Changes in Newcomer Job Satisfaction Over Time: Examining the Pattern of Honeymoons and Hangovers

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In this study, the authors contribute insight into the temporal nature of work attitudes, examining how job satisfaction changes across the 1st year of employment for a sample of organizational newcomers. The authors examined factors related to job change (i.e., voluntary turnover, prior job satisfaction) and newcomer experiences (i.e., fulfillment of commitments, extent of socialization) that may strengthen or weaken the job satisfaction pattern. Results of a study of 132 newcomers with data collected at 4 unique time periods show a complex curvilinear pattern of job satisfaction, such that satisfaction reached a peak following organizational entry and decreased thereafter. However, examination of moderating factors revealed that individuals who reported less satisfaction with their prior job and those having more positive experiences on the new job, such as greater fulfilled commitments and a higher degree of socialization, were most likely to experience this pattern. Findings from this study offer important implications for theory and research on changes in newcomer attitudes over time as well as practical insight on key factors that shape the pattern of job attitudes as individuals enter and experience a new workplace.

Keywords: job satisfaction, socialization, organizational newcomers, longitudinal research

An employee’s affective reaction toward his or her job plays an important role in work motivation, behavior, and retention. Prior research has contributed much to the understanding of employee work attitudes, demonstrating the importance of both situational factors and individual difference variables as determinants of employee attitudes toward the job (e.g., Gerhart, 1987; Porter, 1962; Staw & Ross, 1985; Steel & Rentsch, 1997; Wolf, 1970). Recent research has also recognized the temporal context in which employees experience and react to their work, examining how attitudes change over time and how these changes impact important outcomes. For example, several studies have examined the effect of changes in attitudes on turnover, demonstrating that not just the level of attitudes but also the rate of change over time is important in predicting outcomes (e.g., Bentein, Vandenberg, Vandenberghe, & Stinglhamber, 2005; Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, & Aihburg, 2005; Steel, 2002). Similarly, in a study of job satisfaction over time, Boswell, Boudreau, and Tichy (2005) showed that feelings about one’s job vary systematically as a function of job change, suggesting a general and predictable pattern of an initial peak and subsequent decline in job satisfaction as an individual exits one organization and joins another.

Although the importance of time in understanding work-related phenomena has received increasing research attention (Mitchell & James, 2001), we have little understanding of how reactions toward work evolve over time, such as when individuals transition into a new job. Theoretical work on newcomer experiences and sensemaking of those experiences (e.g., Louis, 1980; Weick, 1995) suggests that there may be a pattern to work attitudes as individuals enter and experience a new setting. Drawing on this work, in the present study we contribute to the growing body of research on the temporal nature of work attitudes, proposing and testing a curvilinear pattern of job satisfaction and examining the role of job change and newcomer experiences in shaping this pattern. In particular, we conducted a longitudinal study of changes in job satisfaction across the 1st year of employment, with an explicit focus on several moderating conditions that may shape the pattern over time as individuals experience and make sense of a new situation.

Changes in Job Satisfaction Over Time

Job satisfaction is an affective reaction to one’s job (Locke, 1976; Wanous & Lawler, 1972) typically argued to be a function of situational factors, including the nature of work, human resources elements (e.g., pay, advancement opportunities), and the organizational environment (e.g., Gerhart, 1987; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969). Other research takes a more dispositional perspective (e.g., Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002; Levin & Stokes, 1989; Staw, Bell, & Clausen, 1986; Staw & Ross, 1985), suggesting there is some stability in an individual’s
attitudes over time and across situations. Combining the situational and dispositional perspectives suggests that individuals have a tendency toward some level of job satisfaction, but there are factors that lead to higher or lower levels of satisfaction with the present situation (Steel & Rentsch, 1997). This is consistent with the conceptualization of an affective set point (Avant, 1977; Dienes & Diener, 1996; Headly & Wearing, 1992), which is a dispositional mood or attitude level around which reactions occur. Experiences may stimulate a shift around one’s attitudinal set point, but over time there is likely to be convergence toward a more stable level.

In particular, a job change and the accompanying “newness of the ‘changed to’ situation” (Louis, 1980, p. 235) is likely to stimulate an initial high in job satisfaction, but over time, satisfaction will decline as an individual becomes more settled and the situation normalizes (Ashford, 2001). There are aspects of job change and organizational entry that would suggest such a pattern. It has been argued that organizations present their most favorable side to employees initially, leading employees to perceive a particularly positive picture of the organization (Van Maanen, 1975; Wanous, 1977; Ward & Athos, 1972). Positive initial attitudes are likely to ensue in anticipation of the positive attributes of the new situation and in contrast with the previous situation of which there is greater familiarity (Louis, 1980). Indeed, the perception that the new job will be better than the previous is often the impetus for job change or at least acceptance of the new job (Boswell et al., 2005).

In addition, research on postdecision dissonance and rationalization suggests that individuals are likely to think well of a new role to which they have committed, regardless of the reasons for the job choice, viewing it even more favorably than they did prior to making the choice (Lawler, Kuleck, Rhode, & Sorensen, 1975; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Vroom, 1966; Vroom & Deci, 1971). Even if confronted with unfavorable elements of the new job, individuals are likely to minimize their importance, thereby shielding the new relationship (Ashford, 2001). Yet, increased tenure with the organization brings increased knowledge of work systems and values (Chatman, 1991; Louis, 1980) and greater recognition of and encounters with the less attractive aspects of the job (Meglino & DeNisi, 1987). Even if the job is similar to what was anticipated (i.e., little surprise; Louis, 1980), the initial high of a new job is likely to wear off as employees engage in more mundane job activities and normalization occurs (Ashforth, 2001; Ashforth & Kreiner, 2002).

There is some empirical support for a general decline in job attitudes following initial employment with an organization. For example, Van Maanen’s (1975) study of police recruits revealed significant decreases in employee motivation and commitment following job entry when recruits settled into the organization. Early research on the stability of postdecision dissonance (Lawler et al., 1975; Vroom & Deci, 1971) revealed a marked reduction in rated job attractiveness as individuals acquire knowledge of their job. Employee turnover research generally finds that new entrants to a job exhibit a decline in work attitudes over time (Hom & Griffeth, 1991; Rusbult & Farrell, 1983; Youngblood, Mobley, & Meglino, 1983). Most recently, Boswell et al. (2005) modeled the temporal interplay between job satisfaction and turnover of high-level managers, showing that for those that changed employers, satisfaction decreased the year prior to turnover, increased the year of the job change (honeymoon effect), and subsequently declined (hangover effect).

Although Boswell et al. (2005) identified a honeymoon–hangover effect, their study was limited in three ways. First, it examined a main effect of a job change on job satisfaction, simply revealing a general pattern of satisfaction as a function of whether individuals quit their job in the preceding year. Second, this general pattern was measured at 1-year intervals. Finally, the sample was solely composed of executives. In the present study, we identify several moderators of the change in job satisfaction (discussed in the next section) to investigate when hangovers and honeymooners would be stronger. In doing so, we provide important theoretical and practical insight on why, and under what conditions, newcomer job satisfaction may change. In addition, our measurement approach offers greater precision in understanding the temporal curvilinear pattern associated with job change by focusing specifically on changes in job satisfaction over the first year of employment at frequent intervals relative to entering a new job. As such, we contribute insight on newcomer reactions as they experience and make sense of a new situation (Louis, 1980). Finally, we examine a sample of employees across a variety of occupations and levels to generalize beyond executive-level employees.

As part of the pattern, we include one’s feelings toward the previous job to examine the potential peak following a job change. We consider satisfaction with the prior job at the point of job change because it is the “baggage” that individuals bring with them that serves as a referent for the new job and thus an important part of the temporal pattern of newcomer attitudes. From a sense-making perspective (Louis, 1980), a contrast effect emerges whereby the prior job serves as background as individuals experience and react to the new situation. Notably, individuals react on the basis of their “remembered experiences” (Schwarz, 2007, p. 19), even when these memories may be biased (Gutek & Winter, 1992; Howard et al., 1979; Wirtz, Kruger, Scollon, & Diener, 2003).

Upon organizational entry, what then is the rate at which we would expect temporal changes in job satisfaction? There is little agreement among researchers as to the timing of newcomer transitions; for example, there do not appear to be “inherently fixed timeframes for becoming socialized” (Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007, p. 48). Yet the majority of prior research suggests that newcomers tend to adjust rapidly to their new jobs and organizations, within the first several months postentry (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Consistent with this, we would expect the peak and subsequent tapering off in job satisfaction to occur fairly quickly. Drawing on stage models of socialization demarcating multiple periods of transition to a new organization (e.g., Anderson, Riddle, & Martin, 1999; Jablin, 1987; Wanous, 1992), the newness and positive features of the new job should facilitate an initial honeymoon period followed within a few months by a hangover whereby job satisfaction will decline as a newcomer experiences and makes sense of the new situation. The frequency and timing of our measurement periods (discussed below in the Method section) attempt to capture this expected rate of change and are also consistent with measurement periods used in prior research on newcomer socialization (cf. Bauer, Bodner,

In sum, we expect that organizational newcomers will view their present job more favorably than their previous job, at least initially, and thus experience a peak in job satisfaction that tapers off over time. Accordingly, one’s current job satisfaction will be higher than satisfaction with the prior job, though over time, satisfaction levels with the present job will begin to converge with how one felt toward the prior job. The following hypothesis incorporates these ideas:

**Hypothesis 1.** Satisfaction with the present job will be higher initially than satisfaction with the prior job (i.e., honeymoon) but will decline over time (i.e., hangover).

**Moderating Factors**

Beyond the general pattern of job satisfaction among newcomers, research has yet to demonstrate why, and under what conditions, such a pattern may change. We propose that a newcomer’s change in job satisfaction depends upon two main dimensions of making sense of the new situation: *job change and newcomer experiences*. Specifically, we predict that key factors related to these two dimensions will moderate the pattern of job satisfaction.

**Job Change**

Although job dissatisfaction is often a key determinant of employee turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006; Tett & Meyer, 1993), individuals change jobs for various reasons and differing circumstances. Interestingly, most studies on work attitudes focus on features of an individual’s present situation without recognizing the possible baggage that individuals bring with them as they exit one organization and join another. Yet, as argued by Louis (1980), both making sense of experiences in the new setting and what is even noticed in the new setting are determined in part from a contrast effect with previous experiences and the perceptions of those experiences. For example, having a negative experience, such as harassment by a supervisor (a work-related critical event; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005), could lead an employee to exit an organization and subsequently be more cognizant of and sensitive to supervisor behaviors at a new organization.

We address this issue in the present study by first incorporating attitudes toward the prior job as an important part of the temporal pattern of newcomer job satisfaction as discussed above (Hypothesis 1). Yet, we also expect that the baggage brought from the job change will influence how one reacts to the new job. For example, the psychological dynamics involved when one voluntarily chooses to leave one job for another are likely quite different than when a job change is involuntary (e.g., termination). The experience of changing to and entering a new situation should stimulate an initial high in satisfaction and then tapering off regardless of the reason for the job change, because even when job change is involuntary, individuals need to make sense of a new job through postdecision dissonance reduction and job choice rationalization (Lawler et al., 1975; Vroom, 1966). However, we expect that individuals who voluntarily chose to leave a prior job in lieu of a different, and presumably more favorable, job will enter into that new job with exceedingly positive anticipations and perceptions. These anticipations may justify the job change yet may bring later disappointment. Thus, voluntary job changes may produce stronger honeymoon and hangover effects than involuntary job changes.

The above assumes that the circumstances surrounding the job change are brought with an individual to the new job, serving as background to the new situation (Louis, 1980). Also relevant is how a newcomer feels about the prior job. Whereas we see this variable as an important part of the general pattern of job satisfaction (Hypothesis 1) by illustrating an initial peak in satisfaction following organizational entry, we also expect the level of satisfaction with the prior job to shape subsequent reactions. When individuals have particularly negative feelings about the prior job, regardless of why they left, they are likely to hold exceedingly high hopes for the new job. This dissatisfaction with the prior job may have motivated or justified the job change (Boswell et al., 2005) and created expectations that the new job will be better. The present job then represents, at least initially, a positive contrast to the prior situation (Louis, 1980; Vroom & Griffin, 1991; Wanous, 1977). Yet a contrast effect is likely to facilitate a subsequent decline in satisfaction when normalization (Ashforth, 2001) sets in and/or the near inevitability of what is anticipated fails to materialize (Porter, 1962). This is consistent with research on the role of realism (e.g., realistic job previews; Phillips, 1998; Wanous, 1980) whereby inflated expectations set up an individual for subsequent disappointment and disillusionment about the job. On the basis of the above logic, we therefore expect that changing jobs voluntarily, as well as reporting lower satisfaction with the prior job, will foster comparatively high initial attitudes toward the present job but that this will diminish over time.

**Hypothesis 2.** Reason for the job change will moderate the pattern of job satisfaction, such that voluntary job change will associate with a stronger peak (i.e., honeymoon) and a stronger decline (i.e., hangover) in job satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 3.** Satisfaction with the prior job will moderate the pattern of job satisfaction, such that lower satisfaction with the prior job will associate with a stronger peak (i.e., honeymoon) and a stronger decline (i.e., hangover) in job satisfaction.

**Newcomer Experiences**

Above we discussed how experiences upon transitioning to a new job are likely to foster a general pattern of newcomer job satisfaction (Hypothesis 1). We also expect that differences in newcomer experiences will play a role in accentuating or attenuating the pattern.

Individuals will vary in their expectations of their new employer because of prior employment experiences, personal values and needs, and/or individual experiences during the recruitment process (Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). As newcomers begin to experience and gain more knowledge about the job, organizational culture and values, and terms and conditions of employment (Chatman, 1991), there will likely emerge differences in what was anticipated versus experienced. Louis (1980) discussed the key role of these surprises to a newcomer’s adaptation as he or she gives meaning to the discrepant situation. To the extent an indi-
idual perceives that the organization’s commitments are not being fulfilled (unpleasant surprises; Louis, 1980) and the situation is not as anticipated, he or she is likely to make negative attributions about the job. This is consistent with research on violations or breach of one’s psychological contract (cf. Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1989). Such individuals are likely to be particularly disappointed, even feel deceived (e.g., experience “on-the-job disillusionment or disenchantment”; Wanous, 1973, p. 328). This suggests that unfulfilled commitments will lead to not only negative reactions toward the job over time (thus, a stronger hangover) but also an attenuated honeymoon as a positive contrast to the prior situation fails to ensue. Conversely, fulfilled commitments help to inoculate (McGuire, 1964) an individual against unpleasant job elements, facilitating adjustment and more favorable (and sustained) reactions toward the job (Wanous, 1973, 1977).

Thus, although individuals are generally likely to experience some level of discontent as they become settled in and gain knowledge about the less favorable elements of their jobs (Chatman, 1991; Van Maanen, 1975), we expect that the more an individual perceives commitments are fulfilled by the organization, the stronger the positive reactions toward the job, the less the disillusionment in the job, and ultimately the weaker the decline in job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4. Perceived fulfillment of commitments will moderate the change in job satisfaction, such that perceiving a higher level of fulfilled commitments will associate with a stronger peak (i.e., honeymoon) and a weaker decline (i.e., hangover) in job satisfaction.

An extensive literature has shown the important role of newcomer socialization to positive outcomes, including work attitudes (Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998). Through the process of socialization, newcomers learn about and assimilate to a new organizational context (Fisher, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Drawing from Haueter, Macan, and Winter (2003), being socialized entails that an employee is knowledgeable about the organization, work group, and task and understands the appropriate role behaviors; that is, he or she “learn[s] the ropes in and of” (Louis, 1980, p. 233) the new organization. We expect a newcomer’s knowledge acquisition—which as a primary (or content) outcome of the socialization process is often discussed in parallel with learning (cf. Bauer et al., 2007; Chao, Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Louis, 1980; Klein & Weaver, 2000)—to play a critical role in a newcomer’s transition to and sensemaking of a new situation. Indeed, seminal work on newcomer socialization (e.g., Brim, 1966; Feldman, 1981; Fisher, 1986; Louis, 1980; Schein, 1968, 1971; Van Maanen, 1976; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) has emphasized the learning aspect of the process, and empirical work in this area has shown that knowledge- and role-related content is critical for an individual’s adjustment and subsequent reactions (e.g., Bauer et al., 2007; Chao et al., 1994; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Klein & Weaver, 2000; Morrison, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Taormina, 2004). Lacking this socialization, newcomers may become frustrated and feel disconnected, thus unlikely to react positively to the job and experience a particularly strong decline in satisfaction as they fail to assimilate to their new role.

In addition, compared with organizational insiders, newcomers typically lack a schema or other guides to interpret and make sense of organizational experiences (Louis, 1980). Yet an understanding of organizational norms and values and job duties and priorities should help a newcomer attach meaning to and cope with surprising and less attractive aspects of the job and ultimately to accept and adjust to the new situation. This would suggest a more sustained positive reaction toward the job. Conversely, without this knowledge and understanding, newcomers are less equipped to cope as they are “confronted with the actuality of their organizational roles” (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995, p. 418). The following hypothesis incorporates these ideas.

Hypothesis 5. The extent of socialization (i.e., knowledge of the organization, department, and job role) will moderate the change in job satisfaction, such that a higher degree of socialization will associate with a stronger peak (i.e., honeymoon) and a weaker decline (i.e., hangover) in job satisfaction.

Method

Procedure and Sample

Longitudinal data were collected from newcomers to a public sector service organization located in the southwestern United States. The organization provides extension training, technical assistance, and technology transfer with an annual budget of over $79 million and 1,500 employees. The host organization employs a variety of socialization tactics that are commonly used in companies (cf. Holton, 2001; Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983). First, all employees attend a 1-day new employee orientation that consists of a series of presentations by various members of the organization, including a visit by the director of the agency, a review and history of the agency by the director of communication, a safety briefing by the safety officer, and an overview of the insurance options by the benefits coordinator. New employees learn about organizational policies and procedures and professional development opportunities. They also fill out payroll paperwork, complete computer-based training modules (e.g., ethical guidelines, discrimination-free workplace), and are given access to various computer accounts. Beyond the 1st day, organizational newcomers engage in company-sponsored social and recreational events, informal mentoring, and training programs. Communication of organizational information to employees is facilitated by an intranet site and monthly newsletters.

Surveys were administered at four times over the course of an employee’s 1st year of employment. All surveys were completed online. The first survey was completed on the 1st day of employment during the organization’s newcomer orientation (Time 0; T0) to represent the break between the prior job and the new job (i.e., the point of job change). To increase participation and candor, we were given time alone with employees during the orientation in which we explained the process, informed participants that the study was voluntary and that responses were confidential, and administered informed consent forms. Though these new employee orientations occurred in batches as new individuals joined the organization twice a month (typically 3–4 employees at one time), the orientation meetings and survey protocol were consistent.

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across groups. Employees were then sent a link to complete additional surveys online on their 3-month (Time 1; T1), 6-month (Time 2; T2), and 1-year (Time 3; T3) anniversary dates. In an effort to increase response rates at each time period, employees were sent an e-mail from a member of the organization’s HR department reminding them that the researchers would be contacting them and that participation in the study was voluntary. For nonrespondents, a reminder e-mail was sent 1 week after each survey had been distributed. Note that if an employee failed to respond to any survey after T0 (e.g., T1), they were still able to participate in subsequent surveys (e.g., T2–T3).

We chose these four measurement time points (Day 1, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year) in part on the basis of previous empirical research on newcomer transitions and socialization (e.g., DeVos et al., 2003; Nelson & Sutton, 1990), which has shown these as frequently used and relevant intervals for data collection (Bauer et al., 2007, 1998). Our decision was also influenced by what management at the host organization deemed a reasonable demand on study participants’ time as well as the insight of the organization’s director and human resources manager as to critical points to capture attitudinal patterns given the timing of socialization experiences and role transitions at this organization (e.g., performance expectations). Most importantly, the timing and frequency of the measurement periods allow for precision in understanding the temporal pattern of job satisfaction consistent with the expected rate of a newcomer’s attitudinal change from organizational entry through the 1st year of employment. Thus, whereas an individual should react positively toward the new job the first few months (captured here at 3 months), by 6 months we would expect to see a tapering off in satisfaction levels.

Study participants represented a wide array of jobs at this organization (i.e., 62% professional/administrative, 22% clerical, 11% skilled craft/technical, 2% executive, 1.5% service maintenance). Thus, the newcomers entered jobs that varied in terms of task components and ranged in level of responsibility and complexity, with example job duties such as customer service, financial analysis, software development, project management, marketing, instructional design, facility maintenance, construction, and office work (e.g., data entry, invoicing, filing, shipping, and receiving). In sum, the participants held jobs generally representative of the larger organization (i.e., 68% professional/administrative, 16% clerical, 10% skilled craft/technical, 3% executive, 1.5% service maintenance) as well as the types of jobs typical within many organizations.

The number of individuals who completed the initial survey (T0) was 132 out of 141 available newcomers (94% T0 response rate); the number participating at T1 was 120 out of 128 (i.e., 4 individuals had left the organization; 94% T1 response rate); the number participating at T2 was 99 out of 113 (i.e., 15 more individuals had left the organization; 88% T2 response rate); the number participating at T3 was 88 out of 106 (i.e., 7 more individuals had left the organization; 83% T3 response rate; 62.4% overall final response rate). As we describe below, our analysis method (random coefficient modeling; RCM) utilized responses from all study participants (N = 132). Of the sample, 35% were female, and 86% were Caucasian, 8% were Hispanic, 3% were African American, and 3% were other. Participants’ ages ranged from 20 to 63 years, with an average age of 39 years (SD = 10.70). The average salary for our sample was $41,451 (SD = $15,800).

We note that our sample was quite representative of the larger organization, which was 36% female and 85% Caucasian. Our sample was somewhat younger and had a slightly lower salary relative to the larger organization (44.5 years and $45,913, respectively), which we would expect when comparing a sample of organizational newcomers with more tenured organizational members.

Measures

Job satisfaction and prior job satisfaction. We used the three-item measure of overall job satisfaction from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979). An example item read as follows: “All in all, I am satisfied with my job” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Job satisfaction with the present job was measured at an employee’s 3-month (T1; α = .86), 6-month (T2; α = .91), and 1-year (T3; α = .83) anniversary of his/her start date. Satisfaction with the prior job was measured at the point of job change (i.e., 1st day of the new job; T0) by rewording the three items from Cammann et al.’s (1979) measure to focus on the individual’s previous job (e.g., “All in all, I was satisfied with my previous job”; α = .93).

Reason for job change. We coded the newcomers’ “reason for leaving” the most recent job (0 = voluntary, 1 = involuntary) from employment applications provided by the organization. Of the respondents, 19% indicated involuntary departure (e.g., layoff, position eliminated) from their prior job.

Perceived fulfillment of organizational commitments. We asked respondents to indicate the extent to which the employer fulfilled initial commitments to the employee using Rousseau’s (1998) Psychological Contracts Inventory. This measure consists of 18 items measuring various work elements, such as providing developmental opportunities, providing stable pay and benefits, supporting high levels of performance, and showing concern for employee well being. Response choices ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (great extent; α = .96). We administered this measure at the 6-month anniversary date (T2) to allow time for the employee to evaluate the fulfillment of perceived commitments (cf. Chatman, 1991).

Socialization. We assessed the extent to which a newcomer was socialized with Haute et al.’s (2003) Newcomer Socialization Questionnaire, a self-report measure of socialization content. Given evidence that socialization typically occurs within the first few months of employment, and consistent with prior socialization research (Bauer et al., 1998, 2007), this measure was administered at the 3-month anniversary date (T1). The Newcomer Socialization Questionnaire contains 31 items that examine the extent to which employees have factual knowledge and knowledge of expected role behaviors in regards to their organization, department (referred to as “program” in the organization studied), and the job for which they were hired. Sample items include the following: “I understand the operations of this organization,” “I understand the relationship between my program and other programs,” and “I understand how to perform the tasks that make up my job.” Response choices ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree; α = .94).

Control variables. For all analyses, we also included an array of control variables to help eliminate alternative explanations for
the results. First, we controlled for the time lag between jobs (in days) and prior work experience (in years) given the potential role of such variables in adaptation and reactions to the new job. These data were coded from participants’ employment applications obtained directly from the organization. In addition, prior research suggests that job satisfaction is in part dispositional (e.g., Judge et al., 2002; Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, & De Chermont, 2003), and individual tendencies to report experiences as positive (or negative) may drive patterns of work attitudes. We thus controlled for positive affectivity (PA) and negative affectivity (NA) measured on the survey at organizational entry (T0) with the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Finally, given the possible role of an individual’s initial expectations in driving subsequent reactions, we controlled for perceived commitments by the organization measured at organizational entry (T0) using Rousseau’s (1998) Psychological Contracts Inventory.1

Analyses

We tested the hypotheses using repeated measures analysis with the complementary approaches of the general linear model (GLM) and RCM, which uses the restricted maximum likelihood estimation method. Using restricted maximum likelihood estimation allows for missing data at one or more periods, so that the entire sample of respondents (N = 132) is used and listwise deletion is avoided (DeShon, Ployhart, & Sacco, 1998). As we discuss later, we also analyzed all hypotheses using only those individuals employed at the end of the 1st year (n = 106), and we found no difference between results from the full sample and from the reduced sample of stayers. Only results from the full sample are reported here.

We conducted the GLM analyses using SPSS 14.0, and we conducted the RCM analyses using SAS 9.1 PROC MIXED statistical software. Hypothesis 1 was tested in the Level 1 analysis (within individuals; i.e., main effects) and Hypotheses 2–5 were tested in the Level 2 analyses (between individuals; i.e., moderators).

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations are depicted in Table 1. As shown in the table, the three measures of satisfaction with the present job significantly correlated with one another but were not significantly related to satisfaction with the prior job. This latter finding reflects the distinction between the feelings toward the prior job and the present job. Fulfillment of commitments and extent of socialization also correlated significantly with satisfaction with the prior job (i.e., intercepts) and the rate at which their job satisfaction changes over time (i.e., slopes). This supports our use of RCM by allowing us to model the variability in the trends we are examining. There was no significant autocorrelation detected, thus we used unstructured errors to allow for covariance between the random components.

To test Hypothesis 1, we used repeated measures analyses in GLM with both simple contrasts (e.g., contrasts to satisfaction with prior job; T0) and repeated contrasts (e.g., contrasts among adjacent periods). Results show that satisfaction with the prior job was lower than satisfaction with the current job from T1 to T3 (p < .05). Repeated contrasts further reveal that this difference became smaller over time. For example, T2 job satisfaction was significantly lower than T1 job satisfaction (p < .05), but T3 job satisfaction was not significantly different from job satisfaction at T2. Thus, as shown in Figure 1 and consistent with Hypothesis 1, we found satisfaction with the current job was higher than satisfaction with the prior job but showed a decline and tapering off across the 1st year of employment (i.e., honeymoon followed by hangover).

RCM was used to clarify the form of the curve shown in Figure 1. We followed Bliese and Ployhart’s (2002) recommended model testing sequence. First, by examining ICC(1), we found that 24% of the variance in job satisfaction was accounted for by between-individuals variance. We found significant linear (γ = 1.18, p < .01), quadratic (γ = −0.83, p < .01), and cubic (γ = 0.16, p < .01) trends in the curve. The cubic form indicates a curve with two bends. Specifically, the findings show that on average, the pattern shown in Figure 1 demonstrates a positive linear trend with a significant turn at T1, trending downward by T2 before turning to level off at T3. These results are consistent with the GLM results and provide further support for Hypothesis 1.

Our results further reveal that there was significant variance around the intercept (T0) and the linear function, suggesting that individuals vary in their level of satisfaction with the prior job (i.e., intercepts) and the rate at which their job satisfaction changes over time (i.e., slopes). This supports our use of RCM by allowing us to model the variability in the trends we are examining. There was no significant autocorrelation detected, thus we used unstructured errors to allow for covariance between the random components.

To examine moderators of the pattern of job satisfaction (Hypotheses 2–5), we used the Level 1 model with linear and quadratic fixed effects and random intercept and linear terms, then intro-

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1 We also conducted the analyses controlling for pay level and job type (dummy coded administrative, professional, clerical, technical, and other) obtained from organizational records. Including these as controls did not substantively change the findings. Accordingly, the results presented here do not include pay and job type as controls so as to preserve power and degrees of freedom and to simplify our results.
duced moderators at Level 2. The linear component describes the overall trend (up or down) and the quadratic component describes the strength of the curve. Although we supported a complex cubic form in support of Hypothesis 1, for further analyses involving moderators we used a quadratic model. We made this choice given our theoretical perspective and several criteria for model selection (i.e., model fit, interpretability of parameters, and behavior of the function) suggested by Cudeck and Harring (2007). First, the fit of the quadratic model was approximately the same as the cubic model. Second, although we tested both moderated quadratic and cubic models, only the parameters for the moderated quadratic model are interpretable (e.g., the moderated cubic models produced values outside the response ranges). This may be due to the low degrees of freedom with only four measurement periods to fit the cubic function (Cudeck & Harring, 2007). Finally, the behavior of the cubic function was unsatisfactory in that many of the moderated cubic models demonstrated an increase in satisfaction by Time 3, which is counter to both our theory and previous research (e.g., Boswell et al., 2005). From a theoretical perspective, we conceptualize a pattern of initial increase followed by a downward trend in job satisfaction, suggesting that the selection of the quadratic model is indeed appropriate for further analyses.

Hypothesis 2 described the moderating effect of a voluntary job change and proposed that a stronger honeymoon and hangover would emerge when job change was volitional rather than forced. As shown in Table 2, the results do not support this hypothesis given that the reason for job change (i.e., voluntary or involuntary) did not interact with the linear or quadratic terms ($p > .05$). We also examined whether either part of the hypothesis (i.e., honeymoon or hangover) was supported. Given the dichotomous nature of the job change variable, we conducted an analysis of covariance comparing the change from T0 to T1 and then from T1 to T2 for the two job change groups (voluntary vs. involuntary), finding no significant difference ($p > .05$) for either the honeymoon or hangover. Thus, the pattern of job satisfaction over time does not depend upon the reason for leaving the prior job, and Hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Hypothesis 3 focused on the role of attitudes toward one’s prior job, proposing that lower satisfaction with the prior job would associate with a stronger decreasing pattern of job satisfaction during the 1st year of employment in the new job. We analyzed a linear model using T1–T3 job satisfaction as the dependent variable, thus changing satisfaction with the prior job from part of the dependent variable to a moderating variable of the remaining periods of satisfaction. As shown in Table 2, the interaction term between satisfaction with the prior job and the linear term only approached significance ($p = .08$), revealing slight differences in the hangover pattern of job satisfaction for those with higher versus lower levels of satisfaction with the prior job. Lower levels of reported satisfaction with the prior job associated with a slight negative pattern of job satisfaction with the current job, whereas there was a relatively flat pattern of job satisfaction for those that reported higher satisfaction with their prior job. This is shown graphically in Figure 2 with satisfaction with the prior job graphed one standard deviation above and below the mean. To explore the honeymoon (i.e., the change in job satisfaction from T0 to T1), we tested the difference between T0 and T1 satisfaction levels. We found that for individuals reporting low satisfaction with the prior job, satisfaction increased significantly ($p < .01$) from T0 to T1, thus revealing a honeymoon followed by a slight hangover over the 1st year of employment. In contrast, for individuals reporting high satisfaction with the prior job, there was neither a honeymoon nor a hangover as there was no statistically significant change in satisfaction through the 1st year. Together, these results provide partial support for Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 proposed a stronger peak and a weaker decline in job satisfaction for employees perceiving a higher level of fulfilled commitments. As shown in Table 2, the linear and quadratic interaction terms for this model were significant ($p < .01$), revealing a difference in the slope as well as the curve in job satisfaction over time dependent on the employee’s perceived level of fulfilled commitments. The nature of the pattern is shown above.

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### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<th>10</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>-.22</td>
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</tr>
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<td>.41**</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<td>(.96)</td>
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<td>.17</td>
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<td>.32**</td>
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<td>(.86)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Job satisfaction (T2)</td>
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<td>0.79</td>
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<td>.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
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<td>.32**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
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<td>(.91)</td>
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<td>8. Job satisfaction (T3)</td>
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<td>.46**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.61**</td>
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<td>9. Reason for job change</td>
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<td>-.13</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Satisfaction with prior job</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<td>(.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Fulfillment of commitments</td>
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<td>.06</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.45**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Extent of socialization</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.54**</td>
<td>(.94)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 88–131. Reliability coefficients (alphas) shown along the diagonal. Satisfaction with prior job measured at T0, extent of socialization measured at T2, fulfillment of commitment measured at T3. T0 = Time 0; T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2; T3 = Time 3.

°0 = voluntary; 1 = involuntary.

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

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2 The test of Hypothesis 2 removes satisfaction with the prior job (T0) as part of the dependent variable to include it as a moderator. Thus, for Hypothesis 2 only, we tested a linear model with T1–T3 job satisfaction as the dependent variable.
graphically in the left quadrant of Figure 3. The results are somewhat contrary to Hypothesis 4. In particular, job satisfaction was consistently lower for those reporting lower fulfilled commitments, and neither a honeymoon nor a hangover occurred as satisfaction was relatively flat over time. Conversely, those reporting higher levels of fulfilled commitments, though generally more satisfied, showed a decreasing pattern in job satisfaction over time following an initial peak. This group appears to typify the honeymoon–hangover pattern of job satisfaction. Hypothesis 4 was thus not supported.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that a higher degree of socialization would associate with a stronger peak and a weaker decline in job satisfaction. As shown in Table 2, the linear and quadratic interaction terms were significant (p < .01) for socialization. As shown in the right quadrant of Figure 3, the nature of the pattern was somewhat contrary to Hypothesis 5. Job satisfaction was lower with less socialization and decreased over time. Conversely, with greater socialization, job satisfaction showed a honeymoon as expected but then a hangover pattern over time. Although different than our hypothesis, these results are consistent with the findings above involving fulfillment of commitments in that newcomers with a higher degree of socialization appear to typify the temporal pattern of an initial peak followed by a decline in job satisfaction. Hypothesis 5 was thus not supported.

We note that all of the results reported here are based on the full set of participant responses, yet we might expect different patterns for individuals that left the organization compared with those who were still employed at the end of the study period. Twenty-six individuals that completed at least one survey turned over by the end of the study. To examine whether the inclusion of these individuals changed the interpretation of the results, we re-ran all analyses reported above using a reduced sample of the 106 who were still employed at the end of their 1st year, and the results were consistent with our findings above.

Discussion

The present study contributes to the literature on the temporal nature of work attitudes by demonstrating a curvilinear pattern of job satisfaction following a job change (i.e., an initial peak and then tapering off in job satisfaction) and that factors related to job change and newcomer experiences play a role in explaining this pattern. Our findings thus offer important insight on why, and under what conditions, satisfaction levels may change across the 1st year of employment. In particular, honeymoons and hangovers were experienced among individuals who reported less satisfaction with their prior job and, surprisingly, among individuals having more positive experiences in the new job, including greater fulfilled commitments and a higher degree of socialization.

Considering first the overall curve of job satisfaction, our methodological approach demonstrated that newcomers experience an initial high in job satisfaction within a few months after organizational entry, trending downward by 6 months on the job, with this decline tapering off by 1 year on the job. This has implications for research and theory on employee attitudes. Most importantly, theories of work attitudes could be enriched by considering the temporal nature of job satisfaction, and specifically, that a job change is likely to stimulate a pattern of job satisfaction as an individual experiences and makes sense of the new situation. The finding that attitudes toward the prior job are lower than subsequent attitudes about the current job may not be surprising given the link between job dissatisfaction and employee turnover. However, we also found that the difference between satisfaction with the prior job and satisfaction with the current job becomes smaller over time. This suggests that though initially the “grass is greener,” it becomes less so over time as job satisfaction tends to taper off. Finding that job satisfaction fluctuates within individuals over the 1st year of employment also reinforces the importance of longitudinal research (beyond a single time lag: T1–T2) to capture potential attitudinal patterns. Although prior work has shown linear trends in work attitudes (e.g., Bentein et al., 2005), our findings revealed a complex yet predictable pattern as individuals change to and experience a new job. It is critical that future research on newcomer socialization considers this pattern when selecting measurement periods and interprets findings in light of the timing of data collection.

An important contribution of this study was our focus on factors related to job change and newcomer experiences as moderators of the general pattern. Our finding of a stronger honeymoon followed by a slight hangover for individuals that entered the organization with lower satisfaction with their prior job suggests a contrast that occurs between the prior and present situation (Louis, 1980). We note that this honeymoon reflects this group being particularly dissatisfied with the prior job, thus having greater opportunity for a significant increase in the new job. Job satisfaction remained higher for those individuals who were highly satisfied with their prior job. Yet, it is the feelings about the prior job brought to the new job rather than the reason for the job change (i.e., voluntary vs. involuntary) that appear key to shaping subsequent reactions. We suggest that theories of work attitudes specifically (and organizational behavior more generally) would be enhanced by greater recognition that employees bring with them and are shaped by their past. These prior experiences are likely to set a standard
against which the current job is evaluated (Shipp, 2006), serving as background for subsequent reactions.

Our findings provide support for specific factors related to newcomer experiences in explaining the pattern of newcomer job satisfaction. However, the influence of such factors was different than expected. Experiencing unfulfilled commitments or less socialization appears to attenuate the pattern, associating with consistently unchanged (and lower) attitudes about the job. To the extent that we view a peak and then downward trend in satisfaction levels as an “expected and typical reaction” (Boswell et al., 2005, p. 889), it may be through the experience of learning about the organization and feeling supported and invested in the job that individuals become more reactive to the good as well as the bad experiences of a new job. In particular, perceiving fulfilled commitments and being socialized may certainly help to facilitate a positive reaction toward the job, yet this honeymoon ultimately is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>95% CI lower bound</th>
<th>95% CI upper bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for job change</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3.618**</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>3.356</td>
<td>3.879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>−0.175</td>
<td>0.379</td>
</tr>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>−0.022</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>−0.264</td>
<td>0.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial expectations</td>
<td>0.312**</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.485</td>
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<td>Years work experience</td>
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<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time between jobs</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>−0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>0.448**</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>0.742</td>
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<td>Quadratic</td>
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<td>−0.204</td>
<td>−0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>0.100</td>
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<td>0.006</td>
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<td>Time between jobs</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<td>Satisfaction with prior job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linear × Satisfaction With Prior Job</td>
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<td>0.037</td>
<td>−0.008</td>
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<td><strong>Fulfillment of commitments</strong></td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time between jobs</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Time between jobs</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.001</td>
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<td>−0.227**</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>−0.392</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. For Level 1 parameter estimates, the degree of freedom (df) ranged from 171 to 269; for parameters in Level 2 analyses, the df ranged from 85 to 105. For “Reason for job change,” voluntary is coded 0, and involuntary is coded 1. For “Satisfaction with prior job,” we used Time 1–Time 3 job satisfaction as the dependent variable. For all remaining analyses, we used Time 0–Time 3 satisfaction as the dependent variable. CI = confidence interval; PA = positive affect; NA = negative affect.

† p < .10.  **p < .05.  ***p < .01.
accompanied by a hangover as newcomers settle into and are exposed to the less attractive aspects of the new job. Whereas we expected such experiences would forestall a tapering off in satisfaction, the high was temporary as normalization set in (Ashforth, 2001) and newcomers converged toward their attitudinal set point (Diener & Diener, 1996). Thus in a sense, the stronger the honeymoon, the stronger the potential hangover will be (i.e., the higher they are, the harder they fall).

These findings may also indicate that fulfillment of commitments and socialization benefit newcomers most early in their tenure and have a dissipating effect by the end of the 1st year of employment. Indeed, though we expected job satisfaction to converge over time toward how one felt about the prior job, it appears that satisfaction with the present job may even dip lower by the end of the 1st year (see Figure 3). We would, however, offer caution in interpreting a specific point on a curve (e.g., T3 job satisfaction relative to satisfaction with the prior job at the point of job change). Our analytic method examines the trend in curvilinearity, and the plotted function simply represents the best fitting line derived from individual data points at varying levels of a moderator (i.e., ±1 SD). Yet this finding further suggests that the honeymoon associated with positive experiences in the new job, such as being socialized and fulfillment of commitments, not only establishes the possibility for a subsequent settling downward as normalization sets in or the newness of the job wears off but also indicates that newcomers may become relatively less satisfied as they learn about their role and job and/or come to the realization that commitments are fulfilled yet there are still unattractive aspects of the job. Organizational socialization models and theories should reflect that newcomer experiences (e.g., becoming socialized) may not simply yield positive linear effects but help to shape a complex curvilinear pattern of subsequent reactions.

It is important to note that we conducted the analyses controlling for variables such as dispositional affect and initial expectations. These robust findings suggest that the more stable satisfaction levels were not simply the tendency for employees with unfulfilled commitments and less socialization to report negative work experiences. Rather, it appears that positive newcomer experiences (e.g., fulfilled commitments, socialization) facilitate a general pattern whereby individuals are reactive toward the job, perhaps serving as a prerequisite for newcomers to experience the honeymoon and the hangover. Conversely, without these experiences, newcomers are unlikely to experience the high of the new job.

This research also makes several important contributions regarding organizational newcomer measurement and study design. First, our results reveal the value of longitudinal research to capture the complexities of newcomer affective reactions. The timing and frequency of the measurement periods is also critical (Mitchell & James, 2001): If the lag between periods is too long, variation may be overlooked; yet if the lag is too short, change may not be apparent. Our research added greater precision regarding the timing of changes in attitudes upon organizational entry, showing the potential changes in satisfaction by the 6th month of employment. This suggests the value of even greater precision in measurement to identify other important time periods. In addition, researchers should plan the data analyses before the data collection. Different approaches to longitudinal research require different types of data and different periods of measurement (Collins, 2006; Raudenbush, 2001; Singer & Willett, 2003), and although our random coefficient models with four periods could adequately portray a quadratic function, a greater number of measurement periods would be necessary should the function be more complex. Within this, researchers must decide which variables will be time-invariant or constant (e.g., personality or event focused) and which variables will be time-varying or changing (e.g., repeated measures of attitudes over time; Singer & Willett, 2003). In sum, the measurement periods and ultimately the analytical approach selected should fit the study context and theoretical framework (Collins, 2006).

Practical Implications

The present study heeds calls for greater precision in assessing changes in workplace phenomena as well as the important role of time more generally (e.g., Bluedorn & Denhardt, 1988; George & Jones, 2000; McGrath, 1988; Mitchell & James, 2001), thus of-
ffering practical insight on when changes are likely to occur within organizations. In particular, this study provided evidence on when a newcomer’s hangover is likely to begin. There appear to be “risky periods” in which employees are likely to experience declining job attitudes and arguably be most susceptible to withdrawal behaviors and turnover (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005). During such periods, certain experiences could work to counteract (e.g., new opportunities) or exacerbate (e.g., perceived mistreatment) the risk of adverse reactions.

Organizations should consider timing when interpreting employee affective reactions toward their work. For example, we would expect high satisfaction levels among a workforce initially but should not be surprised (or necessarily alarmed) to see this decline over time. Organizations could educate newcomers on the expected pattern of job attitudes as part of their on-boarding process and realistic job previews. Anticipating this pattern of an initial high, followed by a tapering off in work attitudes may help individuals to see this as a typical reaction rather than indicating a poor job choice decision. It may also be informative should a manager not observe the expected pattern. For example, relatively flat satisfaction levels (i.e., no honeymoon) may suggest that early experiences related to fulfilled commitments or socialization are lacking. Conversely, to the extent that satisfaction continues to decline, this may signal a need to intervene particularly for those individuals that the organization hopes most to retain.

Our findings for the moderator effects also provide employers with insight on managing newcomer attitudes. First, an individual’s attitudes about the prior job may offer the subsequent employer information about how the individual will react toward the new job. For example, newcomers bringing with them strong negative feelings about the previous job may be particularly prone for a let down in the present job. This could perhaps be countered through the on-boarding process as well as expectation-lowering practices (cf. Buckley, Fedor, Veres, Wiese, & Carraher, 1998; Buckley et al., 2002). Conversely, newcomers with more positive attitudes toward the prior job would be expected to be more unwavering in their subsequent job attitudes. If such individuals respond negatively following organizational entry, employers may need to evaluate the cause (e.g., inflated expectations).

Although the importance of socialization to employee adjustment is well documented (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998), newcomers are still likely to experience highs and lows as they transition to the new role. Similarly, employees who generally feel the job is as anticipated will ultimately experience a settling downward in their work attitudes. To the extent that these findings generalize to other workplaces, continued organizational efforts aimed at maintaining employee engagement (e.g., work challenges, role clarity) and a supportive climate (e.g., voice initiatives, participatory management) may be particularly valuable to countering the potential swing in job attitudes. Yet the honeymoon associated with newcomer knowledge acquisition and fulfilled commitments may help to engage and retain employees through periods in which they are less immersed in the organization with lower personal costs of leaving and/or when investments in employees have yet to pay off. Thus, a honeymoon, even if followed by a hangover, may be of high utility for an employer. Indeed, without newcomer socialization and practices that foster the fulfillment of commitments (e.g., realism during recruitment), an individual’s work attitudes will likely be consistently flat and lower, ultimately with implications for withdrawal behavior and/or organizational exit.

**Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Certain design and measurement challenges should be noted. First, the modest sample size and sample attrition common in longitudinal research are potential limitations to this study. However, our sample size did not preclude us from finding significant and complex effects, and the analytical approach allowed us to include responses from the full sample of the occupationally and hierarchically diverse respondent set. Indeed, our findings demonstrated that the general temporal pattern presented by Boswell et al. (2005) was not unique to executive-level employees, as was the sample examined in that previous study. Our sample included employees in jobs with duties, levels of responsibility, and degree of complexity represented in the broader workforce. Nonetheless, the present study was limited by its focus on newcomers to only one organization that may not be representative of other organizations. Continued research involving diverse occupations and organizations would enhance the understanding of the role of job market conditions, industry and professional norms, employment practices (e.g., socialization tactics, recruiting processes), and job characteristics to patterns of work attitudes.

Related, though we obtained a respectable response rate across each time period and our analysis method allowed us to include the full set of responses (avoiding listwise deletion), a concern with sample decrement over time is the potential for attrition bias, and specifically that departure from the organization (or the reason for the departure) before the end of the study period could affect the observed relationships. For example, those that left the organization within the 1st year may show a different magnitude or pattern of attitude change. As we noted in the Results section, our results did not differ when we used the full sample versus a reduced sample excluding individuals that had left the organization by the end of the study period. In addition, a comparison of those that had left to those that remained on demographic variables, job group, salary, and PA/NA revealed a statistically significant difference only in regards to age ($M = 34.8$ and 40.2 years, respectively; $p < .05$). Finally, following Goodman and Blum (1996), we regressed a dichotomous variable distinguishing those that remained from those that had left on the variables of substantive interest in this study (e.g., job satisfaction, fulfillment of commitments) to determine whether attrition bias contributed to the presence of nonrandom sampling. Results from this analysis indicate no nonrandom sampling bias.

Second, because the *reason for job change* variable was derived from the employment application responses, it may have been susceptible to impression management in the reporting of involuntary turnover to a potential new employer. Though 19% of study participants reported an involuntary job departure, the self-report nature of the measure and potential social desirability affecting responses may partly explain the nonsignificant results involving this variable.

Third, we examined a peak in job satisfaction following a job change by assessing attitudes toward the prior job at the point of job change. It would also be interesting to include measures of past experiences (and an individual’s complex history of the multitude of experiences with different organizations) in real time to deter-
mine whether there is a residual effect of attitudes independent of the lasting impression that individuals have upon beginning a new job (cf. Heller & Ilies, 2006; Karney & Frye, 2002). Related, it is also possible that the honeymoon itself is dependent upon the retrospective biases that individuals create when contrasting their previous job to the present job. More specifically, one’s views and evaluations of the prior job at entry are likely colored by more favorable (even lenient) early perceptions of and expectations for the new job, creating the potential for post hoc rationalization in reports of job satisfaction. The peak in satisfaction (i.e., honeymoon) was based on measures of satisfaction with the prior and present jobs assessed 3 months apart, and we consider these evaluations, even if biased, an important part of the pattern of reactions to a job. However, it would also be interesting to examine how much of the bias is due to retrospection (e.g., inaccurate memories) and/or the contrasts in evaluating the prior and present job. To uncover such effects would require panel data of satisfaction across past and present jobs, including real-time measures and retrospective measures that could examine their potentially reciprocal relationships over time.

Finally, although our longitudinal approach is a significant strength to our study, we focused on the 1st year of employment, and an individual’s relationship with an employer may of course extend beyond 1 year. Indeed, some stage models of socialization discuss the likely transitions and adjustment that occur for employees until organizational exit (e.g., Anderson et al., 1999; Jablin, 1987). It would be interesting, for example, to examine whether individuals experience additional peaks or valleys in work attitudes at certain points in their tenure or following specific experiences (e.g., organizational restructuring, promotion). In addition, more frequent assessments within the 1st year of employment might reveal important time periods and experiences for newcomers, as well as how these might vary across individuals and contexts. Socialization researchers have lamented that we really do not know how long it takes for a newcomer to become socialized (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998). Some have speculated that it occurs rather rapidly (Ashforth & Saks, 1996), even within weeks (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005). Given that our data indicate a levelling off of job satisfaction by 6 months, this may represent a critical time period for the stabilization of newcomer job attitudes (cf. Feldman, 1977; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). We also note that our selection of time periods, though consistent with our conceptualization of the temporal pattern, was largely influenced by previous empirical work and the practicalities of doing field research. We echo previous sentiments about the need for more theory regarding the identification of critical transition periods for organizational newcomers (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998) and the need for discussions with management at the host organization regarding typical socialization rates in their organization.

In this study, we focused on four factors related to job change and newcomer experiences as potentially moderating the pattern of a newcomer’s job satisfaction. We chose to examine these particular variables given the importance of job change and newcomer experiences as individuals make sense of a new job. Future research could explore additional factors that may accentuate (or attenuate) the pattern, such as the role of specific elements of the new job (e.g., job complexity, job decision latitude) and/or the new job relative to the prior job (e.g., perceived or objective changes in type of work, job level, or pay relative to the prior job). In addition, though we controlled for PA and NA in our analyses, future research could more directly examine the role of individual differences in personality as well as human capital (e.g., alternative opportunities) in an individual’s job satisfaction over time. Factors related to the socialization process specifically, such as precise on-boarding tactics, proactive newcomer behaviors, or an individual’s past socialization experiences, may influence the nature and/or rate of the pattern and should be examined in future studies. Finally, beyond overall job satisfaction, there are other important work attitudes, such as organizational commitment and facets of satisfaction (e.g., pay satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction), that would be interesting to examine from a temporal perspective to enhance the understanding of employee attachment to work (Bowling, Beehr, & Lepisto, 2006).

In conclusion, in this study we contribute to the understanding of the temporal nature of work attitudes by examining changes in job satisfaction as individuals change to and experience a new job. A temporal perspective is critical to the understanding of the complexities of organizational phenomena (George & Jones, 2000; Mitchell & James, 2001). Consistent with this, our findings demonstrate a pattern in job satisfaction and the important role of newcomer experiences and perceptions in explaining the pattern, thus providing important theoretical and practical insight on attitudinal reactions toward work.

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