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OVEREDUCATION IN SOCIALIZATION CONTEXT: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY
FROM STATUS INCONSISTENCY THEORY

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Overeducation in Socialization Context: A Longitudinal Study from Status
Inconsistency Theory

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Although organizations increasingly hire overqualified employees, the relationship between overqualification and performance remains puzzling. In this study, I examine how overqualification affects employees' development of social capital and performance in the context of newcomer socialization. Drawing on the theory of status inconsistency, I propose a longitudinal growth moderated mediation model linking overeducation, one type of overqualification, to the growth of performance via the growth collaboration network indegree centrality. Besides, gender is proposed to moderate the mediation effect. Specifically, I propose that overeducation is a high-status characteristic that stands in contrast to the newcomer condition, which is a low-status characteristic. This inconsistent status would cause coworkers' ambiguity. In turn, the ambiguity would increase unpredictability for collaboration. Thus, coworkers may choose to isolate the overeducated newcomers. Accordingly, compared to non-overeducated newcomers, overeducated newcomers would grow slower on collaboration indegree centrality, which in turn would have a detrimental effect on the growth of performance. Furthermore, men, as another high-status attribute, would amplify the negative effect of overeducation on performance growth via collaboration network indegree centrality growth. Most hypotheses are supported by an archival data set in a real estate agency chain in China, in which I traced the first five months of 2,766 newcomers who joined before the outbreak of Covid-19 (from May 2018 to June 2019) or after the outbreak of Covid-19 (from January 2020 to December 2020). I discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this research.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

With the increasing availability of quality tertiary education, many occupations that traditionally employed workers with little schooling (e.g., real estate agents) are experiencing an influx of university graduate employees (bachelor's or master's degree holders) (McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; OECD, 2019). Those highly educated recruits are often regarded as overqualified employees, whose qualifications exceed job requirements or are incompatible with job requirements (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Erdogan et al., 2011; Feldman, 1996). Overqualified employees pose new challenges to organizations due to the fact that they are less likely to be satisfied at work and more likely to leave than their just qualified counterparts (Harari et al., 2017). Therefore, it is imperative to understand how to fully realize the potential of these talented employees and to investigate the potential barriers for their adjustment.

1.2 Research Motivation

However, existing literature has provided incomplete and conflicting predictions about the performance of overqualified employees in three interrelated aspects. First, previous studies primarily focused on how overqualification affects employees' job-related responses but ignored how it affects employees' accumulation of social capital. By and large, past studies have suggested that overqualification may positively affect performance via role-based self-efficacy (Zhang et al., 2016), or task mastery (Lee et al., 2020); or negatively affect performance due to relative deprivation (Luksyte et al., 2020), anger (Liu et al., 2015), or low fit perception (Hu et al., 2015). However, employee performance does not just rely on their ability or motivation to utilize human capital (O'Reilly III & Chatman, 1994), but also on their development and utilization of social capital. Social capital, the amount of the actual

and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), has been found to improve an employee's performance, especially in jobs that require intensive interactions with coworkers and customers (Carpenter et al., 2012; Fang et al., 2011). Unfortunately, extant research on how overqualification impacts employee social capital is underdeveloped (Deng et al., 2018; Erdogan et al., 2018). Studies have mainly focused on how overqualified employees' own interpersonal influence (Deng et al., 2018) or prosocial behaviors (Erdogan et al., 2018) affect their social relations or networking with coworkers. However, little is known about whether coworkers treat overqualified employees differently as compared to just qualified employees, while status literature suggests that people use demographics, such as education to determine status hierarchy and interaction norms (Bacharach et al., 1993).

Second, previous research in overqualification mainly focused on incumbents rather than newcomers, which overlooked the critical socialization stage for establishing relationships with coworkers and accumulating social capital (Bauer et al., 2007; Fang et al., 2011; Simon et al., 2019). Scholars have argued that socialization stage may place overqualified newcomers in a unique disadvantage, because they have to overcome the liability of being new (newcomer) and the liability of being different (overeducated) when interacting with other coworkers (Hurst et al., 2012). In addition, studying the overqualified newcomers in the socialization stage allows us to observe how overqualification influences social capital accumulation process, while studying incumbents only allows us to associate overqualification with the static, stock difference of social capital. Therefore, the unique context of socialization enables me to advance a more dynamic perspective about the influence of overqualification on important outcomes such as social capital accumulation and performance change.

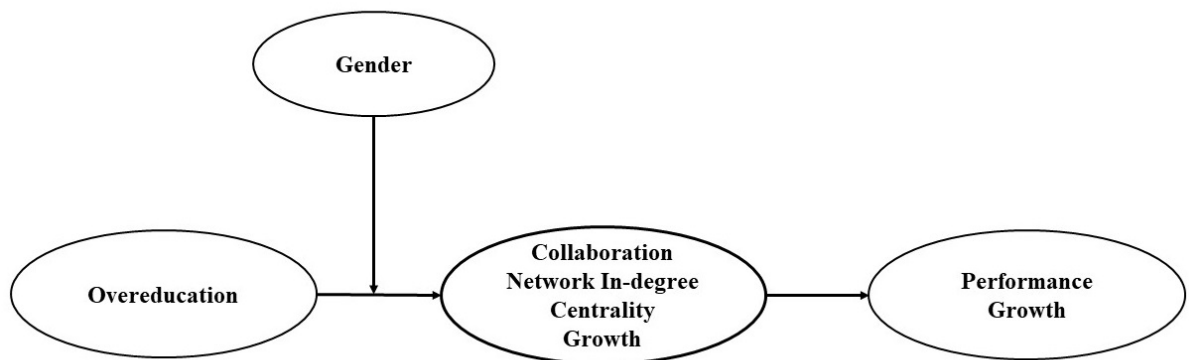
Third, existing research mostly uses a cross-sectional and time-lagged designs rather than a change approach to study the social impact of overqualification on employees (Deng et al., 2018; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Erdogan. et al., 2020). Specifically, time-lagged design can only provide information about the relationship between overqualification and the mean levels of social capital or performance. As a result, spurious associations maybe reported due to the lack of knowledge about the baseline and/or not accounting for the change trends (Chan, 1998; Song et al., 2017). For example, imagine that overqualified employees have higher social capital initially, but increase slower, while non-overqualified employees have lower social capital initially, but increase faster. Adopting a static approach, the relationship between overqualification and social capital can be positive (initial status), irrelative (maybe middle stage), or negative (end stage). For example, Deng and colleagues (2018) did not find a relationship between overqualification and social acceptance in study 1 but found a negative relationship in study 2. One potential reason for the inconsistent findings is that the static approach cannot reflect the change trends and might be influenced by the choice of time point. Therefore, a longitudinal, change approach can offer an alternative explanation to the previous inconsistent findings about overqualification and performance.

1.3 Research Objective and Contribution

To address these limitations, I aim to investigate how overeducation affects employees' performance growth through the growth of one type of social capital- indegree centrality in the collaboration network during socialization. Indegree centrality in the collaboration network reflects the extent to which coworkers invite the focal employees into a collaborative relationship, which can reflect coworkers' perspective. Specifically, based on the social inconsistency theory (Han & Pollock, 2021; Sessions et al., 2021; Stryker & Macke, 1978), overeducated newcomers possess a high-status characteristic (overeducation) and a low-

status characteristic (newcomer) simultaneously, which causes status inconsistency. Such status inconsistency creates ambiguity for coworkers in determining overqualified newcomers' competence and behavior, causing them to be reluctant to collaborate with overeducated newcomers. As a result, overeducated newcomers would grow slower on collaboration indegree centrality compared to their non-overeducated counterparts, which in turn would have a negative impact upon performance growth. In addition, gender, as another crucial status attribute, would affect the mediation effect, such that the disadvantage of overeducation is more salient among men rather than women newcomers. The theoretical model is depicted in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 Theoretical Model



My study focuses on a specific group of individuals: real estate agents, for two reasons. First, in this situation, overeducation is a distinguishing characteristic because those with less education have dominated this industry (Zheng et al., 2021). Second, social capital is crucial for sales success because the completion of a real estate transaction entails several activities that are typically handled by multiple agents working together.

Using a sample of 2,766 new-entry real estate agents, I found that overeducated newcomers have slower collaboration network indegree centrality growth which in turn

resulting in slower performance growth. I also found that the negative effect of overeducation on indegree centrality growth is significant among male newcomers but not female newcomers. This study aims to contribute to the overqualification in three ways. First, my study examined the interpersonal influence of overqualification from coworkers' angle - investigating how overqualified employees performed in other-initiated networks (i.e., indegree network centrality in collaborative network) after controlling self-initiated networks (i.e., outdegree network centrality). Second, my study focuses on overqualification in socialization stage, which demonstrated the unique obstacles caused by status inconsistency between overqualification and short tenure. Third, using latent growth modeling and archival data, my study advances a dynamic understanding of overqualification by showing its impact on the social capital accumulation process and in turn on performance growth.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 offers an introduction. Chapter 2 conducts a review of the literature and identifies the research gaps. Chapter 3 illustrates the rationales and theories for the hypotheses. Chapter 4 describes the method and result. Chapter 5 is the discussion.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter first reviews the literature on overqualification, including its definition, measure, and consequence. Following that, I introduce the socialization literature, which sets the context for my research.

2.1 Overqualification

In this section, I will summarize two aspects of overqualification and address two related limitations. First, I will describe the definition and measurement of overqualification and explain why I focus on the overeducation/objective overqualification in the present study. Second, I will provide an overview of the research on the consequences of overqualification, emphasizing the importance of social aspects and longitudinal perspective in this field.

2.1.1 Definition and measure of overqualification

Overqualification refers to a situation in which an employee's education, experiences, abilities, knowledge, and other talents exceed job requirements or are not compatible with job requirements (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Erdogan et al., 2011; Feldman, 1996).

Overqualification can be operationalized in two ways: subjective overqualification and objective overqualification.

Subjective overqualification is widely used to describe the extent to which employees feel that their qualifications exceed job requirements. There are two common measurements. First, Johnson and Johnson (1996) developed a 9-item perceived overqualification measurement. It includes two dimensions - mismatch and no growth. Example items like "my formal education overqualified me for my present job." Second, Maynard et al. (2006) developed a 9-item unidimensional measure of perceived overqualification. Example items like "My job requires less education than I have."

Although subjective overqualification has received considerable attention, at least two issues remain. First, subjective overqualification captures the perception rather than reality (Maltarich et al., 2011), which may contain subjective bias and is not readily salient contrasting to objective features. Second, it only captures the focal employee's perception of overqualification (Arvan et al., 2019), limiting the research to focus much more on the focal employee's perspective, like how perceived overqualification affects the focal employee's work attitude. It is difficult to understand the peer's reaction to the overqualified employee.

Objective overqualification is another approach to operationalize overqualification. Overeducation is one commonly used operationalization of objective overqualification. There are two ways to determine objective overqualification. First, individuals would be classified as overeducated if their education is more than one standard deviation above the average level of education in an occupation (Hung, 2008; Liu & Wang, 2012). Second, individuals would be categorized as overeducated if they possess an education level exceeding the required education identified from job analysis (Verhaest & Omey, 2006).

For the purpose of exploring the social impacts of overqualification, objective overqualification or overeducation is preferred. First, objective overqualification can be detected (Harari et al., 2017) and hence may be easily captured by peers. Therefore, it provides an avenue to explore how coworkers directly react to the overqualification

2.1.2 Consequences of overqualification

Overqualification affects employee work attitude (Alfes et al., 2016; Erdogan et al., 2020; Luksyte et al., 2020), turnover (Debus et al., 2019; Erdogan et al., 2020; Simon et al., 2019), and performance (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Lee et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2020). The previous studies gave numerous theoretical frameworks for understanding the influence of overqualification. However, there are a number of concerns that require more investigation.

According to the two most widely utilized theories, relative deprivation theory and fit theory, overqualification evokes negative outcomes. For example, relative deprivation theory asserts that when individuals do not get what they desire or to which they are entitled, they will experience deprivation (Crosby, 1976). Following this logic, researchers in overqualification describe overqualification as an unmet expectation condition (Erdogan et al., 2017; Harari et al., 2017), which means that an employee fails to get what he or she wants but thinks deserved. Empirically, this perception leads to negative emotions or attitudes, like decreased positive affect and satisfaction (Alfes et al., 2016; Simon et al., 2019), and simultaneously reduces performance and evokes turnover intention (Lee et al., 2020). Besides, fit theory suggests that when job demands are inferior to individuals' abilities, they are more likely to feel no growth and limited utilization of their abilities in the job; A greater fit between a person and his or her job results in more favorable work outcomes (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Studies have shown that when an employee's skills are above and beyond what the job requires, it can lead to more job boredom and less work engagement (Kim et al., 2019; Luksyte et al., 2020), which can hurt both in-role and out-of-role performance (Luksyte et al., 2020).

Despite the sufficient evidence indicating that overqualification is harmful, some researchers believe it can be beneficial in certain circumstances (Erdogan et al., 2011). Utilizing self-regulation and self-concept-based theories, the potential advantages of overqualification are explained (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Shamir et al., 1993). This approach emphasizes employees' superior skills and capabilities and thus employees tend to explain this circumstance favorably. Prior empirical study demonstrated that overqualified persons may view the task to be simple, believe they have more resources than others, and thus be more likely to be recognized by others (Zhang et al., 2016) . These advantages would strength

employees' role-breadth self-efficacy, work engagement (Ma et al., 2020) , task crafting (Lin et al., 2017), and following performance (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009).

Even though existing studies provide a comprehensive understanding of overqualification, several limitations remain. The first limitation is that the above motivation and ability perspectives are mainly job-related responses. However, the social related influence of overqualification is largely ignored with a few exceptions (Deng et al., 2018; Erdogan. et al., 2020). Using social influence theory, Deng et al. (2018) showed that overqualified employees with significant interpersonal influence would be more likely to be accepted by incumbent members. Consequently, overqualified employees will have high supervisor-rated in-role performance, interpersonal altruism, and team member proactivity. Erdogan. et al. (2020) combined P-E fit theory and network generation theory to explain how P-O fit buffers the negative effect of overqualification on advice network centrality.

On the one hand, these studies indicated that relational perspective could offer additional perspective to explain the influence of overqualification. On the other hand, the proposed relationship is not stable, which indicates that further exploration is needed. For example, in Deng and colleagues' (2018) study, when replacing social acceptance from self-rated (study 1) to coworker-rated (study 2), the result is not significant. One potential reason for this inconsistent result is that social acceptance is rated by only one close coworker, reflecting dyadic relationships instead of the whole network. Another possible reason the author mentioned is that compared to the subjective measure they use, the objective measure would provide a more valid angle to explain the social aspects of overqualification (Deng et al., 2018).

The second limitation is that existing studies know little about overqualified employees in the socialization process. Even though Simon et al. (2019) found that perceived

overqualification have effect on newcomer's initial positive affect, the social aspect of overqualification on newcomers is unclear.

Third, a longitudinal design is limited. Ployhart and Vandenberg (2010) argue that the static longitudinal method may hinder the real relationship due to the limited time point. Even though past studies usually claimed a longitudinal approach, they actually were just time-lagged (Erdogan et al., 2018). Thus, the results may be confused by the time points selected. Consequently, an advanced method is needed to capture the nuance of development.

The above summary demonstrated that social aspect of overqualification is a valuable angle to explore the influence of overqualification. Besides, A longitudinal change method is needed to describe the nuance change of overqualification's influence on newcomers.

2.2 Interactionist Perspective of Socialization

Socialization is the process through which newcomers transform from being organizational outsiders to being insiders (Bauer et al., 2007). The interactionist perspective of socialization asserts that both newcomers and organizations influence the adjustment process (Reichers, 1987). On the one hand, it emphasizes the newcomer's proactivity (Ashforth. et al., 2007; Cooper - Thomas et al., 2012). On the other hand, it focuses on organizational socialization tactics (Ashforth et al., 2007; Cable & Parsons, 2001). Task mastery and social acceptance are the core proximal outcomes (Bauer et al., 2007). One limitation is that the role of peers is defined narrowly. They are just used as one proximal outcome – social acceptance (Bauer et al., 2007). However, peers can also initially work as a means to help or hinder newcomers' socialization.

The second limitation is that even though socialization emphasizes the goal of social interaction, newcomers' social network is largely ignored (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2012) with a

few exception. For example, Morrison (2002) found that friendship network size, density, tie strength, range, and status will influence the outcome of socialization. Yuan et al. (2020) found that close teammates' friendship centrality is indirectly related to newcomers' task performance through newcomers' friendship centrality. These studies demonstrated the importance of the social network in the socialization process. In these studies, social networks were shown to be crucial in the socialization process, but they do not adopt a dynamic perspective with a few exceptions (Zhou et al., 2022), which is crucial because socialization is usually accompanied by rapid changes.

Third, previous research has largely focused on ordinary newcomers; however, non-typical newcomers, such as overqualified newcomers, received less attention (Hurst et al., 2012). It is imperative to determine whether and how odd newcomers integrate into companies because a unique characteristic can have both positive and negative effects.

According to the above reasoning, studying overqualified newcomers' social network development is critical to understanding the process of socialization.

CHAPTER 3 THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 A Social Capital Perspective in Newcomer Socialization

Social capital is "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, accessible through, and derived from the network of relationships an individual or social unit possesses" (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998:243). Individuals can achieve their goals by accessing and mobilizing social capital (Lin, 1999), which is especially important for newcomer career success (Fang et al., 2011).

In particular, social capital can aid newcomers by providing information and opportunity (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Fang et al., 2011; Seibert et al., 2001). First, social capital provides information to newcomers during the socialization process when they need to learn the value system, the norms, the skills, and the required behavioral patterns (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Relationships with coworkers are important avenues for newcomers to obtain high-quality, relevant and timely information for their assimilation into the organization (Coleman, 1988). Such information would enhance the newcomers' reaction speed and accuracy, help them follow behavioral norms, and equip them with task-related knowledge to accomplish the task. Seibert and colleague (2001) used non-newcomer sample to demonstrate the importance of social capital on information and resource accumulation. In addition, previous studies showed that this effect is also salient in socialization stage. For example, Morrison (2002) found that newcomers with large information network can have greater organizational knowledge. In addition, Korte and Lin (2013) also found that high-quality relationships with coworkers provided chances to access higher quality resources, such as information, which can help newcomers find their place in the organization. Furthermore, Fang et al. (2017) discovered that horizontal ties strength can improve newcomer's task mastery and political knowledge because these social relationship can

facilitating timely and relevant information about work. In general, information accumulated through social capital can help newcomers improve their task mastery and role clarity, which in turn would further improve newcomer's performance.

Second, social capital provides opportunities to newcomers. One opportunity newcomer can get is acting together (Adler & Kwon, 2002). It indicates that newcomers have more chances to stay with peers. As a result, coworkers' timely exposure can help newcomers to understand the tasks, get timely feedback and advice from peers (Seibert et al., 2001). Another opportunity newcomer can get is leveraging their contact's resources (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Veterans, especially those at higher levels, generally have the power and influence to allocate resources and thus connecting with these coworkers can enhance their visibility (Bauer & Green, 1994) in the organization and have more chances to engage in challenging assignments (Seibert et al., 2001). These chances not only help newcomers learn the rope but also participate in important tasks, which would improve role clarity and task mastery. It eventually will increase newcomers' performance. Taken together, social capital provides information and opportunity for newcomers to understand the behavioral patterns and participate in important tasks, which would eventually improve their performance.

3.2 Status Inconsistency in Newcomers' Social Capital Development Process

"Status" is defined as "a socially constructed, intersubjectively agreed-upon and accepted ordering or ranking of individuals, groups, organizations, or activities in a social system" (Washington & Zajac, 2005: 284). Status can build social order and reinforce deference relationship (Berger et al., 1972; Berger et al., 1977; Cohen & Zhou, 1991; Ridgeway, 1991). A clear social order or deference relationship can facilitate collaboration in interdependent tasks (Joshi & Knight, 2015) because people can understand their position and

related responsibilities. Thus, in order to develop social capital in collaboration network, individuals' status characteristics are important.

Demographic characteristics such as education, tenure, and gender are typical status markers in the workplace that indicate the social order during social interactions (James, 1959; York & Cornwell, 2006) By and large, higher levels of education or tenure are associated with a higher status value, while lower levels of education or tenure are associated with a lower status value (Bunderson, 2003). Employees with lower status characteristics such as low education or short tenure typically yield to higher education or longer tenure employees' opinions, beliefs, and decisions (Joshi & Knight, 2015).

However, more than one demographic status characteristic can co-exist within a person and create status inconsistency (Lenski, 1954). For example, overeducated newcomers occupy higher status in the education dimension but possess lower status in the organizational tenure dimension. Researchers have used status inconsistency theory to explain how status inconsistency affects the behaviors of focal employees and the behaviors of others interacting with them. Several studies have documented that the focal employees with status inconsistency tends to feel ambiguous and stressful (Sessions et al., 2021) and are motivated to change this unpleasant condition by improving the status at lower level (Han & Pollock, 2021). Specifically, Sessions and colleagues (2021) discovered that inconsistent status between full-time job and side-hustle increased employees' full-time job stress and job performance. In Han and Pollock's (2021) study of Hollywood actors, they found that when status inconsistency is encountered, actors attempt to enhance their status in the lower status dimension.

Researchers have also indicated that status inconsistency may impact coworkers who interact with the focal employees (Meyer & Hammond, 1971). First, coworkers may feel

ambiguous about status-inconsistent person's competence and behavior (Bacharach et al., 1993; Jackson, 1962; Meyer & Hammond, 1971; Warren, 1970). Because the high-status characteristic indicates high competence, while the low-status characteristic indicates low competence, when considering both statuses at the same time, coworkers feel ambiguous about the status-inconsistent person's competence (Meyer & Hammond, 1971). Similarly, coworkers may find it hard to predict the status-inconsistent person's behaviors (Jackson, 1962). The low-status characteristic indicates that the person would work as a supporter and defer to others, while the high-status characteristic indicates that the person would work as a leader and dominate the collaboration. With conflicting expectations, coworkers cannot rely on the normal and automatic expectations to predict status-inconsistent person's behavior, thus feeling ambiguous about how the status-inconsistent person may behave as well as how they should interact with this person (Warren, 1970).

Second, coworkers' ambiguity causes them to isolate status-inconsistent person particularly in collaborative interactions. Predictability is the basis of collaboration (Colquitt et al., 2007). Successful collaboration requires both parties to be able to judge the other's value and predict the actions of another individual (Kurzban & Leary, 2001). Accordingly, an individual's predictability can increase the possibility of building collaboration because partners can know what to expect from others and can anticipate needed adjustment in workplace interactions (Lynch & Rodell, 2018). Conversely, unpredictability increases the risk of collaboration, which in turn forces individuals to avoid the unpleasant condition (Kurzban & Leary, 2001). Specifically, status-inconsistent person's unpredictable competency and behavior raise coworkers' concern about the efficiency of collaboration. Coworkers may worry that status-inconsistent person either cannot accomplish the assigned tasks due to the low status consideration or is not willing to do the assigned tasks due to the

high status consideration (Kurzban, & Leary, 2001). More importantly, coworkers may be afraid of overstepping their bounds, like seizing a leadership role or providing help to status-inconsistent person (Bartel & Wiesenfeld, 2013). In order to avoiding the potential unpleasant experience, coworkers are likely to withdraw from the interactions and isolate status-inconsistent person (Jackson, 1962).

3.3 The Trajectory of Collaboration Network Indegree Centrality in Socialization

Network centrality reflects the extent to which the focal person is in a central position of network (Park et al., 2020) . Having a central position means that an actor can access more information and resources and is more likely to get opportunities (Aldrich et al., 1987; Lee & Tsang, 2001; Marin & Wellman, 2011). Thus, I use degree centrality to represent social capital in the present study and describe how overeducation influences a newcomer's degree centrality and subsequent performance. Furthermore, I mainly focus on indegree centrality, referring to the number of incoming ties toward the focal newcomer (Park et al., 2020), which can reflect how coworkers take the initiative to interact with newcomers.

I propose that newcomers will experience an increasing trajectory in indegree centrality of collaboration networks for a few reasons. First, as time goes by, coworkers are increasingly willing to collaborate with newcomers, because the newcomers gradually gain task mastery and role clarity. As shown in the socialization literature, newcomers gradually develop skills for their jobs (Chan & Schmitt, 2000), and coworkers will see that newcomers possess the needed skills for collaboration. In addition, as newcomers acquire a better understanding of what other people expect of him or her over time (Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Le Zhou et al., 2021), coworkers will find that the time and cost of communication with the newcomers are reduced and thus they are more willing to collaborate with them. Second, as time goes by, coworkers are more likely to trust newcomers and thus they are more willing to

collaborate with them. Trust is the foundation of cooperation (Cook et al., 2005). Studies have found that it would increase over time (Kramer & Lewicki, 2010; van der Werff & Buckley, 2017). Coworkers will gradually recognize newcomers as trustworthy individuals and will gradually accept them as trusted potential partners (Chan & Schmitt, 2000). Thus, coworkers may progressively prefer to involve newcomers in their projects, thereby increasing the indegree centrality of newcomers' collaboration networks. Taken together, I propose that:

H1a. Newcomers' collaboration network indegree centrality increases over time during the socialization process.

3.4 The Trajectory of Performance in Socialization

Researchers have shown that job performance changes over time (Hofmann et al., 1993; Ployhart & Hakel, 1998), especially during periods of transition, such as socialization (Keil & Cortina, 2001). Several scholars have described socialization in organizations as an adaptation process (e.g., Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). According to Chan and Schmitt (2000), adaptation is the process through which an individual varies his/her behaviors in response to new work demands to achieve some degree of fit. Task mastery, role clarity, and social integration are proximal outcomes of the adaption process (Bauer et al., 2007) and increase over time. Performance is the distal outcome of socialization, which is influenced by proximal outcomes and thus is likely to increase with time. Prior studies have shown that performance improves over time (Beus et al., 2014; Chen, 2005; Zheng et al., 2021). I would like to replicate this hypothesis and suggest that:

H1b. Performance increases over time during socialization process.

3.5 Overeducation and the growth of collaboration network in-degree centrality

Even though all newcomers may experience an increase in collaboration centrality, the growth trajectory varies depending on whether the newcomer is overeducated. Based on the assumption that organizational tenure (incumbents versus newcomers) might be the primary status in socialization stage in professional settings (McGrath et al., 1993), I adopt the status inconsistency theory to propose that overeducated newcomers may increase indegree centrality at a slower pace.

First, coworkers feel ambiguous when interacting with overeducated newcomers. Specifically, on the one hand, their high education status indicates that they have higher competence and learning ability to perform better (Lee et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2016). On the other hand, their primary status - newcomer indicates that they may be lack of knowledge and experience for task mastery (Bauer et al., 2007; Chan, 1998). When considering two inconsistent statuses together, coworkers may feel ambiguous about their competency and performance. In addition, coworkers may feel ambiguous about status-inconsistent person's behaviors. Following normal expectations of behaviors in social interactions (Joshi & Knight, 2015), newcomers are expected to defer to incumbents, listen to their opinions, and receive help. In the meanwhile, people with higher education are expected to be the advisor (Erdogan et al., 2018), seize a leadership role and perform independently. As a result of conflicting expectations, coworkers, particularly when the majority are not over-educated, cannot easily predict overeducated newcomers' behaviors and are unsure whether they should invite the overeducated newcomers for supporting roles or let them take initiatives by themselves.

Second, such ambiguity may drive coworkers to isolate overeducated newcomers. Ambiguity reduces the willingness to collaborate with overeducated newcomers. Coworkers may be afraid that taking charge and working as a leadership role may cause overeducated newcomers' dissatisfaction (Bartel & Wiesenfeld, 2013). In addition, even if overeducated

newcomers can work as a supporter, coworkers still have concerns. For example, they are unsure whether overeducated newcomers can translate their educational advantages into work ability rapidly and perform the challenging tasks well. They are also unsure whether overeducated newcomers can recognize their limited organizational knowledge and work carefully even on simple tasks. Thus, coworkers may prefer to leave this unpredictable condition and avoid collaborating with overeducated newcomers. In contrast, non-overeducated newcomers have clear signals of competency and behavior. Coworkers can predict the potential role they can play and possible tasks they can handle, which can reduce the unpredictability and potential conflict about the assignments of roles and tasks. Thus, coworkers might be willing to collaborate with non-overeducated newcomers. Taken together, overeducated newcomers would have lower indegree centrality than non-overeducated newcomers.

Expanding static perspective of status inconsistency theory to dynamic perspective, I expect that the coworkers' differentiated treatments to overeducated and non-overeducated newcomers may be insignificant at the beginning but gradually show in the collaboration trajectory. According to McGrath et al. (1993), newcomers might not be accepted by insiders at the outset. It implies that newcomers are often treated indistinguishably at the beginning, and thus the effect of status inconsistency might be less apparent at the beginning.

However, the difference between overeducated newcomers and non-overeducated newcomers might become obvious over time. Specifically, coworkers feel ambiguous about overeducated newcomers' competence, and cannot predict their behavior when interacting with overeducated newcomers. These ambiguous conditions increase coworkers' time to observe overeducated newcomers for sensemaking. Thus, it is not easy to build collaboration relationship and coworkers are less likely to invite overeducated newcomers to participate in

their projects. In contrast, non-overeducated newcomers' consistent statuses would reduce coworkers' ambiguity about competence and behavior. It indicates that coworkers do not need to spend much time to recognize non-overeducated newcomers' capacity and clarify the roles both parties should take. Thus, coworkers can easily treat them as followers and provide help for them through inviting non-overeducated newcomers into their projects. Accordingly, non-overeducated newcomers' indegree centrality would increase faster than overeducated newcomers. Taken together, I hypothesize that:

H2. Newcomers' overeducation is negatively related to their collaboration network indegree centrality growth.

3.6 Collaboration Network Indegree Centrality Growth and Job Performance Growth

Social capital theory contends that access to social capital can help individuals achieve goals, like performance (Lin, 1999). First, social capital can help people get work-related resources such as information and advice that help them accomplish work activities effectively (Fang et al., 2011; Porter et al., 2019; Seibert et al., 2001). Second, social capital can help people gain access to influential individuals (Porter et al., 2019; Seibert et al., 2001) that give employees more opportunities to participate in challenging assignments (Fang et al., 2011).

Task mastery, role clarity and organizational knowledge, as proximal outcomes of newcomer adjustment, are critical for newcomers' distal outcome – job performance (Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer & Erdogan, 2012; Chao et al., 1994) . Social capital provides information and opportunity, which can improve newcomers' adjustment (Fang et al., 2011; Fang et al., 2017). First, when connecting with coworkers, newcomers can obtain information to understand how to learn task-related skills (task mastery) and organizational knowledge, understand task priorities, and allocate time properly (role clarity) (Bauer et al., 2007;

Feldman, 1981). Second, connecting with coworkers may give newcomers more opportunities to work on important tasks or projects, play different roles in different projects, and directly learn from influential or high-performing colleagues, all of which enhance their task mastery, role clarity and performance.

Based on above reasoning, I extend the positive relationship from a static to a dynamic perspective and propose that the growth of newcomers' indegree centrality is positively related to newcomers' job performance growth. Specifically, increasing indegree centrality quickly in the collaboration network indicates that newcomers can continuously participate in more projects and may connect with more coworkers. Accordingly, they can accumulate information quickly and have more opportunities to practice. As a result, newcomers can increase their role clarity (L. Zhou et al., 2021) and task mastery. In light that task mastery and role clarity are critical for newcomer's performance (Bauer et al., 2007), indegree centrality growth would be positively related to the growth of job performance.

Thus, I propose that

H3. Newcomers' collaboration network indegree centrality growth is positively related to their job performance growth.

3.7 Overeducation, Collaboration Network Indegree Centrality Growth, and

Performance Growth

Combining the above rationale, I anticipate that overeducation would indirectly influence performance growth via collaboration network indegree centrality growth. Thus, I propose that

H4. Collaboration network indegree centrality growth mediated the negative relationship between overeducation and performance growth.

3.8 Moderation Effect of Gender

Gender stereotype literature showed that people have different expectations for men and women (Ellemers, 2018). Men typically is considered as a higher status because of achievement-orientation (e.g., competent, ambitious, task-focused), inclination to take charge (assertive, dominant, forceful), autonomy (e.g., independent, self-reliant, decisive) and rationality (e.g., analytical, logical, objective) (Ellemers, 2018). The gender feature is contradicted with the primary status – newcomer. Women typically is considered as a lower status because of concern for others (e.g., kind, caring, considerate), affiliative tendencies (e.g., warm, friendly, collaborative), deference (e.g., obedient, respectful, self-effacing) and emotional sensitivity (e.g., perceptive, intuitive, understanding) (Heilman, 2012). The gender feature is consistent with the primary status – newcomer.

I propose that the negative effect of overeducation on the growth of indegree centrality in collaboration networks would be severe for men rather than women. In general, men represent dominant and independent orientation (Heilman, 2012), which is inconsistent with the deference feature newcomer represents. However, women represent warmth, collaborative and obedient orientation (Heilman, 2012), which is consistent with the deference feature newcomer represents. Accordingly, the difference in men group would be larger than women group because the feature of men increases the absolute level of ambiguity and coworkers need to spend more time to determine the collaboration relationship.

Specifically, overeducated male newcomers will cause more ambiguity because they have two higher statuses (gender and education) that are inconsistent with the primary lower status (newcomer). The ambiguity makes coworkers feel unpredictability for overeducated male newcomer' competency and behavior. In turn, unpredictability decreases coworkers' willingness to collaborate with overeducated male newcomers. Compared with non-overeducated male newcomers, coworkers need to spend more time to judge overeducated

male newcomers' ability and behavior, and thus need to spend more time to relieve the unwillingness of collaboration.

In contrast, overeducated female newcomers only have one higher status attribute (education) and thus would arise lower ambiguity for coworkers than overeducated male newcomers. Even if overeducated female newcomers cause more ambiguity than non-overeducated female newcomers, the absolute levels of ambiguity in women group are lower than men group. Thus, coworkers may need less time to judge their ability and thus the difference in indegree centrality growth would be smaller in women group than men group.

Thus, I propose that:

H5. Gender moderates the negative relationship between overeducation and collaboration network indegree centrality growth, such that the negative influence of overeducation on collaboration network indegree centrality change will be stronger for men.

I also expect gender would moderate the mediation effect. Thus, I propose a moderated mediation model as below.

H6. Newcomers' gender moderates the indirect negative effect of overeducation on performance growth through collaboration network indegree centrality growth, such that the indirect negative effect is stronger for men.

CHAPTER 4 METHODS

4.1 Method

4.1.1 Sample and procedure

I obtained secondary data from a large real estate agency company located at a megacity in southern China. The data includes two sets of records. One is the agents' monthly personnel record, which includes agents' demographics; the other is the agents' monthly trading record, which includes agents who participated in the same contract, the total commissions of each contract, and the proportions of commissions that each agent has been allocated based on their contributions.

This sample allows me to test my hypotheses in a good way. First, this sample included all agents working at the company for each month, which provides essential information to define overeducation. Specifically, both Hung (2008) and Liu and Wang (2012) mentioned that overeducation is defined through one standard deviation above the average education level of the occupation or organization. Thus, it is necessary to use full agent data for comparison. Besides, status inconsistency also emphasized the utilization of comparison data from the same organization to interpret demographic attributes (Bacharach et al., 1993). In other words, "over" and "status" are relative concepts which need full employees' information to establish the contextual backdrop. For example, an employee with a bachelor's degree might be classified as an overeducated employee in a firm with a small number of highly educated employees rather than in a firm full of highly educated individuals.

Second, the company encourages collaboration among its employees by adopting the ACN (Agents Collaboration Network) system, through which all activities related to one real estate sales or rental contract can be separated and taken by different agents, and once the

deal is closed, agents can share the commissions based on their contributions. These records allow us to compose the collaboration networks for each newcomer.

Since my study focuses on newcomers, I selected the sample based on the following two criteria. First, I only included employees who entered the company during the period covered by my dataset. Second, these new entrants should have been in the company for at least five months. The decision of a five-month observation window is made for two reasons. First, the company offers each newcomer a probation period of six months with a fixed base salary. Accordingly, most newcomers will decide on the fifth or sixth month to stay or leave after the probation period. Second, socialization researchers commonly regard the first five to six months as the newcomers' socialization period (Allen et al., 2017; Morrison, 1993; Wang et al., 2017).

I received two sets of data from the company. The first dataset is from May 2018 to November 2019 covering newcomers before COVID, and the second dataset is from January 2020 to May 2021 covering newcomers during COVID. To ensure that I have complete records of five months for each newcomer, I only considered employees who entered the company from May 2018 to June 2019 in the first dataset and employees who entered the company from January 2020 to December 2020 in the second dataset. As a result, my final sample includes 2766 newcomer agents who stayed for five months or longer. In total, 25.99% of them had a bachelor's degree or above, 39.26% were women, and their average age was 25.38 ($SD = 4.74$) years old.

4.1.2 Measure

Overeducation. I created a dummy variable to measure whether newcomers are overeducated, in which 1 represents newcomers who had a bachelor's degree or above, whereas 0 represents newcomers who have a degree below a bachelor's degree. I use the

bachelor's degree as the threshold to determine overeducation for the following two reasons. Theoretically, individuals are classified as overqualified if they possess a higher education level than what is required by the job analysis (Verhaest & Omey, 2006). In my sample, the majority of employees hold a junior college degree, and they have demonstrated to be qualified employees. Therefore, holding a bachelor's degree or above exceeds the job requirements. Empirically, previous studies have treated individuals whose education is one standard deviation above the average education level of their occupation as overqualified (Hung, 2008; Liu & Wang, 2012). From a normal distribution, a standard deviation above the mean represents the highest 15.9% of the whole sample. In my sample, the percentage of employees with a bachelor's or above degree ranges from 9.23% to 28.99% in different months, and the median is 20%. Considering the categorical nature of the educational level variable, it is reasonable to use a bachelor's degree as the threshold.

Collaboration network degree centrality. I composed the measures of both indegree and outdegree centrality in collaboration networks based on agents' trading records. The trading records show which agents participated in the same deal, the total amount of the commission for each deal, and the proportions of commissions that each agent obtained from a deal.

A real estate deal involves many different activities, such as introducing potential customers, touring customers to the real estate and around, introducing financial and legal issues, and most importantly, signing the contract. According to my interviews with agents and managers, those who participated in the major activities of a deal, especially introducing new customers and signing the contract, earns the largest proportion of the commission. Thus, I define this agent as the leader of the deal, and those who participated in the same deal but earned less than the leader as supporters. For deals that have two or more agents sharing

the same highest proportions, these agents are all treated as leaders. In my sample, 91.4% of deals were led by one leader, and the remaining 8.6% were led by two leaders.

In general, leaders have the authority to decide if others should be invited and who should be invited to their activities at any stage before the deal is closed. Even though employees can proactively put forward to attend others' projects, leaders still have the authority to decide whether or not to agree because including others in projects means sharing profits with others after completing the deal. Thus, outgoing ties can be represented as the number of people an employee invites when playing as a leader. Incoming ties can be represented as the number of times employees are invited to work as supporters.

The degree of centrality for each deal is calculated based on the traditional social network concept of treating the deal leader as an actor and others within the same deal as alters. So, for each deal, the leader (actor) has one outgoing tie, whereas others within the same deal (alters) each have one incoming tie. I aggregated the monthly trade records to calculate the agents' monthly indegree (number of incoming ties) and outdegree (number of outgoing ties) centrality. The data is calculated by UCINET (Borgatti et al., 2002).

In this study, I mainly focus on indegree centrality and treat outdegree centrality as a control because existing studies implicitly assume that overqualified employees' relationships largely depend on their own, such as interpersonal influence (Deng et al., 2018) and organizational citizenship behavior (Erdogan et al., 2018). This approach to some extent can be captured by outdegree centrality, that is, the extent to which the newcomer invites others to collaborate.

Gender. Gender is collected from the official archival data (0 = male, 1 = female).

Control Variables. I controlled for the effects of newcomers' work tenure, and household registration (0 = rural, 1 = urban) and outdegree centrality.

Special Treatment. Since the real estate market fluctuated monthly, to remove the influence of market fluctuation, I set the average performance and centrality in May 2018 as the baselines and calculate the ratios of average performance and centrality in the other months compared with the baseline in May 2018. I then adjust individuals' monthly measures of performance and degrees of centrality with the ratios. For example, I assume that the average performance in May 2018 was 2000. The average performance in June 2019 was 4000. The ratio is obtained by dividing average performance in June 2019 (4000) by average performance in May 2018 (2000), and thus the ratio is 2. If agent A's performance in June 2019 is 6000, his/her adjusted performance in June 2019 is 3000, which is calculated by dividing 6000 by 2.

4.1.3 Analyses

I conducted growth curve analyses using Mplus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) to test the hypotheses. First, I used the latent growth modeling (LGM) techniques to model the change of indegree centrality, outdegree centrality, and performance, and selected the best fitting models to represent these changes. Specifically, I evaluated the fit of five possible latent growth models, including the no-change model, linear growth model, curvilinear growth model, and two freely estimated curvilinear growth models (freely estimate the coefficient(s) of the last one or two months). In all five of these latent growth models, the monthly measures of indegree centrality, outdegree centrality, and performance loaded on the intercept factor with factor loadings of 1. Then, I fitted a no-change model by fixing the mean of the slope factor to be zero, which provides a general assessment of the existence of any change trend. For the linear growth model, the factor loadings of monthly measures on the slope factor were fixed as 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4, representing a linear change trend. For the curvilinear growth model, the factor loadings of monthly measures on the quadratic factor

were fixed as 0, 1, 4, 9, and 25, representing a curvilinear change trend. Based on the curvilinear growth model, the two freely estimated growth models were fitted by freely estimating the last (fifth month) or the last two (the fourth month and fifth month) slope and quadratic factor loadings, which helped to detect how much the latent growth deviated from the curvilinear change trend. I evaluated the model fit of these latent growth curves based on χ^2 statistic, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the best fitting model was selected for indegree centrality, outdegree centrality, and performance. In model comparisons, $\Delta\text{CFI} \leq 0.01$ is used as criteria (Cheung & Lau, 2012), which means that if ΔCFI is smaller than or equal to 0.01 in the constrained model than in the less constrained model, the constrained model was chosen for parsimony.

To test the relationship proposed in hypotheses 2 - 4, I regressed the changes in indegree centrality and performance on overeducation and the change in performance on change in indegree centrality. With 1,000 bootstrapping, I tested the indirect effect of overeducation on change in performance through change in indegree centrality of collaboration. At the same time, I add outdegree centrality as an alternative mechanism to control its potential influence. Finally, I also controlled the influence of gender, work tenure, and household registration when predicting the changes of indegree centrality, outdegree centrality, and performance. All relationships mentioned above were included in one path model and estimated simultaneously.

Finally, I added the moderator and the interaction terms into the model to examine whether gender would influence the relationship between overqualification and collaboration network indegree centrality growth.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Change trends of the indegree centrality and performance

Descriptive statistics and correlations among study variables are presented in Table 1. Table 2 summarizes the model fit indices of the five latent growth models estimated for indegree centrality, outdegree centrality, and performance. Table 3 summarizes the coefficient estimates for the best fitting growth curve model for each variable.

TABLE 1 Correlations Between Study Variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1. Overeducation	.26	.44																			
2. Gender	.39	.49	-.02																		
3. Work Tenure	4.54	5.05	-.02	.10**																	
4. Household Registration	.41	.49	.10**	-.03	.18**																
5. Indegree,t1	.85	2.41	.00	.03	-.05**	-.01															
6. Indegree,t2	1.97	3.41	-.02	.08**	-.10**	-.01	.25**														
7. Indegree,t3	2.42	2.81	-.04*	.07**	-.12**	-.04*	.24**	.38**													
8. Indegree,t4	2.60	3.01	-.04*	.12**	-.15**	-.05**	.19**	.36**	.50**												
9. Indegree,t5	2.55	2.77	-.02	.14**	-.13**	-.05*	.15**	.26**	.48**	.51**											
10. Outdegree,t1	.67	2.91	-.03	.07**	-.02	.02	.23**	.12**	.16**	.14**	.09**										
11. Outdegree,t2	2.00	5.65	-0.02	.08**	-.03	.00	.16**	.34**	.23**	.21**	.17**	.15**									
12. Outdegree,t3	2.58	4.10	-.04*	.08**	-.09**	-.01	.21**	.33**	.55**	.41**	.39**	.21**	.32**								
13. Outdegree,t4	2.96	5.42	-.04*	.13**	-.07**	-.02	.15**	.33**	.40**	.50**	.40**	.14**	.27**	.45**							
14. Outdegree,t5	2.72	4.53	-.02	.13**	-.07**	-.04*	.14**	.23**	.39**	.42**	.57**	.11**	.17**	.45**	.51**						
15. Performance,t1	3.25	3.92	-.02	.07**	-.04	.00	.45**	.26**	.22**	.19**	.17**	.33**	.20**	.25**	.16**	.15**					
16. Performance,t2	6.11	3.83	-.07**	.08**	-.03	-.03	.19**	.39**	.30**	.23**	.23**	.14**	.29**	.29**	.23**	.20**	.35**				
17. Performance,t3	7.22	3.33	-.04	.08**	.01	.01	.12**	.18**	.43**	.25**	.22**	.10**	.15**	.37**	.21**	.20**	.20**	.28**			
18. Performance,t4	7.50	3.26	-.03	.09**	-.04*	-.01	.10**	.16**	.24**	.40**	.24**	.09**	.13**	.22**	.32**	.23**	.17**	.25**	.27**		
19. Performance,t5	7.52	3.29	.00	.10**	.02	-.04*	.07**	.13**	.19**	.22**	.43**	.05**	.09**	.21**	.20**	.34**	.12**	.17**	.21**	.24**	

Note: t1 – t5 means month 1 – month 5 after entry; Overeducation: 0 = non-overeducation, 1 = overeducation; Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female; Household Registration: 0 = countryside, 1 = city. Work tenure means newcomers work experience before entering current company.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

TABLE 2 Model Comparisons of Latent Growth Curves for Indegree Centrality, Outdegree Centrality, and Performance

	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	Δ CFI	TLI	SRMR
indegree centrality							
no growth	1617.38	13.00	0.21	0.41	0.58	0.55	0.22
Linear growth model	518.48	10.00	0.14	0.81	0.17	0.81	0.08
<i>curvilinear growth model</i>	<i>27.67</i>	<i>6.00</i>	<i>0.04</i>	<i>0.99</i>		<i>0.99</i>	<i>0.02</i>
curvilinear growth model -free estimated fifth month	17.02	4.00	0.03	1.00	0.01	0.99	0.01
curvilinear growth model -free estimated fourth and fifth month	1.18	2.00	0.00	1.00	0.01	1.00	0.00
outdegree centrality							
no growth	1862.76	13.00	0.23	0.16	0.84	0.35	0.23
Linear growth model	422.11	10.00	0.12	0.81	0.19	0.81	0.07
<i>curvilinear growth model</i>	<i>14.42</i>	<i>6.00</i>	<i>0.02</i>	<i>1.00</i>		<i>0.99</i>	<i>0.01</i>
curvilinear growth model -free estimated fifth month							
curvilinear growth model -free estimated fourth and fifth month							
performance							
no growth	2501.61	13.00	0.26	0.00	0.99	0.00	0.25
Linear growth model	955.48	10.00	0.19	0.21	0.78	0.21	0.12
curvilinear growth model	82.15	6.00	0.07	0.94	0.05	0.89	0.03
<i>curvilinear growth model -free estimated fifth month</i>	<i>17.23</i>	<i>4.00</i>	<i>0.04</i>	<i>0.99</i>		<i>0.97</i>	<i>0.01</i>
curvilinear growth model -free estimated fourth and fifth month	1.34	2.00	0.00	1.00	0.01	1.00	0.01

Notes. $n = 2766$. Models with the best model fit were marked in bold and italic.

TABLE 3 Summary of Best-Fitted Growth Curve Model

	Mean of Intercept	Mean of Slope	Mean of Quadratic	Variance of Intercept	Variance of Slope	Variance of Quadratic
Indegree centrality	0.88**	1.14**	-0.18**	2.07**	1.72**	0.07**
Outdegree centrality	0.68**	1.44**	-0.23**	1.87*	4.55**	0.28**
Performance	3.28**	3.32**	-0.64**	9.55**	5.63**	0.26**

	Cov (I, S)	Cov (I, Q)	Cov (S,Q)	FL(1)	FL(2)	FL(3)	FL(4)	FL(5)	FL(6)	FL(7)	FL(8)	FL(9)	FL(10)
Indegree centrality	-0.04	-0.06	-0.32**	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	4	9	16
Outdegree centrality	0.78	-0.22	-1.00**	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	4	9	16
Performance	-5.29**	0.94**	-1.19**	0	1	2	3	4.08	0	1	4	9	14.49

Notes. $n = 2766$. FL(1) - FL(5) = factor loadings of months 1–5 on the slope factor; FL(6) - FL(10) = factor loadings of months 1–5 on the quadratic term factor. Cov (I, S) = the covariance between intercept and slope. Cov (I, Q) = the covariance between intercept and quadratic. Cov (S, Q) = the covariance between slope and quadratic.

For indegree centrality, the results in Table 2 suggested that the curvilinear growth model fitted the data significantly better than the no-change model [$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.58$] and the linear growth model [$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.17$] but did not significantly differ from the two freely estimated models [$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.01$]. Therefore, I retained the curvilinear growth model as the best fitting model to describe the latent growth in indegree centrality. Further, Table 3 shows the variances of the intercept factor (variance = 2.07, $p < .01$), slope factor (variance = 1.72, $p < .01$), and quadratic factor (variance = 0.07, $p < .01$) were significantly different from zero, respectively, indicating that there were interindividual differences in the initial status, linear change, and curvilinear change of indegree centrality.

For performance, the results in Table 2 suggested that free-estimated the fifth month curvilinear growth model fitted the data significantly better than the no-change model [$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.99$], the linear growth model [$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.78$], and the curvilinear growth model [$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.05$] and did not significantly differ from freely estimated fourth and fifth months curvilinear growth model [$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.01$]. Therefore, I decided to use free estimated fifth month curvilinear growth model as the best fitting model to describe the latent growth in performance. Further, the variances of the intercept factor (variance = 9.55, $p < .01$), slope factor (variance = 5.63, $p < .01$), and quadratic factor (variance = 0.26, $p < .01$) were significantly different from zero, respectively, indicating that there were interindividual differences in the initial status, linear change, and curvilinear change of performance.

I also tested the change trend of outdegree centrality which is my control variable. The results suggested that the curvilinear growth model fitted the data significantly better than the no-change model [$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.84$] and the linear growth model [$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.19$], and

the two freely estimated models could not converge. Therefore, I retained the curvilinear growth model as the best fitting model to describe the latent growth in indegree centrality. Further, the variance of the intercept factor (variance = 1.87, $p < .05$), slope factor (variance = 4.55, $p < .01$), and quadratic factor (variance = 0.28, $p < .01$) were significantly different from zero, respectively, indicating that there were interindividual differences in the initial status, linear change, and curvilinear change of outdegree centrality.

Based on the best fitting model of indegree centrality and performance, I tested hypotheses 1a and 1b. Hypothesis 1 (a, b) proposed that indegree centrality and performance increase over the first five months. As shown in Table 3, the mean of the indegree centrality slope was positive and significant ($\gamma = 1.14$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.05$). Thus, hypothesis 1a is supported. At the same time, the mean of performance slope was positive and significant ($\gamma = 3.32$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.09$). Thus, hypothesis 1b is supported. These results imply that agents' indegree centrality increased over time and their performance increased over time. In addition, the mean of the indegree centrality quadratic term was negative and significant ($\gamma = -0.18$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.07$). The mean of the performance quadratic term was negative and significant ($\gamma = -0.64$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.26$). Taken together, the trajectories of changes in indegree centrality and performance are shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3. The figures showed an inverted-U shape, which indicated that the indegree centrality and performance increase faster at the early stage but slower at the latter stage. The figure 2 showed that indegree centrality reached the top at the fourth month and then showed a downward trend. The figure 3 showed that performance increased quickly at the first three months but then maintained a flat growth rate.

FIGURE 2 The Trajectory of Change in Indegree Centrality

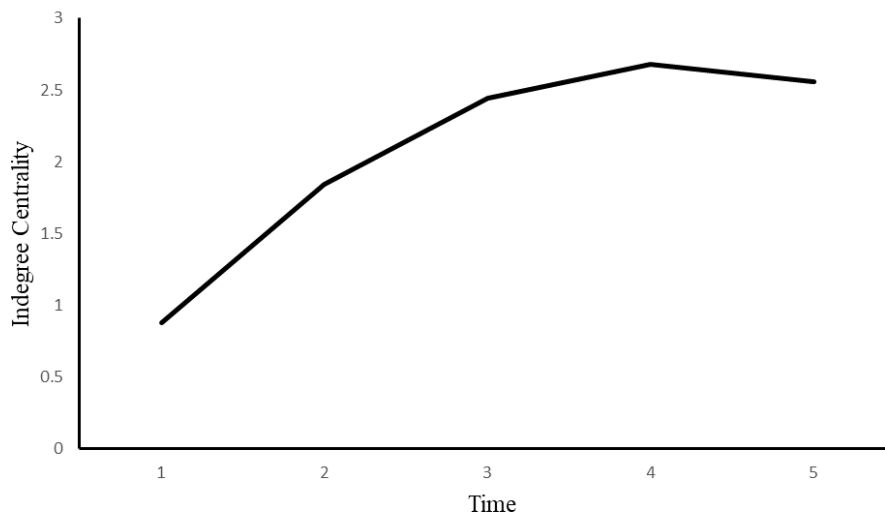
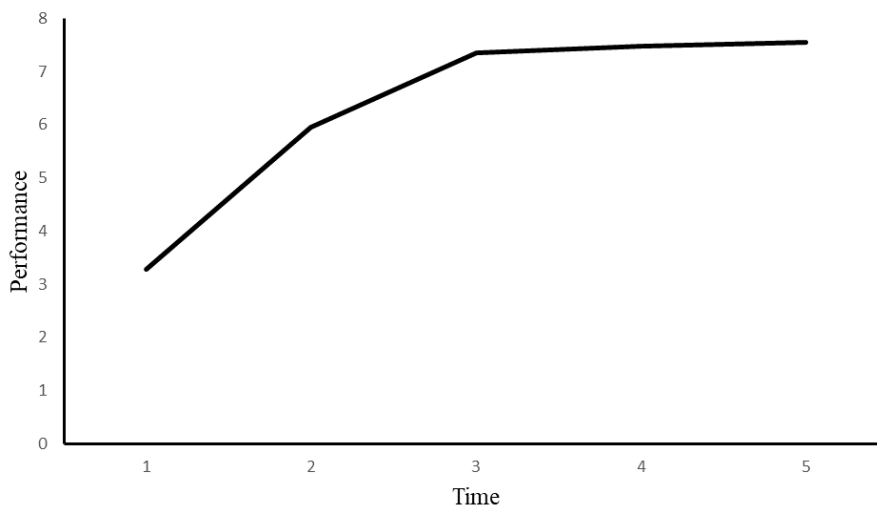


FIGURE 3 The Trajectory of Change in Performance

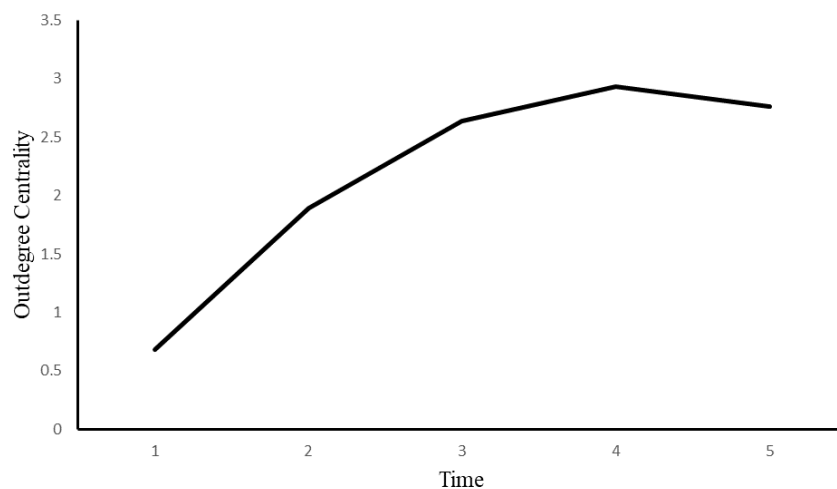


Though I did not propose relationships related to the intercept and quadratic term of indegree centrality and performance, I also displayed the estimates of these coefficients. As shown in Table 3, the means of the intercept of indegree centrality ($\gamma = 0.88, p < .001, SE = 0.05$) and performance ($\gamma = 3.28, p < .001, SE = 0.08$) were positive and significant, indicating that on average, newcomer agents could be included in others' deals and obtain a low level of performance initially. However, the mean of the quadratic factor of indegree centrality ($\gamma = -$

0.18, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.01$) and performance ($\gamma = -0.64$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.03$) were negative and significant, suggesting that though newcomer agents experience increases in collaboration and performance, the rate of increase is declining.

Furthermore, I also examined the intercept, slope, and quadratic factors of outdegree centrality. Similarly, the means of the intercept ($\gamma = 0.68$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.05$) and slope ($\gamma = 1.44$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.07$) of outdegree centrality were positive and significant, whereas the mean of the quadratic term of outdegree centrality (cf. table 3, $\gamma = -0.23$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.02$) was negative and significant, implying that on average, newcomer agents had a low level of proactive collaboration with others initially, but this type of collaboration increased gradually during the first five months, even though the rate of increase is declining. Trajectories of changes in outdegree centrality is shown in figure 4.

FIGURE 4 The Trajectory of Change in Outdegree Centrality



4.2.2 Direct and indirect effects of overeducation

To examine the direct and indirect effects specified in Hypotheses 2-4, I conducted a conditional LGM by including participants' overeducation and changes in indegree centrality to predict the change in performance. The change of outdegree centrality, gender, work

tenure, and urban household registration are also included in the model to control for alternative explanations (See Table 4 and Figure 5).

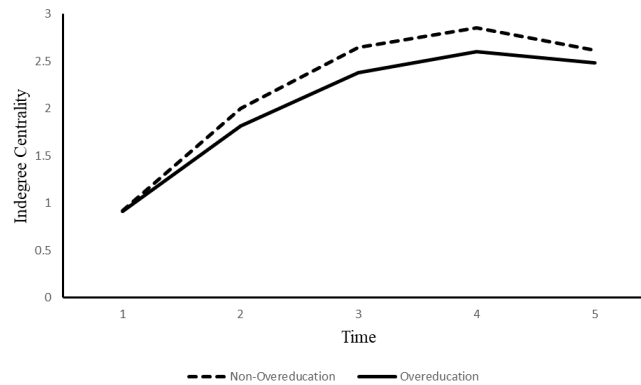
TABLE 4 Estimates of Unstandardized Coefficients

Predictor	Initial level of indegree centrality		Slope of indegree centrality		Quadratic term of indegree centrality	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
overeducation	-.01	0.11	-.23*	0.11	.05*	0.02
gender	.19*	0.09	.26**	0.10	-.02	0.02
work tenure	-.03**	0.01	-.04**	0.01	.01**	0.00
household registration	.04	0.09	-.05	0.10	.00	0.02

Predictor	Initial level of outdegree centrality		Slope of outdegree centrality		Quadratic term of outdegree centrality	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
overeducation	-.20*	0.09	-.20	0.15	.05	0.04
gender	.41**	0.12	.31*	0.15	-.02	0.04
work tenure	-.02	0.01	-.05**	0.01	.01**	0.00
household registration	.16	0.12	.00	0.15	-.02	0.04

Predictor	Initial level of performance		Slope of performance		Quadratic term of performance	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
overeducation	-.02	0.17	-.82	0.77	.27	0.23
gender	-.04	0.16	-.32	0.57	.11	0.17
work tenure	.02	0.02	-.05	0.09	.02	0.03
household registration	-.17	0.17	.53	0.70	-.16	0.21
Initial level of indegree centrality	1.55**	0.19	-1.03**	0.14	.21**	0.03
Initial level of outdegree centrality	.84**	0.14	-.59**	0.11	.12**	0.02
slope of indegree centrality			3.51**	0.53	-.98**	0.15
slope of outdegree centrality			1.33**	0.22	-.36**	0.06
quadratic term of indegree centrality			18.80**	5.92	-5.72**	1.82
quadratic term of outdegree centrality			10.96	9.74	-3.20	2.86

FIGURE 5 The Effect of Overeducation on Indegree Centrality



Supporting Hypothesis 2, overeducation is negatively related to the collaboration network indegree centrality change ($\gamma = -0.23, p < .05, SE = 0.11$). Figure 5 showed the effect of overeducation on the changes in indegree centrality, in which overeducated newcomer agent had a flatter increase in indegree centrality compared with non-overeducated newcomers. Furthermore, overeducation is positively related to the collaboration network indegree centrality quadratic term ($\gamma = 0.05, p < .05, SE = 0.02$). It indicates that overeducated newcomers have faster acceleration. Supporting Hypothesis 3, collaboration network indegree centrality change is positively related to the change in performance ($\gamma = 3.51, p < .01, SE = 0.53$), which means that newcomers' performance increased along with the increase in indegree centrality of collaboration. At the same time, the bootstrapping results in Table 5 showed that overeducation is negatively related to the change in performance via indegree centrality linear slope (estimate = -0.82 , 95% confidence interval (CI) = $[-1.69, -0.10]$). Thus, hypothesis 4 was supported.

TABLE 5 Indirect Effect of Overeducation on The Performance Growth

		BootLLCI	BootULCI
Proposed	Overeducation - indegree slope - performance slope	-1.69	-0.10
Additional	Overeducation - indegree intercept - performance intercept	-0.34	0.31
	Overeducation - indegree quadratic - performance quadratic	-0.69	0.01
	Overeducation - outdegree intercept - performance intercept	-0.31	-0.02
	Overeducation - outdegree slope - performance slope	-0.70	0.12
	Overeducation - outdegree quadratic - performance quadratic	-0.71	0.08

4.2.3 Moderation effect of gender

To test moderation effect and conditional indirect effect, I treat gender as dummy variable and adding the interaction term of overeducation and gender on the slope of collaboration network indegree centrality. The result in Table 6 showed that the interaction effect of overeducation and gender on the slope of indegree centrality is not significant ($\gamma = -0.09, p > .05, SE = 0.16$). Based on this method, hypothesis 5 is not supported. However, when examining the conditional indirect effects, results in Table 7 showed that overeducation is significantly related to the change in performance via indegree centrality linear slope in men group (estimate = -0.80, 95% confidence interval (CI) = [-1.76, -0.09]), but not in women group (estimate = -0.48, 95% confidence interval (CI) = [-1.87, 1.04]). This result is in line with Hypothesis 6. Figure 6 and 7 showed the influence of overeducation on indegree centrality for men and women.

TABLE 6 Estimates of Unstandardized Coefficients in Moderation Effect Model

Predictor	Initial level of indegree centrality		Slope of indegree centrality		Quadratic term of indegree centrality	
	Estimate	<i>SE</i>	Estimate	<i>SE</i>	Estimate	<i>SE</i>
overeducation	-0.01	0.11	-0.23*	0.11	0.05*	0.02
gender	0.17*	0.08	0.32**	0.07	-0.04*	0.02
overeducation * gender	-0.19	0.17	0.09	0.16	-0.03	0.04
work tenure	-0.03**	0.01	-0.04**	0.01	0.01**	0.00
household registration	0.04	0.09	-0.05	0.10	0.00	0.02

Predictor	Initial level of outdegree centrality		Slope of outdegree centrality		Quadratic term of outdegree centrality	
	Estimate	<i>SE</i>	Estimate	<i>SE</i>	Estimate	<i>SE</i>
overeducation	-0.20*	0.09	-0.20	0.15	0.05	0.04
gender	0.40**	0.11	0.38**	0.12	-0.04	0.03
overeducation * gender	0.02	0.20	-0.26	0.27	0.06	0.06
work tenure	-0.02	0.01	-0.05**	0.01	0.01**	0.00
household registration	0.15	0.12	0.01	0.15	-0.02	0.04

Predictor	Initial level of performance		Slope of performance		Quadratic term of performance	
	Estimate	<i>SE</i>	Estimate	<i>SE</i>	Estimate	<i>SE</i>
overeducation	-0.02	0.17	-0.91	1.34	0.30	0.40
work tenure	0.02	0.02	-0.06	0.17	0.02	0.05
household registration	-0.17	0.17	0.59	0.76	-0.17	0.23
Initial level of indegree centrality	1.55**	0.19	-1.03**	0.14	0.21**	0.03
Initial level of outdegree centrality	0.84	0.14	-0.59**	0.11	0.12**	0.02
slope of indegree centrality			3.49**	0.55	-0.97**	0.16
slope of outdegree centrality			1.41**	0.25	-0.38**	0.07
quadratic term of indegree centrality			18.71**	6.93	-5.69**	2.13
quadratic term of outdegree centrality			13.15	18.75	-3.84	5.59

TABLE 7 Conditional Effect of Overeducation on Performance Growth

			BootLLCI	BootULCI
Proposed	Men	Overeducation - indegree linear slope - performance slope	-1.76	-0.09
	Women	Overeducation - indegree linear slope - performance slope	-1.87	1.04
Additional	Men	Overeducation - indegree intercept - performance intercept	-0.34	0.31
	Women	Overeducation - indegree intercept - performance intercept	-0.90	0.19
	Men	Overeducation - indegree quadratic - performance quadratic	-0.71	0.01
	Women	Overeducation - indegree quadratic - performance quadratic	-0.74	0.45
	Men	Overeducation - outdegree intercept - performance intercept	-0.31	-0.02
	Women	Overeducation - outdegree intercept - performance intercept	-0.53	0.30
	Men	Overeducation - outdegree linear slope - performance slope	-0.76	0.11
	Women	Overeducation - outdegree linear slope - performance slope	-1.64	0.23
	Men	Overeducation - outdegree quadratic - performance quadratic	-1.24	0.06
	Women	Overeducation - outdegree quadratic - performance quadratic	-1.86	0.14

FIGURE 6 The Effect of Overeducation on Indegree Centrality in Men Group

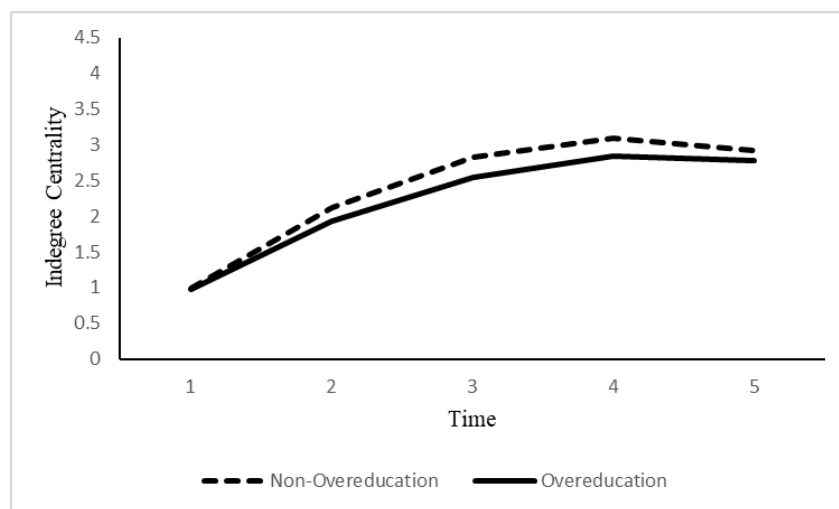
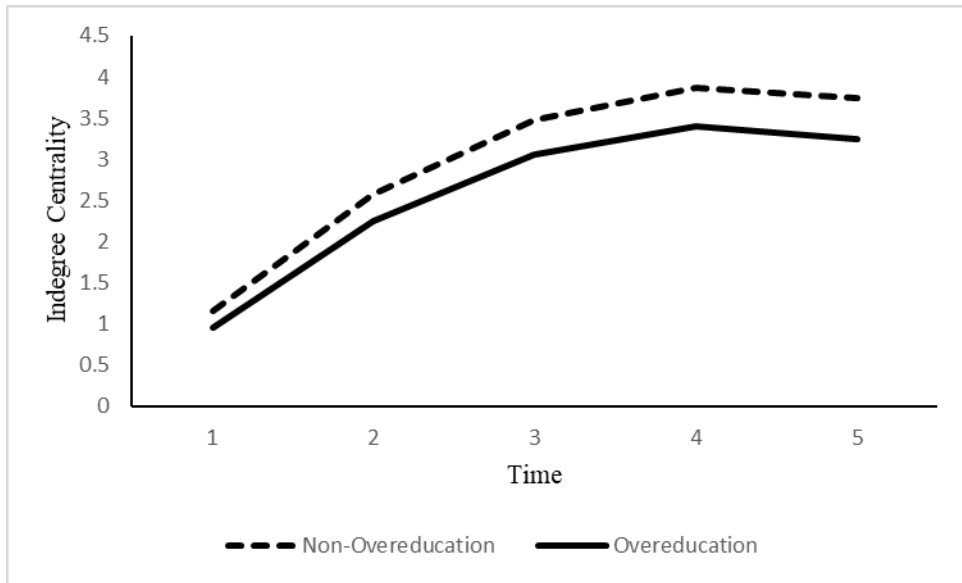


FIGURE 7 The Effect of Overeducation on Indegree Centrality in Women Group



CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

I examined the mediation effect of overeducation on performance growth through indegree centrality growth and the moderation effect of gender. Official records collected from a real estate agent company provided support for the mediating mechanism. The results showed that compared to non-overeducated newcomers, overqualified newcomers' indegree centrality increases slower during the socialization process, which in turn has a slower growth rate of performance. I also examined the moderation effect of gender and the result partially supported that the negative effect of overeducation is stronger for men group rather than women group. Even though the moderation hypothesis is not totally supported, the result still provided some cues for further exploration. The theoretical and practical implications of my findings are discussed below.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

My findings contribute to the existing literature in several ways. The main contribution is to overqualification research in the following two aspects. First, this inquiry contributes to the paucity of studies on how overqualification influences employees' social relationship building. Even though Deng et al. (2018) and Erdogan. et al. (2020) made very meaningful explorations in investigating the social interaction between overqualified employees and others, more effort is still needed to delineate a clearer process. On the one hand, the results of Deng and colleagues' (2018) study are not completely consistent between Study 1 and Study 2 after altering the measure subject (from focal employee to peers), which indicated a potential difference in perceptions and behaviors between overqualified employees and peers in social interactions. My study explored coworkers' influence for relationship building after controlling the social capital focal employee initiatively created. On the other hand, although Erdogan and colleagues' (2020) article distinguished two

mechanisms for the relationship between overqualification and advice network centrality and got different results between the two mediators. They implicitly assumed that overqualified employees stayed in a relatively dominant position during interaction because they focus on the voice overqualified employees sent out rather than received. These findings are meaningful and interesting, but relatedly ignored another potential condition – overqualified employees can also stay at lower positions and be influenced by others. My study provided a new angle to understand overqualification’s influence from a peer’s perspective.

Second, exploring the social influence of overqualification indirectly joins an ongoing debate about the relationship between overqualification and performance. Positive, negative, and neutral results have been documented in prior studies, and a meta-analysis has demonstrated a non-significant result between overqualification and performance (Harari et al., 2017). As a result, scholars have devoted to solving this problem using various ways, such as finding boundary conditions. For example, Lee et al. (2020) dealt with this issue by integrating an ability-based mechanism and a motivation-based mechanism into one model and figure out the conditions each mechanism works. Though this attempt is very inspiring, it still explores overqualification by using subjective measurement, and thus we know little about others’ functions in this relationship. I supplemented this build-in deficit by adopting an objective overqualification measure - overeducation. Objective overqualification is a more observable character than perceived overqualification and thus it can be easier detected by coworkers. Thus, I could analyze the reactions of coworkers. Exploring through peers’ angle largely explained why overqualified employees have lower performance. Furthermore, I captured the growth of performance, which would delineate subtle changes and provide more information. Thus, this study enhanced the understanding of the effect of overqualification on performance and provided additional value for solving this puzzle.

Although the main contribution is to the overqualification literature, I also extend the research on social capital. Morrison (2002)'s classic article explored the social relationships of newcomers, after that, the research on the influence of social networks on newcomers' performance has been popular (Yuan et al., 2020). I broaden this type of research by capturing social capital dynamic change to illustrate the potential influence of time on social capital and how the speed of social capital accumulation process influences the outcome. Besides, prior studies mostly do not distinguish the direction of degree centrality (Ho & Pollack, 2014, as an exception). I differentiate the origin of collaboration networks and use 2766 newcomers' archival data rather than surveys to delineate the social capital development process, which is helpful for us to understand this phenomenon.

Furthermore, prior research on socialization usually treats newcomer indistinguishably (Hurst et al., 2012). In fact, there are many different types of newcomers and different classifications of newcomers may obtain different findings. In this study, I focused on one type of newcomers - overqualified newcomers - to enrich the socialization literature. Specifically, compared to ordinary newcomers, overqualified newcomers encounter double challenges and need to spend more effort to offset these adverse conditions.

Finally, status inconsistency theory has received much attention at a macro level (Jensen & Wang, 2018; Stryker & Macke, 1978; Wang & Jensen, 2019; Zhao & Zhou, 2011), but recently more papers at the micro level started to use this perspective to explain individual-level phenomena (Han & Pollock, 2021; Sessions et al., 2021). However, these studies still focus on the focal employees' reaction to this inconsistency condition, but neglect peers' reaction to this unpleasant condition. I use status inconsistency theory to delineate peer' reactions to this stressful condition.

5.2 Managerial Implications

Though the importance of socialization programs in boarding new employees has been recognized for a long time, and companies have paid attention to developing customized programs (Saks & Gruman, 2012), effective practices to socialize newcomers with unique characteristics, like overqualified newcomers, are lacking. In light that companies may need more budgets for recruiting these employees and are expecting to receive more benefits from them, it is necessary for companies to implement more specific programs for overqualified newcomers to socialize them successfully. Based on my findings, overqualified newcomers have more challenges in building connections with coworkers and deserve more attention from the company.

Besides, overqualified newcomers usually indicate high potential. However, this potential also needs time to transform into actual benefits for the companies. Besides, this process is greatly influenced by the environment, especially peers working with these newcomers. The company cannot achieve the expected outcome of recruiting overqualified newcomers if coworkers treat high potential newcomers as threats and stress, rather than helpers. Thus, on the one hand, effective training programs should remind overqualified newcomers to intentionally build social capital with coworkers during work and equip them with the necessary social skills to collaborate with coworkers, as a result, decrease the possible negative impacts from peers. On the other hand, companies need to recognize coworkers' value to the company and make them feel psychologically safe in working with overqualified newcomers. At the same time, companies could re-design the incentive system to encourage coworkers to help overqualified newcomers and build connections with these newcomers.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

My study also has several limitations that deserve more research in the future. First, though using an archival dataset provided us a precious chance to explore the socialization of overqualified employees from a new perspective, I am not able to capture the nuanced psychological mechanisms that explain how coworkers perceive others before deciding whether or not to collaborate with each other. Future research may employ survey studies to capture both newcomers' and coworkers' subjective evaluations to further evaluate the mediating mechanisms proposed in my study.

Second, even though the conditional effect might be significant under men group, the rigorousness is impaired, since the interaction term is not significant. I hope to treat this result with optimism. First, it demonstrated the difficulty of testing moderated mediation model in latent growth modeling. This result demonstrates why published papers using latent growth modeling primarily focus on the mediation effect. Second, the significant finding in the men group suggests that combining several demographic variables may indeed strengthen the impact of status inconsistency. Future studies can use other ways to combine demographic variables, like the status inconsistency formula, to explore the potential additional effects of status inconsistency. Since my study mainly focused on overqualification, the results might be limited by the main focus.

Third, I distinguished social capital trajectory from social capital itself to explain the influence of time on these constructs. Since many papers in longitudinal studies, especially those that use latent growth modeling, still use a static logic to explain this dynamic phenomenon, more papers are needed to explain the difference and look into how change itself affects outcomes.

Fourth, socialization studies need to explore other specific types of newcomers who may not completely follow the logic of ordinary newcomer findings discovered previously.

Characteristics that make newcomers unique may be different in various companies and contexts, future research needs to select relevant characteristics carefully to identify unique newcomers and factors significantly influence their socialization in the new organization.

Fifth, even though I included quadratic term into the data analysis, I focus on the linear term only because I use social capital and socialization literatures that mostly indicate a changing trend (upward or downward) (Morrison, 2002) rather than a tipping point. The quadratic term likely occurs because in the final one or two months of socialization, the expansion of social networks reaches a saturation point or coworkers withdraw collaborations foreseeing those newcomers may quit their jobs when the base salary becomes zero at the end of the six-month socialization period. More research is needed to understand this unexpected pattern of change in social network and performance.

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