

Newcomer socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours within an open plan office environment.

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A dissertation submitted to Auckland
University of Technology
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Business (MBus)

ABSTRACT

Newcomer socialisation is regarded as an important facet of organisational development. Nonetheless, extensive research publications on newcomer socialisation have been relatively unrelated to the physical workspace context. There is an assumption that the physical context of a newcomer is generic, whereas there are various types of physical space. The physical environment influences human behaviour and the individual's perception of whether it is easier or difficult to perform tasks and interact with others; therefore, assessing newcomer socialisation through a context (physical) free lens is not a true representation of newcomer socialisation in its entirety.

This study aims to view newcomer socialisation within a physical workspace context. To achieve this, academic findings on newcomer socialisation and office design (with a particular interest in open plan office design) will be studied. Given that there have been no studies of newcomer socialisation in open plan office design, the two set of academic findings will be analysed. This dissertation will attempt to answer two research questions:

- (1) How can the newcomer enhance the quality of their own socialisation through proactive behaviours within an open plan office?
- (2) How can the organisation enhance the quality of socialisation for the newcomer through newcomer socialisation tactics within an open plan office?

To achieve these research objectives, a total of 74 newcomer socialisation articles and 37 office design articles have been reviewed.

The main findings to emerge from this study were:

- (1) To date there has been no literature discussing the intersection of newcomer socialisation and open plan office design.
- (2) There were an equal number of opportunities and challenges for both the newcomer and organisation as a result of using socialisation tactics within the open plan office. It was also dependent on what sets of tactics were being used in the open plan office that determined if they were more advantageous or disadvantageous.

- (3) There were a larger number of opportunities and a smaller number of challenges for the newcomer and organisation as a result of using newcomer proactive behaviours within the open plan office. Likewise, it was also dependent on what proactive behaviours were being used in the open plan office that determined if they were more advantageous or disadvantageous.

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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.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my supervisor Dr Roy Smollan for his support throughout my proposal stage and dissertation journey. Dr Smollan's expertise was invaluable in formulating my research. His thoughtful advice and insightful feedback pushed me to sharpen my thinking and brought my work to a higher level.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the dissertation. It introduces the reader to the concepts of newcomer socialisation and open plan office design. To the best of my knowledge there have been no studies discussing the intersection of the two. The research purpose will outline why integration of the two concepts must take place and two research questions will be formulated. Finally, the structure of the dissertation will be presented.

1.2 Introduction

The benefits of good newcomer socialisation experiences apply to newly hired employees, veteran employees, management and organisations (Madlock & Chory, 2014; Mornata & Cassar, 2018). The need for successful newcomer socialisation also increases with worker mobility (Bauer & Green, 1994; Gruman et al., 2006; Mornata & Cassar, 2018). Successful socialisation is significant for all organisations, as it creates positive outcomes, such as employee productivity and engagement (Batistič, 2018; Kowtha, 2018; Madlock & Chory, 2014). It can also alleviate organisational costs, for example, staff turnover and having to train (formal) new staff (Bauer & Green, 1994; Gruman et al., 2006). Likewise, successful socialisation can foster a positive culture and performance (Batistič, 2018; Saks et al., 2011).

Newcomers who are exposed to good socialisation practices as a result of organisational tactics or their own proactive behaviours will reap benefits, for instance, task mastery, job satisfaction, role clarity and adjustment (Bauer & Green, 1994; Gruman et al., 2006; Mornata & Cassar 2018). Not only do tactics and behaviours benefit the newcomer personally, it can also have a positive effect on the organisation, for example, newcomer commitment, job performance and initiative. Newcomers experiencing poor socialisation is also an issue, for example, personal disorientation, stress, uncertainty and work alienation (Bauer & Green, 1994; Gruman et al., 2006; Lewis et al., 2012). Costs to the organisation are just as severe, for example, increasing staff turnover, diminished newcomer work performance and reduced newcomer commitment to the organisation (Batistič, 2018; Madlock & Chory, 2014). In an effort to obtain versatility, staff collaboration and lower design costs, organisations are increasingly adopting open plan offices (Bergström et al., 2015; Bernstein & Turban, 2018). Consequently, the open plan office is an appropriate

context to investigate newcomer socialisation in. Not only have open plan offices become a common feature for organisations to adopt (Brennan et al., 2002; Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al., 2009; Kim & Dear, 2013), there is also a distant correlation between newcomer socialisation and open plan office design. The concept of newcomer socialisation involves a degree of social interaction (Anseel, et al., 2007; Ashford & Black, 1996; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Song & Chathoth, 2011), as does the concept of individuals navigating within open plan office environment, which also requires social interaction (Brennan et al., 2002; Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al., 2009; Kim and Dear, 2013).

1.2 Research Purposes

This study aims to improve understanding of an organisational issue and create a framework for further research and practical purposes. This dissertation will review literature for the two concepts and produce an integrated literature review, 74 journal articles (peer-reviewed) on newcomer socialisation and 37 journal articles (peer-reviewed) on office design were sourced and reviewed for this study. Unpacking the literature review, the dissertation will identify themes, integrate the two concepts, speculate on the findings and then create three models representing the two separate concepts and the integration of the two. Within the context of an open plan office, this linear model will identify how particular socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours could aid good newcomer socialisation opportunities and produce better outcomes for the newcomer and organisation. In the same integrated model, it will also identify how particular socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours could create a barrier to good newcomer socialisation opportunities and produce poor outcomes for the newcomer and organisation alike.

1.3 Research Questions

There appear to have been no studies connecting newcomer socialisation and open plan office design. The proposed research questions will connect two separately well-researched areas focusing on successful newcomer socialisation in an open plan office environment.

RQ 1: How can the newcomer enhance the quality of their own socialisation through proactive behaviours within an open plan office?

RQ 2: How can the organisation enhance the quality of socialisation for the newcomer

through newcomer socialisation tactics within an open plan office?

1.4 Research Methods

A literature review was conducted to address the two research questions. The research acquired from the review was set out to identify themes and arguments to either support or refute the research questions.

An exhaustive search using Google Scholar was conducted. Initially, the following statements were searched:

- newcomer socialisation within an open plan office
- newcomer socialisation in an office environment
- open plan offices and onboarding

This search yielded thousands of results on newcomer socialisation in variable contexts, yet there were no articles discussing newcomer socialisation within an open plan office. The change in spelling from 'socialisation' (British) to 'socialization' (American) issued triple the results. Moving forward, I was mindful of this detail and used both ways of spelling 'socialisation' to retrieve articles.

After a discussion with my supervisor, it was suggested that I should review newcomer socialisation literature first. Newcomer socialisation was to become the primary topic, and open plan offices as the context. I evaluated newcomer socialisation and open plan office design literature separately, using both the Auckland University of Technology and University of Auckland libraries journal databases. I gathered scholarly journal articles through EBSCO, Emerald, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, SCOPUS, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online and Wiley Online. These online databases offered a good collection of articles covering a wide range of work on newcomer socialisation and open plan offices. A mix of conceptual/empirical and qualitative/quantitative articles were sourced from these databases. I chose articles that were relatively modern (i.e. within 20 years). However, some older studies, especially those involving seminal research, were also chosen because the concepts and research are still relevant today.

The key words used in searches for newcomer socialisation literature were 'newcomer

experiences/adjustment' and 'organisational socialisation. The term 'socialisation' on its own (without a combination of newcomer, organisational or employee) was excluded from searches, because it produced a large array of articles on people socialisation (e.g., personalities, growing up in certain cultures and environments) and did not target newcomer socialisation within the workplace.

Investigating articles on 'newcomer socialisation' led to the use of other terms. For instance, 'socialisation tactics, uncertainty reduction and person-organisation fit'. As a result, these new terms were also searched. While studying a sample of journal articles on socialisation tactics, the authors suggested that a combination of tactics and proactive behaviours would aid newcomer socialisation. After reviewing the journal articles on newcomer socialisation, I would then search their reference list and citations as a method to draw on similar articles for further research. Using the Boolean operator, I would pair up a large repertoire of concepts using the term 'newcomer socialisation', for example, 'newcomer socialisation' and 'employee adjustment'. Terms such as 'information seeking' and 'information gathering' were both searched; this allowed me to gather more articles about proactive behaviours in the workplace.

Even though the empirical newcomer socialisation journal articles were valuable, they only focused on the organisation type, geographical location, number of employees and whether it took place in an office (let alone open plan) were not mentioned. Therefore, a separate investigation on open plan office design took place. To assist with searches on open plan office environment articles, terms such as 'disadvantages of' and 'advantages of' open plan office spaces were entered. The Boolean operator was used, and references connecting 'office design' AND 'employee relationships/conflict' were keyed in. Periodicals on open plan office design were found in business publications, for example, 'The Conversation' and 'The Harvard Business Review'. These easy to read articles also linked their studies to scholarly journal articles. Even though there was wide sweep for information on newcomer socialisation and open plan offices, certain articles were also excluded from the study, so the focus could be directly on the two research questions.

Articles that were excluded from the research were:

- The use of proactive behaviours that didn't take place within a workplace context

(i.e., athletes proactively taking up a strict exercise regime).

- Articles that did not talk about how office environments were productive or detrimental to employees (i.e., how certain building material was a lot more sustainable).
- Articles which focused on one office design, other than private or open offices (i.e. activity-based office designs).

1.5 Dissertation Outline

This dissertation is structured into five chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter Two will produce a literature review identifying and discussing the different facets of newcomer socialisation. Secondly, it will define what newcomer socialisation tactics are (i.e., institutionalised versus individualised) and identify the benefits and costs to the organisation delivering them and the newcomer using them. Newcomer proactive behaviours will be defined, and the benefits and costs they yield to both the organisation and newcomer will be analysed.

Chapter Three will produce a literature review on office design with a particular interest in open plan offices. The chapter will define what open plan office design is and discuss its importance. Then it will highlight the organisational and individual benefits and costs of using the open plan office.

Chapter Four will integrate newcomer socialisation literature within a context of open plan office design. Findings will be the result of speculation taken from the integration of the two sets of literature. The aim of this chapter is to identify how organisational socialisation tactics and newcomer proactive behaviours could provide opportunities and challenges to good newcomer socialisation within the context of an open plan office. A model of newcomer socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours in the open plan office is presented.

Chapter Five will include a discussion, an examination of the study's limitations, ideas on what future research is needed to build a better picture of the topic and implications for practice.¹

¹ Throughout the study, the term 'training' will indicate formal training (i.e., formal induction programmes, workshops and seminars) or informal training/on-the-job training (i.e., a veteran staff member mentoring the newcomer).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ON NEWCOMER SOCIALISATION

2.1 Newcomer Socialisation

This chapter provides an overview on newcomer socialisation and how it influences employees and organisations. It will also provide an outline on the varying ways newcomer socialisation can be achieved through organisation-led socialisation tactics and self-initiated newcomer proactive behaviours.

2.1.1 Definitions of newcomer socialisation

There are many definitions of organisational socialisation. For example, Finkelstein et al. (2003) state that socialisation is about learning the ropes. Likewise, Ashforth et al. (2007) maintain that socialisation is a process when a newcomer learns the organisation's values, goals, rules, culture. Equally, Madlock and Chory (2014) describe it as when the newcomer obtains the knowledge about their role and adjusts to their work environment. Kowtha (2018) suggested that "organisational socialisation is the process through which newcomers learn the requisite social and task knowledge in order to resolve role uncertainty and become organisational insiders" (p.87).

In support, other socialisation researchers define the construct in various ways with similar primary motives and purposes. In one study, Cooper-Thomas and Wilson (2011) illustrated that "being a new employee at an organisation necessarily means that one is a novice in some domains relevant to the new work role, with a period of learning and adjustment necessary prior to becoming an insider" (p.388). In addition, "changes occurring during this period of organisational socialisation include learning the role, getting to know colleagues, and understanding the organisation's culture and norms" (Cooper-Thomas & Wilson, 2011, p.388).

Other studies have echoed these findings, with Saks et al. (2007) claiming that the concept of socialisation focuses on "how newcomers adjust to their new surroundings and learn the behaviours, attitudes and the skills necessary to fulfil their new roles and functions effectively

as a member of an organisation” (p. 414). Griffin et al. (2000) definition of socialisation differs slightly as it involves both the organisation and the employee, with the ultimate outcome being mutual acceptance. This is in contrast to the one-sided efforts that the newcomer has to exhibit to gain acceptance.

According to a study conducted by Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2005), organisational socialisation is a “period of newcomer adjustment and learning to meet organisational standards and norms that follows selection and appointment” (p.116). Newcomer learning, job satisfaction and intent to remain are common indicators of socialisation during the crucial post-entry period. Similarly, in another study, Gruman et al. (2006) described organisational socialisation as a process where newcomers acquire the skills and behaviours to function effectively as a member of an organisation. Song and Chathoth (2011) label organisational socialisation as a “process by which individuals learn the values, norms and required behaviours that allow them to participate as members of the organisation” (p.119). In another study by Morrison (1993), it was suggested that in addition to organisational delivery, socialisation is also carried out by newcomer initiatives. The first is task mastery, where the newcomer will learn how to undertake the task of the job. Second is role classification, where the newcomer will learn to understand their role and the organisation itself. Third is acculturation, where the newcomer will learn to fit in with the organisation’s culture. Finally, social integration, is where the newcomer will engage and strengthen relationships with their colleagues.

To sum up the differing views on organisational socialisation definitions, one study by Lapointe et al. (2014) best defines it as a “process that helps newcomers to adjust to their environment, learn the behaviours, attitudes and skills necessary to fulfil their roles and function effectively as members of the organisation” (p.599).

2.1.2 Outcomes of good newcomer socialisation experiences

This next section will cover the personal and organisational benefits incurred from good socialisation experiences. It will explain how and why good socialisation experiences can result in an organisation gaining a competitive advantage, better retention of employees, higher productivity, employee job satisfaction and reduced recruitment costs.

Mornata and Cassar (2018) specified that an adequate and beneficial socialisation programme is critical for all newcomers regardless of prior experience or personal

confidence. Newcomers will experience disorientation, foreignness and sensory overload, all of which will create anxiety or uncertainty. In addition, the newcomer's pre-entry assumption and what actually happens when they first enter the organisation will differ. Aryee (1991) also maintained that newcomers will face uncertainty when they first enter the organisation and that a solid socialisation programme would allow them to adjust better.

In a study involving a US accountancy firm, Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) found that in a climate of constant restructuring and other significant changes, individuals are finding themselves in more situations where they are required to seek, acquire and adapt into new organisational settings. Along with the hiring process, organisations also need to understand and deliver better socialisation practices. Equally, employees need to understand what is expected of them and how they can adjust better. In addition, job hopping is more widely used as a strategy for individuals to stay "competitive in their careers, with the thought that working for different organisations will allow them to develop their skills and credentials" (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000, p.373). Similarly, Bauer and Green (1994) stated that newcomers want to feel comfortable and confident in their new surroundings. An adequate socialisation programme will offer the newcomer certainty and a level of control, and an opportunity to acquire personal benefits.

Madlock and Chory's (2014) study of a large array of occupations (including service and government institutions) found that successful newcomer socialisation increased newcomer commitment, job performance, job satisfaction and their intention to remain with the organisation. In another study involving an international humanitarian organisation based in Switzerland, Mornata and Cassar (2018) maintained that organisational socialisation is divided into two scopes: the first is tactics and the second is proactive behaviours. In addition, good socialisation outcomes can be achieved through a programme of collective, formal, structured training, insiders assisting the newcomers and the value of newcomer skills.

Newcomer organisational socialisation is occurring more frequently. For example, Finkelstein et al. (2003) stated that due to a rise in workplace trends such as restructures and technological changes, more workers will find themselves being a newcomer. Saks et al. (2007) stated that due to the frequent mobilisation of the workforce, organisations are putting more focus into newcomer socialisation, adjustment and learning. Organisations are required to rethink and develop new ways of newcomer learning and create positive experiences early

in the socialisation process. Equally important are the additional benefits of successful socialisation. Batistič (2018) maintained that good newcomer socialisation maximised the return on the investment in recruitment and (formal) training and the organisation also gained a competitive advantage from human capital.

To avert increasing newcomer turnover, early and adequate socialisation has come to the forefront. Madlock and Chory (2014) maintain that the way “organisations treat individuals in the first few months of working in a new environment sends clear signals to new employees about what is expected of them, and how well they fit into the organisation, team and role” (p.57). Batistič (2018) also maintained that effectively socialised newcomers are deemed better trained, loyal and valuable to the organisation. Kowtha (2018) stated that successful socialisation of newcomers will enhance job satisfaction, quicker transition, productivity and retention of valuable employees. Aryee (1991) argued that good socialisation experiences were critical for success and that proactive and socialised employees were a way for organisations to compete in an increasingly difficult market. The importance of strong organisational culture cannot be overlooked in sustaining a high performing organisation, and that a newcomer’s flexibility, commitment and performance would be the result of strong employee culture and identity. Kowtha (2018) also suggested that successful socialisation of newcomers will lead to a “better retention of employees, higher productivity and reduced recruitment and formal training costs” (p.88).

Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004) suggested that newcomers will enter with positive expectations of their new workplace and will indicate how well they will adjust. This theory is termed person–organisation fit (P-O fit), it is also known as the alignment between the newcomer’s own ideals and the ideals of their respective organisation. The first few months of a newcomer’s experience will determine how good the fit is, and organisations are increasingly focused on this fit. Similarly, Cable and Parsons (2001) claim that P-O fit is how newcomers and organisations are attracted to each other on the basis of compatible or similar values and goals. They also found that an additional benefit for organisations establishing a P-O fit, is that it forms a more agile and dedicated workforce, which is “necessary in a competitive business environment and a tight labour market” (p.1).

2.1.3 Outcomes of poor newcomer socialisation experiences

In a climate of constant change, this next section will cover the personal and organisational costs incurred from poor socialisation experiences. It will understand how and why poor socialisation experiences can result in newcomer work alienation, low levels of job involvement, organisational commitment and employee retention.

Allen's (2006) study that took place in a large financial institution, found that "organisational turnover is often highest among new employees". "One of the key potential drivers of withdrawal among organisational newcomers is inadequate socialisation" (P.237). He added that when a newcomer enters an organisation there is a significant level of disorientation and a need to grasp the new environment. Similarly, in a study of IT workers in India, Nifadkar and Bauer (2016) recognised that newcomers felt that there is a high expectation to perform, thus creating anxiety for the newcomer to become an organisational insider. Even highly confident newcomers will face challenges entering a new organisation, due to the pressure to learn new social bonds and task mastery. In support, Cable and Parsons (2001) suggested that newcomers will encounter stress when entering a new organisation as they are unfamiliar with the new surroundings, creating a loss of control and uncertainty about how to succeed in the new environment.

In another study involving workers from a large entertainment and gaming organisation, Wang et al. (2017) found that when newcomers first start a job, they will intentionally downplay any negativity about their role and will justify the negative attributes with an optimistic rationale. They would even corroborate this by proclaiming "it is all about developing new skills and dealing with new situations". Newcomers go into the new organisation with a high, and later down the line feel dismayed to find out that the expected job rewards or experiences seem to be less positive than they had first envisioned.

Wang et al. (2017) said that many newcomers will define this experience as the "Honeymoon-Hangover" effect. This is where newcomers may display unpredictable differences in job attitudes (when changing jobs) that will later decline over time. This is not an uncommon trajectory for newcomers. Similarly, in a study by Miller and Jablin (1991), it was stated that newcomers will experience unease when first entering an organisation due to a mismatch of their prior expectations and the reality they face in the new organisation. The

ambiguity of the role (and expectations to perform) coinciding with the lack of ease interacting with and predicting responses of others, can hasten newcomer uncertainty.

The uncertainty facet of newcomer entry can create a number of issues. For example, a study by Morrison (2002) claimed that stepping into a new organisation can bring about stress and discomfort for newcomers. This can only be accredited to ambiguity, uncertainty and the change of environment. In support, Madlock and Chory (2014) found that role ambiguity occurs when the newcomer is unaware of the behaviours or expectations of the role. This can lead to greater uncertainty, and “role ambiguity tended to lessen an employee’s ability to perform by diverting effort away from focal tasks, consequently reducing the mental resources available for job duties” (Madlock & Chory, 2014, p.59). In a study involving US army soldiers, Schaubroeck et al. (2013) found that when entering an organisation, newcomers will feel vulnerable and anxious. They were required to learn the new ways of working, proactively interact with new people (and personalities) and adjust to the rules and politics of this new organisation. In parallel, they had to maintain a positive image within the organisation, creating an exhausting juggle.

Ashford and Black (1996) maintained that “entry into a new organisational environment can be thought of as a process by which individuals temporarily lose and proactively attempt to regain feelings of control” (p.200). Griffin et al. (2000) supported this by saying that for a newcomer, the desire to gain control is highly sought after as they need feel comfortable in their new environs to be able to amplify their performance and job satisfaction. Coming into a new organisation can be nerve-racking and the newcomer would feel uncertain about their future in the new job. Miller and Jablin (1991) stated that newcomers will experience a level of role shock and uncertainty when entering a new organisation, and that information disseminated from varying sources during this entry period is to alleviate newcomer uncertainty and shock.

A study involving South Korean companies, Kim et al. (2005) found that newcomers will face uncertainty and shock upon entry into a new organisation. Kim et al. (2005) also claimed that there is a need to navigate and prepare for the behaviours and responses from new colleagues. This is due to the lack of comfortable daily routines and the newcomer’s disconnect between their expectations prior to entry and the reality they are now facing, it also includes a lack of familiarity of the organisation structures, culture and rules. This can lead to a feeling of ambiguity and uncertainty about what is expected of them and what they

can expect from the organisation and colleagues alike. Comparable unfavourable effects of newcomer entry have been widely documented. Miller and Jablin (1991) suggest that despite an organisation's attempt to "provide new employees with information that is relevant to their new roles, there may be inadequacies in the nature and scope of the information presented" (p.92). During the entry period, "newcomers perceive that they receive less information from those around them than they believe is needed, for instance, a variety of factors may account for such feelings of information deprivation" (Miller & Jablin, 1991, p.95). The cause of newcomer uncertainty and stress can be pinpointed to the lack of control within a foreign environment; under these same circumstances the newcomer could encounter a weak or distant attachment to their new role.

Madlock and Chory (2014) define job involvement as the individual's psychological attachment to that job and the importance and meaning it has for them. Task socialisation is about understanding the role and the task attached to that role. Without these psychological attachments, uncertainty and feelings of helplessness can be exacerbated, and that acquiring this feeling of control is a standout point for newcomer socialisation. The more we find ourselves entering new organisations, the more important it becomes that adequate socialisation is delivered. These findings were echoed by Song and Chathoth (2011), who claimed that organisations that avoid delivering suitable socialisation could create adverse effects for the newcomer, and that this avoidance would lead to job dissatisfaction and high staff turnover. Similarly, Batistič (2018) maintained that ineffective newcomer socialisation not only amplifies the risk of newcomer turnover, it also contributes to adverse effects, such as lost revenue, the extra cost of losing staff and loss on investment in (informal and formal) training and recruitment of new staff. Both formal and informal training can create costs for the organisation, either through expensive facilitators or the loss of productivity when veteran staff give up their own time to instruct the newcomer.

Incidences where an organisation deliberately neglects adequate newcomer socialisation experiences are not uncommon. For example, in a study involving an engineering firm, Korte (2009) maintained that there has been expectation by organisations that newcomers must learn to fit into the organisation themselves, and without the need for organisation assistance. Not only does this hinder adequate socialisation, it can create newcomer resentment and high staff turnover.

2.2 Socialisation Tactics

This next section will cover the definition of socialisation tactics and the role they play in the newcomer socialisation process. It will discuss the differences between institutionalised and individualised tactics, as well as discovering the personal and organisational benefits; it will also reveal the costs incurred from differing tactic experiences.

2.2.1 Definitions of socialisation tactics

Batistič (2018) defined “socialisation tactics as the ways in which the experiences of individuals transitioning from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organisation” (p.223). Saks et al. (2007) suggested that appropriate socialisation tactics can alleviate role conflict, role ambiguity and intentions to quit. It can also strengthen organisational commitment and provide job satisfaction. Ideal personal and work consequences will avail when newcomers are exposed to and accumulate job characteristics ranging from task identity, variety, autonomy and significance. Batistič (2018) also established that socialisation had followed a three-step process. First, the anticipatory stage where newcomers will anticipate the facets of their new role before they enter, this is followed by an accommodation stage when the newcomer first starts their new role. Finally, there is the adaption stage where the newcomer will undertake the role and do their best to settle in, this is when socialisation tactics are at their most critical stage.

Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004) postulated that the ideals of the newcomer may change during entry as the socialisation tactics are delivered. This will occur as they reflect on their own ideals and the ideals of the organisation and make sense of the two and re-evaluate their own. Batistič's (2018) -maintained that a newcomer's initial perception of the organisation may change due to their experiences during entry and other events.

Ashforth et al. (2007) suggested that both institutionalised and individualised tactics can provide personal benefits for the newcomer. Even though both set of tactics are delivered by the organisation, there are noticeable differences between the two. Institutionalised socialisation tactics are structured as a formalised experience. Individualised tactics are self-initiated by the newcomer, where they are required to figure out the new working procedures on their own; lacking a formal structured socialisation programme. Kim et al. (2005) found

that socialisation tactics can bring about a positive influence on” job satisfaction, organisational commitment and the proactive socialisation behaviour of new employees” (p.233).

2.2.2 Socialisation tactics – types

Gruman and Saks (2011) and Ardts et al. (2001) identified institutionalised socialisation tactics as the use of formal, sequential, collective, investiture, fixed and serial tactics. Formal tactics separates the newcomer from the group, where they are expected to follow a separate (formal) training programme to learn their role. An example of this is when the newcomer is given an induction manual to work through. Sequential tactics are used when the organisation delivers clear instructions to the newcomer about the trajectory of activities and experiences they are likely to receive. An example of this is when the newcomer is advised that they will be given a formal induction talk on Wednesday and shadow a veteran staff member on Thursday.

Collective tactics are when the newcomer is subjected to the same learning experiences as the rest of the group. This is to maintain uniform ways of thinking and responses across the team. An example of this is when the newcomer is given a set of specific practices they need to adhere to when dealing with fellow colleagues. Investiture tactics are when the organisation will provide the newcomer with support while reinforcing their self-confidence. An example of this is asking the newcomer to suggest a solution, where the organisation can either correct them or allow them to implement this solution, with the general rule that the organisation will still provide ongoing support. Serial tactics are when a veteran staff member acts as a role model for the newcomer. An example of this is when a veteran staff member offers the newcomer peer to peer learning and support. Fixed tactics are when the newcomer is given a planned set of socialisation activities with instruction on what needs to be completed and by when it needs to be completed. An example of this is when the newcomer will follow a comprehensive induction manual and tick off certain steps at the end of the week.

Gruman and Saks (2011) also suggests that all of these institutionalised tactics allow the newcomer to adapt to their roles passively or reactively, reaffirming the organisational status

quo. It was found that many organisations have adopted institutionalised tactics, as it has the potential to satisfy the newcomer's basic needs with adequate structure, guidance and information.

Gruman and Saks (2011) and Ardts et al. (2001) found that individualised tactics are categorised as informal, random, individual, variable, divestiture and disjunctive. Informal tactics will place the newcomer into the group where they would be expected to follow and learn on the job in due course. These set of tactics are absent of structure and the newcomer learns by default rather than design. An example of this is being 'thrown in at the deep end', where the newcomer will actively learn from the group while taking the initiative to ask questions. Random tactics are when the newcomer is left with an unstructured and ambiguous list of activities or tasks to undertake. An example of this is when the manager will mention what tasks the newcomer has to do during that week, without any definition or rationale for doing them. Individual tactics is when the newcomer is encouraged to follow separate learning experiences outside the rest of the group. This tactic is to encourage independent ways of thinking and responses across the team. An example of this is when the newcomer is asked to form their own thoughts on how to deal with customers, and the organisation will either validate or invalidate their response. Divestiture tactics are when the organisation will denounce the newcomer's previous assumptions in an attempt to conform the newcomer to the organisation's ways of thinking. An example of this is when the organisation will not acknowledge the newcomer's prior views on how the induction process should take place, and ask them to conform to the organisation's way of doing things and thinking (i.e. work independently without support). Disjunctive tactics are when the newcomer is encouraged to seek and make sense of their own experiences, rather than following a veteran staff member for guidance. An example of this is when there is an expectation that they will gain knowledge from their own experiences on a certain task, rather than mimic a veteran staff member. Variable tactics are when the newcomer is given no defined timeframe to complete their socialisation activities. An example of this is when the manager gives the newcomer a set of tasks or learnings but does not indicate a timeframe to in which to learn or undertake them.

Each subset of individualised tactics has one common theme, in that newcomers are placed into situations to learn from their own experiences by using their initiative, self-efficacy and self-initiated tactics (e.g., observing).

2.2.3 Aids to good newcomer socialisation from the use of socialisation tactics

This next section will discover which tactics are being used to create good socialisation experiences.

According to Batistič (2018) successful socialisation is in the form of institutionalised tactics that are targeted, frequent and sustained. One of these is serial tactics, which allows a veteran staff member to act as a mentor or role model. Investiture tactics aid the newcomer by providing support and positive feedback. It was found that by exposing newcomers to differing socialisation tactics, the organisation was able to support the newcomer's adjustment and create mutual benefits for both parties; therefore providing targeted socialisation tactics that could alleviate job dissatisfaction and intent to quit amongst newcomers.

In support, Perrot et al. (2014) stated that many bi-polar sets of tactics (i.e. collective-individual, formal-informal, sequential-random, fixed-variable, serial-disjunctive and investiture-divestiture) can be used in differing circumstances with different newcomers. The reason being is that not all socialisation tactics are equally efficient in socialising newcomers under different contexts. In a study of newly-recruited accountants, Saks et al. (2007) suggested that social tactics (serial and investiture) allowed for better adjustment outcomes, and that during the adaption stage certain levels of tactics will be tested and ultimately delivered by the organisation. Bauer and Green (1994) found that investiture tactics used by the organisation will encourage newcomers to learn as they feel valued by the organisation, creating job satisfaction and organisational identification. The benefits of learning will help newcomers appreciate the organisation and role, give them a sense of purpose, aid their professional development and decrease any intentions to quit.

In a study involving a large educational institution, Klein et al. (2006) found that personal benefits of socialisation experiences consist of organisational efforts to enable and allow for newcomer adjustment such as onboarding practices, informal efforts delivered by insiders and newcomer proactive behaviours. An example of a successful onboarding practice is the organisation creating a structured set of learning outcomes for each week, including support and guidance along the way to help the newcomer achieve these outcomes.

Gruman and Saks (2011) study highlighted that positive institutionalised onboarding experiences is the balance of the newcomer's confidence, self-belief and institutionalised

socialisation tactics. It also has a positive connection with proactive behaviours, especially feedback seeking and information gathering. Wang et al. (2017) study found that continuous levels of socialisation tactics reduce the hangover effect for newcomers, and this can only happen when organisations furnish high-quality mentoring and encourage authentic self-expression among newcomers. This particular support also has the potential to reduce newcomer resignations. Batistič (2018) maintained that organisations will use varying tactics to socialise and adjust newcomers into their roles. Gruman and Saks (2011) found that collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial and investiture tactics positively increase newcomer allegiance and reduce turnover. These same institutionalised tactics can aid newcomers who are dissatisfied with any lack of formal direction.

Miller and Jablin (1991) suggested that newcomers who are effectively socialised into the organisation with the right socialisation tactics tend to experience lower levels of work alienation. They also suggested that a newcomer who is socialised via institutionalised tactics will also conform to the ways ‘in which to behave’ and will not deviate from organisational expectations. Cable and Parsons (2001) supported this and found that institutionalised tactics delivered by the organisation can forge a connection between the newcomer’s own values and their view of the organisation’s values. Newcomers will experience a better fit when collective and formal socialisation tactics are delivered by the organisation. They will feel a sense of cohesion when the organisation delivers a much more shared and focused learning experience, rather than a ‘thrown in at the deep end’ approach. In a study involving a large Chinese courier company, Song et al. (2017) argued that collective and formal tactics also help the newcomer feel more secure and help them learn what is needed to adhere to the firm’s values, expectations and shared norms.

Kim et al. (2005) stated that the effectiveness and efficiency of social tactics varies, some tactics are more important than others and have a different way of aiding the adjustment for newcomers. It was also found that more tailored tactics would allow the newcomers to fit in better, and that a positive outcome of using organisational tactics is to increase newcomer job satisfaction and alleviate turnover. Organisations will “often try to develop workforce flexibility and commitment by instilling person–organisation fit, which refers to the compatibility between people and the organisations in which they work” (Kim et al., 2005, p. 232). In parallel to Kim et al.’s (2005) findings, Cooper-Thomas et al. (2012) found that during the interview process the organisation will evaluate the applicant’s fit by comparing their

values to the values of the company. It was also found that a newcomer's initial fit perceptions become less positive during socialisation. In the same study, it was noted that employees will experience person-organisation fit when firms delivered frequent and supportive institutionalised socialisation tactics that enable newcomers to reduce their uncertainty, embrace their roles and gain interest in the organisation's goals and values. One example of these tactics could be in the form of sequential tactics, where the newcomer is advised on how the tasks and learning will take place, and what the timeframe would be.

Perrot et al. (2014) study demonstrated that a positive outcome of using tactics is to attain the newcomer's perceived organisational support and trust. It also serves as an indicator that the organisation cares about the employee and is concerned for their well-being. "When new employees feel supported, they are more secure in their identity as a learner. Therefore they can take the necessary steps to ensure learning without fearing the consequences of asking questions, making mistakes or upsetting their image and standing" (Perrot et al., 2014, p.252). Lapointe et al. (2014) found that trust in organisations plays an important role in mediating the relationships between organisational socialisation tactics and newcomer adjustment, and particularly the newcomer's psychological bond with the organisation. Eberl et al. (2012) suggested that newcomers would face increasing uncertainty if they sense that their organisation does not actively support them, creating unease and a tendency to resign. Organisations expressing trust when delivering tactics is important for newcomer socialisation. This is when the newcomer will feel accepted and supported, and the organisation acts as responsible role models, and communicates to the newcomer reassurance that they are trusted by the organisation.

Kowtha's (2018) study involving South East Asian engineers found two forms of socialisation tactics that were required for successful newcomer socialisation. The first is contextual tactics, where newcomers will go through a (formal) training programme in order to understand the job specifics. The second is social tactics, where a newcomer would form a relationship with a mentor or senior peer. Both tactics will allow the newcomer to ease into their role, and one of these tactics is to implement a socialisation agent. In parallel, Miller and Jablin (1991) maintained that higher levels of perceived agent helpfulness is the result of more rigorous social interactions between the newcomer and insiders. The insider will relay messages to ease newcomer entry, and give the newcomer a sense of competence in the task and role, and also a sense of acceptance into the work group/organisation. In support,

Klein et al. (2006) found that “new employees reporting higher levels of agent helpfulness should have greater mastery of their performance, goals/values” and that social exchange aids trust and establishes a bond between newcomer and insiders (p.99).

Lapointe et al. (2014) found that socialisation tactics can aid newcomer entry and accelerate adjustment through social exchange with colleagues. It was also found that institutionalised tactics help newcomers to assimilate into the organisation, build confidence and undertake the required tasks. According to Allen (2006), socialisation tactics can reflect the social aspects of socialisation, for example, experienced organisational members acting as role models for newcomers (serial tactics), newcomers receiving positive social support from experienced organisational insiders (investiture tactics) and finally, when they receive support from a mentor. Cooper-Thomas and Wilson (2011) also found that by giving newcomer colleagues certain tasks and responsibilities through peer-to-peer support, the organisation can reduce the social costs of tactics. The organisation can also incentivise colleagues to undertake these roles, that could reduce performance costs associated with tactic use, and organisations can then make resources available to newcomers in an attempt to easily enact tactics and accelerate their adjustment. An example is getting a veteran staff member to spend two hours a day (for the first month) with the newcomer and instructing them on a certain task(s).

Perrot et al. (2014) maintain that organisations will build environments that will allow for successful adjustment, and to do this they will seek and identify factors on how they should treat their employees. By working to generate strong perceived organisational support early on in the relationship, organisations can enhance newcomer learning and other potentially positive outcomes of perceived organisational support (i.e. performance, citizenship behaviour and positive job attitudes). An example of this is when the newcomer willingly engages and puts more effort into team discussions and learning. It also strengthens the way the employee accepts the organisation’s goals and values, and the commitment they display towards the organisation. It was also suggested that higher levels of organisational commitment from the employee fostered a better engagement with the company, creating a more successful socialisation. In parallel, Madlock and Chory (2014) found that “organisational commitment may be defined as the comparative strength of an individual’s identification and involvement with an organisation” (p.60). High levels of organisational

commitment also yield positive outcomes (i.e., higher job retention and satisfaction). This is when the newcomer has a strong belief and accepts the organisations goals and values, and also has the enthusiasm to go above and beyond and work for the good of the organisation. Madlock and Chory (2014) also suggested that institutionalised tactics, and in particular investiture (social support) is associated with higher levels of newcomer commitment over a longer period of time.

A study carried out by Jones (1986) found that institutionalised tactics have led newcomers into more restrictive and protective roles, whereas individualised tactics gave way to more pioneering roles. Individualised socialisation, self-efficacy allows newcomers to verify their abilities to perform successfully in new situations, and use learnt skills, strategies and past experience in an effort to successfully undertake the new environment, adjust and gain acceptance within the new organisation.

Gruman et al. (2006) maintained that individualised socialisation “almost forces newcomers to be proactive as a way to acquire the necessary information, which can lower their uncertainty and allow them to make sense of their surroundings” (p. 93), it was also stated that “proactive tactics are more necessary in an individualised socialisation environment” (Gruman et al., 2006, p.93). They found that individualised socialisation allows the newcomer to design and proactively acquire the necessary skills and behaviours for successful socialisation. In support, Perrot et al. (2014) suggested that the individualised tactics approach is more informal and less structured than institutionalised socialisation, which is a more formal and structured, and process driven by the organisation to socialise newcomers. This occurs when the newcomer deems that the institutionalised tactics delivered by the organisation as inadequate and therefore leans towards the use of individualised tactics. An example of this is when the newcomer feels that the learning delivered by the manager is inconsistent, and as a result they will seek out opportunistic tactics such as observing colleagues to form their own interpretation, in an attempt to progress within their role.

Batistič's (2018) study identified that individualised tactics can accelerate the understanding of organisational tacit knowledge (i.e. goals, culture, social capital), and that an individualised tactic custom-made approach would be more beneficial when adding a subset of institutionalised tactics (i.e. investiture and serial tactics). Gruman et al. (2006) also maintained that individualised tactics can enable role innovation for newcomers, whereas institutionalised tactics will largely mimic the current role.

According to Cooper-Thomas and Wilson (2011), newcomers will gain more by learning an extensive range of adjustment tactics and that the use of individualised socialisation tactics (i.e. random, variable, individual, informal, variable, disjunctive and divestiture) would build task confidence for the newcomer. It was also found that tactics of this nature encourage the newcomer to question the status quo and develop their own unique approach to their roles. Gruman et al. (2006) maintained that individualised socialisation “almost forces newcomers to be proactive in order to acquire the necessary information that can lower their uncertainty and allow them to make sense of their surroundings” (p.93)

Cooper-Thomas and Stadler (2015) identified that another facet of individualised or self-initiated tactic use is the newcomer’s perspective on assessing benefits versus costs. It was found that performance benefits give the newcomers a better grasp of the role, social and organisational needs, whereas ego benefits will give newcomers improved self-efficacy and self-esteem outcomes. Cooper-Thomas and Stadler (2015) also maintained that the newcomer’s perception of successful socialisation is about getting to grips with the organisation and role, and that social benefits is about building a strong relationship with colleagues, and finding a sense of belonging and support. The notion of costs versus benefits will determine how the newcomers will act and present themselves in the organisation. The effort to understand the costs may prevent the newcomers using certain tactics for adjustment, whereas the idea of benefits arising from tactics use will encourage the newcomer to take up these tactics.

Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004) found that newcomers are mindful of the costs and losses accredited to using an individualised tactic and will do their best to avoid these. When information seeking, the newcomer will rank the cost to ego versus social benefits, where the idea of costs rather than the benefits of tactics would be of more concern to newcomers. At the top of that list would be performance, as it is imperative for gaining opportunities and meeting organisational expectations. Cooper-Thomas and Stadler (2015) indicated that for newcomers, performance costs and benefits trumped ego and social costs. It also shows that performance concerns are highly regarded for newcomer socialisation. In another study, Griffin et al. (2000) stipulated that “newcomers may enter an organisation with some tendency toward engaging in certain socialisation tactics that will be either effective or ineffective depending on the organisational tactics” (p.470).

Findings from Gruman and Saks' (2011) study suggested the point of importance is that new staff will respond differently to organisational attempts. Kowtha (2018) encouraged cross-sectional research as a way to identify the variables and needs to customise onboarding programmes according to the newcomer's characteristics.

Gruman and Saks (2011) found that a newcomer's prior experience/education is an important factor in hiring training and retention in the role; the newcomer's personality is also key to their understanding the success of their socialisation and adjustment. In addition, Cooper-Thomas and Stadler (2015) suggested that a large majority of newcomers would fall into the category of 'veteran newcomers'. This group would have prior work experience entering organisations and would rely on their own thoughts to navigate the adjustment process. However, these prior thoughts alone are not sufficient and other socialisation measures would be required. Cooper-Thomas and Wilson's (2011) study identified that experienced newcomers would feel that organisational socialisation tactics will have less effect on them as they would be more reliant on their own experience to adjust into the new organisation. Nevertheless, tactics do play a role in successful socialisation regardless of prior experience. Kowtha (2018) suggested that newcomers will use their prior experience as a way to overcome challenging situations in their new environment. Prior experience and professional education can accelerate newcomer adjustment and commitment, as well as alleviate the need for high (formal) training costs.

2.2.4 Barriers to good newcomer socialisation from the use of socialisation tactics

This next section will discover which tactics are being used to create poor socialisation experiences.

According to a study involving telecommunication workers in India, Cable et al. (2013) identified that institutionalised tactics are about formally delivering newcomer socialisation according to the needs and understanding of the company. As a result, many organisations would adopt a one-size fits all approach and not take into consideration the uniqueness and prior experience of the newcomer. In the same study, Cable et al. (2013) also suggested that organisations need to be aware of the newcomer's personality and should tailor their approach to get the best out of the newcomer. In support, Kowtha (2018) stated that

socialisation is considered subjective, and newcomers can produce different responses to the same tactic. Thus the one-size fits all approach does not always work and socialisation tactics should be designed according to the personality of the newcomer, and take into account their prior experience and ways of learning. Gruman and Saks (2011) maintained that prior assumptions by the organisation had overshadowed which newcomer tactics suited best. Traditionally it was assumed that newcomers learned best from the one-size fits all approach, however over time this theory was refuted, and it was found that there was a need to socialise people differently.

According to Gruman and Saks (2011), newcomers who are more inquisitive and inclined to face a high degree of ambiguity would prefer individualised tactics, as these tactics would give them fewer restrictions to express creativity and innovation. Newcomers who are less inclined to face ambiguous situations (when first starting) would be more comfortable with institutionalised tactics, as they wouldn't want to divert from the status quo approach. Newcomers with lower self-efficacy or self-esteem had a preference for institutionalised tactics. Even though it was useful knowledge to have, Kowtha (2018) did suggest a concern with a newcomer's prior knowledge, where in some circumstances the newcomer's prior experience may hinder new learning and they could hold an inflexible expectation on how the socialisation should take place.

Madlock and Chory (2014) stated that one of the many detrimental results of ineffective socialisation or socialisation tactics is newcomer work alienation. Work alienation was defined as a lack of connection between the employee and their role through a lack of control, lack of meaning or drive, lack of direction to achieve the goals and no intrinsic benefit by doing the work. Certain work structures and delivery of socialisation can actually exacerbate this alienation through limited job autonomy, preventing employee participation and work enrichment. In support Kim et al. (2005) postulated that a lack of structure through disorganised and inadequate institutionalised tactics can create an atmosphere of ambiguity, however it does allow newcomers to question the status quo and leads to employee proactivity in the role. An example of this is when the newcomer feels that the tactics delivered by the organisation are restrictive and undermine the creativity and value of their current skills. In order to demonstrate their skills they may take up a proactive position and start questioning legacy processes and suggest how their prior experience could help with process improvement. Perrot et al. (2014) suggested that less confident newcomers would

normally conform to a risk averse institutionalised approach and undertake tasks clearly prescribed by the organisation, yet this approach does restrict the newcomer from role innovation. In a study by Saks et al. (2007), it was found that institutionalised tactics could alleviate newcomer uncertainty and anxiety. However, if institutionalised tactics are delivered for an extended period after entry, it could hamper newcomer proactive behaviour.

Wang et al. (2017) suggested that employees may experience a honeymoon - hangover effect “upon learning new knowledge and skills during orientation, receiving supportive mentoring, understanding identifiable steps in the (informal and formal) training process and career paths” (p.207). In the same study it was found that the ‘hangover effect’ becomes more prevalent as normalisation sets in and newcomers start to confront the unpleasant realities of the job. Ashforth et al. (2007) maintained that the sustained impact of socialisation tactics will decrease the longer the tenure, and therefore, not only must the delivery of the tactics be effective, it needs to be sustained and monitored.

Cooper-Thomas and Stadler (2015) stated that during individualised socialisation, the manager would invite the newcomer to adjust into their role through a process of self-learning rather than a structured unwavering process. Newcomers are given the opportunity to assess the costs and benefits of these individualised tactics themselves. In most cases, ego concerns outweigh social concerns for newcomers. Ego costs involve the effort and the lengths the newcomer will go to protect their own ego, and it can include maintaining high self-importance, self-image and self-efficacy. Social costs involve the dangers of offending social norms and disrupting co-workers, allowing this to occur could expose and accredit negativity towards newcomers. Similarly, Cooper-Thomas and Wilson (2011) suggest that performance costs involve the labour and effort (physical and mental) to carry out a tactic, and that the riskier they are the higher the chance to attain benefits and costs. Cooper-Thomas and Stadler (2015) suggested that newcomers would enter the workplace to create and form their presence through trial and error.

Even though there is a large amount of literature detailing the personal cost of poor socialisation tactics, equally these same tactics can have an adverse effect on the organisation delivering them. According to Madlock and Chory (2014), organisational costs can increase as a result of fiscal and resource expenses. For example, the employee’s lack of will to undertake tasks (causing timewasting), staff turnover, dangerous and unsanctioned

practices by the employee (which can lead to loss of reputation), a depleting team environment and added stress for veteran staff. Another example of this is when an unhappy newcomer will start spreading critical views of the current culture and detailing how better it was at their previous job, possibly causing veteran members to rethink their view of their own organisation.

2.3 Newcomer Proactive Behaviours

This next section will cover the definition of newcomer proactive behaviours and the role they play in the newcomer socialisation process. It will also classify the different behaviours used and discover which behaviours are used to create good or poor socialisation experiences.

2.3.1 Definitions of Newcomer Proactive Behaviours

A study by Crant (2000) maintained that individuals are “not always passive recipients of environmental constraints on their behaviour; rather, they can intentionally and directly change their current circumstances” (p.437). Saks et al. (2007) stated that newcomers have generally been seen as reactive when it comes to socialisation, organisations were given the responsibility to deliver and lead the socialisation and adjustment absent of any newcomer proactivity. Song and Chathoth (2011) postulated that newcomers were commonly regarded as passive and reactive agents, and it is only in more recent times they have been deemed as active agents in the socialisation process. Gruman and Saks (2011) also found that newcomer perceptions of socialisation tactics and newcomer proactive behaviour jointly affect the outcome of newcomer learning (socialisation content). Socialisation tactics aim to socialise newcomers into an organisation setting, whereas proactive behaviour is an individual-driven or informal means of ‘self-socialising’. Anseel, et al. (2007) maintained that proactivity is a goal-driven behaviour based on individual self-belief, desire for control, high self-efficacy and the need to achieve a future-oriented thinking goal.

Crant (2000) also found that proactive employees define their circumstances by altering the situation for themselves through five domains of proactive behaviour: role breadth, self-efficacy, taking charge, proactive personality and personal initiative. All five domains overlap and demonstrate the need to take the initiative to improve the present situation or produce new ones by challenging the status quo, rather than passively adapting to current

circumstances. In a study involving ground staff from a Taiwanese airline, Hwang et al. (2015) stated that role breadth is the newcomer's belief to undertake a wider set of tasks; ones that will challenge them and venture outside their comfort zone, role expectations or even job description. For example, the newcomer is asked to work on a specific lower-level task, by doing so they identify an advanced task that will challenge them and improve themselves. As a result of this proactive move, they could approach their supervisor and ask them to incorporate this advanced task into their daily work.

In a study involving workers from multiple German software development companies, Ohly and Fritz (2007) found that self-efficacy is the way in which a newcomer would evaluate their ability to perform specific tasks and behaviours. For example, where the newcomer has the confidence to undertake a certain piece of work above their level. It was also suggested that individuals with higher self-efficacy will have more confidence to execute proactive behaviours, and that their desire for control would be stronger than those with lower self-efficacy. In another study involving lower to mid-level managers across all industries, Morrison and Phelps (1999) maintained that taking charge is a quintessential proactive behaviour, where the newcomer would improve and subsequently change themselves and their role through proactivity. For example, the newcomer identifies that the current process is not entirely effective and has the confidence to overtly address it and improve it. Parker et al.'s (2006) study involving production workers in a UK manufacturing firm, found that harbouring a proactive personality allows an individual to engage proactively in behaviours that foster and hasten their adjustment. For example, the newcomer actively participates in meetings that will help them adjust quicker. Frese et al.'s (1996) study involving blue collar workers in West and East Germany firms (within a unified Germany) found that personal initiative is a work behaviour that encourages self-starting as a method to overcome barriers to achieve a goal. An example of this dimension is that the newcomer will undertake a more challenging task to gain a desired result.

2.3.2 Newcomer proactive behaviours – types

Cooper-Thomas et al. (2014) and Saks et al. (2011) identified seven proactive behaviours; feedback seeking, information seeking, general socialising, networking, boss-employee relationships, negotiation of job changes, and positive framing. Similarly, Griffin et al. (2000) also highlighted that proactive behaviours can help the newcomer to make sense of the workplace through information seeking, feedback seeking and promoting optimistic

views through positive framing. They will also evolve in their tasks and expectations through job-change negotiating, forging strong relationships with their supervisor or line manager and network within the organisation. In support, Kim et al. (2005) and Ashford and Black (1996) found that the seven proactive behaviours could easily be condensed into three larger groups. The first is sense making, where the individual will proactively pursue information and feedback. Second, relationship building, where the individual will proactively attempt to form and forge good relationships within the new organisation. Finally, positive framing, where the individual will perceive the new environment in a positive way.

The need to gain control was highlighted in a study by Gruman et al. (2006). In their study it was found that sense making was important for newcomers, as it allows them to make sense of their new environs. Lapointe et al. (2014) also suggested that sense making is when a newcomer develops a trusted perception of their new environs and the organisation in full. Ashford and Black (1996) found that individuals can exercise proactive behaviours and alleviate uncertainty by seeking information that “tells them what they should be doing to survive in their new role and setting, and feedback (a subset of Information) that tells them how they are viewed by others” (p.201).

Morrison (1993) classified employee feedback seeking and newcomer information seeking behaviours universally as information seeking. It is seen as a common way to alleviate newcomer ambiguity and uncertainty, newcomers will proactively seek this information which can be obtained by approaching managers, peers and attending meetings. Five types of Information that can be acquired: referent, technical, normative, performance feedback and social feedback. Ashford and Black (1996) explained the five types. First is referent information, this is used to educate the newcomer of what is expected in that role, for example, the newcomer must ensure that emails are answered within two working days. Technical information teaches the newcomer how they should execute their specific job tasks, for instance, the newcomer is shown which online database they need to check for client information. Normative information teaches the newcomer about the organisation's principles, for example, the newcomer is advised of the company's customer service promise. Performance feedback evaluates and advises the newcomer on how well they are performing their tasks and role, for instance, the supervisor will approach the newcomer directly if they feel that emails are not being turned around in two working days. Social feedback advises the newcomer on relationships within the organisation and how to

approach these relationships, for example, when the newcomer is told that before engaging with a senior manager they need to address them by their title rather than their personal name.

Certain types of information are sought from differing relationships. For example, Chan and Schmitt's (2000) study found that technical Information was sought from peers rather than managers. The reason being is that peers are expected to have the technical nous of the newcomer's role, and therefore more inclined to have intimate knowledge of tasks involved. They also see that asking peers is less humiliating than asking supervisors (believing that supervisors may judge the newcomer's competency). However, referent information was usually acquired from supervisors rather than peers, in the belief that supervisors have the responsibility to delegate, assign tasks and measure performance. In support, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) stated that modelling and observing behaviours from peer and supervisors is also a significant gain from relationship building. When trialling new behaviours, newcomers can understand which are productive and which behaviours are detrimental to their own standing and the organisation. Newcomers will observe their role model's behaviours in a way to accelerate their adjustment.

Korte's (2009) study found that relationship building, rather than the individual's capability of learning was the catalyst of the socialisation process. It was also suggested that the quality of the relationship is pivotal for newcomers, and that frustrations escalated when there was a lack of direction, instruction and support from their colleagues. For veteran colleagues the most important personal characteristics for a newcomer was self-confidence, experiences and sense of ambition. Filstad's (2004) study with a real estate firm identified a strong importance on relationships when socialising, and that the idea of finding a more established colleague who would guide the newcomer correctly to undertake the job and learn the culture of the team was also important. Kim et al. (2005) maintained that socialisation is affected by how proactive individuals are in "seeking out interaction opportunities, and that some people are more likely than others to seek out interaction opportunities when they enter a work situation" (p. 235).

Cooper-Thomas et al. (2014) suggested that proactive relationship building behaviours can be classified into general socialising, boss-employee relationship building and networking. General socialising is when newcomers participate in social events to get to know their colleagues better, and in parallel, a way to represent themselves as approachable and

engaging. For example, attending morning tea or other social events as an opportunity to discuss and convey organisational experiences at a social and informal level. Ashford and Black (1996) maintained that boss-employee relationships “assess the extent to which newcomers are motivated to try to build relationships with their bosses” (p. 212). For instance, both the newcomer and supervisor sit in the lunch room together and discuss what they did during the weekend, it’s also a good way to break the ice and any hierarchal barriers within a social context. Kim et al. (2005) also stated that networking is a way in which the newcomer would proactively approach another colleague within their own or different area to discuss or build a mutually beneficial work relationship. For example, the newcomer will proactively show interest and assist a colleague with a piece of work that they are doing or even refer to their own past experience to help. In Korte’s (2009) study, it was suggested that relationship building outweighed the newcomer’s ability to learn, and that collegial networks was the primary context for socialisation; not the organisation itself. High quality mentoring relationships between the newcomer and an experienced colleague and being accepted by the work group was the catalyst for higher job satisfaction and less intention to leave.

Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) suggested that for newcomers, interpersonal sources such as peers, mentors and supervisors are seen as a good channel to attain information and assist in the learning process. Supervisors assist newcomers with alleviating any unforeseen events, and success or failure for newcomers is also reliant on their relationship with their supervisor within the first few months of entry. Peers can communicate the more elusive/tacit areas of knowledge oblivious to any supervisors’ or mentors’ knowledge that supervisors or mentors are unaware of. Coaching is a valuable tool that mentors deliver and can be either short-term within the first few weeks, ongoing or even start later.

Ashforth et al. (2007) suggested that positive framing is to view situations in a more optimistic way, and to interpret events within the environment as supportive. One example is that the newcomer initially sees their new open plan office as condensed, rather than seeing it as a detriment to their working or learning, the newcomer can also view it as a way to easily connect with colleagues.

2.3.3 Aids to good newcomer socialisation from the use of proactive behaviours

This next section will note which proactive behaviours are being used to create good socialisation experiences.

Cooper-Thomas and Stadler's (2015) study found that newcomers will use proactive behaviours to accelerate their adjustment by improving legacy systems and even establishing new ones. In an earlier study involving temporary employees from New Zealand, Cooper-Thomas et al. (2014) found that using "proactive behaviours such as direct inquiry, feedback seeking and networking can accelerate and optimise newcomer socialisation" (p.318). "Proactive behaviour is also aligned with positive outcomes that include greater learning, social integration, role innovation, job satisfaction and lower intention of leaving" (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014, p.318). "Proactive behaviours are self-initiated, future-focused and about taking control in order to bring about change and accelerate newcomer adjustment" (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014, p.319). It also strengthens social relations with the current team and builds confidence for further development. Cooper-Thomas et al. (2014) suggested organisations which encourage newcomers to act proactively will build a blueprint for successful socialisation. Proactive behaviours are also aimed to modify the newcomer or the environment in the attempt to increase person–environment fit.

Griffin et al. (2000) suggested that proactive behaviours were about initiating situations and creating favourable conditions for the newcomer, subsequently leading to positive outcomes. Unlike reactive behaviours, newcomers who take on proactive behaviours will not wait for opportunities to come to them and they will actively seek out opportunities to suit their environment/developmental needs. In support, Gruman et al. (2006) stated that the use of more proactive behaviours equates to positive socialisation and that organisations need to encourage newcomer proactive behaviours as a way to accelerate the socialisation process. In addition, proactive behaviour has generally been a desirable trait as it leads to many welcomed characteristics such as initiative, confidence and adaptability. Saks et al. (2011) study maintains that the use of proactive behaviours can lead to low staff turnover and high job satisfaction. It also has other positive outcomes such as better learning, the ability to undertake tasks quicker, understand expectations of the role and social integration. One example is "that newcomers who more frequently engaged in a proactive behaviour (e.g., information seeking) were more likely to receive the corresponding proactive outcome (e.g., information)" (Saks et al., 2011, p.36).

In support, Ashforth et al. (2007) suggested that employee proactive behaviours allow the organisation to design and freely change its own path through creative agility. At an individual level it can bring about innovation and leadership effectiveness and by challenging the status quo, the employee can put forward new ideas or methods to improve the organisation, structure, service or product. Lapointe et al. (2014) maintained that newcomers who engage in proactive behaviours have a higher level of satisfaction, performance and lower turnover. In addition, proactive behaviours also allow newcomers to develop and grow within the role and organisation.

In contrast to newcomers with a low desire for control, their counterparts with a higher level had displayed behaviours and actions to seek more information, negotiate and form relationships, all resulting in better socialisation and equally in job satisfaction. Bolino et al. (2010) argued that “employees who engage in proactive behaviours are considered go getters, because they look to take pre-emptive actions that will positively impact themselves, their environment or both” (p.325). In short, rather than accepting the status quo, proactive employees will challenge it and find ways to improve their circumstances. Both the organisation and newcomer can see and attain benefits as a result of employee proactive behaviours, for example, employee effectiveness, the resilience and capacity to manage unforeseen circumstances and organisational performance.

Yu and Davis (2016) stated that proactive behaviour allows the newcomer to bring about favourable change to themselves and in their environment. In today’s global economy, to gain a competitive advantage, organisations will actively hire employees who undertake proactive behaviours. In addition, Gruman and Saks (2011) suggested that newcomer attitudes, behaviour and retention is the result of how organisations socialise. Newcomers will become dedicated and industrious if they are effectively socialised by the organisation and proactive behaviours will help the newcomer navigate their way through ambiguity and lead to reduced uncertainty. It is also important that organisations understand newcomer intentions to undertake proactive behaviours and the motivations they will use to carry out proactive behaviours. Newcomers who are highly conscientious will seek feedback and information in order to progress planning, problem solving and achievement.

Saks et al. (2007) stated that sense making behaviours such as feedback seeking and information seeking are widely used to aid newcomer transition, and will help the newcomer

to understand their tasks, role and environment; all leading to successful socialisation. Information seeking has the purpose to alleviate any newcomer uncertainty about correct behaviour, while seeking feedback can give the newcomer insight on how to modify their behaviours to allow for future rewards. Ashforth et al. (2007) study found that newcomers can gain a better understanding of their abilities and their environment by actively seeking out information and feedback, and both behaviours will help them accelerate their socialisation. “As employees gain information about their work setting, the social expectations that exist and feedback on their own performance/activities, they are able to reduce uncertainty and learn their place in the organisation” (Kim et al., 2005, p.234). In support, Cooper-Thomas et al. (2014) suggested that information gathering and feedback seeking can enhance and speed up newcomer socialisation.

Ashforth et al. (2007) suggested that information seeking is a way for both newcomers and organisations to mutually attain their objectives. These objectives can be obtained from performance feedback or information feedback about the task or work environment, organisation, stakeholders and ways of working. It is seen as a tool to evaluate and rectify behaviours and ways of working, which in turn will allow the newcomer to become accepted and personally confident. Saks et al. (2011) stated that while requesting feedback is important, it should be requested in the appropriate context and frequently during the first months of socialisation to make sure the newcomer is on the right track. Saks and Ashforth (1996) argue that it is important not to underestimate the uncertainty, stress and anxiety experienced by newcomers when they first enter the organisation. Adequate orientation and socialisation will help the newcomer gain understanding of tasks, their own role and the required attitude to do well within the organisation. Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller's (2000) study suggested that sense making allows the newcomer to alleviate uncertainty through information seeking and feedback seeking, where they can seek information on their tasks and seek feedback on how well they perform. In a study involving the British Army, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2005) found that as “newcomers learn about their role, colleagues and organisation they reduce their uncertainty, show improvements in performance and job satisfaction and are more likely to stay” (p.116). In addition, newcomers who take on sense making techniques can perceive issues within the organisation, and as a result acquire a clearer understanding of the organisation.

Lapointe et al. (2014) suggested that by using sense making during organisational entry,

newcomers can enhance job satisfaction and accelerate adjustment. Morrison et al. (2004) also found that newcomers can alleviate the impact of organisational surprise by undertaking information and feedback seeking behaviours. This will allow them to prepare for and understand the rationale of such events, while also guiding them to adapt to the organisational values. Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2005) argue that uncertainty reduction theory allows newcomers to gain a better understanding and confidence of the environment, colleagues and role. The benefits of this theory can be achieved through sense making, where it helps to reduce the uncertainty element of organisational socialisation, and by adopting sense making the newcomer will have a higher chance of staying in the organisation. Batistič (2018) maintained that sense making will help the individual to understand the new work environment accurately, clearly and also positively, subsequently leading to uncertainty reduction.

Ashford and Cummings (1983) suggest that feedback is a valuable resource that helps the newcomers attain goals and subsequently alleviate any uncertainty. In support, Bauer and Green (1998) argue that acquiring feedback is highly important for the newcomer, as it can modify their behaviour to give them a better idea on how to adjust into their new role. Newcomers who start off with a high desire of control would be inclined to lobby for job changes aimed at creating jobs that better suit their skills and abilities. Therefore, the need to understand what is expected from them is a critical step in order to undertake, contribute and perform in their job. Beenen et al. (2017) suggested that positive outcomes avail from proactive feedback seeking behaviours (i.e. reduced intention to quit, job satisfaction, citizenship behaviours, creativity and better adjustment).

Ashford and Black (1996) state that newcomers who seek feedback are aware and better prepared to modify their performance behaviours and align it with the organisation's expectations, and because of feedback, newcomers can have a better grasp of role expectations and clarity. Batistič (2018) maintained that proactive newcomers will seek information and feedback from their supervisors and other experts in their area. Proactive feedback seeking allows the employee to assess their capabilities, understand the work environment and adjust their performance strategies as necessary.

According to Anseel et al. (2007), feedback seeking behaviours can be categorised into image-based, ego-based and instrumental. Image-based is to enhance and protect one's

image in the organisation. Ego-based is where the newcomer will refrain from seeking feedback (when the feedback is potentially threatening to the ego). For instrumental, the newcomer will seek feedback to assist them with their goals and regulate their behaviour. Getting this feedback would prove helpful to their learning, development and performance. Morrison et al. (2004) maintained that feedback seeking allows the newcomer to assess their capabilities, identify their environment and modify their behaviours to fit in and impress. Beenen et al. (2017) study also found that newcomers who see their supervisors as supportive are more inclined to seek feedback.

According to Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000), “feedback is especially important for newcomers who are more likely to misinterpret the environment, make mistakes and violate organisational norms than individuals who have just completed a formalised socialisation process” (p.374). It also helps them understand what they need to educate themselves on more to become a fully socialised member of staff and what they can unlearn (existing bad habits). Dahling and Whitaker (2016) suggested that shrewd newcomers will seek feedback when they have just undertaken a job and delivered a favourable result, or from a colleague who already holds them in high esteem. They can use this feedback to showcase their reputable standing in front of others, in short, many use it as a tool to improve their public standing and their quest to improve themselves (impression management).

Saks et al. (2011) argued that the main objective of newcomer proactivity is to reduce uncertainty by understanding the role and environment, and one way is to seek information. Proactive information seeking will give the newcomer confidence and a clear picture of what is expected of them and eliminate role ambiguity. Cooper-Thomas et al. (2014) suggested that asking questions from colleagues is the hallmark of proactive seeking behaviours and this will allow the newcomer to gain more clarity on their role and acclimatise better. Not only does this benefit the newcomer by reducing uncertainty, it allows them to understand, predict, control their environments and acquire much needed detail to carry out their new role. Morrison (2002) stated that information seeking can take a subjective route, where it may be used by individuals who have a low tolerance of uncertainty. It can also be used by high self-esteem individuals who need it as a way to gain more traction in their role or by newcomers with less confidence in their work to affirm that they are on the right track. In an earlier study, Morrison (1993) found that newcomers who proactively sought information in their first six months of employment had better prospects to master

their job, define their role, learn about their organisations culture and become socially integrated. In parallel, Mornata and Cassar (2018) suggested that information seeking is a channel to develop and cement a working relationship with veterans and other colleagues. It is also a way in which the newcomer can comprehend, advance and attain status as a full member within the organisation.

Gruman et al. (2006) suggest that proactivity behaviours are formed because the newcomer needs a higher degree of control and the power to shape their socialisation. In addition, Griffin et al. (2000) maintain that frequent proactive information seeking will allow the newcomer to understand and perform their tasks more effectively and efficiently, and as a result they would accelerate adjustment into their role and gain acceptance amongst their colleagues. An example of proactive information seeking was found by Miller and Jablin (1991), who suggested that newcomers can use a wide repertoire of information seeking behaviours in order to obtain information. One is asking overt questions, which can be a useful channel when openly acquiring information from a colleague that the newcomer can trust to provide the necessary information with minimal or no costs. Overt questions are deemed efficient and specific, it will alleviate ambiguity and forge a relationship that will allow continuation of this exchange.

Mignerey et al. (1995) suggested that information seeking behaviours will aid the newcomer to become innovative and accepted by the organisation. Miller and Jablin (1991) also found that adequate communication traits play a significant part, as it the main channel for information seeking which subsequently results in uncertainty reduction and heightened assimilation. In another study involving an engineering firm, Chao et al. (1994) stated that learning the organisational goals and values is also fundamental for organisational socialisation. Through information seeking the newcomer can acquire these particular goals and values, these same goals can even come from informal channels such as unwritten tacit goals by influential veterans within the organisation. In support, Madlock and Chory (2014) argued that newcomers who actively seek out information have an advantage in the organisation, they are more adaptable, satisfied in their roles and have a better sense of their personal identity than people who are less inclined to seek information.

Finkelstein et al. (2003) study found that information seeking behaviours is a primary channel

to alleviate newcomer uncertainty. Information seeking behaviours will allow the newcomer to become more aware, exposed and socialised to organisational politics, goals and values, leading to a better chance of career development and rising through the ranks of the organisation. Klein et al. (2006) suggested another information gathering method called realism of pre-entry knowledge, this is the prior information a newcomer has acquired before starting their new role. Realism of pre-entry knowledge can assist newcomer adjustment, as it gives them a grasp on what to expect when entering a new organisation. Newcomers who were given this knowledge had a better idea of what is needed to perform in their role and as a result accelerated the socialisation process.

Korte and Lin (2013) suggested that the quality of relationship between the newcomer and colleagues were a catalyst of good socialisation and positive outcomes. "For a newcomer, finding a mentor and building camaraderie allowed for a smoother transition into the work group, resulting in newcomer job satisfaction" (p.417). Cooper-Thomas et al. (2014) supported this by stating that relationship building is an effective way for newcomers to learn through and engage with more experienced colleagues. Therefore, building relationships with supervisors mutually instigates better learning, engagement and well-being.

Allen (2006) argued that social interaction behaviours can build networks, create identity, establish role expectations, skills and help convey much of the organisational policies. For newcomers, understanding the social structures and relationships were imperative to their socialisation. In another study involving an Indian IT company, Nifadkar, and Bauer (2016), found that camaraderie, solidarity and a sense of belonging were significant when entering and adjusting. In support, Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) maintain that relationship building allows the newcomer to interact and immerse themselves into the organisation, it also shows their colleagues that they are willing to fit into the team.

Filstad (2004) argued the importance of taking the initiative in developing interpersonal relationships, both within and outside the organisation. Newcomers who acquired knowledge through astute observation and actively engaging with co-workers and supervisors had better socialisation outcomes. In addition, newcomers benefited from using a wider range of role models, dependent on the areas of knowledge and relationships they wanted to acquire. Not only does initiating and maintaining strong relationships with co-workers make the

learning experience pleasant, it can give the newcomer access to information and other learning opportunities. For example, Kim et al. (2005) suggested that stopping by a person's office and initiating a conversation is a valid way to exercise these proactive behaviours, as it gives the newcomer an opportunity to acquire suitable role behaviours, it also gives them a sense of the organisation and its expectations. In addition, Batistič (2018) maintained that positive interactions with helpful veterans could "provide newcomers with opportunities to build social relationships and develop social networks that produce feelings of greater acceptance and adjustment" (p.225). In support, Chao et al. (1994) study found that newcomers who proactively seek involvement in work activities outside their normal set of defined tasks enjoyed a better level of job satisfaction and displayed a higher level of commitment and acceptance within the organisation.

According to Griffin et al. (2000), understanding how formal and informal relationships are formed and take place within the organisation was critical for newcomer success. Being aware of the power structures, roles and influence within the organisation and building relationships with supervisors and peers, makes it easier for the newcomers to understand and acquire knowledge. In another study, Lapointe et al. (2014) found that forming an informal mentoring relationship with an insider had a positive effect on newcomer adjustment, this action was also considered a proactive tactic outside the institutionalised formal mentorship programmes delivered by the organisation.

Schaubroeck et al. (2013) found that the quality of the relationship between the newcomers and their managers was critical for successful adjustment. Creating and engaging in amicable, professional and reciprocal exchanges were also important to the newcomer-manager relationship, and that the role of trust binds a positive social-exchange relationship. Bauer and Green (1998) maintain that manager behaviours towards the newcomer will evolve over time, and during entry manager behaviours had a strong influence on newcomer learning and accommodation. As soon as the newcomer assimilates into the organisation, manager behaviours will have a new focus and divert from newcomer accommodation and adjustment and veer towards employee performance. Finkelstein et al. (2003) also maintained that organisational insiders who manage newcomers are regarded as important sources of socialisation information. Hence, identifying manager behaviour will give significant cues to see how newcomers are effectively socialised, and that newcomers will seek information on how to do their jobs and will turn to their managers for this guidance and

assume the manager's position as a role model.

Another proactive tactic delivered by newcomers is positive framing. This is when the individual will self-manage to frame differing situations more positively in the attempt to heighten their self-confidence and self-efficacy. For example, Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) study involving an accountancy firm, found that newcomers who enter with a positive outlook on their new environment were most likely to be satisfied with their work within seven months of starting. In support, Ashford and Black (1996) found that newcomer job satisfaction and better performance was linked with positive framing of the new environment. The newcomer would be receptive to organisational values and engage, rather than reluctantly follow or even denounce the organisation values and motivations; therefore allowing them to socialise quicker. According to Ashforth et al. (2007) positive framing will help newcomers perceive the organisational environment as encouraging and as a result will motivate them to acclimatise to their own tasks and the organisations values. Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) also suggested that positive framing is about looking at new events, colleagues or an unfamiliar environment with a positive light, this behaviour can help with problem solving, and also help newcomers deal with difficult personalities. Cooper-Thomas et al. (2014) stated that positive framing was a significant strategy for job satisfaction. In addition to newcomer intrinsic gains, it also displays the newcomer as an optimistic person by nature.

2.3.4 Barriers to good newcomer socialisation from the use of proactive behaviours

This next section will investigate which proactive behaviours are being used to create poor socialisation experiences.

One of the most notable personal costs of using proactive behaviours was the effect it had on an individual's ego and confidence, and their willingness to use these behaviours. Mignerey et al.'s. (1995) study involving office workers, found that newcomers with low levels of assertiveness have a tendency to avoid communication (when needed) and will not actively seek feedback, leading to job dissatisfaction. An earlier study by Jones (1986) found that newcomers who have lower levels of self-efficacy will hold a different view on the level of proactiveness needed to undertake their new role in comparison with someone with a higher level of self-efficacy. Morrison (1993) also found that newcomers with lower self-esteem would feel embarrassed and anxious about information seeking from their supervisor,

as they believe it would damage their reputation as a knowledgeable employee. In parallel, Gruman and Saks (2011) study found that newcomers with extroversion would be better at engaging in relationship building proactive behaviours.

According to Cooper-Thomas, and Stadler (2015), less confident newcomers are very conscious about of the way they are perceived by other colleagues, the social costs and benefits of their behaviours and feel that constant information seeking could dampen their ego in front of experienced insiders. Morrison (1993) also found that some newcomers will generally be apprehensive about asking for information from certain sources (personal or impersonal) and within certain environments, due to the assumption that it will paint them as incompetent or needy. Newcomers can be apprehensive about seeking feedback as they could see it as exposing their own perceived incompetence and it also requires a lot more courage than information seeking. Seeking information is seen as acceptable and ongoing and neutral in terms of reputational costs (unless already discussed countless times before).

Anseel et al. (2007) suggested that many people are understandably conscious of the opinions others have about them and want to maintain a favourable image to the public. There is the motivation to seek information for reducing uncertainty; however the newcomer may think it could create a public image of them as someone who is oblivious to detailed instructions, and will therefore make a decision to seek information based on costs and benefits of doing so. Morrison (2002) maintained that there are certain costs with newcomers seeking information, as it can be personally damaging if the information is critical, causing embarrassment for the newcomer, the person delivering it and even others watching.

Morrison (2002) also found that those with lower self-esteem and performance expectations “requested less information than those with high performance expectations or high self-esteem, even when the information was to be delivered privately” (p.231). According to Anseel et al. (2007), in order to protect their ego, the newcomer may be put off from seeking information when they feel it will only portray them badly in front of others or the person they are seeking it from. There is also the feared assumption that this could publicly portray them as incompetent, forgetful and not the right person for the job.

Morrison (2002) stressed that for an individual, information seeking is all about making sure that the costs of seeking information does not outweigh the benefits of gaining it. In another study by Gruman et al. (2006) it was suggested that newcomers who have lower performance expectations or self-esteem may avoid seeking feedback as it has the potential to hurt their ego; therefore the motive not seek it would be only to defend their confidence and ego. In contrast employees with higher performance expectations, self-efficacy and self-esteem are open to feedback. According to Crant (2000), impression management is a significant concern for newcomers seeking feedback. The newcomer will assess if and how their feedback seeking could affect the relationship with their colleagues. If so, they would seek alternative ways to get this feedback, however these alternative ways can also create issues, subsequently hindering their relationships.

Miller and Jablin (1991) also suggested that using indirect questions is another way of seeking information, being less inquisitive can aid newcomers who are uncomfortable in seeking information from the direct source. They use this style of questioning to alleviate any humiliation and any interrogative questioning towards the colleague/supervisor. The drawback of using this tactic is that it has the potential to frustrate the information source, as the newcomer may not get to the point, subsequently leading to unnecessary humiliation on the part of the newcomer.

Another method is getting a third party (colleague) to gather information from the primary source (manager). This is used when the primary information is not available or the newcomer is too apprehensive to directly ask the information source. This also has negative consequences for the information seeker, as the colleague may have unfavourable ideas about the motive or the newcomer's approach. In the same study, Miller and Jablin (1991) mentioned that newcomer will disguise their information seeking attempts through natural conversation. The aim is to make the information source comfortable and almost feel casual about the conversation, where the newcomer's ulterior motive is to acquire much-needed information at the time. It can also be counterproductive, as the information source may divert from the newcomer's actual aim. In addition, Mignerey et al. (1995) found that newcomers with high communication apprehension or a fear of communicating to others will experience less successful organisational adjustment, as information seeking, role clarity, task mastery and relationship building is based around strong communication.

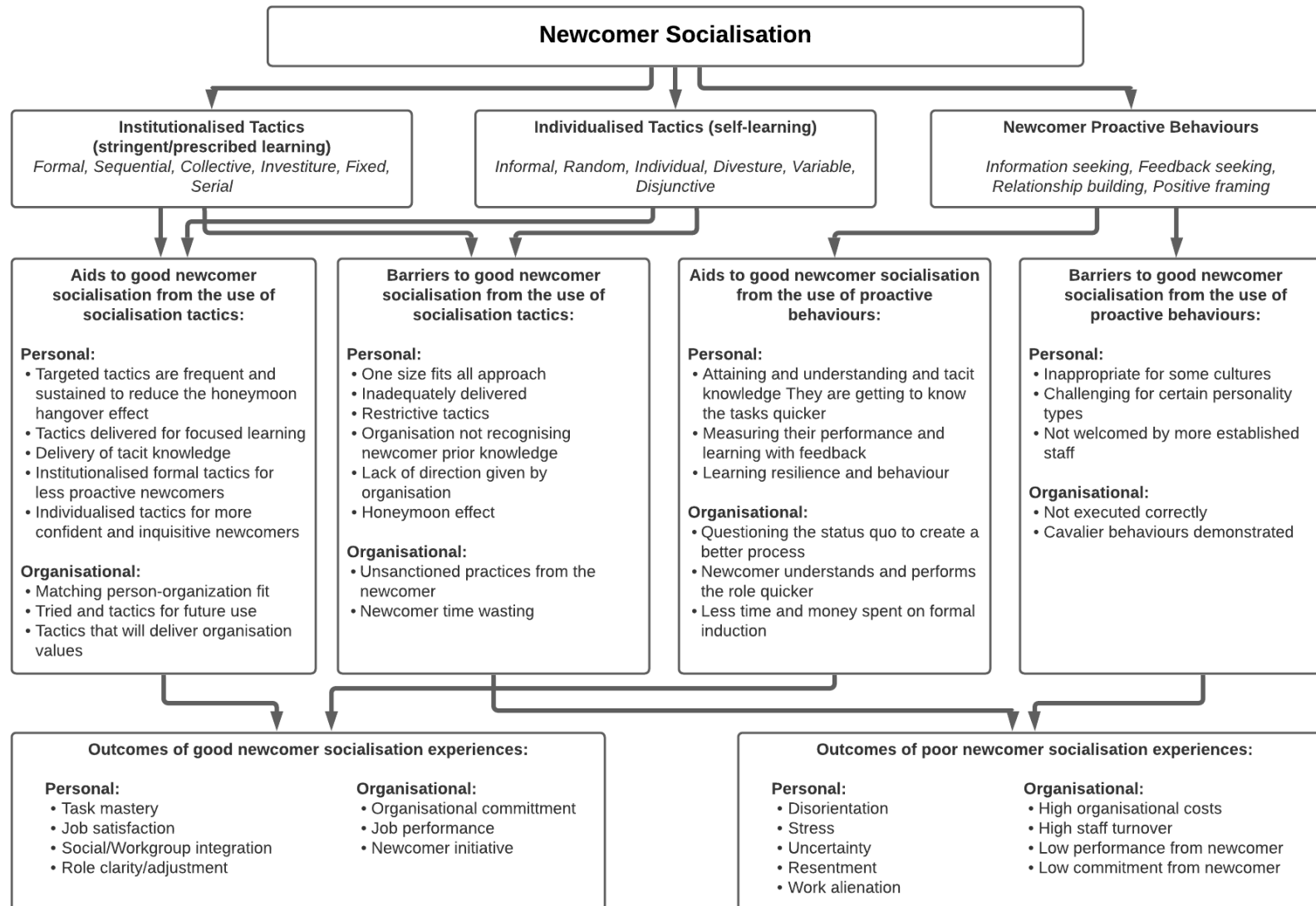
The uptake in newcomer and individual proactive behaviours can also challenge the cultural fabric of an organisation and the people within it. For example, in a study involving Hong Kong co-op students, Morrison et al. (2004) suggested that the proactive approach differs within different cultural contexts. In individualistic societies, taking charge and challenging the status quo was a sign of initiative and astuteness, and asking for feedback from managers was seen as normal practice during socialisation. For people in collectivistic societies, a low assertive and high-power distance reflects the relationship between employee and employer. In addition, proactive behaviours can be seen as inappropriate and individuals are not encouraged to question their manager or deviate from the expected norms.

Even though there has been a large focus on the personal cost of using proactive behaviours; equally these same individual behaviours can also have an adverse effect on the organisation. For example, in a study by Crant (2000), it was mentioned that certain organisations view proactive behaviours as cavalier and irresponsible, causing valued processes to be overlooked and even to the extent of compromising company reputation and team cohesion. In addition, Batistič et al. (2016) study involving Slovenian SMEs, identified that some organisations deliberately nurture newcomers to a point where newcomers would refrain from undertaking proactive behaviours. It was also found that any provocation or resistance to steadfast values would create disharmony within the existing work group. Also, established colleagues who had adopted the structured socialisation and principles would see the use of newcomer proactive behaviours as mere grandstanding and divisive. In another study, Bolino, et al. (2010) suggested that proactive behaviours are not always seen as a magic bullet or constantly helpful, some behaviours can be considered harmful as they can misguide employees, leading to unnecessary mistakes and costs.

Figure 1: Newcomer Socialisation Tactics and Behaviours for Future Use

This model demonstrates how the newcomer socialisation process is achieved through the use of socialisation tactics (delivered by the organisation) and proactive behaviours (initiated by the newcomer). It also identifies how these tactics and behaviours can aid or create barriers to good newcomer socialisation. It demonstrates how good use of socialisation tactics and behaviours can lead to good socialisation and encouraging personal and organisational outcomes. The model also reveals how poor socialisation tactics and behaviours lead to poor socialisation and adverse personal and organisational outcomes.

Figure 1: Newcomer Socialisation Tactics and Behaviours for Future Use



Summary: Newcomer Socialisation Literature

Seventy-five journal articles on organisational socialisation were chosen for the research above. Whether empirical and conceptual, not one article had discussed the possible relevance of office design, nor indicated how different designs could affect the socialisation process. The literature generally assumed a standard office design. Therefore, it would be prudent to explore organisational socialisation in the context of office space. An open plan office design was chosen as the context in which newcomer socialisation would be researched with the overall objective of understanding the relationship between the office design and newcomer socialisation, and how this particular design could either help or hinder the socialisation process.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW ON OFFICE DESIGN

3.1 Office Design

This chapter will discuss the importance of office design on employee behaviour, wellbeing and organisational productivity. Open plan offices will be the focus of this study. It will establish if this particular office design has benefited or created a detriment for individuals and organisations alike. The following chapter will integrate literature on socialisation and open plan office design.

3.1.1 The importance of office design

There is a connection between office design and employee behaviour, for example, in a study carried out by Kamarulzaman et al. (2011), it was postulated that a comfortable office design is essential as it will enable employees to focus and do their jobs correctly. In addition to human capital, office design also plays a pivotal role in the organisation's success or failure. Ashkanasy et al. (2014) stated that the physical environment is the second largest expense after staffing. Brennan et al. (2002) found that in offices, the work environment was also significant for ongoing employee commitment and job retention. If the office design is deemed to be inadequate to the user's needs, it will create stress and jeopardise colleague relationships within that work environment. For example, Veitch (2018) found that the increased strain on work relationships was attributed to the individual not being able to complete a task due to constant interruptions from colleagues sitting in the same vicinity.

3.1.2 Office design - types

This study will focus on one particular office design and how it contributes to the overall office environment. Office designs vary, regarding space, costs, worker capacity, aesthetic qualities and intended use. Private offices are characterised by doors, walls and other physical barriers, whereas open plan offices are defined by open spaces or common areas (Hongisto et al., 2016; Smith-Jackson et al., 2016; Sundstrom et al., 1982). Open plan offices often consist of cubicle designs that use "dividers rather than floor-to-ceiling walls that serve to establish a space for individual or multiple workers. It can also be an open bay design which places workers in an open space where workstations and other

workers are visible and audible” (Smith-Jackson et al., 2016, p.808). “Open plan offices can also vary in size from small (two or three employees) to large spaces where over a hundred people can work” (Bergström et al., 2015, p.222).

An office design can evoke individual perceptions of the work and how they would fit into this environment. For example, Zerella et al. (2017) suggested that office layout also influences how individuals will interpret and interact with their organisation and the tasks itself. Generally, office designs are adjusted from time to time for operational and commercial reasons. Sometimes as a result of this change, it can produce an environment that will also foster good working conditions, collaboration and productivity.

Like individual and subjective perceptions, national/ethnic cultures can relate differently to certain designs and office dynamics. For example, Haynes (2007) maintained that different national/ethnic cultures were also influenced by office design and that working relationships within the office can also change once new designs have been laid out. The physical environment also influences the strength of work relationships, and that having a restricted or inadequate physical work setting can create stress on these relationships. For example, Khazanchi et al. (2018) suggested that organisations continue to adjust their physical environments to create better relationships within the office. The physical environment influences relationships at work, and positive ones can promote valuable outcomes (i.e. information sharing and wellbeing).

Office design can also either enhance or detract from workers commitment to their roles, organisations or both. For example, Bergström et al. (2015) maintained that wellbeing and engagement were the main factors for organisations to determine if employees would be susceptible to frequent absences (caused by stress). In addition to this finding, employees who experienced clarity and consistency within their environment had also experienced higher levels of job satisfaction. Sundstrom et al. (1994) suggested that the cause of job dissatisfaction was how office noise contributed to increased distraction. The office design was pivotal in this study, and it was found that an inadequate work area did have a bearing on frustration through minimal space, workers being exposed to visual disturbance and noise, and a lack of privacy.

Open plan offices were chosen for their organisational popularity, and its design was seen to promote a constant amount of human interaction (Kim & Dear, 2013). In light of the events in 2020, the popularity of open plan offices has somewhat diminished. Lockdowns and social distancing as a result of Covid 19 and the subsequent return to the office has seen a decline in workers sitting together in close proximity, and within a shared space (without any formidable physical protection). The pandemic has also created a shift for many people to work remotely.

3.1.3 Personality and office design

As we are subjective beings, an individual's background, past experiences, characteristics, and confidence can perceive specific office designs as either welcoming or threatening. For example, Block et al. (1989) study found that an individual's personality characteristics (i.e. gregarious and people orientated) will determine the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a particular office design. Similarly, Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al. (2009) found that colleagues with high extroversion connected better and assimilated easier into open plan offices. The reason being is that people who were extroverted had the confidence to approach and also tolerated being approached by a colleague(s) spontaneously and frequently. They could also feed off this people energy to undertake their tasks. Block et al. (1989) suggested that introverted individuals were a lot more comfortable to working in private spaces and having the ability to restrict colleague interaction into their workspace. Roelofsen (2008) maintained that the perception of the sound is also subjective to the listener, and that annoyance levels can differ. In some cases, particular sounds can be a slight annoyance, and for others it becomes so great that the person cannot function, leading them to hold pessimistic views of their colleagues, environment and the organisation.

Even the individual's demographic identity can determine how they will perceive the office environment. Rasila and Rothe (2012) study found that younger employees preferred an open plan setting as opposed to older workers. In another study involving an Algerian IT company, Benammar et al. (2018) found that men seemed to act more aggressively within an open plan office setting or when there had been a reduction in space or privacy. Therefore, it was assumed that the open plan office was less satisfying for men than women. In this study, it was astutely identified that the female sample were said to have a

more collective sense of community and socialness in comparison to the men in the same study. A conclusion from the Algerian study, would suggest that male introverts were more inclined to suffer distress within an open plan office, as opposed to extroverted women. By contrast, in Morrison and Smollan (2020), it is noted that women indicated that they were being observed in open plan whereas men did not. Therefore, females may like open plan less than men.

3.1.4 Tasks/Roles and office design

An employee's physical position within an office design can affect their specific role or task in hand. For example, Seddigh et al. (2014) argued that for tasks that require high concentration and complexity, private or individual offices were favoured. In support, Block and Stokes (1989) maintained that employees felt that complex tasks were best suited to individual offices as opposed to open plan offices. Nonetheless, for more routine and monotonous tasks, employees preferred a more open plan and social-based environment. Hedge (1982) found that open plan office environments were least favourable with employees undertaking technical and managerial roles in comparison to employees undertaking lower administration tasks. Brennan et al. (2002) suggested that in general, workers cherish the ability to concentrate uninterrupted and focus on their tasks. Haapakangas et al.'s (2018) study found that tasks requiring high concentration were important in office design, and that open plan distractions were significantly counterproductive.

3.1.5 Privacy and office design

When not in meetings or socialising, there has always been a need for privacy when undertaking confidential and complex tasks that require a high amount of concentration and attention to detail. For example, Block and Stokes (1989) maintain that "privacy involves one's feelings of control over the amount of social contact experienced, or the amount of information received" (p.278). Ashkanasy et al. (2014) postulated that privacy works in ways where it is not always about less information going out; it controls the information and contacts coming in (having control of your environment). Similarly, Bhave et al. (2020) state that privacy is fundamental for employees and employers. There is an

expectation of discretion within the office environment, and having a secure physical and technological environment was a key factor. Morrison and Smollan's (2020) study involving a New Zealand law firm, not only did they find that privacy within the open plan office was generally important for a number of employees, due to their perception of always being observed in the office, female employees had a more imperative need for privacy within the open plan office opposed to male employees. Bernstein and Turban (2018) found that spatial boundaries had permitted employees to control and drive up productivity within their private environment. It also allows the employee to put in place various restrictions on the volume or type of information that can be discussed in public view.

The level, duration or the need for privacy depends on the individual. For example, Khazanchi et al. (2018) study suggested that low-level privacy may be offered to employees who carry out small and less complex work as opposed to highly complex work that requires high privacy. Haynes (2007) found that employees "reported that the need for privacy diminished over the time, where they concluded that it was a consequence of the team becoming more cohesive "(p.160).

3.2 Organisational and Personal Benefits of Open Plan Office Design

Due to its dynamics and layout, open plan offices have led to positive incidences of increased colleague interaction, cost-effective designs, accessible learning opportunities and unhindered communication.

3.2.1 Colleague interaction

Colleague interaction is an important facet of organisation life, as it helps newcomers gain confidence, support and insights into their new environment. It can also lead to further opportunities (including promotion and recognition) within the organisation. Given the close proximity to other workers, the open plan office is seen as a perfect environment where interactions are formed. For example, Bernstein and Turban (2018) suggested that in the effort to promote better workplace collaboration, organisations have promoted open place offices as a way to offer transparency, knowledge transfer and collegiality within the

group.

Block and Stokes (1989) postulated that even though individuals have a preference to work in a more private setting, it was suggested that people were more productive in a more social and open setting. Sundstrom et al. (1980) found that “employees who do find their jobs boring may find that the social contact provides a source of stimulation, increased communication and being part of the team” (p.102).

Gou et al. (2018) suggested that open plan design proponents have continuously argued its benefits (i.e., space efficiency, flexibility, employee collaboration and social interaction). Block and Stokes (1989) also suggested that social interaction helped deliver much-needed energy to employees, and that “people with repetitious jobs did not perform better in more private places” (p.296). In support, Brennan et al. (2002) found that with workers whose jobs and tasks were deemed monotonous, open plan offices was a way to engage with others, and therefore aiding mental wellbeing.

Sundstrom et al. (1982) found that open plan offices promote collegial support. Individuals could feel and see that they were working in an area where they could experience raw organisational collaboration and productivity. In another study, Hedge (1982) argued that the open plan design creates an egalitarian setting where employees at all levels can work in a shared environment. This particular setting helps managers and their reports form better relationships in an attempt to create more cohesiveness. Brennan et al. (2002) maintained that proponents of open plan offices reassure that the dissatisfaction in moving offices will no longer exist once the employee has been acclimatised, and that they will eventually understand the benefits of the open plan design.

3.2.2 Cost-effective design and versatility

Cost-effective design and versatility is important for organisations, because it allows them to free up more money on professional development and human resourcing. Open plan offices have historically (and even today) been seen to encompass this low-cost, high tenant density design. For example, according to Brennan et al. (2002), open plan offices

were first initiated in the 1950's and subsequently gained relative popularity in 1970's, as this concept was seen to encourage communication and collegial benefits within a low-cost design. They also championed its agility, and as a framework to continually reinvent at low cost and improve the working environment. Organisations purposely sought out open plan offices as a way to maximise space and facilitate better culture and communication. Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al. (2009) suggested that there had been fiscal benefits with organisations implementing an open plan office design. These include the ability to reconfigure space, accommodating a larger group of employees, and that it can be continuously modelled to suit the needs and demands of an ever-changing workforce. In support, Kim and Dear (2013) argue that there are many economic benefits in using open plan offices, these benefits include increased useable area, higher occupant density and ease of reconfiguration.

Hedge (1982) suggested that the open plan office was thought of the ideal flexible work environment, as the physical barriers were no longer in the way, and the needs of the workplace could be adjusted easily with little cost. Financial gain was the prime reason for organisations needing to adapt to open plan office settings. The second was the assumption of open knowledge sharing, enhanced creativity and optimal teamwork. In support, Haynes (2008) stated that organisations had promoted open plan offices as a way to lessen their space and construction costs. However, the idea that it would create free flow and accessible communication was the defining factor. Sundstrom (1982) suggested that open plan offices have been positively advertised, because they had offered a better environment, natural lighting, flexibility and financial savings.

3.2.3 Communication and collaboration

With its open area and human proximity, the open plan office is traditionally recognised as a perfect environment for employees to communicate and collaborate on ideas without the restrictions of physical silos. For example, Kim and De Dear (2013) state that organisations introduced open plan offices as a way to facilitate communication and strengthen relationships within the organisation. Open plan proponents advocate that by removing walls, it had created better communication and access for all staff. Bergström et al. (2015) postulated that organisations preferred the open plan office, as it assisted a larger flow of communication, increased information between colleagues and also created

a platform for creativity and social interaction.

According to Brennan et al. (2002), many organisations say that the advantages of having an open plan design was that it promoted the flow of communication. Bernstein and Turban (2018) supported this by suggesting that open plan offices can be customised to suit the needs and interest of all, for example, using different channels through which to communicate with, SMS (short message service) rather than physically interacting with colleagues.

3.2.4 Learning Opportunities

The ability to gain knowledge without much effort is an ideal proposition for many. It also lessens the need to continually knock on someone's office for the information, and alleviate the risk of damaging one's ego. Not only does the open plan environment allow opportunities for learning, but processes and tasks are also discussed in the open as a result of input from others in the office (including many experienced veterans). For example, Bernstein and Turban (2018) indicated that removing spatial barriers could promote better collaboration and information gathering. In support, Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al. (2009) advocated that the open plan office could promote solidarity, collaboration, feedback, information sharing and knowledge from a more extensive array of people. In addition, there is an improved clarity of shared knowledge and the opportunity to have lively open discussions, subsequently building relationships and disseminating organisational values.

Haynes (2007) also indicated that organisations felt that an open plan office had the ability to transfer knowledge freely within the organisation. It also provided employees with a better opportunity for social engagement. In an open plan office, they could learn new processes and tasks by listening to conversations and making observations. Hedge (1982) suggested that by removing "internal walls and partitions from the office, an organisation can rapidly and relatively inexpensively remould the office configuration, both to improve the flow of information through it and to satisfy the changing demands of organisational development" (p.520). In addition, Rasila and Rothe (2012) maintained that open plan offices can also increase efficiency, as it provided the opportunity for all individuals to contribute information within a more immediate and engaging environment. It can also

assist individuals indirectly, for example, new employees could accelerate their learning and confidence by listening to and taking heed of their more experienced colleagues' conversations and work detail. Smollan and Morrison (2019) found that employees appreciated the way in which the open office facilitated work-related conversations and learning. In another study, Morrison and Smollan (2020) found that the open plan office environment can yield opportunities for peer learning, employees hearing important pieces of information and colleague assistance.

3.3 Organisational and Personal Costs of Open Plan Office Design

Due to its dynamics and layout, open plan offices have also led to incidences of compromised concentration, privacy, collegiality, productivity and communication.

3.3.1 Distraction

Distraction can compromise the individual's ability to undertake tasks or deliver services that require a high level of attention to detail or concentration effectively. For example, Brennan et al. (2002) argued that workers felt that open plan offices could attribute to job dissatisfaction and compromised productivity. In addition, Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al. (2009) found that noise annoyed employees who worked in open plan offices, which led to declining worker experience. Individual conversations, especially phone calls, compromised clear communication and learning within the open plan environment, where many colleagues had to raise their voices continuously. According to Ashkanasy et al. (2014), employees have difficulty eliminating irrelevant noise which can create a perceived decrease in privacy, increased interruptions and subsequently accelerate the adverse effects attributed to open plan working conditions.

As a result of moving from private offices to open plan, employees did identify the differences of the open plan design. For example, Brennan et al. (2002) suggested that significant disturbance was the primary reason for negative experiences as the result of moving to an open plan office. It was also mentioned that increased noise and the lack of privacy were the biggest complaints from study participants, and that interruptions was a key factor for the distractions. Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al's. (2009) study also found that a

majority of employees' raised concern with the open plan environment where they witnessed an increase in the exposure of interruptions. In support, Hongisto et al. (2016) study identified that employee dissatisfaction was the main concern with open plan environments. Along with privacy complaints, the large number of speech and noise incidences had created distractions to their working day. It was not merely the noise itself; it was the content that lapsed their judgement and concentration when undertaking a task or process. For example, Bergström et al. (2015) study found that when colleagues are faced directly across from one another in an open plan office, it will create a lot more distraction and declined concentration opposed to facing in opposite directions. In another study by Brennan et al. (2002) it was maintained that for some employees, constant, social interaction could have a suffocating effect and a desire for a lot more focus and concentration. This open interaction was subsequently affecting the individual's experience and job performance further, especially individuals who felt that the open plan environment was already a challenge to their working life.

Gou et al. (2018) found that open plan offices were criticised for their adverse user experiences, such as a lack of privacy and constant noise. These particular experiences were found to create overstimulation, stress and diminishing concentration. Varying conversations or statements that have no direct importance was considered a major concentration distraction for employees. For example, Bergström et al.'s (2015) study suggested that crosstalk was problematic within open plan offices. Crosstalk happens when different and competing information is circulated within the office simultaneously. Crosstalk caused decreased levels of concentration, which led to increased employee stress and diminished productivity. Like content, gossip and banter created another source of annoyance in the open plan office. For example, Rasila and Rothe (2012) stated that even though the noise was a significant issue; it was content of conversations that led to experiences of short term memory loss and amplified frustration. Kim and De Dear (2013) study found that noise and intelligible chatter had created a lack of concentration and increased disturbances within the office.

Benammar et al. (2018) suggested that even though there was tolerance for open plan offices, individuals quickly identified its acoustic, visual and atmospheric shortcomings. Open plan office noise leads to exhaustion, high anxiety, distress, agitation and even in some cases, low productivity. In support, Kim and De Dear's

(2013) study suggested that open plan offices are considered places of distractions, where there is a potential upsurge in unnecessary information circulated around the office, and such incidences can cause stress and task concentration to slip. For example, Jahncke et al.'s (2011) study found that due to ongoing distraction and noise, employees were less satisfied, demonstrated lower work productivity and poorer health in an open plan compared to private or traditional offices. In support, Brennan et al. (2002) maintained that noise and distractions were deemed as one of the most challenging characteristics of the modern work environment. Individuals are also bothered by the multitude of noises coming from machines and conversations; these noises collectively contributed to a decrease in job satisfaction and productivity.

Seddigh et al. (2015) found the large number of stimuli encountered in an open plan office attributed to the decrease in concentration for employees who transferred from a private office. Haapakangas et al.'s (2018) study identified that there were many apparent distractions when transferring into an open plan office, such as noise, constant interactions and competing conversations. A heightened level of anxiety was also experienced when the transferred employees realised that there were no quiet rooms or a lack of quiet rooms in the open plan design. Having access to quiet workspaces was a significant factor for individuals.

3.3.2 Office relationships

For many, it is the relationships within the office that influence their work existence and define the workplace. These relationships can be rewarding in an open plan; however, it can also create conflict and challenges to once amicable work relationships. For example, Bergström et al. (2015) stated that contrary to belief, removing partitions in the open plan office actually diminished collaboration and productivity. Similarly, Rasila and Rothe (2012) suggested that the open plan office decreases team cohesiveness creates personal irritation and fosters poor relationships. Brennan et al. (2002) study found that individuals who relocated from private to open plan offices had described their dissatisfaction with the new physical environment. The employees felt that the relocation led to a drop in collegial relationships, job satisfaction and a perceived decrease in job performance.

Bernstein and Turban (2018) stated that distractions caused by open plan offices make it harder for employees to focus and concentrate on their tasks and that the desire to interact and collaborate with colleagues decreases. Seddigh et al. (2015) argued that “larger open plan offices may have a more negative effect on employees in comparison to smaller open plan offices” (p.172). This might be due to a higher prevalence of irrelevant stimuli, as the number of people working in open plan office increases (Seddigh et al., 2015, p.173). Haapakangas et al. (2018) study also found that as well as noise, people who transitioned from private to open plan felt that their once good collegial relationships had now been compromised with the shift, leading to stress and division within the office. In support, Morrison and Macky (2017) study found that shared office environments did not necessarily contribute to colleague friendships and productive interactions.

3.3.3 Decreased employee productivity

Decreased employee productivity can be caused by a long list of reasons, including known open plan office effects such as distraction, strained office relationships and job dissatisfaction. For example, Kim and De Dear (2013) suggested that open plan offices could contribute to a decrease in workplace productivity and satisfaction. In addition, Brennan et al. (2002) found that employees who have highly demanding jobs that required more concentration were most affected by the transfer, as they felt that they worked better in more private and quieter spaces. According to a study by Haynes (2007), informal interaction created distractions which led to diminished productivity. In support, Hedge (1982) stated that there was no evidence detailing that an open plan office environment did increase work productivity. Brennan et al. (2002) suggested that workers preferred working in a space where they are not frequently being subjected to visits from other colleagues, as they felt it was a hindrance in completing their daily objectives and slowed down their productivity. Rasila and Rothe (2012) suggested that density and crowding in offices also created negative feelings, employees even described the offices as too suffocating and challenging to be productive. Rasila and Rothe (2012) also said that open plan offices could create a surge in workloads because of constant interruptions and diverting from the task in hand. In support, Seddigh et al. (2014) found that open plan offices contributed to higher employee stress, subsequently decreasing employee productivity.

Seddigh et al. (2015) stated that even though the initial cost of the building open plan offices was cheaper for organisations, the actual cost of decreased employee productivity outweighed any initial fiscal benefits. Ashkanasy et al. (2014) maintain that organisations contribute large amounts of money to produce more high-density open plan offices in an attempt to aid productivity. Nonetheless, more money is lost through inefficiency and litigation as a result of distractions, conflicts, lost privacy and unwanted noise. Pejtersen et al. (2011) study found that listening to other people conversations was the hallmark of annoyance in open plan offices. These particular annoyances created health issues as a result of overstimulation and irritability which eventually led to low employee productivity.

3.3.4 Office communication

Good communication is seen as imperative for any organisation. In theory, the open plan office with its lack of physical barriers and close worker proximity would increase good and unobstructed communication. However, it is also prudent to know that the same set up can also create obstacles for good communication. For example, Bernstein and Turban (2018) postulated that the exposed nature of the open plan offices can hinder communication and productivity, where in many circumstances the individual would be less inclined to have their matters discussed in the public arena. In support, Rolfö et al.'s (2018) study found that in an open plan office, face to face conversations decreased by 70%, and emails increased. Sundstrom et al. (1982) also found that the lack of opportunity to hold a confidential conversation was one of the concerns when transitioning from a private to open plan. In parallel, Khazanchi et al. (2018) suggested that private offices have been shown to aid the duration and openness of conversations in comparison to open plan offices. It was also mentioned that lower incidences of privacy would hinder information being shared and therefore jeopardise communication and information sharing. It can also erode staff mental wellbeing, as employees would be unable to express themselves due to the fear of being ridiculed in public. Rasila and Rothe (2012) also suggested that holding conversations within an open plan environment was compromised by visual distractions in the room.

3.3.5 Privacy

The lack of privacy can hinder productivity, confidentiality and employee wellbeing. Privacy is an important facet of office life; it allows individuals to undertake and complete tasks, meetings and interactions without restriction or fear of being interrupted or scrutinised. Employees who reside in an open plan office do have the realisation that their privacy would be compromised. For example, Haynes (2008) argued that the loss of privacy as a result of the moving to an open plan office had overshadowed its possible gains of collaborative teamwork and open communication. In support, Brennan's (2002) study highlighted that the open plan design hindered the private nature of their work, leading to frustration and impatience within the office. In addition, individuals favoured privacy over open accessibility with fellow colleagues; they felt that the open plan office did not enhance better communication, and viewed it more of a barrier to both confidential and constructive conversations.

Haynes (2007) suggested that the closed-door symbolised privacy, and as soon as individuals transitioned into the open plan office, they lacked security and anticipated a loss of privacy and freedom. In support, Kim and De Dear's (2013) study found that employees who moved from private offices to open plan had voiced their frustration when undertaking more complex tasks and that their concentration had been subdued due to the lack of privacy. Similarly, Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al. (2009) stated that open plan offices also hindered visual privacy, for example, it had led to a fear that colleagues would always consider them as available, even when they were completing a complex task that required privacy.

Kim and Dear (2013) maintain that the open plan design fails to prevent constant interruptions and observations from other colleagues, these particular incidences led to a feeling of lost control. Hedge (1982) also suggested that even though the open plan environment was sociable, organisations didn't take into account the negative reactions caused by disturbances and the lack of privacy. Khazanchi et al. (2018) argued that the lack of privacy and constant distraction had a negative effect on the way the work relationships progressed. Similarly, Brennan et al. (2002) stated that the perceived lack of control contributed to the decrease in satisfaction from employees residing in open plan offices, and that there was a lack of focus and concentration with multiple conversations

happening at the same time. In a study involving Japanese telecommunication workers, Inamizu (2015) found that the office environment is important in determining employee job satisfaction and that the reduction in privacy can create a feeling of lack of control and stifled communication. Haapakangas et al. (2018) also suggested that not only did poorly designed open spaces and the lack of privacy or control enhance dissatisfaction, it was also detrimental to the individual's physical and psychological well-being. Smith-Jackson et al. (2016) suggested that open plan offices have been negatively associated with speech interference, no privacy and perception of loss of control. It has been associated with co-workers spying on each other, in addition it was seen as a very intrusive environment and breeding ground for micromanaging behaviours.

Pejtersen et al. (2011) suggested that open plan offices compromised employee independence, and without the physical barriers, it encouraged colleagues to interrupt and interfere with their co-workers work. In support, Rasila and Rothe's (2012) study identified that visual privacy was also hampered, where employees felt that they were being watched continuously. This led them to have their guard up all the time. For example, when the individual had a slight break after doing a piece of time-consuming and challenging work, their colleagues would walk past and check on their internet use, subsequently leading to conflict and job dissatisfaction. Similarly, Brennan et al. (2002) maintain that once workers had transferred from private to open plan offices, these same workers were less satisfied with the new surroundings due to less privacy and felt it was vastly inadequate to what they had before.

3.3.6 Stress and job dissatisfaction

Personal stress and job dissatisfaction not only affected the wellbeing of the individual concerned, it was also detrimental to the organisation. The result is poor job performance, absenteeism and low productivity. The open plan office with its highly-wired environment created a heighten behaviour within a high-density environment (Inamizu, 2015).

Individuals who transitioned from a quieter or private office to an open plan office did find the new environment challenging. For example, Brennan et al. (2002) found that moving from private office to open plan decreased overall job satisfaction, affecting the employee both physically and mentally. In support, Bergström et al. (2015) found that in a 12 month period following relocation, workers who shifted from private offices to open plan indicated

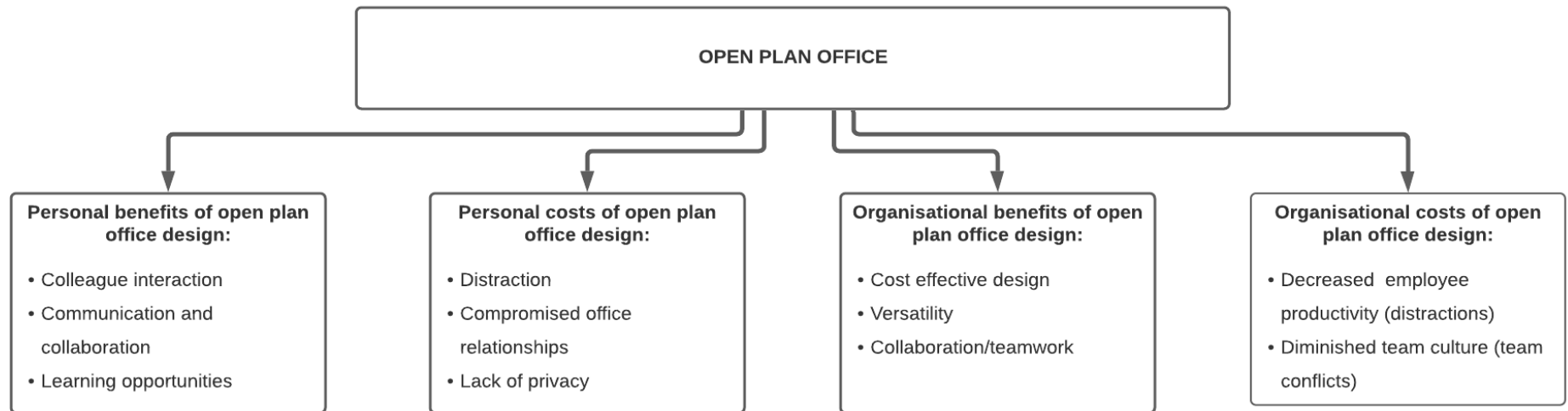
a level of deteriorated job performance, satisfaction and personal health. Inamizu (2015) suggests that there was a significant increase in psychological stress when employees transferred from a private office to open plan office.

Pejtersen et al. (2011) found that open plan offices contributed to employees taking more sick leave in comparison to private offices. Seddigh et al's. (2014) study suggested that private offices allowed for fewer disturbances and stress in contrast to open plan offices. Block and Stokes (1989) also found that the majority of employees indicated that working in private offices offered greater satisfaction and less stress in comparison to open plan offices. Bergström et al. (2015) also argues that open plan offices could exacerbate job dissatisfaction, leading to absenteeism and loss of productivity, especially for an individual undertaking a cognitively demanding role. Pejtersen et al's. (2011) study found that not only did the everyday concerns of open plan contribute to stress, it also, caused medical issues and the distribution of common colds and other airborne sicknesses.

Figure 2: Open Plan Office Model

In summary, this chapter has identified a number of areas where open plan offices can impact individuals, teams and organisations. Figure 2 captures both the personal/organisational benefits and costs of using an open plan office. The direction is to promote the benefits and mitigate the costs.

Figure 2: Open Plan Office Model



CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

This chapter will integrate newcomer socialisation and office design literature. It will speculate and provide discussion on newcomer socialisation (including the use of tactics and proactive behaviours) within the context of an open plan office.

4.1 Newcomer Socialisation within an Open Plan Office

Of 75 articles on newcomer socialisation and 37 on office design, none were found discussing the intersection between the two. With the increase of open plan office use, coupled with a vast movement of people leaving jobs and starting new ones, combining the two separate research pieces would address the importance of newcomer socialisation within a commonly used context, and perhaps lead to further research in this area.

Newcomer socialisation literature continues to reaffirm the impact of socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours on good newcomer socialisation. Office design literature also identifies the positive aspects. For example, frequent colleague interaction, equity amongst peers, and accessible learning. It also signals the negative aspects of open plan design (i.e. distraction and noise) (Bernstein & Turban, 2018; Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al., 2009; Sundstrom et al., 1982).

Both sets of literature did have subtle cues on how particular newcomer behaviours could work in an open plan office. For example, successful newcomer socialisation relies on proactive behaviours, and proactive behaviours also require astute awareness, social accessibility and observations. In addition, the open plan office is known to be an environment of visual and auditory openness, and it has the added benefit of showcasing the roles and behaviours of other colleagues. Therefore, it is assumed that the opportunistic nature of proactive behaviours would be easier to exercise in such an environment and a lot more rewarding.

Another area identified was the close connection between generations, the newcomer profile and open plan office preference. For example, younger employees are more likely to adjust to an open plan office in comparison to older workers (Lee & Brand, 2005; McElroy & Morrow, 2010). The depiction of a newcomer also seemed to favour younger

employees, and in a large number of newcomer socialisation studies, the participants were new graduates. For example, in the study of newcomers, the vast majority of the sample were made up of individuals between the ages of 20 and 29 years (e.g., Dahling & Whitaker, 2016; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Morrison et al., 2004).

Individuals who are set in their ways might be less inclined to accept an office design change (Lee & Brand, 2005; McElroy & Morrow, 2010). It could be that individuals who have been doing the same job for many years (especially coming from a private office) would be less happy to adapt as a newcomer within an open plan office. In addition, individuals who are not partial to change would be less likely to change jobs frequently (Hoffman, 2018).

People with diverse personalities, adapt and respond differently within specific environments. One example is the differences between introverted or extroverted personalities. Introverted individuals tend to recharge by being alone, like routine and less change (Bos et al., 2017). They would also better conjure ideas on their own and may feel distressed in a room of chatty colleagues (Maher & Von Hippel, 2005; Seddigh et al., 2016). Therefore it would be assumed that extroverted individuals are more likely accept open plan office environments a lot easier than introverts.

When the newcomer starts a new job, they are bombarded with sensory overload and face a lack of control in unfamiliar territory. They need to learn fast and equally impress their new colleagues and managers. Within an open plan office, there will be constant distractions, interactions and noise, which could accelerate the newcomer's stress levels, especially someone with an introverted personality.

Open plan offices are an appropriate environment to seek out opportunities to learn. The newcomer will be exposed to the office's politics, and that having an array of discussion around them, the newcomer is able to shape their own opinions (negative or positive) of their colleagues and the organisation itself. Nonetheless, physical exposure could also hinder the newcomer's adjustment, because the open plan office is effectively an open stage (Hongisto et al., 2016; Kim & Dear, 2013; Sundstrom et al., 1982). Therefore, secretly and openly, veteran staff will judge the newcomer's actions and words as a way to approve of the newcomer's organisation fit and if they can even do the job. This newcomer

adjustment is less harmful in a private office, where the level of display is more discreet; hence closed doors.

This next section, will integrate newcomer socialisation concepts (socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours) within the context of an open plan office. It will explore how socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours could be used in an open plan office and how they can assist or hinder successful newcomer socialisation. One of the hallmarks of newcomer socialisation is the need for training. In the workplace, there are different types of training available for newcomers. Firstly, the organisation will conduct formal training, which involves newcomers attending workshops, completing online modules as part of an induction programme. This type of training is usually embedded into institutionalised tactics as opposed to individualised tactics. Informal training is generally confined to peer to peer training or the newcomer shadowing veteran staff (Manuti et al., 2015; Noe et al., 2014).

4.2 Opportunities: Newcomer Socialisation within an Open Plan Office

This section will discuss the potential opportunities of using socialisation tactics and newcomer proactive behaviours within an open plan office.

4. 2 .1 Opportunities for good newcomer socialisation as a result of socialisation tactics within an open plan office

Organisations use socialisation tactics to aid newcomer adjustment. Tactics can be provided in two ways, first as institutionalised (the structured approach) or individualised (the self-initiated approach) (Ashforth et al., 2007; Cooper-Thomas & Wilson, 2011; Cooper-Thomas & Sadtler, 2015). Due to the lack of physical barriers, both sets of tactics have the potential to aid good newcomer socialisation experiences when delivered in an open plan office. For example, newcomers can witness other colleagues' actions and behaviours and then capitalise on this learning opportunity by adjusting their behaviours to fit within the organisation. Also, given the proximity of being within arms lengths of each other, veteran colleagues would be able to observe the newcomer's actions or behaviours. This open access will give the veteran colleague a chance to assess the newcomer's developmental needs and possibly correct any gaps accordingly.

Institutionalised tactics are structured in a way that allow newcomers to exercise reactive behaviours, whilst being guided by a prescribed course of learning and working (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks 2011; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). Within a busy open plan office, these tactics would create a sense of structure and support for the newcomer. For example, both the veteran colleague (most likely the person to train the newcomer) and the newcomer would be given a structured plan that would allow them to understand their roles and expectations. It would help assemble their day and perhaps alleviate any additional distraction from impromptu meetings and events. This tactic would prove beneficial within the open plan office, as employees are prone to distractions with its array of people.

Differing institutionalised tactics will have varying benefits for a newcomer's socialisation within an open plan office. One of these types of tactics are formal tactics. This set of tactics will deliver the newcomer a separate training programme within isolation or away from busy veteran staff (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks 2011; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). Having this formal training programme will allow newcomers to fully concentrate within the open plan office, where many competing tasks and conversations are taking place and lessen the need to diverge from the learning task.

Another institutionalised tactic is sequential tactics. This is where organisations will explain to the newcomer in detail the training programme (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks 2011; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). Having a clear understanding of the onboarding process, actions and expectations would be easier for a newcomer to follow when bombarded within a highly charged open plan office environment (i.e. competing noises and observations). Collective tactics are used when the newcomer receives the same learning as rest of the group (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks 2011; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). When used within an open plan office, this institutionalised tactic will allow them to fit within the culture, mimic peer behaviours or understand and respect their peers' ways of working within the office. This tactic would be valuable for the newcomer, who would find that having a uniform approach will allow them to exhibit correct newcomer behaviours in the attempt to gain respect and friendships from veteran staff.

Another is investiture tactics; the newcomer receives sufficient support to boost their

confidence (Ardts et al., 2001; Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks 2011; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). This institutionalised tactic would prove favourable for the newcomer. It would give the newcomer confidence and support to approach other colleagues and undertake tasks to sustain certainty in the open plan office.

Utilising serial tactics is about pairing a newcomer with a veteran employee who will act as a role model (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks 2011; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). Within an open plan office, mentorship would give the newcomer a sense of support and protection, and the newcomer will develop the confidence to navigate the environment with a formal mentor.

Finally, fixed tactics are initiated when the newcomer is advised on what socialisation activities need to be planned and the timeframe they should be completing them by (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks 2011; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). Fixed is similar to sequential, for example, the newcomer would be immersed into a busy open plan environment with its wealth of colleague interactions and training sessions to attend. Having a clear and structured approach would reassure the newcomer, as they would be able to identify when they should interact with specific staff and attend the training sessions.

Individualised tactics are used when newcomers are encouraged to follow separate learning experiences outside the rest of the group. These tactics are set out to encourage independent ways of thinking and responses (Allen, 2006; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Cooper-Thomas & Stadler, 2015; Kowtha, 2018; Perrot et al., 2014). Within an open plan office, the newcomer would have a large array of observations and interactions. Therefore, when using individualised tactics, newcomers would generally adjust and assess which ones will create more benefits or costs (Allen, 2006; Batistic, 2018; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Kowtha, 2018; Perrot et al., 2014). For example, within sizeable open office areas, they will judge which tactics will hinder their standing and progress within the organisation and which ones will allow them to obtain benefits (i.e., kudos and a better understanding of the environment).

The open plan office is an environment where these self-initiated tactics are observed by other colleagues; an environment where newcomers can gain or lose credibility.

Like institutionalised tactics, different individualised tactics will have varying benefits for newcomers' socialisation within an open plan office. One particular set of individualised tactics are random tactics. This is when the organisation will ask the newcomer to design their (informal) training programme themselves (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Kim et al., 2005). The benefits of utilising this tactic within the open plan office is that without walls or doors, the newcomer would be readily available to observe other colleagues and take up ad-hoc learning opportunities without the pressure of rigid schedules (created from a more formal institutionalised tactics approach).

Another set of individualised tactics are informal tactics; this is about placing the newcomer within a group, where they are expected to learn from this group and take the initiative to ask veteran staff questions (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Kim et al., 2005). Being within proximity of each group member in the open plan office would accelerate informal learning opportunities and tacit knowledge retention. Attaining informal knowledge is more readily available when utilising these individualised tactics.

Individual tactics are exercised when newcomers are formally told to form their own opinions and responses to certain situations (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Kim et al., 2005). The open plan office would have a wealth of this information, and the newcomer would be able to observe and approach veteran colleagues to see how they would approach these specific situations themselves. For some, this hands-on approach could prove a lot more useful than reading a process manual.

4.2.2 Opportunities for good newcomer socialisation as a result of proactive behaviours within an open plan office

Given that the open plan office is traditionally void of internal walls and doors, proactive behaviours such as information seeking and relationship building may be easier to initiate. For example, information seeking by observing or even listening to other colleagues within an open plan office would seem a lot easier than setting up private meetings to obtain the same information. Another example is that a newcomer could stand at a colleague's desk and observe a new system or process discussion. Proactively seeking information within

an open plan office would also be assisted by the fact that the newcomer is also physically closer to this knowledge source. In the open plan office, they are exposed to discussion among colleagues, for which they can question freely on. For example, Methot et al.'s (2012) study involving a large US insurance company found that employees were able to seek information easier when peers were nearby.

Newcomer proactive behaviours are about newcomers actively seeking out opportunities to suit their environment or developmental needs in the effort to create better socialisation experiences (Cooper-Thomas & Stadler, 2015; Saks et al., 2007; Song & Chathoth, 2011). Due to its absence of physical barriers, an open plan office would be a more comfortable environment for newcomers to exercise proactive behaviours. This is due to the proximity and access to veteran staff, and ample opportunities to gain feedback. Not only would it be more accessible, exercising proactive behaviours in the open domain would give peers the opportunity to witness the newcomer's proactive contribution (in the attempt to raise the newcomer's profile). Proactivity can be showcased in an open plan office to demonstrate competency, confidence and engagement.

In general, individuals with introverted tendencies find it more challenging to exercise proactive behaviours (Ashford & Black, 1996; Cooper-Thomas & Stadler, 2015). Within the open plan office there is generally an increased likelihood of social interaction. Therefore, the same introverted individuals who initially found proactive behaviours too challenging to initiate could view the open plan set up a lot easier to seek information and establish relationships. For example, given the location and lack of doors and walls, they would be forced to interact with other colleagues (almost subconsciously). Open plan offices can also present less invasive ways to engage and learn through observing others. This is more appealing for an introverted individual who would find it a daunting task to knock on the door of a private office every time they wish to engage, get information or feedback.

Newcomers initiate sense making behaviours as a way to seek information and feedback, in the effort to understand the environment and their role expectations (Cooper-Thomas & Stadler, 2015; Gruman et al., 2006). When starting in a high-energy environment such as open plan office, newcomers will need to know what the expectations of their role are, who their colleagues are, what they should learn and how to master the environment. Initiating sense making behaviours would help them obtain this information, reduce uncertainty and lead to positive outcomes (Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993).

The open plan office is a good environment for information and feedback seeking; due to its accessibility and frequency of interactions, for example, more experienced colleagues would be ready to answer questions, provide information or offer feedback. The newcomer would not have to knock on doors or schedule meetings for this assistance.

Relationship building between colleagues and even supervisors would be easier within an open plan office, for example, because colleagues are in proximity, it would be easier for the newcomer to connect and interact with them. This positioning would be a lot more ideal and immediate than the newcomer having to schedule meetings. In addition, the open plan office will allow the newcomer to socially gather and network with other colleagues to form and strengthen existing relationships. For instance, in an open plan office, when the newcomer walks into the office, they would be able to greet their colleagues before sitting down at their desk. Alternatively, when colleagues walk past they can mutually greet each other.

Relationship building and collegial networks were significant factors for successful socialisation (Cooper-Thomas & Stadler, 2015; Filstad, 2004; Korte, 2004). Considering the open plan office environment, newcomers will do their best to impress and portray themselves as a valuable investment. They would do this to actively pursue friendship and acceptance through proactive behaviours such as relationship building. Also, developing positive relationships will help the newcomer get through the day and motivate them to do well and become a good citizen of that organisation. Developing good relationships can help break down many newcomers' nervousness, especially in a 'stage like' environment such as the open plan office. Even though there is uncertainty, it can be mitigated by the assurance and support from peers, and this support is usually the result of relationship building. For example, in a study involving new hires at a US University (Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2013) found that newcomers who had actively sought out to build relationships with more senior colleagues received an increased amount of support from their peers. In this study, a senior colleague had unselfishly set aside time out of their busy schedule and sat down with a newcomer to introduce tacit organisational knowledge.

Positive framing could work for or against the newcomer when they first immerse into an open plan office. Positive framing happens when individuals interpret their current situation more favourably (Ashforth et al., 2007; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014). In this case, it would

take place in the open plan office environment, for example, on their first day, the newcomer may witness an office in chaos (including noise and argument). To positively frame this, they may classify this chaotic environment as highly energetic with passionate employees. The downside to this positive framing, is that it ignores the cues that the environment could be a deteriorating culture.

4.3 Challenges: Newcomer Socialisation within an Open Plan Office

This section will discuss the potential challenges of using socialisation tactics and newcomer proactive behaviours within an open plan office.

4.3.1 Challenges to good newcomer socialisation as a result of socialisation tactics within an open plan office

Delivering tactics not deemed appropriate for the newcomer could exacerbate poor socialisation experiences (Cable et al., 2013; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Kowtha, 2018). One reason is that the organisation does not consider the newcomer's background or personality when onboarding them into an open plan office. First, individuals who transition from a quieter or private office to an open plan office may find learning in the new environment challenging. Secondly, socialisation tactics delivered may not suit the newcomer's learning style and personality.

One of the challenges newcomers face when starting a new job is how they are perceived by their new colleagues (Kowtha, 2018; Madlock & Chory, 2014). For example, the newcomer may accidentally say things that could undermine the new organisation's values or goals. Alternatively, the newcomer is also influenced by their peers through open plan office discussion and observations. For instance, there may be veteran staff who openly criticise the company goals, leading the newcomer to question their new company. This level of exposure in an open plan office could influence whether their socialisation would be smooth or not, it is an environment that can showcase the newcomers' skills and also shortcomings. For example, in a study involving US graduate students, Allen et al. (1999) found that more established colleagues' behaviours influenced the newcomer's perception of their new environment. In this study, when senior colleagues worked during their lunch break, newcomers would think that this was the norm and appreciated their

colleagues' work ethic and inevitability mimicked their peers' behaviours. In contrast, other newcomers saw it as a less rosy culture of which they would rather not be a part of.

With its structured and formal approach, institutionalised tactics intend to pull the newcomer away from uncertainty (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Perrot et al., 2014). Equally, this same tactic approach could restrict more proactive employees from exploring and taking advantage of an open plan's office wealth of expertise and interaction. For example, stringent institutionalised tactics (i.e. formal tactics) that take the newcomer out of the office environment with a prescribed training programme, may hinder them from initiating relationships with role models, and deny them the flexibility to observe others and even join in the conversations.

Even though well-structured and supportive, institutionalised tactics can seem restrictive and could prohibit newcomers gaining self-confidence in learning how to deal with ambiguous situations in an open plan environment. For example, the newcomer is subjected to in-house training with rehearsed situations. When it is time to initiate these actions during real-life situations, it could prove all too much for the newcomer. For instance, a study involving newly hired employees at a large educational institution, Klein and Weaver (2000) found that institutionalised tactics did restrict their participants from exercising more observant behaviours at work. The sample had undertaken their learning in isolation away from mainstream group. The more established colleagues performed the same tasks the newcomers were reading about in the induction manual.

In contrast, the individualised tactics approach would see the newcomers 'thrown in at the deep end, within an unfamiliar open plan office. Given the uncertainty and unknown role expectations, this experience could create a lot of stress and confusion for the newcomer. For example, the newcomer is asked to initiate their learning by asking various colleagues for information and advice; these same colleagues may be too busy to teach. Also, there would be a lot of the stress around their own perceived image and ego when trying to navigate and learn within the new environment. These same perceptions could even affect the pride of highly confident newcomers. Newcomers with lower confidence would feel nervous about being judged and needing approval from their peers, for instance, they may think that they are asking too many questions and subsequently judged on their approach (Tidwell & Sias, 2005).

Three individualised tactics were omitted from the opportunities section. Given the open plan office context, these three would be best placed in the challenges section. They are disjunctive, variable and divesture. Individualised tactics such as disjunctive tactics are about leaving the newcomer to the goodwill of other peers (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). This tactic could be daunting in an open plan office, as veteran staff could either unwillingly assist or even deliberately avoid training them. This standoffish attitude could be the lack of organisational direction on who should teach the newcomer. Saks and Gruman (2011) report that veteran colleagues became increasingly frustrated and had difficulty keeping up with their work when interrupted by students in a co-operative education programme.

Formal tactics would allow for a designated training period and structured timeframe, whereas individualised tactics such as variable tactics are about a lack of training (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). This could create uncertainty and undue stress for newcomers, as they cannot establish a clear training pattern. They would also be unaware of the expectations, what they should learn and when. For example, Burböck et al.'s (2016) study involving German graduate students found that newcomers who did not have adequate (informal and formal) training would feel a lot more uncertain and anxious about their new environment. The students were left to read on work protocols and interpret and exercise these independently. Without strict direction, they felt uneasy that they were not following the correct process, feeling anxious about how their supervisors would judge them.

Divesture tactics are about stripping away the newcomer's prior thinking and embedding the organisation's own way of thinking (Ardts et al., 2001; Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). It can be seen as an opportunity or a challenge. For example, if the newcomer had navigated an open plan office previously in their old job, and now the organisation forbids this prior method of navigation, it could prove detrimental to newcomer's confidence and leave them confused and frustrated. Alternatively, if the new organisation's approach is a lot more positive, it could prove a lot easier for the newcomer to adapt to their new environment. Another example is that the organisation denounces the newcomer's prior approach to learning (i.e., passive shadowing) and asks them to actively perform the tasks.

4.3.2 Challenges to good newcomer socialisation as a result of proactive behaviours within an open plan office

For a newcomer, their image would be the central factor before any proactive behaviours are taken. The reason being is that the open plan office is a public arena where many people congregate and observe (Brennan et al., 2002, Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al., 2009). A newcomer will assess if their information or feedback seeking could benefit or prove detrimental to their image in front of others. For instance, if the newcomer was to approach a senior colleague and ask how well they managed to complete a task. If the colleague praised the newcomer's competency and quickness for completing the task while in front of other colleagues in the open plan office, this particular moment would elevate their standing. In contrast, if the feedback delivered in front of others was critical, it would lower the newcomer standing (perceived or real). Also, newcomers with less confidence would find it quite a daunting experience, and in some cases, their perceived image would take precedence over their learning progression. For example, they would forgo asking for information or feedback in the open plan space (to the detriment of their own learning and advancement).

Open plan offices are known for their distraction and noise (Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al., 2009; Roelofsen, 2008). Newcomer socialisation is a learning process that requires a lot of detail and focus. For instance a sense making behaviour such as seeking information is a process that requires unobstructed communication (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014; Morrison, 1993; Morrison, 2002; Saks et al., 2011). Therefore when a newcomer or veteran is seeking information within an open plan office, there is the possibility of being distracted from competing conversations. Both the newcomer and the veteran staff member would find this a problem, as it can create a level of interruptions and flow of incorrect information.

Individuals with lower self-confidence tend to seek less feedback in front of others, this apprehension to seek less feedback amplifies when the feedback delivered is critical (Anseel et al., 2007; Ashford & Black 1996; Batistič, 2018). Therefore, newcomers with lower self-confidence could lose the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge, because of their apprehension to seek feedback in an open plan office. The cost of seeking performance feedback from colleagues in the open domain may induce

anxiety. The reason is that the newcomer would be sensitive to how observers within an open plan office perceive the feedback.

In the open plan office, there is a possible feeling of reputational damage when seeking information or feedback (instead of asking the same detail behind closed doors). For instance, the self-image of the newcomer or even the veteran colleague could be mutually compromised when the veteran questions a newcomer's skillset, or a newcomer questions the 'veteran's rationale for doing something or even suggest improvements in their process.

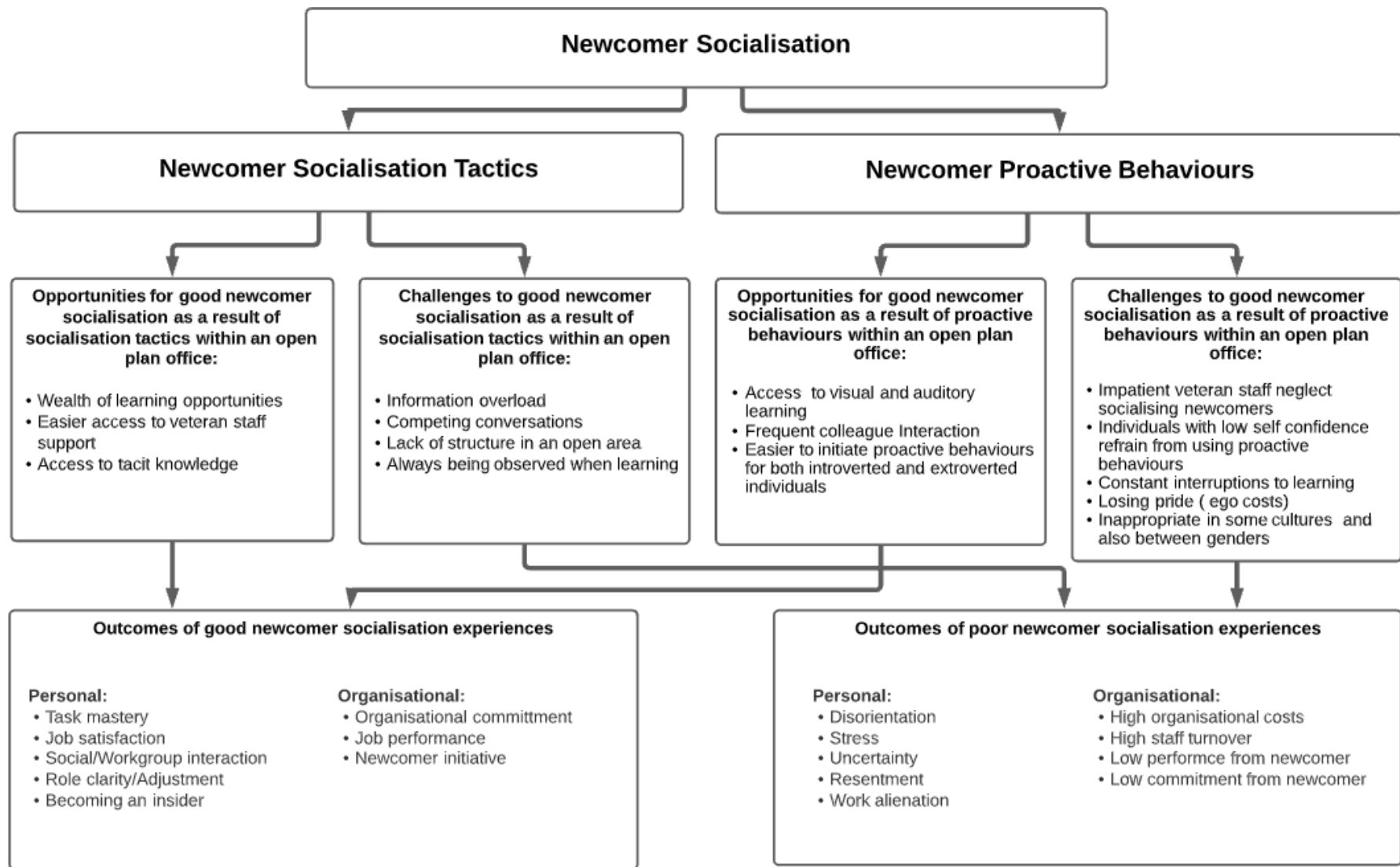
Proactive behaviours, such as relationship building within a public place could create a certain level of apprehension for a newcomer. For example, in more collectivist cultures, questioning the manager in a public arena could be considered a height of rudeness (Le Febvre & Franke, 2013). In more conservative societies, forming work relationships with another colleague of a different gender could be inappropriate (Sully De Luque & Sommer, 2000). Even initiating conversations or friendly interactions with someone of higher standing in an open plan office could be suspiciously viewed by other colleagues as grandstanding in a competitive workplace.

There is a level of apprehension of initiating relationships openly. Newcomers would evaluate how their interpersonal approaches are viewed by the person they are trying to befriend and how others will see it. The newcomer may feel that it could alienate themselves, because the colleague they are approaching may not appreciate their approach; being the open plan office exacerbates this level of anxiety as it may draw a crowd. In an open plan office, there are no barriers to stop individuals from interacting with each other on a frequent basis (Bergstrom et al., 2015; Kim & De Dear, 2013; Kim & Young, 2014). Possible challenges could be offending the office norm (i.e. overly enthusiastic newcomers disrupting co-workers), this constant interruption has the potential to taint the newcomer's image. For example, the newcomer enters an open lab, even though the veteran staff member seems to be available, the veteran staff member could be annoyed because they feel constantly interrupted, where the newcomer is doing their best to establish a work relationship.

Figure 3: Newcomer Socialisation within an Open Plan Office Model

This model integrates the newcomer socialisation process (Figure 1) within the context of an open plan office (Figure 2). Like Figure 1, newcomer socialisation is achieved through the use of socialisation tactics (delivered by the organisation) and proactive behaviours (initiated by the newcomer) within an open plan office. It also identifies how using these tactics and behaviours can create opportunities or challenges to good newcomer socialisation. It also demonstrates how these opportunities can lead to good socialisation and encouraging personal and organisational outcomes. The model also demonstrates how the challenges can lead to poor socialisation and subsequently adverse personal and organisational outcomes.

Figure 3: Newcomer Socialisation within an Open Plan Office Model



CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This chapter provides detail on what the limitations of the current study were and what further research is needed to get a more in-depth and clearer picture on the issue. Also, as a result of the study, a list of suggested implications for organisational practice will be presented.

5.1 Limitations

To the best of my knowledge, there have been no studies discussing how newcomer socialisation practices would work in an open plan office setting. From an extensive array of newcomer socialisation journal articles, none of these produced any detail on how open plan office design, let alone the physical environment would influence newcomer socialisation, for example (Gruman et al., 2006 ; Lapointe et al., 2014; Madlock & Chory, 2014;). Likewise, there was no mention of newcomer socialisation in any of the office design articles, for example (Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al., 2009; Bernstein & Turban, 2018). Therefore, newcomer socialisation literature was combined with open plan office literature and the combination of the two concepts were speculated on.

A second limitation, even though a handful of newcomer socialisation articles did link newcomer personality types with socialisation, none of these articles discussed how certain newcomer personalities would adjust within a specific office design, for example (Ashford & Black, 1996; Cooper-Thomas & Staler, 2015). Office design literature did indicate that introverted personalities would find it harder to adapt into an open plan office, for example (Bos et al., 2017), yet never discussed whether newcomers would find it easier or more challenging to adjust in this particular environment.

A third limitation was that none of the newcomer socialisation articles assessed the personality type of the veteran staff member. Veteran colleagues are most likely deliver (informal) training to the newcomer. It also did not discuss how the veteran staff member would manage regular and time-consuming interaction from newcomers within an open plan office environment. In newcomer socialisation literature it was assumed that newcomers could approach veteran staff members at any time, regardless of how busy or reluctant they were, for example (Ashforth et al., 2007; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Kim et al.,

2005).

A fourth limitation is that newcomer socialisation articles did indicate different newcomer ethnic/national cultural expectations, for example (Kim et al., 2005; Le Febvre & Franke 2013; Song et al., 2017), but not in the context of open plan office design. However in another study, individual ethnic/national cultural perceptions within certain office design was discussed, for example (McElroy & Morrow, 2010), however it did not signal that the individuals in the study were from differing national/ethnic cultures embarking on newcomer socialisation within the open plan office.

A fifth limitation is that there was little attention to given to gender issues. None of newcomer socialisation articles did indicate how the open plan office would influence a newcomer's adjustment or perception according to their gender. Yet there were a handful of open plan office articles that did discuss gender issues, for example (Benammar et al., 2018; Bodin Danielsson & Theorell, 2019; Bos et al., 2017; Morrison & Smollan, 2020), but not in the sphere of newcomer socialisation. The first example, Bos et als'. (2017) study on gender differences found that in comparison to male's employees, female employees felt more uneasy conducting sensitive conversations in an open plan office. In parallel to newcomer socialisation, this could signal a barrier to newcomer information and feedback seeking within an open plan office. Another example to demonstrate the importance of gender issues, Morrison and Smollan (2020) study found that unlike male employees, female employees felt like that where constantly observed and had to adjust their physical appearance and behaviour accordingly, and seek approval from other colleagues. Finally, in a third example, Bodin Danielsson and Theorell (2019) found that females undertaking complex tasks reported more frustration with the noise of the open plan office than men. In support, adjusting to and learning a new role is also a complex task for most individuals.

Finally, there is a recently added limitation to this study, the new developments of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID) and how it could influence newcomer socialisation within the open plan office. The newcomer socialisation articles retrieved for this study were set during a period not influenced by a pandemic. Therefore, there was no suggestion how a lockdown could either enhance or compromise the newcomer socialisation process within a remote setting. However, Rodeghero et al. (2020) had written a study in the infancy of the COVID pandemic. This study does capture how a facet of newcomer socialisation

could play out in the COVID world. It discussed the impact of onboarding new hires remotely. Rodeghero et al. (2020) stated that despite sophisticated videoconferencing technology, new hires who onboarded remotely never had the chance to socially interact with their team members. Not only was there a lack of social connection; newcomers were unable to attain feedback or information immediately (as they would in an office setting). Instead they would use emails as a channel for feedback, this method compromised message clarity in comparison to face to face conversations. Yet some of the participants did acknowledge that by not having team members constantly approaching them in-person increased their opportunities to have uninterrupted work. Other studies discussed the future and redesign of the open plan office space as a result of the pandemic. This included social distancing, space and limited amount of employees in the office at one time, for example (Parker, 2020; Samani & Alavi, 2020).

5.2 Further Research Directions

No empirical study has been carried out on newcomer socialisation within an open plan office environment. Therefore much of this dissertation has been speculation based on journal material taken from the two different research pieces.

Empirical studies will be required to better understand how newcomer socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours would work within an open plan office (i.e., interviewing and distributing surveys to newcomers, veteran staff, management and human resources). Another example is to conduct a longitudinal study involving newcomers. One suggestion is to follow a participant (newcomer) from pre-entry into the organisation, their first two weeks, months, and even when the newcomer becomes a veteran employee.

Another direction for future research is to explore how newcomer socialisation impacts a diverse range of individuals. Therefore, further research on the gender, culture and personality of the newcomer is needed to better understand the dynamics of newcomer socialisation within an open plan office. It would be also prudent to investigate how differing gender, personality type and cultural expectations would adjust within an open plan office through empirical research.

Another suggestion is to investigate how veteran staff with differing personalities would handle newcomer interactions within an open plan office, again through empirical

research. Other methods, such as observing how newcomers interact with veterans and their work would be useful. It would demonstrate how these newcomers would use tactics and behaviours, interpret communications, and alternatively how veteran colleagues may react to the newcomer's actions or mannerisms.

The use of newcomer socialisation tactics and newcomer proactive behaviours has been shown by Gruman et al., 2006 ; Lapointe et al., 2014; Madlock & Chory, 2014, but not in the context of the open plan office nor did it discuss how the COVID era would alter this . Further research on how the use of tactics and behaviours would be deployed in instances of social distancing, isolation and remote working. As a result of the pandemic, new ways of employee interaction could change how organisations deliver tactics and newcomers use proactive behaviours.

5.3 Implications for Practice

Organisations providing newcomers structure, support and clear guidelines when entering an organisation is a necessity for newcomer adjustment (Bauer & Green, 1994; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Organisations should set up and support newcomers transitioning from private offices to open plan offices (Brennan et al., 2002; Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al., 2009). Organisations to support the assimilation and socialisation of newcomers coming into open plan offices.

Organisations are required to understand the rewards and ramifications of delivering socialisations tactics within an open plan office environment, for example, institutionalised tactics is ideal for newcomers who engage in less feedback seeking. Nonetheless, they have the potential of limiting newcomer creativity because the newcomer is expected not to divert from the status quo (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2005; Perrot et al., 2014). This could prove frustrating given the wealth of opportunity to seek out an array of learning opportunities within the open plan office space. Individualised tactics is ideal for newcomers who wish to demonstrate their own personality and values opposed to mirroring other colleagues (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2012; Kim et al. 2005; Perrot et al, 2014). Yet, newcomers can feel lost without a certain amount of structure when first adjusting into an open plan office environment.

Proactive behaviours can be used to create favourable outcomes (Ashforth et al., 2007;

Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014; Saks et al., 2007), yet it can also create complications (Bolino, et al., 2010; Crant, 2000; Mignerey et al., 1995; Morrison et al., 2004). Therefore, newcomers need to assess and use proactive behaviours in the open plan office shrewdly.

More reserved or less confident personalities could find adjusting into an open plan office more arduous (Bos et al., 2017; Maher & Von Hippel, 2005; Rasila & Rothe, 2012). Managers need to be aware of newcomer's personalities and how this will affect the newcomer adjusting to the organisation's specific office design. This assessment could also take place during pre-entry into the organisation or even during the job interview. This same awareness would apply to the newcomer's gender and cultural expectations, and the organisation will assess how this could affect the newcomer adjusting into the organisation's specific office design or organisation itself.

5.4 Contributions

To the best of my knowledge, there have been no studies discussing how newcomer socialisation practices would work in an open plan office setting. From the extensive array of journal newcomer socialisation articles studied, none of them had given any detail on how the office design, let alone the physical environment would influence the newcomer's adjustment into an organisation. Therefore, findings from this study can contribute a new viewpoint to the field of newcomer socialisation. First, it has identified a specific physical context for newcomer socialisation to take place in. Second, existing newcomer socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours have been integrated into an open plan office context from a theoretical stance. Finally, a model showing the integration between newcomer socialisation and open plan office design has been created.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

For a newcomer, their ideal objective is to attain a good socialisation experience and adjust accordingly. It is also to gain task mastery and role clarity (Batistič, 2018; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Saks et al., 2007).

Not only would a newcomer benefit from good socialisation experiences, the organisation would also gain from this. For example, newcomer organisational commitment and staff retention (Aryee, 1991; Batistič, 2018; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Kowtha, 2018). First this

study had to define what good socialisation practices were. What it found ranged from delivering adequate socialisation to avoiding a one-size-fits-all model. Next it had to identify the tools to accomplish this objective, these tools were socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours (Ashforth et al., 2007; Batistič, 2018; Gruman & Saks, 2011). The study also found that there were both aids and barriers to good newcomer socialisation as a result of using tactics and behaviours (Batistič, 2018; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Gruman & Saks, 2011). Later it was established that the organisation had a responsibility to identify which tactics to promote and which ones to mitigate, likewise, the same principle applied to the newcomer when using proactive behaviours.

From the 74 journal articles chosen on newcomer socialisation, none of them indicated whether the study was set in a traditional office setting or open plan office space. To establish a physical context for newcomer, an open plan office design was chosen, primarily because of its increasing popularity with organisations (Haynes, 2007; Hedge, 1982; Kim & Dear, 2013). Reviewing the literature, the open plan office had known benefits for the individual and organisation, and it equally bore costs (Kaarlela-Tuomaala et al., 2009; Rasila & Rothe, 2012; Sundstrom et al. 1982).

The integration of the two concepts yielded opportunities and challenges for both the newcomer and organisation. It demonstrated how the use of tactics and behaviours can create polar opposite experiences for both. In the end it had to ascertain if newcomer socialisation tactics and proactive behaviours would ensure good newcomer socialisation within an open plan office.

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