ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE: ON THE ACTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF NEWCOMER AND EXPERIENCED EMPLOYEES

Socialização Organizacional no Setor Público: Ações e Percepções de Novatos e Experientes

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study aims to explain how the process of organizational socialization of newcomers occurs in a public faculty.

Design/methodology/approach – This qualitative and interpretativist research was conducted under an inter-actionist approach. We interviewed 14 newcomers and also experienced government employees from a state public faculty in São Paulo. The content of the interviews was analyzed by a categorization process.

Findings – The findings show that socialization of newcomers is self-motivated, informal, non-institutionalized, influenced by the normative nature of work and insufficient support given by the group. Newcomers' admission into the workplace does not cause serious conflicts or tensions that could lead to changes in the workplace. It is the proactive behavior of the newcomers that allows them to adapt to work and know traditions, beliefs and history of the organization.

Research limitations/implications – The limitation of this study is the context of a public university's workplace.

Practical implications – This research allows the organization to get information about the triangular relationship between challenge, support and trust which could have direct effects on the newcomers' workplace learning.

Social implications – We propose that the organization creates a workplace in which the employees can feel strong bonds of solidarity and collectivism, and in which they could have concrete opportunities to realize that their work can contribute to something important, impacting, in the group and in the organization.

Originality/value – This study articulates the concepts of organizational socialization, proactive behavior and self-socialization, which may provide future implications for public management in universities.

Keywords - Organizational Socialization; Newcomers; Public Service; University.

RESUMO

Objetivo – O objetivo deste estudo é explicar como acontece o processo de socialização organizacional em uma universidade pública.

Metodologia – Adotou-se metodologia qualitativa e interpretativista apoiada na abordagem interacionista. Conduziram-se 14 entrevistas com funcionários públicos novatos e experientes de uma universidade do Estado de São Paulo. O conteúdo das entrevistas foi analisado pelo processo de categorização.

Resultados e Conclusões – Os achados mostram que a socialização dos novatos é automotivada, informal e não institucionalizada, com influência da natureza normativa do trabalho e de orientações insuficientes dadas pelo grupo. Sua entrada no local de trabalho não gera conflitos e tensões graves que levem a mudanças organizacionais. Adaptar-se ao trabalho, conhecer tradições, crenças e história da organização cabem à proatividade do novato.

Limitações – O contexto desta pesquisa limita-se ao educacional superior público brasileiro.

Implicações Práticas – Este estudo permite a organização inferir a relação triangular entre desafio, suporte e confiança para identificar fatores que podem afetar a aprendizagem do novato no local de trabalho.

Implicações Sociais – A organização estudada pode estimular um ambiente de trabalho no qual o servidor sinta fortes laços de solidariedade e de coletivismo, e no qual tenha concretas oportunidades de perceber que seu trabalho pode contribuir com algo importante, de impacto, no grupo e na organização.

Originalidade – A articulação dos conceitos de socialização organizacional, comportamento proativo e autos-socialização pode apontar importantes futuras implicações para a administração de universidades públicas.

Palavras-chave – Socialização Organizacional; Novatos; Serviço Público; Universidade.

1 INTRODUCTION

Organizational socialization can be understood under two main approaches, whose concepts have been systematically attested in the vast international literature and in the restricted Brazilian bibliography, both in number and in contexts (Carvalho, Borges, & Vikan, 2012). The first approach emphasizes the use of norms, values, objectives and organizational culture (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) to plan human resource management policies and practices (Shinyashiki, 2002). So its discussion is centered on Human Resources Management, usually under the term organizational integration. The second is about the learning process that takes place while the newcomer joins the organization (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). It is under this approach that this study is conducted.

Organizational socialization is the process by which the individual, inserted in a new context in the organization, interprets, learns and internalizes values, skills, expected behaviors and social knowledge essential to assume a role in the organization or to act effectively as a member (Louis, 1980; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). The learning of work by the newcomers is at the heart of any process of organizational socialization. However, few researches center their discussion on how this process affects the learning of the new individual in the new workplace.

The public service sought to modernize its management practices after 1990 by moving from the bureaucratic model to the public administration manager, which is concerned with the efficiency of the services provided to the client-citizen (Bresser-Pereira, 1996). However, it is observed that the concern with the human development of the newcomers in the organization is not a common practice: the public employees get a position after a very competitive public selection and their acceptance by the experienced members is done indifferently (Chaves, 2003), with their proactive behavior being responsible for their self-socialization and learning at work (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). These authors also point out that both concepts of proactive behavior and self-socialization have been studied independently, without relating them to their effect on learning.

This study aims to fill this gap by explaining how the process of learning in the workplace of technical-administrative employees of a state public faculty in São Paulo occurs from the perspective

of newcomer and experienced employees. In this qualitative study (Merriam, 2002), based on an interpretativist approach, fourteen interviews were conducted with seven experienced employees and seven newcomers with the specific objectives of: (a) identify and describe how the organization handles the integration of the newly hired government employees with workplace and group; (b) identify and describe how newcomers learn their work and join the group; (c) identify and describe the different perceptions of the experienced and newcomer employees about the process of organizational socialization.

The first section of this study contextualizes the state-of-the-art about the concepts of organizational socialization in its relations with proactive behavior, self-socialization and learning in the workplace. In the second section, the methodology procedures of the research are explained. In the third section, we present and discuss the findings of the research, which precede its conclusion.

1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section presents the concept of organizational socialization from an interactionist perspective and its connections to the concepts of proactive behavior, self-socialization and workplace learning.

1.1 Organizational Socialization from an interactionist approach

Carvalho, Marques and Brito (2015) and Shinyashiki (2002) explain that socialization can be primary or secondary. The first happens in childhood, when the individual inserts himself as a member of societies through the performance of socialization agents such as family and school. The second considers the insertion of the individual in segments of the objectified world, with the internalization of specific knowledge and roles. Thus, the organizational socialization that occurs in the workplace is a secondary form of socialization in the individual's life.

However, Borges and Albuquerque (2004) draw attention to the terminological confusion between organizational, occupational and professional socialization, terms that appear indistinctly in the literature about this theme. The last two are directly related to the introduction of individuals in a given occupation and profession. Organizational socialization, in turn, refers to the process by which an individual acquires social knowledge and skills necessary to assume a given role in the organization and become its effective member (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Therefore, organizational socialization is the process by which the individual, inserted in a new organizational context, interprets, learns and internalizes values, skills, expected behaviors and social knowledge to assume a role in the organization or to act effectively as its member (Louis, 1980; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). However, organizational socialization has not always had this holistic understanding.

Early studies on the subject were concerned with identifying the organizational tactics employed in adapting the newcomer to the new workplace and focusing on the stages that newcomers went through during the socialization process (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006), that is, they simply understood how individuals learned to do their work (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994). Studies by Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992), Chao et al. (1994), Ashford and Black (1996), among others argue that the literature on organizational socialization should consider not only situational but also individual variables, adopting a symbolic interactionist perspective, aimed at understanding individuals' particular worldview in the socialization process and at the way newcomers behave proactively to facilitate this process (Carvalho, Borges, & Vikan, 2012). Nowadays it has been relevant to investigate the actions and perceptions of newcomers about their learning process about the new

organization and job (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006). Therefore, not only "what" is learned, but also "how" and "why" is learned should be considered in the newcomers socialization process.

The organization influences the individual's learning and their socialization (Chao et al., 1994) according to six categories:

1) Performance: knowledge and skills an individual needs to learn to perform their job and role in the organization.

2) People: finding people with whom you can learn about the organization, the group, and the work contributes to other members accepting the newcomer.

3) Policies: the newcomer should be able to identify formal and informal working relationships as well as power structures within the organization, learning about group culture and behavioral patterns.

4) Language: learn to master technical language and job and organization-specific jargon.

5) Organizational values and objectives: the newcomer must understand what are the rules and principles that maintain the integrity of the organization. It involves identifying informal working networks and unspoken norms.

6) History: learning about members' traditions, customs, rituals, and life histories allows the newcomer to acquire and perpetuate knowledge about organizational culture. How individuals perceive these dimensions determines the learning characteristics of the work or organization and the results in their socialization.

For a better observation and study of this construct, the distancing of the functionalist structural perspective towards interactionist and constructivist approaches may offer other possibilities to glimpse and understand human experiences (Borges & Albuquerque, 2004; Carvalho, Marques, & Brito, 2015). Research under this approach, of which Chao et al. (1994) are precursors, consider the proactivity of the individual and understand that newcomers are active agents who seek people and places of learning deemed valuable to facilitate their own organizational adjustment, and are still able to influence group norms and their outcomes (Andrade, Oliveira, Cappelle, Antonialli, & Paiva, 2012). It is about this proactive behavior and its role in the newcomer's socialization in the organization that concerns the next subsection.

1.2 Proactive Behavior, Self-Socialization and Workplace Learning

The workplace has been widely recognized as legitimate for learning new skills and knowledge that enable individuals to participate better in everyday activities (Le Clus, 2011). And the determining condition for learning to happen is to provide a safe and reliable workplace to individual, because only under these conditions learning can flourish (Illeris, 2011).

In a study of 150 Engineering and Business graduates during their first seven months of work at a company, Ashforth, Sluss and Saks (2007) concluded that the "how" these newcomers socialized had fundamental value over what they actually learned. It is therefore important for individuals, especially those of younger generations, to be recognized ontologically and to feel accepted and valued as people. Therefore, ensuring a safe and reliable workplace is a prerequisite for creative and transformative learning to be experienced (Illeris, 2011).

However, by assigning only to the organizations the function of creating programs that are concerned with the socialization of the newcomers, the literature ended up representing newcomers as passive. It means that newcomers play more a reactive role in the socialization process than a proactive one (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Proactive behavior is the informal and self-directed ways newcomers seek to self-socialize in the new workplace or job and that affect their learning

(Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). It is also considered as the effort made by the newcomers in the search for information (Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000) to facilitate their own adaptation (Ashford & Black, 1996) to the new workplace.

In a review by Griffin, Colella and Goparaju (2000), the most common forms of proactive behavior manifestation were the search for feedbacks to improve their performance; seeking information with co-workers and superiors; establishing informal relationships with colleagues and superiors; offering and receiving informal mentoring; acting positively; engaging in extra-work activities; exchanging ideas about work; and watching others working.

Although few studies assess the newcomers' self-socialization, that is, the association between their proactive behavior and learning (riffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000; Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007), it is argued that proactive behavior facilitates learning because individuals are responsible, by themselves, for exploring the subjects they feel insecure about and setting their pace of learning. By being actively involved in the context of their learning, the newcomers not only generate information about their tasks, colleagues and environment, but also modify the context so that it best meets their needs and preferences, thus enhancing learning (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007).

The individual's entry into an unfamiliar organizational environment may be characterized by a period of uncertainty and thus act as a trigger for learning. The experiences of entering a new environment make individuals experience situations of low control. Unfamiliar situations, from which numerous problems may arise, cause the newcomer to face high levels of uncertainty as to how appropriate it would be to respond to these situations (Ashford & Black, 1996). Elkjaer (2013) explains that when the newcomer seeks cognitive or aesthetic mechanisms to promote the encounter with new experiences that allow him/her to overcome difficult situations there is a great possibility that new knowledge will be generated. When the problem is resolved, a sense of control can replace uncertainty for a certain period.

However, it is insufficient to state that only the initial feeling of low control in the face of a disturbing situation is a trigger for the newcomers' proactive behavior in seeking knowledge and learning from these experiences. Although newcomers who are concerned about having a higher level of control over uncertain situations get more information, socialize and build more effective networks than those with low control needs, for Ashford and Black (1996), there are others factors that can influence the newcomers' proactivity.

These include tolerance to organizational ambiguity (in tasks, policies and values), cognitive ability to achieve results, and especially situational factors such as organizational culture of developing spaces for the manifestation of the newcomers' proactive behavior. The latter, also called "expansive learning environments" (Milligan, Margaryan, & Littlejohn, 2013), reinforces the organization's role in providing workplaces that foster the human capacity to investigate and think reflexively, and to allow new learning experiences in the organizational environment (Brandi & Elkjaer, 2011). Learning in the workplace must be the ability to develop and socialize in order to become skilled and practicing members who investigate, think reflexively, solve problems and share solutions and experiences among members of the organization (Brandi & Elkjaer, 2011), a premise that reflects the concept of organizational socialization.

The next section clarifies the type of research, its ontological-epistemological approach and the process of data construction and analysis.

2 METHODOLOGY PROCEDURES

This basic qualitative study (Merriam, 2002) is based on an interpretative and interactionist epistemological approach. Specifically about the constructs organizational socialization and workplace learning, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) and Chao et al. (1994) argue that the descriptive qualitative researches leaned upon an interactionist approach are the most appropriate to achieve the proposed objectives.

Remembering, the general objective of this research is to explain how the learning process occurs in the workplace of a technical-administrative employee of a state public faculty in São Paulo from the perspective of newcomers and also experienced government employees. To achieve it, semi-structured interviews were conducted with fourteen technical and administrative staff with the profile presented in Table 1.

	Research Participant	Gender	Age	Years with the organization	Labor Law System
NEWCOMERS	N1	F	48	3	Consolidated Labor Laws System
	N2	F	34	3	Consolidated Labor Laws System
	N3	F	46	3	Consolidated Labor Laws System
	N4	F	30	4	Consolidated Labor Laws System
	N5	F	34	4	Consolidated Labor Laws System
	N6	F	29	6	Consolidated Labor Laws System
	N7	F	56	4	Consolidated Labor Laws System
EXPERIENCED	E1	F	57	31	Exclusive legal system
	E2	F	51	27	Exclusive legal system
	E3	F	56	36	Exclusive legal system
	E4	F	64	22	Exclusive legal system
	E5	F	51	30	Exclusive legal system
	E6	M	53	33	Exclusive legal system
	E7	F	51	27	Exclusive legal system

Table 1 – Profile of research participants
Source: elaborated by the authors from interview information (2016).

The time of newcomer participants with the organization ranged from 3 to 6 years and the time of experienced participants, from 22 to 36 years. It is clarified that for the organization studied, the subject who is in his/her first five years of activity is considered a newcomer. As for their educational training, all have specialization course. Researchers chose for government employees from different sections that were able to reflect on and verbalize their experience, ensuring a variety of cases and experiences so that their speeches would broaden the scope of the results. The interviews took place in the interviewees' natural workplace and the questions that guided the interviews were based on the following thematic axes: how was the process of joining the public service?; what do you do at work?; how do you appropriated the nature of the work and learned to do it?; who did provide support and / or teach you the job?; tell us a good and a bad experience in the workplace; questions about the organizational workplace and expectations about work in the coming years.

The content of the interviews was separated into elements or units of meaning and analyzed by the categorization process of Flores (1994), which consists of the following steps: 1) data reduction: identification of situations, contexts, activities, events, examples and opinions found in the interviews that were related to the research objectives; 2) data presentation: transformation

and presentation; 3) Conclusion formulation: generation and verification of conclusions. The categories are defined from the set of elements of the same theme that have meaning found in the various elements of analysis.

Thus, the categories (Table 2) were defined *a posteriori* from the information that emerged from the interviews, as defined for qualitative researches based on Symbolic Interactionism. Also, the researchers considered convenient to characterize, based on the information from the interviews, the nature of the government employees work in the organization studied. Therefore, the category "The nature of work of technical-administrative government employees" was created, which influences and permeates all others.

Objectives	Research categories that help achieve objectives
(a) Identify and describe how the organization handles the integration of the newly hired government employee with the workplace and group.	The nature of work of technical-administrative government employees / Starting work: does my past condemn me or not?
(b) Identify and describe how newcomers learn their own work and integrate themselves into the group.	The nature of work of technical-administrative government employees / How I learn and how they teach me
(c) Identify and describe the different perceptions of experienced and newcomer employees about the process of organizational socialization.	The nature of work of technical-administrative government employees / Is the socialization of newcomers also a matter of generation?

Table 2 – Category system for the proposed research problem
Source: elaborated by the authors from the interview information (2016).

Next section presents the discussion of the research findings organized into the four categories presented in Table 2.

3 DISCUSSION

This section presents and analyzes the data found in the interviews according to the four categories proposed and organized in the following subsections: The nature of work of technical-administrative government employees; Starting work: does my past condemn me or not? How I learn and how they teach me; Is the socialization of newcomers also a matter of generation?

3.1 The nature of work of technical-administrative government employees

The environment studied is a state professional bureaucracy (Adler & Borys, 1996) that maintains in use the coercive principles of classical organization theories (Cunha, 2011). Although it advocates breaking paradigms, work in this organization is standardized and task-oriented. According to the research participants, work evolved from "before it was just reproducing what the boss did, it was manual" (E2) to tasks that require them continuous and renewed ability to organize, read and study to solve daily problems in the workplace. For Gerber (2006) and Le Clus (2011), it is this changing characteristic of work, accentuated by new electronic and organizational technologies that influences the way individuals and organizations perceive learning, interfering with "how" people learn and socialize. However, the need for a legislation-based work has not changed over time.

Called by Hall (2004) as an instrument of formalization and control, formalized procedures help people get their work done. This perception is evident and clear to newcomers: "Our work is technical. We work essentially on standards" (N1). Administrative technicians don't invent things.

Our job is on laws. Nothing runs away or can escape what is written. Our role as technical-administrative staff is to observe the law and advise [...]" (E1). However, this rigidity can lead to a great sense of dissatisfaction, powerlessness, alienation and psychosocial isolation at work (Hall, 2004), especially over time.

The next subsection presents how the formal or informal prior knowledge of the newcomer government employee is considered, or not, by the organization.

3.2 Starting to work: does my past condemn me or not?

Of the fourteen technical-administrative employees interviewed, ten were not government employee before starting their career in the faculty. Applications to the University solely and exclusively happen by a civil service exam. The job description of the technical-administrative employee follows the Brazilian Classification of Occupations – CBO – and is included in the applications public notice as well as in the occupational profile of the University positions. Technical-administrative employees are responsible for planning, organizing, controlling and analyzing administrative activities. They should also develop administrative activities compatible with the area of operation, aiming at meeting the established routines and systems. Applications public notice does not determine, most of times, the location of the future employee. It is determined by the director of the faculty or by the human resources department. Consequently, it is up to the professionals involved in the definition of the newcomers' location to consider or not their previous knowledge and experience for the future function to be performed.

E1 reports that decisions about newcomers' location have always been made by the human resources department without planning or priority definition: "When I got here, they asked me nothing of what I was doing, who I was, if I had any knowledge of anything, nothing. They simply left me four days in HR, lost, not knowing what to do". The speech of E1 represents the statement of all other participants, newcomer and experienced, that there is no concern for the institution to know about the newcomers' previous life, formation, knowledge and experiences in previous jobs.

N2 reports having explained about her previous experience to the Human Resources supervisor at the time of hiring, who warned her: "You can't be demanding this kind of thing on the first day you are entering here because you are new, and that is not good for you" (N2). Indifference to the previous experience of the newcomer does not seem to have changed over time, and although N2 is aware of the characteristics of public service, she believes that a more careful look at the newcomer depends on the managerial profile of those in management positions.

Hall (2004) argues that when individuals join an organization, it does not matter who they are. The organization has already established a system of standards and expectations to be followed regardless of who makes up its staff. This framework of norms and expectations is much stronger than individuals, because even when they leave their positions and functions in the organization, its structure will still remain there.

However, organization nullifies the epistemological dimension of the individual, that is, that focused on knowledge; as well as the ontological dimension, focused on the human existence and development when it has a short-sighted look at the newcomers' educational formation and organizational trajectory, disregarding their academic background and the experiences of other previous jobs (Brandi & Elkjaer, 2011).

Upon entering Faculty, the newcomers are nullified in their epistemological and ontological dimensions because they are not asked who they are, what they did, how they got there, and what their future expectations are within the new organization. These questions are essential for connecting the future members to the organization and, consequently, the organization to the world around them (Elkjaer, 2001; Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007).

Of the participants heard, only E4, N5, N6, N7, all from the Faculty's administrative area, stated that their previous academic background helped them in their current work. This is because some procedures are standardized under state and federal laws and not just within the faculty. Some examples are the bidding processes of purchases, the use of the Electronic Bidding System – BEC –, the payments of suppliers and the labor laws proposed in CLT – Consolidated Labor Laws System. However, the same participants point out that no one asked them about their prior knowledge. Therefore, the capacity in the current area and the possibility of using it was a coincidence.

Elkjaer (2013) reports that, in these cases, it is as if the individuals should forget about their previous life in order to be able to adapt exclusively to new forms of reality, interactions and learning; being inducted into a new community; having to adapt and socialize within conservatism, protectionism, overvaluation of internal practices, and the tendency for the organization to recycle employee knowledge rather than critically challenge and broaden it.

Continuing the discussion, the next subsection explains how novices learn their work and seek to integrate with existing standards.

3.3 How I learn and how they teach me

Being talented in the domain they work depends on the daily practice of the government employees. Experienced and newcomer employees alike agree that to learn the job it is necessary to pay attention to it in daily life, live it, experience it in the present moment, with a serious intention to learn from the circumstance and to reflect upon it in order to resolve problems. It is from this intentional experience, proactivity and context of social practice that learning, especially informal learning, takes place and is embedded in the context of the organization (Marsick & Watkins, 2001; Le Clus, 2011).

For the participants of this research, delving deep into the nuances of work and especially the environment surrounding it is crucial to understand why work is done that way. This is why there are numerous statements from research participants that "I need to get it done to be able to understand", because any detail in the execution of the work is highly valued, culturally or historically: "Here we value the aesthetics of documents" (E3).

The effort of the employees to obtain information that would enable them to do the work is marked in the discourse of both, newcomer and experienced, when they state that to learn the job and to understand how faculty and university work they have "to get along" (E2, E5 and N5). "Since I joined here I have suffered from this thing of getting along. Get along that the problem is yours" (E2), mainly due to the lack of support, willingness of the colleague/superior to teach the new tasks.

When asked about how work was learned, all research participants, immediately after the researchers' question, cited a name: "I learned from so-and-so"; "oh, it was so-and-so who taught me". So-and-so is a reference to a specific colleague or immediate superior (E1, E7, N1, N2, N4, N7), which shows that upon entering in the new job, the government employee first learn from a colleague at the workplace.

However, E1 explains that not necessarily the immediate superior was responsible for the newcomers' socialization: "There was not this thing that everyone today has to come into the boss room and talk, exchange ideas. No. I could not. We didn't even want to stop by near". "The employee was seen as subordinate" (E1), and as fear prevailed, the only way to learn was with the support of a colleague who was more understandable and could help. The interviewed participants believe that the relationship is now more cordial and collaborative, probably driven by change in social and work contexts inside and outside the university. Therefore, the study by Brum et al. (2014) with municipal civil employees reported the same experience regarding responsibility in initial education about the work and the main tasks of the newcomer to be in charge of a team member, which was perceived

as positive, as this form of socialization contributes to the reduction of anxiety and facilitates the interaction of the newcomer with the group.

When asked if they noticed that the learning process of work had changed over time, participants said no. "Here we continue to depend on each other to learn. From the colleague, the boss, or other units of the [university]. "[...] Now, with computerized systems, there is an attempt to standardize procedures and give a whole new face to [university]" (E4), "of course we also had training, which served more to meet colleagues and learn as each one did in his/her unit" (E5), but "when money is lacking, when we go through a crisis like the one we have now, we have no money for anything, so we continue to learn from our colleagues" (E1).

The experience gained by the employees, whether newcomer or not, will depend on themselves, according to E4: "It doesn't matter how much time he/she has in the faculty, what matters is whether he/she has experienced that situation." N2 agrees with E4 and believes that the employees' proactive behavior allows them to solve problems: "You have to live, experience, seek solutions to problems, be proactive in the present to create your background for the future".

Considering the findings of this research till now, it is evident that technical-administrative government employees gain experience from the outcome of how they interact with others. Interaction, etymologically, is an integrated action with other people. In these interactions, the important thing is that each worker involved learns something to improve its performance and to be able to share with others (Gerber, 2006).

From the interviews, it is noted that what is learned is directly related to the quality of interactions (Elkjaer, 2001; Eraut, 2004; Illeris, 2011). There are recurring statements about the difficulty of establishing a dialogical relationship between the employee who needs to learn and who is responsible for teaching him/her. Making questions and receiving shallow answers do not characterize interaction. It is necessary for the issuer of instructions to consider the newcomer or the person who needs to learn throughout their being, respecting their particularities, as: the best way to learn from each one; the personality; and their personal goals.

The carelessness in this process, which is identified in the participants' speech by the lack of patience, centralization, the feeling of disturbing the other with excessive questions, not stopping work and looking the person in the eye while teaching, limits the related discussions to work and organizational socialization. It is noteworthy that in the study by Genari, Ibrahim and Ibrahim (2017) with federal civil employees, the lack of a complete socialization program, the lack of instructions to perform the work and the lack of time of the immediate superior were the most problematic points about the role of the manager in socialization.

As Griffin, Colella and Goparaju (2000) presented, the search for information about the work, either with the superior or colleagues; the establishment of informal relationships with these colleagues; observation and exchange of ideas about work demonstrate the newcomers' proactive behavior. Authors such as Billet (2001), Gerber (2006), Marsick and Yates (2012) and Le Clus (2013) also claim that listening, conversation, exchanging ideas, solving problems, teaching colleagues, collaborating with them, and taking on challenges are key sources for workers to learn about their work activities.

The next subsection discusses newcomer and experienced employees' perceptions of the process of organizational socialization.

3.4 Is the socialization of newcomers also a matter of generation?

This subsection seeks to understand if there are differences in the perceptions of experienced and newcomer employees between the organization's goals and their own professional and personal goals, and how this dynamics may influence organizational socialization.

Chao et al. (1994) believe that the newcomers need to learn what are the behavioral patterns, culture, history, traditions, values and commitments of the group in which they will be inserted in order to become a member of this social world with which they want or must be compromised (Elkjaer & Huysman, 2008).

In order to be able to identify these factors in the studied environment, it is necessary to contextualize that the faculty underwent, from 2010 to 2014, an intense renewal of its staff due to the significant number of retirements and creation of another university unit in the same municipality, which demanded the urgent hiring of more than fifty new employees. As both incidents are recent and marked a cycle in organizational history, it was not difficult, though questioned, for research participants to devote an important part of their discourses to reporting how this intense relationship between newcomer and experienced employees is being defined from the daily relationship during the learning of work.

Although the term newcomer may semantically sound derogatory or refer to the age group, to a new generation and alienated individuals about the existence and functioning of the faculty, three of the newcomers interviewed have already had contact with the faculty because they are related to former employees, and another (N7) is already retired but continue working.

Both newcomer and experienced employees feel that their organizational environment is constantly evolving, daily facing new challenges never experienced before, what demands new skills from them. Experienced employees say that a feature newcomers have in common is their ease and speed in use of technology in their daily activities. "They are already born digital" (E7) and "it is easy to learn how to handle these things, computers" (N7), which can influence the way they relate to experienced members, especially when the experienced employees think themselves inferior for not have this ability.

N7 states that she felt better welcomed by members of her age group than by newcomers:

> Yes, there are differences [between generations]. I hear a lot because of my age: "Oh, these younger people, right, [N7], work differently from us, do not have that commitment, it seems that...". And it's true. It is a question of generation. It is different. I hear a lot about this here in the faculty.

N3 reports that when she arrived at the faculty, she was well received by some experienced employees, who even helped her in the institutional and work comprehension. But she felt resistance from others. However, it was up to her to conquer her space, and soon after, she considered herself "among them".

A newcomers' learning is the heart of any organizational socialization model (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). It is emphasized that organizational socialization is understood here as the learning process of attitudes, behaviors and knowledge necessary to participate as a member of an organization (Griffin; Colella, & Goparaju, 2000). Thus, this process can be operationalized by the institution itself or through the newcomers' proactive behavior.

In the case of the faculty under study, the beginning of the socialization process of some newcomers came from an occasional and informal initiative of the human resources supervisor and it does not last in time. This way, organizational socialization is responsibility of the newcomers, who depend on their proactive behavior and their initiative in seeking informal ways to draw near to older members and know the work context. Brum et al. (2014) highlight the importance of continuing the socialization process so that the employees feel constantly committed to their professional responsibilities as a public agent. The question that arises here is the extent to which the organization studied encourages or inhibits the proactive behavior of newcomers.

According to the interviewees, some functions in the faculty facilitate organizational socialization, as they require a systemic view of its functioning. However, when the function is very specialized, such as departmental technicians, socialization depends strictly on the group in which they are inserted. In these cases, it is just the breadth and depth of self-socialization that will define both the "what" and the "how" the newcomer will learn.

The work in the faculty is complex because "there is so much information the newcomer has to deal with" (N3). They need to learn technical information on how to get the job done; referential information on what is expected of them at work; social information on how people are and how they relate to and between them; assessment information on how others will judge your work and behavior; normative information on organizational culture; organizational information on structure, procedures, products and services and performance; and political information on the distribution of power in the organization (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). From the interviews, it can be inferred that without the help of those who are sharing the same workplace every day, the various interactions and the accompaniment of the most experienced employees, the work in the studied faculty becomes a difficult maze to go through.

A very common issue cited in the interviews was the commitment of newcomer and experienced employees to work and the institution. E5, E6, N5, N6, and N7 believe that a lack of commitment to work and organizational goals is directly related to new generations. For these participants, newcomers have no long-term affective commitment to the organization, they believe that "they are passing through" (E5) and constantly seeking new challenges in other organizations.:

> I feel like older people are attached to the job: "Wow, I have a job in an university! I want to stay here till the end of my life! Look what a wonderful job!" Younger workers don't have that: "It's good, but let's see if something better comes along because I won't stay the rest of my life here" (N8).

On the other hand, E1, E4, E5, E8, N2 and N6 warn that the lack of commitment is not related to generations, that "it is one's posture" (E5), "it is a personal opinion" (E7) and reveal the behavior of another very characteristic group of the organization, the "retiring employees" (Reatto & Godoy, 2017):

> But now here at our faculty there are people who are in the "retiring" phase. There are people who have five years left to retire and say that tomorrow is going to retire and does nothing else. It's difficult. It's like the behavior of these new entrants, who have no responsibility for time, don't worry if the other's desk is full, [and don't ask] "do you want me to help?" (N6).

For N2, the behavior described by N6 is reprehensible because it influences the socialization of newcomers:

> And what started to happen in my vision: the new employees that started coming in, because they are new in the faculty and they lack personal maturity, they say "if they don't care, neither do I". This is personal immaturity. For young people in their nineteen or twenty year old, who are in their first job, they lack some of that responsibility. Then they can see the older one doing this and think: "I won't kill myself here either, nobody cares about anyone" (N2).

N2 further warns that it is a managerial function to pay attention to these kinds of deviations in the behavior of the most experienced employees and, insistently, to ensure that newcomers do not internalize and reproduce them in the workplace, because "it is not that's what newcomers have to see and learn" (N2).

E1 believes that new generations carry other values, beliefs and practices with them and that regardless of the age of the employee, everyone should learn to adapt to increasingly dynamic workplace scenarios. Thus, for E1, E4, E6 and N7, the entry of newcomers does not necessarily generate serious conflicts and tensions that modify the organizational structure, "because most end up accepting the way we work" (E4).

Therefore, in the view of newcomer and experienced employees, the difference in age or generation does not seem to be a barrier or a hindering agent in the newcomers' socialization. This perception of difference lies in "what" and "how" newcomers or experts understand their work and learn it. Ashforth, Sluss and Saks (2007) explain that newcomers are not afraid to choose who they want to interact with, what they want to learn and how they will apply this knowledge in their daily lives. It is this newcomers' proactive behavior that will define what kind of learning process will lessen uncertainties and increase relevant knowledge to newcomers cope with everyday life.

4 CONCLUSION

In this study, the adoption of an interactionist interpretive approach contributes to studies in organizational socialization that are concerned with human development in the workplace and distancing oneself from attempts to rationalize and manage newcomers socialization in organizations. Thus, the study fully achieved the objectives to which it was intended to contribute.

It is with this developmental look, concerned with understanding human nature in the workplace that, according to the interviewees' reports, it is noted that in the studied environment the knowledge and skills that the individual needs to learn and put into practice to perform their work proficiently and their role in the organization are influenced by the very nature of public employees' work and their initial proactive behavior.

Newcomers are active agents who seek to learn the content necessary for their own adjustment to the group they need or want to be in. Although this proactive behavior is often restrained by such constraints as the specificity of the university's internal legislation and the tough standardization the working procedures historically defined by its members. While public management has undergone managerial changes to resemble private organizations, there are limited and sporadic actions to ensure the newcomers' learning and to promote socialization.

Therefore, it is possible to state that in the studied environment the newcomers are primarily responsible for their socialization. The content of the organizational dimensions influencing the socialization proposed by Chao et al. (1994) can be described as follows:

1) Performance: newcomer's academic background and previous work experience are not seen as necessary for the public service work. The situated learning curriculum, specific legislations, and the historical importance given to personal preferences imposed on employees make the newcomers learn informally in daily, on practice, solving problems.

2) People: The newcomers learn directly from the immediate superior or, if any, from colleagues in the same group. When they do not receive from the group the support perceived as necessary for their learning, they mobilize contacts from other university units to obtain the information.

3) Policies: just as one learns work, it is in social interactions with colleagues that the novice informally perceives the power relations, culture, and behaviors of the group. These interactions are often superficial, characterized by shallow technical guidance, centralization of work in the immediate boss, lack of patience in teaching, and the government employee finding out how the organization works over time, often after 20, 30 years or more.

4) Language: learning to master technical language and the specific jargon of function and organization are symbols of power. From the beginning of the newcomers' work, it is clear that the

faculty works on standards, specific legislation, and that mastering them is essential for working and controlling resources and people.

5) Organizational values and goals: organizational policies, values and goals are not clear to newcomers. They are not presented with the mission, vision, or values of the university and faculty. Also, it is clear that there is no discussion about the importance of their activity as a technical-administrative employee in the faculty's core activity, which is teaching, research and community outreach in higher education in health field**.**

6) History: only the newcomers' proactivity justifies their quest to learn about members' traditions, customs, rituals, and histories. Most of the time, employees spend their entire lives in the same workplace without even visiting other university units or knowing the full or partial functioning of the faculty. There are few spaces for knowing on faculty history where photos, official documents or other artifacts can be retrieved. Thus, with the retirement of the employees, the historical facts and memories of the organization are lost.

Given the scarcity of human resources responsible for structured socialization and financial resources for formal education programs, it is up to the group, especially the director or supervisor of the department, to create the conditions for the newcomer to join the workplace and learn. Given the responsibility of socializing the newcomer, the immediate superior could be responsible for presenting the new employees with the history, values, mission and vision of the university, as well as accompanying them on visits to the main facilities of the university in order to insert them into the new workplace. It is believed that the group itself can be the best motivator in fostering and guaranteeing legitimate spaces for the newcomer to learn.

From the interviews we can infer that the challenges daily faced by the government employees in the workplace are many. First, practices in the university, and consequently in the studied faculty, are process, function and normative orientated, all of them with a high control feature, which characterizes the nature of the work and interferes in the forms of learning. Second, the fact that newcomers' socialization is self-motivated and non-institutionalized helps to develop in the individual an early proactive learning behavior. However, there are not supports and feedback during the learning processes what do not generate confidence enough to remain proactive, leading the employee to demotivation and diminishing the meaning given to work or creating negative meanings for it in the long run. Much of the overcoming of challenges (personal agency) is only up to the isolated initiatives of these employees.

The emerging of the "retiring employees" group, explicitly identified by one of the interviewees, can be explained by the self-socialization responsibility attributed to the employee without due support and trust. Since some behaviors of the experienced employees are not intended by the organization, it is up to the organization to ensure that they are minimized and not propagated by the faculty, as employees look for clues on how to think and behave in their own workplace. Consequently they construct their own attitudes, interpretations and working meanings.

People who make your own work meaningful are engaged and committed because they perceive it as aligned with their values and goals (Rodrigues, Barrichello, & Morin, 2016). However, this is a challenge for the faculty to overcome, that is, to ensure that the interests of the organization are aligned with those of the newcomers, whose notice requires general knowledge and does not guarantee the profile of a novice to work in a public institution of higher education. So would the organization be responsible for again creating spaces to discuss or develop the beginner's working senses? Or could your current managers simply wonder if their current work environments are places where people can experience intrinsic forms of motivation? Can the group infuse newcomers with situations in which they can interpret them as signs of congruence between their work activities and their own concepts in order to bring them meaningful experiences?

To this last question, it seems not to us, since many of the experienced employees see newcomers as a new generation whose values are different from their own, whereas in fact it is only their attitudes that change, not their values. In turn, newcomers give their work only instrumental meaning and are not inserted in an academic-scientific community, which can be very restrictive for an organization that deals with the training of higher level health professionals.

Therefore, it is intended that this study may lead to the discussion of the socialization of newcomers in the public service, especially in the studied workplace, in two ways, which may be future implications for public management in universities.

The first is that the faculty or its groups (departments, boards, sections) identify and then confront the factors that affect the newcomers' socialization. Because these evidences depend on the specificities of each workplace, a local self-assessment of learning ability is important in raising the types of factors and their combinations that may affect learning. As a practical contribution of this study, the model of Eraut's two triangles (2004, 2011) is suggested. The author states that there is a triangular relationship between challenge, support and trust. Much of what can be learned at work depends on confidence to be proactive and pursue learning opportunities. Similarly, there are relationships between contextual and environmental factors that deserve attention as place and physical structure of work, because they affect both the level of work challenge and the opportunities to find, observe and work alongside people who have more or less knowledge, and receiving feedback or providing support and advice for learning.

The second approach proposes to arouse discussions in the studied faculty and in universities in general about whether the workplace constitutes a legitimate space for the creation or transformation of the meaning of work. It is argued that when the individual identifies, feels attracted and realizes the importance of the group in which one is inserted, one gets a positive meaning about the work. It is not intended here to propose that the faculty apply models to manage and control the meanings of work. Far from it: we propose that faculty creates a workplace in which the employees can feel strong bonds of solidarity and collectivism, and in which they could have concrete opportunities to realize that their work can contribute to something important, impacting, in the group and in the organization.

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3. Development of theoretical propositions (theoretical work)	√	√		
4. Theoretical foundation / Literature review	√			
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