

Organizational Socialization, Individual Adaptability and Organizational Career Growth: the mediating role of Person-Organization Fit

Paola Spagnoli, Alessandro Lo Presti, Emanuela Ingusci,
Amelia Manuti, Michela Cortini

Research question: Does person/organization fit mediate the relationship between organizational socialization and organizational career growth?

Organizational Career Growth (OCG) is defined as one's perceptions of the chances of development and advancement within an organization (Jans, 1989).

Although the organizational change processes that occurred in the last two decades have involved hindering career advancement interventions, such as downsizing, flattening organizational structure, wage freezes, and job enrichment, career growth interventions may still play a strategic role.

OCG may still play a relevant role in the process leading to the development of positive attitudes toward the work itself and the organization and individual performance (McElroy & Weng, 2016; Spagnoli, 2017).

Studies in this field have been mainly focused on the consequences of OCG, whether the study of the process eliciting OCG is still in its infancy.

Building on the **organizational socialization** theoretical framework, a recent study by Spagnoli (2017) reported a significant relationship between organizational socialization and organizational career growth.

P-O fit is a proximal outcome of the organizational socialization process (e.g., Cable and Judge, 1996; Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007), it refers to the compatibility between people and the organizations in which they work (Bowen, Ledford, & Nathan, 1991; Kristof, 1996; Schneider, 1987).

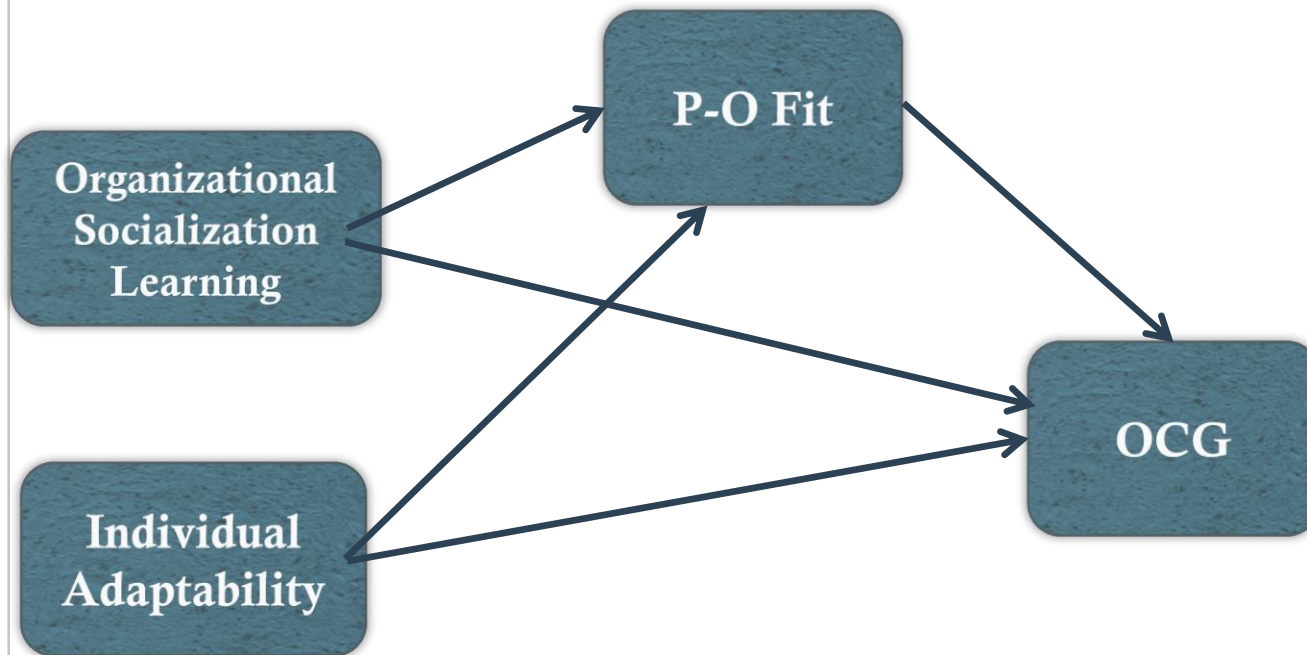
Research question: Does person/organization fit mediate the relationship between organizational socialization and organizational career growth?

Theory of work adjustment (TWA; Swanson & Schneider, 2013), which posits a relation between person–environment fit and job satisfaction and tenure, suggests that person–organization fit may have a direct influence on extrinsic measures of career success such as salary and job level attained (Bretz & Judge, 1994). Practically, the more an employee successfully adapts to/fits the organization, the more it is likely for him or her to attain further job level and salary increase.

In organizations where employees' career advancement is still possible, the employees' adjustment could be a necessary precondition to be promoted within the organization and achieve organizational and individual positive outcomes.

Target: high potential and knowledge workers.

Empirical model and study hypotheses



H1: Organizational socialization is related to OCG.

H2: Organizational socialization is related to P-O Fit.

H3: P-O Fit mediates the relationship between Organizational Socialization and OCG.

Note: Individual Adaptability was inserted in the model as control variable.

Method participants



476 men (51.3%)
451 women (48.7%)



258 temps (27.8%)
669 perms (72.2%)



593 low to medium (64%)
334 higher (36%)



155 up to 1 year (16.8%)
132 up to 2 years (14.2%)
640 more than 2 years (69%)

Method: variables

Variables	Items	Item example
Organizational socialization (Haueter, Hoff Macan, Winter, 2003) <i>3 sub-scales</i>	35	- Organization (12 item): <i>"Hystory of this organization"</i> - Group (12 item): <i>"Group's objectives"</i> - Task (11 item): <i>"Responsibilities, tasks, and project"</i>
Individual Adaptability (Ployhart & Bliese, 2006)	4	<i>"I believe it is important to be flexible in dealing with new people"</i>
P-O Fit (Cable & DeRue, 2002)	5	<i>"My personal values match my organization's values and culture"</i>
OCG (Spagnoli & Weng, 2017) <i>4 sub-scales</i>	15	- Career goal progress (4 item): <i>"My present job moves me closer to my career goals"</i> - Professional ability development (4 item): <i>"My present job encourages me to continuously gain new and job-related skills"</i> - Promotion speed (4 item): <i>"My promotion speed in the present organization is fast"</i> - Remuneration growth (3 item): <i>"My salary is growing quickly in my present organization"</i>

Method: procedure and data analysis

A **self-report questionnaire** was administered by **hand delivery and return** through the **snowball technique** involving graduated students on Work psychology who voluntarily took part in the data collecting phase of the study. As part of a class assignment meant to integrate the research experience with the classroom experience, each of these students received a limited number of questionnaire to distribute to workers.

Structural Equation Modelling

Bootstrap Method (*Bias-corrected confidence interval*)

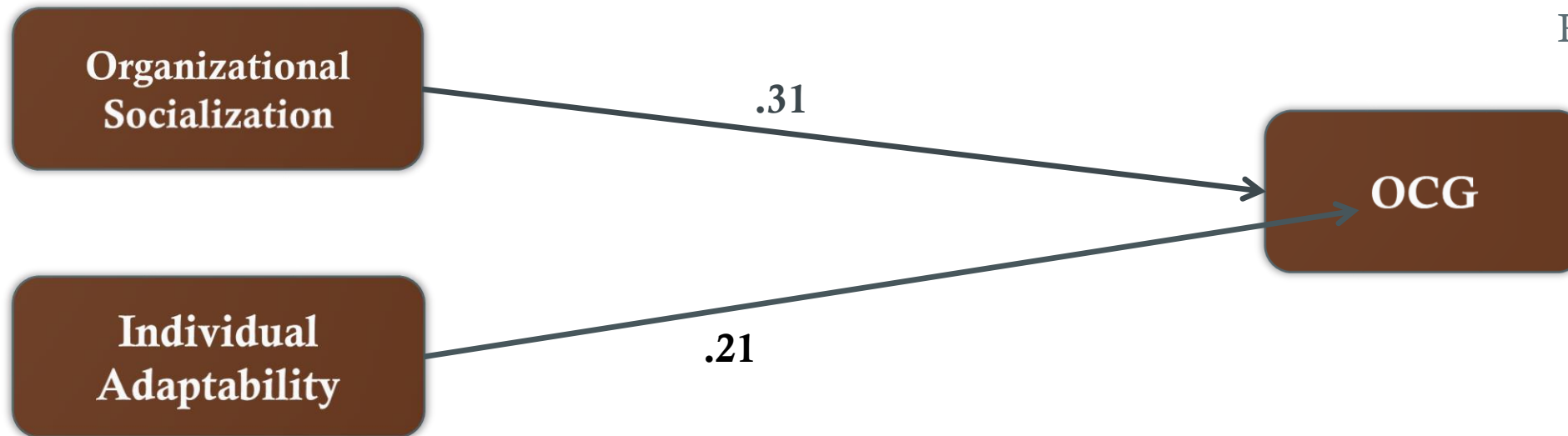
Descriptives, zero-order correlation, reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas)

Variables	M	sd	1	2	3	4
1. Individual Adaptability	3.57	.60	<i>.69</i>			
2. Organizational Socialization	4.30	.54	.31	<i>.89</i>		
3. Person-Organization Fit	3.49	1.00	.17	.44	<i>.90</i>	
4. Organizational Career Growth	2.99	.92	.25	.32	.61	<i>.93</i>

RESULTS *direct effects*

(standardized estimates)

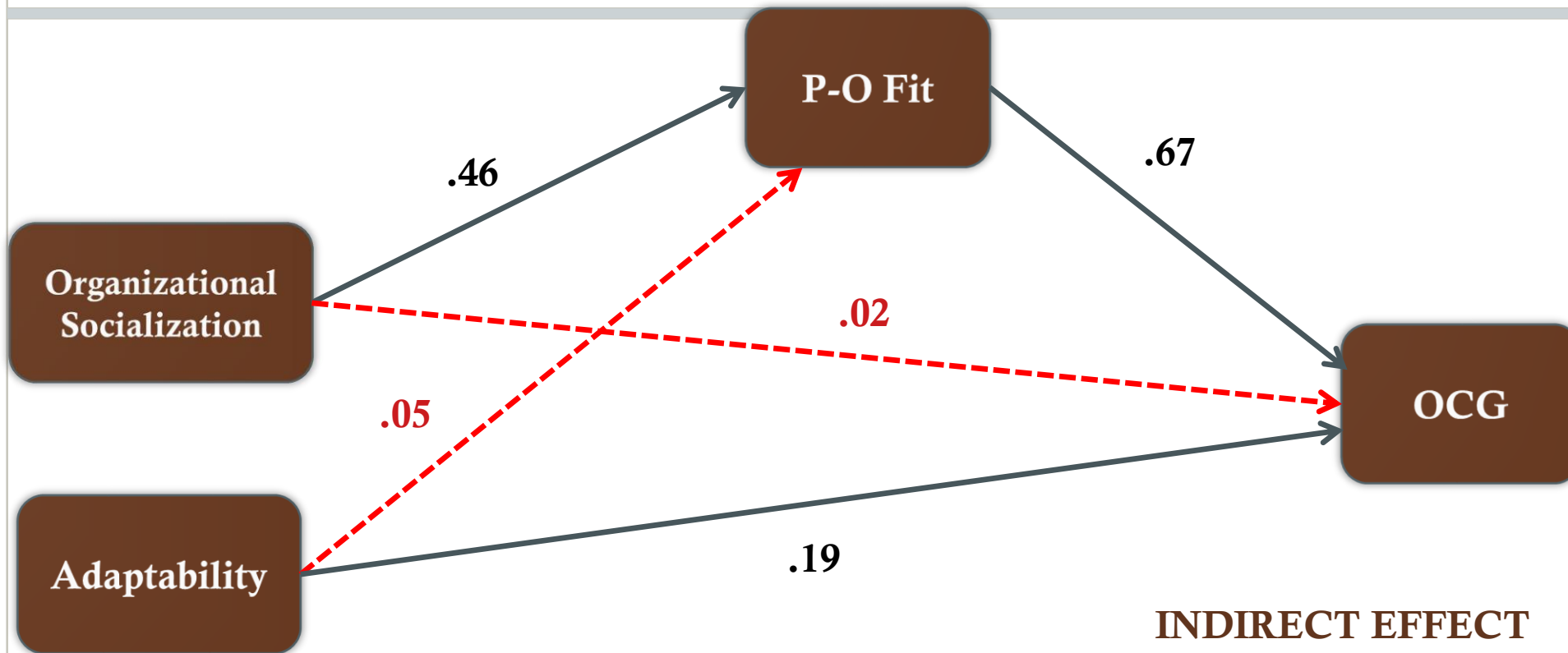
MODEL FIT
 $X^2=225,197$ $df=41$
CFI=.95
RMSEA=.07



R² = .14

RESULTS *Indirect effects*

(standardized estimates)



MODEL FIT
 $X^2=516.207$ $df=98$
CFI=.95
RMSEA=.07

$R^2 = .51$

INDIRECT EFFECT
 $B = .78$ $p=.002$
[LowCI =.627, UpCI= .957]

Discussion

- Organizational socialization predicted Organizational Career Growth (H1 supported)
- Organization socialization predicted P-O Fit (H2 supported)
- P-O Fit Mediated the relationship between Organizational Socialization and Organizational Career Growth (H3 supported)

Conclusions and implications

- Values' match between employees and organization plays a relevant role in the process leading to the development of the perception of employees career growth. Organization should consider this when recruiting and attracting new employees:
 - Manager should clarify from the beginning the organizational values.
 - New employees should be selected considering candidates' values.
- Organizational socialization interventions aimed to foster employees learning regarding organization, group and task should be implemented.

Limits

- Cross-sectional survey.
- Common method variance issues.
- Sampling bias.
- Heterogeneous sample

Thank you for your attention!

Contacts: paola.spagnoli@unicampania.it

AIP Research Group «Work in Progress»: <http://www.aipass.org/node/6938>

References

- Swanson, J. L., & Schneider, M. (2013). Minnesota theory of work adjustment. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (2nd Ed., pp. 3–23). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Bretz, R. D., Jr., & Judge, T. A. (1994). Person–organization fit and the theory of work adjustment: Implications for satisfaction, tenure, and career success. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 44, 32–54.
- McElroy, J. C., & Weng, Q. (2016). The connections between career and organizations in the new career era. *Journal of Career Development*, 43, 3–10.
- **Spagnoli**, P. (2017). Organizational socialization learning, organizational career growth, and work outcomes, a moderated mediation model. *Journal of Career Development*, DOI: 10.1177/0894845317700728.
- Cable, D.M., Judge, T.A. (1996). Person-organization fit, job choice decision, and organizational entry. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 67, 294-311.
- Saks, A.M., Uggerlev, K.L., Fassina N.E. (2007). Socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment: A meta-analytic review and test of a model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 70, 413-446.

References

- Haueter, J., Hoff Macan, T., & Winter, J. (2003). Measurement of newcomer socialization: Construct validation of a multidimensional scale. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 63, 20–39.
- Robert E. Ployhart, , Paul D. Bliese, (2006). Individual Adaptability (I-ADAPT) Theory: Conceptualizing the Antecedents, Consequences, and Measurement of Individual Differences in Adaptability, in C. Shawn Burke, Linda G. Pierce, Eduardo Salas (ed.) *Understanding Adaptability: A Prerequisite for Effective Performance within Complex Environments (Advances in Human Performance and Cognitive Engineering Research, Volume 6)* Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp.3 – 39.
- **Spagnoli, P., Weng, Q.** (2017). Factorial validity, cross-cultural equivalence, and latent means examination of the organizational career growth scale in Italy and China. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2017.1340325>.
- Cable d.M., DeRue D.S. (2002). The convergent and discriminant validity of subject fit perceptions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 875-884.