Testing the Efficacy and Mechanisms of an Authentic Self-expression Orientation in

Enhancing Newcomer Job Performance: A Longitudinal Quasi-Field Experiment

By

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ABSTRACT

Building on prior research (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013) showing that an orientation program that emphasizes authentic self-expression (ASE) may facilitate newcomer adjustment, the present longitudinal quasi-field experiment further tests the effects of the ASE program, with a focus on the dynamic treatment effects on socialization outcomes (i.e., perceived stress, popularity, and job performance). Participants were two cohorts of newly-hired nurses entering into a large hospital in China, with the first cohort receiving a traditional orientation and the second cohort receiving an ASE orientation. The final sample consists of two groups of 37 nurses, matched on various demographic variables. Participants were followed up four times (Months 3, 6, 9, and 12) post-entry. Results showed that compared with the control group, nurses in the ASE condition (a) reported a lower level of perceived stress at Month 3, and this effect was maintained over 12 months, (b) were rated by their peers as more popular and had better job performance ratings by their mentors at Month 12, with the treatment effect emerging over time. Further, perceived stress and rate of popularity change mediated the ASE effect on job performance at Month 12.

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Introduction

Newcomer orientation is frequently used by organizations as an important strategy in helping new employees quickly get adjusted to the new work settings (Wanous & Reichers, 2000). Traditional orientations programs offering "general facts" about the job and the organization (e.g., the term of employment, health benefits, organizational history, and culture, etc.), and/or providing task-specific training (Klubnik, 1987; Mulling, 1999) have been found to have little or modest impact on newcomer adjustment (Fan, Buckley, & Litchfield, 2012; Saks, 1995). In response, several orientation programs that move beyond general facts and address specific, deep-level post-entry adjustment issues have emerged. For example, post-hire realistic job preview (RJP) and expectations lowering procedure (ELP) attempt to manage newcomers' initial expectations (Buckley, Fedor, Veres, Wiese, & Carraher, 1998; Phillips, 1998); realistic orientation program for entry stress (ROPES) aims at immunizing newcomers against entry stressors (Fan & Wanous, 2008; Wanous & Reichers, 2000); self-fulfilling prophecy (SFP) intervention helps newcomers improve self-efficacy (McNatt, 2000; McNatt & Judge, 2004). It should be noted that both traditional and adjustment-facilitating orientation programs are based on the shared belief that newcomers' cognitions, values, and attitudes should be changed to be consistent with organizations' identities and cultures. However, this might cause tension between newcomers and organizations because newcomers' yearning for authenticity is neglected at the organizational entry (Kernis, 2003; Kernis & Goldman, 2006).

Acting as an inner desire for human experience, authenticity is characterized as "reflecting the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self in one's daily enterprise" (Kernis, 2003, p. 16). Many philosophers and psychologists have placed great value on acting in accord with one's true self and place this type of congruence at the core of an individual's well-

being and interpersonal functioning (Rogers, 1961). As for newcomers, being allowed to display their sense of self and to enact identities that are valued are of great significance. For one thing, forcing newcomers to forgo their own identities and embrace the organization's identity may trigger conflicts between the organizations and newcomers, posing a potential threat to newcomers' initial adjustment (Grandey, 2003; Kahn, 1990). For another thing, the initial stage of socialization offers newcomers opportunities to negotiate their identities with the new environment. By showing authentic selves, they can "build or confirm a situational identity" that fits their true values (Reichers, 1987, p. 280). Thus, rather than solely emphasizing organizational identities, orientation programs may enhance newcomer adjustment by addressing their basic needs of authentic self-expression and encouraging them to show their "best selves" in the workplace.

The seminal work by Cable et al. (2013) has empirically demonstrated the effectiveness of such programs, which emphasized authentic best self-expression (namely, the ASE orientation/program), in improving newcomers' work engagement, job satisfaction, job performance (operationalized as customer satisfaction), and retention. However, these adjustment outcomes were only measured at one point in time, leaving how adjustment outcomes change during the long period of socialization period unknown. Recently, several researchers have started to investigate how socialization outcomes change over time after the orientation program implemented (Fan & Wanous, 2008; Van den Heuvel, Demerouti, & Peeters, 2015), suggesting that meaningful variation in socialization outcomes exist at both the within-person and the between-person level. Furthermore, although Cable et al.' (2013) lab study demonstrated that the beneficial effects of the ASE program on socialization outcomes were mediated by newcomers' perception of authentic self-expression, this is exactly what the ASE program was

designed to do - encouraging authentic self-expression. Other mechanisms, which can further explicate the beneficial effects of the ASE program, should also be investigated, (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991).

Therefore, in the current research, we examined how newcomer adjustment unfolds during the one year of socialization after the orientation and further tested mechanisms of how treatment condition led to group differences in socialization outcomes by incorporating both newcomers' (inward-looking, concerning self) and coworkers' (outward-looking, concerning others) perspectives. Specifically, we tested how the ASE program make effects on job performance via perceived stress (newcomers' perceptions) and popularity (others' perceptions). Different from Cable et al.' operationalization of job performance as customers' satisfaction, in the current research, we asked newcomers' mentors to rate their job performance, further explored whether an ASE program can improve job performance as typically assessed in the socialization literature. (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007; Saks & Ashforth, 1997).

To capture the process of how the distal outcome of job performance occurred after the ASE orientation, we draw clues from both newcomer adjustment and authenticity literature. First, the environment newcomers face after entry, is always constructed as new, ambiguous, and full of uncertainty and unfamiliarity (Jackson, Schuler, & Vredenburgh, 1987). Accordingly, the troubling emotions invoked by such uncertainty, such as anxiety and stress, requires considered responses (Edwards, 1992; Nelson & Sutton, 1990). Therefore, the reduction of newcomers' perceived stress is one of the initial tasks for the organizational practice in helping newcomers achieve successful adjustment. We posit that one of the potential mechanisms that might explicate the effects of ASE program on job performance is the reduction of newcomers' stress,

given that the ASE program addresses the stressor of identity conflicts between the newcomer and the organization (Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005).

Besides the emotional element, another critical task for newcomer adjustment is the development of social relationships, namely, social integration, which has been frequently documented to be positively related with distal socialization outcomes (e.g., job performance; Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007). That is to say, newcomers should gain acceptance from others to transfer from "outsiders" to "insiders". Succeeding in such tasks can be reflected in newcomers' popularity in the workplace, defined as "generally being accepted by one's peers" (Scott & Judge, 2009, p. 21). Theorists posit that integration into a social group involves the establishment of a situational identity, which is just the ASE program emphasized (e.g., Reichers, 1987). We therefore expect popularity to mediate the relationship between treatment condition and job performance over time.

In this article, we extend theory and empirical findings by testing the dynamic changes of socialization outcomes after the ASE orientation over the first year of the socialization process, at the same time integrating different points of views in evaluating adjustment outcomes (self-report perceived stress, peer-report popularity, and mentor-report job performance). Furthermore, mediation models were conducted to test whether perceived stress and popularity mediated the treatment effect on job performance. We used a quasi-experiment and repeated measures design, surveying newly entered employees, their peers, and mentors four times, with a three-month interval. Our study contributes to the literature in three primary ways. First, the dynamic nature of this research allows us to map out the dynamic treatment effects on various socialization outcomes. Capturing what happens after orientation implementations over the long period of socialization can help us better understand the efficacy of the ASE program and exactly at which

time point the treatment effect occurs. Second, by integrating the theory of authenticity, with the

socialization literature on newcomer stress and social integration, we provide insights into the

mechanisms of how the orientation program that emphasizes authenticity leads to higher quality

of job performance. Specifically, our research contributes to the socialization literature by

showing that the orientation program that emphasizes authentic self-expression can benefit both

newcomers' perceptions and others' rates on newcomers, which in turn leads to better job

performance. Finally, we contribute to practice by helping managers to understand how to

construct better orientation strategies in socializing newcomers by encouraging authentic self-

expression and daily use of their unique strengths.

Theory and Hypotheses

In the current research, we tested the efficacy and mechanism of the ASE program by

comparing it to a traditional orientation program, which is most frequently used by organizations

(Anderson, Cunningham-Snell, & Haigh, 1996; Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983). Figure 1 depicts

the conceptual model of the present study. First, we tested how different orientation programs

shaped trajectories of different adjustment outcomes (i.e. perceived stress, popularity, and job

performance). Later, we tested the mediation roles of perceived stress and popularity in the

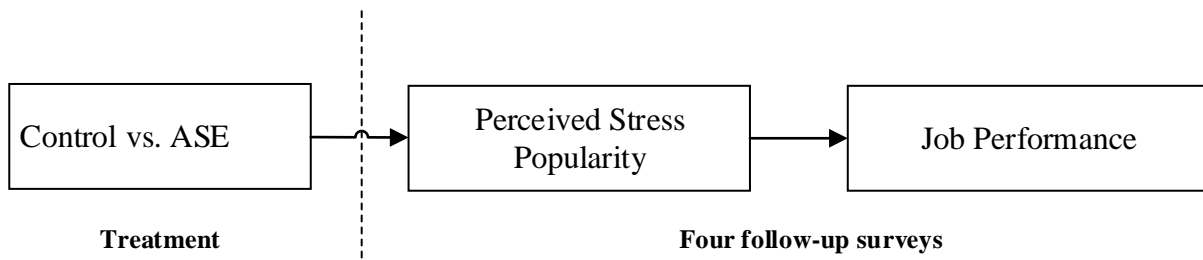relationship between treatment effect and job performance.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

The theoretical foundation of the ASE orientation is the concept of authenticity, a defining characteristic of the human experience (Kernis, 2003; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008). Specifically, individuals have a tendency to express and behave in accord with their true feelings, thoughts, and attitudes (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Baker, Tou, Bryan, & Knee, 2017). Therefore, the core component of the ASE program is to encourage newcomers to behave authentically in their daily work (will be talked more in detail later). However, people are motivated to show both their positive and negative true selves, working to verify them with feedback (Cable & Kay, 2012). To help newcomers avoid the negative aspects of self-identity which may lead to less ideal performance and assessments from significant others in an organization (e.g., coworkers, supervisors) (Swann, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004), and to build up a positive identity during the distinct stage of initial socialization, an optimized ASE program should highlight individuals' best selves, which refers to "individuals' cognitive representation of the qualities and characteristics the individual displays when at his or her best" (Roberts et al., 2005, p. 713). In this sense, the other important component of the ASE program is to activate newcomers' best selves by directing them to identify and play to their strengths, which is also characterized as being true to oneself (Palmer, 2000) or authentic (Harter, 2002). To sum up, the ASE orientation socialize newcomers by emphasizing and highlighting authentic best expression in the workplace after entry, which is expected to help newcomers quickly get adjusted to the new environment.

Traditional orientation programs, which offer "general facts" about the organization and technical skills required in the workplace, can assist in the learning process and reduce stress to some extent (Berger & Calabrese, 1974). However, we argue that the ASE program can do a better job in stress reduction, since it moves beyond simply informing "general facts" and

specifically addresses a main stressor overlooked by traditional orientation programs, that is, the conflicts between the fundamental needs of authentically expressing oneself and the internalization of organizational identity (Roberts et al., 2005).

Entering into a new organization provides a unique opportunity for newcomers to show who they are and what they can achieve (Reichers, 1987). During this process, they are desired to negotiate and establish acceptable roles with new coworkers and supervisors by striving to establish an acceptable identity (Cable & Kay, 2012; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). While at the same time, organizational tactics always focus on transmitting the organization's culture and identity, with the purpose that newcomers accept the organizational identity and behave in a way that meets the organizational expectations (Swann et al., 2004). Suppressing one's own identity and inhibiting one's true self can be exhausting, which requires many psychological resources to cope with, resulting in elevated psychological stress (Bell, 1990; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Settles, 2006). The ASE program may alleviate such negative affects in two main ways. On the one hand, since individuals are allowed to align their true selves with the outward behaviors, psychological resources that might be directed toward identity conflict coping could be saved, leading to less pressure posed on newcomer adjustment. Individuals who are forced to alter or mute their true expressions for the sake of assimilating into the organization my experience stress (Bell, 1990; Hewlin, 2003; Settles, 2006). Previous researchers also claimed that the situations that afford authenticity should be more facilitative of health and well-being (Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, & Deci, 1996; Sheldon, Ryan, & Reis, 1996). Consistent with these assertions, empirical study also demonstrated that authenticity is positively associated with general well-being and positive affect (e.g., Baker et al., 2017; Boyraz, Waits, & Felix, 2014; Wood et al., 2008; Y. Wang & Li, 2018), and negatively related with psychological stress, anxiety and physical

symptomatology (e.g., Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Lopez & Rice, 2006; Ryan, LaGuardia, & Rawsthorne, 2005).

On the other hand, directing people to reflect on their strengths and use the signature strengths in daily work can help them build up a positive identity, mitigating stress caused by identity negotiation. Specifically, by behaving truly in accordance to one's strengths, people can be recognized and accepted at their best true selves, which is associated with greater positive affect (Harter, 2002; Roberts et al., 2005). Moreover, Roberts et al. argued that reflected best-self can lead to self-enhancement, which has been suggested to play a significant role in coping with stressful conditions (Taylor, Lerner, Sherman, Sage, & McDowell, 2003). Therefore, we argue that the ASE program should be more effective in reducing newcomer stress than the traditional orientation program.

However, it is unclear when exactly ASE's treatment effect on stress occurs post entry. According to the laboratory experiment conducted by Cable et al. (2013), treatment effects arose one hour after the manipulation, showing an instant change of individuals' attitudes toward their job. Along a similar line of logic, given that perceived stress is another measurement of the psychological attitudes toward the job, we argue that the effects of an ASE intervention on perceived stress can occur quickly (in our case, at the first wave of our post-entry survey, at Month 3). However, previous research on stress-coping orientation programs showed that the treatment effect on stress reduction was not immediate, but emerged over time. For example, Fan and Wanous (2008) reported that the stress reduction effect did not occur until 6 months post-entry. Given the mixed empirical evidence, we do not hypothesize specific dynamic patterns of treatment effect. Nevertheless, we believe that the ASE program should reduce newcomers' perceived stress more than the traditional orientation program over time. Thus,

Hypothesis 1. Compared to the traditional orientation, individuals exposed to the ASE orientation will report lower levels of perceived stress over time.

Compared with not undertaking any orientation programs, traditional orientation program can improve newcomers' popularity to a certain extent by helping newcomers gain awareness of what kinds of behaviors might be preferred by peers, and how they can adjust their behaviors to align with the workgroup norms and expectations (Morrison, 1993). For example, Klein and Weaver (2000) reported, based on a field quasi-experiment, that the people dimension of socialization content mastery (dealing with the degree to which newcomers have established successful and satisfying working relationships with others) was significantly improved after attending an origination-level traditional orientation program.

However, we believe that the ASE program can perform even better than the traditional orientation in enhancing newcomers' popularity among coworkers. Authenticity involves a process of "self-disclosure and the development of mutual intimacy and trust" (Goldman & Kernis, 2002, p. 19). People who put more emphasis on behaving "who they are" also tend to place a high priority on self-disclosure and being honest in their interpersonal interactions (Kernis & Goldman, 2004). In this way, they are more likely to build up intimate relationships, resulting in easier acceptance of their entry by the insiders. Research on social relationship has also demonstrated the important role interpersonal disclosure plays in relationship development (Chelune, & Chelune, 1979; Falk & Wagner, 1985). From this perspective, relational authenticity, which fosters positive relationships among individuals (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005), could make it easier for individuals to be accepted by the in-group members. Furthermore, being recognized at ones' authentic best self can help newcomers gain reputational benefits (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2012). Newcomers' attributes and social activities are important factors impacting how insiders perceive and accept them in social networks (Ellis, Nifadkar,

Bauer, & Erdogan, 2017; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). By playing to one's strengths, people are able to bring out their full potentials, being recognized as a competent employee, which will help them develop better work relationships with coworkers (Cable et al., 2013). As a result, they are more likely to gain acceptance from the group members (Hinds, Carley, Krackhardt, & Wholey, 2000).

Nevertheless, behaving on individuals' authentic selves is risky, because it might contradict with the prevailing behavioral norms already formed in the organization (Kernis & Goldman, 2004). This is especially true for people in service roles, in which employees are expected to perform in a similar way to prototypical members (Grandey, 2003). Consequently, it is likely that people's true proclivities are not accepted within a short time by their coworkers. However, we assume that the benefit of being relationally authentic will gradually emerge, with more interpersonal interactions in which individuals show their genuine self to others. Therefore, we expected that the ASE orientation will increase newcomers' popularity among coworkers, but felt that such an effect might not become evident immediately post-entry.

> *Hypothesis 2.* Compared to the traditional orientation, individuals exposed to the ASE orientation will report higher levels of popularity over time.

According to Roberts et al. (2009), people who behave authentically have a feeling that they are living in accordance with their true selves. Due to such congruence between peoples' internal experiences (e.g., feelings, values, and beliefs) and the external expressions (e.g., verbal statements), individuals are able to potentially free up cognitive and psychological resources that otherwise might be put into assimilation coping and redirect them into role tasks. Moreover, when authentic true selves are allowed and accepted by the organizational tradition, their intrinsic motivation is more likely to be activated, as a result of which higher quality of job performance can be achieved (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Empirical research also has found that

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suppression of one's true self-expression and the imposition of external behavior assimilation will limit creativity, innovation, and group decision making (e.g., Ely & Thomas, 2001; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Therefore, we expect that individuals' quality of job behaviors will benefit from the ASE orientation, which encourage authentic best self-expression. Simultaneously, newcomers' strengths are highlighted. From this perspective, individuals' best potentials are able to be fully utilized, resulting in increased organizational productivity. For example, it was reported that compared with typical organizations, the organizational productivity is 1.4 times higher when individuals' core strengths are activated (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Employees were also found to be more engaged when they are allowed to use their signature strengths at work (Rath, 2007). From what we have talked about, we expect that the newcomers in the ASE orientation should have better job performance than those in the traditional orientation.

Yet, exactly how the ASE effect on job performance unfolds over time is less clear. Cable et al. (2013) demonstrated the treatment effect of the ASE program on job performance at 6 months post-entry; however, it might be that the treatment effect occurred quite quickly, and remained over time, or that the treatment effect emerged over time. In the present study, newcomers received performance ratings at all four follow-ups, which allowed us to explore the dynamics of ASE's treatment effect on job performance. Due to the exploratory nature, we refrain from proposing specific treatment effect dynamics, but we expect that the ASE program should boost newcomer job performance over time. Therefore,

Hypothesis 3. Compared to the traditional orientation, individuals exposed to the ASE orientation will show higher levels of job performance over time.

Over the years, socialization researchers have paid much attention to stress reduction in newcomer socialization, because stress is believed to be a major impediment toward productivity

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(e.g., Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Wang & Takeuchi, 2007). Individuals under stress may have a hard time coping with the stressors, leading to diminished cognitive resources toward tackling task behaviors (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Wells, 1998; Schein, 1971). For example, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) showed that psychological stress was negatively related to task knowledge acquisition for new employees. Saks and Ashforth (2000) drew a similar conclusion with college graduates that entry stressors were negatively related to job attitudes, stress symptoms, and job performance. Thus, we expect that organizational tactics that reduce perceived stress will boost higher job performance. For instance, a longitudinal field experiment on the ROPES program, which targeted entry stressors among new international students, showed that perceived stress mediated the relationship between the ROPES intervention and post-entry adjustment outcomes (e.g., academic adjustment, retention rate, interaction adjustment; Fan & Wanous, 2008). Therefore, we propose that perceived stress can bridge the linkage between the ASE intervention and job performance:

Hypothesis 4. Perceived stress will mediate the treatment effect of ASE orientation (vs. traditional orientation) on job performance.

Gaining acceptance from coworkers and supervisors may contribute to newcomers' adjustment in that it offers access to otherwise unavailable resources, such as knowledge, advice, and feedback (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2012). Research suggests that newcomers frequently resort to coworkers for help during early entry periods and found that interactions with peers have been the most available and valuable socialization practice (Louis et al., 1983; Nelson & Quick, 1991). Therefore, individuals who successfully get integrated into the social network, tend to engage in more interactions with organizational insiders, through whom they may gain access to helpful knowledge, shared resources, and feedback. These social capitals, in turn, can contribute to improved performance on the new job (Cross & Cummings, 2004; Nelson & Quick, 1991).

Furthermore, when new employees get acceptance from the valued insiders, they will have a perception of belongingness, which has been claimed to influence perception of meaningfulness and employees' performance (e.g., Fulford & Enz, 1995; Kahn, 1990). Therefore, the extent to which new employees are accepted by the insiders is an important predictor of both attitudinal and behavioral indicators of socialization outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance) (Bauer, Erdogan, Liden, & Wayne, 2006; Bauer & Green, 1998; Kammeryer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2000). Thus, we expect:

> *Hypothesis 5.* Popularity will mediate the treatment effect of ASE orientation (vs. traditional orientation) on job performance.

Methods

Overview of Research Design

The present study utilizes a longitudinal quasi-experimental design. Participants were two cohorts of new nurses entering a large public hospital in China. The first cohort ($n = 118$) went through a traditional orientation program (with no ASE training), serving as the control group. The second cohort ($n = 37$) received the ASE training in the following year, serving as the experimental group. Both cohorts of new nurses and their peers and mentors completed four waves of post-entry surveys around the same time frames (3, 6, 9, and 12-month post-entry) with identical questionnaires measuring various treatment outcome variables (perceived stress, popularity, and job performance). We used the 3-month measurement interval in the current study, because it was the most commonly used time interval in socialization research (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998; Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007).

Matching

In order to address the potential group non-equivalence prior to the treatment, we matched the two treatment groups on a series of demographic and individual difference variables

using the method of propensity score matching (c.f., Rosenbaum & Rubing, 1985; Connelly, Sackett, & Waters, 2013). Our goal was to obtain two equivalent groups of participants with the only difference being the treatment (ASE orientation vs. Control). We have chosen this matching method because it ensures that the two groups of subjects are matched equally on all the chosen covariates simultaneously instead of matching on all of the covariates individually (which is more complicated) (Connelly et al., 2013; Stuart & Rubin, 2008; Zhao, 2004).

Propensity scores are estimated using a multiple logistic regression model, in which the observed covariates are independent variables and treatment assignment (treatment = 1, control = 0) is the dependent variable (Rosenbaum & Rubing, 1985; Stuart & Rubin, 2008). The first step is to choose the covariates to be used in the matching process. Generally, variables that are related to the treatment and the outcomes should always be included in a propensity score model (Rubin & Thomas, 2003; Brookhart et al., 2006). To figure out variables that are related to outcomes, we combined these two cohorts of new nurses into one sample and examined the correlations between all the demographic (age, education, residence, one child status, number of siblings, birth order, marital status, and prior work experience) and two personality variables (proactive personality and emotion stability) variables and four waves of post-entry outcome variables. Correlational analysis results showed that age, number of siblings, single-child status, proactive personality, and emotional stability had significant correlations with at least one post-entry outcome. To investigate variables that are related with the treatment, we conducted t-tests and Chi-square tests and found that the two groups were significantly different in education (M_{ASE} = 3.00, SD_{ASE} = 0; $M_{Control}$ = 2.72, $SD_{Control}$ = .83; t = 2.07, p < .05), birth order (M_{ASE} = 1.16, SD_{ASE} = .44; $M_{Control}$ = 1.35, $SD_{Control}$ = .59; t = -2.07, p <.05) and proactive personality (M_{ASE} = 3.63, SD_{ASE} = .33; $M_{Control}$ = 3.36, $SD_{Control}$ = .42; t = 3.59, p <.05). Thus, the

aforementioned seven variables were included in the multiple logistic regression model to estimate propensity scores.

In the second step, participants in the control group were matched onto participants in the ASE group based on the propensity scores. Specifically, a caliper (0.25 standard deviation of the logit of the propensity scores as per Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1985) was chosen to ensure that absolute distance of propensity score between the matched individual and the target one is within a specific constant value. If there were more than one potential matched participants for a target participant, we chose the one who had the nearest propensity score with the target one. Through this matching procedure, 36 matched pairs were obtained. We then matched the last ASE participant by choosing the one with the nearest value of propensity score in the remaining participants in the control group (Rosenbaum & Rubing, 1985). As such, all 37 new nurses in the ASE group were matched with 37 new nurses in the control group.

To verify group equivalence between matched groups, we conducted a series of t-tests and Chi-square tests, which revealed that the matched groups did not differ on any of the demographic variables, even with a very lenient alpha of .20. Specifically, for number of siblings, $M_{ASE} = 0.48$, $SD_{ASE} = .65$; $M_{Control} = 0.43$, $SD_{Control} = .64$, $t = .36$; $p = .72$. For birth order, $M_{ASE} = 1.16$, $SD_{ASE} = .44$; $M_{Control} = 1.16$, $SD_{Control} = .44$; $t = 0$, $p = 1.00$. For single child status, χ^2 $(df = 1) = .06$, $p = .82$. For education, $M_{ASE} = 3.00$, $SD_{ASE} = 0$, $M_{Control} = 3.14$, $SD_{Control} = .92$, $t = -.90$, $p = .37$. For age, $M_{ASE} = 22.59$, $SD_{ASE} = .64$; $M_{Control} = 23.86$, $SD_{Control} = 1.16$; $t = -1.24$, $p = .22$. For proactive personality, $M_{ASE} = 3.64$, $SD_{ASE} = .33$; $M_{Control} = 3.52$, $SD_{Control} = .45$; $t = 1.27$, $p = .21$. For emotional stability, $M_{ASE} = 3.44$, $SD_{ASE} = .51$; $M_{Control} = 3.35$, $SD_{Control} = .61$; $t = .66$, $p = .52$. Therefore, we conclude that the matching was a success.

Final Sample and Study Procedure

In the final matched sample, there were 37 new nurses in each group, and the average age was 22.73 years old ($SD = .94$); the majority (94.6%) had at least an associate degree; most of them rented an apartment (56.8%); forty-five (60.8%) were the only child of their parents; and on average had 0.46 siblings ($SD = .65$). All were female and single, and none had prior full-time working experience.

At this hospital, all new nurses went through a two-day general newcomer orientation program conducted by the HR department, followed by a five-day special new nurse training mandated by the Nursing Department. While the former was a traditional organization-level orientation program focusing on "general facts," the latter covered various technical aspects of the nursing job (e.g., documentation procedures, clinical care skills, health education skills, and safety policies). All new nurses went through the special training together in a large classroom. The last session of the special training (on a Friday afternoon) was a wrap-up session which entailed a quick and brief review of what had been covered throughout the special training. Whereas the control group went through the wrap-up session, the ASE group received the ASE program, with both sessions lasting for about 3 hours (or half-day).

Data sources included employee questionnaires, partner questionnaires, and mentor questionnaires. On the first day of the special training, new nurses completed a demographic survey and measures of proactive personality and emotional stability. At the end of the special training, that is, immediately after the wrap-up session or the ASE session, new nurses completed a questionnaire consisting of specific adjustment self-efficacy (used for manipulation check). We conducted four follow-up mail surveys (both self-report and other-report), at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months post-entry. The self-report survey included perceived stress. At this hospital, each new nurse was assigned to a more experienced partner nurse who worked with them as a two-

person team daily. The partner nurse rated the popularity of the new nurse. Each new nurse was also assigned to a mentor, who was a senior nurse at the same unit. The mentors rated new nurses' job performance. Both mentors and partner nurses were blind to the experimental manipulation.

All follow-up surveys were distributed through the Nursing Department, with prepaid return envelopes provided by the research team. New nurses, their mentors, and their partner nurses were asked to mail the completed surveys directly to the research team. New nurses were paid 3 USD for each follow-up survey, mentors and partner nurses were paid 1.5 USD for completing the mentor-ratings and peer-ratings respectively.

For the control group, the response rates for self-report surveys were 97.3%, 97.3%, 86.5%, and 75.7% for the four follow-ups, respectively; the response rates for peer-report surveys were 97.3%, 89.2%, 91.9%, and 94.6% for the four follow-ups; and the response rates for mentor-report surveys were 97.3%, 91.9%, 91.9%, and 100% for the four follow-ups. For the ASE group, the response rates for self-report surveys were 81.1%, 94.6%, 97.3%, and 94.6% for the four follow-ups, respectively; the response rates for peer-report surveys were 75.7%, 86.5%, 89.2%, and 94.6% for the four follow-ups; and the response rates for mentor-report surveys were 81.1%, 89.2%, 94.6%, and 94.6% for the four follow-ups. A series of $\chi 2$ tests revealed no significant differences in response rates between the control and ASE groups.

Development of the ASE Program

We developed our ASE program modeling after Cable et al.'s (2013) program. Our ASE program had three sessions. In the first session, an associate director of the Nursing Department came to the training session and made a 15-minute presentation. She emphasized that the hospital provides new nurses with many opportunities to express their true selves and encourages

them to identify and apply their strengths at their work. She then shared a personal experience reinforcing the above points. This training session was designed to let newcomers know that it is perfectly fine to engage in authentic self-expression at this hospital.

In the second session, new nurses were instructed to individually complete a "desert survival" exercise, which was similar to the "lost at sea" exercise used by Cable et al. (2013). The hypothetical scenario was that due to engine failure, a plane carrying the new nurse and other passengers had to land in a desert. The emergent landing was successful, but the new nurse needed to decide which top five items to choose from 26 items and carry with them in order to survive. New nurses were instructed to individually work on the problem for 15 minutes. Then they were divided into several 5-person groups to share each other's selections with rationales. This training session was designed to give newcomers opportunities to "do individual work that would permit self-reflection in the next part of the orientation session" (Cable et al. 2013, p. 10) and lasted for 30 minutes.

In the third session, new nurses worked alone for 20 minutes during which they thought about and wrote down answers to the following questions: (a) "Three words that best describe you as an individual," (b) "Your uniqueness that makes you happy and perform well at work/school," (c) "Reflect on a specific time - perhaps on a job or at school - when you were acting the way you were 'born to act' and led to good results," and (d) "How can you apply your strengths on this nursing job?" Then, each new nurse shared their answers and experiences within the five-person group, which lasted for about 100 minutes. This last training session was designed to help newcomers identify their signature strengths and think deeply how their signature strengths can be utilized in their daily enterprise.

One major difference between our ASE program and Cable et al.'s (2013) is that our program was much longer (3 hours vs. 1 hour), particularly for the personal sharing part. To promote authentic self-expression, it is important to give new nurses sufficient time to reflect on, express, and articulate how to apply their strengths. This modification not only stayed faithfully with the fundamental tenets of the ASE intervention, but also directly addressed Cable et al.'s (p. 10) speculation that the effects of ASE might be stronger with a longer intervention. Another difference was that unlike Cable et al.'s design, we did not distribute two fleece sweatshirts and one badge with new nurses' names on them to the ASE participants. It was judged politically incorrect to implement this component of the ASE program by the Nursing Department due to concerns over unfair perceptions.

Measures

Perceived Stress. Perceived stress was measured by Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein's (1983) Perceived Stress Scale - 10-item Version. This scale consists of 10 items indicating job experience as unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloading. One sample item was "During the last six months, have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?" Subjects were asked to rate how often they experienced these feelings since the previous survey on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often) and the coefficient alpha were .88, .72, .82 and .78 at the four follow-ups, respectively.

Popularity. Scott and Judge's (2009) 8-item scale was used to measure popularity. An example item is "The person for whom I am completing this survey is well-known." Coworkers responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to each of the popularity items. The coefficient alpha were .96, .90, .93 and .93 at the four follow-ups, respectively.

Job performance. Job performance was measured by the 5-item questionnaire by Janssen and Van Yperen (2004). One sample item was "This employee always completes the duties assigned to him/her." Mentors rated the newcomers on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The coefficient alphas were .81, .80, .84 and .80 at four follow-ups, respectively.

Manipulation check. We propose that the ASE program would improve newcomers' adjustment self-efficacy such that emphasis of authentic selves and personal strengths will help newcomers build up confidences toward their adjustment. Therefore, this element was used as a manipulation check. The adjustment self-efficacy scale was developed based on needs assessment, measured immediately after the orientation. One sample item was "I have the ability to adapt to the working environment of this hospital." The scale included 7 items and were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The coefficient alpha was .90. Indeed, participants' adjustment self-efficacy varied across the two conditions such that the ASE participants reported a higher level of adjustment self-efficacy than those in the control condition: $t (72) = 2.14$, $p < .05$. As such, we conclude that different treatments were successfully implemented.

Analytic Strategies

Our data was multilevel in nature, in that repeated measures of various socialization outcomes (level 1) were nested within individuals (level 2). Thus, we used multilevel modeling (MLM) to analyze longitudinal treatment effects. Specifically, at the within-person level (Level 1), we explored the change trajectories of various socialization outcomes for the entire sample, with time as the only predictor. Level 1 models are also called "unconditional models." Specifically, a null model (i.e., the intercept only model) was first fitted to the data, followed by

adding a linear time term (coded 0, 3, 6, 9 for Month 3, 6, 9, 12, respectively) and a quadratic time term (coded 0, 9, 36, 81 for Month 3, 6, 9, 12, respectively), to explore whether added term(s) would improve model fit. We also explored whether allowing the intercept, linear time term, and quadratic time term to vary across individuals would boost model fit. Level 1 analysis resulted in an optimal within-person trajectory, in which the mean intercept indicated the entire sample's average standing at Month 3, and the mean slope(s) indicate the entire sample's average change rate(s).

Next, at the between-person level (Level 2), we incorporated treatment condition as a predictor of significant variances in the intercept and/or slope of within-person trajectory identified from Level 1 analysis. Level 2 models are also called "conditional models," as they are conditional on treatment. A significant treatment effect on the intercept and slope(s) meant a significant group mean difference at Month 3, and a significant difference in slope(s), respectively. Finally, at the between-person level, with the intercept and/or slope(s) of perceived stress and popularity acting as the mediators, we tested the underlying mechanisms of the longitudinal treatment effects. All MLM analyses were run using Mplus 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2017).

Results

Testing Treatment Effects on Socialization Outcomes

The means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Key Study Variables

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Intervention[a]	74	—	—													
2. T1 Stress	66	1.55	.50	-.21												
3. T2 Stress	71	1.56	.40	-.11	**.50**											
4. T3 Stress	68	1.61	.49	**-.39**	**.67**	**.25**										
5. T4 Stress	63	1.60	.49	-.23	**.52**	**.32**	**.53**									
6. T1 Popularity	64	5.81	1.25	-.24	-.14	-.01	.02	-.21								
7. T2 Popularity	65	5.77	1.07	-.04	-.24	-.02	-.06	**-.30**	**.63**							
8. T3 Popularity	67	6.13	.99	.01	.07	-.05	.03	-.21	**.38**	**.42**						
9. T4 Popularity	70	6.21	.92	**.29**	-.12	**-.25**	-.14	**-.32**	.03	**.39**	**.38**					
10. T1 Job Performance	66	4.38	.63	-.16	-.06	-.09	-.06	**-.41**	**.66**	**.42**	**.40**	**.38**				
11. T2 Job Performance	67	4.47	.52	.09	-.19	-.15	-.22	**-.45**	.24	**.55**	**.44**	**.50**	**.46**			
12. T3 Job Performance	69	4.51	.56	.09	**-.21**	**-.30**	-.01	**-.47**	**.36**	**.34**	**.49**	**.36**	**.35**	**.38**		
13. T4 Job Performance	72	4.57	.56	**.48**	**-.25**	-.22	**-.30**	**-.37**	-.08	.12	.10	**.61**	.13	**.31**	**.32**	

Note. T1= Month 3. T2 = Month 6. T3 = Month 9. T4 = Month 12. [a] 0 = Control Condition; 1 = Authentic Self-expression Condition.

For bold correlation coefficients, *ps* < .05. Perceived stress was self-reported. Popularity was peer-rated. Job performance was mentor-rated.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that the ASE group should report lower levels of perceived stress than the control group over time. Table 2 indicates that the optimal unconditional model for perceived stress had a significant mean intercept (γ_{00} = 2.55, $p < .001$) and a non-significant mean linear slope (γ_{10} = .008, $p = .24$); further, variances in intercept (τ_0 = .10, $p < .001$) was significant. The conditional model analysis yielded (see Table 3) a significant treatment effect on the intercept (γ_{01} = -.23, $p < .01$). Figure 2 shows that the ASE group started out with lower levels of perceived stress at Month 3, and the differences remained throughout all four follow-ups. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Table 2.

Multilevel Growth Modeling Analyses Results Based on Unconditional Models

	Intercept γ_{00}		Linear Time γ_{10}	
Variables	Coefficient	Between-Individual Variances	Coefficient	Between-Individual Variances
Perceived Stress	2.55***	.10***	.008	–
Popularity	5.76***	1.05**	.05**	.015**
Job Performance	4.40***	.20**	.02	.003*

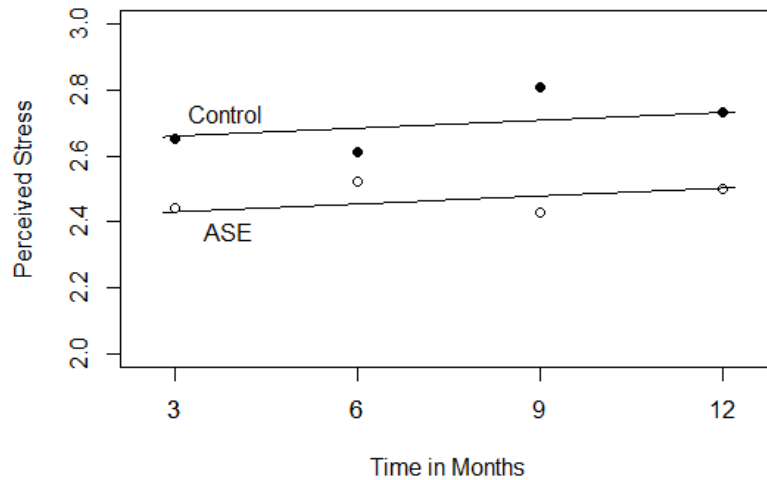*Note.* * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 2. Sample Means and Fitted Curves for Stress

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the ASE group should have higher levels of peer-rated popularity than the control group over time. Table 2 indicates that the optimal unconditional model for popularity had a significant mean intercept ($\gamma_{00} = 5.76$, $p < .001$) and a significant mean linear slope ($\gamma_{10} = .05$, $p < .01$); further, variances in intercept ($\tau_0 = 1.05$, $p < .01$) and linear slope ($\tau_1 = .05$, $p < .01$) were both significant. The conditional model analysis revealed (see Table 3) a non-significant treatment effect on the intercept (Month 3) ($\gamma_{01} = -.54$, $p = .06$), but a significant treatment effect on the slope ($\gamma_{02} = .12$, $p < .01$), with the ASE group having a larger positive slope. Figure 3 shows that the ASE group started out with a slightly lower level of popularity than the control group; however, popularity of the ASE group increased more than that of the control group over time. The linear slope difference led to a significant group mean difference in popularity at Month 12 ($\gamma_{01} = .51$, $p < .05$).[1] Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

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[1] The tests for group mean differences in popularity and job performance were obtained by re-centering time at Month 12. That is, after re-centering, treatment effect on the intercept indicates group mean difference at Month 12.

Table 3.

Multilevel Growth Modeling Analyses Results Based on Conditional Models

Dependent Variables	Mean	Treatment Effects
Stress		
Intercept	2.66***	-.23**
Linear slope	.008	
Popularity		
Intercept	6.01***	-.54
Linear slope	-.004	.12**
Job Performance		
Intercept	4.49***	-.20
Linear slope	-.016	.07***

Note. Treatment effect = the difference between the ASE condition and the control condition.

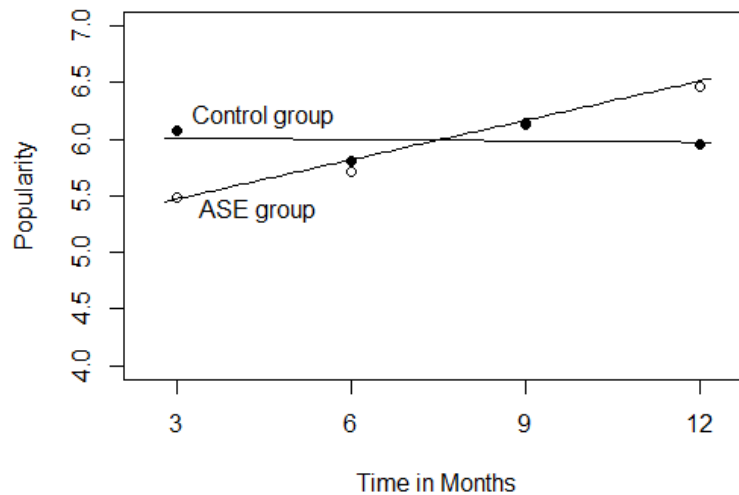* $p < .05.$ ** $p < .01.$ *** $p < .001.$

Figure 3. Sample Means and Fitted Curves for Popularity

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the ASE group should have higher levels of mentor-rated job performance than the control group over time. Table 2 indicates that the optimal unconditional model for job performance had a significant mean intercept (γ_{00} = 4.40, $p < .001$) and a non-significant mean linear slope (γ_{10} = .02, $p = .054$); further, variances in intercept (τ_0 = .20, p

< .01) and linear slope ($\tau_1 = .003$, $p < .05$) were both significant. The conditional model analysis

resulted in (Table 3) a non-significant treatment effect on the intercept (Month 3) ($\gamma_{01} = -.20$, p

$= .143$), but a significant treatment effect on the slope ($\gamma_{02} = .07$, $p < .001$), with the ASE group

having a larger positive slope. Figure 4 shows that the two groups started with similar levels of

job performance, but job performance of the ASE group increased more than that of the control

group over time. The linear slope difference led to a significant group mean difference in job

performance at Month 12 ($\gamma_{01} = .47$, $p < .001$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.
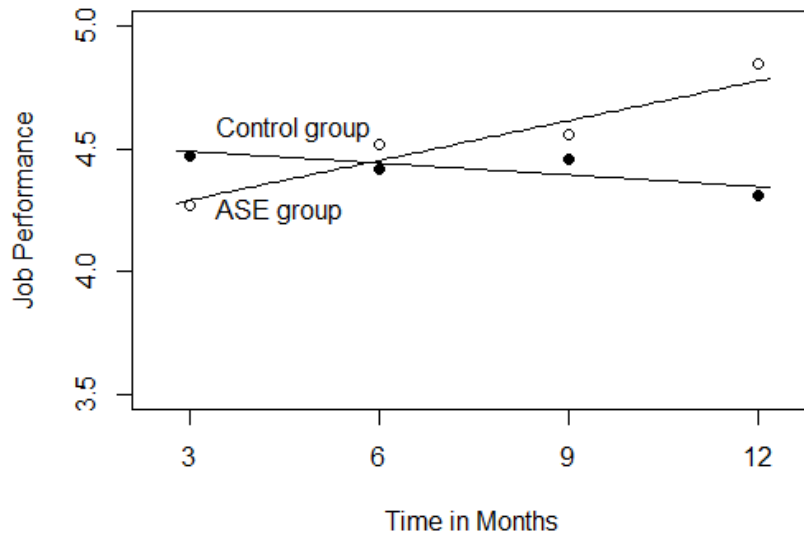

Figure 4. Sample Means and Fitted Curves for Job Performance

Testing for Mediation effects

Hypotheses 4 and 5 predicted that perceived stress (H4) and popularity (H5) should

mediate the treatment effect on job performance. Earlier analyses have established significant

treatment effects on the intercept of perceived stress, the slope of popularity, and the mean of job

performance at Month 12. Accordingly, at the between-person level, with the intercept of

perceived stress and the slope of popularity acting as mediators, we tested whether the ASE

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orientation boosted job performance at Month 12 (when the treatment effect was significant) through perceived stress reduction and an accelerated rate of popularity. Results showed that the indirect effect of ASE program (vs. control) on job performance at Month 12 through perceived stress intercept (point estimate = .10, $p < .05$, 95% CI [.02, .19]) and popularity slope (point estimate = .42, $p < .05$, 95% CI [.06, .77]) were both significant. As such, both Hypotheses 4 and 5 were supported.

Discussion

Organizational entry offers a unique opportunity for newcomers to negotiate their identities with the new environment, to establish their acceptable roles and to let others know who they truly are and what they can accomplish by fully utilizing their signature strengths. This longitudinal quasi-field experiment demonstrated how an ASE intervention could satisfy such opportunity by shaping the trajectories of various newcomer adjustment outcomes (including perceived stress, peer-rated popularity, and mentor-rated job performance) over a period of 12 months upon organizational entry. In addition, we identified and empirically tested two new mediating mechanisms underlying the treatment effects of the ASE program on enhancing newcomers' job performance. The first mechanism, perceive stress, focused on newcomers' self-perception after organizational entry, and the second mechanism, popularity, focused on how newcomers were perceived by organizational insiders – their peers.

Results showed that the ASE program had differential treatment effect dynamics depending on specific outcome variables. For instance, the stress-reduction effect occurred quite rapidly, at Month 3 post-entry, and remained throughout all four follow-ups during the 12-month post-entry period, demonstrating the long-term sustainable effect of the ASE program. By contrast, the ASE effect on popularity and job performance showed a different pattern, in that the

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treatment effect was not significant at Month 3 post-entry, but emerged over time, and became significant at Month 12. That is, new nurses in the two treatment groups started with similar levels of popularity and job performance; however, the ASE group had significantly larger positive slopes (rates of changes), which in turn resulted in significant group mean differences at Month 12.

Furthermore, as expected, results indicated that both intercept of perceived stress and the slope of popularity mediated the ASE's treatment effect on job performance. This indicates that stress reduction and social acceptance are two major adjustment elements underlying the ASE orientation program. Interestingly, although stress reduction effect was apparent as early at Month 3 post-entry, and was found to be a mechanism transmitting the treatment effect on the final level of job performance (Month 12), this mediation effect is not immediately apparent (treatment effect on Month 3 job performance is not significant). Reasonably, there might be a time lag underlying the transition between affective experience and true job performance (e.g., Cropanzano & Wright, 1999; Riketta, 2008). However, another possible explanation might relate to newcomers' popularity rated by their peers, such that being accepted by their peers might weigh more than personal stress reduction in performing their work roles. Specifically, as the results showed, individuals in the ASE group started with similar popularity with those in the control group in the early period of socialization, but they became more popular for several months thereafter and such a higher rate of increase mediated the treatment effect on job performance. It might be the case that lack of social acceptance led to reduced support from insiders, which in turn interfere with the enhancement of role behaviors (Bauer et al., 2007).

Theoretical Contributions

With repeated measures design and intervention study, the current research mapped out the temporal nature of adjustment outcomes (stress, popularity, and job performance) after the ASE orientation. Cable et al.' (2103) study did not address what happens over time during the socialization after the ASE intervention. Throughout socialization, however, newcomers will experience a change of work behaviors and job attitudes (Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Rubenstein, & Song, 2013). Our findings addressed this gap by tracing within-individual dynamics over 12 months and showed different patterns on various adjustment outcomes.

Our study also contributes to the socialization literature by bridging stress-coping research with newcomer orientation research. Although stress-coping methods have been documented in a large body of research in the workplace (e.g., Kagan & Watson, 1995; Leiter, Laschinger, Day, & Oore, 2011), it has received little attention in the newcomer orientation literature. As a notable exception, Fan and Wanous (2008) designed a stress-coping orientation program (ROPES) to help newcomers deal with entry stressors and found that stress reduction mediated the treatment effects on adjustment outcomes. The current study suggests an alternative way to achieve the stress reduction effect. That is, besides directly offering strategies to cope with specific entry stressors identified through a thorough needs assessment (what ROPES did), the newcomer orientation program that emphasizes authentic self-expression and highlight the personal strengths in fulfilling work roles, may also help reduce newcomer stress.

Finally, by incorporating popularity as a mediator in understanding the effectiveness of the ASE program, this study enriched both newcomer intervention and social integration research. To begin with, although considered as an important socialization outcome, newcomers' social acceptance has always been operationalized as newcomers' perceptions of how coworkers accept them as a member of the group (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Bauer & Green, 1996;

Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003). However, acting as the most available and helpful source for adjustment, organizations' true perceptions toward newcomers, which avoids cognitive bias, worth more attention (Louis et al., 1983). The current research made a breakthrough by changing the reference from self to others, investigating how peer-rated popularity changed after the orientation, and how such other-rated social acceptance impact distal socialization outcome (job performance). This not only extends the findings of Cable et al.' (2013) study, but also provides insights into the socialization research.

More importantly, this research shows that popularity can be manipulated through an orientation program that highlights identity preservation and usage of signature strengths in solving task problems. In the long history of exploration of effective ways through which newcomers gain acceptance from insiders, the adoption of normative attitudes, values, and behaviors has been given primary emphasis (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Klein & Heuser, 2008). This is consistent with the social relationship literature that individuals who are similar to their coworkers are more likely to experience higher levels of social acceptance (Ibarra, 1993; Mollica, Gray & Trevino, 2003). However, as we have mentioned in previous sections, individuals who attempt to alter or mute their cultural expressions or perspectives for the sake of assimilating into the organization's dominant culture may also lead to resource exhaustion (Beall, 1990; Hewlin, 2003). Conversely, the strategy of authentic best self-expression, which allows newcomers to be who they are and do what they can do, has been found to have a positive impact on newcomer popularity. This may offer new insights related to the organizational tactic in helping newcomers quickly fit into the new organization.

This study features several methodological strengths. First, we conducted a quasi-field experiment in the real-world setting. To ensure the internal validity of the experiment, a meticulously designed matching procedure was implemented to maximize the equivalence of the two experimental groups (e.g., Rubin & Thomas, 1996). Second, we incorporated a repeated measure design, collecting four waves of post-entry data for a 12-month, allowing tracking changes for a long period. Third, multi-source data was collected based on characteristics and conceptualizations of different variables (i.e., self-reported perceived stress, peer-rated popularity, and mentor-rated job performance), minimizing the common method variance problems (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Finally, hypotheses were tested using the MLM method (Bauer, Preacher, & Gil, 2006; Zhang et al., 2009), enabling both between-person and with-person effects to be detected and mapped out.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Our study also has several limitations. The first limitation is related to the quasi-experiment design, since we cannot rule out pre-existing group differences as confounders. For instance, one potential threat to internal validity is that with much fewer new nurses hired by the hospital for the second cohort (37 in the second year vs. 118 in the first year), the hiring selection procedure might be more competitive in the second year. Therefore, the treatment effect might be contributed to the selection effect, such that participants in the ASE group had higher qualifications to start with. However, the competing explanation cannot explain the findings that the ASE treatment effects were not significant for popularity and job performance at Month 3, but emerged over time. Our meticulously-designed matching process attempted to minimize any pre-existing group differences. Results showed no differences between both groups on any of the demographic and personality variables in our sample. Nevertheless, future research with a true

randomized field experimental design is needed to more firmly establish the interval validity of our findings.

The second limitation is the modest sample size (n = 74). However, since this study was a longitudinal quasi-field experiment in a real workplace, it is difficult to recruit a large sample to participate in our field study, especially when one requires multi-source data with four follow-up waves of surveies in a 12-month period. Furthermore, after reviewing the published newcomer intervention studies with field and quasi-field experiment designs, we found the median sample size to be an estimation of 67. Therefore, our sample size, although modest, was in alignment with this type of research design in the literature. Future research with a large sample size is certainly encouraged to replicate our findings.

Third, although our focus on nurses sample in a Chinese hospital response well to the calls for research on settings in which high-reliability processes are required (role reliability results in life or death) (Cable et al., 2013), our homogeneous sample of all female nurses, and the limited context of Chinese culture, might lead to generalizability issues. Therefore, it might be helpful for future studies to test our hypotheses in other contexts including male workers in different countries and work situations.

More broadly, besides the characteristics of the working processes, the extent to which insiders are willing to accept new employees' true identities and strengths, and the way they respond to such patterns of work behaviors will also be an important element determining newcomers' adjustment. Specifically, individuals' true inclinations may conflict with their peers, or contradict with those accepted behavioral norms (Deci & Ryan, 1995), which might occasion others' antipathy and inhibition. If the already established members of the group do not accept those "outsiders" who behave differently with them and are not willing to respond with

authenticity, newcomers' social integration and psychological well-being will be undermined, although they fulfill their needs of being true to themselves (Ryan & Deci, 1995, 2000). Therefore, the acceptability of others' authenticity, or insiders' characteristic of authenticity, might be important conditional boundaries in forming the effectiveness of the ASE orientation program. The investigation of these factors may deepen our understanding of the conditions under which the ASE orientation will perform better.

Finally, both the current and Cable et al.' (2013) study focused on testing the effectiveness of the ASE program on adjustment outcomes, regardless of the personal attributes that might influence the effectiveness of the treatment effect. Self-efficacy, for example, might serve as a moderator. Specifically, given that contents of the ASE program requires less psychological resources as long as someone has an intention to show their best selves (which most newcomers should follow due to the compatibility of self-interest and organizational interest), it might be the case that low self-efficacy individuals will benefit more from the ASE orientation (Fan & Lai, 2012). Therefore, it could be interesting for future research to consider personal attributes that might moderate the treatment effect on related adjustment outcomes.

Practical Implications

This research also has significant practical implications for organizational socialization. Since there is an increased frequency of job changes in today's job market, newcomer socialization is becoming an urgent concern for organizations (Allen, Eby, Chao, & Bauer, 2017). Our findings suggest that the ASE orientation can be effective in reducing newcomer stress, boosting popularity among coworkers and enhancing job performance in the long run. This implies that the ASE orientation might can be practically used in an organization to help

newcomers in early socialization. Noticeably, some specialties and cautions need to be mentioned in the implication of such a brand new program.

First, compared with the ROPES program, which is specifically designed to cope with stress, the ASE program seems to be able to reduce newcomer stress more quickly than the ROPES program with significant effect occurring at Month 3 (the current study) vs. Month 6 (Fan & Wanous, 2008). Besides, ROPES program has to be tail-made for specific job positions, whereas the ASE program is a pre-packaged program that can be applied to all sorts of job positions, making it easy to be implemented in organizational practice. However, it's too early to conclude that the ASE program performs better than the ROPES program in stress reduction since as we are not sure whether individual differences might moderate the effectiveness of the ASE orientation (e.g., self-efficacy). In practice, it is recommended that organizations choose appropriate orientation programs based on the characteristics of the newcomers as well as their available resources (e.g., people, budget).

Next, popularity was found to be a critical mechanism in explaining the ASE's effectiveness, implying that the ASE orientation may function even more effectively in work context where newcomers are required to cooperate. Given that an increasing amount of work nowadays is performed by teams (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003), this study may inspire the corporate HR department to design their ASE programs to accelerate the acceptance of newcomers by existing team members. Nevertheless, as we have mentioned, behaving on one's true self and behaving on who they truly are is not without costs (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). At the same time encouraging newcomer authenticity, in alignment with their signature strengths, those insiders' acceptance of such a pattern of behaviors, should also be taken into account.

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