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# AN INTERACTIONAL APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONS' SUCCESS IN SOCIALIZING THEIR INTERN NEWCOMERS: THE ROLE OF GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION INVENTORY

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*Using an interactionist approach, this study examined the effects of the general self-efficacy (GSE) and the organizational socialization inventory (OSI) domains, as well as the GSE × OSI domains on tourism and hospitality organizations' success—newcomer perceived general job satisfaction (GJS) and intent to return (ITR)—in socializing their intern newcomers. The sample included 352 senior tourism and hospitality undergraduates from two institutions of higher education in tourism and hospitality in China's Hainan Island who just experienced organizational socialization in their respective placement organizations. Results indicated that intern newcomers' GJS and ITR can be significantly predicted by GSE and all OSI domains, respectively; that GJS can be incrementally explained by all the interactions between GSE and the four OSI domains, except for the GSE × OSI\_training; and that ITR can be incrementally explained by the interactions of GSE × OSI\_training and GSE × OSI\_future prospect. The study's findings as well as their theoretical and practical implications are discussed within the context of organizational socialization research, GSE-related social cognitive career theory and core self-evaluation theory, and human resource development practices in tourism and hospitality organizations.*

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**KEYWORDS:** *intern newcomer; organizational socialization; general self-efficacy; interactionist approach; China*

At the crux of the integration between a newcomer and his or her employment organization lies the *organizational socialization* (OS) process, which allows him or her to transition from a rank outsider to an effective insider (Bauer, Bodner, & Tucker, 2007; Cooper-Thomas & Thomas, 2006). The success-related outcomes

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of the process, as predicted by, for example, higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention, can be influenced by personal and situational factors as well as the interaction between the two (Bauer et al., 2007; Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000; Reichers, 1987). As such, the dynamics of OS can be captured from each of the three approaches: the situationist, the individual difference, and the interactionist.

The *situationist approach* holds that employees' work attitudes and behaviors are derived from the work and its environment (e.g., Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Mischel, 1968). In this vein, newcomers' work attitudes and behaviors have been predicted, for example, by *newcomer learning*, which relates to what is learned or achieved in the course of a newcomer's OS (e.g., Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Taormina, 2004). This is because newcomer learning has been increasingly understood as one of the key antecedents of OS success-related outcomes (e.g., Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006; Taormina, 1997, 2004). In this conceptualization, many researchers have theoretically developed models in which the specific dimensions of newcomer learning are identified. Taormina (1994, 2004), for example, developed an OS model of *organizational socialization inventory* (OSI), comprising four dimensions of training, understanding, coworker support, and future prospect. Further, these dimensions have been found to be related to a number of OS success-related outcomes such as job satisfaction (e.g., Bigliardi, Petroni, & Dormio, 2005; Taormina, 2004).

Alternatively, researchers (e.g., Fisher, 1986; Jones, 1983) in the 1980s began to hypothesize a role for newcomers themselves, which can be referred to as the *individual difference approach*. Within this framework, newcomers' organizational attitudes and behaviors are hypothesized to be predicted by a number of individual difference variables, including newcomer proactive behaviors, dispositions, and many others (Griffin et al., 2000; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). *General self-efficacy* (GSE)—“individual's perception of their ability to perform across a variety of different situations” (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998, p. 170)—for example, has been found to be related to some OS success-related outcomes such as job performance (Saks & Ashforth, 2000).

It should be noted, however, that both the situationist and the individual difference approaches are limited in scope, such that either one of the two alone in an OS study cannot capture OS dynamics in a comprehensive manner (e.g., Gruman, Saks, & Zweig, 2006). To address this shortcoming, the *interactionist approach* seeks to integrate the individual difference and situationist approaches by proposing that a person's organizational attitudes and behavior are functions of factors in the person and factors in the situation (e.g., Chatman, 1989; Lewin, 1951; Moos, 1973). Following this approach, a few OS researchers have theoretically developed interactive models of OS. For instance, Griffin et al. (2000) proposed that organization socialization tactics impact and interact with newcomer proactive socialization tactics to influence a number of OS success-related outcomes. The interactionist approach has received some supportive empirical attention (e.g., Gruman et al., 2006) and positive assessments. Jex and Britt (2008), for instance, articulate that the interactionist approach is an exciting development because it represents the

most realistic view of what actually happens after newcomers' organizational entries.

Despite the progress made in the past decades, the OS literature, with only a few exceptions (e.g., Griffin et al., 2000; Gruman et al., 2006), has often been criticized for overemphasizing the situationist approach, ignoring the role of individual differences, and failing to consider a more interactionist approach (Griffin et al., 2000; Gruman et al., 2006; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). We also found, surprisingly, that there has not been any interactive model of OS that is tailored for the situation where the interactionist approach have been used to explain why newcomers' OS success-related outcomes are the functions of both individual differences and newcomer learning dimensions as well as the interaction between the two.

Based on the foregoing, the purpose of this study is to integrate the two approaches in OS research by adopting the interactionist approach. Basically, we propose that the extent to which an organization succeeds in socializing its intern newcomers is a function of the newcomers' GSE and OSI domains, as well as the interaction between GSE and OSI domains. In particular, we examine, respectively, the effects of GSE and OSI domains, and the interaction of GSE  $\times$  OSI domains on newcomer perceived *general job satisfaction* (GJS) and *intention to return* (ITR).

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

One of the major problems in OS research is that there has been a *relative lack of theory* (e.g., Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006). As a result, OS literature, for the most part, has been described as theoretically and conceptually fragmented to the point that it is poorly understood (e.g., Bauer et al., 2007; Fisher, 1986; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). We therefore look into the literature, both internal and external to OS, to delve into existing theoretical foundations regarding the causal relationships among the three sets of proposed constructs.

### GJS and ITR as OS Success-Related Outcomes

Because of the relative lack of theory, there has been a lack of agreement on what constitutes success-related OS outcomes. Bauer, Morrison, and Callister (1998) hold that what "successful socialization" actually means is likely to differ across newcomers, organizations, and the like, affecting decisions about which outcome variables are appropriate to measure. In the context of tourism and hospitality industry, there has been a globally encountered ongoing problem: attracting and retaining high-quality employees within the industry (e.g., Aksu & Köksal, 2005; Song & Chathoth, 2008). As such, we believe that tourism and hospitality organizations' success in socializing their "intern newcomers"—those who are at their field placement in real work settings before or on graduation—can be largely captured by two OS outcomes. The first outcome is GJS: newcomers' overall positive feelings or attitude toward their overall job in the placement organization. The other is ITR, which is referred to, in the present study, as the extent to which an intern newcomer will return after graduation to his or her placement organization, for applying for a formal employment and/or for accepting the job offer from

the same placement organization. Similarly, most OS researchers tend to operationalize newcomers' success-related outcomes as the "big three"—job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent to remain—partly because there has been no overarching theory of work adjustment (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007).

### Main Effects of GSE on GJS and ITR

From the dispositional approach, one of the most salient existing antecedents of both GJS and ITR is self-efficacy, which is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands" (Wood & Bandura, 1989, p. 408). According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 1997), self-efficacy beliefs vary on three dimensions: (a) level or magnitude (particular level of task difficulty), (b) strength (certainty of successfully performing a particular level of task difficulty), and (c) generality (the extent to which magnitude and strength beliefs generalize across tasks and situations). Alternatively, Gibbons and Weingart (2001) differentiated three levels of personal efficacy beliefs: task-specific, domain, and general self-efficacy. These three levels of self-efficacy differ in level of aggregation across tasks and performance domains and in stability over time and situation. Whereas task-specific self-efficacy refers to confidence in one's ability to accomplish a specific task in particular situations, domain specific self-efficacy denotes an underlying belief in one's ability to perform within a category of activities (Gibbons & Weingart, 2001). In the self-efficacy literature, because of Bandura's restrictive words—"given situational demands" (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001)—most researchers tend to conceptualize and study self-efficacy as a task or domain specific construct, focusing narrowly on the first two dimensions: magnitude and strength. For instance, based on Bandura's social cognitive theory, social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) supports the thesis that domain specific self-efficacy beliefs affect people's academic and career choice goals and actions, both directly and indirectly. Lent et al. (1994) hypothesize that "occupational relevant self-efficacy will relate positively to choice goals" (p. 97). They further noted that choice goals can be operationalized as the intention to engage in a particular action or series of actions. As such, the ITR (defined earlier) fits right into the category of choice goals; therefore, it should be predicted, theoretically, by newcomer's task or domain specific self efficacy. However, empirical findings regarding this causal linkage have been mixed. Gruman et al. (2006), for example, found that the intern newcomers' task specific self-efficacy is significantly, though marginally, related to their ITR. In contrast, Chuang (2005) reported an insignificant relationship between hospitality and tourism undergraduate students' career specific self-efficacy and career choice intentions to work within the industry. In short, despite its popularity, task or domain specific self-efficacy as well as its predictability of individual's behavior and behavioral intentions do have its limitations (e.g., Scherbaum, Cohen-Charash, & Kern, 2006). Partly because of this, there has been an increasing interest in GSE as well its role in predicting individual's attitude and behavior.

According to Sherer et al. (1982), GSE influences people's expectations of mastery, behavior, and responses in new situations, and is a function of one's past experiences with success and failure. Moreover, research has found that GSE is

related to, but distinct from, other self-evaluation constructs including self-esteem, neuroticism, and locus of control. Collectively, these three constructs and GSE further form a broad, latent, higher-order trait: *core self-evaluation*, which is defined as “a basic, fundamental appraisal of worthiness, effectiveness, and capability as a person” (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003, p. 304). More important, while drawing on research in several disciplines, Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997, p. 163) have been the first researchers who formally theorize the main effects of core-evaluations on job satisfaction. Particularly, they propose that “general self-efficacy will positively influence job satisfaction” (p. 163). Empirical findings regarding this relationship, however, have been contradictory, with some (e.g., Judge et al., 2003) being supportive of this proposition, whereas others (e.g., Saks & Ashforth, 2000) not being so. This would suggest that more empirical evidences on this theoretical causality are necessary, particularly in the area of newcomers’ organizational socialization where GSE as well as its relationships with other OS success-related outcomes have been neglected. As a result, for instance, the relationship between newcomer GSE and ITR, to our knowledge, has not been theorized in either the OS literature or the literature (e.g., career development) external to OS.

In contrast, the causal relationship between choice goals (e.g., ITR) and task or domain specific self-efficacy have long been theorized in career development literature. As noted earlier, social cognitive career theory proposes that task or domain specific self-efficacy directly influences the construct of career and academic related choice goal, which is operationalized as the intention to engage in a particular action or series of actions (e.g., Lent et al., 1994, p. 94). Although this theoretical proposition has been supported by some empirical studies in science-, technical-, engineering-, and math-related educational domains (e.g., Lent et al., 2005), it has failed, however, in getting empirical support in the tourism and hospitality domain (see Chuang, 2005). This failure has motivated us to assume that ITR will be significantly related to GSE, rather than task or domain specific self-efficacy. In fact, our assumption is quite reasonable and promising particularly because of two most recently conducted studies. One is a meta-analytic study conducted by Luszczynska, Scholz, and Schwarzer (2005). The other is a field study conducted (across several countries) by Luszczynska, Gutiérrez-Doña, and Schwarzer (2005). The two studies argue that perceived self-efficacy is not only of a task-specific nature, but it can also be identified at a more general level of functioning. Further, mainly based on Bandura’s social cognitive theory, the two studies eventually conclude that GSE appears to be a universal construct that accounts for variance within various domains of human functioning; and that GSE yields meaningful relations with other psychological constructs. Based on the above, it is reasonable to expect that newcomers’ perceived GJS and ITR share one common antecedent of dispositional variable—GSE—which leads to our first hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1:* GSE will be positively related to GJS and ITR.

### **Newcomer Learning Domains and Their Main Effects on GJS and ITR**

From the perspective of the content area of newcomer organizational socialization, OS could include newcomers’ changes or development of new skills, knowledge,

abilities, attitudes, values, norms, tasks, and roles that typify group and organizational membership (Chao et al., 1994). While focusing on the dimensionality of newcomer learning domains, Taormina (1994, 1997) developed a four-domain measure of OSI, including training, understanding, coworker support, and future prospects. It possesses better psychometric prosperities as compared with Chao et al.'s (1994) six-domain measure, which has been the most popular newcomer learning measure in OS research (see Taormina, 2004, for details). Moreover, OSI has already been used in cross-national studies (Taormina, 1998; Taormina & Bauer, 2000) in the United States, China, Singapore, and so forth.

According to Taormina (2004), Training on the OSI refers to the extent to which the employing organization has helped the employee obtain the functional skills or abilities needed to perform a particular job in the organization. It has been found to be significantly related to several OS success-related indicators in a number of OS studies focusing on their probationary newcomers (e.g., Chao et al., 1994; Haueter, Macan, & Winter, 2003; Klein, Fan, & Preacher, 2006; Taormina, 2004; Taormina & Bauer, 2000). Yet, in the OS literature, there has been no documented finding regarding the relationships between intern newcomers' OS success indicators (including GJS and ITR) and the four domains of OSI (including OSI\_training).

It is well known that OS training is imperative and very useful because of the fact that well-trained intern newcomers will be more effective, and, thus, successful and satisfied (Bigliardi et al., 2005). In this respect, Taormina (1997) theoretically proposes that "the higher a newcomer evaluates the training he or she received, the higher will be his or her satisfaction with the overall job" (p. 34). Likewise, an intern newcomer who highly values the training he or she received from his or her placement organization should also be more organizationally committed (Bigliardi et al., 2005), and, therefore, should be more likely to return to his or her placement organization after graduation. Thus, we develop our second hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 2:* OSI\_training will be related to the GJS and ITR.

Second, Understanding on the OSI is an assessment of how well the employee comprehends various types of information about the organization in which he or she works and how that organization functions (Taormina, 2004). Past OS research (e.g., Taormina, 2004) has found that Understanding is positively associated with a number of OS success indicators such as GJS and organizational commitment among probationary newcomers. However, there has been a notable gap in OS research in terms of the lack of finding regarding the relationships between an intern newcomer's OS success indicators and his or her OSI\_understanding of the placement organization. It is well known that an OS program is designed to transform an outsider into an effective insider. To facilitate this transformational process, organizations usually orientate their intern newcomers to corporate policies, operations, values, cultures, and the likes. It is reasonable to assume that greater understanding of these content areas achieved during OS should yield more effective intern newcomers, giving them higher GJS. Also, greater understanding should lead to higher levels of organizational success, making newcomers more committed to the organization (Bigliardi et al., 2005). This, in turn, increases an intern

newcomer's likelihood of ITR after graduation. Furthermore, Taormina (1997) explicitly proposes that the newcomer understanding domain has a moderate or high correlation with his or her job satisfaction and turnover intentions, respectively. Therefore, our third hypothesis is developed as follows:

*Hypothesis 3:* OSI\_understanding will be related to GJS and ITR.

Third, Coworker Support on the OSI assesses how well the employee relates to other members in the organization. Taormina (1997) proposed that perceived higher level of coworker support should have high positive correlation with a number of OS success indicators including overall job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Moreover, from the situational perspective, it has been argued by researchers external to OS that, apart from the nature of the job and the work environment (e.g., Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Herzberg, 1966), satisfaction with the job can also be derived from social persuasion by coworkers (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978; White & Mitchell, 1979). Empirically, OSI\_coworker support has been found to be significantly related to OS success indicators such as GJS and organizational commitment in previous OS studies (e.g., Taormina, 2004) whose study samples were based on probationary newcomers, but not on intern newcomers. As such, it has remained unexplored and thus unknown whether or not the OSI\_coworker support is significantly related to an intern newcomer's success-related outcomes of GJS and ITR. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the higher OSI\_coworker support as perceived by him or her in the placement organization during OS, the less likely that he or she will not be satisfied with his or her job in the placement organization; and hence, the more likely that he or she will return to the same placement organization for further employment after graduation. Accordingly, we hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis 4:* OSI\_coworker support will be related to GJS and ITR.

Finally, Future Prospect on OSI represents the employee's long-term view of the organization, such as his or her anticipation of continued employment in, and the rewards offered by, the organization (Taormina, 2004). In fact, in terms of the expectation on the potential rewards, promotion, and chances of good career offered by the organization, this OSI\_future prospect domain overlaps, largely, with *outcome expectation*—one's beliefs about the consequences or outcomes of demonstrating particular behaviors (Lent et al., 1994). The outcome expectation is one of the core cognitive person variables in social cognitive career theory. According to Lent (2005), it involves imagined consequences of particular courses of action (e.g., "if I try doing this, what will happen?"). Lent and Brown (1996) articulated that people's choice goals are also guided by such considerations as to whether or not the expected outcomes (e.g., salary and promotion) are worth the effort. More specifically, Lent et al. (1994) hypothesized that there will be a positive relation between occupationally relevant positive outcome expectations and expressed choice goals. As such, it is not surprising that OSI\_future prospect has been found to be related to a number of newcomer success-related outcomes such as GJS



(Taormina, 2004) and turnover intention (Chan, 1997). However, these efforts focused on probationary newcomers outside the tourism and hospitality industry domain, but not on the intern newcomers in the tourism and hospitality domain. Given this gap in the OS literature, it is reasonable to assume that intern newcomers who are happy with their future prospects should be more satisfied with their placement jobs and be more likely to return to the same placement organization after graduation. Moreover, "motivation-maintenance" theory (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959) suggests that employees with lower satisfaction level on job security, technical advancement, and the likes often have a lower level of job satisfaction. Taken together, these arguments lead to the fifth hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 5:* OSI\_future prospect will be related to GJS and ITR.

### **Interactive Effects of GSE and OSI Domains on GJS and ITR**

According to Mischel (1973), person and situation interact organically to influence one's attitude and behavior. Likewise, Judge et al. (1997) argue that the main and moderating effects of employee's GSE on his or her work attitude and behavior are not mutually exclusive; rather, "it is possible that all types of effects could be found" (p. 177). Specifically, Judge et al. (1997, p. 177) propose, for the first time in the literature, that individual's GSE may interact with situation specific variables to influence, for instance, their job satisfaction. More specifically, they postulate that an individual with low GSE may doubt his or her ability to grow successfully by learning new skills and taking on new responsibility. This, in turn, could affect not only his or her job choice (Brockner, 1988) but also his or her responses to opportunities related to any given job. In short, an individual with low GSE is liable to react to fear or anxiety rather than pleasure at the prospect of new challenges (Bandura, 1986) and thus may attempt to avoid them (Judge et al., 1997).

Although GSE's moderating role has also been confirmed by empirical studies external to the OS field (e.g., Eden & Kinnar, 1991, p. 777), it has rarely been explored within the OS field, with only few exceptions. Saks and Ashforth's (2000) empirical findings, for example, provided very little support for such a viewpoint of a dispositional theory of work adjustment, known as behavioral plasticity theory (Pierce, Gardner, Dunham, & Cummings, 1993). They purport that low GSE newcomers are more susceptible to external influence (i.e., entry stressors such as role conflict) and more malleable as compared to high GSE newcomers. However, we know, surprisingly, very little about how interactional processes between GSE and OSI domains play out in OS research, which may accentuate or inhibit the success of any OS schemes. Taken together, and based on the above, we expect that the variances of GJS and ITR can be incrementally explained by the interactive effect of GSE and the four domains of OSI, beyond those explained by GSE and OSI domains. Thus, we additionally propose and test the following four hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 6:* GSE and OSI\_training will interact to influence GJS and ITR, respectively, such that the positive relationships between GSE, GJS, and ITR, will be stronger, when GSE is high than when it is low.

*Hypothesis 7:* GSE and OSI\_understanding will interact to influence OS success indicators of GJS and ITR, respectively, such that the positive relationships between GSE and the two OS success indicators will be stronger, respectively, when GSE is high than when it is low.

*Hypothesis 8:* GSE and OSI\_co-worker support will interact to influence OS success indicators of GJS and ITR, respectively, such that the positive relationships between GSE and the two OS success indicators will be stronger, respectively, when GSE is high than when it is low.

*Hypothesis 9:* GSE and OSI\_future prospect will interact to influence OS success indicators of GJS and ITR, respectively, such that the positive relationships between GSE and the two OS success indicators will be stronger, respectively, when GSE is high than when it is low.

## METHOD

### Sample

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from participants with the following background characteristics: (a) they had just returned from their placement organizations where they worked as intern newcomers for an average of about 4 months; (b) they were about to graduate from their 4-year tourism and hospitality bachelor's degree management program; and (c) they were also at an active stage of career choice decision making, having questions such as whether or not they will go back to their placement organizations right after graduation. A phone call survey conducted by the first author in 2007 found that a total of about 660 soon-to-be tourism graduates in Hainan Island were either from Hainan University or Hainan Normal University. Thus, they constituted our targeted survey sample. All of them were presented, either in person or via email, with the self-administered questionnaire. The respondents were informed that complimentary career counseling services from the researchers would be available on request, which served as an incentive to participate in the survey. A total of 381 copies of the questionnaires (about 58% of the total) were returned, of which 352 copies (about 53% of the total) were usable.

The sociodemographic profile of respondents showed a gender distribution with about 52% male and 48% female. In terms of age, 70.4% were between 21 and 23 years, followed by 25.30% between 24 and 27 years. Respondents' length of placement time ranged from 1 month to 8 months, with more than half (52.6%) between 3 and 4 months, followed by 27% between 1 and 2 months, and 19.3% between 5 and 6 months. Approximately 41% students chose to have their placement in tourism organizations in Hainan province, whereas about 59% students did it in other mainland provinces outside Hainan, China.

### Measures

As noted earlier, we adapted the 20-item measure of OSI (Taormina, 2004, p. 92) in the present study. "My organization" in the original version was changed to "my placement organization" in order to suit the profile of our respondents. As previously stated, there are four OSI domains, with five statements each. A sample

item representing the OSI\_training domain used was: "The training in my placement organization has enabled me to do my job very well." In terms of the OSI\_understanding domain, the intern newcomers were presented with the following sample statement: "I know very well how to get things done in my placement organization." A sample item used for the OSI\_coworker support domain stated: "Most of my coworkers have accepted me as a member of the placement organization." Finally, in terms of the OSI\_future prospect domain, the respondents were presented with such a statement: "I expect that my placement organization will continue to employ me for many more years." Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the 20 statements in the OSI measure. Responses were obtained on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "1" (*strongly disagree*) to "5" (*strongly agree*). The same 5-point Likert-type scale was used to capture intern newcomers' responses to the 8-itemed GSE statements, which was developed by Chen et al. (2001, p. 79). A sample statement of the GSE measure is: "I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks."

We conducted two corresponding confirmatory factor analyses to verify the dimensionalities of the OSI and GSE measures, respectively, using the full-information maximum likelihood technique provided in AMOS6.0. Results confirmed that the four-factor model of OSI fitted the data. The goodness-of-fit indices are within or near acceptable ranges,  $\chi^2 = 435.538$  (164),  $p < .001$ ; goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .89; comparative fit index (CFI) = .88; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .06. Although this four-factor OSI model did not demonstrate a high degree of fit with the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999), the fit statistics in our sample are, however, consistent with the results obtained in previous research (i.e., Taormina, 2004). We therefore retained the four-factor model of OSI for our analyses. As to GSE, the CFA results revealed that a single factor model in our present sample fit the data well:  $\chi^2 = 20.975$  (12),  $p > .001$ ; GFI = .93; CFI = .91; RMSEA = .09. Given the high degree of fit in terms of most of the indices, we retained the single factor solution to the GSE measure for our further analyses.

GJS was measured by using a single-item instrument developed by Van de Ven and Ferry (1980) on a 10-point scale ranging from *dissatisfied* ("1") to *very satisfied* ("10"). The question was adapted to fit the situation by asking—"all things considered, how satisfied are you with your job in your placement organization?" Previous research (e.g., Scarpello & Campbell, 1983) suggests that a single-item measure of GJS is stable and reproducible and may reflect it more accurately than many facet measures of GJS.

ITR was assessed using three items specially developed for this study. It was captured by asking students to indicate their level of agreement along a 5-point scale ranging from "1" (*most unlikely*) to "5" (*most likely*), with three statements: (a) "after graduation, I will definitely go to work in the same placement company/organization;" (b) "after graduation, I will apply for a job in the same placement company/organization;" and (c) "If the employer in the same placement company/organization would offer me a job, I will gladly take it." An exploratory factor analysis was employed to explore the dimensionality of the ITR measure. As a result, a principal component analysis with varimax rotation suggested that the

ITR measure was unidimensional: One factor was extracted based on an eigenvalue greater than one, explaining 73.05% of the common variance (factor loadings ranged from .85 to .87).

Furthermore, the Mainland Chinese versions of the OSI, GSE, and GJS used in this study, were based on, and translated from, their corresponding original English versions using a blind translation-back-translation method as described by Brislin (1976). Finally, construct reliability tests were also performed for the six scale/subscales used in our study. Results (see Table 1) revealed that both Cronbach's reliability alpha value for the exploratory factor (i.e., ITR) and the composite reliability alpha values for the confirmatory factors (i.e., the four OSI factors and the one GSE factor), were all equal to, or exceeded the recommended significance level of .70, as recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

### Data Analysis

SPSS12.0 (the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was employed to analyze the data. The statistical analyses results are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and coefficient alphas of the relevant variables included in the study. Following prior researchers (e.g., Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt, & Barrick, 2004; Lam, Pine, & Baum, 2003) and statisticians (e.g., Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003; Evans, 1991), we performed a series of moderated hierarchical regression analyses (Table 2) for hypothesis testing. Specifically, we entered the control variables (i.e., age, gender, and length of internship) in Step 1 of the regression. At Step 2, we simultaneously entered the two main effects, i.e., GSE and an OSI domain (e.g., OSI\_training). At Step 3, we entered the two-way interaction product of the corresponding two variables involved at the second step (e.g., GSE  $\times$  OSI\_training). Thus, the variance of corresponding dependent variable (e.g., ITR) due to the above-stated control variables and the main effects were partialled out, allowing for variance due to the interaction term to be observed (Cohen et al., 2003).

With regard to the interaction, it is noteworthy that, prior to deriving the respective interaction terms, GSE and each of the four OSI domains were all centered in order to protect against potential errors in subsequent statistical inferences (Kraemer & Blasey, 2004). Finally, following Cohen et al. (2003), we further illustrate the significant interactions indicated, in Table 2, by plotting figures of the OS success indicator (i.e., GJS or ITR) as a function of an OSI domain (e.g., OSI future prospects) for three different levels of GSE: low (*1 SD below the mean*), neutral (*at the mean*), and high (*at 1 SD above the mean*).

## RESULTS

### The Main Effect of OSI Domains and GSE on OS Success Indicators

In support of Hypothesis 1, GSE was found to be significantly related to GJS ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ) and ITR ( $r = .27, p < .01$ ), respectively (Table 1). The same hypothesis was further verified by data shown in Table 2. For instance, GSE in

**Table 1**  
**Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Alpha Estimates**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	22.70	1.36	—									
2. Gender	1.48	.50	-.14**	—								
3. LOP	3.47	1.41	-.09	-.07	—							
4. GSE	3.65	.64	.01	-.10*	-.19**	—						
5. OSI_TR	3.35	.71	-.03	.11*	-.04	.33**	—					
6. OSI_UN	3.51	.59	.03	.03	-.08	.45**	.49**	—				
7. OSI_CS	3.55	.74	.05	-.03	-.26**	.50**	.52**	.44**	—			
8. OSI_FP	3.38	.68	-.07	.00	-.05	.44**	.51**	.48**	.43**	—		
9. GJS	6.75	2.05	-.02	.02	-.21**	.29**	.45**	.32**	.41**	.40**	—	
10. ITR	3.28	.91	.04	.00	.07	.27**	.45**	.25**	.23**	.51**	.41**	—

Note: LOP, length of placement (measured by actual month); GSE = general self-efficacy; OSI = organizational socialization inventory; TR = training; UN = understanding; CS = coworker support; FP = future prospect; GJS = general job satisfaction; ITR = intent to return. *N* = 352. Reliability alpha estimates are on the diagonal. Age is measured by year. Gender is coded as "1" for male and "2" for female.

\**p* < .05, two-tailed. \*\**p* < .01, two-tailed.

**Table 2**  
**Main and Moderating Effects of GSE and OSI Domains on GJS and ITR**

Predictor	General Job Satisfaction (GJS)			Intent to Return (ITR)		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Age	-.040	-.030	-.030	.040	.060	.050
Gender	.001	-.030	-.030	.020	-.010	-.010
LOP	-.210**	-.170**	-.170**	.070	.120*	.130*
GSE		.130*	.130**		.160**	.170**
OSI-TR		.400**	.400**		.410**	.380**
GSE × OSI_TR			.060			.110*
<i>F</i> <sup>2</sup>	.045	.254	.258	.007	.239	.250
$\Delta R^2$	.045	.209	.004	.007	.232	.011
<i>F</i>	5.47***a	23.57***b	19.95***c	.761 <sup>a</sup>	21.74***b	19.13***c
$\Delta F$	5.47**	48.48**	1.63	.761	52.86**	4.88*
Model		Model 1	Model 2		Model 3	Model 4
Age	-.040	-.043	-.038	.044	.045	.050
Gender	.001	.012	.019	.016	.039	.040
LOP	-.210**	-.160**	-.150**	.072	.129*	.140*
GSE		.160**	.170**		.236**	.240**
OSI_UN		.240**	.220**		.148*	.130*
GSE × OSI_UN			.130*			.099
<i>F</i> <sup>2</sup>	.045	.159	.180	.007	.111	.121
$\Delta R^2$	.045	.110	.016	.007	.105	.010
<i>F</i>	5.47***a	13.07***b	12.18***c	.761 <sup>a</sup>	8.67***b	7.91***c
$\Delta F$	5.47**	23.416**	6.67*	.761	20.41**	3.73
Model		Model 5	Model 6		Model 7	Model 8
Age	-.039	-.043	-.049	.044	.046	.042
Gender	.001	.029	.027	.016	.050	.049
LOP	-.212**	-.104*	-.099*	.072	.1595**	.162**
GSE		.118*	.132*		.228**	.238**
OSI_CS		.324**	.320**		.161**	.159**
GSE × OSI_CS			.108*			.073
<i>F</i> <sup>2</sup>	.045	.190	.201	.007	.113	.118
$\Delta R^2$	.045	.145	.011	.007	.106	.005
<i>F</i>	5.47***a	16.23***b	14.49***c	.761 <sup>a</sup>	8.803***b	7.703***c
$\Delta F$	5.47**	30.953**	4.915*	.761	20.738**	2.067
Model		Model 9	Model 10		Model 11	Model 12
Age	-.039	-.009	-.022	.044	.085	.078
Gender	.001	.021	.018	.016	.035	.034
LOP	-.212**	-.169**	-.170**	.072	.118*	.117*
GSE		.113*	.159**		.083*	.108*
OSI_FP		.345**	.334**		.488**	.482**
GSE × OSI_FP			.215**			.121**
<i>F</i> <sup>2</sup>	.045	.209	.253	.007	.284	.298
$\Delta R^2$	.045	.164	.044	.007	.277	.014
<i>F</i>	5.47***a	18.25***b	19.48***c	.76***a	27.39***b	24.37***c
$\Delta F$	5.47**	35.78**	20.52**	.76**	66.93**	6.88**
Model		Model 13	Model 14		Model 15	Model 16

Note: LOP = length of placement; GSE = global self-efficacy; TR = training; OSI = organizational socialization inventory; UN = understanding; CS = coworker support; FP = future prospect. *N* = 352. The coefficients are standardized beta weights.

a. Degrees of freedom = 3,348.

b. Degrees of freedom = 5,346.

c. Degrees of freedom = 6,345.

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01.

Model 5 (Step 2) was significantly related to GJS ( $\beta = .16, p < .01$ ) and ITR ( $\beta = .24, p < .01$ ), respectively, after controlling for the influences of OSI\_ understanding domain and the three control variables of age, gender, and length of placement.

In support of Hypothesis 2 to Hypothesis 5, each of the scores of the four OSI domains (Table 1), including training ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ), understanding ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ), coworker support ( $r = .41, p < .01$ ) and future prospect ( $r = .40, p < .01$ ) was significantly and positively related to intern newcomers' GJS respectively. So was each of the scores of the four OSI domains comprising training ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ), understanding ( $r = .25, p < .01$ ), coworker support ( $r = .23, p < .01$ ) and future prospect ( $r = .51, p < .01$ ) to intern newcomers' ITR, respectively. These four hypotheses were further confirmed in a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses (see Table 2, Step 2), depicted by training in Model 1 ( $\beta = .40, p < .01$ ), understanding in Model 5 ( $\beta = .24, p < .01$ ), coworker support in Model 9 ( $\beta = .32, p < .01$ ) and future prospect in Model 13 ( $\beta = .35, p < .01$ ). These variables were all significantly and positively related to intern newcomers' GJS, respectively, after controlling for the effects of the three control variables and GSE. So were training in Model 3 ( $\beta = .41, p < .01$ ), understanding in Model 7 ( $\beta = .15, p < .01$ ), coworker support in Model 11 ( $\beta = .16, p < .01$ ) and future prospect in Model 15 ( $\beta = .49, p < .01$ ) to intern newcomers' ITR after controlling for the effects of the same three control variables and GSE.

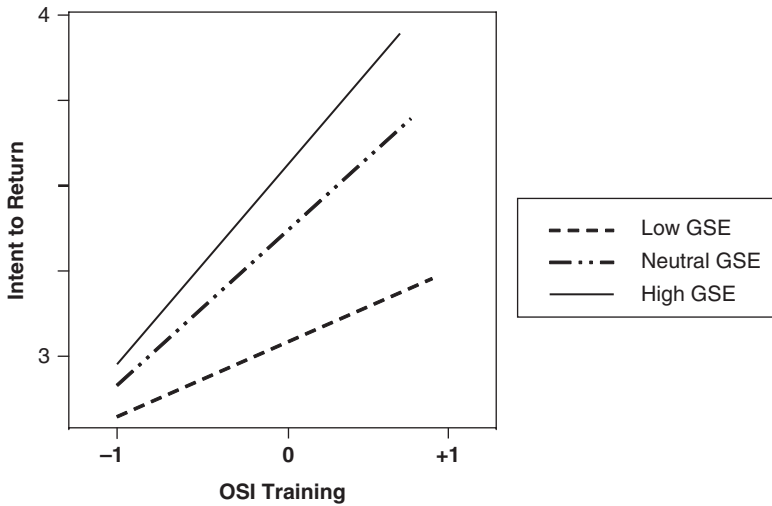
### The Moderating Effects of OSI Domains $\times$ GSE on OS Success Indicators

Table 2 presents the results of GSE interaction with each of the four OSI domains as predictors for GJS and ITR. Specifically, results indicate that GSE  $\times$  OSI\_training interaction in Model 2 (Table 2, Step 3) did not add a significant increment to the variance explained for GJS ( $\Delta R^2 = .004, p > .05; \beta = .06, p > .05$ ). The same interaction in Model 4 added, however, a significant increment of the variance explained for ITR ( $\Delta R^2 = .011, p < .05; \beta = .11, p < .05$ ). Figure 1, which plots ITR as a function of OSI\_training for different levels of GSE, suggests that the positive relationship between OSI\_training and ITR is stronger when GSE is high than when it is low. Based on these findings, Hypothesis 6 has been partially supported.

Results indicate that GSE  $\times$  OSI\_understanding interaction in Model 8 (Table 2, Step 3) did not add a significant increment to the variance explained for ITR ( $\Delta R^2 = .010, p > .05; \beta = .09, p > .05$ ). The same interaction in Model 6 added, however, a significant increment to the variance explained for GJS ( $\Delta R^2 = .016, p < .05; \beta = .13, p < .05$ ). The form of this significant interaction was similar to the hypothesized one, that is, the positive relationship between OSI\_understanding and GJS is strongest when the level of the GSE is high, the same relationship is constrained to be near zero when the level of GSE is low (Figure 2). These combined findings suggested that Hypothesis 7 was partially supported.

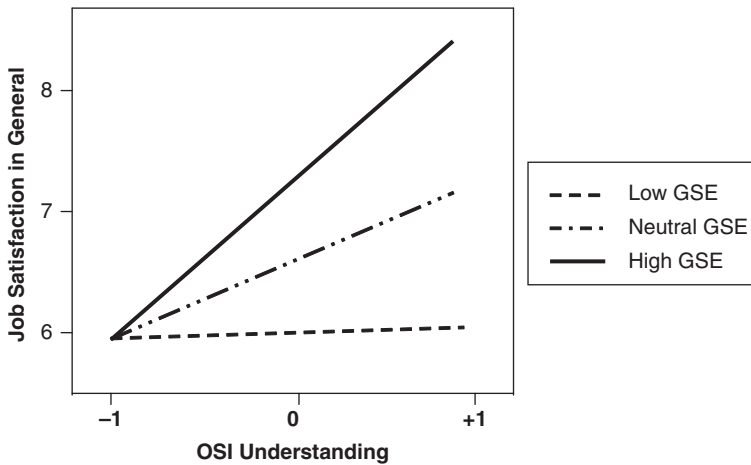
Likewise, Hypothesis 8 eventually gained partial empirical support as well. That is, adding the interaction term of OSI\_coworker support  $\times$  GSE in Model 12

**Figure 1**  
**ITR as a Function of OSI Training for Different Levels of GSE**



Note: ITR = intent to return; OSI = organizational socialization inventory; GSE = general self-efficacy.

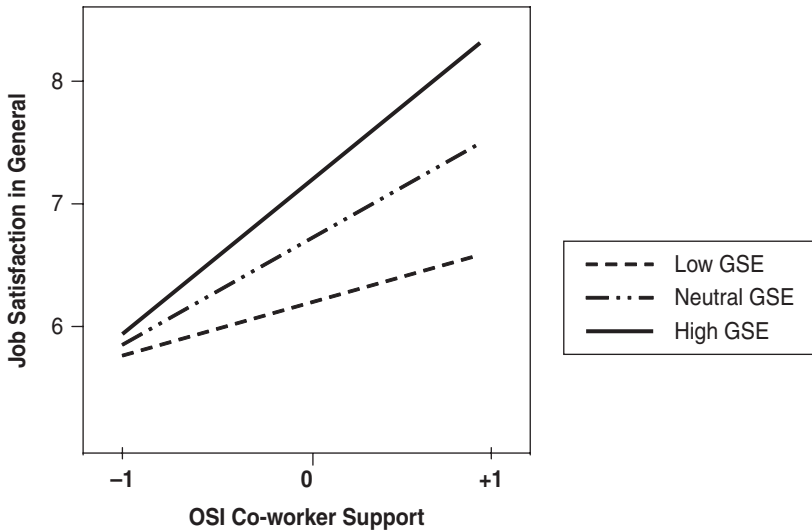
**Figure 2**  
**GJS as a Function of OSI Understanding for Different Levels of GSE**



Note: GJS = general job satisfaction; OSI = organizational socialization inventory; GSE = general self-efficacy.



**Figure 3**  
**GJS as a function of OSI coworker support for different levels of GSE**



Note: GJS = general job satisfaction; OSI = organizational socialization inventory; GSE = general self-efficacy.

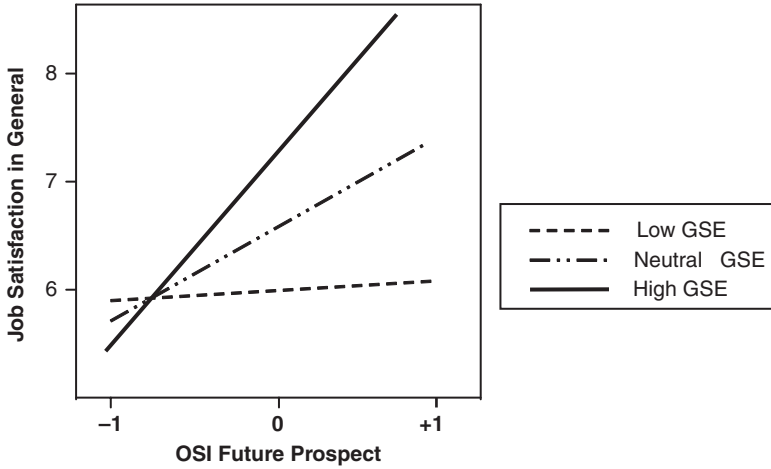
(see Table 2, Step 3) did not significantly increase the variance explained for ITR ( $\Delta R^2 = .005, p > .05; \beta = .07, p > .05$ ), but the same interaction term in Model 10 did increase variance explained for GJS ( $\Delta R^2 = .011, p < .05; \beta = .11, p < .05$ ). We interpret the significant interaction as depicted in Figure 3, purporting that the relationship between OSI\_coworker support and GJS is stronger when GSE is high than when it is low.

Notably, adding the product of OSI\_future prospect  $\times$  GSE (see Table 2, Step 3) increased the variances explained both for GJS Model 14 ( $\Delta R^2 = .044, p < .01; \beta = .215, p < .01$ ) and for ITR in Model 16 ( $\Delta R^2 = .014, p < .01; \beta = .121, p < .01$ ), thus supporting Hypothesis 9. As depicted in Figure 4, the form of that interaction was similar to our hypothesis, that is, the positive relationship between OSI\_future prospect and GJS is strongest when the level of the GSE is high; the same relationship is constrained to be near zero when the level of GSE is low. Last, the interaction form graphed in Figure 5 is consistent with what we have hypothesized: The positive relationship between OSI\_future prospect and ITR is stronger when GSE is high than when it is low.

## DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

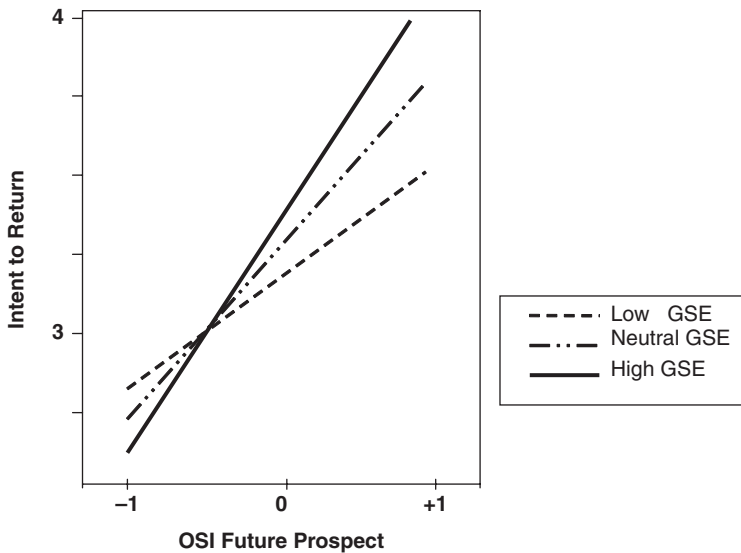
Although self-efficacy has been one of the most prominent individual difference variables to appear in socialization research (Saks & Ashforth, 1997), it has been

**Figure 4**  
**GJS as a Function of OSI Future Prospect for Different Levels of GSE**



Note: GJS = general job satisfaction; OSI = organizational socialization inventory; GSE = general self-efficacy.

**Figure 5**  
**ITR as a Function of OSI Future Prospect for Different Levels of GSE**



Note: ITR = intent to return; OSI = organizational socialization inventory; GSE = general self-efficacy.

operationalized and studied as a variable of motivational state (i.e., task- or domain-specific self-efficacy), rather than motivational trait (i.e., GSE), with only few notable exceptions (e.g., Saks & Ashforth, 2000). As such, our little knowledge and understanding of GSE, per Saks and Ashforth (2000), has been that newcomer's GSE, as well as its interaction with some situational variables (i.e., entry stressors such as role conflict) have failed to predict his or her job satisfaction or turnover intentions. In contrast, the present study successfully found, in our sample, that intern newcomer's GSE and most of its interactions with the four OSI domains can independently and jointly predict his or her GJS and ITR. These contradictory findings can be largely explained by the following two methodological issues.

The first issue is that, in comparison, two different measures of GSE have been adopted across the two studies. Following most previous researchers, Saks and Ashforth (2000) have used Sherer et al.'s (1982) measure to capture their newcomers' GSE. Even so, Sherer et al.'s measure has been found to have insufficient validities (see Chen et al., 2001, for a review). This is reflective of a critical issue associated with GSE in general, that is, GSE has often been criticized for its psychometric properties (see Scherbaum et al., 2006, for details). In response, researchers have begun to tackle this criticism via new scale development and rigorous psychometric studies, putting GSE on more solid psychometric footing (Scherbaum et al., 2006). For example, Chen et al.'s (2001) new GSE measure, which has been adopted in the present study, outperforms Sherer et al.'s (1982) measure in terms of item discrimination, item information, and the relative efficiency of the test information functions (Scherbaum et al., 2006). This differentiates our study findings from previous ones (e.g., Saks & Ashforth, 2000), in that we have successfully found all the main and most of the moderating effects of GSE on GJS and ITR, respectively. Furthermore, in their recent comparative study that examines the reliability of responses to the items GSE measures, as well as the item parameters of the measures using item response theory, Scherbaum et al. (2006) reported that Chen et al.'s (2001) measure demonstrates the most desirable and acceptable psychometric prosperities. They purport this after examining the three GSE measures developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995), Sherer et al. (1982), and Chen et al. (2001), while concluding that the criticisms for some GSE measures may be overstated and may not be justified.

The other methodological issue is that the failure to find significant interactions is typical of nonexperimental field research even when there is compelling theoretical explanation to expect such an effect (Saks & Ashforth, 2000). As noted by Evans (1985) and McClelland and Judd (1993), in nonexperimental studies, moderating effects are so difficult to detect that even those explaining as little as 1% of the total variance should be considered important. Fortunately, the significant interactions in our present study explain the incremental variances, ranging from 1.1% to 4.4%, in the corresponding dependent variables of GJS and ITR. Methodologically speaking, our findings regarding the main and interactive effects of GSE and OSI domains on OS outcomes are reliable, since we have incorporated the new GSE measure and have employed an appropriate method in detecting moderating effects. For instance, multicollinearity is believed to be one of the

most critical concerns for multiple regression analyses in general, and moderated multiple regression analyses, in particular. In this regard, an inspection of the variance inflation factor (VIF) score revealed that the largest VIF among all the independent variables in the present study is 1.38, which is far less than the 10.0 threshold suggested by Neter, Kutner, Nachtsheim, and Wasserman (1996). This indicates that there are no instances of problematic multicollinearity among any of the independent variables or interaction terms in the present study. In short, incorporating new GES measure and sound statistical analyses help strengthen and differentiate the present study's findings from previous studies in the similar area. In addition, our study is approached from the interactionist perspective, which in turn helps extend the literature in several ways.

First, we found that GSE's main and moderating (for the most part) effects on newcomers' GJS and ITR, respectively, are statistically significant; and that these two types of effects are not mutually exclusive in our present sample. In so doing, we lend the first empirical support to Judge et al.'s (1997) theory regarding the causal sources of intern newcomer's job satisfaction. Likewise, we also provide empirical support to the thesis that an individual's career choice goals of ITR can be significantly predicted by his or her GSE. This finding is critical in that it is contrary to the criticism, noted by Scherbaum et al. (2006, p. 1049), that GSE "is not predictive of people's behavior (e.g., Bandura, 1997)." In fact, the history of task or domain specific self-efficacy, according to Scherbaum et al. (2006, p. 1047), "has equally been marked by numerous controversies and debates" (e.g., Bandura & Locke, 2003; Vancouver, 2005). As such, at least three theoretical implications can be drawn from the findings of our study, in combination with those similar findings from Luszczynska, Scholz, and Schwarzer's (2005) cross cultural study. One, the choice goals should be and can be predicted by people's GSE. Two, social cognitive career theory should be extended from only theorizing task or domain specific self-efficacy's role in predicting individual's other social cognitive variables (such as choice goals), to also include GSE's predictive role. Three, newcomer's perceived self-efficacy is not only of a task or domain specific nature, but it should be and can be identified at a more general level of functioning.

Second, from situational perspective, past research has linked OSI domains to a number of OS success-related indicators such as GJS, turnover intention, actual turnover, organizational commitment, among many others (e.g., Bigliardi et al., 2005; Taormina, 2004). However, the linkage between OSI domains to intern newcomers' ITR has never been explored in both OS and tourism and hospitality literature, as what we have done here. Furthermore, to our knowledge, the interactional effects between newcomer learning dimensions (e.g., OSI domains) and newcomers' GSE have never been explored in previous OS studies as what have been carried out in this study, despite the fact that there has been repeated call for such kind of interactional insight into newcomers OS dynamics (Ashforth et al., 2007; Fisher, 1986; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). In fact, in addition to their main effects on newcomers' organizational adjustment outcomes, newcomers' GSE and each of OSI domains, there is an interaction between GSE and each of OSI domains, which may either accentuate or inhibit the success of organizations' efforts in

socializing their newcomers. Thus, it is suggested that newcomers' GSE, newcomer learning dimensions, as well as the interaction between the two should be simultaneously taken into consideration in future research endeavors of modeling newcomers' organizational socialization. This is relevant given that there is an increasing emphasis on the interactional approach to understanding newcomers' organizational adjustment (e.g., Gruman et al., 2006); and that newcomer learning is increasingly acknowledged to characterize his or her organizational socialization process (e.g., Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006).

From a human resource management standpoint, a number of implications can be drawn from what have been found in the present study. First, to prevent HRD managers from pursuing their success in socializing their intern newcomers in a piecemeal fashion, we strongly suggest that both the separate and interactive effects pertaining to personal (e.g., GSE) and situational (e.g., OSI domains) variables should be taken into consideration. Toward this end, tourism and hospitality practitioners need a good understanding of what constitutes newcomer OS learning while engaging themselves in enhancing the effectiveness of newcomers' OS. Second, human resources managers may also need to focus on newcomers' GSE in general, especially those newcomers with low GSE, because newcomers' GSE has been found to be directly and indirectly related to their OS success related outcomes. Managers, for example, may need to test for newcomers' initial GSE levels prior to socializing their newcomers. This could help management while taking necessary steps to intervene in the case of newcomers with low GSE levels. Specific programs, such as successful experience, positive performance feedback, effective modeling, and coaching (e.g., Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998) could be tailored to augment newcomers' GSE, which, in turn, promotes the level of newcomers' GJS and ITR. The main goal of GSE development programs would not necessarily be to build new skills, but to enhance newcomer's beliefs and confidence that they can do well with their current skills, knowledge, and strategies (Bandura, 1997; Luthans, Zhu, & Avolio, 2006).

A limitation is that our study is not experimentally designed, which in turn, might have constrained us to more successfully detect the moderating effects of GSE on the relationships between OSI domains and OS success indicators. Another limitation of the study is that we have only investigated a limited number of OS success indicators and individual differences. Future studies with different samples in different countries and regions would be, therefore, essential so as to verify and generalize the present study's findings. Additionally, future studies may simultaneously take into consideration self-efficacy at general and task- or domain-specific levels, as well as their potential collective and incremental contributions to the variance, explained, of organizations success in socializing their newcomers. Finally, it is recommended that researchers take the interactional approach to capturing the dynamics of newcomers' organizational socialization while taking into consideration relevant methodological issues on detecting main and moderating effects among a set of defined variables.

In conclusion, this study found that organization's success in socializing their newcomers—perceived higher GJS and higher ITR to the organization—can be predicted by newcomers' GSE, the four domains of OSI, as well as most of the

interactions between GSE and OSI domains. Overall the findings of this study lend a good preliminary support for the interactionist approach to understanding newcomers' complex "onboarding" issue.

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