


ONBOARDING, SOCIALIZAÇÃO E CULTURA ORGANIZACIONAL: FRONTEIRAS CONCEITUAIS E ARTICULAÇÕES ENTRE PROCESSOS DE INTEGRAÇÃO NAS ORGANIZAÇÕES**ONBOARDING, SOCIALIZATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: CONCEPTUAL BOUNDARIES AND LINKS BETWEEN INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN ORGANIZATIONS****ONBOARDING, SOCIALIZACIÓN Y CULTURA ORGANIZATIVA: LÍMITES CONCEPTUALES Y VÍNCULOS ENTRE LOS PROCESOS DE INTEGRACIÓN EN LAS ORGANIZACIONES**

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RESUMO

Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar as distinções conceituais e as inter-relações entre os termos *Onboarding*, Socialização Organizacional, Integração, Cultura Organizacional e Comportamento Organizacional, com base em uma revisão bibliográfica narrativa. A partir de autores clássicos e contemporâneos, discute-se como cada conceito representa uma dimensão específica do processo de adaptação de novos membros às organizações. Argumenta-se que, embora os termos sejam frequentemente utilizados como sinônimos na prática, suas diferenças são relevantes tanto para a compreensão teórica quanto para a formulação de estratégias eficazes de gestão de pessoas. O *Onboarding* é apresentado como uma estratégia formal de entrada, planejada e mensurável; a Socialização Organizacional, como um processo amplo e contínuo de aprendizagem social; a Integração, como resultado psicológico e relacional que indica pertencimento e alinhamento; a Cultura Organizacional, como pano de fundo simbólico que molda os demais processos; e o Comportamento Organizacional, como o campo teórico que analisa os efeitos dessas dinâmicas sobre atitudes, relações e desempenho. Ao final, propõe-se uma articulação conceitual entre os termos, compreendendo-os como partes interdependentes de um sistema adaptativo que influencia diretamente o sucesso da inserção de novos colaboradores. A sistematização teórica aqui proposta visa subsidiar gestores, pesquisadores e formuladores de políticas organizacionais no desenvolvimento de práticas mais alinhadas aos desafios contemporâneos da gestão de pessoas.

Palavras-chave: Onboarding; Socialização Organizacional; Integração; Cultura Organizacional; Comportamento Organizacional; Gestão de Pessoas.

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the conceptual distinctions and interrelations between the terms Onboarding, Organizational Socialization, Integration, Organizational Culture and Organizational Behavior, based on a narrative bibliographic review. Based on classical and contemporary authors, it discusses how each concept represents a specific dimension of the process of adaptation of new members to organizations. It is argued that, although the terms are often used as synonyms in practice, their differences are relevant both for theoretical understanding and for the formulation of effective people management strategies. Onboarding is presented as a formal, planned and measurable entry strategy; Organizational Socialization, as a broad and continuous process of social learning; Integration, as a psychological and relational result that indicates belonging and alignment; Organizational Culture, as a symbolic backdrop that shapes the other processes; and Organizational Behavior, as the theoretical field that analyzes the effects of these dynamics on attitudes, relationships and performance. Finally, a conceptual articulation between the terms is proposed, understanding them as interdependent parts of an adaptive system that directly influences the success of the insertion of new employees. The theoretical systematization proposed here aims to support managers, researchers and organizational policy makers in developing practices that are more aligned with the contemporary challenges of people management.

Keywords: Onboarding; Organizational Socialization; Integration; Organizational Culture; Organizational Behavior; People Management.

RESUMEN

Este artículo pretende analizar las distinciones conceptuales e interrelaciones entre los términos Onboarding, Socialización Organizacional, Integración, Cultura Organizacional y Comportamiento Organizacional, a partir de una revisión bibliográfica narrativa. Basándose en autores clásicos y contemporáneos, se discute cómo cada concepto representa una dimensión específica del proceso de adaptación de los nuevos miembros a las organizaciones. Se argumenta que, aunque los términos se utilizan a menudo como sinónimos en la práctica, sus diferencias son relevantes tanto para la comprensión teórica como para la formulación de estrategias eficaces de gestión de personas. El Onboarding se presenta como una estrategia de entrada formal, planificada y medible; la Socialización Organizacional, como un proceso amplio y continuo de aprendizaje social; la Integración, como un resultado psicológico y relacional que indica pertenencia y alineamiento; la Cultura Organizacional, como un telón de fondo simbólico que da forma a los otros procesos; y el Comportamiento Organizacional, como el campo teórico que analiza los efectos de estas dinámicas sobre las actitudes, las relaciones y el rendimiento. Finalmente, se propone una articulación conceptual entre los términos, entendiéndolos como partes interdependientes de un sistema adaptativo que influye directamente en el éxito de la inserción de nuevos empleados. La sistematización teórica aquí propuesta pretende apoyar a los gestores, investigadores y responsables de políticas organizativas en el desarrollo de prácticas más alineadas con los retos contemporáneos de la gestión de personas.

Palabras clave: Onboarding; Socialización organizativa; Integración; Cultura organizativa; Comportamiento organizativo; Gestión de personas.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary organizational studies, there is a growing appreciation of strategies aimed at the integration of new members, especially in contexts marked by high turnover, cultural transformations and demands for performance from the first days of work. In this scenario, terms such as *Onboarding*, *Organizational Socialization*, *Integration*, *Organizational Culture*, and *Organizational Behavior* have been widely used in research and people management practices (ZHANG, 2019; BAUER, 2010; CHAO *et al.*, 1994; SCHEIN, 2010).

This terminological overlap can generate theoretical and practical confusion, especially when institutional policies and programs for the reception of new collaborators are developed without considering the conceptual nuances involved. For example, *Onboarding* actions are often treated as synonymous with *Organizational Socialization*, although the former represents a set of formal and structured practices, while the latter constitutes a broad, dynamic and continuous process of social learning (VAN MAANEN & SCHEIN, 1979; KLEIN; POLIN & SUTTON, 2015; ZHANG, 2019). Integration, in turn, is often conceived as a stage or result of socialization, representing the moment when the individual perceives himself as an integral part of the organization (REATTO & BRUNSTEIN, 2020).

Additionally, it is important to consider that such processes occur within a broader symbolic and normative context, represented by the *Organizational Culture*. This culture, as defined by Schein (2010), constitutes a pattern of shared assumptions, learned by a group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. It directly influences the values, behaviors, and ways in which new members are socialized.

In turn, the field of *Organizational Behavior*, which studies how individuals and groups act within organizations (ROBBINS & JUDGE, 2013), offers the theoretical background to understand the impacts of these processes on organizational dynamics. In this sense, understanding the conceptual differences and logical connections between *Onboarding*, *Organizational Socialization*, *Integration*, *Culture*, and *Organizational Behavior* is essential to avoid reductionist approaches and enhance effective people management strategies. In addition, it contributes to the development of more robust theoretical models, as well as to practices that are more coherent with the complexity of human interactions in the organizational environment (CHIAVENATO, 2014; SAKS & GRUMAN, 2018).

In view of this panorama, this article aims to critically analyze the conceptual distinctions and interrelations between the terms *Onboarding*, *Organizational Socialization*, *Integration*, *Organizational Culture* and *Organizational Behavior*. The proposal is to offer a



theoretical systematization, based on specialized literature, which contributes to the understanding of these concepts in their specificity and complementarity. It is also intended to present a proposal for conceptual articulation that helps managers, researchers and organizational policy makers in the design of actions more aligned with contemporary challenges of people management.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ONBOARDING

The term *Onboarding* refers to the structured process of integrating new employees, with the aim of accelerating their adaptation to the work environment, organizational practices, and performance expectations. It is a formal and systematized approach, generally conducted by people management sectors, and which begins at the time of hiring and can extend through the first months of work (BAUER, 2010).

According to Klein and Polin (2012), *Onboarding* comprises a set of institutional practices that aim to provide newcomers with information, social support and behavioral tools so that they can perform their functions effectively. These practices include training, mentoring, performance monitoring, and welcoming actions, contributing to the construction of bonds with the organization and alignment with its culture. In this sense, the personalization of *Onboarding experiences*, taking into account the individual characteristics of the newcomers and the specific context of the function they will perform, has proven effective in increasing the perception of organizational support and facilitating the learning curve.

Despite its proximity to the concept of Organizational Socialization, *Onboarding* is distinguished by its planned character and guided by explicit organizational objectives, while socialization involves, in addition to the formal process, the informal, interpersonal, and progressive experience of the organization's culture (SAKS & GRUMAN, 2018; COOPER-THOMAS & ANDERSON, 2006).

ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION

Organizational Socialization is a continuous process through which individuals learn the values, norms, expected behaviors and practices of the organization, with the aim of becoming effective and integrated members of the work group (VAN MAANEN & SCHEIN, 1979). Unlike *Onboarding*, which tends to be more punctual and formalized, socialization encompasses both formal and informal aspects, being strongly influenced by daily social interactions and organizational culture in a broad sense.



Chao *et al.* (1994) highlight that this process occurs in multiple dimensions, including organizational knowledge, language, policy, history, objectives and values of the organization. In this way, socialization represents not only the transmission of information, but also the internalization of cultural elements and the reconfiguration of the identity of the new member.

Simsek (2024, p. 67) defines Organizational Socialization as the "learning of the knowledge, values, and behaviors necessary to play a certain role in the organization and the adaptation of employees to organizations". The author points out that it is through socialization that organizational culture is learned, maintained and multiplied.

For Saks and Ashforth (1997), the effectiveness of socialization is related to two types of tactics: institutional (formal, collective, and sequential) and individual (informal, unstructured, and personalized). The choice between these tactics directly influences the degree of adaptation, engagement, and permanence of new employees.

In the most recent studies, Organizational Socialization has been increasingly approached as a process of co-construction, in which both the organization and the new member actively act in the construction of meanings and social practices (KOWALSKI; LIDDY, 2021). This dialogic perspective considers that adaptation does not occur only through the internalization of norms and values, but also through the possibility of the newcomer contributing with new visions and practices. The flexibility of organizations to welcome the diversity of trajectories and experiences becomes, therefore, a differential for more inclusive, innovative, and resilient work environments.

The role of leadership and social support in this process has also gained prominence. Jokisaari and Vuori (2018) demonstrate that the way immediate leaders delegate tasks and offer support influences the perception of effectiveness and the integration of newcomers. In addition, Allen, Shockley and Poteet (2012) point out that formal mentoring programs promote not only learning, but also the psychological well-being of new employees, contributing to their retention and development.

Thus, Organizational Socialization must be understood as a multidimensional and interactive phenomenon, which goes beyond isolated practices and requires the coordinated involvement of different organizational actors, so that newly joined employees feel welcomed, understand their functions and align themselves with institutional objectives and values.

INTEGRATION



Organizational integration can be understood as an advanced phase or even as one of the expected results of the Organizational Socialization process. It is the moment when the individual internalizes the values, understands the organization's objectives, and begins to present behaviors aligned with institutional expectations, acting with greater autonomy and effectiveness in the performance of their functions (REATTO & BRUNSTEIN, 2020). It is also at this stage that employees tend to establish stronger bonds with colleagues and leaders, developing internal relationship networks and consolidating their sense of belonging.

Genari, Ibrahim and Ibrahim (2017) highlight that a successful integration depends not only on the initiatives promoted by the organization, such as training, mentoring programs and welcoming actions, but also on the active engagement of the individual himself in understanding and accepting the established norms, values and practices. Integration, therefore, should not be understood as a one-off event, but rather as a continuous, relational and contextual process, which requires mutual efforts between organization and individual.

According to Silva and Silva (2022), the absence of intentional integration practices in organizations can generate demotivation, low performance, and early turnover. As suggested by authors such as Saks and Gruman (2018), Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) and Jokisaari and Vuori (2018), structured integration programs, combined with knowledge management strategies, contribute significantly to the engagement of civil servants, the internalization of organizational culture and the improvement of institutional results.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational Culture can be defined as the set of assumptions, beliefs, values and shared practices that guide the behavior of the members of an organization (SCHEIN, 2010). It constitutes the symbolic and normative background in which the processes of *Onboarding*, Organizational Socialization and integration occur.

According to Hofstede *et al.* (2010), Organizational Culture works as a system of collective meanings, which directly influences the way people perceive and interpret organizational reality. This culture is learned socially, transmitted through symbols, and reinforced through rituals, stories, language, and organizational structures.

For Deal and Kennedy (1982), understanding Organizational Culture is essential to assess the coherence between the values professed by the organization and the practices



effectively experienced by employees, which directly impacts the effectiveness of socialization and the permanence of individuals in the organization.

More recently, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2015) argue that organizational culture should not be understood as something static and homogeneous, but as a multiple and interpretative phenomenon, influenced by narratives, symbolic disputes, and the complexity of social relations in the workplace. Schneider, Ehrhart and Macey (2013) point out that organizational culture is closely linked to organizational climate and performance, being fundamental to sustain practices of engagement, innovation and organizational learning.

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Organizational Behavior (OC) is an interdisciplinary field that studies the impact that individuals, groups, and structures have on human behavior in organizations, with the aim of increasing their effectiveness and promoting more productive and healthy work environments (Robbins & Judge, 2013). This field addresses a wide range of topics, such as motivation, leadership, communication, organizational culture, power and, directly, the processes of Organizational Socialization and integration of new members.

According to Chiavenato (2014), Organizational Behavior includes both individual behavior, involving perceptions, attitudes, values, and personality, and group behavior, including group dynamics, conflict resolution, and leadership styles. It is based on the premise that the organization is an open system, in constant interaction with the external and internal environments.

By integrating different levels of analysis (individual, group, and organization), the OC provides a robust theoretical framework to understand the impacts of *Onboarding* and Organizational Socialization on the professional trajectory of employees. As Judge and Zapata (2015) point out, such initial adaptation processes significantly influence the engagement, performance, and permanence of workers in institutions, in addition to affecting organizational results in the long term.

METHODOLOGY

This article adopts a qualitative approach, of a theoretical nature, based on a narrative literature review (Gil, 2019). Narrative review aims to gather, describe and interpret relevant scientific productions on a topic, without, however, following systematic search and analysis protocols. In this type of review, the conceptual understanding and theoretical articulation of the contents are prioritized, allowing for a more flexible and interpretative analysis.



Classic and contemporary works in the areas of Organizational Behavior, People Management, Organizational Psychology and Organizational Theory were consulted, selected based on their relevance in the field and frequency of citation in the specialized literature. The emphasis fell on authors who directly address the concepts of *Onboarding*, Organizational Socialization, integration, Organizational Culture and Organizational Behavior.

The analysis was conducted in an interpretative way, focusing on the identification of convergences, distinctions and possible theoretical articulations between the concepts studied. The inclusion criterion of the works was their conceptual clarity and explanatory capacity in relation to the object of the study.

DISCUSSION: CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ONBOARDING, SOCIALIZATION, INTEGRATION, CULTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Although the concepts of *Onboarding*, Organizational Socialization, integration, Organizational Culture, and Organizational Behavior share significant interfaces, each one represents a specific dimension of the processes of adaptation and interaction in the work environment. Understanding its conceptual boundaries is essential to avoid the indistinct use of terms and to improve people management practices and institutional design.

ONBOARDING AS A FORMAL ENTRY STRATEGY

Onboarding represents the beginning of the new employee's trajectory and is characterized by its organizational intentionality. It is a planned, measurable process with defined objectives, such as reducing adaptation time, improving initial performance and increasing engagement (BAUER, 2010). Depending on how it is structured, *onboarding* can be more or less effective in triggering broader socialization — which is why it is often considered a strategic socialization tool (SAKS & GRUMAN, 2018).

SOCIALIZATION AS A BROAD AND CONTINUOUS PROCESS

Organizational Socialization, in turn, is not limited to formal actions. It is a broad and continuous process of social learning, which involves the acquisition of tacit knowledge, observation of behaviors, internalization of values and formation of professional identity (VAN MAANEN & SCHEIN, 1979). It occurs both in formal contexts (such as training and meetings) and informal (everyday interactions, rituals, narratives, and support networks).



The distinction lies in the temporal and symbolic scope: *Onboarding* tends to have a defined beginning and end, while socialization can last for years, being influenced by factors such as changes in function, restructuring, or institutional crises.

INTEGRATION AS AN OUTCOME AND EXPERIENCE

Integration should be understood as a desired result of Organizational Socialization and *Onboarding*. It manifests itself when the individual perceives himself or herself as included, recognized, and aligned with organizational objectives (REATTO & BRUNSTEIN, 2020). It is a psychological and relational state that translates the success (or failure) of previous processes.

It is important to highlight that integration is not synonymous with conformity: it also involves authenticity and agency, that is, the balance between adapting to the organization and preserving one's individual identity (GENARI, IBRAHIM & IBRAHIM, 2017).

CULTURE AS A BACKGROUND AND SHAPING FORCE

All of the above processes are influenced — and, in part, shaped — by Organizational Culture. As a system of shared meanings, culture acts as an interpretative filter and behavior guide, conditioning both the content and the form of *the Onboarding* and Organizational Socialization processes (SCHEIN, 2010; HOFSTEDE *et al.*, 2010).

Therefore, one cannot analyze *Onboarding* or Organizational Socialization without considering the cultural context: in organizations with collaborative cultures, welcoming tends to be more inclusive and participatory; in hierarchical or competitive cultures, socialization can be more rigid or exclusionary.

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AS AN INTEGRATING FIELD

Organizational Behavior (OC) acts as an integrative theoretical field, allowing us to understand how individuals and groups respond to organizational practices and cultural influences. By studying topics such as attitudes, motivation, leadership and climate, the OC offers subsidies to understand the psychological and social impacts of *Onboarding* and Organizational Socialization on the performance and well-being of individuals (ROBBINS & JUDGE, 2013; CHIAVENATO, 2014).

Thus, the OC provides the conceptual framework to evaluate the effects of integration processes on organizational outcomes, such as engagement, retention, productivity, and organizational climate.



PROPOSAL FOR CONCEPTUAL ARTICULATION

Based on the analysis carried out, it is proposed to understand the concepts discussed as interdependent parts of the same adaptive system, in which:

- *Onboarding* represents the structured gateway, with a defined start and explicit guidelines;
- Organizational Socialization is the process of continuous learning and internalization, influenced by multiple formal and informal dimensions;
- Integration is the relational and psychological result of the success (or not) of these processes;
- Organizational culture works as the symbolic and normative environment that guides, conditions, and transforms processes and people;
- Organizational Behavior acts as an analytical field that allows us to investigate and explain how all this translates into attitudes, interactions, and performance.

Chart 1 presents a conceptual synthesis that aims to articulate the terms *Onboarding*, Organizational Socialization, Integration, Organizational Culture and Organizational Behavior, highlighting their definitions, functions and interrelations in the context of the adaptation of new members to organizations. This systematization seeks to facilitate the understanding of the specificities and complementarities between the concepts, contributing to more rigorous analyses and more effective interventions in people management.

Chart 1 - Proposal for Conceptual Articulation

<i>Onboarding</i>	It represents the structured gateway, with a defined start and explicit guidelines
Organizational Socialization	It is the continuous process of learning and internalization, permeated by multiple formal and informal dimensions
Integration	It is the relational and psychological result of the success (or not) of these processes
Organizational Culture	It functions as the symbolic and normative environment, which guides, conditions and transforms both processes and people
Organizational Behavior	It acts as an analytical field that allows you to investigate and explain how all this translates into attitudes, interactions, and organizational performance

Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).

This articulation, in addition to favoring conceptual rigor, contributes to improving both theoretical analysis and practical intervention in different organizational contexts.

CONCLUSION

This article aimed to critically analyze the distinctions and interrelationships between the concepts of *onboarding*, *organizational socialization*, *integration*, *organizational culture* and *organizational behavior*, based on a review of the specialized literature. From the theoretical systematization carried out, it was possible to identify that, although these terms often appear in an overlapping way in organizational and academic language, they have distinct meanings and complementary functions in the process of adaptation of new members to organizations.

Onboarding is configured as a formal strategy for the reception and initial orientation of new employees, while Organizational Socialization represents a broader, continuous and symbolic process of learning and cultural internalization. Integration, in turn, emerges as a possible relational and psychological result of these processes, translated into feelings of belonging, alignment of expectations, and effective participation. Organizational culture acts as a backdrop and shaping force, providing symbolic and normative references that guide behaviors and decisions. Finally, organizational behavior offers analytical elements to understand the impacts of these experiences on individuals, groups, and the organization as a whole.

The articulation between these concepts favors a more holistic understanding of organizational adaptation processes, and can support more effective people management practices, especially in contexts marked by cultural diversity, institutional complexity, or high turnover. Such insights are particularly relevant for institutions that face the constant challenge of integrating new employees into established organizational cultures.

As a limitation, this study was based exclusively on a theoretical analysis. To deepen the understanding of the relationships discussed, it is recommended to carry out empirical research that investigates how such concepts manifest themselves in organizational practice. In addition, comparative studies between different *onboarding models* and their relationships with organizational culture can contribute significantly to the advancement of the field.

In summary, by clarifying the limits and connections between these five central concepts, this article seeks to contribute to the consolidation of a more precise and useful theoretical vocabulary for research and practice in people management and organizational behavior.



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