The Impact of the Onboarding Program on the Satisfaction and Well-Being of Employees.

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Master in Management

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Resumo

O presente estudo usou a teoria da coesão relacional para analisar o impacto das táticas do processo de socialização organizacional no engagement e bem-estar dos novos colaboradores, através da mediação de fatores relacionais como a perceção de suporte organizacional e embeddedness no trabalho. Com base num contexto de uma empresa de centro de serviços partilhados, da indústria química, foi proposto estudar a relação dos novos colaboradores com o Programa de Onboarding e o seu impacto no bem-estar e engagement, através de uma metodologia quantitativa, cujos dados foram recolhidos através de dois questionários online e aplicados a uma amostra de 72 participantes, que tinham entrado na empresa entre Janeiro e Abril de 2023 e completado o programa organizacional de integração. Os resultados demonstraram estar de acordo com o estado de arte atual e com as hipóteses propostas, tendo evidenciado que a perceção de suporte organizacional e embeddedness no trabalho são positivamente influenciados pelas táticas de socialização o que, por sua vez, irá gerar maior engagement e consequentemente maior bem-estar nos colaboradores. Este estudo permite demonstrar as implicações teóricas, mas principalmente práticas da importância de uma escolha ponderada de táticas de socialização que permitam a organização atingir os seus objetivos e tirar partido do envolvimento e engagement dos seus novos colaboradores, que permitirá obter também um maior nível de bem-estar individual e organizacional.

Palavras-chave: Socialização Organizacional, Onboarding, Perceção de Suporte Organizacional, Embeddedness no Trabalho, Engagement, Bem-estar
Códigos de Classificação JEL: O15 - Recursos Humanos, I31 – Well-being

Abstract

This study used relational cohesion theory to analyse the impact of the organizational socialization process tactics in the engagement and well-being of new employees, through the mediation of relational factors such as perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness. Based on a context of a shared services centre company, of the chemical industry, it was proposed to study the relationship between newcomers and the Onboarding Program and its impact on well-being and engagement, through a quantitative methodology, whose data was collected via two online surveys applied to a sample of 72 participants that have joined the company between January and April of 2023 and completed the organizational process of integration. The results demonstrated to be aligned with the current literature and the proposed hypothesis, revealing perceived organizational support and on-the-job-embeddedness are positively influenced by socialization tactics, which will create bigger engagement and therefore, greater well-being on employees. This study allows to demonstrate the theorical but mainly practical importance of a thoughtful choice of socialization tactics that allow for the organization to accomplish its goals and benefit from involvement and engagement from its new employees, which will allow for the achievement of higher levels of individual and organizational well-being.

Keywords: Organizational Socialization, Onboarding, Perceived organizational support, On-the-job embeddedness, Engagement, Well-being

JEL Classification System: O15 - Human Resources, I31 – Well-being

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Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic and the evolution of the 4.0 revolution, many processes within the Human Resources Management had to be redesigned, mainly with the spread of hybrid work; for instance, the socialization process had to be redesigned in ways that could integrate employees on their new job. Socialization is a crucial HRM procedure due to its impact on satisfaction, well-being, employees' adjustment to a new company, and ultimately their retention. Organizational socialization is the process of learning (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Feldman, 1981; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) through which new employees start the process of becoming effective insiders (Perrot et al., 2014; Wanberg, 2012).

There are different socialization tactics that differ in terms of the information provided (content), the way through which that information can be provided (context) and how to react to different job situations (social). Research has shown that diverse socialization strategies can impact the newcomer in an assortment of results, which can range from relational effects to affective and behavioural outcomes (Allen & Shanock, 2012). For instance, these tactics can have impact on the way through which new employees perceive they are being supported by the organization and their embeddedness in the new job (Allen & Shanok, 2012; Zhou et al., 2022).

Perceived organizational support is the employees' general belief regarding the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). On-the-job embeddedness is the degree of an employee's "stuckness" or enmeshing, inside a larger social framework, and it results from various external (or contextual) forces — which are labelled links, fit, and sacrifice—in the organization and community that operate on a focal employee (William Lee et al., 2014). Socialization tactics may thereby promote a common conviction on the new employee regarding how the organization is worried about employee integration, thereby driving to higher perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness. This may also be important to organizations whose focus is talent retainment, since both factors have an impact on work engagement – a positive affective and motivational attitude characterized by high levels of commitment to work, absorption on the tasks and vigour to perform them (Bakker et al., 2014) and well-being (Xu et al., 2019) – the overall judgement of how good is life (Diener et al., 2020).

Building on the relational cohesion theory (Yoon & Lawler, 2006) it is argued that early socialization experiences will impact employees' well-being. Thereby it is proposed a model on the basis of two key relational mechanisms proposed in the relational cohesion theory. Each mechanism associate's socialization tactics to newcomer's well-being and incorporates the extent to which they perceive their relationship with the organization as supportive, caring, and entailing positive social exchanges (perceived organizational support) and also the degree to which they develop a sense of embeddedness within their new job (Allen & Shanock, 2012).

To date, few studies have explored the potential mechanisms that sustain how socialization tactics lead to higher levels of well-being among newcomers; and these studies have focused primarily on contextual factors, such working conditions, rather than examining individual-level factors that are intern to those who experience the socialization process (Allen & Shanok, 2013; Perrot et al., 2014). Exploring individual mechanisms helps identify ways in which organizations can better plan the socialization process that maximize the possibility of successful newcomer embeddedness.

Another gap in the literature is that the socialization process per see is not sufficient to promote higher well-being levels (Perrot et al., 2014). Indeed, most studies have explored the socialization tactics as the sole mechanism through which organizations may promote the newcomer adjustment (e.g., Gruman & Saks, 2011; Kim et al., 2005). In any case, it should be relevant to comprehend how individuals perceive the connection being created between them and the organization, that is understanding the resultant perception of support employees feel they receive from the organization. Perceived organizational support is established in the idea that employees develop a trade relationship with their organization - and this relationship is much developed amid the socialization process; that is, employees who experience a high quality socialization process may likely perceive being cared for and supported by their organization which in turn may lead them to feel they need to reciprocate, for instance through being engaged with their work (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Despite its potential importance, studies who explore the role of POS as a potential mechanism that sustains how the socialization led to higher well-being, have been scarce (Allen & Shanock, 2012).

Based on the literature, this study is relevant as it aims to analyse the impact of the three socialization tactics – its content, social dimension, and context – on relational (perceived

organizational support and on-the-job-embeddedness) affective and behavioural outcomes (work engagement and well-being).

Specifically, this study aimed to test how the three socialization tactics lead to higher levels of both work engagement and well-being by considering potential mechanisms that could sustain the relationship. Based on the literature review, it was hypothesized that both perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness could be mediators on the relationship between socialization tactics and work engagement, and well-being. It was further expected that socialization tactics would promote both perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness that, in turn, increased work engagement and, as a consequence, well-being. Thereby, this dissertation addressed the question: how does the socialization tactics impacts work engagement, and overall well-being? The objectives of the research were (1) test the mediating role of perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness on the relationship between an onboarding program (content, context, and social dimension) and work engagement. (2) test the mediating role of work engagement on the relationship between perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness and employees' well-being, and (3) test the serial mediating model between socialization tactics and well-being through (a) perceived organizational support and work engagement; and (b) on-the-job embeddedness and work engagement.

The main contributions of the study for practice are to validate the importance of a well-structured socialization process, with an onboarding program whose content, context and social aspects contribute positively to a positive perceived organizational support, on-the-job embeddedness, work engagement and overall satisfaction and well-being, so that organizations can evaluate current practices and create strategies that allow for socialization tactics to be a competitive advantage.

As such, this dissertation is structured into five chapters. On the first chapter, the literature review will assess the state of the art of variables under study. The second chapter will contextualize the company in which this study is based, by giving an overview of the company itself and the current practices. On the third chapter, the chosen investigation methodology will be presented in order to describe the instruments, procedure and characterize the sample. Lastly, the final two chapters will present the obtained results as well as provide an analysis and consequently a discussion that will allow for drawing conclusions in terms of theoretical and practical implications.

1. Literature review

1.1. Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization is the process of learning (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) through which newcomers move from being outsiders to becoming effective insiders (Wanberg, 2012). Thus, it is the process through which an organization integrates a new member into its way of thinking and acting, after the process of recruitment and selection (Perrot et al., 2014). It is an important period of adaptation between a new employee and an organization in which each one tries to fit the other, by compromising in a process designated by the psychological contract that is based on trust and a process of social exchange.

The socialization process is developed in three stages, according to Van Maanen and Schein, 1979: (1) *early socialization*: occurs during the recruitment and selection phase in which the candidate learns more about the organization and creates an image together with expectations. At this stage, individuals already have pre-conceptions regarding the organization and the labour market itself; but at the interview and contacts established with the organization, the person receives information about the policies, working conditions, and career development opportunities that will contribute to the creation of expectations about the future (Rego et al., 2008) ; (2) *meeting*: occurs between a newcomer's first day until the end of the trial period; at this stage, connections are made between colleagues, hierarchical superiors, and other stakeholders that allow employees to learn their roles and engage in the organizational culture. Expectations may (or may not) be fulfilled during the meeting stage, where employees assume their new position in the organization and start acquiring the competencies and behaviours needed to fully perform the new job. At this stage, there is a mutual adjustment between employee and employer, and the previously created expectations are solidified by employees through the development of a psychological contract (Rego et al., 2008); (3) *metamorphosis* occurs after the initial stage of adaptation, in which it is expected that employees already readjusted their behaviours to fit the organizational goals. This stage aims to engage people for as long as they work in the organization, to develop their sense of belonging and stability, and to improve their commitment, motivation, and satisfaction (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Rego et al., 2008).

During the socialization process, there are different socialization tactics that organizations can use (Chong et al., 2021). The aim of socialization tactics is for newcomers to understand their role in the organization, in order to be committed, satisfied, and well-adjusted to reduce the intentions of turnover. The socialization tactics are the way the experiences of transitioning to a new role are planned for an individual (Bauer at al., 2007). According to Van Maanem & Schein (1979), they can be separated into six groups, categorized respectively into social, context, and content. These tactics can promote learning that is more orientated to an institutionalized or individual role (Allen & Shanock, 2012). Institutionalized role learning stimulates new members to act according to organizational procedures, by providing guidance and information about tasks and behaviours (Allen & Shanock, 2012). Individualized role learning encourages newcomers to improve current processes and to develop their own approach to a role (Allen & Shanock, 2012). Organizations that use institutionalized tactics typically provide newcomers with a common set of learning and formal training experiences that form the context, clear information about the timing and sequence of activities to achieve learning milestones in terms of content, and mechanisms to connect newcomers with experienced organizational members who provide positive social support and feedback that affirms their identity, providing a social aspect to the socialization (Chong et al., 2021).

The context refers to the way the information is presented to the newcomer (Allen & Shanock, 2012). It can be formal in which an official procedure of welcome is prepared and promotes organizational values. It can also be informal when a newcomer is immediately placed in the workplace and integrated by colleagues. Moreover, it can also be applied to individuals on a one-to-one basis that helps preserve each person's differences and perspectives, or collectively to a group, where employees can share experiences and network (Godinho et al., 2023; Rego et al., 2008; Van Maanem & Schein, 1979).

The content of the information provided to newcomers can be sequential versus random or fixed versus variable. It can be sequential when incorporating different stages of the employee journey until being able to tackle the work. The content can also be random when the strategies do not follow any specific pattern. It can also be fixed if the socialization process has a calendar to be followed, or variable if instead of following a pre-defined schedule it is adaptable to the employees' learning capability (Godinho et al., 2023; Rego et al., 2008; Van Maanem & Schein, 1979).

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The social aspect of the tactics refers to the mechanism that connects the newcomers (Chong et al., 2021). It can be serial if a new employee is coached by a mentor or a buddy on how to behave in the company. It can also be disjunctive if an individual is allowed or encouraged to have this learning alone. At last, it can be by investiture when previously gained knowledge and traits are valued, or by divestment when the previous knowledge is not encouraged, and the aim is to 'reset' the new employee to better adjust him/her to the new position and organization (Godinho et al., 2023; Rego et al., 2008; Van Maanem & Schein, 1979).

There is evidence about the advantage of aggregating different tactics, such as social institutionalized as it promotes the bond between the employee, the role, and the organization (Godinho et al, 2023). Alternatively, content and context individualized support innovative guidance (Rego et al., 2008). It is also important to adjust the tactics to individuals because socialization is a process where both the organization and the employee should put in effort for it to be successful.

The most important topics to cover during the socialization process are the workplace and office facilities, IT equipment and accesses, an introduction to the company's history, mission, vision, goals, and values. It is also relevant to give an overview of the organization's products/services and its activity sector, organizational charts, job description review, technical and functional information about job procedures, training program and schedule of the first week of work. Moreover, it is important to give an overview of people management policies and procedures, the ethic code, among other organizational information considered fundamental to a new employee integration, according to (Chao et al, 1994).

According to de Almeida (2021), an organization can adopt several strategies of socialization such as (1) selection interviews at an early stage, allowing future employees to get to know, on a surface level, the organizational environment, some colleagues, and the organizational culture, as well as the activities performed and HR programs like benefits and rewards; (2) a challenging job content to motivate future employees to enter the new organization; (3) tutors/buddy that integrate a newcomer and facilitate his/her integration, by representing the company, having a closer bond with him/her, and providing information, training, and feedback; (4) workgroups where a new employee is integrated into the department, to support the socialization process; (5) the welcome manual - this aggregates information about the organization such as its history, vision/mission/goals, local policies, and benefits, among

others. When this is accessible to a newcomer, it can facilitate his/her integration strategically. Providing a welcome manual avoids overwhelming the employees with information on the first few days, facilitates the adaptation of the employee to the organization, promotes organizational learning needed to achieve a good performance, avoiding wasting time and inappropriate behaviour due to not having enough information; (6) formal integration programs and initial training facilitate the integration of new employees by familiarizing them with the company's language, structure, products/services, mission/vision/goals, and internal customs and guidelines.

A successful integration of a new employee will create the foundations for good motivation and retention of employees (Godinho et al, 2023). Hence, it is fundamental to plan the socialization process considering that there are steps that can be followed, such as presenting a welcome to the newcomer or other relevant documents (e.g., ethics code, human resources procedures) and then providing training about specific job technical issues and to the expected behaviour in the organization.

According to Porter et al. (1987), there are three types of reactions to the socialization process, which range from (1) rebellion - when an individual rejects the organization's values and rules; (2) creative individualism when employees accept basic values and norms but are reluctant on other aspects and (3) conformism when all values and norms are accepted. These reactions may impact the organization since attitudes can drive organizational change. Furthermore, the quality of the socialization process influences employees' behaviours and attitudes, such as organizational commitment, turnover intentions, trust feelings, productivity, or loyalty (Mazzei et al., 2023).

According to DeSimine and Werner (2012), quoted by Botelho and colleagues (2017), socialization is of extreme importance not only to organizational success but also to employee satisfaction, commitment, performance, and talent retention. The socialization process directly co-relates to other HR practices namely, the recruitment and selection process, performance evaluation and reward management (since a good integration facilitates the knowledge of what is expected from employees, and the possible rewards they may get), training and development, career development and competence management.

At the individual level, socialization helps employees create an image of the organization that will impact their expectations. An expectation when not met influences the success of the

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socialization process and has consequences in the short and long term for both the organization and employees. Some consequences may include less job satisfaction, organizational commitment, lower retention rate or higher turnover, and lower productivity which in turn increases the costs for the organization (Bauer, 2010). The socialization process will ultimately influence the decision of a new employee to stay or leave the organization, due to the person-organization fit. On the other hand, when the socialization process has positive results, it can improve employees' satisfaction and their organizational commitment, decrease distress and conflict, and promote trust in the organization, as developed in the exchange relationship between individuals and the organization (Rego et al., 2008).

1.2. Onboarding Program

Orientation programs aim to introduce newcomers to the job, managers, team, and the organization itself (Lopes et al., 2017). Indeed, a newcomer's program is a strategy adopted by many organizations due to the advantage of being able to share information with a group of employees, instead of being at an individual level. This program should be designed in a way that, in a short number of days, new employees can acquire information in several areas such as organizational matters (mission/vision/goals, policies/rules and internal guidelines, structure, health and safety procedures, and products/services of the company), benefits (work schedule, benefits plan), and job-related issues and relationships (introduction to colleagues and hierarchical superiors, main responsibilities, objective and vision of the job, tasks, and goals to be reached) (Godinho et al., 2023).

The onboarding program can have a variable duration depending on the organization's intention on the depth of knowledge to be shared with the newcomers, but regardless of the time, it should have the following steps: (1) welcome new employees; (2) meeting with the team and team leader; (3) when necessary filling documents; (4) providing information about policies, procedures, rules, and guidelines; (5) tour of the office, and (6) introduction of duties and responsibilities of the job (Rego et al., 2008).

The main advantages of such programs are having fewer costs of adaptation, less time to achieve expected performance levels, developing perceptions of organizational support on new employees, and promoting higher levels of on-the-job embeddedness (de Almeida, 2021).

1.3. Perceived Organizational Support

The socialization process may help newcomers to learn about the organization itself, their work roles and promote a better fit between person and organization (PO-Fit; Ellis et al., 2017). Thus, socialization supports the development of employees' perception about being supported by their organization i.e., perceived organizational support (Qadeer et al., 2020).

Perceived organizational support can be defined as employees' belief that an organization values their performance and is concerned about their well-being (Eisenberg et al., 1986). This belief is construed through different processes, including the socialization process, or the benefits management as each one benefits employees' well-being and promotes their organizational perceived support (Eisenberg et al., 1986).

Relational cohesion theory (Yoon & Lawler, 2006) explains the effect of socialization experiences on newcomers' perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness. This theory is focused on individuals and their group attachment and suggests that organizations provide three types of capital to their employees during the ongoing social exchange relationship. Human capital is based on a "knowledge sharing process"; social capital is based on a "relationships building process with colleagues and supervisors", and cultural capital is based on a "common understanding of culture, history and norms" (Yoon & Lawler, 2006). The three dimensions of socialization tactics are related to the three types of capital. In content tactics, newcomers recognize that the organization has established a strategy for their adaptation and is willing to invest in their future (Kim et al., 2005). In social tactics, experienced members (buddies, mentors, or supervisors) provide social learning through positive interactions and support new employees in the organization. In response, newcomers perceive that organizational agents care about them (Shore et al., 2009) and try to become effective members of the organization. Context tactics deliver common learning experiences and cultural capital through training (Saks & Gruman, 2011). These tactics should lead to the perception of a positive social exchange relationship with the organization and are a signal to the new employee that the organization cares about him/her. Hence, these tactics not only promote perceived organizational support through a positive social exchange but also minimize feelings of uncertainty and anxiety characteristics of new environments. By doing so, socialization tactics also contribute to the building of a trust-based relationship not only with colleagues but with the organization (Perrot et al., 2014) that helps newcomers to effectively feel embedded into

the new work environment and the organization as a whole (Bauer & Erdogan, 2014; Nasr et al., 2019).

All in all, socialization tactics influence perceived organizational support since they provide the new employee with a network of people to connect with, and it shows that the organization is willing to invest in the employees and cares about their adjustment (Allen & Shanock, 2012). Thus, based on the relational cohesion theory, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: (a) The content, (b) social, and (c) context dimensions of socialization tactics are positively related to perceived organizational support.

1.4. On-the-job embeddedness

New employees during the socialization process bonds with other employees within the organization and create a perception of being connected and embedded in the organization itself (Allen & Shanock, 2012; Yoon & Lawler, 2006).

On-the-job embeddedness is defined as the bond that individuals have with the company and/or position, having both an organizational and community component (Allen, 2006). Job embeddedness theory focuses on three types of ties: links to others, fit with the environment (the organization for on-the-job embeddedness), and sacrifices of material or psychological benefits that would be lost by leaving. First, links may be formal or informal bonds formed between employees and their co-workers, managers and communities. Second, fit that refers to the adjustment between the employee and the job, the employee and the organization or between the employee and the community in which the organization is framed, in which case the employee feels like their values, and goals are aligned with the organizational ones. At last, sacrifices are the material costs or losses that employees would have in the case of leaving the organization, like benefits or even people (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Socialization tactics relate to on-the-job embeddedness since the strategies may encourage the creation of relationships with other stakeholders such as colleagues, and managers as well as expand the sense of belonging within the organization that in turn will influence links, fit, and sacrifice (Allen, 2006). The stronger the links, and adjustments and the higher the sacrifices, the more embedded and bonded with the organization an employee is (Rego et al, 2008). Fang and colleagues (2011) suggested that it is mainly through interactions and communication with others during the socialization process that newcomers develop social capital. Additionally,

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Allen and Shanock (2012) predicted that socialization tactics fostered interaction and communication that influenced the three dimensions of on-the-job embeddedness. Moreover, two meta-analyses showed that socialization tactics were related to fit and the links - two key components of embeddedness (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007).

Based on the relational cohesion theory, the following hypothesis was defined:

Hypothesis 2: (a) The content, (b) social, and (c) context dimensions of socialization tactics are positively related to on-the-job embeddedness.

1.5. Work Engagement

The relational cohesion theory suggests that through ongoing exchanges, such as when newcomers are enrolled in the socialization process, they develop perceptions of support from the organization and a sense of harmony with it; these relational mechanisms (i.e., perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness) lead to work engagement.

According to Schaufeli (2017), work engagement can be defined as a psychological state that relates to work in a fulfilling and positive way, and is divided in three dimensions: (1) vigor refers to high levels of energy and resilience and the ability to persevere in difficult situations; (2) dedication is characterized by a sense of belonging, meaning and pride as well as enthusiasm and; (3) absorption which can be described as being completely focused and immersed when performing the tasks, to the point where there may be some difficulties detaching from work (Bakker et al., 2014).

Organizational socialization can play a key role in developing employee engagement since it provides initial training for new employees, necessary to adapt to a new reality and to be able to have a sense of belonging in the new company, as well as being a driver in adopting positive and optimistic attitudes towards challenges that may be faced, which will ultimately contribute to their well-being (Xu et al., 2019). It has also been shown that co-worker support, performance feedback, autonomy, and learning opportunities (inherent to socialization tactics) are related to work engagement (Bakker et al., 2008). Work engagement has also been shown to be a result of perceived organizational support as well as on-the-job embeddedness, especially since these relational factors relate to the employee's trust in others and the organization as a whole (Tabak & Hendy, 2016). According to Mazzei and colleagues (2023), perceived organizational support is positively related to job satisfaction and work engagement. POS results in greater work

engagement due to the social exchange relationship between employee and organization, according to which workers exert effort and dedication to the organization for their dedication to them (Shore, Coyle-Shapiro, Chen, & Tetrick, 2009). Consequently, perceiving support from the organization reinforces previous positive expectations that will motivate employees toward organizational goals, engaging them to work and making them happier (Hellman, 2009).

Thus, based on the above-mentioned literature, the following was hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3: Perceived organizational support mediates relationships between socialization tactics and work engagement.

We argue that on-the-job embeddedness will mediate the effects of the three socialization tactics on work engagement. This suggestion follows from relational cohesion theory, which suggests that social exchange leads to positive attitudes through the creation of a sense of positive relationships and harmony (Yoon & Lawler, 2006). Specifically, job embeddedness theory (Allen, 2006) suggests that employees become embedded in a network of relationships that can create a web of restraining forces and make them more engaged with their work (Mitchell et al., 2001). We propose that socialization tactics influence work engagement because each tactic can support the development of relationships between the newcomer and others and a sense of connection with them; hence, newcomers are likely to attach value to these relationships that would have to be sacrificed upon leaving the organization, and together, these factors may make newcomers perceive themselves as more embedded in the organization (Allen & Shanock, 2013). Given that, the following hypothesis was proposed:

Hypothesis 4: On-the-job embeddedness mediates the relationships between socialization tactics and work engagement.

1.6. Well-being

Work engagement can also be connected with engagement feelings such as urgency, focus, intensity, and enthusiasm; and engagement behaviours like persistence, proactivity, adaptability and ambition, driven by the engagement feelings can lead to better organizational performance and well-being (Macey et al., 2009).

Well-being is a concept that has been debated in literature due to its subjective nature and broadness. According to Kjell and Diener (2021), well-being can be measured by analysing life satisfaction. Life satisfaction comprises an evaluation of an individual's quality of life

according to each person's criteria and can be related to terms such as happiness, contentment, fulfilment, and gratification, among others (Diener et al., 2020).

Socialization can influence employees' well-being since employees may face a reality that differs from expectations if socialization tactics are not properly planned to create distress and less perceived organizational support (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014). Furthermore, organizational support theory suggests that work engagement mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and well-being given that employees who feel supported by the organization tend to be happier in general (Zhou et al., 2022), and this is also supported by empirical evidence (Allen & Shanock, 2012). Perceived organizational support may be particularly valuable to work engagement and well-being among newcomers because joining a new company is typically associated with uncertainty and anxiety that could be alleviated or exacerbated by high or low organizational support (Wanberg, 2012).

Thus, relying on the literature the following hypothesis were proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Work engagement mediates the positive relationship between perceived organizational support and well-being.

About on-the-job embeddedness, theory and research indicate that more embedded individuals tend to be happier (Mitchell et al., 2001). The development of on-the-job embeddedness may be relevant for newcomers because they tend to enter a new organization with few relationships (Allen & Shanock, 2013). The created relationships during the socialization process develop links and a sense of fit and would be a sacrifice to quit as they are responsible for employees' life satisfaction (Diener et al., 2020). On-the-job embeddedness was originally proposed as an affect-driven well-being model (Mitchell et al., 2001), suggesting that embeddedness would be directly related to happiness at work separately from affective mechanisms such as work engagement. However, relational cohesion theory argues that the development of relationships with others improves well-being through work engagement (Yoon & Lawler, 2006). As such, based on the relational cohesion theory the following was proposed:

Hypothesis 6: Work engagement mediates the positive relationship between on-the-job embeddedness and well-being.

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We also suggest that POS and embeddedness will be positively related to well-being, as mediated by work engagement. Different studies have demonstrated that work engagement is an important antecedent of well-being and that work engagement mediates the relationship between different job resources or demands and well-being (Schaufeli et al., 2017). In the context of newcomer fit, socialization tactics are methods to foster exchange and develop human, social, and cultural capital (Allen & Shankock, 2013). Linking relational cohesion theory with well-being we propose that POS and on-the-job embeddedness are two relational mechanisms that connect the three socialization tactics to work engagement and well-being.

Taking the literature review into consideration, as well as the hypothesis considered, an integrated model between the different variables is proposed (Figure 1). The serial mediation model assumes the existence of a relation between the socialization tactics in terms of content, context and social, the relational mechanisms like perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness, and the affective and behavioural outcomes of work engagement and consequently well-being.

Hypothesis 7: (a) The content, (b) social, and (c) context dimensions of socialization tactics are positively related to well-being through the mediating effect of perceived organizational support and, as a result, work engagement.

Hypothesis 8: (a) The content, (b) social, and (c) context dimensions of socialization tactics are positively related to well-being through the mediating effect of on-the-job embeddedness and, as a result, work engagement.

Figure 1 – Proposed serial mediating model
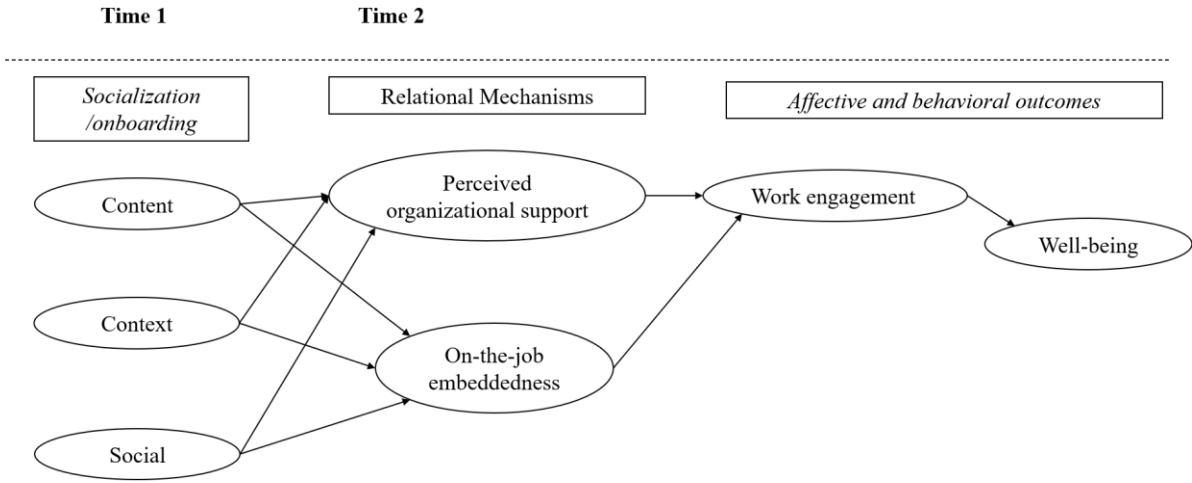
2. Contextualization

The international chemical group that was analysed, has its Headquarters in Belgium and is present in 64 countries worldwide, with more than 150 years of history in the chemical market. It has been present in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon, as a key driver of the development of the industry and the local community, since 1934 representing a source of employment and economic growth in the chemical industry.

In Portugal, this organization still operates on two different levels. The first one is an industrial site to produce Hydrogen Peroxide used as a whiting agent among others. Created in 2005, the group devised a shared service Centre to provide worldwide solutions in Finance, Purchase, Customer Management, Human Resources, IT Support and Information Services, Process Automation, Project Management, Supply Chain, Customs and trade, logistics, Data Analysis, and Continuous Improvement. This administrative office has evolved into a centre of expertise for corporate areas and global business units of the company, being a multicultural office with more than 800 employees from 34 nationalities.

Due to the multinational nature of the organization, this one continues to have hiring needs that justify the focus that the local HR Department deploys in a socialization strategy aiming to engage the new employees and welcome them into the company.

The following strategies are used in the organization, to run the socialization process as smoothly and successfully as possible: selection interviews that set attainable expectations of the organization; job content that is clear to employees since the beginning of the recruitment process; a buddy that is attributed by the team leader to support and train new employees in their integration; instead of a welcome manual, the HR Team sends an e-mail to employees on the first day of work with important information such as benefits, policies, guidelines and the onboarding schedule; an onboarding program to integrate the new employees.

The socialization process in this organization adopts the following socialization tactics: (1) Formal group context tactics since the Human Resources department promotes a collective experience of fixed and sequential learning sessions called the "Induction Program" that occurs every month, for the newcomers. (2) Fixed sequential content tactics since new employees take part in an Onboarding Program that follows a calendar with sessions that allow for the comprehension of the organization's guidelines and rules. (3) In terms of social tactics, a serial method is used to coach employees about organizational procedures.

The onboarding program is composed of nine sessions spread over two full days, including a welcome session that presents the organization and its culture. The HR team creates a networking moment between employees. There is also a session dedicated to business continuity and crisis management as well as the identification of ways of working. There is also a session covering all topics regarding safety and environment, health, and well-being. On the second day, there is a session to promote the organization's learning path and another dedicated to local HR rules and guidelines like benefits, and programs, among others. There is also a session dedicated to IT and how to have support in that field, a session that guides the time-management and payment process and rules, and a closing session with a senior member of the organization. On both days, the organization promotes a lunch for the newcomers and the session's facilitators to create a moment of network and informal socialization.

The socialization process is ultimately seen as a shared responsibility of the HR Department and the newcomer's team and managers since they are the first point of contact and the closest bond employees have. It is encouraged that each team assigns a buddy to the newcomer to accompany him/her in the first days, as well as having a planned training program with different learning experiences like exploring and reading materials. There is also a time and space for job shadowing and the promotion of different socialization tactics (others than the ones applied during the formal onboarding program). The onboarding program is composed of nine sessions, spread through two full days, including a welcome session that presents the company and its culture as well as presents the HR team and creates a networking moment between employees, a session dedicated to business continuity and crises management as well as the ways of working, a session that covers all topics regarding safety and environment, health, and well-being. On the second day, there is a session to promote the learning path of the company, another dedicated to local hr rules and guidelines like benefits, and programs, among others, a session dedicated to IT and how to have support in that field, a session that guides the time-management and payment process and rules and a closing session with a senior member of the leadership.

On both days, the company promotes a lunch for the newcomers and the session's facilitators, to create a moment of network and informal socialization. However, the socialization process is ultimately seen in the company as a shared responsibility of the HR Department and the newcomer's team and managers since that is the first point of contact and the closest bond the employee has. It is encouraged that each team assigns a buddy to the

newcomer to accompany him in the first days, as well as having a defined training program with different learning experiences like exploring reading materials, and job shadowing, among others, promoting different socialization tactics than the ones applied during the formal onboarding program.

3. Methodology

3.1. Procedure and Participants

This study used a quantitative methodology with a correlational nature. The study was conducted during the onboarding process of the organization and involved a two-wave data collection with a three-month time lag between them. The two-phased survey was chosen to reduce the potential common method bias that may occur with one-time data collection (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Overall, 72 full-time new employees were invited to fulfil two online surveys through the Google Forms platform. After the onboarding program started, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and that the surveys were strictly confidential, without any possibility of identifying individual employees. They were also told that their participation was anonymous and completely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any moment.

The first survey was sent before the onboarding program started and was conducted between January and April of 2023. The second survey was sent three months after the onboarding ended and was conducted between April and July of 2023, allowing a 3-month time lag between the two surveys. The first survey assessed participants' demographic information, (e.g., gender, age, and occupational area), as well as the socialization tactics, work engagement, and well-being. The second survey assessed relational mechanisms (i.e., perceived organizational support, on-the-job embeddedness), work engagement, and well-being.

The sample of the study was a non-probabilistic non-convenience sample and was composed of 72 participants who answered the first survey. On the second wave, three months later, only 53 employees answered the survey (response rate: 73.6%). Overall, 41.1% of the participants were male and their mean age was 32.53 years ($SD = 9.44$). The sample worked in the following occupational areas: finance (20.8%), human resources (13.9%), industrial (2.8%), IT (11.1%), Legal and compliance (1.4%), procurement (34.7%), research and information (4.2%), supply chain (4.2%), support, and customer service (6.9%).

3.2. Instruments

This study used a two-wave design that allowed for a fixed sample to have its population's variables measured at two separate times. The first survey was answered before the onboarding program, as can been seen in Annex A, and evaluated the following:

Socialization tactics (T1). To measure the three dimensions of socialization, we used 14 items from the Socialization Tactics Scale (Jones, 1986). It measured the content (five items; α = 0.73; e.g., "I have been through a set of training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of standard procedures of local and company rules and guidelines"), context (five items; α = 0.73; e.g., "This company puts all new hires through the same set of learning experiences"), and social aspects of the socialization process (four items; α = 0.53; e.g., "Experienced organizational members see advising or training newcomers as one of their main job responsibilities in this organization") on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Well-being (T1). To measure well-being, three items from the abbreviated version of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Kjell & Diener, 2021) were used. An item example is: "Overall, I feel like my life is close to my ideals.". Participants answered on a 5-point Likert scale that varied from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. The internal consistency of the scale was 0.77.

Work Engagement (T1). To measure work engagement, we used the ultra-short measure for work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2017). It is composed of three items (e.g., "I feel energized at work"). Participants answered on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 – never to 5 – always. The internal consistency was 0.81.

A second survey was sent three months later, as can be seen in Annex B.

Perceived organizational support (T2). To measure perceived organizational support six items were used (Eisenberg et al., 1986). An item example is: "This organization really cares about my well-being.". Participants answered on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree). The internal consistency was 0.89.

On-the-job embeddedness (T2). To measure on-the-job embeddedness, we used 18 items developed by Mitchell and colleagues (2001). An item example is "My job utilizes my skills and talents well." or "I feel that people at work respect me a great deal". Following Lee et al.

(2004), the three organization-focused composites were aggregated to form an on-the-job embeddedness construct (α= .92).

Well-being (T2). We used the same measure (Kjell & Diener, 2021) used on time 1 ($\alpha = 0.83$).

Work Engagement (T2). We used the same instrument (Schaufeli et al., 2017) from the first wave ($\alpha = 0.92$).

3.3. Control Variables

We used participants' sex and age as controls. We used sex as a control because some studies have shown that women tend to be more sensitive and as such might influence their perceived support from the organization and well-being (Mascarenhas et al., 2022); hence, sex differences could influence both mediators and the criterion variables. Furthermore, age could also account for influences on well-being, as there have been identified differences in the way older and younger feel about their life as a whole (Dello-Russo et al., 2020).

3.4. Data Analysis

In the proposed serial mediating model (see Figure 1), there were three types of variables: (1) predictors (socialization tactics); (2) criterion variable (well-being); and (3) three mediators (perceived organizational support, on-the-job embeddedness, and work engagement). SPSS 29.0 and the software JASP (version 0.14.1) were used to test the proposed research model. First, the multivariable normality test was done. Second, descriptive analysis was conducted to calculate the mean and standard deviation for each variable. Third, correlational analyses were performed to examine whether the three socialization tactics were associated with the mediators and the criterion variables. Fourth, the measurement model's goodness of fit was evaluated. In this regard, we found that the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08, Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR) < 0.08, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > 0.90, and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) > 0.90 evidenced a good fit (Kline, 2015).

Subsequently, to test hypotheses 1-6, model 4 of the PROCESS macro in SPSS was used (Hayes, 2018). This macro is particularly relevant for estimating indirect effects as it uses the bootstrapping method (5000 times) which allows confidence intervals (CI) to be obtained. To test hypothesis 7-8, model 6 (also from PROCESS) was used. The products (moderations) were

centred on their average value, and the bootstrapping method (5000 times) was used to calculate the confidence intervals.

4. Obtained results analysis

4.1. Common method bias and multicollinearity issues

Although we have followed some recommended procedures to reduce the potential common method bias - i.e., using closed-ended questions mixed in the survey (e.g., "I like cold weather") and resorting to previously validated surveys to assess the variables under study - it cannot be completely avoided (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Hence, to understand its presence in the study we followed some recommendations (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

First, we performed Harman's single factor test to check for common method bias. The findings showed that the first factor only accounted for 38.04% of the total explained variance (below the threshold of 40% proposed by Podsakoff and colleagues (2003); hence, the common method bias was not a serious issue.

Second, as Kock suggested (2015), we also performed a full collinearity evaluation test to check for the potential common method bias. The results demonstrated that all the variance inflation factor (VIF) values ranged from 1.19 to 2.75; because the values were less than the cut-off point of 3.33, multicollinearity concern was not a severe issue in this study.

At last, we performed four confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to confirm the independence of the variables under study. To assess the adequacy of the model and compare it with other reasonable alternative models, diverse fit indices were analysed (Hair et al., 2010), namely CFI, TLI, SRMR, and RMSEA. Model 1 was the hypothesized seven-factor model comprising separate scales for socialization tactics (content, context and social), perceived organizational support, on-the-job embeddedness, work engagement and well-being. Model 2 was a five-factor model where all the three socialization tactics were combined into a unique factor. Model 3 was a three-factor model in which the three socialization tactics were combined into a unique factor and the three mediators (perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness and work engagement) were also combined into a single factor. Model 4 was a one-factor solution in which all items were loaded onto a single factor. Table 1 shows that the seven-factor model (Model 1) provided the best fit for the data (CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.93, SRMR = 0.05, and RMSEA = 0.05), and all other alternative models evidenced a poorer fit. These results together with the

Cronbach alpha reliability scores across all the measurement scales evidenced the discriminant and convergent validity of the study; hence, we proceeded with the hypotheses testing.

Table 1- Confirmatory factor analysis results

Models	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model 1	65.66	51	0.94	0.93	0.05	0.05
Model 2	126.05	87	0.87	0.85	0.07	0.09
Model 3	231.02	132	0.78	0.74	0.09	0.11
Model 4	288.39	135	0.74	0.70	0.11	0.11

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics, together with the correlations and internal consistency indices of the variables under study. In line with Field (2009), the relatively small standard deviations compared to the mean scores of the variables suggested that the means represented the observed data.

First, the reliability of the study variables is above the recommended limit of 0.70, in line with Fornell and Larker (1981). The result of convergent validity, which measures how the latent construct indicators correlate, reveals that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all latent constructs in the study are above 0.5 (see Table 2). Further, the AVE for each construct was evaluated against its correlation with the other constructs, and AVE was larger than the construct's correlation with other constructs, hence, convergent validity was supported. While the discriminant validity that demonstrates how the indicators of each latent variable are unique was valid, as the square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) indicated by the diagonal value of each latent variable were all greater than the correlations of each variable (Hair et al., 2010), further we also analysed the Maximum Shared Variance (MSV); the results of the MSV showed that it was lower than the AVE for all the constructs; thus, the discriminant validity was supported.

Thus, the reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the study were confirmed. Based on the validity of the study instrument, we proceeded and analysed the study

hypotheses. As expected, all variables showed significant correlations with each other and in the expected direction.

Table 2 - Descriptive statistics, correlations

Variable	M	SD	CR	AVE	MSV	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
1. Context	4.04[1]	0.51	0.80	0.58	0.36	-														
2. Content	4.21[1]	0.56	0.83	0.61	0.36	0.599	***	—												
3. Social	3.76[1]	59	0.86	0.67	0.13	0.228		0.270	*	—										
4. POS	4.12	0.53	0.88	0.70	0.65	0.571	***	0.526	***	0.360	**	—								
5. OJE	4.09	0.46	0.84	0.64	0.65	0.443	***	0.418	**	0.276	*	0.629	***	—						
6. ENG	4.07	0.68	0.95	0.87	0.40	0.542	***	0.422	**	0.345	*	0.813	***	0.729	***	—				
7. Well-being	4.02	0.68	0.91	0.76	0.40	0.312	*	0.409	**	0.248		0.568	***	0.633	***	0.527	***	—		
8. Age	32.52	9.44	-	-	-	-0.060		-0.097		-0.167		0.007		-0.101		-0.047		-0.022		—
9. Sex[2]	1.58	0.49	-	-	-	-0.131		-0.228		-0.176		-0.133		0.099		0.080		0.076	0.061

Note. $N = 72$; $^{*}p < 0.05$ $^{**}p < 0.001$.

[1]Scale ranging from 1 to 5.

[2] Sex codes: 1 – male; 2 – female

The square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are in brackets. M = Mean; SD = Standard-deviation; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance. CR = Composite Reliability. POS = Perceived organizational support. OJE = on the job embeddedness. ENG = work engagement.

4.3. Hypothesis test

To test the hypotheses, we used models 4 and 6 of the PROCESS macro in SPSS (Hayes, 2018). The mediation is significant when the dependent variable (Y=well-being) is influenced by the independent variable (X=socialization tactics) through the mediators (M=on-the-job embeddedness, perceived organizational support, and work engagement), and it is presented in Annex C.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that the socialization tactics would be positively related to perceived organizational support. In terms of socialization context, the analysis model explained 32% ($R^2 = 0.32$, F=24.70, $p < 0.000$) and showed that socialization context had a direct and positive effect on perceived organizational support (B=0.62, $p< 0.000$, 95%CI [0.37;0.88]). Regarding socialization content, the analysis model explained 27% ($R^2 = 0.27$, F=19.47, $p < 0.001$) and showed a positive relation between the socialization content on perceived organizational support (B=0.52, $p< 0.001$, 95%CI [0.28;0.75]). Regarding socialization's social aspects, the

analysis model explained 12% ($R^2 = 0.12$, F=7.58, p < 0.0082) and showed a positive relation between socialization social aspects on perceived organizational support (*B*=0.34, *p*< 0.0082, 95%CI [0.09;0.59]). As such, hypothesis 1 was supported by data.

Hypothesis 2 expected that the socialization tactics would be positively related to on-the-job embeddedness. In terms of socialization context, the analysis model explained 29% (R^2= 0.29, F=21.22, p < 0.000), and demonstrated a positive relation between the socialization context and on-the job embeddedness (*B*=0.52, *p*< 0.000, 95%CI [0.29;0.75]). Regarding socialization content, the analysis model explained 17% ($R^2 = 0.17$, F=11.05, p < 0.001) and showed a positive direct effect of the socialization content on on-the job embeddedness (*B*=0.36, *p*< 0.001, 95%CI [0.14;0.58]). At last, regarding socialization's social aspects, the analysis model explained 11% ($R^2 = 0.11$, F=6.90, p < 0.01) and evidenced that the relation between the socialization social aspects and on-the-job embeddedness was significant and positive (*B*=0.28, *p*< 0.01, 95%CI [0.06;0.50]). As such, hypothesis 2 was supported by data.

Hypothesis 3 expected that the relationship between socialization tactics and work engagement would be mediated by perceived organizational support. First, regarding socialization context the indirect effect was significant (Indirect effect=0.52, 95%CI [0.25;0.86]). In terms of socialization content, the indirect effect was also significant (Indirect effect=0.43, 95%CI [0.17;0.79]). Lastly, regarding social aspects, the indirect effect (Indirect effect=0.29, 95%CI [0.09;0.53]) was also significant. Given that, hypothesis 3 was supported by data.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the relationship between socialization tactics and work engagement would be mediated by on-the-job embeddedness. First, regarding socialization context the indirect effect was significant (Indirect effect=0.53, 95%CI [0.24;0.88]). In terms of socialization content, the indirect effect was also significant (Indirect effect=0.35, 95%CI [0.11;0.71]). Regarding the social aspects, the indirect effect was also significant (Indirect effect=0.30, 95%CI [0.06;0.55]) are significant. Hence, hypothesis 4 was supported by the data.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that work engagement would mediate the relationship between perceived organizational support and well-being. The results revealed a significant indirect effect (Indirect effect=0.29, 95%CI [0.16;0.45]), which supported hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that work engagement would mediate the positive relationship between on-the-job embeddedness and well-being. The results revealed a significant indirect effect (Indirect effect=0.45, 95%CI [0.27;0.67]), supporting hypothesis 6.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that the three dimensions of socialization tactics would be positively related to well-being through the serial mediating effect of perceived organizational support and work engagement. The serial indirect effect of the socialization context on well-being through perceived organizational support and work engagement was significant (Indirect effect=0.20, 95%CI [0.08;0.38]). The indirect effect of the socialization content on well-being via perceived organizational support and work engagement was also significant (Indirect effect=0.16, 95%CI [0.04;0.32]). Lastly, the indirect effect of the socialization social aspects on well-being via perceived organizational support and work engagement was also significant (Indirect effect=0.11, 95%CI [0.03;0.22]). Thus, hypotheses 7 received support.

Hypothesis 8 expected that the dimensions of socialization tactics would be positively related to well-being through the serial mediating effect of on-the-job embeddedness and work engagement. First, the indirect effect of the socialization context on well-being through on-the-job embeddedness and work engagement was significant (Indirect effect=0.26, 95%CI [0.11;0.49]). The indirect effect of the socialization content on well-being via on-the-job embeddedness and work engagement was also significant (Indirect effect=0.16, 95%CI [0.04;0.35]). Lastly, the indirect effect of the socialization social aspects on well-being through on-the-job embeddedness and work engagement were significant as well (Indirect effect=0.14, 95%CI [0.03;0.30]). Thus, hypotheses 8 received support.

5. Discussion

The study analyses the impact of socialization tactics (content, context, and social dimensions), on newcomer's well-being. For that, we relied on the relational cohesion theory (Yoon & Lawler, 2006) to build a conceptual model in which relational and affective mechanisms would serve as mediators in this relationship. Therefore, we used perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness as relational mechanisms and work engagement as an affective one. This study also investigates whether the path from the three socialization tactics increase newcomers' well-being through a serial effect of both perceived organizational support and work engagement, and on-the-job embeddedness and work engagement.

Overall, the findings highlight that the three socialization tactics lead to increased levels of well-being because each one tends to enhance newcomers perceived organizational support which, in turn, promotes their engagement to work. Furthermore, it is also shown that each socialization tactic improves well-being because each one embedded employee in the organization, improving as a result their work engagement. Hence, there are relational and affective mechanisms that explain how socialization tactics lead newcomers to feel happier.

5.1. Theoretical implications

First, the findings show that the three socialization tactics are positively related to both perceived organizational support and on-the job-embeddedness. Thus, when an organization focus on organizational socialization tactics with relevant contents, cantered around a context that allows for information to be absorbed and with inter-personal aspects that allow for new employees to feel accompanied, they tend to perceive that their organization is supporting them and also feel more embedded in that organization. The results are in line with literature showing that perceived organizational support is connected to socialization tactics, since formal institutionalized tactics are viewed by newcomers as part of an organizational decision to invest them and is worried about their integration and well-being (Allen & Shanock, 2013). Further, socialization tactics, as techniques to reduce stress and connect newcomers to other employees, will enable the perception of support felt by the newcomer (Perrot et al., 2014). Plus, organizational socialization can contribute to on-the-job embeddedness by connecting the content, context and social aspects of each tactic to employees and allow them to feel like they belong and that it would be a sacrifice to leave the company. There is evidence showing that by reducing stress and uncertainty, developing relationships with other stakeholders such as

colleagues or leaders, and supporting the creation of systems, socialization tactics are drivers of embeddedness (Allen, 2006).

Second, the results show that perceived organizational support mediates the positive relationship between the three socialization tactics and work engagement. This means that when the socialization process is well applied and planed in terms of content, context, and social aspects, the perception of support and value felt by employees tends to increase, and it leads them to become engaged with their work. In other words, a well-planned socialization creates engaged employees because they perceive that their organization is there for supporting them and cares about them (Zhou et al., 2022). Other studies have shown that perceived organizational support explains how socialization impact affective outcomes, such as work engagement (Tabak & Hendy, 2016). For instance, Allen and Shanock (2013) also found evidence for the mediating role of perceived organizational support on the relationship between socialization and affective commitment. Thus, socialization not only creates engaged employees but also improve their perception about the organizational support.

Moreover, on-the-job embeddedness also mediates the positive relationship between the three socialization tactics and work engagement. That is, socialization makes employees create links and positive bonds within the organization that may be a sacrifice to quit if employees decide to leave the organization. In turn, they experience a sense of a positive exchange between them and the organization that makes them become energetic to do their work, dedicated to it and absorbed while working (Bakker et al., 2014). The literature is in line with this finding (Chong et al., 2021); the relationships created by new employees, the fit of their values/skills/knowledge to the organization makes them perceive that leaving the company would be a sacrifice, thus contributing to a feeling of trust and engagement to their work (Tabak & Hendy, 2016). Therefore, on-the-job embeddedness plays a mediating role between socialization and work engagement.

Third, work engagement also mediates the path from perceived organizational support to well-being, and between on-the-job embeddedness and well-being. When employees believe that the organization cares and values them and their contributions, this can increase their levels of energy and resilience that characterize vigor, as well as the sense of belonging and pride and the absorption at work (William Lee et al., 2014); indeed, when employees feel support from the organization, and experience a sense of complete fit (Allen & Shanock, 2013), they tend to feel that they need to give back to their organization (as hypothesized by the reciprocity norm

from the social exchange theory; Blau, 1964), and as such become more engaged and, as a result, happier (Chong et al., 2021; Eisenberg et al., 1986; Mitchel et al., 2001). Therefore, one can conclude that work engagement – as an affective positive attitude – mediates relational constructs, such as perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness, and well-being.

Lastly, the results show a serial mediating effect from the three socialization tactics to well-being through perceived organizational support and work engagement. This means that the socialization tactics used by the organization influence newcomers' well-being because they enhance their perceived organizational support and work engagement sequentially. The findings here highlight that the socialization context has stronger results; that is, newcomers tend to feel more supported by the organization when there is an onboarding program that welcomes a group through a formal and purposeful training program whose goal is to guide them in terms of rules and procedures and to welcome and integrate them. This, in turn, appears to contribute create a positive view of work in a fulfilling way, contributing to the newcomer's well-being. The results are in line with the relational cohesion theory; accordingly, perceived organizational support predicts affective outcomes (e.g., work engagement and well-being) as a result of socialization tactics. The theory further postulates that the sense of belonging and meaning created during the socialization improves the relational bond developed between the newcomer and the organization (Allen & Shanock, 2013). This will make employees feel engaged with their work as a strategy to give back the support given by the organization which, in turn, makes them happier. Thus, socialization not only reduces uncertainties but also creates positive perceptions of organizational support, engaging employees and making them happier.

The results show similar findings regarding on-the-job embeddedness. That is, the three socialization tactics increase on-the-job embeddedness which results in increased engagement and therefore leads to higher levels of well-being. Similarly, the dimension of context stands-out. In other words, new employees may experience feelings of connection between them, and the other newcomers present on the onboarding program, since they are experiencing the same stages and steps of integrating a new organization; consequently, when new employees form relationships and fully understand the benefits of working in the company perceive that leaving it would be a sacrifice for them (Wanberg, 2012). The results are in line with the relational cohesion theory; on-the-job embeddedness is related to affective outcomes as a result of socialization tactics, because experiencing a positive socialization program may   lead

newcomers to feel part of something bigger, create positive bonds with others in the organization, and making them perceive a fit with the organization; it thereby contributes to increase their work engagement levels, and as a result leaving them happier (Allen & Shanock, 2013).

5.2. Practical implications

In terms of practical implications, this study shows the importance of socialization tactics with content that is relevant, context that allows for a good integration and social aspects that guide new employees in the organization. These methods have impact on perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness, and consequently, on work engagement and general well-being.

This study emphasizes the content of the onboarding program as a relevant key, since it highlights how the organization should structure the onboarding process, and how newcomers understand the procedures, guidelines, and training. Plus, managers can take some key messages regarding the socialization process. First, the onboarding program should coincide with the hire date of a new person. It is important that employees feel welcomed in the team while they are completing the formal institutional program that will structure the whole process. Another important aspect is that the sessions should cover all topics related to HR policies, HSE rules, among others mentioned; there should also exist a periodic assessment with the newcomers to make sure that the messages were effectively understood and applied after the onboarding program.

The social aspect of socialization concerns the type of synergies between the new employee and more experienced staff. For instance, managers should recommend attributing a Buddy to integrate and facilitate the entrance of a new employee. Other strategies may include the organization of a lunch on the days of training that allow for socialization and to create network with the facilitators of the sessions contributing to increase both perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness.

Lastly, the socialization context takes into consideration the environment of the learning experiences and it is shown to be an indicator of feeling welcomed in the organization, and belonging to it because sharing the same feelings with other newcomers creates bonds to them and to the organization in general. It is important to apply this type of socialization technique, since it will be the starting point for creating engaged and happier employees.

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The fact that the onboarding program is structured for physical sessions, reuniting employees can also contribute to the on-the-job embeddedness and consequent work engagement, since it connects employees and allows them to share the same set of experiences.

5.3. Limitations and future directions

In terms of limitations, the reduced sample size, the low representativity of the sample group, and the use of self-reported measures may limit the generalizability of the findings. However, as the findings show the common method bias is not a severe issue in this study.

For future research, it could be interesting to expand the study to other organizations and understand the fit of the model on a bigger sample. It should also be relevant to explore how the online versus physical socialization tactics impact the newcomer's work engagement and well-being.

Additionally, we also suggest including job satisfaction in the affective and behavioural variables, in order to have a more complete understanding of overall well-being, as well as studying the turn-over after the process or onboarding, in order to have a view of the socialization tactics impact on the intentions of leaving the company, taking into consideration how these have proven to influence the perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness, which will impact work engagement and ultimately, well-being

Conclusion

This study analysed the influence of socialization tactics on relational aspects such as perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness, which would lead to higher levels of work engagement and as a consequence, well-being. As such, it was possible to fill the gap in literature and build on relational cohesion theory, by demonstrating the importance of the perceived connection created between new employee and organization, on the built of engagement that will lead to well-being, that will derive from the choice of socialization strategies that can create feelings of adjustment and reduce stress and uncertainty levels for the newcomers. In conclusion, firstly, it was possible to conclude that the socialization strategies positively related to both perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness. Then, it was found that both relational mechanisms mediated the relationship between the tactics and work engagement. Finally, this research allowed us to demonstrate that the socialization tactics related to work engagement and well-being by improving the level of perceived organizational support and on-the-job embeddedness.

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Annexes

Annex A – Survey T1

Part 1 – Socialization Tactics – Please evaluate the Content, social aspects and context of the onboarding program.

- Please assess the content of the onboarding sessions (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree)
    - I have a good knowledge of the time it will take me to go through the various stages of the training process.
    - I have been through a set of training experiences which are specifically designed to give newcomers a thorough knowledge of standard procedures of local and company rules and guidelines.
    - I did not perform any of my normal job responsibilities until I was thoroughly familiar with departmental procedures and work methods.
    - I have been very aware that I am seen as "learning the ropes" in this organization.
    - I am aware of my responsibilities as an employee in the company.
- Please assess the social aspects of the onboarding sessions
    - I have received little guidance from experienced employees as to how I should perform according to the company guidelines.
    - Experienced organizational members see advising or training newcomers as one of their main job responsibilities in this organization.
    - I am gaining a clear understanding of my role in this organization from observing my colleagues.
    - I have been generally left alone to discover what my role should be in this organization (R).
- Please assess the context of the onboarding program
    - This company puts all new hires through the same set of learning experiences.
    - Other newcomers have been instrumental in helping me to understand company guidelines.
    - Since I have joined the company, I have been extensively involved with other new recruits in common, job-related training activities.
    - There is a sense of "being in the same boat" amongst newcomers in this organization.

o I feel welcomed in the company.

Part 2 – Well-being – Please evaluate your well-being and harmony.

- Please assess the following questions regarding well-being at work

    o My lifestyle, overall, has allowed me to be in harmony.

    o Considering most aspects in my life, in general, I consider them to be balanced.

    o I feel at harmony, in general.

    o Overall, I feel like my life is close to my ideals.

    o Generally, I feel like my life conditions are excellent.

    o In general, I feel happy with my life

Part 3 – Work Engagement – Please evaluate your work engagement.

- Please assess your work engagement as a newcomer in the company (1 – never; 5 – always)

    o I feel energized.

    o I feel excited about my job.

    o I feel involved with my work.

    o In general, I am satisfied with my job.

    o Generally, I enjoy working in this company.

    o Overall, I like my job.

Part 4 – Demographic data - Please complete this survey with your data

    o Please select the gender you identify as (male, female, other)

    o Please indicate your age

    o Please indicate the last 3 digits of your telephone number

    o Area (communication, finance, general management, human resources, industrial, IT, Legal and compliance, marketing and sales, procurement, research and information, supply chain, support and customer service)

Annex B – Survey T2

Part 1 – Perceived organizational support – Please evaluate your perceived organizational support regarding the company's concern with the employees' well-being.

- Please assess the perceived organizational supports (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree)

    o This company really cares about my well-being.

- o This company is proud of my work.
- o This company tries to make my job as interesting as possible.
- o This company takes into great consideration by personal values and goals.
- o This company cares about my satisfaction at work.
- o This company is available to support me when I have a problem.
- Please assess the impact of the onboarding process in the organizational integration. (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree)
  - o The Induction Program has facilitated my integration in the company.
  - o With the onboarding sessions, I have been able to understand company guidelines and local rules and procedures.
  - o I have retained information passed on the onboarding program and I am able to apply the information and procedures that were mentioned.
  - o The Induction Program has impacted my way of behaving in the company.
  - o Besides local procedures, the Onboarding Program allowed me to understand the company culture.

Part 2 – On-the-job embeddedness – Please evaluate your on-the-job embeddedness.
- Please assess the fit to the organization (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree)
  - o I like the members of my team.
  - o My co-workers are similar to me.
  - o My job utilizes my skills and talents well.
  - o I feel like I am a good match for this company.
  - o I fit with the company's culture.
  - o I like the responsibility I have at this company.
  - o My values are compatible with the organization's values.
  - o I can reach my professional goals working for this organization.
  - o I feel good about my professional growth and development.
- Please assess the organization-related sacrifice (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree)
  - o I have a lot of freedom on this job to decide how to pursue my goals.
  - o The perks of this job are outstanding.
  - o I feel that people at work respect me a great deal.
  - o I would sacrifice a lot if I left this job.
  - o My promotional opportunities are excellent here.

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o   I am well compensated for my work.

o   The benefits are good at this company.

o   The health-care benefits provided by this company are excellent.

o   The prospects for continuing employment with this company are excellent.

Part 3 – Well-being – Please evaluate your well-being and harmony.

- Please assess the following questions regarding well-being at work (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree)

o   My lifestyle, overall, has allowed me to be in harmony.

o   Considering most aspects in my life, in general, I consider them to be balanced.

o   I feel at harmony, in general.

o   Overall, I feel like my life is close to my ideals.

o   Generally, I feel like my life conditions are excellent.

o   In general, I feel happy with my life.

Part 4 – Work Engagement– Please evaluate your work engagement.

- Please assess your work engagement as a newcomer in the company (1 – never; 5 – always)

o   I feel energized.

o   I feel excited about my job.

o   I feel involved with my work.

o   In general, I am satisfied with my job.

o   Generally, I enjoy working in this company.

o   Overall, I like my job.

Part 5 – Demographic data - Please complete this survey with your data

o   Please select the gender you identify as (male, female, other)

o   Please indicate your age

o   Please indicate the last 3 digits of your telephone number

o   Area (communication, finance, general management, human resources, industrial, IT, Legal and compliance, marketing and sales, procurement, research and information, supply chain, support and customer service)

Annex C – Hypothesis test

H1	R^2	F	p	B	LLCI	ULCI
Context	0,3263	24,7031	0,0000	0,6299	0,3754	0,8843
Content	0,2763	19,4716	0,0001	0,517	0,2818	0,7522
Social	0,1294	7,5814	0,0082	0,3414	0,0925	0,5903

H2	R^2	F	p	B	LLCI	ULCI
Context	0,2939	21,2247	0,0000	0,5248	0,2961	0,7535
Content	0,1781	11,0521	0,0016	0,3644	0,1444	0,5845
Social	0,1193	6,9084	0,0113	0,2878	0,0680	0,5076

H3		B	Standard-Error	p	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect						
	Context	0,6094	0,1727	0,0009	0,2627	0,9561
	Content	0,5126	0,1561	0,0019	0,1992	0,826
	Social	0,3266	0,1594	0,0456	0,0067	0,6465
Direct Effect						
	Context	0,0830	0,1678	0,6233	-0,2541	0,4201
	Content	0,0805	0,1443	0,5795	-0,2094	0,0656
	Social	0,0305	0,1273	0,8115	-0,2252	0,0258
Indirect Effect						
	Context	0,5265	0,1552	-	0,2556	0,8675
	Content	0,4321	0,1576	-	0,1785	0,7929
	Social	0,2961	0,1110	-	0,0947	0,5344

H4		B	Standard-Error	p	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect						
	Context	0,6094	0,1727	0,0009	0,2627	0,9561
	Content	0,5126	0,1561	0,0019	0,1992	0,826
	Social	0,3266	0,1594	0,0456	0,0067	0,6465
Direct Effect						
	Context	0,0751	0,1538	0,6276	-0,2338	0,3839
	Content	0,1536	0,1256	0,2271	-0,0987	0,4058
	Social	0,0244	0,1187	0,8381	-0,2141	0,2629
Indirect Effect						
	Context	0,5344	0,1641	-	0,2486	0,8894
	Content	0,3591	0,1528	-	0,1109	0,7107
	Social	0,3022	0,1228	-	0,0660	0,5533

H5	B	Standard-Error	p	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect	0,5894	0,1029	0,0000	0,3841	0,7947
Direct Effect	0,2907	0,1203	0,0183	0,0507	0,5308
Indirect Effect	0,2987	0,0750	-	0,1649	0,4589

H6	B	Standard-Error	p	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect	0,6251	0,1212	0,0000	0,3833	0,8669
Direct Effect	0,1664	0,1612	0,3056	-0,1552	0,488
Indirect Effect	0,4587	0,1017	-	0,2748	0,5607

H7		B	Standard-Error	p	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect						
	Context	0,3473	0,1483	0,0231	0,0496	0,64500
	Content	0,4070	0,1270	0,0023	0,1521	0,662
	Social	0,2376	0,1301	0,0737	-0,0237	0,4988
Direct Effect						
	Context	-0,1247	0,1323	0,3505	-0,3906	0,1411
	Content	0,0675	0,1145	0,5585	-0,1627	0,2977
	Social	0,0063	0,1009	0,9508	-0,1964	0,2090
Indirect Effect						
	Context	0,1866	0,0620	-	0,0799	0,3239
	Content	0,1653	0,0707	-	0,0498	0,3242
	Social	0,1147	0,0499	-	0,0307	0,2241

H8		*B*	*Standard-Error*	p	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect						
	Context	0,3473	0,1483	0,0231	0,0496	0,6450
	Content	0,4070	0,1270	0,0023	0,1521	0,6620
	Social	0,2376	0,1301	0,0737	-0,0237	0,4988
Direct Effect						
	Context	-0,0296	0,1360	0,8286	-0,3029	0,2437
	Content	0,1341	0,1123	0,2381	-0,0915	0,3596
	Social	0,0449	0,1044	0,6694	-0,1650	0,2547
Indirect Effect						
	Context	0,2665	0,0963	-	0,1156	0,4940
	Content	0,1703	0,0714	-	0,0503	0,3313
	Social	0,1561	0,0705	-	0,0341	0,3087