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Navigating Remote Organizational Socialization:
Examining Demands and Resources for Newcomers in the Remote
Work Context

Author: Xiaochuan Rong

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Supervisor: Jan Magnusson

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Abstract

The academic interest in remote work has drastically increased over recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Existing studies have proven that remote work has advantages and disadvantages for employers and employees. However, little is known about the influence of remote work and the relevant factors in the context of newcomers and their organizational socialization. Building on the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, this study employed semi-structured interviews with nine participants who worked in two educational consulting companies in China and were in the process of remote organizational socialization during the interview. The thematic analysis was applied to analyze and interpret the interview data and explore insights into newcomers' possible demands and resources when they socialize and work remotely. The findings unfolded that the demands encountered by remote-working newcomers during the process of organizational socialization encompass a range of issues. Besides, there exist resources that can aid newcomers in remote organizational socialization. The findings of this study, on the one hand, extend the application of the JD-R model to the organizational socialization of newcomers in the remote work context and, on the other hand, suggest potential challenges and potentially useful resources for organizations and managers at the practical level in guiding newcomers in organizational socialization in the remote work context.

Keywords

Remote work; Newcomer; Organizational socialization; Job demands; Job resources

Introduction

The increase in remote work has been propelled by technological advancements and especially since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The adoption of remote work arrangements by organizations is on the rise, with the initial aim of reducing the risk of pandemic transmission and its relevant detriments, but now remote work has become a new prevalent working style in the post-pandemic period by virtue of its strengths such as offering greater flexibility, attracting highly skilled personnel, and improving employee contentment. Regarding remote work, the International Labor Organization (2020) has classified the contemporary working style into four distinct categories: teleworking, remote work, working at home, and home-based work. However, it has been observed that these terms have been utilized interchangeably in various research studies. Thus, the present investigation will adopt the definition formulated by Tursunbayeva et al. (2022), which posits that remote work encompasses any work arrangement conducted beyond the conventional onsite workplace, regardless of whether it is facilitated by information and communication technologies.

Rudolph et al. (2021) have identified the top 10 topics in the field of industrial and organizational psychology that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted. Among these topics, telecommuting and virtual teamwork were identified as particularly salient, highlighting the significance of remote work and its potential challenges for employers and employees. Nonetheless, one crucial subject matter that has been overlooked within the ten topics pertains to organizational socialization in the context of remote work, which holds significant implications for a vast majority of organizations and employees. The concept of organizational socialization refers to the progression of individuals who are new to an organization as they shift from

being external to internal members of the organization (Bauer et al., 2007). The practical implication of this concept pertains to the degree to which newly recruited employees acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and functional comprehension of their job responsibilities, establish professional relationships with their colleagues within the organization, and gain a comprehensive understanding of the culture, procedures, and personnel of their new workplace (Van Maanen and Schein, 1977).

The genesis of research on organizational socialization can be traced back to investigations into burnout phenomena within the workplace (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Moreover, studies on organizational socialization, also known as newcomer adjustment or onboarding (Cooper-Thomas and Burke, 2012). Numerous research studies have provided evidence regarding the consequences of organizational socialization in traditional workplace settings. For example, effective organizational socialization facilitates the transition of new members from being outsiders to becoming valuable contributors while simultaneously reducing negative perceptions in a complex, dynamic, and unfamiliar environment (Ashforth et al., 2007). However, the recent shift from traditional work towards remote work may introduce novel challenges or opportunities for new employees during their organizational socialization, the implications of which remain uncertain. Furthermore, there is a dearth of empirical investigation into the effects of remote work on integrating new employees into an organization.

According to the knowledge gap, this study aims to investigate the organizational socialization of newcomers working in a remote environment. As stated previously, there is insufficient evidence to determine whether the transmission of remote work has positive or negative effects on the organizational socialization of newcomers.

This study will therefore examine, on the one hand, the possible new challenges that have emerged as a result of remote work and their impact on the organizational socialization of newcomers, and, on the other hand, what possible resources exist in remote work and how newcomers utilize them to facilitate their process of organizational socialization. In particular, the survey will sample newcomers from two Chinese educational consulting firms.

This study will utilize the theoretical framework of the job-demands resources model (JD-R), which simultaneously integrates work's positive and negative influences on employees and provides a dynamic process between the two (Bauer et al., 2007). Therefore, it fits the objectives of the research. In order to capture the diverse experiences and perspectives of newcomers, the study will employ a qualitative research approach, with semi-structured interviews serving as the primary data acquisition method. The interview data will then be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify themes and patterns from the participants' narratives.

The research questions of this study are:

- RQ1: What are the new demands that have emerged due to remote work, and how do these demands impact the organizational socialization of newcomers?
- RQ2: How do newcomers navigate resources to facilitate their organisational socialisation process in remote work?

Literature Review

Presently, an increasing number of investigations pertaining to organizational socialization have centred on identifying strategies that can facilitate the successful completion of the process of organizational socialization by newcomers. This process can be categorized into two perspectives: the organisation's view and the newcomer's.

From the View of the Organization

Existing research on how to socialize newcomers to an organization can be characterized in two components from the organisation's standpoint. On the one hand, organizations implement specific orientation and training programs to facilitate the onboarding process for new employees. In contrast, research and practice indicate that organizations use socialization tactics to help newcomers integrate into their new organizations and occupations rapidly. Compared to specific programs, socialization tactics are more sophisticated and systemic.

Orientation program for newcomers refers to a series of company-led events that take place within the first month after arrival (Wanous and Reichers, 2000), and it has been regarded as one of the most prevalent and significant approaches for firms to onboard their newcomers (Feldman, 1989). A training program is comparable to an orientation program in that firms likewise prepare it and is typically administered formally to newcomers. However, training programs place a greater emphasis on the information and abilities that newcomers must acquire and master in order to perform work-related tasks (Saks, 1996).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that organizational orientation and training programs have a good effect on the organizational socialization of newcomers, but other variables can modify this effect. In the case of orientation programs, Wesson and Gogus (2005) experimentally compared the effects of social-based and computer-based orientation programs on newcomers' organizational socialization. They discovered that computer-based orientation programs were not as conducive to newcomers' learning about the organisation's people, politics, organizational goals, and values as social-based programs. Fan, Buckley and Litchfield (2012) discovered, through a review of prior research, that some traditional orientation programs have little effect in fostering the organizational socialization of newcomers. In contrast, some more profound interventions, such as adjusting newcomers' expectations of the organization and the job, appear to aid in adapting to their new positions. Some studies have demonstrated that training programs can aid newcomers in defining their duties and removing ambiguity (Delobbe et al., 2016). However, the actual effectiveness of training programs can be affected by the personal factors of newcomers. For instance, Saks (1994) examined the effects of formal and self-study training on the anxiety and stress levels of junior accountants and found that self-efficacy affected the effectiveness of training. Delobbe et al. (2016) have also indicated that the more a newcomer's sense of obligation, the greater the perceived and obtained training benefit. Both orientation and training programs are essential for the operational systems of new employees. However, the majority of research on them is based on case studies of unique organizations, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, more research has been conducted on the function of socialization tactics in the socialization of newcomers in organizations at the organizational level.

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) first described the socialization tactic as "the

experience constructed for individuals by others in the organization as they transition from one role to another". They discovered that socialization tactics might be classified into six dimensions, with each dimension comprising two bipolar components with a continuous range. Collective and individual socialization, formal and casual socialization, sequential and random socialization, fixed and variable socialization, continuous and discontinuous socialization, investment socialization and divestment socialization were the six factors in socialization procedures. In a later study, including a group of recent MBA graduates, Jones (1986) studied the relationship between socialization methods and newcomer adaptation processes. He proved that the six techniques Van Maanen and Schein provided could be categorized into organizational and personal aspects. Institutionalized socialization consists of collective, formal, continuous, fixed, serial, and invested techniques; individualized socialization consists of individual, informal, random, variable, discontinuous, and divested strategies. According to Ashforth et al. (1997), the difference between these two components is that institutionalized socialization informs the newcomer and demonstrates a more structured and formalized socialization process, whereas the latter component represents a lack of structure that allows the newcomer to be socialized unintentionally rather than intentionally.

Several studies have begun to examine the distinctions between the effects of institutionalized and individualized tactics on organizations and newcomers, building on previous research on organizational tactics. Several studies have shown the value of institutionalized tactics for organizations and newcomers. Ashforth and Saks (1996) discovered that institutionalized socialization tactics were related to reduced role ambiguity, role conflict, stress symptoms, and intention to leave, as well as increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational

identification. Cable and Parsons (2001) conducted a three-wave longitudinal study to see how socialization tactics influence newcomers' perceptions of their own personhood. They discovered that socialization tactics, particularly fixed, sequential, serial, and investiture tactics, can increase newcomers' organizational fit and assist them in establishing values that are aligned with those of the business. In addition, they argued that these four tactics are likely to increase the sense of belonging among newcomers. Comparatively, fewer studies have been undertaken on individualized tactics than institutionalised ones. Chong et al. (2021) found, using structural equation modelling on data from over 500 MBA interns, that personalized methods serve to address newcomers' requirements for autonomy and enhance their sense of self-determination, whereas institutionalized strategies have the opposite effect.

To sum up, socialization tactics are essential for both organizational development and the socialization of newcomers. However, a deficiency in the current research on corporate socialization tactics is the paucity of research on remote work environments; consequently, the means of applying socialization tactics in remote work environments and the proportion of institutionalized or individualized strategies used remain unclear and unanswered.

From the View of the Newcomer

From the standpoint of newcomers, research on organizational socialization has focused on examining both the content and proactive behaviours of newcomers' organizational socialization. First, the content of socialization refers to what newcomers need to learn to become organizational insiders (Wang et al., 2015). Several studies have investigated the nature of organizational socialization content and its potential categorization. Task, role, group, and organization are the four

areas of socialization content described by Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992). Haueter et al. (2003) developed a comparable category with organization, group, and task components. A second typology, developed by Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002), comprises four dimensions: role, social, organizational knowledge, and interpersonal resources. The six-component categorization proposed by Chao et al. (1994) is by far the most thorough and widely used classification. According to Chao et al. (ibid), newcomers acquire six key components of organizational socialization: history, language, politics, people, organizational goals and values, and performance competencies. To some extent, the six aspects are recommended to control what newcomers should learn, aiding companies and individuals in comprehending the possible benefits of organizational socialization.

On the other side of organizational socialization content, researchers have examined how learning about various socialization content affects successful organizational socialization. According to one study, the influence on newcomers' socialisation differs due to the dimensions of socialization content (Simosi, 2010). Simosi used the data from new hires in a Greek service company to conduct regression analyses and found that information gleaned from both working relationships and social relationships is crucial for developing newcomers' organizational commitment, specifically affective commitment, in the early stages of organizational socialization (ibid). Furthermore, the influence of information from social interactions is greater than the influence of information from professional contacts. In addition, research suggests that the content of socialization can mediate between certain indicators and the organizational socialization results of newcomers. For example, a study found that mastery of performance proficiency, organization goal and values, people and politics can mediate the positive association between two indicators, pre-entry knowledge and agent helpfulness, and role clarity, job

satisfaction, and organizational commitment, using data from newcomers at a large educational institution to build structural equation model (Klein et al., 2006).

Unlike socialization content, which emphasizes the content that newcomers should learn, proactive behaviour research focuses on how newcomers behave during the organizational socialization process (Klein and Heuser, 2008, Wang et al., 2015). Several studies have attempted to outline the characteristics of positive newcomer conduct in relation to the study on positive newcomer behaviour. For instance, Crant (2000) has argued that newcomers have a tendency to alter the status quo by taking the initiative to enhance existing conditions or establish new ones. Parker and Collin (2010) have determined that proactive employee behaviours involve being anticipatory or future-focused, self-motivated, and taking the initiative to make things happen. On the other hand, specific expressions of proactive behaviour among newcomers have been classified by several studies. Crant (2000), for instance, classified proactive behaviours into two categories. The first includes behaviours such as spotting possibilities for advancement and challenging the status quo. The other consists of so-called context-specific activities, such as feedback seeking and stress management. In addition, Cooper-Thomas et al. (2011) classified proactive behaviours into three categories: changing role or environment (e.g., redefining job, changing work procedure), changing self (e.g., feedback seeking, role modelling), and mutual development, which emphasizes the interactions between newcomers and their work environment (e.g., boss relationship building, resources exchanging).

Existing research implies that proactive practices of new employees improve their organizational socialization. According to a study by Jansen et al. (2005), subtleties in proactive behaviours may affect the learning and retention of socialization

content. For instance, asking is typical proactive behaviour of newcomers in unfamiliar contexts, and the socialization material newcomers learn may differ depending on whom they question. Asking supervisors can help newcomers learn politics and language. In contrast, asking experienced colleagues is a better option for newcomers who wish to learn about the organization's performance, history, objectives, and values. In addition, Gruman et al. (2006) proposed that the proactive activity of newcomers moderates the relationship between socialization tactics and numerous good outcomes. Fang et al. (2011) also researched the function of proactive conduct and concluded that it could help new workers tap into social capital through ties with existing insiders in the firm and use this social capital to facilitate their adaption and career success.

In addition, research has investigated elements that may influence proactive behaviour, including organizational setting and personal characteristics. Gruman et al. (2006) surveyed a sample of cooperative university students and discovered that institutionalized socialization strategies, particularly structured and formalized strategies, were more likely to activate proactive behaviour in newcomers, as opposed to personalized strategies, which inhibit proactive behaviours such as information seeking and relationship expansion in some newcomers. In addition, one study revealed that socialization tactics may be a more accurate predictor of proactive action than other types of strategies (Nguyen et al., 2021). Individual qualities have an effect on the proactive conduct of newcomers, in addition to the influence of socialization tactics. In Cooper-Thomas and Burke's study (2012), for instance, newcomers exhibited proactive behaviour when they were more confident in their talents, less tolerant of uncertainty, acted with goal-oriented views, or were just more outgoing. In contrast, when newcomers are anxious or have negative perceptions, they engage in less proactive activities. Lastly, research has

demonstrated that organizational culture has an effect on the proactive conduct of newcomers. Liu et al. (2021) conducted an empirical study with 263 newcomers to examine the relationship between colleagues' rejection and newcomers' proactive activity. According to the findings, exclusion among coworkers negatively affected newcomers' information-seeking and social networking habits. Cross-sectional research undertaken in four Dutch organizations illustrated that a learning-oriented organizational climate, which implies support of innovation and learning from failure, might facilitate the establishment of proactive behaviors through the mediation of individuals' resilience (Putz, 2013).

Remote Work

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in research on remote work, and existing studies have examined the topic of remote work from various angles, such as from the perspective of employers and employees or the perspective of the benefits and drawbacks of remote work. This section seeks to integrate the two angles in order to present a summary of the existing research on remote work.

It has been demonstrated that, from the employee's perspective, remote work can help employees achieve a better work-life balance and generate new employment options for individuals who cannot work onsite. First, remote work's flexibility can boost employee motivation (Craft, 2020). Second, remote work can also increase employees' perceived autonomy, which can increase their job motivation (Carroll and Conboy, 2020). On the other hand, remote work can increase employment opportunities for certain groups, such as those with disabilities who may not be able to work offline due to commuting issues (Kruse et al., 2022) or professionals who can provide specialized expertise and services without being onsite (Crowley and

Doran, 2020).

However, remote employment has negative effects on employees as well. First, while remote work offers flexibility, it can also upset the work-life balance of individuals. For instance, research in the United Kingdom discovered that some remote employees find it difficult to compartmentalize and separate work from their private life (Cook et al., 2020), and other studies have shown that working from home may result in work interfering with family life (Wang et al., 2021). Second, remote work negatively affects the physical and mental wellbeing of employees. Studies have indicated, for instance, that remote work during the pandemic exacerbated mental health problems caused by negative emotions such as anxiety, tension, and rage (Madero Gómez et al., 2020, Moretti et al., 2020). For some employees, remote employment during the epidemic is related to feelings of loneliness and social isolation (Wang et al., 2021). Lastly, remote work may also contribute to social division, which certain demographic factors may exacerbate. In particular, Li et al. (2020) found that non-digital natives had more trouble adapting to distant work than digital natives. In addition, Gallacher and Hossain (2020) utilized the pertinent statistics data in Canada and discovered that certain populations faced more significant challenges in transitioning from traditional work patterns to remote work, such as low-income employees, employees without a college degree, and non-immigrant employees, among others. Due to women's unequal status in family care responsibilities, a study conducted in Italy found that female employees may face greater difficulties in remote work during the pandemic than male employees (Manzo and Minello, 2020).

In addition to the positive and negative effects of remote work for employees, various aspects of it have ramifications for both employees and companies. Studies

have demonstrated that remote work increases employee productivity (Hunter, 2019), while the extent of productivity improvements is expected to vary by gender (Feng and Savani, 2020). Additionally, remote employment can boost the efficiency of businesses. Studies have shown, for instance, that the patterns of remote work enable some firms to interact with employees from around the world who work in different time zones, allowing them to extend their daily work hours to 24 hours (Raišienė et al., 2020). Secondly, in terms of cost, remote working can minimize the company's overhead in areas such as utilities and real estate (Craft, 2020). This is especially advantageous for startups and smaller technological enterprises in order to alleviate financial pressure (Paris and Guerra, 2023). On the other hand, remote employment can cut employees' commuting expenses (Brueckner and Sayantani, 2023). However, research indicates that remote work can lead to trust and oversight concerns between employers and employees. For example, supervisors may assume that employees may abuse the freedom and flexibility of remote work due to a lack of visibility (Parker et al., 2020).

Research has proposed ideas for addressing the disadvantages of remote work. According to Cook et al. (2020), employees should learn to use psychological defensive mechanisms to demarcate their private and professional zones, allowing them to momentarily disconnect from a stressful circumstance and go on to another task. More study indicates that companies should take primary responsibility for reducing the negative consequences of remote work. For instance, one study suggests that firms should provide ergonomic equipment to help employees handle the physical issues related to telecommuting (Tavares et al., 2021). Other research has advised that firms should implement various remote support methods for employees, including psychological and professional technical support (Larson et al., 2020, Urbaniec et al., 2022). In addition, research indicates that organizations

should adopt rules that promote remote work and foster an organizational culture that adapts to remote work in order to boost employees' sense of safety and trust (Franken et al., 2021).

Existing research has primarily focused on identifying the benefits and drawbacks of remote work for individuals and companies and examining methods to alleviate the drawbacks of remote work. However, there is a lack of research that distinguishes and clarifies the effects of remote work on different types of employees and employees at different phases of their careers. In addition, the majority of study on distant work was undertaken during the COVID-19 epidemic, and there have been limited studies on remote work since the end of the pandemic. This study will analyze the evolution of organizational socialization of newcomers to remote work in the post-pandemic context and will seek to contribute to the existing research on distant work-related subjects.

Theoretical Framework: JD-R Model

JD-R theory also called the JD-R model, has been evolving and improving since its inception in 2001 (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017, Saks and Gruman, 2012). The development of the JD-R model was marked by two times that might be regarded as significant junctures.

Based on earlier study findings, Bakker and Demerouti enhanced the JD-R model in 2007 (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). The JD-R model assumes that, despite the fact that each occupation may hold distinct risk factors linked with job stress, these characteristics may be roughly classified into two groups: job demands and job resources (Bakker et al., 2003, Demerouti et al., 2001). Regarding the two

components of the framework, namely job demands and job resources, job demands encompass the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that necessitate continuous physical and psychological (cognitive and emotional) exertion or competencies, and are therefore associated with particular physical and psychological expenditures. Job demands might become stressors if the individual cannot recover adequately from the tremendous effort required to achieve such demands (Meijman and Mulder, 1998). In contrast, job resources refer to a job's tangible, mental, communal, or structural aspects that either facilitate the achievement of occupational goals, mitigate job-related pressure and their concomitant physical and psychological cost, or foster individual advancement and progress. Moreover, resources are not only essential for meeting job demands, but they also possess substantial value in and of themselves.

Regarding the link and interactions between job demands and job resources, first and foremost, it is a dual process between demands and resources, and this process is crucial to the creation of job strain and motivation (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). From the perspective of demands, employment demands can deplete employees' mental and physical resources, leading to tiredness and health problems. In contrast to demands, workplace resources can inspire individuals, leading to greater work engagement, reduced cynicism, and outstanding job performance. Moreover, along the dual process, interactions between demands and resources emerge. Multiple resources have the potential to affect various demands. Job resources can minimize the effects of job demands on job strain.

Additionally, buffering interactions between any two variables in the stress-strain sequence are feasible. It has been established that employees who have access to a variety of job resources, such as social support, position clarity, performance

feedback, information delivery, and job autonomy, are better suited to deal with job demands (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Additionally, Bakker et al. (2007) illustrated the relationship between high or low levels of demands and resources. In particular, their research revealed that when demands are high, and resources are scarce, individuals feel high levels of stress and low motivation. In contrast, when demands are low and resources are sufficient, stress levels become low and motivation are high (see as figure 1).

Resources	High	Low strain High motivation	High strain High motivation
	Low	Low strain Low motivation	High strain Low motivation
		Low	High
		Demands	

Figure 1. Matrix of Demands and Resources (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007)

In 2017, Bakker and Demerouti (2017) further enhanced the JD-R model by establishing and including three crucial new components: personal resources, job crafting, and self-undermining (See illustration 2). Before diving into the specifics of the three components, it is important to note that the authors extended the JD-R model's assumption that motivation positively affects job performance while job strain harms job performance. The new addition emphasizes the significance of managing the balance and number of demands and resources for newcomers in order for them to perform well at work.

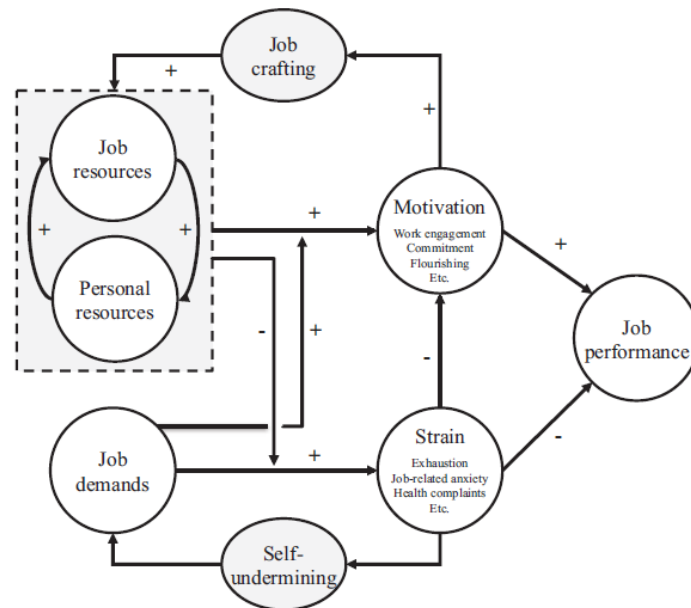


Figure 2. The Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017)

Regarding the additional modifications to the model, they first differentiated between job and personal resources and classified them accordingly (ibid). Personal resources refer to people's perceptions regarding their influence over their circumstances, such as optimism, self-efficacy, etc. Second, they incorporated job crafting into the paradigm, establishing a gain cycle from resources to motivation to job crafting to resources. Tims et al. (2012) define job crafting as the proactive adaptations employees make to their job demands and available resources. For example, employees can expand their job resources (e.g., by looking for positive feedback) and resolve job demands (e.g., by starting a new task or learning a new skill). Lastly, self-undermining behaviour is characterized by creating hurdles that can hinder performance and produce a spiral of loss due to job demands and stress. Some ideas provide support for the self-undermining mechanism. According to Zapf et al. (1996), job demands result in strain and cause employees who suffer strain to perceive and create additional job demands. Bakker and Costa (2014) hypothesized that people suffering from workplace stress tend to perceive and

generate more job demands over time.

The JD-R model is a highly adaptable and useful framework for understanding the links between job demands, job resources, and various employee outcomes in organizational and occupational situations. According to the existing research, however, research on the applicability of the JD-R model to remote work is lacking. This study will aim to adapt the JD-R model to the setting of remote work in order to investigate the potential demands and resources for newcomers during their organizational socialization and to understand how these demands and resources impact newcomers in the remote work environment. It is important to note that in this study, as in previous research on JD-R and remote work (De Carlo et al., 2022), remote work will not be viewed as a predictor or variable related to specific newcomer's work characteristics, demands, or resources; rather, remote work will be viewed as a "context" in which newcomers are likely to face new demands or produce new resources, and socialize themselves within organizations.

Methodology

Target Group and Sampling

This study's participants are newcomers who have experienced organizational socialization remotely. According to the definition of the organizational socialization time frame, the period during which new employees are deemed to be experiencing organizational socialization is the first year following the start of their employment (Ellis et al., 2014). This study chose nine newcomers with a maximum work experience of less than a year and who had just begun their new positions at two educational consulting companies.

The reasons for choosing educational consulting companies are, on the one hand, the knowledge-intensive nature of their work makes socialization a crucial success factor; on the other hand, many technology companies have taken advantage of remote work to support their employees' ability to work remotely, and as a representative of the combination of the technology industry and other industries, an increasing number of educational consulting companies are attempting to implement remote work. Exploring the remote organizational socialization of newcomers in educational consulting companies might shed insight into the new developments that many companies in technology-related industries may experience in the organizational socialization of newcomers during the transformation of remote labour. I collected data from two companies rather than one due to the consideration of data saturation. In other words, the number of interviewees from one company who agreed to participate in the study was insufficient to satisfy data saturation.

According to Robinson's argument regarding sample size, the optimal number of participants for qualitative research is between three and sixteen (Robinson, 2014). As a result, I first invited ten people to serve as interviewees; finally, nine agreed, with one refusing owing to the time difference. Regarding the sampling strategy, I utilized a snowball sample in which I first contacted a former college classmate who had been working for one of the educational consulting firms for ten months, and with her assistance, I was able to find nine newcomers as participants without regard to gender, age, profession, or other demographic characteristics (See table 1 below).

Table 1. Participants' Profile

Participant	Gender	Age	Profession
1	Female	24	Curriculum Developer
2	Male	25	Educational Consultant
3	Female	28	Program Manager
4	Female	24	Researcher
5	Male	26	Researcher
6	Female	24	Media Intern
7	Male	25	Data Analyst
8	Male	23	Data Analyst
9	Male	26	User Operations Specialist

Semi-Structured Interview

This research employed semi-structured interviews to acquire information from respondents. Tencent Meeting, one of China's most popular online meeting platforms, was used to conduct the interviews. According to the five-phased semi-structured interview guide established by Kallio et al. (2016), the process of a semi-structured interview is comprised of five steps that are separate and interrelated.

The first step involves establishing the requirements for employing semi-structured interviews as the data-collecting method. According to Kallio et al. (ibid), a semi-

structured interview is appropriate for the topic of my study and fits with the research questions. First, semi-structured interviews are an effective method for collecting people's ideas and opinions regarding remote work, onboarding, and pertinent issues (Barriball and While, 1994). Secondly, the primary issue of remote organizational socialization is rarely mentioned in daily life and is considered poorly by people (Åstedt - Kurki and Heikkinen, 1994). The semi-structured interview is an effective method for exploring people's viewpoints on significant subjects - in this example, organizational socialization and working remotely (Cridland et al., 2015).

The second phase is the retrieval and application of prior information. In order to accomplish this, comprehensive literature research was conducted before the interview. As previously demonstrated, the literature review consists of the major research findings about organizational socialization from the perspectives of both organizations and individuals, existing studies regarding remote work, as well as the pertinent theories, such as the JD-R model, which are closely related to the study's goal and research questions. The second stage provides a broad and crucial foundation of prior knowledge in this subject and gives me ideas for interview questions and outlines.

In the third phase, a tentative semi-structured interview guide is developed. Using the results of the second phase, I compiled a list of questions. The questions were loosely constructed, adaptable, and participant-focused (Kallio et al., 2016). All other questions were open-ended except for questions designed to collect specific information. I have provided pertinent examples to clarify questions that could be a bit abstract. Besides, the order of the questions was arranged deliberately from main themes to follow-up questions and from lighter ones to in-depth ones. For

example, the main themes of the questions ranged from the objective account of the interviewees' experiences to their subjective views and opinions of those experiences and then to a more in-depth study of their perspectives through the use of hypothetical questions. Moreover, each major subject can be considered as a segment, and each section has multiple follow-up questions, some of which have been developed at this stage. However, there is also room for developing impromptu questions based on interviewees' responses (Chenail, 2011).

The fourth phase involves conducting a pilot test of the interview guide. According to Chenail (2011), this stage aims to confirm the coverage and relevance of the material that the initial interview guide is likely to achieve and improve the quality of the acquired data. I utilized expert evaluation and field testing to evaluate my interview questions (Kallio et al., 2016). Expert evaluation refers to soliciting opinions from specialists not involved in the research. In order to accomplish this, I asked my thesis supervisor to review and analyze the interview guide, which prompted me to rethink the guide's entire structure and identify problematic questioning techniques, such as leading questions, multifaceted questions, etc. In addition, I tested the validity of the interview design by conducting interviews with possible study participants. Specifically, I interviewed two of my friends who were also in their onboarding period but did not work for the example firms. Based on the outcomes of the interviews and their feedback, I assessed the clarity of the questions and created an improved version.

The final part presents the complete semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix for details), followed by the actual interview. I introduced myself briefly during the interviews and provided interviewees with a general overview of my research. I then informed each interviewee of the essential ethical issues discussed in the

section on ethical considerations. According to the comprehensive interview guide, I posed the questions and listened to the responses from the interviewees. It is worth noting that I adopted some alternative questions or gave examples when they misunderstood or could not understand some questions. In addition, I attempted to watch and investigate non-verbal information, such as their actions, mannerisms, etc., even though these opportunities were minimal due to the online nature of the interviews. Following that, I requested any feasible compliments and showed my appreciation.

After each interview, I transcribed the audio recording into text and read the transcripts section by section and line by line as part of my analysis process, which will be explained in the following section: the thematic analysis. In addition, I had various thoughts during the transcription process. On the one hand, I kept retrospectively and reflecting on the interview process, the interview's content, the outputs, etc., and then modified the interview guide and my interviewing abilities for the following interviews. On the other side, I was constantly evaluating the informational saturation and deciding whether or not to do additional interviews.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a technique for identifying, analyzing, and summarizing data-related themes (patterns) (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Moreover, it is a method for illustrating facts in great detail and covering various varied topics through interpretations (Boyatzis, 1998). It is feasible to compare researchers' thoughts and perspectives with the data collected in various situations and several times over the project's duration (Alhojailan and Ibrahim, 2012). Thematic analysis, unlike interpretative phenomenological analysis or grounded theory (and other methods such as discourse analysis or content analysis), is not constrained by a pre-existing

theoretical framework; therefore, it can be used within a variety of theoretical frameworks and can be applied to perform flexible tasks within them (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Given the operationalization of theme analysis, the study refers to the so-called Thematic Qualitative Text Analysis Process (TQTAP) presented by Kuckartz and consisted of seven procedures as the methodological framework (Kuckartz, 2014b). In this framework's operation, he underlined the significance of category construction. Before diving into the specifics, it is essential to highlight the distinction between deductive and inductive categories. Building categories deductively implies that the categories existed before collecting and coding empirical data. These categories may have originated from prior beliefs or hypotheses.

In contrast, inductive categories are formed directly from the coding results of empirical data without any underlying theories, hypotheses, or principles. In the initial phase of qualitative text analysis, it is usual for researchers to directly derive primary categories from the study questions and interview guide. It is typical for researchers to begin their analysis with deductive categories and then develop inductive categories and subcategories based on empirical findings (Kuckartz, 2014a). In the study, categories were constructed deductively to form the main thematic categories based on the initial research questions and theories; however, this does not imply that these main thematic categories are immutable; inductive categories will continue to play a central role in the analysis and are likely to replace the original main categories during the inductive process.

Referring to the TQTAP, the following four steps were established for the data

analysis. Notably, coding and analyzing are iterative processes requiring ongoing interpretation, coding, comparison, and creation. Multiple criteria exist for theme analysis, each with subtle distinctions (Bryman, 2016, Corley and Gioia, 2004). Consequently, it was unavoidable that the analysis would have a back-and-forth aspect, and the TQTAP framework serves primarily as a reference to better show the analytical process rather than reflecting the accurate operation.

In the initial phase, I carefully read the transcripts from beginning to end, marked key text passages, and established the primary subject categories. Instead of switching between multiple digital tools, I used Microsoft Word solely at this stage. Using the comment tool, I jotted down my observations and thoughts as memos and highlighted some possibly useful parts with the text highlight option. During the in-depth reading, I took notes on anything pertinent to the study topics or piqued my interest. After completing all of the reading, I could synthesize many possible primary categories and envision the analysis results in general, but they remained hazy and unsteady.

Second, I began the initial phase of coding. I chose the transcript of the third interviewee as the initial text because, relative to the others, it contains the most extensive and sufficient information, which is likely to provide a good foundation for the subsequent coding. According to coding principles (Kuckartz, 2014b), coding units are defined not by formal criteria but by semantic bounds. Thus, meaning units should always consist of concepts and sentences. Regarding the units of my codes, the majority consists of sentences and one or more talks, with the occasional occurrence of a single sentence or even individual words. Even though it is often difficult for a single word to convey sufficient information, I discovered that some of the respondents' statements were motivating and might even be seen

as categories, such as "peer support" and "flexible working style." I have developed a rough framework of categories based on the first three transcripts that I selected based on the quantity of information they provide. However, the logic and connections are poor, and the categories are primitive.

Afterwards, I proceeded to code the rest of the transcripts, which is defined as the second coding process by Kuckartz (2014a). In this phase, more categories and subcategories flourish, and the category system as a whole expands and gets reorganized. I checked the new transcript excerpts against the preliminary categorization framework. If the new passages matched an existing category, I assigned them to it; otherwise, it was likely necessary to create a new category. After the first half of this stage, I determined that the core categories were largely stable while new subcategories continued to emerge. In other words, data saturation has not yet been reached. As a result, I continued introducing and adding additional sub-categories to the system. I was prepared to interview more people if the data from all the transcripts remained less saturated. Fortunately, when I categorized the last two transcripts, more categories recurred, and the new categories began to contribute nothing to the overall comprehension of the study objectives.

Consequently, I believed that the data had reached saturation. Given the quantity and coding order of transcripts, however, it is probable that some information was omitted. This portion will be explored in the section on limitations. Following this stage, a theme category system consisting of core categories and many levels of subcategories has been constructed, but its configuration is not yet well-organized.

The final stage is to conclude the entire theme analysis process and develop the final version of the category system. As stated previously, the configuration is still

loose and lacks category links. Consequently, I revisited each category and code in the system. I attempted to establish linkages between clusters of categories based on the content of categories and the prior theoretical and empirical knowledge gathered from the literature study and theories. In the meantime, the structure of categories was reorganized to a certain extent, which included increasing or decreasing dimensions and the number of categories in accordance with the pragmatic principle and taking sample size into account when establishing the dimensions of codes (Kuckartz, 2014a). For instance, there were two categories entitled "online meeting and its relevant context" and "organizational policy and culture" When comparing the sub-categories of "online meeting and its relevant setting" with those of "organizational policy and culture", however, there was overlap and interconnection, and the former cluster logically belongs to one of the subsets of "organizational policy and culture"; therefore, it is plausible to merge "online meeting and its relevant setting" into "organizational policy and culture." Eventually, a comprehensive and lucid categorization system was constructed. Generally, analysis results can be displayed as a table with three levels of topics (See table 2 below).

Table 2. Three-level themes

Major Theme	Subtheme	Minor Theme
Demands	Cooperation and collaboration at work	
	Delivery and acquisition of information	Limitations of information acquiring
		Limited information in the reversing transmission (from newcomers to others)
	Forced self-management	Work-life conflict
		Changing work patterns and time fragmentation
	Concerns about personal development	Role confusion and ambiguity
		Negative organizational identification: conflicts with the future
	Social isolation (inadequacy of membership negotiation)	
Resources	Policy and culture in organizations	Policy
		Culture
		Online meetings
	Interpersonal relationship	Relationship building before remote work
		Seniors, peers, and superiors at work

Findings

Based on the analysis's findings, the study has identified five subthemes within the demands dimension and two subthemes within the resources dimension. Specifically, the five demands-related subthemes are difficulties of cooperation and collaboration at work, limitations of information delivery and acquisition, enforced self-management, concerns of personal development stemming from role ambiguity and negative organizational identification, and difficulties associated with social isolation. In addition, the two subthemes referring to resources are policies and culture that are suited for remote-working newcomers, as well as interpersonal interactions that are mutually beneficial. Each subtheme will be elaborated upon successively in the following sections.

Demands

Cooperation and Collaboration at Work

This study uncovered three conclusions about the issues of cooperation and collaboration. First, communication between people is slightly hindered, making it difficult for newcomers to ask questions or receive answers promptly. Participants consider it inefficient that they must spend much time awaiting coworkers' responses. Several people detailed their issues with online communication:

“In most cases, communication online is conveyed by textual chatting, and sometimes it costs you too much time to clarify very simple stuff [P9].”

“If you can work with colleagues in person, most of the work coordination will just be finished in five minutes. However, when it comes to remote work, you have to make appointments in advance, which is quite cumbersome [P7].”

In addition, asking for assistance, a crucial proactive behaviour for newcomers

(Morrison, 1993), becomes more difficult than in the traditional working style. P5 stated, *"I do not fear asking questions when I can meet with individuals face-to-face, but I found it difficult to ask inquiries when I was working online alone [P5]."* When asked why, P5 stated that he feared he would be unable to articulate himself well through text messages and preferred to investigate solutions on his own rather than wait for responses.

Second, remote collaboration can potentially emphasize differences in colleagues' working habits and styles, hence increasing the danger of conflict escalation. In addition to differences in working habits and style, distant collaboration could amplify differences in age, culture, personality, etc. and their effects. As participants mentioned:

"I used to work half online and half onsite. When I worked with my colleagues in person, I thought we had delightful cooperative experiences. Nonetheless, I have been working online for six months, and I feel more potential conflicts are showing up. For example, I do not think my working style matches with some of my coworkers, but they cannot convince me to operate in their ways sometimes when we discuss online [P2]."

"My boss is a very successful lady who is older than me and quite strict with her subordinates. But when I first joined her office, she patiently taught me many new knowledge and skills for my work and even invited me to her home a few times. [...] However, with the pandemic worsening, she returned to her country, so we had to communicate and cooperate remotely all the time. [...] And I found she became a person who likes to demand and criticize people for some reason. We are not as close as the past anymore [P6]."

Finally, when a time difference is involved in remote work, cooperation issues

become more severe. In the interviews, one participant highlighted a situation in which she worked in China, but her supervisor worked in Norway, which is uncommon but worthwhile to discuss here. The most evident issue is the urgency and timeliness of the task; despite being aware of the time difference, the supervisor routinely scheduled and assigned work based on her schedule. As a result, she had to rearrange her schedule to accommodate her boss's directives as a new employee. Moreover, in most cases, unsynchronized communication resulted in her working overtime to fit her boss's schedule, even during the Spring Festival, one of China's most important public holidays. In addition, she was not compensated for the voluntary overtime labour she performed without her supervisor's knowledge. When asked the reasons, she explained:

“I was just a newcomer, and at that moment, we were in the period of lockdown due to the pandemic, and the job market was getting tough, so it would make my situation worse if my arguments regarding the time difference and overwork issues irritated my boss [P6].”

Participants believe that remote work makes it more challenging to collaborate with others due to the rise in time and emotional expenditures. In order to interact with coworkers more efficiently, it is common for newcomers to spend time familiarizing themselves with their coworkers and getting to know one another (Anakwe and Greenhaus, 1999). However, speaking online may increase the time and emotional cost of communicating with coworkers for new employees. In terms of the emotional costs, P5 suggested:

“When I have not known how my coworkers talk to people, I felt like some of them talked in a very direct way or even a bit rude, and then I started to question myself if I did something wrong and made them mad. To be a good newcomer, I was just being quiet and told myself I should make more effort

[P5].”

Some specific forms of work face higher time costs in remote contexts. P6 stated, for instance, that media-related employment includes filming and producing films and repeated export and revision of videos. However, editing and exporting videos typically takes a considerable amount of time. She believed that working on video-related activities remotely would likely double the time it would take her to complete them on-site because she could not present the videos to managers without exporting them.

Delivery and Acquisition of Information

Limitations of Information Acquiring

Numerous studies have demonstrated that information seeking and acquisition are essential for successfully integrating newcomers (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002). Newcomers to remote entry may experience a dearth of information, particularly regarding professional and informal information. Initially, suppose their employers did not give them systematic, clear guidelines or instructions during remote onboarding. In that case, newcomers may have encountered inadequacy and a lack of professional information that impedes their work and the organizational socialization process. During the interviews, participants expressed a need for a more transparent and methodical onboarding procedure and job instructions. P8 asserted that his office did not provide him with very comprehensive instructions during his onboarding; thus, he frequently had to conduct extensive research to obtain the information he needed to perform his duties.

“There was a time that I made a kind of serious mistake because of the absence of information, which was critical, but they did not tell me beforehand. Although my supervisor did not blame me for the mistake, it still caused me to

spend extra time fixing it and affected my feelings negatively [P8].”

Moreover, participants who transferred to a new position within the same firm were also affected by the absence of professional information. As P3 described:

“I took over the job position from a predecessor, which was a promotion for me. However, because the handover of work was done remotely, there were just a few paper materials to allow me to learn, and they were not so helpful for me, in fact. If I hand my work over to someone, I would be willing to lead my successor in person by teaching in language [P3].”

Even if relatively ample work-related information was delivered to newcomers during their socialization, they could still be impacted by the lack of informal information. According to the literature review, the information newcomers acquire can be divided into formal and informal categories (Klein and Heuser, 2008). Formal information refers to the rules, policies, etc., but informal information refers to the culture, actual power structure, unseen rules, etc., and both are crucial to the socialization of newcomers. P4 mentioned:

“I was intimidated by the assessment rules in the beginning, but with more time I have worked here, I found some rules are not implemented strictly in fact, and there are some covert ways to finish the work more efficiently, which you have to explore proactively by yourself, especially in the online environment [P4].”

P2 called the informational bonuses he missed while working remotely to his attention. He acknowledged that some information could only be obtained through on-site talks; remote workers will miss out on unforeseen chances. In addition, the distant delivery of information is likely to reduce the emotional value of some information.

“I imagine that I could feel better when I can talk to people in person by looking at their facial expressions and body language rather than only listening to their

cold sounds through online calls [P8].”

“Another point is that I feel I have lost some channels to talk ‘trash’ with people who might experience the same as you at work. Honestly, I do think the proper complaint is good for employees’ mental health [P1].”

Moreover, the absence of informal information may also result in job uncertainty for newcomers. Two participants, for instance, reported that they had experienced staff changes in their workplaces throughout their onboarding period. Even though they are not participating in the changes, they still experience fear and insecurity due to the staff changes. Especially when this crucial information is not disclosed honestly and clearly, newcomers are more prone to have negative perceptions and emotions.

“Most of my office worked remotely, and turnover was high. Due to constant turnover, I never met most of my coworkers, which made me regretful. Besides, my employer never told us when and why those people left, which hampered job collaboration [P6].”

“Initially, I was aiming to transfer from an intern to a permanent employee. But when I knew some people were fired without any transparent reasons, I felt very upset for them and for myself because I was just supposed that they would not hire me anyway after my internship [P9].”

Limited Information in the Reversing Transmission

In contrast to the difficulties of information delivery from people who have worked in organizations to newcomers, newcomers working remotely also face the challenge of delivering their information to other members of organizations, specifically how to demonstrate their working-related performance online instead of face-to-face. Studies show newcomers' performance assessments and career

success depend on strong performance and achievement (Feldman and Mazmanian, 2020). However, interviewees said that remote work obscured their work processes and outcomes, making it hard to follow up with coworkers. P6 said: *“Video editing is a part of my job. But because my boss is completely ignorant of this part and cannot directly see my work progress online, she sometimes accuses me of taking too long to edit videos and even suspects me of being lazy, making me feel aggrieved [P6].”* Some participants who discovered this issue tried to change their working performance demonstrations, but the scale of the adjustment was difficult to grasp. For example, some people communicate their job progress to their superiors more frequently but still worry about the frequency level. Sending too many messages may interfere with superiors' work, while not actively communicating for a long time may make superiors feel they are not dedicated to work.

Forced Self-Management

Work-Life Conflict

The emergence of remote work increases the variety of available work settings and the flexibility of working hours. In the interviews, each participant stated that their homes are the most prevalent location for remote work. Working at home helps newcomers save time and money on commuting, but other issues have emerged; for instance, a few participants mentioned that they experienced unexpected disruptions when they worked at home, such as the internet suddenly becoming unusable to communicate with coworkers, coworkers' babies pushing the door open and interrupting their meetings, etc.

According to existing studies, remote work is likely to have detrimental effects on the work-life balance; moreover, the imbalance could lead to conflicts between

work and life, or more precisely, work and family (Anderson and Kelliher, 2020, Palumbo, 2020). According to this research, it is not unusual for new remote newcomers to experience imbalance or conflicts. P3 reported that because she did not have a defined workplace and working hours, her personal life was filled with work, especially during lockdowns when she was not permitted to leave home. In addition, due to the unpredictability of her employment, she must quickly transition from rest to work in an emergency. She explained that her nerves were always on edge, causing her bodily agony.

In addition, given the widespread culture of overwork and job embedding in China (Huang et al., 2021), imbalance and conflict are not limited to those in comparatively higher positions in organizations such as P3; they are also prevalent among many employees. P1 argued: *“I remember one time, when I was having dinner with my partner after finishing my work, one of my coworkers called me that they got an imperative task and needed my aid right away. That was the first time I produced a hateful sense for my work [P1].”*

Changing Work Patterns and Time Fragmentation

Not only has remote working revolutionized the way people work, but it has also produced a new working environment in which employees are no longer required to feel monitored by their superiors and have lost the physical space for communal sharing and teamwork (Kraemer and Chen, 2012). P6 stated that she did not know if the slack working environment was due to the company's tiny size or the fact that everyone works remotely. Additionally, P4 ascribed her procrastination to the absence of a collaborative work environment.

“There is no fixed workstation in my workplace, and even if you have to punch in online every day, you can still control and assign the working hours on your

own. [...] However, I am not very self-disciplined and not good at time management. [...] Without the supervision by my superiors and the mutual promotion among colleagues, procrastination happened a lot, which in turn resulted in that I had to work in the evening to make up for the time I wasted during the working time [P4].”

In the interviews, many participants mentioned the occasional procrastination and emphasized that remote work challenges employees' self-management skills, especially for newcomers who must acclimate to an entirely new environment without clear instructions and supervision from others. In addition, remote work fragments working time compared to conventional companies' complete and centralized working styles. P2 noted that remote work had made it possible for him to work at any time, which allows him flexibility but violates his personal space. Therefore, he had to push himself to consciously and purposefully split his energy between work and life, inevitably draining him. As P2 demonstrated, newcomers must adapt proactively and manage themselves to become accustomed to the working methods; otherwise, they may be frustrated by the new adjustments brought about by remote work.

Concerns about Personal Development

Role Confusion and Ambiguity

Membership negotiation and organizational identification are two crucial interpersonal processes in the organizational socialization of newcomers (Rajamäki and Mikkola, 2019). Role negotiation and membership negotiation are both components of membership negotiation. In my study, the analysis results indicate that, given the setting of remote work, newcomers are likely to encounter

misunderstanding in role negotiation, and they may also engage in insufficient membership negotiation in their socialization. The following section will provide an analysis of the membership negotiation findings.

Role negotiation highlights the significance of work activities in the socialization of the newcomer and refers to the newcomer's status as an employee in the workplace (ibid). Role negotiations typically occur in professional settings, such as workplaces, or during the collaboration between newcomers and existing team members (Myers and Oetzel, 2003). However, newcomers may experience difficulty with role negotiation when working remotely. On the one hand, due to the hindrance in cooperation and the limitation of information acquisition, as discussed in the preceding sections, interactions between newcomers and other coworkers are likely to be limited, which in turn hinders newcomers from learning the accurate expectations from their superiors and peers, which are crucial for assisting newcomers in clarifying their roles at work during the role negotiation process (Scott and Myers, 2010). As P8 mentioned:

“During the initial training, my manager introduced the expected timeline of works and possible working contents to me, but they did not express them very clearly, and what I actually did was not follow the supposed timeline. I became very bewildered sometimes because I was just working on the tasks they assigned to me, but I was not clear what they expected from me and how good my work should be as a newcomer [P8].”

On the other side, away from inaccurate expectations, coworkers play significant roles in newcomers' role negotiation; they are viewed as the information source and role models that help newcomers better comprehend the corporate culture (Myers et al., 2011). In the case of remote employment, however, the impact of a coworker

is typically absent. Furthermore, the lack of a coworker's role can contribute to the difficulties of a newcomer's role formation and transition. P3 stated:

"When I was shifting to a new employment position in the same office, all I had to learn from were paper materials created by the previous employee. Even though I could still reach her using the company's web platform, it was inconvenient to contact her whenever I faced a problem. [...] At the outset of my shift from tutor to program manager, I unintentionally brought some of my previous work habits with me, which wasted a great deal of time [P3]."

Negative Organizational Identification: Conflicts with the Future

As stated, organizational identification is a significant interpersonal process for newcomers throughout the socialization. Organizational identification refers to an employee's sense of unity with other members of an organization or the workplace, which encourages employees to define themselves in relation to their membership (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Rajamäki and Mikkola (2019) indicate that successful organizational identification is essential for enhancing the organization's productivity and the socialization of newcomers. However, the findings of my study indicate that newcomers may develop a negative organizational identification while remote employment. For example,

"It seemed like the company would not provide me with enough learning resources for my career growth [P5]."

"My opinion was that the company could fire me anytime, and they would prefer to hire someone who is more experienced rather than cultivating me into the person they need [P1]."

This study identified two plausible causes for the emergence of negative identification. Communication issues and restricted information distribution will

likely result in negative identification. Studies have shown that newcomer identification is primarily based on workplace communication; additionally, communications can occur physically between newcomers and other employees, but it also works when communications are developed through technology mediators, such as social media and online office platforms. The most important aspect is that newcomers can receive feedback and social support through communication (Cheney et al., 2014, Sharma and Bhatnagar, 2016). Based on previous studies, difficulties with communication, teamwork, and information availability may be one of the reasons why newcomers develop negative identification.

The second reason is that most participants are suspicious of remote employment. In other words, they do not identify the mode of remote employment that has been extensively accepted and acknowledged by the predominant labour market. Some participants have voiced concern that remote work is detrimental to their long-term career growth and that it may be difficult for them to perform onsite work if they have been accustomed to working from home. P1 believed that remote work has a shortage of enhancement regarding soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, negotiation skills, etc., which are important for newcomers' holistic development in the workplace. Furthermore, P3 mentioned:

“Remote work has limited impacts on the improvement of my capabilities. Some aspects cannot acquire growth from the experience of remote work. For example, I am keen to receive more training that is relevant to my work; however, they always just throw me some recorded training videos or textual materials, which is good, but not those kinds of training like you can interact with others and ask questions in time [P3].”

Social Isolation

Membership negotiation is the communication process by which a new employee joins the social network of his or her organization (Scott and Myers, 2010). The outcomes of a successful membership negotiation can promote the newcomer's identification, mitigate the possible conflict between the organization's interests and the newcomer's demands, and facilitate the socialization process (ibid). Nevertheless, existing ideas and the investigation results suggest that the membership negotiation process for newcomers in remote labour is likely inadequate. First, role negotiation establishes the groundwork for membership negotiation (Myers, 2010); however, due to the ambiguity of role negotiation, as discussed previously, a newcomer's membership negotiation is likely to be negatively impacted. Moreover, communication and social network are the two essential components driving the growth of membership negotiation (Scott and Myers, 2010). In other words, social connection is essential for membership negotiation success. However, limited to the setting of remote work, social interaction channels have diminished, and some social interaction channels have been eliminated.

The following three factors contribute to social interaction's decline or possibly extinction. First, the online work mode decreases or eliminates the potential for offline work activities and experiences. During the interviews, some participants stated that their jobs required them to plan offline events and that, as planners, they would also like to participate in or even lead the events they had scheduled. Few of them, however, have ever participated physically in these activities. P2 claimed:

“I used to plan a few events with colleagues. I was working in Beijing, and other colleagues worked in Shanghai or Guangzhou. However, finally, our

company chose Shanghai as the location where to conduct the event. I felt upset and disappointed because I was expecting to participate in this event and meet with my colleagues. And this kind of thing happened more than once, so I have felt I do not have much enthusiasm and motivation anymore when I plan new events [P2].”

In addition to reducing the likelihood of physically participating in formal work-related activities, remote work diminishes and eliminates informal social connections that are frequent in the traditional workplace. Multiple participants thought that job-related subjects dominated communication during remote work and that topics of conversation were more purposeful, excluding those that promoted more familiarity and relaxation among coworkers. For instance,

“There was once our boss proactively invited us to talk about other stuff rather than work in order to enhance the relationships among us, but the effect was not good, and we all felt awkward [P6].”

“I tried to chit-chat with others between the short breaks during the online meetings, but I sensed I was wasting others’ time, and I could not feel any relaxation from that [P8].”

“I think remote work has cut off the time for socializing with people and slacking off. Conversely, there are only two modes, real work and real rest alone [P7].”

In addition, some participants noted that the absence of informal social connections could result in the loss of potential information, such as corporate culture, social norms within organizations, etc., that could benefit newcomers.

Eventually, unlike colleagues who may have hybrid working styles or have worked onsite before transferring to remote work, for newcomers who work remotely from the start, online meetings and working chats/calls become the only way they can

develop relationships with others, meaning they lose the more convenient means of developing friendships and satisfying the social demands of working relationships, which is communicating and socializing in person. Most participants stated that it was challenging to make acquaintances through remote employment. Some of them believe it does not matter whether they can make friends at work because when they chose remote employment, they recognized that it could be difficult to create social contacts outside the workplace. P9 argued: *“I did not expect that I could have friends from work. And in fact, I am still not familiar with most of my colleagues so far, although I have worked for half a year. I guess the reason could be there are fewer chances for us to get to know each other [P9].”*

Some of the participants have made concerted efforts to develop acquaintances at work, but they have all encountered issues to some degree. For instance,

“Colleagues to friends need a process; even if we have a good impression of each other at the beginning, lacking the actual process, it is still difficult to become friends [P7].”

“When you spend a lot of time with someone online and think you are getting along well, you will look forward to becoming friends with him/her. However, I found it was super hard to build a friendship through remote work [P1].”

In addition, P2 discussed the bond he built with a coworker while working onsite but how the relationship grew weaker and weaker when he began working remotely.

Resources

Policy and Culture in Organizations

Policy

According to the investigation results, sensible company rules and regulations and newcomers' acquaintance with them is crucial as a structural- and communal-related resource for newcomers during remote onboarding. This study divides company rules and regulations into the performance evaluation system and the other rules. Systematically evaluating an employee's work and outcomes using a standardized scale and index is known as performance evaluation. This method permits precise measurement of the intended quantity and quality while limiting the impact of subjective evaluations and confusing evaluation criteria (Ali et al., 2012).

The flexibility of the performance evaluation system is a valuable resource for newcomers in general, as revealed by interview data. On the one hand, employers might offer flexibility in the evaluation system and permit new hires to determine their daily workload and work hours within an acceptable range. As participants experienced:

“Although I was quite new in the office and had much stuff to learn, thanks to the evaluation rules were not too rigorous. I did not feel super stressed in the first few weeks [P1].”

“My manager was supposed to check the quantity of work I finished every evening, which was pressure. However, in practice, I had some right to adjust the workload each day, and the manager would not urge me immediately when he found I had not finished my work; rather, he would wait for one or two days before

asking me for the outcomes [P4].”

On the other hand, one of the most important resources in remote work is the evaluation system that stresses efficiency and results rather than hours worked. Flexible working hours are one of the advantages of remote employment, as opposed to the regular hours and periods required by traditional work. When organizations have acknowledged and welcomed the flexible character of remote work at the regulatory level, this flexibility can become a resource for newcomers. P7 claimed:

“My company evaluates us based on work outcomes rather than how much time you spend daily. It encourages me to focus on what I am doing and finish my work efficiently, and then I can use the rest of the day as my personal time. [...] I desperately wanted to learn anything about my work when I just entered the company. I finished my work in the half-day and used the rest of the day to learn what I was interested in. That was a rapid growth phase for me [P7].”

In addition to performance evaluation methods, newcomers may find other rules valuable resources. Institutionalized socialization, in which the organization gives more information to newcomers and exhibits a more structured and codified socialization process (Jones, 1986), contains more additional and valuable regulations than individual socialization in the study. These rules, as components of the structured and defined procedure, enhance the organizational socialization experience for newcomers. One participant, for instance, mentioned the regulation of rookie protection, which made her feel secure and less anxious about making mistakes. In addition, P4 said that the corporation built a dedicated online chat room for each newcomer on the entry day, in which all of the company's important members would participate. The direct manager gave the group the "new talent development" moniker and introduced her to the other members. Even though this

group did not have much useful information, it immensely helped her understand the office's dynamics. Another example is from P3:

“Superiors evaluate the progress and shortcomings based on the cases instead of attributing to the people, which is good. And we have a daily feedback mechanism for newcomers, by which newcomers are able to express their thoughts and experiences, and makes it possible that continuously adjust and optimize the way we work [P3].”

In conclusion, both the adaptability of the performance evaluation system and the presence of rules in institutionalized socialization can be considered resources for newcomers. However, it is important to note that not all of these policy-related resources have been successfully utilized by newcomers. In certain instances, they exist in an informal manner that is difficult for newcomers to understand. Participants frequently cited the following statement: *"I did not believe I was capable of such behaviour until I had the experience."*

Culture

In addition to policies, culture manifests in more subtle forms, such as values, conventions, and beliefs. Organizational culture has been the subject of study for decades. Robbins et al. defined it as a system of shared values in which people from diverse origins and educational levels describe a comparable culture (Robbins and Judge, 2003). According to prior research, a healthy and good organizational culture serves as the social glue that binds employees together, enhances their sense of belonging, and facilitates the process of sense building (Shahzad et al., 2012). According to Ouchi and Wilkins (1985), two primary dimensions exist for understanding organizational culture. One is the macro analysis, which focuses on beliefs, language, symbols, etc., in organizations established in anthropological

traditions; the other is the microanalysis, which derives from a psychological perspective and tends to focus on mid-range rather than large abstractions. The analysis will be conducted from a micro perspective throughout the study.

According to the results of the interviews, the term "Western work culture/environment" has been highlighted frequently. This study will examine two characteristics of "Western-style work culture" to better understand its role as a resource for facilitating the remote onboarding of newcomers. First, due to remote work, nearly all workplace information may only be given through written or verbal communication, and nonverbal expression is significantly less prevalent than in traditional offices. Conceptually, verbal expressions over nonverbal expressions indicate low-context cultures, such as those of the Germans, Scandinavians, and Americans. In contrast, nonverbal expressions reflect high-context cultures, such as those of the Japanese, Chinese, and Arabs (Kraemer and Chen, 2012). P9 claimed: *"Despite the reduced communication involved in remote work, the quality of information really improves. Before sending a message, you must carefully study and organize your words, as all of your coworkers will recognize that it is based on your messages [P9]."* Furthermore, P8 stated that remote work increases his productivity since he no longer needs to assume what people mean beyond what they say, and relationship-related distractions diminish. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that remote work has altered how information is exchanged at work to some extent, and the so-called Western-style work culture, which refers to the low-context culture in this case, enables newcomers to send and receive information more directly without too much consideration for the feelings and thoughts of others.

According to prior research, the cultural preference of certain Chinese in the workplace has shifted from collectivism to more individuality in the new

millennium (He et al., 2004). Triandis (2001) separated collectivism and individualism, with the primary distinction being that people in collectivist cultures are more concerned with connections. In contrast, people in individualist cultures prioritize their attitudes and aspirations. This study discovered that certain qualities of remote employment, such as flexibility, greater freedom, geographical independence, etc., offer conditions for newcomers to satisfy their individualistic requirements. For example,

“I think the organization’s culture is the Western style. People here would not judge me or ignore my thoughts based on my age and educational attainment. I feel others respect me, and I can express my thoughts bravely without judgment [P5].”

“The company has an open culture. I can choose the way which fits me best to work, as long as I do not influence other people’s work [p7].”

Except for the two elements introduced above, it is notable that the dilution and breakdown of power distance in companies may be one of the causes of "Western-style work culture." Power distance refers to the degree of discrepancy between individuals with differing power levels, as demonstrated by the hierarchical relationship between a superior and subordinate in an organizational context (Hofstede, 1984). Furthermore, power distance is strongly linked to collectivism. According to studies, Chinese culture has a greater power-distance orientation than Western cultures (Humborstad et al., 2008).

Most participants in my study believed that the organizational culture is consultative and negotiating instead of paternalistic. In other words, the sample's organizational culture corresponds to the low power distance. Participants regularly used terms like "relaxing," "inclusive," and "approachable" to describe the

organization's atmosphere. Therefore, a reduced power distance inside a resource's culture could benefit newcomers. However, it has been challenging to discover data to demonstrate a connection between remote work and low power distance, and the phenomena of low power distance that arose from the study may be particularly tied to the organizational culture.

In summary, the "Western-style work culture/environment" will likely be a valuable resource for newcomers working remotely. The relatively low context and individualistic company culture play significant roles, both likely associated with the remote work environment. In addition, the low power distance could be a significant factor, although its relationship to remote work is currently unknown.

Online Meetings

In addition to regulations and culture, another possible resource for newcomers specifically tied to remote employment is online meeting customs. For remote workers, internet calls and meetings have become vital to their daily job. As a result, a new phenomenon known as "webinar fatigue" has evolved, characterized by endless long hours of online work and the inability to unwind (Sharma et al., 2021) adequately. A few interviewees indicated that an excessive frequency of online meetings causes them to get exhausted and inefficient. However, most respondents indicated that online meetings could enhance their remote work experiences. This research generated three ideas for utilizing online meetings as resources instead of something that tires out newcomers.

In the first place, participants believed weekly online sessions helped them better adjust to their work. Through online meetings, for instance, newcomers might obtain information they may be lacking in their everyday work, such as

communication patterns among company members. Moreover, regular meetings can aid newcomers in following the organization's dynamic and interacting with coworkers, preventing them from feeling isolated outside the organization's shared activities. In addition, informal or non-work-related interactions that occurred during meetings helped minimize the feeling of alienation and bring new members closer together. Second, scheduling periodic work summary meetings and presenting and appreciating the work accomplishments of newcomers can increase their favourable attitudes and prevent potential negative emotions, such as loss of meaning.

Last but not least, the presence or absence of cameras during an online meeting is likely to impact the experience and emotions of newcomers. P7 asserted: *"It is essential that you unlock the camera for me. Looking at and observing each other's facial emotions brings us closer together. Through cameras, you can sometimes see what others are doing outside of work, which might generate conversation opportunities [P7]."* P9 considered that it is astonishing if someone has never seen the faces of certain coworkers with whom they communicate as frequently as with family members. However, the requirement to turn on cameras may also induce anxiety and tiredness in some newcomers. P6 said: *"I get discomfort and tension during meetings with cameras present. I would rather converse with individuals without being able to see each other's faces [P6]."* Therefore, whether the camera issue is beneficial or detrimental for newcomers has not been determined. In this instance, the decision to activate or deactivate cameras appears crucially dependent on the unique preferences of newcomers.

Interpersonal Relationship

Relationship Building Before Remote Work

This study indicated that newcomers who have worked onsite in the same organization met with some coworkers or even became acquainted with certain coworkers before beginning to work remotely have better experiences with remote organizational socialization. On the one hand, compared to those who have been online since their first day of entry, those who had the opportunity to participate in onsite activities on their first day of entry reported that these activities helped them get to know their colleagues, understand the company culture, and feel more engaged. The activities include a welcome ceremony, office visit, introductory company information presentation, etc. On the other hand, participants reported that they established relationships with coworkers before transitioning to remote work. The initial relationships established with team members before remote work make it easier for newcomers to learn information and collaborate with coworkers during the transition to online work. P2 said:

“Before starting the online work, I had carried out activities offline with some colleagues, so I had already developed a certain sense of integration. Therefore, communication and coordination with colleagues were smooth in the subsequent remote work [P2].”

Seniors, Peers, and Superiors at Work

All participants agreed that having friendly ties with coworkers aids in adjusting to remote work and mitigating potential challenges. According to the findings, three kinds of individuals can be considered relationship-related resources: seniors, peers, and superiors. Seniors are primarily responsible for imparting information and job

advice gleaned from years of experience. P1 mentioned: *“The seniors at work will share some experiences and tips so as to help me better cope with the new changes at work. I think it is necessary to have a trustworthy senior who can lead you in the right direction [P1].”*

In addition to offering work-related advice and information, coworkers can also provide emotional value. Participants noted, for instance, that they occasionally discussed workplace concerns and annoyances with peers but not seniors or superiors. For example, "Tu Cao"(吐槽) is a term that participants adopted to describe the sort of conversation between peers and themselves. There has been no scholarly interpretation of "Tu Cao;" nonetheless, it is akin to verbal whining, which may involve the use of humour or sarcasm to criticize a particular subject or someone, typically to convey displeasure or release pent-up irritation. Aside from emotional values, some participants stated that they were willing and have spontaneously gone out with peers who live in the same cities after work, which helped to mitigate the social challenges of remote work somewhat. Due to the identical circumstances and demands they face, newcomers who are onboarded at the same time as their peers may receive additional help from their peers. P5 suggested: *“The colleague with whom I have the best relationship is a girl who joined the same period as me. We have similar personalities and can solve some problems in work together [P5].”*

Superiors are likely to perform the most important, though sensitive, function as an interpersonal resource for newcomers, manifested in practical and emotional support. In terms of practical support, superiors are in a better position than other coworkers to assist newcomers in solving specific challenges. For instance, P3 stated that her job required her to be online and prepared to respond quickly to

potential emergencies. During the lockdown period due to the pandemic, she was overwhelmed by the amount of work, so she asked her boss for additional personnel. Her supervisor responded immediately by recruiting interns to help relieve the burden.

The speed and manner in which superiors respond to messages appear to influence newcomers practically and emotionally. Some interviewees indicated that, as newcomers, they inevitably experienced new challenges and preferred to seek assistance from their direct supervisor. However, if their superiors are sluggish to react to questions or if the response is not what they anticipate, they may feel impeded in their work progress and emotionally ignored by their supervisors. Participants considered that emotional support from superiors could have a more significant impact on them than emotional support from coworkers. Emotional support can be supplied by displaying concern for newcomers' day-to-day life, proactively sharing personal stories, engaging in a one-on-one conversation to alleviate the mental pressure of newcomers, demonstrating trust in newcomers, etc.

In a nutshell, throughout the onboarding period, the correct interpersonal ties with seniors, peers, and superiors and the practical and emotional benefits derived from these relationships are crucial resources for newcomers who work remotely. Notably, providing positive feedback to newcomers in all sorts of partnerships is crucial, which was brought up in the interviews regarding relationships at work.

Discussion

Analysis of Findings in Conjunction with the JD-R Model

Based on the JD-R model and pertinent theories, the study's findings can be described from two perspectives: new demands and the interaction between demands for newcomers during remote work, and potential resources and the interaction between resources for newcomers during remote work. In this section, I will examine the conclusions about demand and resources, with reference to the JD-R model as the theoretical foundation.

According to JD-R theories (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007, Bakker et al., 2003), job demands that employees may encounter are separated into four categories: physical, psychological, social, and organizational demands, with psychological demands subdivided into emotional and cognitive. Initially, physical and emotional demands for newcomers have evolved due to the changes brought about by remote work regarding flexible working modes, unfixed workplaces, fragmented working time, etc. Specifically, they manifest as physical discomfort, an irregular lifestyle, negative emotions, etc., due to the imbalance and conflict between work and life, forced self-management/self-discipline, procrastination, and other issues caused by the potential failure of self-management.

Second, the cognitive dimension may present new demands for newcomers. Due to inadequate communication and limited information, the expectations of newcomers from others and the effect of role modelling by experienced colleagues become hazier in remote work. As a result, it becomes more difficult for newcomers to understand and familiarize themselves with the roles they should play in working

and social relationships. As a result, newcomers may develop negative associations with their organizations.

Third, in terms of social demands, remote work diminishes or eliminates some enablers for newcomers to engage in social interactions, such as locating the same physical area for communication, engaging in onsite work activities with coworkers, and possibilities for informal social connections. Moreover, the role uncertainty and ambiguity that newcomers experience at the level of cognitive demands might impede the development of their membership negotiations, resulting in their disengagement from the social network inside the organization or even social isolation.

Eventually, the most substantial percentage of the new demands that newcomers may confront are organizational demands. Specifically, organizational demands appear as difficulties in the collaborations between newcomers and other colleagues and restrictions on the transmission and accessibility of information. The potential for delays in communication and reaction during remote employment increases the time and emotional stress on newcomers. Moreover, in cases of remote work, differentiation among colleagues may be amplified, which may enhance the chance of conflict with coworkers. In terms of information acquisition, newcomers may encounter a lack of professional and informal information when working remotely, which, while affecting the effectiveness of their work, may also increase their uncertainty about their jobs. Regarding the organization's demands, newcomers must also consider properly presenting their work performance to superiors and coworkers when working remotely.

Besides the findings of several demand categories, the study also discovered

plausible interplays between specific demands. Theoretically, Bakker et al. (2017) have suggested that employment demands are not isolated from other demands, while they are probable to accumulate and interact with one other. In this study, firstly, the emotional demands of the newcomers may interact with all other demands of one another. Because the problems that other demands may bring might lead to certain unpleasant feelings in newcomers, and how newcomers deal with these negative emotions flows via the process of they respond to other demands. Secondly, at the dimension of organizational demands, there are interplays between the demands connected to collaboration among members and the demands for information acquisition. On the one hand, exchanging information is important for developing an excellent collaborative relationship; on the other hand, transmitting and acquiring information need to be carried out in a cooperative relationship. Finally, organizational demands may have implications for cognitive demands. As discussed previously, the limited communication between newcomers and other members is a major factor in forming role ambiguity and negative organizational identifications. The following figure illustrates the relationship between the various elements of demand.

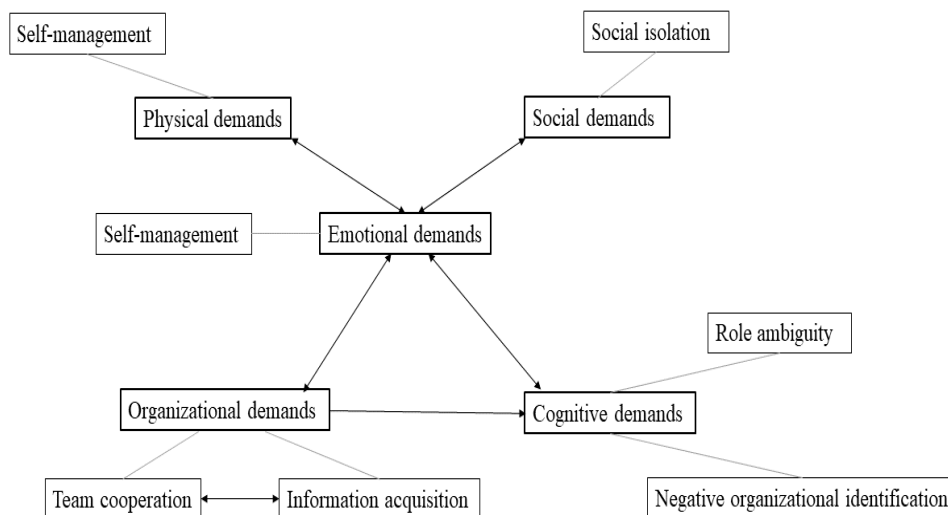


Figure 3. Relationship between demands

Regarding the resource aspect, the JD-R model categorizes resources as job and personal. Job resources were the focus of the research's resource findings. The first potential resource relates to organizational policies, such as flexible performance evaluation systems, appraisals emphasising job efficiency and outcomes rather than time wasted, and other organizational rules. The second resource is organizational culture, especially when the culture is characterized by low context and individuality. In addition, utilizing online meetings effectively as the third resource could favour the remote work of newcomers. The final resource consists of the interpersonal resources between newcomers and existing members. Regarding the dimension of time, the relationships formed before beginning remote work can serve as resources for newcomers, as opposed to the ties formed purely through remote work. Relationships with seniors, peers, and superiors are all advantageous for newcomers.

Besides, this study also found some personal resources newcomers employ in their remote work. For instance, participants with a higher self-efficacy level responded better to the novel demands posed by remote work. They engaged in more proactive activities, such as taking the initiative to acquire professional knowledge, actively consulting with coworkers, comparing their strengths and weaknesses with peers, etc., in order to generate resources that could be used to address potential issues. Notably, however, the personal resources discovered in this study are generally identical to prior findings addressing newcomers' resources in organizational socialization in typical work contexts; hence, this area was omitted from the results section.

This study also discovered potential links between work resources and personal resources, which, to a certain extent, validates the interaction between the two

resources as described by the JD-R model. On the one hand, as stated previously, proper proactive behaviours can afford newcomers access to additional job resources. For instance, asking coworkers for assistance or actively seeking solutions when encountering obstacles helps newcomers generate better work outcomes, and good work outcomes and performance will further earn the trust of others and foster the development of interpersonal relationships. Conversely, work resources can contribute to the growth of personal resources. For instance, supportive relationships with coworkers and good feedback in interpersonal encounters might boost the self-efficacy of newcomers. A more flexible organizational framework and an inclusive corporate culture allow newcomers to develop proactive behaviours, such as utilizing time more effectively to acquire professional knowledge and enhance workability. The following figure illustrates the relationship between the various elements of resources.

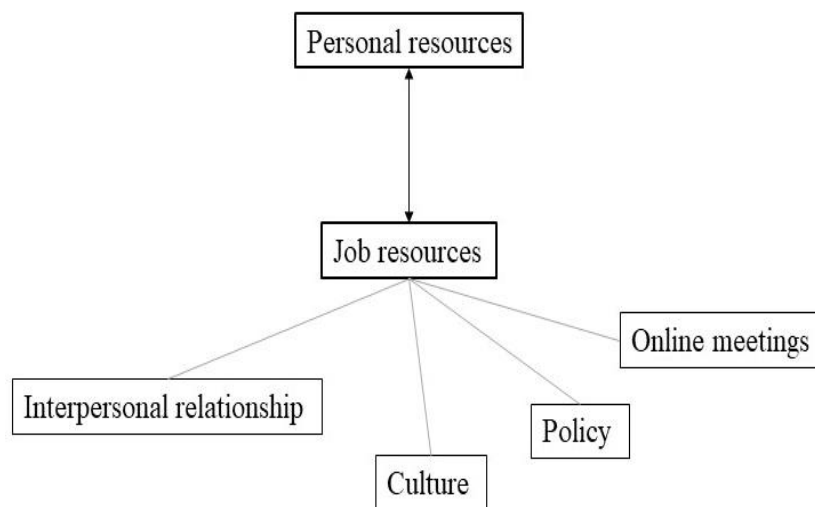


Figure 4. Relationship between resources

In addition to the findings and discussions about demands and resources, this study revealed some insights into strain. According to the JD-R model, strains are caused and worsened by job demands, which include fatigue, job-related anxiety, health

concerns, etc., and employee burnout is the worst-case situation (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). The strains emerge as a range of negative emotions and sentiments of varying intensity in the study. In particular, based on Scherer's study regarding categorization of emotions (2005), this study found and characterized five emotions from the analysis results: anxiety, fear, boredom, sadness and disappointment, and anger. Anxiety has the most diverse set of causes, nearly covering all demands, compared to other emotions. Fear is generated mainly by uncertainty over future personal growth owing to role ambiguity, negative organizational identifications, and hurdles to cooperation and communication. The main causes of boredom, misery, and dissatisfaction are prolonged social isolation and difficulty establishing interpersonal interactions in remote work. In this study, anger is the least prevalent emotion, and it manifests when newcomers are misunderstood and blamed due to teamwork and communication issues caused by remote work.

Practical Suggestions

According to the JD-R model and the study's findings, the study will provide recommendations on how to lessen the effects of new demands and improve resources and their values for remote-working newcomers from organizational and superior perspectives. At the organizational level, organizations should first develop relevant policies based on the characteristics and new demands of remote organizational socialization and convert relevant policies and documents into textual records to facilitate newcomers' learning, such as by creating digital organizational culture handbooks (Asatiani et al., 2021). In addition, these documents should be updated to reflect the current state of affairs. Second, organizations could choose experienced insiders to provide professional and emotional assistance to newcomers by assigning electronic mentors and electronic

buddies (Saks and Gruman, 2021). In addition, companies should encourage other insiders to be more proactive with newcomers by taking the initiative to form relationships with them, providing them with more positive feedback, etc. Finally, organizations should not overlook employees who change positions within the same organization, as they will face the same challenges as newcomers to the workplace. Therefore, appropriate organizational resocialization support for them is necessary.

In terms of superiors, as the people who interact most frequently with newcomers and have a certain level of leadership, they can directly impact the newcomer's work experience. On the one hand, they should strive to increase opportunities for remote-working newcomers to communicate with others in order to alleviate informational and interpersonal issues. Specifically, they can use online meetings to engage newcomers in the team more effectively using various meeting formats, such as daily team calls, one-on-one check-ins, etc. (Choudhury et al., 2020, Goodermote, 2020). It is crucial to highlight, however, that when holding online meetings, superiors should consider the personal preferences of newcomers, such as whether to turn on the camera. In addition, supervisors can arrange opportunities for newcomers and other team members to meet offline and socialize in order to boost the newcomer's sense of belonging and collaborative mindset, such as designating specific days as regional co-working days (Choudhury et al., 2020). On the other side, supervisors' communication with newcomers should be as transparent and explicit as possible to avoid ambiguity and uncertainty regarding work assignments, their roles, others' expectations, etc. For instance, supervisors can provide newcomers with clear task instructions, a timeline, and a list of completion objectives.

Limitations

Despite the significant insights gained from this study, it is essential to recognize the limitations that may have influenced the results. First, although this study determined that the data information was exhaustive based on the received interview materials, there may be further information concerning the research issue that was missing due to objective factors that were constrained by the sample size.

In this study, the sample was collected using the snowball method, which may result in limited diversity of sample types, such as newcomers who know each other in the company having similar personalities or job positions, which may further lead to overrepresentation of certain characteristics, thereby affecting the accuracy of the results.

Lastly, this study does not define the types of newcomers and their reasons for remote work. Some interviewees had past onsite or hybrid work experience, even though they worked remotely in their new jobs when participating in the study. Furthermore, most participants were full-time employees, although a few were interns. Regarding the reasons for remote work, some people were compelled to go online for objective reasons, such as the pandemic, while others decided to work remotely due to personal desire. These variations may affect the precision and generalizability of the study's findings.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Combining the existing studies and this study's findings, four proposals for future investigations are important. According to the JD-R model, job resources can attenuate the effects of job demands on job strain, as job demands and job resources

interact and ultimately contribute to job performance. This study focuses primarily on uncovering the demands and resources that newcomers may encounter for organizational socialization in a remote work context, as well as the potential influence of demands and the potential value of resources, respectively, on newcomers. Therefore, future research might investigate the relationship between resources and demands in greater detail, such as to what extent or how the existing resources could handle the issues given by demands.

Second, participants in this study identified a few demands and resources that may not be prevalent but are nonetheless worthy of consideration. For instance, at the demand dimension, one participant stated that the option of remote employment had prompted him to work from home despite being ill. This story suggested that some regulations and standards may need to be modified to accommodate remote work adequately. Moreover, one participant reported that, while working online, he had been victimized by a fraudster impersonating his supervisor and sending him emails. Consequently, network and data security in remote work may potentially be a topic worthy of investigation. At the resource level, some participants stated that they would gain work-related experience or perhaps form mutually supportive relationships by connecting with strangers in similar circumstances on social media. Therefore, social media may become an additional resource acquisition avenue for newcomers. In addition, the majority of newcomers are likely recent graduates; therefore, school-related resources may also assist them in the beginning phases of their employment. For instance, one participant reported that her school mentor had been quite helpful to her in her profession.

Lastly, this study focuses primarily on the effects of remote organizational socialization on employees, whereas the effects on employers and organizations

remain largely unexplored. In addition, this research uncovered differences in the effect of organizations' adoption of institutionalized or individualized approaches on the remote onboarding of newcomers, a topic that merits more investigation.

Conclusion

This study used semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, with the JD-R model as the theoretical framework, to explore and identify the possible demands and resources that newcomers in the onboarding phase may face in the context of remote work, and to attempt to understand the possible impacts that the new demands and resources may have had on newcomers' organizational socialization.

In terms of demands, remote-working newcomers may face the following challenges and expenses during the organizational socialization process. Firstly, in remote collaboration with colleagues, communication will be disjointed and sluggish, while differences in work habits and styles will be amplified, and the greater time differences caused by being in different time zones, etc., may further exacerbate the issues. Secondly, remote work can result in a lack of access to professional and informal information for newcomers, which may contribute to a feeling of job insecurity among newcomers. In addition to a lack of information access, newcomers encounter difficulties communicating information to others within the company, including how they can demonstrate performance and results in remote work more effectively. Thirdly, remote work alters the way people work, their work schedules, and the boundaries between work and life, which can present demands for newcomers with regard to self-discipline and self-management. Fourthly, communication and information issues in remote work can result in ambiguity and confusion regarding the role of newcomers in the workplace, as well as negative organizational identification. Lastly, remote work may also enhance the risk of social isolation among newcomers.

In terms of resources, this study discovered that newcomers can consider the

following two aspects as resources to assist them in socializing remotely with the organization. Firstly, flexible organization policies and systems can reduce the tension of newcomers during their onboarding period, with performance evaluation systems having the greatest effect on newcomers. Secondly, an open and inclusive company culture provides more opportunities for newcomers to adapt to new positions without fear of the repercussions of mistakes and is characterized by low context and individualism. Thirdly, the appropriate utilization of online meetings can facilitate the integration of newcomers and alleviate communication and social interaction issues. Interpersonal relationships between newcomers and other company members are also a valuable resource for them. On the one hand, establishing relationships prior to working online can provide newcomers with a solid interpersonal foundation for online work. On the other hand, excellent relationships with seniors, peers, and superiors can provide newcomers with work-related assistance and emotional support.

This study's findings complement the lack of previous research on the remote organizational socialization of newcomers. Regarding the theoretical implications, this study extends the applicability of the JD-R model to remote work contexts, investigates the specific manifestations of the demands and resources in the model in the process of newcomers' remote organizational socialization, and validates the interplay between the different components of the demands and resources in the model, namely the interplay between different demands and the interplay between personal resources and organizational resources. In terms of the practical implications, the findings of this study can, on the one hand, assist organizations and managers in recognizing the challenges that newcomers may face in remote organizational socialization and adjusting their approaches when bringing newcomers on board, and, on the other hand, provide organizations, managers, and

newcomers with possible resource-related recommendations to help them overcome the challenges that remote organizational socialization presents. In conclusion, this study argues that although newcomers may face new demands and challenges during remote organizational socialization, organizations and managers can still play a role by providing newcomers with resources to address these challenges and working on expanding access to them.

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Appendix

Interview Guide

Part 1: basic information

- What was your remote work phase from when to when?
- What prompted you to begin working remotely?
- Do you still work remotely? If not, what caused you to discontinue working remotely?
- What type of employment is it? Please include a brief description.

Part 2: from experience to opinions

- Please recollect your first day on the job and describe what occurred.
- Please recollect any pleasant events from your first month on the job (prompt words: intriguing, felt pleased, fulfilled, excited, comfortable, appreciated, inspiring, moving, meaningful)? What were any bad events that jumped out to you (words such as unpleasant, frustrating, boring, nervous, afraid, disappointed, depressed, irritable, helpless, furious, and so on)?
- Please describe any pleasant events you have throughout your first three months on the job. What were some of the unpleasant encounters that particularly jumped out to you?
- Please recollect what pleasant experiences you had during your first six months of employment. What were your most memorable unpleasant experiences?
- If we go back a year, were there any experiences that struck out to you throughout your first year?

Possible follow-up questions depending on the responses to the preceding questions:

- What was the cause of your particular emotion, feeling, or experience? (For

example, why were you moved? What exactly causes you to be frustrated?)

- What did your company or any of its members do while you were coping with these discomforts? (If the respondent expresses difficulties, for example)
- How did you overcome these challenges and gradually adapt to your new job?
- Aside from the company and yourself, who and what else do you believe assisted you when you were having difficulties?

Part 3: hypothetical questions

- What did you expect from the job before you started?
- How would you grade this job experience if you had to rate it on a scale of 1-10? Why?
- What have you learned from this job? (As a follow-up to the preceding question)
What do you think the company and company members offered to help you have a better experience if you could go through this period again from the beginning? What could you do to improve your own experience? What other persons or experiences could you have had to enhance your experience?
- Do you have anything further to say?