研究論文

Justification for Organizational Socialization

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組織社会化の正当化

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Abstract

All organizations have some form of socialization for new employees, whether they acknowledge it or not. It benefits both the new hire as well as the company if the socialization is done correctly. This paper contains four sections. Section one combines two definitions of socialization to give a comprehensive concept of what socialization means to business academics. Section two further explains socialization by presenting some widely cited socialization tactics. Section three addresses some criticism of socialization. The fourth and final section shows the benefits of an effective socialization program. In the end, organizations should not ask whether to socialize new employees but rather how to socialize all employees.

Socialization Defined

Many definitions of socialization can be found in business literature. There is a large degree of overlap in these definitions. To give the reader a conceptual overview, the author elucidates two definitions.

In the article “Building on the Past” they cobble together several definitions to create a definition for socialization:

> A process in which newcomers to a social group or other social entity are transformed from outsiders to functioning, participating, and effective insiders of that entity. To become insiders, newcomers must usually learn, acquire, internalize, and practice new ways of thinking and behaving. To arrive at these new ways of thinking and behaving, they must engage in sensemaking; that is, they must attri-

> bute meaning to what they experience in the new work setting by placing it within a cognitive framework.
>
> (Beyer & Hannah, p. 637)

The first part of this definition states an outsider is transformed into an insider. Not just an insider, however, a "functioning, participating and effective" insider. This means, and rightfully so, once an organization decides to hire someone, they have expectations for that person to become a functional member. Socialization provides the springboard for becoming such an employee. This would make it sound as though socialization is only for new employees, however, Chao et al. point out "Socialization is not only an important issue for organizational newcomers, but it is important for established organizational members as well. The need for resocialization among organizational members may be most salient as people experience job changes" (1994, p. 742). Thus, socialization should be a never-ending process–necessary to transition newcomers to insiders and keep those already on the inside up to date. The second part of this definition states new employees must assign meaning to events taking place around them. This then allows them to "learn, acquire, internalize, and practice new ways of thinking and behaving." Organizations should be aware that left with a lack of definitions, new employees will create their own meaning because as Karlgaard points out, "We impose a narrative structure on otherwise random sequences of events until they cohere in a way that makes sense to us and that we can manage. We put things in order, and so doing, we give them meaning" (2019. p. 209). Our sense of meaning not only influences our ability to manage situations. It may create metaphors that dictate our morals and actions in that these "metaphors forge the values that ultimately drive people's actions" (Lent, 2016, p. 31). Effective socialization it will prevent them from misconstruing their new inputs and it will start them thinking and behaving in accord with the company culture.

The previous definition focused how socialization influences the work aspects of an organization. This next definition supplied by Filstad focuses more on the social aspects of an organization:

> Organizational socialization is the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills to assume an organizational role transformed from outsider to full member, learning the culture and learning to appreciate values, abilities, expected behavior and social knowledge.
>
> (2004, p. 396)

Socialization does not only influence the work aspects of a person's job. Socialization affects the social aspects of work. This was alluded to in the previous definition with the word "behave." However, this second definition makes it clearer that a newcomer to an organization cannot be considered an insider until they acquire the social knowledge of that organization. In fact, this definition makes it sounds as though the social aspects are more important than the work aspects when it comes to socialization. In truth, a well-balanced combination of the two is necessary to completely socialize a new employee into a company.

Socialization Tactics

Socialization tactics have been split into two main categories: institutional or individual. Ardts et al. complied the main socialization tactics which repeatedly appear in articles concerning socialization and placed them as being opposite sides of the institutional-individual dichotomy.

1) collective versus individual
2) formal versus informal
3) sequential versus random
4) fixed versus variable
5) serial versus disjunctive
6) investiture versus divestiture

(Ardts et al., 2001)

To make them easier to understand, the author created a visual representation of the information in the Ardts article. (Appendix A) The figure may make it easier for readers to conceptualize the relationships of these tactics as they read through this section. The top half of the figure corresponds to the first tactic listed in the six dichotomies above. Each of these is an institutionalized socialization tactic, which means the organization is highly involved in the socialization process. If an organization were to choose to use all six of these tactics it would indicate a hands-on approach to socializing new employees. Moreover, doing so tends to lead "to conformist role behaviour," which has a positive upside of "organizational commitment, both in the sense of loyalty and in the sense of emotional commitment" (Ardts et al., 2001, p. 161).

The lower half of the figure corresponds to the second tactics from the six dichotomies. Each of these necessitates less involvement by the organization. They are

termed as individualized socialization tactics. Utilizing all six of these tactics tends to lead to a more innovative employee, but the drawback is newcomers who tend to be less loyal and less emotionally attached to the organization (Ardts et al., 2001, p. 164).

Once an organization chooses to socialize its employees, they must decide what kind of employees they want working in their organization and then choose which tactics to use. Most articles tend to lean toward promoting institutionalized socialization tactics.

Socialization Criticized

Most of the literature also agrees organizational socialization is beneficial. There are however two critical viewpoints regarding socialization. The first is that training and socialization is a manipulation of individuals. The second is the possibility that the socialization could go to an extreme and become a form of harassment. Both objections to socialization, rather than pointing to how it should be abolished, point to the necessity of a well-planned and transparent socialization process.

In an article covering both side of the socialization debate, Gordon lists several objections to socialization. The first one, upon closer examination, is a call for organizations to take more care in creating their socialization programs. It supposes that "in the name of helping employees grow, perhaps even with the best of intentions, the company may simply be trying to "re-wire" people to suit its own impersonal ends" (1989, p. 32). Some would debate that organizations never have any intention other than reaching "impersonal ends" no matter what may become of the employees. A valid point but beyond the scope of this paper. However, such notions are proof that an organization with employee growth as a goal should socialize employees to work together smoothly, as stated in this quote from the ideas from Jones and Van Maanen & Schein, "the primary goals of socialization are to ensure the continuity of central values and to provide new employees with a framework for responding to their work environment and for coordinating with other employees" (Kim et al., 2005, p. 238). Accordingly, Gordon's objection is not a call to abandon socialization. It is a call for organizations to socialize better by evaluating their intentions.

This next quote from Gordon shows that beyond being careful about how they socialize new employees, organizations must be truthful in communicating their program rationale. After socialization at Pacific Bell, the San Francisco based phone company, there were employees who complained, "They were being forced to fit some mold," when they were subject to a training seminar designed with the intent "to

help." Here the article states a very important issue which demands organizations develop transparent socialization programs. "Intent is only that. The perception of some employees was that the company was trying to turn them into interchangeable robots" (Gordon, 1989, p. 38). Accordingly, what an organization is intending to do is not as important as what the employees subjected to socialization feel is being done to them. This same idea is repeated by Cooper-Thomas and Anderson who cite research by Black, Mignerey and Van Maanen & Schein showing "it is newcomers' perceptions of the tactics, in terms of the message they provide, rather than the tactics themselves that have the more important influence" (2002, p. 426). Transparency may be one effective way to solve this problem. Employees need to be told truthfully what they are being trained and why.

The second problem caused by socialization gone wrong is harassment. This type of socialization will be harder to stop because there is no program for the types of things done in the name of having newcomers learn the ropes and earn their place. The people who think of the harassment as a traditional "newcomer hazing" tend to survive the ordeal and have a great story to tell afterward. For some examples of various extremes, such as a seemingly-good-natured request for a non-existent item such as a Shelf Stretcher or Squeegee Sharpener, readers can look to pages 135 to 138 of *Consider This: Moments in My Writing Life after Which Everything Was Different* by Chuck Palahniuk. Palahniuk posits his hunt for the Squeegee Sharpener was important because, "I'd learned the layout of the place and had introduced myself to every boss I might ever be assigned to work for." (2020, p. 136) He was able to place the incident within a "cognitive framework" as mentioned by Beyers and Hannah in the section, Socialization Define. Thus, he could learn and become a functional member of the workplace. Readers wishing to know more should be forewarned that the last story, the opposite of a good-natured request, involves a dead horse. The consistent thing about these stories is that people love telling them as much as they love hearing them and may even compete to see which stories are the best. Therefore, this type of hazing will be hard to overcome.

Naturally, there are organizations trying to do away with hazing on campuses and at the workplace because they are not all as "fun" to tell as the ones Palahniuk relates. Nevertheless, some employees see workplace hazing as a vetting process. Brown & Middaugh point out that nurses will "frequently engage in irritating actions or behaviors to see how new nurses can tolerate or fit into the unit" (2009, p. 305). Critics of such actions say they are a form of horizonal hostility or horizonal violence occuring

between workers of similar status–the only difference being the length of time in the organization. No matter where the hazing comes from, the effects harm more than just the person hazed. "The impact of discrimination and harassment, the related negative physical and mental outcomes, the low levels of job satisfaction, and the negative impact of these experiences on family/home stress likely take a significant toll" (Jahnke et al., 2019, p. 10). Therefore, the harassed employees, companies, families and by extension, society at large must pay when the harassment is beyond the boundaries of a cognitive framework.

The author thinks workplace hazing cannot be eliminated. It needs to be placed within a cognitive framework enabling new employees to transition from outsider to insider while at the same time, giving the current workers assurance that the newcomer fits and can be relied upon. By reframing it as socialization it may be possible to create clear protocols of what current workers can do in the name of this onboarding transition. Additionally, it should be made clear to the newcomer that the socialization process may seem harsh at times, but it is just one rite of passage into their new working life.

Several studies note that hazing can lead to higher turnover (Brown & Middaugh, 2009; Jahnke et al., 2019). Moreover, Tofler specifically states when people are hazed it may end up, "leading to their leaving or resigning from an environment which may not be sufficiently nurturing" (2016, p. 627). Retaining employees helps keep company costs down–some cost benefits are explained in the following section. On the other side of employee retention, barriers to entry in the form of a difficult, but meaningful socialization may lead new employees to value their jobs more, preventing them from jumping from job to job. They will feel a sense of accomplishment at having been able to join the company.

Overall, critical opinions of socialization are not reasons to end socialization. Rather, they indicate socialization plans must be completely thought through. Also, new employees should be made aware of the meaningful aspects of the socialization. Otherwise, newcomers will feel they are being manipulated at best or harassed at worst. And the veteran employees may go too far, leading to actual harassment.

Socialization Benefits

Most of the articles on socialization speak of its benefits. This section illustrates how both the organization, and the newcomer can benefit from a well-designed socialization program.

Organizations may raise the objection that socialization programs are expensive. To combat that objection, it is better to look at the issue from the other side—how much it cost an organization not to socialize newcomers. Demer states, "An executive who doesn't integrate successfully can cost a company 10 to 20 times their salary in lost momentum and opportunities" (2004, p. 17). If these executives were socialized correctly, becoming integrated into the organization, their salaries would be well spent on creating momentum and opportunities. To make matters worse, according to the American Management Association, "40% of senior managers don't last more than two years in their new positions" (Demer, 2004, p. 16). Even using the conservative number from the previous quote, 10 times an executive's salary being lost, would mean organizations are working at a deficit against the 60% of managers who stay on. This data pertains to senior managers. However, Gustafson writes that for some industries more than 50% of new employees will quit within one year of being hired (2005, p. 34). If a good socialization program can increase retention, the costs of such a program will be much less than those associated with the average hiring and training process.

That last point indicates organizations can save money if their new employees do not quit soon after being hired. Some people may question whether socialization can really make a difference in how long people stay on in an organization. However, Klein and Weaver state, "Organizational socialization has been linked to a number of important organizational outcomes including increased organizational commitment, job involvement, role orientation, and tenure." So, an employee who has been through an effective socialization program will be more committed to the organization and more likely to continue working for longer. Kristof states, through socialization employees are "more likely to be committed to the organization and are less likely to quit" (1996, p. 32). The most complete justification comes from Ardts:

> a newcomer gains knowledge about the structure, goals, history, traditions, rituals, myths, language and politics of the organisation; the group or work unit, such as, the personalities, interests, attitudes and behaviours, and the way to deal with colleagues, superiors and subordinates; the way in which the tasks and functions have to be fulfilled, the required knowledge and skills, priorities, the use of resources, and finally personal change relating to identity, self-image and motivation.
>
> (2001, p. 159)

It could be argued that most of the points benefit the organization rather than the individual. However, clearly a positive change in self-image and motivation are benefits for the employee. Feldman states another benefit of socialization is an improve "sense of competence and confidence" (1976, p. 65). So, an employee with a strong self-image who is motivated, competent, and confident could be the outcome of effective socialization. The changes socialization evokes are beneficial to both the employee and the organization.

Conclusion

Socialization can benefit all the stakeholders of an organization, from the worker through to society at large. However, the organization needs to oversee the socialization to ensure the program teaches both job-related and social knowledge to the new employees with integrity. Companies assuming no program is necessary may end up with a culture of horizonal hostility, something akin to hazing or harassment. A well-thought-out, transparent socialization program can mitigate such negative possibilities. Through effective socialization organizations profit and employees grow. Accordingly, organizations should consider what type of socialization program to implement not whether to do so.

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Appendix A

Institutionalized Socialization Tactics

A group process which is strongly orchestrated by the organization

Seen as a continuum of direct opposites

Less group driven process which is less orchestrated by the organization

Individualized Socialization Tactics

1	2	3	4	5	6
Collective	**Formal**	**Sequential**	**Fixed**	**Serial**	**Investiture**
Description New employees socialized together **Example** Group training	**Description** Custom made socialization experience **Example** Training camps	**Description** Specified steps leading toward job mastery **Example** Rigid internships	**Description** Fixed timeline - communicated to newcomer **Example** Fixed schedule	**Description** Availability of experienced members **Example** Role-models	**Description** Affirms newcomer's identity **Example** Opinions valued
Possible Positive Outcome: More institutional socialization tactics tend to leads to conformist role behavior, loyalty and emotional commitment.			Possible Negative Outcome: More institutional socialization tactics tend to leads to employees that are less innovative or less willing to attempt self-directed job improvements.		
Possible Positive Outcome: More individualized tactics tend to lead to more innovative role behavior, which tends to lead to adjustments and perhaps improvements in job performance.			Possible Negative Outcome: More individualized tactics tend to lead to less organizational loyalty and thus an increased tendency to leave the organization.		
Description New employees socialized individually **Example** On job training	**Description** No set plan, training as they go **Example** On job training	**Description** Steps are set according to situation **Example** Ad-hoc steps	**Description** Timing is more fluid, no set end points **Example** No timeline	**Description** Experienced members unavailable **Example** Sink-or-Swim	**Description** Tries to change newcomer's identity **Example** Military training
Individual	**Informal**	**Random**	**Variable**	**Disjunctive**	**Divestiture**
1	2	3	4	5	6

Based on information found in the article The Breaking in of New Employees, Ardts 2001