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Organisational socialisation theory. Integrating outsourced FM employees into organisations

ADERIYE, Oluwatoyin Yetunde <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4341-5412>

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ORGANISATIONAL SOCIALISATION THEORY

Integrating outsourced FM employees into organisations

Oluwatoyin Yetunde Aderiye*

1 Background

Socialisation is the process of learning the ropes of a position, of training and indoctrination of the individual by the organisation, through the system of values, norms and behaviours considered as recommended/acceptable (Schein, 1988). It is the active creation of a new identity through a personal definition of a situation (Reinharz, 1979) and takes place when an individual transfers from one group to another within a social structure. This means absorption of the prevailing culture in which an individual is found. It has its origins in sociology (Schein, 1988) and is widely applied in other fields beyond management such as health (Phillips et al., 2013), education (Garavan & Murphy, 2001), and a host of others due to the wide applicability of its premise: our need to understand and find a place for ourselves within every new environment. Organisations use the socialisation process to formally welcome newcomers to a role. Informally, socialisation can be learned by watching what those do, who are already established in the environment one wishes to understand.

Socialisation of new employees is the series of initiation rites through which newly recruited employees adapt to their new jobs and to the work environment and create a professional identity for themselves. Commonly referred to as organisational socialisation, it is the process by which new hires acquire the attitudes, behaviours, and knowledge required to participate and function effectively as a member of an organisation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This organisational socialisation provides new recruits with a set pattern of behaviour they can emulate, to enable them to blend into the organisation (Buchanan, 2010). In essence, organisational socialisation is the key to ensuring a seamless entry of newly employed staff (Ge et al., 2010). Where employees achieve seamless socialisation, they are more likely to enjoy their jobs more, understand them better, and perform better, which can lead to improved customer experience. The results of high performance, organisational identification, and job satisfaction are then evident through the model proposed by Ashforth et al. (2007), which reveals that organisations who go through the Newcomer learning process have better performance, strong organisational identification, increased job satisfaction, a lessened intention to quit, and better role innovation.

*t.aderiye@shu.ac.uk

Socialisation does not exist in a vacuum. It is a bundle of parts which is used as machinery by organisations to socialise new recruits. Assimilation of new concepts and behaviour is a gradual process which involves both the brain and different aspects of social behaviour in an organisational setting.

Absorption of the prevalent organisational culture that exists in a workplace is the goal of socialisation, so its components are derived from organisational culture itself. These components are displayed here, and Figure 19.1 shows that they all work together with organisational culture as an anchor.

Socialisation components are essentially the several ways in which a new culture is passed on to the new members of the society. The processes, rituals and routines, stories and symbols, norms, and organisational structure can either be taught formally through a socialisation process or picked up informally by the new employee. Punishment and rewards are used to reinforce the knowledge organisations want the employee to retain, or to help remove previously imbibed culture picked up from previous organisations.

Figure 19.1 shows the steps individuals embark on when they first join an organisation. They come in cold to the norms and processes of the organisation, but they commence the socialisation through the combined immersion in the organisational structure and processes, stories and symbols, norms, rituals and routines, and an understanding of punishment and rewards. An even more important step is the need for employees to make it to the other side and be accepted as one of the team. This enables them to contribute to the current and future culture of the organisation.

This process is necessary to preserve the current organisational culture which is the basis on which most organisations are run. The way and manner of business is what has worked in the past and distinguishes them from rival companies, and there is often a need to teach this culture to newcomers. Simple practices like a colour code to show uniformity to a certain manner of speech can be used as artefacts to identify the organisational culture of an employee.

Whilst it is very important to watch what new employees are 'taught', the way they are taught is even more important. Employees can either be taken through a process (institutionalised) or left to go through the process on their own by depending on their natural proactive abilities (individualised). Ashforth et al. (2007) explain that the process the new employee passes through has a high impact on the final 'fit' they achieve in the organisation. The use of investiture as seen in Figure 19.1 to build upon the characteristics the organisation desires, coupled with a previously proven method of socialising new employees, will have a positive effect on
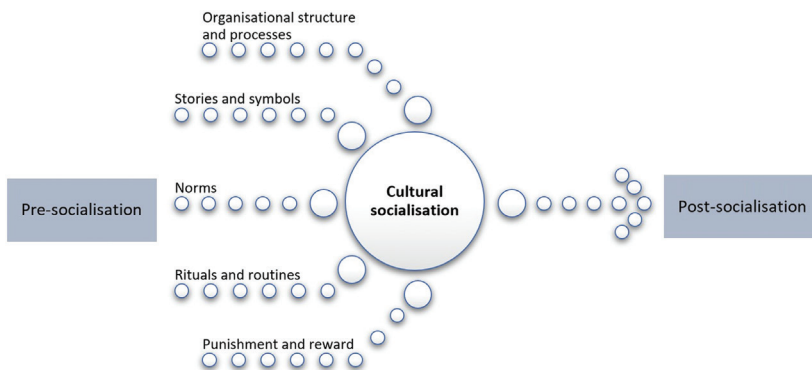

Figure 19.1   Components of socialisation

the ease with which they adjust. Finally, they build the employees' confidence and encourage them to exhibit proactive behaviour, which can only be positive in this light as all instances of self-doubt and uncertainty can be dispelled. The results of high performance, organisational identification, and job satisfaction can be felt. There will be a reduction in intentions to quit where the staff are comfortable in their work roles and the organisation (Ashforth et al., 2007).

1.1 The socialisation process

Socialisation follows a pattern and often begins long before the employee resumes at his duty post, in some cases even before the appointment has been awarded. Often, some employees seek the glamour or perks associated with having a particular job with an in-depth understanding of what they will be required to do. When this occurs, the work environment can either exacerbate or alleviate the feeling of inadequacy. Feeling welcome in an environment will give the recipient time to adjust to it, even in cases where there is a negative aspect. The newly employed staff also decide if it is all worth it. They can confirm this by the level of satisfaction they derive from the job. The various stages of the socialisation process are explained next.

1.1.1 Anticipatory socialisation

Human beings have the capacity to think, understand, and anticipate the older they get. Starting something new is rarely met with a total lack of awareness, especially in cases where there has been some sort of forewarning. Feldman (1976a) explains that the employee forms opinions about the organisation at this stage through discussions with prospective employers and the final decision that is made concerning employment. He postulates two aspects of anticipatory socialisation as realism and congruence. Realism is the extent to which the employee was right about the new job. Congruence is the level of satisfaction the employee derives from the job and his/her ability to successfully carry out the job role. Cases where the anticipation of the new employee is not met often lead to low satisfaction with the job and increased probability of leaving the job (Scholarios et al., 2003).

1.1.2 Accommodation

The encounter stage is where the employee can understand what really goes on in the organisation, how it is run, who runs it, and a general sense of awareness. Here, the actual journey to become a member of the organisation begins. They start the slow morph that makes them a recognisable member of the organisation to outsiders. New staff imbibe a new way of doing things even when they have carried out those tasks in a previous workplace. They learn to become productive members of the team by carrying their own share of the work. They also learn about their new colleagues and begin to form a relationship with them. Bosses, level-colleagues, and subordinates are courted or shown who is boss. The dynamics are set for future interactions, and if a bad impression is made at this point, it might take a while to undo it, if it ever can be undone. In organisations with close-knit teams, this might take longer, and the employee needs to carefully follow the rules to avoid losing their fledging trust.

1.1.3 Role management

The third step in this process is the struggle for balance that the new employee embarks upon. There is a need for better management of all the roles we assume both at work and on the home

front. Family and responsibilities outside both the workplace and the home front also have to be managed. Priorities must be set even in the workplace, as the demand on one's time may come from more than one source at work. Coupled with responsibilities outside the workplace, there is a need for flexible schedules, delegation of duties, and the resolution of both conflicting demands and clashes that occur because of personal issues. This process of balance evens out over time, but it begins during the socialisation process, when new employees begin to understand the requirements of their role.

In the next section, different models that organisations can use in achieving this fit are reviewed.

1.2 Socialisation models

The organisational socialisation process focuses on assisting the newcomer to learn the behaviours, attitudes, and skills necessary to fulfil their new roles and function effectively as a member of an organisation (Fischer, 1986). This socialisation process varies from organisation to organisation and is dependent on their goals/objectives and the role the employee will take up. Several theories currently exist on the best socialisation process for employees (Saks & Ashforth, 1997), and the most appropriate are examined for application to facilities management and compared in the following.

1.2.1 Evaluation of the socialisation models

- Buchanan's three-stage early career model – Buchanan (1974)

Buchanan's early model is a detailed socialisation process which was developed with long-term employees in mind. It is a five-year-plus socialisation process that, though detailed, will need an employee signed unto a long-term contract to execute. It holds that the first year (stage 1) is the most important, as employees have a special desire to conform to the organisational membership and their general outlook is often formed during this period. The second to fourth years (stage 2) are marked by a desire to make a significant contribution to the organisation and solidify their place. The fifth year and beyond (stage 3) involves the maintenance or alteration of firmly established behaviour rather than the formation of fresh ones. It exists to prove that stages 1 and 2 worked for the individual and that the organisation can depend on them to deliver their duties.

- Feldman's three-stage model – Feldman (1976a, 1976b)

The first stage encompasses all that the new employee learned before assuming employment and all the decisions made about the job before commencement. It is marked by realism or reality shock which is the extent to which individuals have a full and accurate picture of what life in the organisation is really like. The second stage occurs when the employee finally understands what happens in the organisation and begins to integrate him-/herself into it. This integration is achieved through the employee's success in learning new tasks at work, success in establishing interpersonal relationships, clarity, and definition of role within the work team, and the degree of congruence between the employee and the supervisory team on achievements.

The third stage is marked by the employees' ability to manage outside-work conflicts and conflicts that arise within the work team as well as their ability to be less upset about these conflicts. This stage delivers the expected outcomes of the socialisation process. General feelings of

satisfaction and the ability to influence activities in the department top the aspects of this stage. Internal job motivation and the extent of commitment to job role are the other two aspects.

- Wanous's integrative approach to socialisation – Wanous (1980)

Wanous's socialisation process, whilst simple, retains a greater level of detail than that of Feldman. The stages show how new employees first understand what they are signed up for and the gradual process they follow to adapt and eventually enjoy. It is easy to see how new employees can decide quickly if the job will suit them or push them to find another. The first stage involves accepting the reality of the organisation. There is the confirmation or disconfirmation of initial expectations. New employees confront the conflicts that arise as a result of their personal values clashing with that of the organisation. Stage two is where the new employee adjusts to the organisation (coping with all the changes thrown at him/her). Here, there is a need to reconcile the perception of the employee's achievement with that of the employee's supervisory team. The third stage enables the new employee to settle in and determine their position in the organisation's web. They can determine what the organisation wants and conform to it. They resolve all internal and external conflicts arising from personal and work commitments and form interpersonal relationships which will change their perceptions of their self-image and produce a new set of values congruent with that of the organisations. The fourth and final stage is where the new employee shows commitment to the organisation and determines if they are truly satisfied in their position, thereby increasing their motivation and their involvement in the organisation.

- Pascale's seven-step approach to socialisation – Pascale (1985)

In 1984 Richard Pascale developed a seven-step approach to socialisation which advocates a middle ground between total individuality and total conformity. The first step proposes a careful selection process for employees to ensure that those that eventually make it into the organisation will fit the job role and organisational culture, and that those who believe they will not fit should leave of their own accord. The second stage prompts the new employee to question previously held beliefs about work ethics, and the organisation to encourage a free acceptance of the new values and beliefs encountered. It also mounts pressure on the new employee to solidify team spirit and the belief that they are a part of the organisation. The third stage makes employees work for all they get. They are promoted only when they have hit or superseded their targets and are made to understand that progress is based on individual performance, which reduces competitive spirit and increases personal motivation. The fourth stage makes the new employee aware of the stringent measures taken to ensure that organisational values are closely monitored and enforced. The fifth stage creates a strong commitment to the organisation, enabling the employee to resolve work- and home-related conflicts with ease. In return, this same commitment assures the employee that all the promises and benefits accrued will be given to him/her when due. The sixth stage promotes the underlying assumptions of the organisation in the form of stories, as discussed earlier in this chapter. This aims to inspire loyalty and ensures the new employees are aware of the culture exactly as the management wants it presented. The final stage embraces the role of powerful role models in moulding the new employee. They have a guide who will explain all they need to know and show them the ropes as they go along. In this model, step 5 is deemed the most important, as the final socialisation of the employee depends on his/her personal beliefs about the organisation.

- Schein's three-stage socialisation model – Schein (1978)

In 1978 Schein developed a three-stage socialisation model which includes the entry, socialisation, and mutual acceptance stages. The first stage expects a prospective employee to seek for a job of their choice and apply for it. Acceptance of their application will compel them to anticipate what their job role will be and their place in the organisation followed by the actual reality. The second stage involves the acceptance of the organisation also termed as 'reality shock' by Feldman (1976a, 1976b). The new employee now has to understand the new role, the reward system and form a fresh identity for themselves. They will deal with interpersonal relationships and decipher what success means in the new setting. There will also be the need to cope with all the changes that may arise as values and beliefs clash. The third stage involves acceptance on both the part of the individual and that of the employee. If this mutual acceptance takes place, the individual will be motivated to perform their best and to continue on in the organisation. The organisation plays its part by rewarding hard work with promotions, a deeper involvement, and an increased salary.

The next section will provide a closer look at the context of outsourcing and the model outline that could fit especially to the rapidly changing world of facilities management.

2 Applicability to workplace studies

The models of socialisation introduced in the previous section can be applied to several different sectors and employees, but the focus of this chapter is on outsourced facilities management employees. Employing outsourced staff is a common occurrence, as it allows the organisation access to specific external skills, enabling it to focus on its core business. It may then be agreed as a strategic move to outsource certain tasks, especially non-core activities, to external service providers to support core organisational goals.

Outsourcing is often the ideal solution for organisations who want maximum output with minimal internal resources. Outsourced functions used to be the very basic non-core activities like cleaning of the offices and premises. It gradually began to involve other departments like administration, infrastructure, communications, marketing, and IT (Booty, 2006). Today, organisations outsource even some of their core business, including their strategic plan for advancing the goals, and some bolder ones outsource disaster recovery. According to research carried out by RICS (2012), the seven most outsourced services are cleaning and janitorial services, landscaping, food services, architectural design, travel services, building engineering, and construction and renovation. When these services would all be outsourced, it could form a large part of services of the organisation, which shows a need for proper integration of the outsourced employees into the client organisation. This means organisations could have a substantial percentage of employees who do not directly work for them. To ensure the culture and citizenship of the internal FM organisation is not diluted, and to ensure outsourced employees are better integrated, they need to undergo the process of socialisation.

Job seekers consider more than the financial benefits and the prestige associated with a job when they apply. They also wish to derive satisfaction in their role, to feel fulfilled and 'belong' in the organisation, and this applies to outsourced employees too. Organisations regularly worry about the suitability of outsourced recruits and how they are adapting to the work environment because of the time, effort, and money spent on recruiting and training (Taormina, 2009). They aim to reduce high turnover rates and low motivation issues by trying to select employees suited to the job. This has led to a rise in person profiling to check the suitability of incoming candidates for the job they seek to do, and while this may not be possible for outsourced employees, a socialisation process will reduce the natural abrasions that may occur and improve compatibility. Hesketh and Myors (1997) state that the person who seeks a job and the organisation that

person wishes to work for both have a large part to play in socialisation and adaptation. There is a higher level of satisfaction when congruence exists between them, where congruence is 'the better . . . fit between an individual and his work' (Feldman, 1976b, p. 71). This level of congruence has been termed person-organisation fit. Person-organisation fit between people and organisations occurs when: (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both (Kristof, 1996).

Person-organisation fit is most easily achieved where the behaviour, vision, and characteristics of the employee or jobseeker reflect that of the organisation the person is in or seeks to join. This 'fit' should be the goal of every service provider and client organisation where socialisation of outsourced employees is concerned. Ensuring the satisfaction of both the outsourced employee and the organisation will lead to an ease in adapting outsourced employees into their assigned organisation and reduce the headaches associated with non-congruence. It also leads to a reduction in turnovers, as employees are more content (Kasimati, 2011). The other benefit of a good person-organisation fit is an increase in satisfied clients. Where employees achieve great fit and take on the organisation's values, they are also better able to represent the organisation.

This understanding of the peculiarities that exist within outsourcing of facility management services are thereby helpful in understanding the specific requirements of a socialisation model that can be used for outsourced staff. First is the recognition of three distinct phases that outsourced employees need for socialisation to occur, which is not fully represented in any of the socialisation models in the previous section. These are: Pre-socialisation, In-socialisation, and Post-socialisation. The Pre-socialisation stage occurs before the employee begins work and comprises what they anticipate the organisation and their duties to be like; it is closely linked to the Anticipatory stage referenced earlier, where the employee is unsure of what awaits them in the role. The In-socialisation stage comprises what happens after socialisation has commenced up till the new employee has been integrated into the organisation, which is the Accommodation stage explored earlier. This is where the induction takes place, and the organisation arranges a training schedule for the new employee(s). It ends when the employee understands the culture of the organisation and has accepted their role in it. The Post-socialisation stage is what happens after the employee has been fully integrated into the organisation and connects to the final step of Role management. It is important to the 'cultural fit' that a high integration level is maintained to ensure employee satisfaction and the productivity that accompanies it (Sageer, 2012).

The socialisation models explored before all propose different ways to conduct the socialisation process, but all have a major shortcoming: a stage that maintains and improves the person-organisation fit after the employee has completed the initial process. This stage is needed especially for outsourced employees, who will have two conflicting cultures to maintain from their employer and the client. Without regular training to keep the outsourced employee updated on the expectations of the client and the organisation's culture, a dip is inevitable over time which can lead to a drop in service quality and delivery.

The proposed framework that will be adaptable to the FM sector will need to be flexible and must be able to fit into organisations of any size or sector working with variable budgets. Its main advantage will be first the appropriate socialisation for outsourced staff, but also the inclusion of steps that maintain the level of person-organisation fit to ensure high levels of service quality and delivery. It is also critical for improving the knowledge and understanding of both outsourced and in-house employees on regular industry and professional changes. The framework should be functional whether only one function is outsourced or where all the non-core functions of the organisation are contracted out. In the proposed framework outlined in Figure 19.2, outsourced employees can be brought on board and taken through the
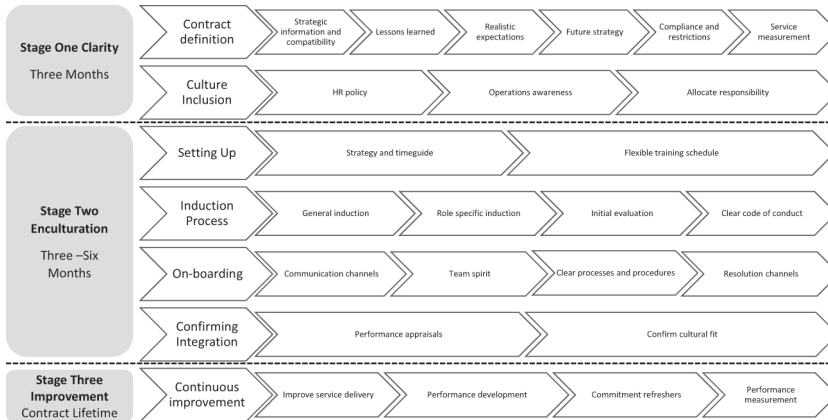
Figure 19.2   FM cultural fit framework (Aderiye, 2015)

three stages of socialisation (clarity, enculturation, and improvement) which correspond to the pre-socialisation, in-socialisation, and post-socialisation stages. This framework was developed through previous research (Aderiye, 2015) and recognises the importance of all three socialisation stages.

Clarity refers to the first stage of the integration process. It concerns what should be done by the organisation even before employees are recruited. No previously reviewed framework adequately represents the preparation facilities managers or organisations in general need to employ when taking on new employees. This should apply to both internal and outsourced staff, and it is even more crucial for outsourced employees as they do not work directly for the organisation. This stage reflects the information exchange that should go on between the client organisation and the service provider before a contract/partnership is set in ink. This information exchange and the agreed-upon rules/decisions that follow are what is referred to in this context as clarity. The expected output from this stage is a clear understanding by each party of their responsibilities before they enter into a contract.

Enculturation refers to the process by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture and assimilates its practices and values. It is used in this framework to aid the outsourced employee in learning the culture of the client organisation. It discusses what should be done and how to do it successfully. This stage is what is commonly referred to by organisations when integration is discussed. In this framework, it covers the set-up of the process, the start of the process, how it is achieved, and how an organisation can confirm success. It can be the longest part of the integration process depending on the time allotted to it by the parties concerned. The benefits, however, outweigh the costs, as outsourced employees are likely to develop a high sense of responsibility towards the organisation and their customers as they have gradually come to the realisation of their contribution through the process. The expected output of this stage is the total immersion by the outsourced staff in the culture of the organisation.

The improvement stage of the framework should be conducted periodically to sustain integration. It is missing from the socialisation models discussed in the previous section and exists only in the proposed framework. The aim of the stage is simple: to prevent a drop in the quality of service by intermittently training staff (internal and outsourced) on the organisation's goals and the customer's requirements. The expected output of this stage is improvement of the newly embedded culture by the outsourced staff.

Organisational socialisation through the use of an intentional framework such as the one outlined earlier can significantly improve the person-organisation fit and lead to employees that fit better within the culture of the organisation. In applying socialisation theory to workplaces, employers need to remain aware of the type of employee, as different types of employees (out-sourced, TUPE, zero-contract, full time, part time) may need different socialisation processes. It is important to be aware that you may encounter several challenges in attempting to socialise some employee categories and to adjust the framework accordingly.

The major gap that the application of organisational socialisation can fill is that of a seam-less fit between employees and organisations. Where employees can achieve a seamless fit in organisations, there is increased employee satisfaction, productivity, and customer satisfaction. In an era where the wellbeing of employees is increasingly mainstream, these end results can have a positive effect of employee wellbeing and engender both tangible and intangible positive reactions toward the organisation.

3 Methodology/research approach

The very nature of socialisation as it relates to organisational culture lends itself to the eth-nography as a strategy of inquiry. It is generally the preferred method of research, as the word ethnography means inscribe (*graph*) the culture (*ethnos*), and is used to describe and analyse pat-terns of interactions, roles, ceremonies and rituals, and artefacts of a specific group of people (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Patton (2002) records that ethnography is the earliest distinct tradition in qualitative inquiry. Ethnography is a research culture with origins in anthropology that allows researchers to explore and examine the cultures and societies that are a fundamental part of the human experience (Murchison, 2010). It focuses on collecting data by participating in the lives of the participants which can be used to answer the questions raised by the study. Marshall and Rossman (2011) agree that ethnography studies human groups because it seeks to understand their culture; therefore, 'culture is a central concept for ethnography'. They are also clear about the types of culture that can be studied through ethnography: groups, communities, organisations, and social movements. This covers the subject of socialisation.

This approach has been employed in the development of the FM cultural fit framework, working with exclusively qualitative means. Data collected are almost always related to the culture of the participants which can be used to form opinions, enable understanding, or solve problems experienced by the participants of that culture. A major characteristic that makes ethnography ideal for organisational socialisation is that the participants develop shared patterns of behaviour, belief, and language seen as a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013). This is the basis of culture and organisational socialisation as reviewed in this chapter. Seeking out these patterns of behaviour and using them to create a framework that organisations can utilise in socialising their employees will be the ideal goal. Ethnography is best conducted using qualita-tive methods such as interviews or focus groups and analysed by thematic analysis. Ethnography lends itself well to qualitative methods, but a weakness of qualitative methods is the subjective interpretation of the data which is applicable to positivist methods. An understanding of behav-iour, belief, and common language means it is not always replicable from one organisation to another. Works by Van Maanen (1979) and Ashforth et al. (2007) are good starting points for ethnographic studies on socialisation.

A close second in research approach that may be employed to investigate culture is grounded theory, as it seeks to develop theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and ana-lysed and has its basis in the premise that there should be a continuous interplay between data collection and analysis (Urquhart et al., 2010). It is a qualitative research design in which the

inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, an action, or an interaction shaped by the views of many participants (Creswell, 2013), although it was not used in the development of the framework in this chapter.

This framework is still in its proposal stage, although it was developed through several stages of qualitative research. This means it still needs to be applied to an organisation to test its applicability and the reliability of all the stages and can be taken forward by researchers or anyone interested in testing its suitability. This should be implemented in organisations with outsourced staff to confirm the steps and stages that can be used to socialise an employee from the start to the end of their contract.

Researchers could conduct further research using this framework by employing a long-term comparison study of two organisations, with one organisation implementing the framework and the other conducting business as usual. This could highlight the effectiveness of the framework where the organisations have similar characteristics and are in the same industry.

4 Limitations

It is difficult for any framework to be truly generic and flexible, so this framework would not fit every organisation. This means this framework might not be suitable for short-term contracts, as it would require some time to complete the process, and it would not be beneficial in contracts shorter than a year. It might also not be suitable for organisations with outsourced staff who work on multiple contracts at the same time.

Another critical factor to the implementation is the interest level of the organisations and the staff. This framework should be implemented by the client organisation; where there is no upper management interest, the framework would not be effective. The second level of interest required is staff interest. If the outsourced staff who should go through the socialisation process are not interested, it would be difficult to achieve integration. There are often significant barriers to training within the real estate and facilities management sectors.

The industry, type of organisation, employee type, and average length of service all need to be considered to determine what will be the best approach. This means that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to socialisation theories. These barriers typically revolve around a lack of time, financial constraints, and sometimes, staff reluctance to participate.

5 Theory relevance to practice

Outsourced arrangements can have either a positive or negative impact on the service experience and satisfaction of the customer depending on the socialisation that has been provided for outsourced staff. Personal interaction, responsiveness of the service staff, flexibility of the forward-facing staff, ease of access, and courtesy go a long way in satisfying customers and mollifying upset clients. A properly tailored socialisation process will need to represent all these factors in the measure in which they are needed as determined by the organisation.

The second consideration is to understand how the organisation socialises its new and current employees. The socialisation process holds a lot of promise for organisations, as they can improve the performance of their organisation through the application of socialisation theory to their processes for outsourced employees. The potential benefits of this are manifold, as explained in this chapter, and can make the difference between regular and great employees. This should always be threefold: the relationship building and setting of expectations before the employee commences their first day; the process of on-boarding that the organisation employs, which incorporates all of the components of the customer experience amongst other needs of

the organisation; and the manner in which the organisation maintains the socialisation of their employees after the on-boarding process is complete.

6 Further reading

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