

INTEGRATION AT THE WORKPLACE STUDIES WITHIN MULTINATIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL FACTORIES IN HUNGARY

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Abstract: The primary objective of this essay is to assign a gap in Human Recourse Management literature. Many studies and resources are known about hiring and maintaining people and their loyalty to organizations. Work socialization is the first step to keeping people; however, most of the literature on integration at the workplace focuses primarily on organizational commitment and not on the individuals. Various perspectives of work socialization have been discussed including socialization stages, guidance and carrier development. This essay focuses on the approach of Human Resource Management, but the scope is expanded to the individual as well.

In this paper, the reasoning, the methods and the questions of my future doctoral research on integration at the workplace are analysed. First, the issue is discussed from the perspective of social changes in Hungary. The next part of this essay illustrates varying definitions from the literature, providing then my own view of how to explain the integration process in the workplace and through which what I would like to focus my research. This article also aims to show possible methods (in-depth interviews with Human Resource Managers and document analysis) for examining the topic at multinational pharmaceutical factories in Hungary, while highlighting the most important questions for which my research aims to find answers.

Keywords: ???????

Introduction

Growing up in Hungary after the democratic revolution of 1989, I realized that the country had become a part of the global community and how global processes have had enormous impact on the country. These effects may have proved more important than the actions of any of our governments. Due to the sudden unfolding of the world after 1989, and the accompanying exposure of Hungary to global changes, the lives of ordinary people have been greatly influenced. During socialism, the purpose of the government was to provide full employment, so that people could feel security in their jobs. At that time, it was natural for every employee to retire from his/her first workplace. In a market economy, the need for new workplaces is highly influenced by different circumstances, such as well-educated labour, wages, taxes, infrastructure and the market. Additionally, because of the continuous changes of these factors and, of course, the current economic situation, workplaces are quickly established and eliminated. It follows that people change their workplaces more frequently than ever before: 77,8 % of employees between 15 and 19 years old, 55,2 % of employees between 20 and 24 years old and only 38,2 % of employees between 25 and 29 years of age presently work at their first workplace [Internet 1]. This means that organizations have more newcomers who are of different

age, work experience, education background, social background and behaviour [Móré, 2011]. Therefore, new challenges are created in the process of integration, which should not be neglected in 21st century management literature.

Literature Review

This part of the essay illustrates different approaches to the idea of work socialization, providing also my own interpretation of this idea and through which I would like to focus my examinations of this topic.

One of the most well-known approaches [Van Maanen & Schein 1979] defines work socialization as a process by which newly-hired employees learn about, adapt to, and come to identify with an organization. Louis [1980] suggests a process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, expected behaviours and social knowledge to participate as an organizational member.

Newer definitions also stress the goals of learning. Haueter et al. [2003] and Saks et al. [2007] refine work socialization as a procedure through which employees acquire information and knowledge on how to adapt to new jobs, roles, work groups and organizational culture, in order to be useful members of their organizations. Furnham [2005,

145. p.] defines the term as a procedure through which an organization changes its newcomers. He suggests that its basic objective is to maintain control, by ensuring that newcomers share the same norms and values as those already established, i.e. it involves attempts to teach newcomers new rules, roles, norms, values and concepts used by the organization.

Feldman's [1976a,b] three-stage entry model itemizes the integration process as follows:

1. Anticipatory socialization – “getting in”: getting realistic expectations, determining match with the newcomer;
2. Accommodation – “breaking in”: initiation into the job, creation of interpersonal relationships, clarification of roles, congruence between self and organizational performance appraisal;
3. Role management – “setting in”: degree of fit between life interests outside work and organizational demands, resolution of conflicts at the workplace itself, diversity due to individual experiences.

A recent approach [Brown, 2011, p. 31–32.] also itemizes the process, but it emphasizes the importance of fitting into the existing organizational culture. Brown suggests that for a new employee, the socialization process evolves through four stages:

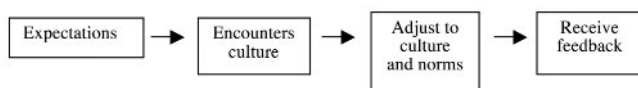


Figure 1: The four stages of work socialization

Source: Brown, D. R. [2011]: *An Experiential Approach to organizational Development*. 8th ed., Reason Education, Inc., New Jersey, 32 p.

Another definition views work socialization as one entering an organization with initial expectations, encountering an organizational culture, adjusting to that culture and norms and receiving feedback. This definition is in contrast with the others, because it lacks any mention of the learning (and also the work) processes.

No literature has been found that would make distinctions according to the differences among persons in the process of work socialization. Although new studies began to study the interaction between socialization and individualization, no considerable attention has been given to the personal differences among newcomers. However, while Haueter et al. [2003] suggest that the integration process is not the same for everyone, the authors do not mention the personal differences among newcomers as reasons.

Another approach argues that new employees can be differentiated along how much they learn about the following elements of the organizational culture: norms, goals, policies and values. This approach also gives advice on how to differentiate employees on the basis of how well they can develop interpersonal relationships which are necessary for successful functioning within an organization [Mitus, 2006].

The hiring process is a complex procedure which contains three steps: recruiting, selection and integration into

the workplace. The literature emphasizes the importance of selection (how to select CV-s effectively, assessment centres, different job interview techniques, type of questions and non verbal communication through the interviews, but selection is just one of the three steps. Certainly, the recruiting process depends on organizational practice and the type of new position; in my opinion, the integration process is not highly emphasized by authors.

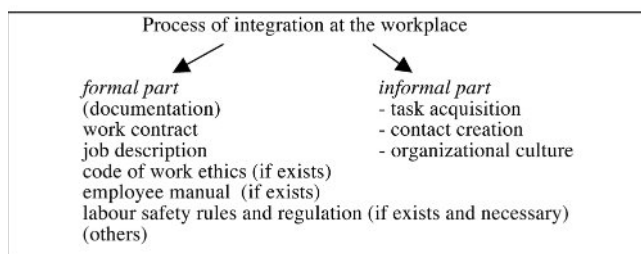


Figure 2: Parts of integration at the workplace

Source: own figure

My explanation for the integration at the workplace includes two parts: a formal and an informal part. The formal part essentially contains the documentation; this process is independent of the personality of the newcomer – the contact and the job description process is the same for a 25 year old employee and a 50 year old employee (if they are hired for the same position). The informal part of the integration process has three important factors:

1. Task acquisition in practice: knowing the tasks on a daily basis and the way these should be accomplished – the ability to work independently and the realization of the added value to the organization;
2. Contact creation: getting to know the direct co-workers and managers, building connection networks at the workplace and fitting in the hierarchical system;
3. Organizational culture: getting to know the organizational habits, values and rules.

In my view, these three parts cannot be independent of the entirely new personality of the newcomer and this element has not been studied in Human Resource Management literature, as yet.

What I miss is that the definitions clearly define the process itself; however, not from the perspective of Human Resource Management, because there is no emphasis on practical realization and there are no practical instructions. Furthermore, definitions from the literature do not distinguish between entrances.

Aims and Methodology

In this part of the paper, the aims and methods of my future doctoral research are analysed. Considering the social changes and the economic situation in Hungary, the literature review and my explanation for integration at the workplace, my research will consist of three questions, with each question including sub-questions. The questions are the following:

1. How does the integration in practice at Hungarian multinational pharmaceutical factories work? What are the steps of integration? What are the differences in the integration process concerning positions? Is there a mentoring system? If there is, what is it like?
2. Multiculturalism: does the subsidiary company use the same process as the parent company? Which are the same factors of integration at the workplace and which factors have been changed because of cultural specificities?
3. Is the 21st century present in the process of work socialization? Do they consider the individual features of their employees, such as age, educational background, work experience, behaviour and social background during the process of work socialization? If yes, how?

In order to answer these questions and those which will arise over the course of my examinations, I have chosen document analysis of organizational documents and in-depth interviews with Human Resource Managers at chosen organizations as my research methods. Document analysis shows how the integration process is regulated and the depth-interviews point out how it works in practice.

Antal [1976, 15 p.] calls document analysis every process during which – on the basis of the regularly recurring features occurring in the notices and messages – we come to conclusions which are not overtly stated, but to conclusions which may be inferred from how the message was formulated (i.e., coding) and which may be verified and continued in a different way through other methods. Klein [2004, 120. p.] defines an in-depth interview as a conversation which aims to get information and collect data. A more detailed approach suggests that in-depth interviewing, known as unstructured interviewing, is a type of interview which researchers use to elicit information, in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation; it can also be used to explore interesting areas for further investigation. This type of interview involves asking informants open-ended questions, and probing wherever necessary to obtain data deemed useful by the researcher. As in-depth interviewing often involves qualitative data, it is also called qualitative interviewing [Internet 2].

In the first period of my research, document analysis will be made and, considering its results, the in-depth interview questions will be compiled.

Summary

The goal of this study was to assign a gap in Human Resource Management literature and illustrate the reasoning, the methods and the questions of my future doctoral research on integration at the workplace. The social changes in Hungary justify an analysis of work socialization and the review of the literature shows that there is a wide-range of

studies about work socialization, but less attention has been given to the personal differences among newcomers during the process. This essay analysed the chosen methods (in-depth interview and document analysis) which will be used in my research. The most important questions of the examination were also highlighted.

The analysis of work socialization has its own practical merits and I intend to deliberately and analytically reveal its important factors and steps. Furthermore, I will endeavour to focus on its organizational effects and also try to come up with suggestions that would be taken into account in human resources activities.

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