same level or else climbed the career ladder to end up in senior positions (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2009).

Finally, future research could put more emphasis on measurements for future prospects. Previous research has measured career success using salary, job level, and job perceptions variables; whilst the results were not strong, they did suggest that person-organisation fit may not have a direct effect on these variables (Bretz & Judge, 1994). Career prospects are enduring importance for newcomers as they can adapt changes in organisation when it comes to restructuring or role enhancement as time goes by (Allen et al., 2017). These findings suggest that researchers should carefully consider how and when they include future prospects as a distal outcome because clarification is needed regarding what future prospects newcomers achieve and how newcomers achieve future career prospects. For example, it would be interesting to know if newcomers achieve future prospects from learning provided inside or outside the organisation. On-the-job training such as a mentoring programme enables employees to learn about their roles and is a way of upgrading employees' skills encouraging them to perform their tasks (Taormina, 1999). In the same vein, training outside the organisation also provides learning that enables employees to develop their skills and promote their career prospects, as well as networking and learning from employees at other organisations, potentially creating a motivated workforce for the organisation (Tabvuma et al., 2015)

## 6. Conclusion

Since there are many newcomers joining New Zealand's businesses today (Statistics New Zealand, 2018), it becomes imperative to understand the newcomer adjustment process in order to make it as good as possible for both employees and organisations. Learning benefits both newcomers and organisations because an increase in learning predicts person-organisation fit as well as outcomes of newcomer adjustment. The present study reviewed newcomer adjustment literature for background on newcomer learning, proximal and distal outcomes of newcomer learning, person-organisation fit, sensemaking theory, and the theory of work adjustment. Integrating these ideas into a theoretical model, this study developed and tested a model of newcomer adjustment involving one independent variable (newcomer learning), one mediating variable (person-organisation fit), and three dependent variables (job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit) using a large sample of 550 newcomers who had worked for nine months or less in their present organisation.

Correlation, regression, and mediation analyses were conducted to investigate the total, direct, and indirect relationships of learning with three distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment (job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit) as well as the mediating effects of person-organisation fit. First, significant positive correlations were found as anticipated, supporting Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, and 6. Specifically, consistent with previous findings, newcomer learning was positively associated with person-organisation fit (Hypothesis 1) (Kim et al., 2009; Thomas & Anderson, 1998). Person-organisation fit was positively associated with job satisfaction (Hypothesis 2) and future prospects (Hypothesis 4). Person-organisation fit was negatively associated with intent to quit (Hypothesis 6). This study's findings are in line with prior research in which person-organisation fit predicted distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment such as job satisfaction and intent to quit (Chao et al., 1994b). This study also included an additional outcome, future prospects, which was measured using items from one of the four domains from Taormina's (1994) Organisational Socialisation Inventory. Second, results from mediation analysis supported Hypotheses 3, 5, and 7: Consistent with previous research, the relationships between newcomers' learning and their distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment (job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit) were mediated by person-organisation fit (Kim et al., 2009). Thus, when newcomers

experience learning during the first few months of entry in the organisation and perceive they fit well in an organisation, they are more likely to have higher job satisfaction, are more likely to perceive future career opportunities, and are less likely to leave the organisation. This demonstrates the importance of person-organisation fit. Moreover, this study's large data set provides greater certainty with reduced errors in the results.

In summary, the results of this study supported all proposed hypotheses and demonstrated that the relationship between newcomer learning and each distal outcome of newcomer adjustment is mediated by person-organisation fit. The present study investigated a range of dependent variables in the context of considering the mediating effect of person-organisation effect between newcomer learning and distal outcomes of newcomer adjustment.

First, this study supports the important role of person-organisation fit which mediates indirect effects of newcomer learning on job satisfaction, future prospects, and intent to quit. It also demonstrates the positive correlations between newcomer learning with job satisfaction and future prospects, as well as the negative correlation between person-organisation fit and intent to quit. Second, future prospects is a variable that has not been commonly used in previous studies, so findings of this research reveal that person-organisation fit is also important in newcomers this less commonly studied job attitude. Third, person-organisation fit has been seen as an important factor in organisational socialisation outcomes (Kristof, 1996); this research contributes to our understanding of the central role of person-organisation fit during organisational socialisation, proposing, testing and finding support for a new mediation model with a range of both thoroughly-studied (job satisfaction and intent to quit) and rarely-studied (future prospects) outcome variables.

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## 8. Appendices

This section provides a list of questions asks to the participant or newcomer who has started his or her new job in the past nine months using 7-point Likert scale, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly disagree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Slightly agree

6 = Agree

7 = Strongly agree

### **Newcomer learning - Content Areas of Socialisation Scale (CAS) six dimensions (Chao et al., 1994a)**

#### *Performance proficiency (PP) – Five items*

CAS PP1 – I have not yet learned “the ropes” of my job (R)

CAS PP2 – I have learned how to successfully perform my job in an efficient manner

CAS PP3 - I have mastered the required tasks of my job

CAS PP4 - I have not fully developed the appropriate skills and abilities to successfully perform my job (R)

CAS PP5 – I understand what all the duties of my job entail

#### *People (P) – Six items*

CAS P1 – I do not consider any of my coworkers as my friends (R)

CAS P2 – I am usually excluded in social get-togethers given by other people in the organisation (R)

CAS P3 - Within my work group, I would be easily identified as “one of the gang”

CAS P4 - I am usually excluded in informal networks or gatherings of people within this organisation (R)

CAS P5 – I am pretty popular in the organisation

CAS P6 – I believe most of my coworkers like me

*PX (Politics) – Six items*

CAS PX1 – I have learned how things “really work” on the inside of this organisation

CAS PX2 – I know who the most influential people are in my organisation (R)

CAS PX3 - I do not have a good understanding of the politics in my organisation (R)

CAS PX4 - I have a good understanding of the motives behind the actions of other people in the organisation

CAS PX5 – I can identify the people in this organisation who are most important in getting the work done

CAS PX6 – I am not always sure what needs to be done in order to get the most desirable work assignments in my area (R)

*Language (L) – Five items*

CAS L1 – I have not mastered the specialised terminology and vocabulary of my trade/ profession (R)

CAS L2 – I have not mastered this organisation’s slang and special jargon (R)

CAS L3 - I do not always understand what the organisation’s abbreviations and acronyms mean (R)

CAS L4 - I understand the specific meanings of words and jargon in my trade/ profession

CAS L5 – I understand what most of the acronyms and abbreviations of my trade/ profession mean

*History (H) – Five items*

CAS H1 – I know very little about the history behind my work group/ department (R)

CAS H2 – I am not familiar with the organisation's customs, rituals, ceremonies, and celebrations (R)

CAS H3 - I know the organisation's long-held traditions

CAS H4 - I would be a good resource in describing the background of my work group/ department

CAS H5 – I am familiar with the history of my organisation

*Organisation goals and values (OG) – Seven items*

CAS OG1 – I would be a good representative of my organisation

CAS OG2 – The goals of my organisation are also my goals

CAS OG3 - I believe that I fit in well with my organisation

CAS OG4 - I do not always believe in the values set by my organisation (R)

CAS OG5 – I understand the goals of my organisation

CAS OG6 – I support the goals that are set by my organisation

CAS OG7 – I would be a good example of an employee who represents my organisation's values.

**Person-organisation fit (Saks & Ashforth, 1997b) – Four items**

SA POF1 – The values of the organisation are similar to my own values

SA POF2 – My personality matches the personality image of the organisation

SA POF3 – The organisation fulfils my needs

SA POF4 – The organisation is a good match for me

**Job satisfaction (JS) – Single item**

JS – In general, I am satisfied with my job

**Future Prospects – Organisational Socialisation Inventory (OSI) (Taormina, 1994)  
– Five items**

OSI FP1 – There are many chances for a good career with this organisation

OSI FP2 – I am happy with the rewards offered by this organisation

OSI FP3 - Opportunities for advancement in this organisation are available to almost everyone

OSI FP4 - I can readily anticipate my prospects for promotion in this company

OSI FP5 – I expect that this organisation will continue to employ me for many more years

**Intent to quit (Miller & Wheeler, 1992) – Single item**

MW IL – I intend to leave the organisation within two years