I am nice and capable! How and when newcomers' self-presentation to their

supervisors affects socialization outcomes

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Abstract

Whereas meta-analytical research draws a relatively unfavorable picture of the usefulness of self-presentation on the job, our study challenges this view by highlighting the benefits of such behaviors during newcomer socialization. Drawing from social influence theory, the current study examines how and when newcomers' self-presentation, in the form of ingratiation and self-promotion, facilitates their socialization success (indicated by affective commitment, job performance, and promotability) by shaping their supervisors' relational and work-based socialization efforts. Data from a time-lagged field study of 355 newcomer-supervisor dyads provided support for the proposed model. In particular, we found that ingratiation was positively related to supervisor relational socialization effort, which in turn was positively related to newcomer affective commitment. Additionally, self-promotion was positively related to supervisor work-based socialization effort, which in turn was positively related to newcomer job performance and promotability. Drawing on social influence theory's notion that characteristics related to the influencer may further affect self-presentation effectiveness, we found that newcomers' interpersonal influence and work role clarity weakened the positive effects of newcomer self-presentation on supervisor socialization efforts. These findings illustrate how newcomers can achieve desirable socialization outcomes by enacting social influence on organizational insiders with self-presentation, extending the literatures on both self-presentation and newcomer socialization.

Keywords: newcomer socialization, self-presentation, ingratiation, self-promotion, supervisor socialization effort

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The two most prominent forms of self-presentation in working life are *ingratiation* (i.e.,

behavior used to be seen as likable such as doing favors or complimenting others) and *self-*

promotion (i.e., behavior used to be seen as competent such as highlighting one's strengths or

talents) (Bolino, Long, & Turnley, 2016; Jones & Pittman, 1982). Meta-analytically, both forms

of self-presentation appear to be highly effective in the selection context, that is, for obtaining

employment (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009). However, when focusing on their effects *on*

the job, they have zero, or at best modestly positive associations with work outcomes (e.g., job

performance evaluations; Barrick et al., 2009; Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003). In light of these

findings, Bolino, Long, and Turnley (2016) stressed the notion of context distinctiveness, urging

research to explore other contexts where self-presentation may be critical.[1]

As such, we argue that one context where self-presentation on the job will have important

implications is newcomer socialization (i.e., individuals' transition from being organizational

outsiders to becoming insiders; Jones, 1986). During this process, key socialization agents such

as supervisors often have little reliable information on who their new employees are and how

they will develop (e.g., Ellis, Nifadkar, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2017). We thus expect supervisors to

be considerably affected by newcomers' self-presentation. Indeed, Bauer and Erdogan (2014)

noted that "[p]erhaps the most under-researched area of organizational adjustment is the idea that

organizational newcomers affect organizational insiders ..." (p. 450).

Research in this area is important considering today's highly competitive work

environments where supervisors often face considerable time- and resource-related constraints

that limit their ability to allocate adequate socialization efforts to newcomers (e.g., Ellis et al.,

2017). Therefore, newcomers' self-presentation should be an effective and largely overlooked

means for newcomers to overcome these constraints, especially given that supervisors play a key

role in facilitating newcomers' socialization (e.g., Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Rubenstein, &

Song, 2013). To address this issue, we draw from a social influence perspective, suggesting that

self-presentation is often used to influence how one is viewed and treated by others in order to

reach desired outcomes (Goffman, 2002). Based on social influence theory (SIT; e.g., Ferris et

al., 2002; Kelman, 1958), we develop and test a model on *how* and *when* newcomers' self-

presentation behavior facilitates their socialization success by shaping supervisors' socialization

efforts. Specifically, we propose that both ingratiation and self-promotion help newcomers to

leverage more relational and work-based socialization efforts from supervisors which, in turn,

relate to key socialization outcomes (i.e., affective commitment, job performance, and

promotability). Further, we draw from SIT to propose the moderating effects of newcomers'

interpersonal influence (i.e., the extent to which one can successfully put others at ease and build

rapport; Ferris et al., 2005) and *work role clarity* (i.e., the extent to which one can understand

what is needed to function in one's job; Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007) on

the self-presentation–supervisor socialization efforts relationships. Given that the social

influence literature suggests opposing moderation effects (i.e., facilitation vs. attenuation), we

examine these moderation effects with two research questions. Our hypothesized model is

depicted in Figure 1.

   This study makes three contributions. First, we challenge the conclusion set forth by

previous meta-analyses that self-presentation on the job has relatively poor utility (e.g., Barrick

et al., 2009). More precisely, by drawing from the notion of context distinctiveness (Bolino et al.,

2016), we seek to demonstrate that self-presentation behavior during the socialization phase can

be highly effective in eliciting positive outcomes. In doing so, we contribute toward a more

nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of self-presentation behavior on the job. Second, this

study contributes to the newcomer literature by complementing theoretical views that have

focused on newcomers as recipients of influences (e.g., Liu, Wang, Bamberger, Shi, &

Bacharach, 2015; Wang, Kammeyer-Mueller, Liu, & Li, 2015). By focusing on newcomers as

actors of social influence in line with SIT, our study sheds light on the flip side of influence

processes between newcomers and relevant organizational insiders (e.g., supervisors) during

socialization. Third, our study further informs SIT by drawing from the theory's notion that

characteristics related to the influencer may have an important effect on the effectiveness of

social influence behavior. By investigating competing predictions related to the moderating roles

of interpersonal influence and work role clarity, our study contributes to a better understanding

of the utility of self-presentation for different newcomers (Bolino et al., 2016).

Hypotheses Development

Newcomer Self-presentation through the Lens of SIT

Thus far, influence processes during socialization have been primarily examined in the

form of how supervisors can exert downward influence on newcomers to shape their attitudes,

behaviors, and socialization experience (Saks & Gruman, 2012; Wang et al., 2015; for

exceptions from experimental social psychology research see Hansen & Levine, 2009, and Kane

& Rink, 2015). Other than supervisors' downward influences, we propose that social influence

will also occur in the opposite direction such that newcomers may exert upward influence on

their new supervisors. SIT (Ferris et al., 2002) acknowledges this notion, arguing that "[s]ocial

influence processes in organizations involve the demonstration of particular behavioral tactics

and strategies by individuals to influence behavioral outcomes controlled by others in ways that

maximize influencer positive outcomes and minimize negative outcomes" (p. 65). More

specifically, the theory suggests that lower-status individuals (such as newcomers) often try to

achieve a desired reaction from their higher-status targets of influence (such as new supervisors)

by affecting how they are perceived by the target. In the current study, we focus on *ingratiation*

and *self-promotion* as the most central self-presentation tactics (e.g., Higgins et al., 2003).

In line with the social influence literature, we argue that newcomer ingratiation and self-

promotion likely lead to different types of supervisor treatment. These two tactics differ in their

foci in that ingratiation (also referred to as other-focused self-presentation) focuses on relational

aspects to present oneself as likable, whereas self-promotion (also referred to as job-focused self-

presentation) focuses on work-based aspects to present oneself as competent (e.g., Bolino,

Varela, Bande, & Turnley, 2006). As such, each tactic may relate to a supervisory reaction that

corresponds to the focus of the tactic.

Accordingly, we propose that ingratiation elicits higher levels of *supervisor relational*

socialization effort, referring to the extent to which supervisors engage in activities toward

newcomers that facilitate the development of a favorable social relationship (Wang et al., 2015).

Examples include paying personal attention to newcomers, spending a great deal of time with

newcomers, and allowing newcomers to get to know them more closely (Kammeyer-Mueller &

Wanberg, 2003). SIT suggests that engaging in ingratiation would help newcomers to make their

new supervisors respond to them with higher levels of relational effort because supervisors

would perceive them to be likable and socially desirable (Turnley & Bolino, 2001). In particular,

ingratiation may enable newcomers to present themselves as "good citizens" who will fit well

with others and the organization so that their supervisors may view them more favorably (Bolino

et al., 2006). Further, similar to the beneficial effects of ingratiation by job applicants in the

selection context, newcomers may also use ingratiation to build rapport with their new

supervisors (Zhao & Liden, 2011). Thus, social norms may also lead supervisors to reciprocate

newcomers' expressed good intention by devoting more time to them (Zhou & Wang, 2015).

Hypothesis 1: Newcomers' ingratiation is positively related to their supervisors'

relational socialization effort.

Regarding self-promotion, we propose that this behavior results in higher levels of *work-based supervisor socialization effort,* referring to activities that facilitate the development of

newcomers' work-based functioning in their new jobs (Wang et al., 2015). Examples include

providing feedback to newcomers regarding their performance, offering newcomers constructive

criticisms, and communicating guidance on newcomers' work-related behaviors. SIT suggests

that self-promotion would help newcomers to garner more work-based effort from their

supervisors because supervisors would perceive them to be competent (Turnley & Bolino, 2001).

In particular, by engaging in self-promotion to make their own professional strengths more

visible, newcomers can signal to their supervisors that they have high work-related potential

(Zhao & Liden, 2011). As a result, we expect supervisors to be more willing to invest in

newcomers' professional development by allocating more work-based socialization effort.

Hypothesis 2: Newcomers' self-promotion is positively related to their supervisors'

work-based socialization effort.

Supervisor Socialization Efforts and Socialization Outcomes

According to SIT, self-presentation is used not only to elicit a favorable reaction by one's

target (here: supervisor socialization effort), but also to further reach desired work outcomes

through obtaining such favorable reactions (Ferris et al., 2002). To capture such outcomes in the

present context, we examine newcomers' *affective commitment* as a key attitudinal indicator of

socialization success and *supervisor-rated job performance* as a key productivity-related indicator of socialization success (Bauer et al., 2007; Wang, Zhan, McCune, & Truxillo, 2011). In addition, we examine *supervisor-rated promotability* (i.e, the ascribed potential to perform in a higher-level position; De Pater, Van Vianen, Bechtoldt, & Klehe, 2009) as a crucial career-related outcome in the present context. In particular, we chose this outcome because it taps a typical core goal of social influence attempts – that is, getting along to getting ahead (Wolfe, Lennox, & Cutler, 1986; Zivnuska, Kacmar, Witt, Carlson, & Bratton, 2004). Prior theorizing and research suggests that both relationship-oriented and task-oriented supervisor behaviors are relevant for employee attitudinal, productivity-, and career-related work outcomes (Borgmann, Rowold, & Bormann, 2016; Yukl, 2013). We thus expect relational and work-based socialization efforts to independently contribute to each of the aforementioned socialization outcomes.

First, because supervisors are formal representatives of the organization, relational efforts on their part shows personal considerations toward newcomers, as well as conveys perceptions of the organization's good intent and care of newcomers' interests (Sluss & Thompson, 2012). We thus propose that newcomers would reciprocate these experiences by developing a high level of affective commitment. Second, experiencing relational attention, as well as spending time with one's supervisor, may also lead newcomers to experience positive affect (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013) and to readily see their supervisors as someone to trust (Schaubroeck, Peng, & Hannah, 2013). This may contribute to newcomers' willingness to invest energy in their tasks, thus resulting in higher performance ratings from supervisors (Bauer et al., 2007). Finally, by investing in the relationship with newcomers, supervisors may also develop more familiarity with and affect-based trust in them. Supervisors may therefore be more likely to believe in newcomers' potential to attain higher positions (Shi, Johnson, Liu, & Wang, 2013) and provide

them with chances to increase their visibility in the organization (Allen, Eby, Chao, & Bauer, 2017), thus resulting in higher promotability ratings.

    Hypothesis 3: Supervisors' relational socialization effort is positively related to newcomers' (a) affective commitment, (b) job performance, and (c) promotability.

    Further, we propose that supervisors' work-based socialization effort predicts the three aforementioned socialization outcomes. First, by receiving feedback and suggestions for performance improvement, newcomers would feel that supervisors value them as new recruits and are willing to support their work-based development, thus increasing the likelihood that they will have high levels of affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Second, by receiving constructive criticism and feedback from their supervisors, newcomers would learn their new roles more effectively and demonstrate higher job performance (Smither, London, & Reilly, 2005). Finally, by experiencing work-based effort from supervisors, newcomers would have more opportunities and empowerment to demonstrate developmental potential which can contribute to higher promotability ratings (Harris, Li, Boswell, Zhang, & Xie, 2014).

    Hypothesis 4: Supervisors' work-based socialization effort is positively related to newcomers' (a) affective commitment, (b) job performance, and (c) promotability.

    Taking the above arguments together, it follows that newcomers' ingratiation/self-promotion behaviors should be positively related to the three socialization outcomes, and that these relationships are mediated by supervisor relational/work-based socialization effort. This aligns with the tenets of SIT such that social influence elicits positive reactions, which in turn leads to more favorable outcomes (Ferris et al., 2002).

    Hypothesis 5: Supervisors' relational socialization effort mediates the relationship between newcomer ingratiation and (a) affective commitment, (b) job performance, and

(c) promotability.

Hypothesis 6: Supervisors' work-based socialization effort mediates the relationship

between newcomer self-promotion and (a) affective commitment, (b) job performance,

and (c) promotability.

The Moderating Roles of Interpersonal Influence and Work Role Clarity

Further, SIT suggests that characteristics related to the influencer can have an important

effect on the effectiveness of social influence behavior (Harris, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Shaw,

2007). In particular, we propose that *interpersonal influence* and *work role clarity* of newcomers

will shape the effectiveness of their self-presentation in eliciting supervisor socialization effort

(Bauer et al., 2007; Ferris et al., 2005). These two variables each represent a broad category of

influencer characteristics (i.e., interpersonal and work-related) that have been argued to be

important for the utility of self-presentation (Brouer, Badaway, Gallagher, & Haber, 2015;

Ralston, 1985). Moreover, we chose these specific moderators because they relate to newcomers'

extent of certainty in two distinctive but equally important socialization domains (i.e.,

interpersonal relations and work roles), both of which have been shown to play major roles in

shaping newcomers' socialization experience (Bauer et al., 2007). Given that the social influence

literature allows for opposing predictions in terms of the moderating impact (i.e., facilitative vs.

attenuating) on the self-presentation–socialization effort link (e.g., Brouer et al., 2015; Ralston,

1985), we examine these propositions in the form of research questions (RQ).

First, interpersonal influence, the extent to which one can successfully put others at ease

and build rapport (Ferris et al., 2005), should be particularly relevant for newcomers' relational

attempts of self-presentation. On the one hand, interpersonal influence could facilitate the utility

of ingratiation because those higher in interpersonal influence may execute ingratiation with

greater certainty and ease (Brouer et al., 2015; Ferris et al., 2007). On the other hand, more

certainty in interpersonal influence allows newcomers to interact and behave in ways that can

directly elicit supervisor relational effort (e.g., communicate and build rapport more effectively),

thus attenuating the impact of specific ingratiation attempts (Ferris et al., 2005).

Second, work role clarity, the extent to which one can understand what is needed to

function in one's job (Bauer et al., 2007), should be particularly relevant regarding newcomers'

work-based attempts of self-presentation. On the one hand, work role clarity can facilitate the

execution of self-promotion attempts because when newcomers are certain about what is needed

and expected of them, they may use self-presentation more appropriately (e.g., only allude to

those own strengths that are relevant of role fulfillment), thus making self-promotion more

credible in eliciting a favorable supervisory work-based reaction (e.g., Bolino et al., 2016). On

the other hand, work role clarity can attenuate the relationship between self-promotion and

supervisor work-based effort. More precisely, higher work role clarity likely enables newcomers

to more directly address their work demands. Engaging in self-promotion would thus have less

weight in eliciting supervisor work-based effort, because supervisors have more direct, work-

based information from their newcomers (Kacmar, Carlson, & Bratton, 2004).

> **RQ 1:** Does newcomers' interpersonal influence strengthen or attenuate the relationship
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> between newcomers' ingratiation and supervisors' relational socialization effort?
>
> **RQ 2:** Does newcomers' work role clarity strengthen or attenuate the relationship
>
> between newcomers' self-promotion and supervisors' work-based socialization effort?

Method

Sample and Procedures

We gathered data from recent university graduates starting various jobs and their

supervisors in the German-speaking area of Europe throughout 2015 and 2016. We collaborated

with 21 university career services who invited graduates (via email) who had either already

accepted a job offer, but had yet to start their position or who had only been at their job for less

than two months. Interested graduates could click a link in the email to redirect them to the

online screening survey of the study. After providing consent and confirming their job start date,

the graduates were included in the study ($N = 964$) and completed a Time 0 survey measuring

their interpersonal influence ability, age, gender, work experience, job type, and industry (private

vs. public). Once graduates had been at their job for two months, they received the first

substantive survey (i.e., Time 1 survey), in which we measured their work role clarity, self-

presentation tactics use in the last two months and contact information for their direct

supervisors.[2] Four months after job entry, the second substantive survey (i.e., Time 2 survey)

asked participants to rate their supervisors' relational and work-based socialization efforts in the

last two months and their affective commitment.[3, 4] At the same time, supervisors provided

ratings of the newcomers' job performance and promotability.[5] At the end of the survey period,

we had complete data from 355 newcomers and their supervisors, yielding a response rate of

36.83%.[6] For basic demographic information of newcomers and their supervisors see Table 1.

Newcomers' job types were very diverse; most prevalent were the areas of health, education, and

science (57.75%), business and administration (23.38%), and information technology and

engineering (13.52%). None of the supervisors rated more than one newcomer.

Measures

Unless otherwise specified, we used a 7-point Likert scale (1 = s*trongly disagree* to 7 =

strongly agree) for all measures. Cronbach's alphas are displayed in Table 1.

Newcomer measures. *Ingratiation and self-promotion* were assessed with four items

each from Bolino and Turnley (1999). Participants were asked to indicate how often they used

certain behavior over the last two months. The anchors were (1) *never* to (5) *often*. Sample items

were "Compliment your supervisor so she/he will see you as likeable" (ingratiation) and "Make

your supervisor aware of your accomplishments" (self-promotion). *Interpersonal influence* was

assessed with three items by Ferris et al. (2005) (e.g., "It is easy for me to develop good rapport

with most people"). *Work role clarity* was assessed with the six-item scale from Rizzo, House,

and Lirtzman (1970) (e.g., "I know what my responsibilities are"). *Newcomer-rated supervisor*

relational and work-based socialization efforts were assessed by adapting three and four items,

respectively, from Ashford and Black (1996). Items were adapted to tap a supervisor's effort to

develop a relationship with the newcomer and to provide feedback on the newcomer's work-

based behaviors, respectively. All items were worded such that they referred to the supervisor's

behavior toward the respective newcomer over the past two months, with anchors ranging from

(1) *never* to (5) *often*. Sample items were "Let you form a good relationship with her/him"

(relational socialization effort) and "Gave you constructive criticism" (work-based socialization

effort). *Affective commitment* was assessed with the eight-item scale by Allen and Meyer (1990)

(e.g., "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization").

Supervisor measures. *Job performance* was measured using five items from Williams

and Anderson (1991) (e.g., "This newcomer fulfills all the responsibilities required by her/his

job"). *Promotability* was assessed with the two-item scale by De Pater and colleagues (2009)

(e.g., "This newcomer has the capabilities to successfully perform in higher-level jobs").

Control variables. In line with prior research on socialization and self-presentation (e.g.,

Harris et al., 2007), we controlled for *age*, *gender*, *work experience*, and *type of industry* (private

vs. public). Further, because self-monitoring may affect the effectiveness of self-presentation

(Turnley & Bolino, 2001), we controlled for newcomers' *self-monitoring* (using the six-item scale from Laux & Renner, 2002). Finally, to ensure that the findings were not confounded by newcomers' opportunities to interact with supervisors, we also controlled for their *opportunity to interact with the supervisor* (using one item from Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

Analytic Strategy

Path analysis was used to estimate the hypothesized model in Mplus 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2015). We grand-mean centered all independent variables (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). To examine the mediation hypotheses, we used Monte Carlo simulations with 20,000 replications (Selig & Preacher, 2008) to obtain the 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

Results

Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations of the study variables and control variables are displayed in Table 1.[7] Unstandardized coefficient estimates for the estimated path model are displayed in Table 2. The key findings are summarized in Figure 2.

In line with *Hypothesis (H)1,* we found a positive relationship between newcomer ingratiation and supervisor relational socialization effort; in support of *H2,* newcomer self-promotion was positively related to supervisor work-based socialization effort. In addition, although not hypothesized, newcomer self-promotion was positively related to supervisor relational socialization effort, whereas newcomer ingratiation was not related to supervisor work-based socialization effort.[8] Regarding *RQ1* and *RQ2,* interpersonal influence and work role clarity both emerged as significant moderators. Plotting these interactions at conditional values of the moderators (+/- 1 *SD*) revealed that the ingratiation-supervisor relational socialization effort relationship was only significant and positive at lower levels of interpersonal influence but not when interpersonal influence was higher (see Figure 3). Similarly, the self-promotion-

supervisor work-based socialization effort relationship was only significant and positive when work role clarity was lower but not when work role clarity was higher (see Figure 4). This suggests that both interpersonal influence and role clarity weaken (rather than strengthen) the respective effects of newcomer self-presentation on supervisor socialization efforts. In line with *H3a*, supervisor relational socialization effort was positively related to affective commitment; contrary to *H3b* and *H3c*, supervisor relational socialization effort was not related to job performance and promotability. Supervisor work-based socialization effort was also not related to affective commitment, thus failing to support *H4a*. In line with *H4b* and *H4c,* supervisor work-based socialization effort was positively related to job performance and promotability.

Table 3 summarizes the parameter estimates and their 95% confidence intervals in testing the mediation hypotheses (i.e., *H5* and *H6*). *H5a* (i.e., ingratiation → supervisor relational socialization → affective commitment) was supported, while *H5b* (i.e., ingratiation → supervisor relational socialization → job performance) and *H5c* (i.e., ingratiation → supervisor relational socialization → promotability) were not supported. Moreover, *H6a* (i.e., self-promotion → supervisor work-based socialization → affective commitment) was not supported, but *H6b* (i.e., self-promotion → supervisor work-based socialization → job performance) and *H6c* (i.e., self-promotion → supervisor work-based socialization → promotability) were both supported. Further, although not hypothesized, we found evidence for a moderated mediation such that work role clarity moderated (i.e., attenuated) the indirect relationships (via supervisor work-based socialization) between self-promotion and job performance as well as promotability.[9]

Discussion

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Building upon SIT, the present study offers several theoretical implications. First,

whereas the effectiveness of self-presentation on the job has been questioned (e.g., Barrick et al., 2009), our study shows that using self-promotion and ingratiation during the socialization period helps newcomers obtain relational and work-based efforts from their supervisors, which, in turn, allow newcomers to achieve higher levels of affective commitment and higher levels of job performance and promotability, respectively. Thus, our study provides relevant insights on the beneficial implications of self-presentation by newcomers, whereas extant research has mainly focused on regular job incumbents or job applicants (Bolino et al., 2016). Moreover, our time-lagged study design complements existing self-presentation research which has thus far mainly focused on relative short-term effects (e.g., a timeframe spanning a couple days) of self-presentation on how one is judged by others (Bolino et al., 2016).

Second, our study establishes a link between the literatures on newcomer socialization and self-presentation (as a central way of upward influence), by focusing on the core of influence processes; that is, to demonstrate behavioral tactics (i.e., newcomers' self-presentation) to influence behavioral outcomes controlled or enacted by others (i.e., supervisors' socialization effort) in a manner that maximizes the influencer's positive outcomes (i.e., newcomers' socialization outcomes) (Ferris et al., 2002). As such, our findings that newcomers can actively affect their socialization success via shaping supervisor efforts complement the extant research on newcomer proactivity. While this research shows that newcomers benefit from building a favorable supervisor relationship to seek out various information (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993; Song, Liu, Shi, & Wang, 2017), our research helps to understand *how* and *when* newcomers may in fact be able to bond with their supervisors and influence how they are treated.

Third, we contribute to a more nuanced understanding of newcomers' self-presentation effectiveness. Specifically, whereas the literature suggests both facilitation- and attenuation-

based effects for interpersonal influence and work-role clarity (e.g., Brouer et al., 2015), our findings support the latter. Self-presentation appears rather ineffective for newcomers with high levels of interpersonal influence and work-role clarity. However, those who have lower interpersonal influence and work role clarity can benefit more from self-presentation in terms of eliciting supervisor efforts. We thus add knowledge on *when* such tactics can be effective for newcomers (e.g., Turnley & Bolino, 2001).[10] In doing so, we also consider mediators (i.e., supervisors' relational and work-based efforts) and moderators (i.e., newcomers' interpersonal influence and work role clarity) that are novel to the newcomer socialization literature.

We found that supervisor work-based effort was not related to affective commitment, and supervisor relational effort was not related to performance and promotability ratings. This pattern of result suggests that supervisor relational effort is primarily relevant for newcomers' affective outcomes, whereas work-based effort is primarily relevant for work-based outcomes. Supporting the notion of thematic correspondence (e.g., Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007), they point to the importance of distinguishing relational vs. work-based supervisor socialization efforts (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Finally, although not hypothesized, we found that newcomer self-promotion was also related to supervisor relational socialization effort. This is consistent with the notion that social judgement on likability and competence do not always have comparable effects; one can have a more dominant influence than the other in certain situations (Cuddy, Glick, & Beninger, 2011).

Practically, our findings imply that newcomers should be made aware that the use of ingratiation and, especially, self-promotion upon job entry can positively affect how they will be treated by their new supervisors, and hence, their socialization experience. Moreover, our moderator findings suggest that supervisors and organizations may in fact have some control

over the impact of self-presentation tactics during socialization. That is, if supervisors and/or

organizations screen for high levels of interpersonal influence and clearly communicate their

expectations and tasks to newly hired employees, they may reduce their reliance on newcomers'

self-presentation to allocate socialization effort.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

First, we assessed the majority of constructs from the newcomer perspective, thus

rendering some findings prone to common method bias. To minimize this issue, we included a

substantial time lag between newcomer self-presentation and supervisor socialization efforts, and

used supervisor ratings of job performance and promotability (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, &

Podsakoff, 2003). Moreover, the presence of significant interaction effects further suggests that

common method bias is less of a concern (Holland, 1986). In addition, our experimental study

lends support for the proposed causal direction between self-presentation and supervisor efforts

(see Appendix for details). However, it should be noted that the vignette nature of experimental

materials may limit the generalizability of our findings and the construct validity may be

undermined by collapsing both self-presentation tactics. Future research may want to examine

the reverse causal direction of H1 and H2, because receiving socialization efforts may empower

newcomers to increase their future self-presentation engagement or sufficient socialization

efforts may also decrease newcomers' urgency and need to engage in effortful upward influence.

Second, the effects of newcomer self-presentation on supervisor socialization efforts may

be further transmitted through benevolence and ability as the two most essential components of

trustworthiness (e.g., Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007). Both may also be induced among trustors

(e.g., supervisors) as a result of trustees' (e.g., newcomers) self-presentation, thus shaping the

amount of socialization effort of trustors. Further, the effects of supervisor socialization efforts

on the socialization outcomes may partly be explained by newcomer learning. Given that prior

research on newcomers' active role has largely focused on learning as a key mechanism through

which newcomers socialize into an organization (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007), testing this

idea may help to understand how newcomer social influence and learning are interweaved.

Third, scholars may test other conditions in which newcomer self-presentation may be

less effective or even backfire. For instance, when self-presentation is exclusively directed at

supervisors, such one-sided behavior may be attributed to more deceitful or self-serving motives

(Eastman, 1994), which may lead to negative effects of self-presentation on supervisor

socialization efforts (Judge & Bretz, 1994). Further, future research may investigate when

exactly the effectiveness of self-presentation behavior may diminish as an employee's

organizational tenure increases. Instead of considering the "on the job" vs. "newcomer" phase

separately and as extreme conditions, mapping this process more dynamically may result in a

finer-grained understanding of self-presentation effectiveness and help build a more rigorous

theory (George & Jones, 2000; Mitchell & James, 2001). In addition, how newcomer-supervisor

relationships evolve over time, especially regarding the initiation, mutual impact, and integration

of their respective identities as newcomers and supervisors, may also be investigated from the

perspective of relational identity theory (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007).

Finally, future research could advance the empirical development of this stream of

research by collecting social network data from newcomers and their important socialization

agents (e.g., supervisors and coworkers) with dyadic ratings. Then, advanced social network

analysis techniques such as multiple regression quadratic assignment procedure (Borgatti,

Everett, & Johnson, 2018) and the social relations model (Kenny & La Voie, 1984) can be used

to address social influence processes from a more dyadic angle.

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Footnotes

[1] The term "context" is used differently in the social influence/self-presentation and the socialization literatures. Whereas the former considers "context" as the settings in which social influence/self-presentation can be enacted, the latter considers "context" as the socio-environmental factors (i.e., formal organizational practices, climates, socialization agents) that can predict newcomer socialization content and process (Wang et al., 2015). In the present paper, we use the term "context" as referred to in the social influence/self-presentation literature.

[2] Whereas the distribution of the Time 1 survey was temporally fixed to two months after job entry, participants were invited to fill out the Time 0 survey any time before they had been in their jobs for no longer than two months. Thus, the time lags between the Time 0 survey and the Time 1 survey could vary between participants. We re-ran our analyses controlling for this time lag. All results remained virtually unchanged. Detailed results can be obtained from the authors.

[3] We decided to assess supervisor socialization efforts from the newcomers' perspective for three reasons. First, supervisor socialization efforts can be regarded as a performance-oriented type of behavior. As such, we assessed these behaviors from the perspective of the respective newcomers to avoid potential self-report bias (e.g., social desirability) if such performance-oriented behavior were to be rated by the supervisors themselves (Podsakoff et al., 2003). It also allowed our mediators to be measured from a different source than two of the dependent variables (i.e., job performance and promotability). This helps alleviate concerns related to common-method bias, given that mediators and outcomes were measured at the same time point. Second, how newcomers see their supervisors' socialization effort appears to be more important to successful adjustment to a new organization than does the supervisors' views of their provided socialization effort. Accordingly, researchers have repeatedly argued that individuals' perceptions are most relevant for how they feel and behave (Perrewé & Zellars, 1999). Third, using newcomer ratings of supervisor behavior constitutes an approach that is in line with previous newcomer research (e.g., Bauer & Green, 1998; Ellis et al., 2017; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013).

[4] To ensure that newcomers had their supervisors' intent to socialize them in mind when answering the survey, we framed the study invitation letter, the distribution email and the instruction of the survey such that newcomers were reminded of the topic at hand – that is, their own socialization and their supervisor's behavior carried out toward them.

[5] We used two and four months after job entry as measurement times to be consistent with previous literature (Chen & Klimoski, 2003; Wang et al., 2011), our theorizing, and common probation period practice in the German-speaking area of Europe.

[6] We tested whether newcomers who dropped out over the study period ($N = 609$) differed from those who completed all surveys ($N = 355$; the final sample) in terms of gender, age, years of prior work experience, and job type. This was not the case.

[7] Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the construct validity of all measures. A nine-factor model was specified by loading items on their respective latent

variables. This nine-factor model fitted the data well (χ^2[666, N = 355] = 1190.39, p < .01, confirmatory fit index [CFI] = .91, Tucker-Lewis index [TLI] = .90, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05), and significantly better than a one-factor model that was specified such that all items loaded onto the same latent factor (χ^2[702, N = 355] = 4323.54, p < .01, CFI = .36, TLI = .33, RMSEA = .12; $\Delta\chi^2$[36, N = 355] = 3133.15, p < .01). Further information concerning the successful demonstration of construct validity can be obtained from the authors.

[8] We conducted an experimental study which further supported the proposed causal direction between newcomer self-presentation and supervisor socialization efforts (see Appendix for more details). We thank an anonymous reviewer for this valuable suggestion.

[9] Results did not change when additionally controlling for job type. Given that job type was a categorical variable consisting of diverse job type clusters (e.g., health, education, and science; business and administration), we used the cluster sampling approach in the Mplus 7 software with the sandwich estimator, which provides an unbiased and robust estimations of standard errors by taking into account the differences across the job type categories (Rogers, 1993; White, 1980).

[10] It is worth noting that we only found work role clarity, but not interpersonal influence, to significantly moderate the indirect effect of the respective self-presentation tactic on newcomer socialization outcomes via supervisor socialization effort. In other words, in our study, newcomers lacking certainty about what is needed and expected in their new jobs benefited more from self-presentation in terms of reaching desirable socialization outcomes, compared to those lacking certainty in managing interpersonal matters. This finding suggests that although both newcomers' interpersonal influence and work role clarity shaped the effectiveness of self-presentation tactics on proximal supervisor reactions, they may have different implications to the long-term effectiveness of self-presentation (e.g., on ultimate socialization outcomes).

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-order Correlations

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Gender (Time 0)	.71	.45	—														
2. Age (Time 0)	27.01	3.97	-.19**	—													
3. Work experience (Time 0)	1.79	1.86	-.07	.43**	—												
4. Opportunity to interact with supervisor (Time 2)	4.26	.87	-.04	-.01	.00	—											
6. Self-monitoring (Time 0)	4.68	.89	-.04	-.04	.08	.13*	(.86)										
7. Industry (Time 0)	.48	.50	.08	.10	.04	-.08	.05	—									
8. Ingratiation (Time 1)	2.22	.88	.03	-.02	-.02	-.06	.16**	.03	(.80)								
9. Self-promotion (Time 1)	2.85	.84	-.20**	.08	.08	.05	.24**	.00	.34**	(.74)							
10. Interpersonal influence (Time 0)	5.30	.93	.03	.06	.10	.08	.45**	.01	.20**	.23**	(.82)						
11. Work role clarity (Time 1)	5.09	.96	.05	-.03	.03	.35**	.21**	-.05	.04	.21**	.15**	(.83)					
12. Supervisor relational socialization effort (Time 2)	3.29	.93	-.05	.05	.05	.44**	.17**	-.01	.20**	.26**	.16**	.37**	(.84)				
13. Supervisor work-based socialization effort (Time 2)	3.41	1.05	-.10*	.02	.07	.39**	.13*	-.01	.10	.23**	.16**	.33**	.62**	(.91)			
14. Affective commitment (Time 2)	4.21	1.09	-.09	.06	.10	.23**	.20**	-.08	.07	.20**	.22**	.33**	.34**	.31**	(.84)		
15. Supervisor-rated job performance (Time 2)	6.19	.76	.12	-.04	-.04	.17	.19	.09	.38**	.15	.23*	.18	.14	.27**	.37**	(.88)	
16. Supervisor-rated promotability (Time 2)	5.64	1.36	.03	-.05	-.08	.11	.30**	.06	.32**	.28*	.20	.06	.20	.35**	.33**	.59**	(.87)

Note. $N = 355$. Alpha reliabilities appear in the parentheses along diagonal. For gender, male = 0, female = 1. For industry, private = 0, public = 1.

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

Table 2

Unstandardized Coefficients of Moderated Path Model

Variables	Supervisor relational socialization effort		Supervisor work-based socialization effort		Affective commitment		Job performance		Promotability	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Intercept	3.30**	.04	3.44**	.05	3.26**	.25	5.87**	.37	4.45**	.70
Control variables										
Gender	-.04	.10	-.18	.11	-.12	.12	.15	.18	.21	.34
Age	.01	.01	-.01	.01	.01	.02	.00	.02	.01	.04
Work experience	.00	.03	.03	.03	.02	.03	-.04	.05	-.11	.09
Opportunity to interact with supervisor[a]	.40**	.05	.38**	.06	.03	.07	.11	.11	.05	.21
Self-monitoring	.02	.05	-.03	.06	.05	.07	.03	.09	.34*	.17
Industry	.04	.08	.06	.10	-.14	.10	.19	.17	.12	.31
Independent variables										
Ingratiation	.19**	.05	.09	.06	-.02	.07	.29*	.12	.33	.22
Self-promotion	.15**	.06	.16*	.07	.06	.07	-.02	.12	.22	.23
Interpersonal influence	.03	.05	.09	.06	.13*	.06	.04	.10	-.02	.18
Work role clarity	.20**	.05	.18**	.06	.23**	.06	.03	.09	-.17	.17
Interactions										
Ingratiation × Interpersonal influence	-.13*	.06	-.12	.07	.02	.08	.04	.18	-.05	.34
Ingratiation × Work role clarity	.05	.05	.06	.06	.09	.07	.12	.12	.07	.22
Self-promotion × Work role clarity	-.05	.05	-.14*	.06	.02	.06	-.30*	.12	-.12	.22
Self-promotion × Interpersonal influence	.06	.06	.05	.07	-.07	.07	-.26	.17	-.15	.34
Mediators										
Supervisor relational socialization effort					.18*	.07	-.18	.12	-.16	.22
Supervisor work-based socialization effort					.11	.06	.27**	.10	.51**	.19
Residual Variances	.59**	.04	.83**	.06	.93**	.07	.41**	.07	1.37**	.23
R²	32.7%		25.3%		21.9%		36.3%		34.2%	

Note. *N* = 355. *SE* = standard error. For gender, male = 0, female = 1. For industry, private = 0, public = 1.
* *p* < .05 ** *p* < .01.

Table 3

Unstandardized Estimates and Bias-Corrected Confidence Intervals of Indirect Path Coefficients

Variables	Indirect effect	
	Estimate	Bias-corrected 95% CI
Ingratiation → Supervisor relational socialization effort → Affective commitment (H5a)	**.034**	**[.004, .075]**
High interpersonal influence (HI)	.012	[-.017, .049]
Low interpersonal influence (LI)	.057	[.008, .120]
Difference between HI and LI conditions	-.045	[-.113, .000]
Ingratiation → Supervisor relational socialization effort → Job performance (H5b)	**-.034**	**[-.091, .010]**
High interpersonal influence	-.012	[-.056, .019]
Low interpersonal influence	-.057	[-.146, .017]
Difference between HI and LI conditions	.045	[-.013, .137]
Ingratiation → Supervisor relational socialization effort → Promotability (H5c)	**-.030**	**[-.126, .053]**
High interpersonal influence	-.007	[-.068, .036]
Low interpersonal influence	-.048	[-.194, .082]
Difference between HI and LI conditions	.040	[-.073, .187]
Self-promotion → Supervisor work-based socialization effort → Affective commitment (H6a)	**.017**	**[-.003, .047]**
High work role clarity (HW)	.002	[-.020, .027]
Low work role clarity (LW)	.032	[-.004, .080]
Difference between HW and LW conditions	-.029	[-.083, .005]
Self-promotion → Supervisor work-based socialization effort → Job performance (H6b)	**.043**	**[.005, .099]**
High work role clarity	.006	[-.044, .059]
Low work role clarity	.080	[.016, .167]
Difference between HW and LW conditions	-.074	[-.177, -.005]
Self-promotion → Supervisor work-based socialization effort → Promotability (H6c)	**.082**	**[.010, .182]**
High work role clarity	.011	[-.083, .111]
Low work role clarity	.154	[.034, .316]
Difference between HW and LW conditions	-.142	[-.333, -.011]

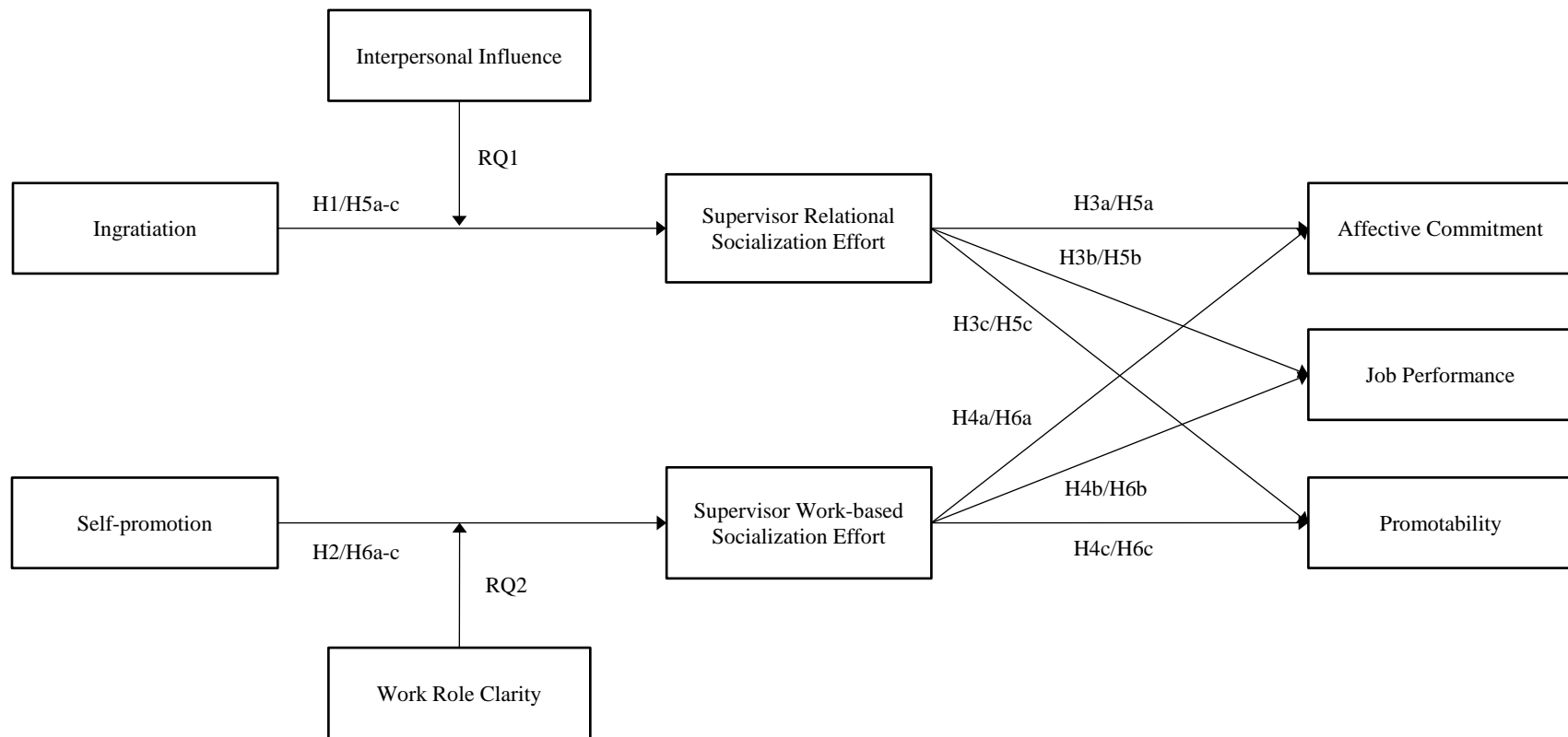*Note.* Estimates and confidence intervals used to test Hypotheses 5-6 are in bold.

Figure 1. Hypothesized model. H = hypothesis. RQ = research question. H5a, H5b, H5c, H6a, H6b, and H6c represent mediation effects.
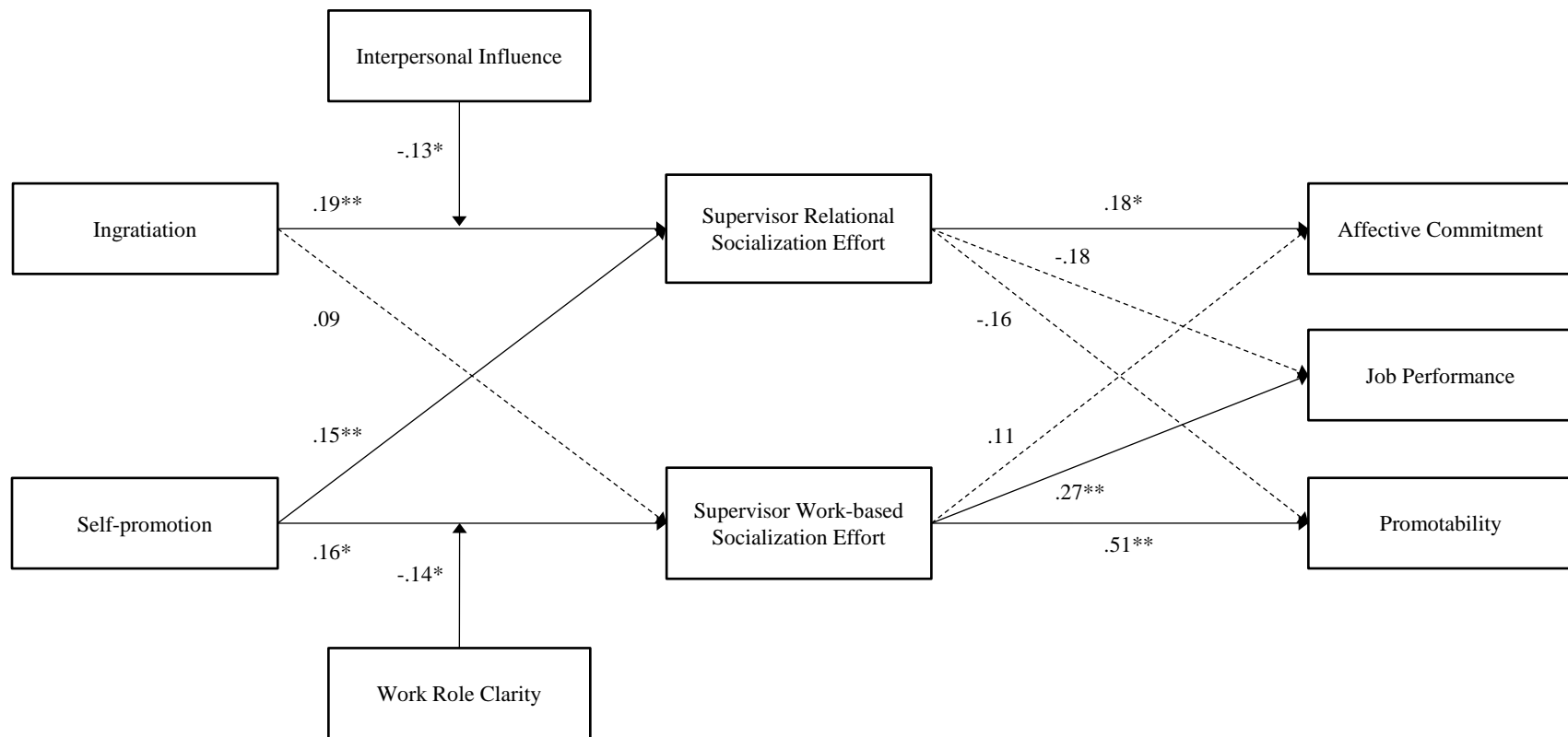
Figure 2. Unstandardized estimates of path coefficients. Effects of the control variables and direct effects between self-presentation and socialization outcome variables are not included for the purpose of clarity; for estimates of the complete set of coefficients, please see Table 2. Solid lines are statistically significant, whereas dashed lines are not.
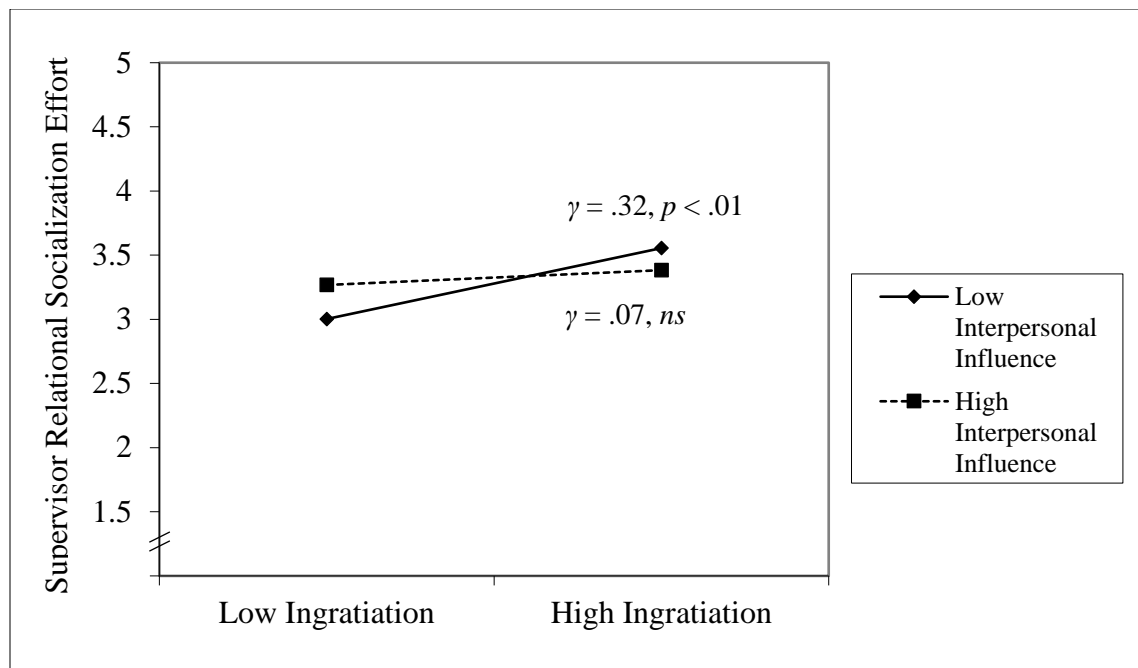* *p* < .05 ** *p* < .01.

Figure 3. Newcomer interpersonal influence moderates the effect of newcomer ingratiation on supervisor relational socialization effort.
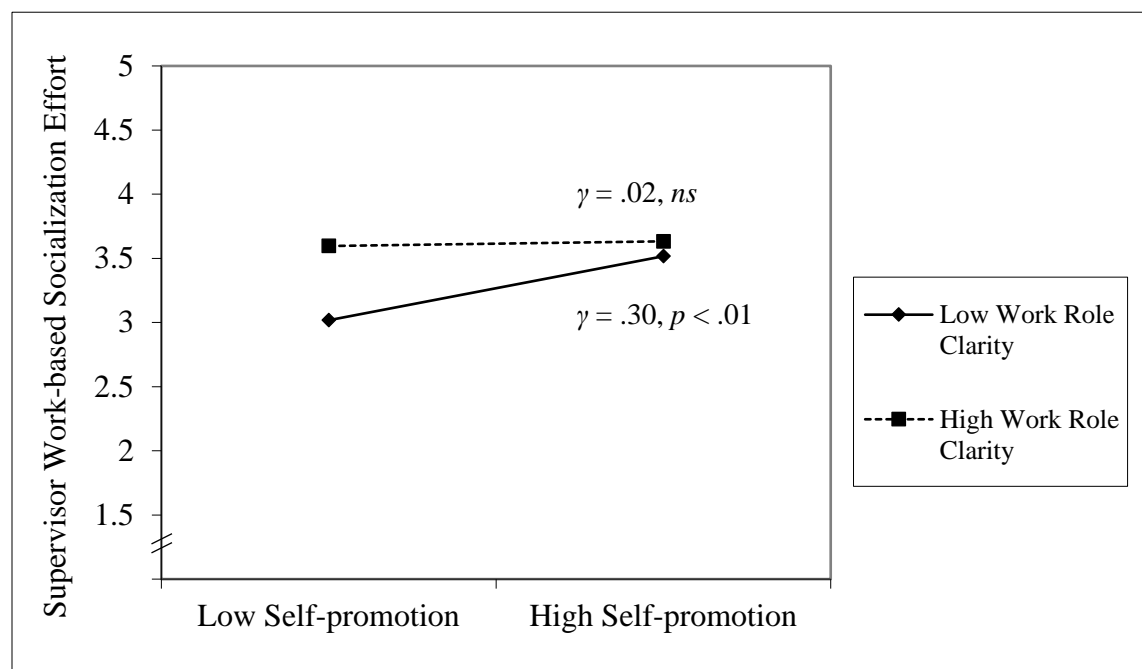

Figure 4. Newcomer work role clarity moderates the effect of newcomer self-promotion on supervisor work-based socialization effort.

Appendix

Description of the additional experimental study. We conducted an experimental study to substantiate the proposed direction of effects between newcomer self-presentation and supervisor socialization efforts. In particular, we tested whether supervisors differ in the extent to which they would provide socialization efforts toward a newcomer if they encountered a newcomer who engages in either *low* vs. *high* levels of self-presentation (in the form of both ingratiation and self-promotion).

Sample, Materials, and Procedures. We collected data from 99 individuals who indicated holding a supervisory role with the help of a market research company (Respondi; www.respondi.de). In total, 31.3% of participants were female; age ranged from 23 to 65 years ($M = 45.42$, $SD = 9.60$). Average tenure was 13.65 years ($SD = 10.24$), and average time in a supervisory role was 11.09 years ($SD = 7.97$). In total, 31.3% had vocational training, 24.2% had a bachelor's degree, 37.4% had a master's degree, and 5.1% had a doctoral degree. Participants worked in a variety of industry types, the most prevalent being public administration (14.1%), health and social affairs (11.1%), information technology (11.1%), and manufacturing (11.1%).

Data were collected online using a between-subjects design. Participants were first instructed to imagine they were supervising a new employee, after which they were randomly assigned to a scenario describing a newcomer using low levels of self-presentation ($n = 49$) or a newcomer using high levels of self-presentation ($n = 50$). These vignettes were designed such that they (a) closely aligned with the definition of self-presentation in the form of ingratiation (i.e., behavior to appear likable) and self-promotion (i.e., behavior to appear competent) (Jones & Pittman, 1982) and (b) presented example behavior of the measure from Bolino and Turnley (1999) that we used in the main study. In particular, the vignettes were worded such that supervisors had to imagine a newcomer who "never/often behaved toward them in order to appear likable and competent", followed by the ingratiation examples "the newcomer has never/often shown interest in you, complimented you, or done a favor for you" and the self-promotion examples "the newcomer has never/often told you what talents or abilities she/he has or how valuable she/he is to the company". Supervisors then reported the amount of socialization efforts they would provide to the respective newcomer in the vignette (using the same adapted scales from Ashford and Black [1996], as in the main study) and provided their answers to various demographics.

Results. In line with our propositions, participants in the low self-presentation condition provided significantly less overall socialization efforts compared to those in the high self-presentation condition ($t[97] = -3.87$, $p < .01$, Cohen's $d = .78$). Considering the two types of socialization efforts separately, supervisors who encountered a low self-presentation newcomer provided significantly less relational socialization effort ($t[97] = -4.42$, $p < .01$, Cohen's $d = .89$) and significantly less work-based socialization effort ($t[97] = -2.10$, $p < .05$, Cohen's $d = .42$) compared to those who were presented with a newcomer high in self-presentation. Taken together, the results of this additional experimental study lend further evidence for the proposed causal direction between newcomer self-presentation and supervisor socialization efforts.