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Reviewing two sides of the socialization literature: A comprehensive theoretical model of social receptivity of newcomers

Una rassegna sulle due facce della letteratura sulla socializzazione: Un modello teorico completo della social receptivity di nuovi membri

Annalisa Theodorou

Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to review the literature that investigated the socialization process, considering different perspectives and highlighting existing gaps. Ultimately, proposing a comprehensive theoretical model of social receptivity of newcomers. In the first part, the focus is on the flourishing literature that examined the newcomer's perspective of socialization, which was depicted as a learning or an adaptation process. In the second part, the studies that investigated the co-workers' perspective during the socialization process are reported. The social receptivity to a new member is interpreted as the resulting of two levels: the newcomer characteristics and the co-workers' characteristics. In the third and last part, relying on the two lines of research reviewed, it is proposed a model of the socialization process, in which the two levels of analysis predict social receptivity. In turn, social receptivity should intervene in enhancing newcomer adjustment, as depicted by proximal (role clarity, self-efficacy, knowledge of organizational culture, and stress) and distal (job attitudes, engagement, performance, and turnover) outcomes.

Keywords: socialization; newcomers; social receptivity; adjustment.

RIASSUNTO

L'obiettivo di questo lavoro è quello di passare in rassegna la letteratura sul processo di socializzazione, considerando differenti prospettive e sottolineando le lacune esistenti. In conclusione, è proposto un modello teorico completo della social receptivity dei newcomers. Nella prima parte, il focus è sulla florida letteratura che ha preso in esame la prospettiva del newcomer nella socializzazione, quest'ultima descritta come un processo di apprendimento o di adattamento. Nella seconda parte, sono riportati gli studi che hanno investigato la prospettiva dei colleghi durante la socializzazione. La social receptivity del newcomer è interpretata come risultante da due livelli, le caratteristiche del newcomer e quelle dei colleghi. Nella terza ed ultima parte, basandosi sulle due linee di ricerca passate in rassegna, si propone un modello di socializzazione in cui i due livelli di analisi predicono la social receptivity. A sua volta, quest'ultima dovrebbe intervenire per migliorare l'adattamento del newcomer, denotato da indici prossimali (role clarity, self-efficacy, conoscenza della cultura organizzativa e stress) e distali (job attitudes, engagement, performance e turnover).

Parole chiave: socializzazione; nuovi membri; social receptivity; adattamento.

*Corresponding author.
Annalisa Theodorou
Department of Social and Developmental
Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome
Via dei Marsi 78, 00185, Rome, Italy.
Email: annalisa.theodorou@uniroma1.it.
(A. Theodorou)



Introduction

Adjusting to a new environment is an integral part of individuals' life. Social psychologists studied the socialization process in groups, such as school classes, sports teams, families, and workgroups, attaching importance to how these groups react to a new member. On the other side, organizational psychologists, primarily interested in what organizations can do to facilitate socialization, focused on how newcomers, with their behaviours and characteristics, can adjust to a new environment, producing much of the existing literature (Moreland & Levine, 2006; Rink, Kane, Ellemers, & van der Vegt, 2013). In particular, they considered the newcomer's perceived social acceptance by colleagues as an indicator of newcomer adjustment (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007; Ellis, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2015). In this chapter, the theory and research derived from both organizational and group socialization pieces of literature are reviewed, focalizing on the social receptivity of a new member. The paper is organized into three parts.

In the first part, it is presented more in detail the socialization process through the newcomer perspective (e.g., Bauer et al., 2007; Ellis, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2015). Specifically, two conceptualizations of the process are presented, both widely mentioned from different scholars to explain individual adjustment. The first one considers socialization as a learning process, during which the newcomer needs to acquire information on roles, tasks, and social expectations. The second one depicted socialization as an adaptation period, a process of reduction of uncertainty (Saks & Gruman, 2012). The idea is that, during the entrance in a new environment, the newcomer experiences uncertainty and confusion. Consequently, newcomers work hard to solve this undesirable situation: in this phase takes place an investment of resources (e.g., personal and social; see Theodorou, Livi, Alessandri, Pierro, & Caprara, in press) and the availability of such resources can impact on the individual capacity to adjust to the new environment.

Despite the flourish empirical findings and models of organizational socialization, the majority of them have considered the process merely as an assimilation process, and had just the purpose to understand how newcomers can catch up with performance levels of the other workers, and how to maintain the status quo (Joardar, Kostova, & Ravlin, 2007; Joardar & Matthews, 2010; Rink et al., 2013). Thus, in the second part, the studies that considered the reaction to the newcomers shown by the social context are reported, focalizing on two factors: the newcomer characteristics and the co-workers' characteristics.

In the third and last part, a model of social receptivity of newcomers, defined as the social reaction to newcomers shown by colleagues, is presented. It is based on two levels (i.e., the newcomer and the co-workers' characteristics) that taken together can predict social receptivity. According to this view, social receptivity, in turn, has a central role in determining proximal and distal indices of adjustments. In doing so, the intent is to underlie how social receptivity is not an indicator of adjustment like the others, but it is part of the socialization process and a fundamental precursor of all the other newcomer adjustment indicators. In conclusion, some considerations of the literature reviewed are reported, as well as future possible research directions.

1. The individual perspective

The instability of the labour market and the research for increasingly higher standards of productivity and competition have profoundly affected the concept of work, especially since 2008, with the economic crisis and the consequent labour crisis (Ellis, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2015). For instance, in the last years, the incidence of temporary work showed an increasing trend in Europe as well as in the USA (OECD, 2019), and more and more often people lack security about their employment future. Furthermore, frequently individuals confront the loss of a job or with the idea of its possibility and have to accept jobs for which they are overqualified.

In this scenario, the willingness to assume new and different job positions is important, as well as the capability of the individual to adjust to various work environments. To manage this uncertainty, the worker must be very versatile on any kinds of situations: Flexibility to changes and adaptation to a different context and work conditions became fundamental prerequisites for the

majority of the employments. Under these conditions, organizations are giving more and more attention to human resources and the consequences of these changes on their productivity. Organizational psychologists are called upon to confront this demand.

Indeed, there is a growing interest in understanding the organizational socialization process, defined as “the process by which newcomers make the transition from being organizational outsiders to being insiders” (Bauer et al., 2007, p. 707). It is considered the process by which an individual acquires values, skills, expected behaviours, and social knowledge necessary to assume an organizational role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Well-adjusted workers are a stable resource: they will not leave easily, they will be more satisfied with their jobs, more committed to their organization, and they will produce more (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012). Therefore, the socialization literature is so extended in this context.

Over the years, different measures of organizational socialization have been used, and the construct was operationalized in different ways (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012). The popular Chao, O’Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, and Gardner’s scale (1994) was developed to measure the extent to which the employee has learned the content of the socialization. The dimensions investigated are: performance proficiency, that refers to the acquired knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the organizational role; politics, or the knowledge of the power structures in the organization; language, or the dictionary that is proper of the organization; people, that refers to the establishing of successful relationships with co-workers; organizational goals and values, that is the degree in which the employee understand the goals of the organization; and history, that refers to the knowledge of organizational traditions, customs, myths, and rituals.

The Organizational Socialization Inventory (OSI; Taormina, 1994) is a 20-item scale that investigates 4 dimensions: training received, co-worker support, understanding the job and the organization, and future possibility to work in the organization. More recent scales are Klein and Heuser’s scale (2008), that is an attempt to expand the Chao et al.’s scale (1994) and is composed of 12 dimensions (language, history, task proficiency, working relationships, social relationships, structure, politics, goals and strategy, culture and values, rules and policies, navigation, and inducements), and the scale by Haueter, Macan, and Winters (2003; Spagnoli, Farnese & Livi, 2018), that focus on 3 dimensions: task socialization (11 items), group socialization (12 items), and organizational socialization (12 item).

What is clear so far is that organizational socialization was defined and operationalized mainly through a newcomer perspective (i.e., individual adjustment), and as a learning and passive process instead of an adaptation process. In particular, in this conceptualization, the socialization requires an individual change, whereas an organizational change is not contemplated. Historically, the first purpose of the organizational socialization literature was to study effective organizational efforts aimed at assimilating newcomers, mostly in terms of organizational tactics (Ellis, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2015; Moreland & Levine, 2006). The term organizational tactics refers to the ways organizations structure newcomers’ first experiences intended to acquire the new role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine how, later on, this interest turned into a closer investigation of the factors that promote socialization. Interestingly, what has been called institutionalized (vs. individualized) tactics, namely the strategies that produce shared experiences with colleagues and other newcomers, demonstrated to be the most effective (Jones, 1986).

Another perspective considered socialization mostly as an adaptation process. When individuals join a new organization, they cross a foreign territory (Louis, 1980). Indeed, from the beginning newcomers are called upon to “learn the ropes” (Schein, 1968), and to respect obligations and duties, while not proper knowing yet what are the social expectations about desired behaviours (Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis, 1992). Thus, at first glance, newcomers can easily experience confusion and disorientation. Following this lead, socialization has been viewed as a process of reduction of uncertainty for newcomers, so they may feel confident and able to successfully contribute to their new organization (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Since new members are active participants of their adjustment process to the new environment (Reichers, 1987; Rullo, Livi, & Farinacci, 2015), the availability of positive personal resources to invest in this adaptation phase can support socialization (Saks & Gruman, 2012; Taormina & Law, 2000).

Although socialization was frequently considered as an uncertainty reduction process in the literature (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Reichers, 1987; Van Maanen, 1977), the stress paradigm associated to the socialization process is a very recent domain of research (Ellis, Bauer, Mansfield, et al., 2015; Saks & Gruman, 2012). The Conservation of Resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) defined stress as “a reaction to the environment in which there is (a) the threat of a net loss of resources, (b) the net loss of resources, or (c) a lack of resource gain following the investment of resources” (Hobfoll, 1989). Recently, Saks and Gruman (2012) redefined the socialization process as a demanding and stressful situation, and the resources available to the individual are viewed as crucial in determining individual adjustment. Among others, co-workers’ support seems to play a privileged role (Saks & Gruman, 2012; Saks & Gruman, 2018).

A significant amount of studies has considered how newcomers can actively promote their adjustment (Saks, Gruman, & Cooper-Thomas, 2011) through their behaviours and tactics (for a review, see Moreland & Levine, 2006). First, newcomers can start close surveillance of persons and events that occur in the workplace so that they can cover their lack of information. Second, feedback-seeking is a useful tactic because provides more information, but it can expose newcomers to the risk of receiving negative feedbacks. It is possible to indirectly ask for feedbacks using indirect questions, joining a random conversation about work and, lastly, talking with outsiders that are familiar with the context (e.g., costumers). Third, newcomers can gather information through their formal or informal mentors (i.e., supervisor, an older colleague) and the relationships and collaboration with other newcomers. Finally, newcomers can engage in discretionary behaviours, such as attending and participating in workplace activities that are not included in their role tasks (Bauer & Green, 1994).

An interesting research line that can be situated between the learning and adaptation pieces of literature is the one that focused on newcomers’ social relationships, relying on the social network framework (e.g., Morrison, 2002). In this research line, different types of newcomers’ social networks are considered as means useful to obtain information on the organization, the job, and the role, ultimately promoting the newcomers’ learning process. Successively, newcomers’ social networks were defined as social resources and incorporated into the social capital available to newcomers to achieve adaptation (Bauer & Erdogan, 2014; Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2012). Although this research line reflects a social point of view of the socialization process, it represents and is part of the individual perspective. In fact, its standpoint is not different from other organizational research lines in terms of the passive role attributed to co-workers, considered as mere facilitators of individual adjustment. Social relationships are seen nothing but a sort of a newcomer’s attribute or quality and not an integral part of successful socialization.

But how scholars measured the newcomer adjustment in the organizational socialization literature? Over the years, scholars evaluated adjustment through some indicators of socialization, which have been recently categorized in proximal and distal outcomes (Bauer et al., 2007; Ellis, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2015). The proximal outcomes refer to individual indicators of adjustment and include role clarity, self-efficacy, social acceptance, and knowledge of organizational culture (Ellis, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2015). Role clarity refers to the extent to which a newcomer understands his or her role (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Furthermore, as a learning process, socialization has to cause in newcomers an increment of confidence in their ability in the workplace, so self-efficacy was also considered as a desired outcome. Perceived social acceptance is intended as the extent to which the newcomer feels integrated into the social working context. Lastly, the knowledge of organizational culture refers to the vision of socialization as the information acquired on the organization in terms of culture.

Distal outcomes of organizational socialization refer to long-term attitudinal and behavioural outcomes that result from successful socialization and impact on organizational effectiveness (Ellis, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2015). They consist of job attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions) and employee behaviours (i.e., job performance and turnover behaviour). Job attitudes as job satisfaction and organizational commitment are important because they are predictors of in-role performance (i.e., performance based on role tasks), as well as of extra-role performance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000); whereas, job performance and

turnover behaviours represent obviously a very serious concern for organizations, in terms of effectiveness and retention of resources.

All in all, whether the socialization has been considered as a learning or an adaptation process, others at work seem to play a central role in the individual adjustment. First, in each of the measures presented above, social relationships at work are contemplated. Second, in the socialization as an adaptation approach, others are considered as a resource useful to achieve adaptation. Third, if we consider the newcomer's proactive behaviours described above, as individual search for role examples, feedbacks, and relationships, the social environment seems to be crucial.

In summary, given the current market demands, the organizational socialization literature is very rich and in expansion, while empirical studies have by now repetitively demonstrated the empirical validity of several models of individual adjustment. However, this kind of studies have neglected the actual, rather than perceived, social receptivity of a new member. What could happen if others are not willing to provide their practical and social support to the newcomer? Furthermore, importantly, there is a fundamental gap in this kind of literature that concerns the small group socialization (Klein & Heuser, 2008; Moreland & Levine, 2006). Groups are the most proximal social context and represent important predictors of future individuals' behaviour (Moreland & Levine, 2006); following this reasoning, a newcomer can provoke an important reaction on teammates. These topics are addressed in the next paragraph.

2. The social perspective

In this paragraph, socialization refers to the adjustment that occurs every time a new member enters into a group (Moreland & Levine, 1982). This event is inevitably destabilizing for the individual, that has to confront an unfamiliar context (Louis, 1980), but also for the group in its entirety. In the classic model by Moreland and Levine (1982) socialization is an adjustment phase in which both the individual and the group tend to regulate one another through the evaluation and commitment processes. According to the evaluation process, the group tries to assess and then maximize the individual's contribution to the group goal achievement while, on the other hand, the individual assesses and then tries to influence the group in order to enhance its contribution to the satisfaction of his or her personal needs (Moreland & Levine, 1982). In this process of regulation, individual experiences assimilation from the group, while the group experiences accommodation.

The evaluation process produces feelings of commitment from both sides, resulting in the effort to satisfy one another needs and preserve each other attractiveness. As time passes, levels of individual commitment to the group change and, preferably, arise during the socialization phase. This model further assigns a role to the group commitment toward the individual, which also changes and grows in the course of this stage. If the reciprocal individual and group's commitment reaches their respective acceptance criteria, a role transition occurs, and the individual can be considered a full member. This model has the advantage of highlighting the temporal changes and the dynamicity of the socialization process, along with the equal attention for the individual and group's point of view.

Although involuntary, a new member represents always a strong element of innovation for the group, and a disturbance of a previous prearranged balance (Levine, Choi, & Moreland, 2019). Different groups can be more or less willing in accepting newcomers: the latter can be a resource, especially in particular conditions of depletion of group resources but they can also represent a source of threat for other members (Moreland & Levine, 2006). In fact, personal characteristics of newcomers can impact on the acceptance from the oldtimers (i.e., the "more expert" members), as well as on group characteristics preceding newcomers' arrival (Joardar & Matthews, 2010). Thus, for a newcomer to be successfully socialized to a group, it is fundamental to be the right person at the right time. Otherwise, a failed, or a not fully achieved, socialization could result in social exclusion (Ditrich & Sassenberg, 2016).

Group acceptance was defined as "a group's recognition of a newcomer as one of them whereby the group members value the individual for both his\her task ability and establishing interpersonal relationships" (Joardar & Matthews, 2010, p. 194). Therefore, group acceptance was investigated using two different outcomes: the acceptance of the newcomer contribution on the

group task, and the acceptance in terms of willingness to establish social relationships (Joardar et al., 2007). Group acceptance conceptualized in this way was operationalized through a 10-item scale by Joardar et al. (2007) and addressed groups rather than individuals. The scale is composed of five items that capture the task-based acceptance (e.g., “X would be an asset to our workgroup”) and five items that measure the relationship-based acceptance (e.g., “We would like to invite X to social events”).

After a literature review, Rink et al. (2013) further considered task-based acceptance as composed of two components: (1) *team reflection*, that refers to the group tendency to reflect upon itself and the capacity of alter its procedures and processes and generating new idea due to the mere presence of the newcomer; and (2) *team knowledge utilization*, that entails the group’s inclination to use and make the most of the newcomer peculiar knowledge, skills, and aptitudes. According to the authors, team reflection, team knowledge, and group acceptance are part of the group receptivity to a newcomer. The latter is defined as a more psychological component that refers to the group’s willingness to consider the newcomer as a full member.

In summary, group socialization refers to the mutual adjustment of the newcomer and the group at the same time. Scholars that investigated the group reaction to a new member conceptualized social receptivity in different ways, basically capturing both the acceptance of the newcomer contribution to the group tasks and the willingness to develop a social relationship with him/her. As mentioned above, social receptivity is related to different factors concerning different levels of analysis: the newcomer and the co-workers’ characteristics (Livi & Theodorou, 2018). These factors can affect social receptivity in all its differential conceptualizations. In the next paragraphs of this review, the most important factors investigated by scholars are reported.

Among newcomers’ characteristics that support a positive social receptivity there is high similarity with the group (Joardar et al., 2007; Kane, 2010; Kane, Argote, & Levine, 2005; Phillips, Liljenquist, & Neale, 2009), being an additional member rather than a replacement (Bunderson, Van der Vegt, & Sparrowe, 2013), being a permanent rather than a temporary newcomer (Rink & Ellemers, 2009), sharing social similarity with the current group (Kane et al., 2005), using more collective terms rather than individual terms (Kane & Rink, 2011), exhibiting conformity to the norms (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010; Hansen & Levine, 2009), having a high competence (Chen & Klimoski, 2003), having high levels of conscientiousness, openness to experience, extroversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability (Joardar & Matthews, 2010)

Important co-workers’ characteristics at the group level that can facilitate social receptivity are group composition in terms of favourable members characteristics (Livi & Theodorou, 2018; Theodorou, Livi, Levine, Kruglanski, & Pierro, n.d.), not frequent membership changes especially in small groups (Rink et al., 2013), low group longevity (Hirst, 2010), interdependent tasks, collectivistic cultures, and cooperative norms (Joardar et al., 2007), group unsuccess (Choi & Levine, 2004; Cini, Moreland, & Levine, 1993), stable status hierarchies (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003), time pressure on the task (Theodorou et al., n.d.), intergroup competition and intergroup conflict (Baer, Leenders, Oldham, & Vadera, 2010), and environment uncertainty (e.g., organizational crisis).

3. An extended model of social receptivity and its consequences

The aim of this section is twofold. First, the intent is to outline a theoretical model in which findings from two different lines of research, namely organizational socialization and group receptivity, are encompassed. In doing so, findings that considered the organization or the group as the social environment in which the newcomer must adapt are compared. It is proposed that it is the group level that can offer important information on social receptivity. Second, social receptivity is posed as a central factor that is accountable for adjustment, rather than merely an indicator of it. This section is divided into three paragraphs: operationalization of social receptivity, antecedents, and consequences (proximal indicators and distal indicators).

3.1 Social receptivity: towards a broader definition of the construct

In the literature that investigated the individual perspective of socialization, social receptivity has been recognized as a proximal indicator of newcomer adjustment (Bauer et al., 2007). In particular, it has been defined as the perceived social acceptance demonstrated by co-workers (see also Ellis, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2015). Although newcomers' perception of acceptance is fundamental, in this work it is argued that the real receptivity should be taken into consideration. As demonstrated by Rink et al. (2013), it is composed of three important components, namely social acceptance, influence, and the ability of the social environment to adjust its processes to include the newcomer.

In this model, there are different new ideas proposed. First, the two sides involved in the socialization process, namely that of the newcomer and that of the co-workers, should be taken into consideration at the same time. Specifically, it is proposed that self-reported measures of perceived acceptance by co-workers are not thorough and should be integrated by co-workers' self-reported measures, depicting the extent to which they accept the newcomer. Additionally, co-workers could also respond about newcomers' adjustment and the extent to which they feel newcomers are socially integrated, having an other-reported measure. Lastly, more objective measurements should be employed as Rink et al. (2013) dimensions suggested (i.e., newcomers' ideas adopted and processes modified to include the newcomer). Also, newcomers' absences and attendance at social events could give important information about adjustment (Bauer & Green, 1994).

Second, more than one relationship level should be measured, e.g., the newcomer and the others in the organization (e.g., co-workers from different workgroups but also clients) and the newcomer and his/her new workgroup. Third, the relationships between each of the components of social receptivity should be carefully investigated, as it is not guaranteed that these measures could be consistent and they can sometimes be even negatively related, as proposed by Levine, Choi, and Moreland (2019).

Lastly, new measurements could be used to detect receptivity from the newcomer's perspective. For instance, one recent study considered measuring newcomers' voice behaviour (Reissner, Günter, & de Jong, 2019). Voice behaviour has been defined as "a nonrequired behaviour that emphasizes expression of constructive challenge with an intent to improve rather than merely criticize" (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998, p. 854). In an interesting study, newcomers' voice behaviour determined supervisors' voice endorsement only in high but not low socialized newcomers (Reissner, Günter, & de Jong, 2019).

3.2 Antecedents

In this paragraph, the antecedents contemplated by previous theoretical models are discussed to unify different perspectives. First, it is hypothesized that newcomer's and co-workers' characteristics can directly predict social receptivity. Furthermore, an interaction between the two cannot be excluded. For instance, the newcomer's personality is likely to be evaluated through the co-workers' eyes, and so the newcomer's traits can interact with certain personality traits of the co-workers. Additionally, some group characteristics can be more salient for some co-workers rather than others. For instance, in the event of an uncertain future of the group, co-workers that are marginal members in their groups could be less anxious in respect to the future (as in the case of full member, for whom the group represent an important part of the individual's life) and, thus, can be more open to the newcomer.

3.3 Consequences

3.3.1 Proximal outcomes

Relying on the theoretical and empirical models of Ellis, Bauer, and Erdogan (2015) and Bauer et al. (2007), an enhanced social receptivity should predict the newcomer's role clarity, knowledge of the group/organizational culture, newcomer's self-efficacy, and newcomer's levels of stress. This latter indicator has not been contemplated in the classical theoretical models. However, indicators that include both learning and adaptation indices could allow measuring adjustment from

two different perspectives. Below, it is explained how positive social receptivity should predict each indicator.

First, in the early stages of the organizational socialization process, co-workers (e.g., leaders, mentors, other newcomers) can offer support to newcomers in (1) making sense of the events experienced at work (Reichers, 1987; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979); (2) guiding newcomers in learning their role (Reichers, 1987; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979); (3) providing information and resources (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Moreland & Levine, 2006; Morrison, 1993; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992); and (4) representing important sources to learning informal expectations about desired behaviours (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006; Li, Harris, Boswell, & Xie, 2011). All of these processes should result in enhanced role clarity, newcomer's knowledge of the organizational culture, and increased newcomer's self-efficacy beliefs.

Second, socializing is stressful (Kleinman, Siegel, & Eckstein, 2002; Liang & Hsieh, 2008; Taormina & Law, 2000; Thomas & Lankau, 2009). It was demonstrated that in the first two years newcomers experience increased emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Dunford, Shipp, Boss, Angermeier, & Boss, 2012). Psychological distress studied in samples of newcomers demonstrated to be positively predicted by role conflict, role ambiguity, and workload (Nelson & Quick, 1991; Nelson, Quick, & Eakin, 1988; Nelson & Sutton, 1990). In this scenario, co-workers' powerful guidance role in interpreting events and understanding role expectations helps newcomers' coping with the stress associated with the new environment (Allen, McManus, & Russel, 1999; Saks, 1994). Moreover, co-workers' social support is a well-known buffer to newcomers' stress (Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998; Ellis, Bauer, Mansfield, et al., 2015; Thomas & Lankau, 2009).

Ultimately, decreased levels of role conflict and stress are also positively related to general information, knowledge, and skills relevant for the job acquired from newcomers (Bravo, Pierò, Rodriguez, & Whitely, 2003; Taris & Feij, 2004). Thus, a positive social receptivity can have a role in sustaining both learning and stress reduction processes.

3.3.2 Distal outcomes

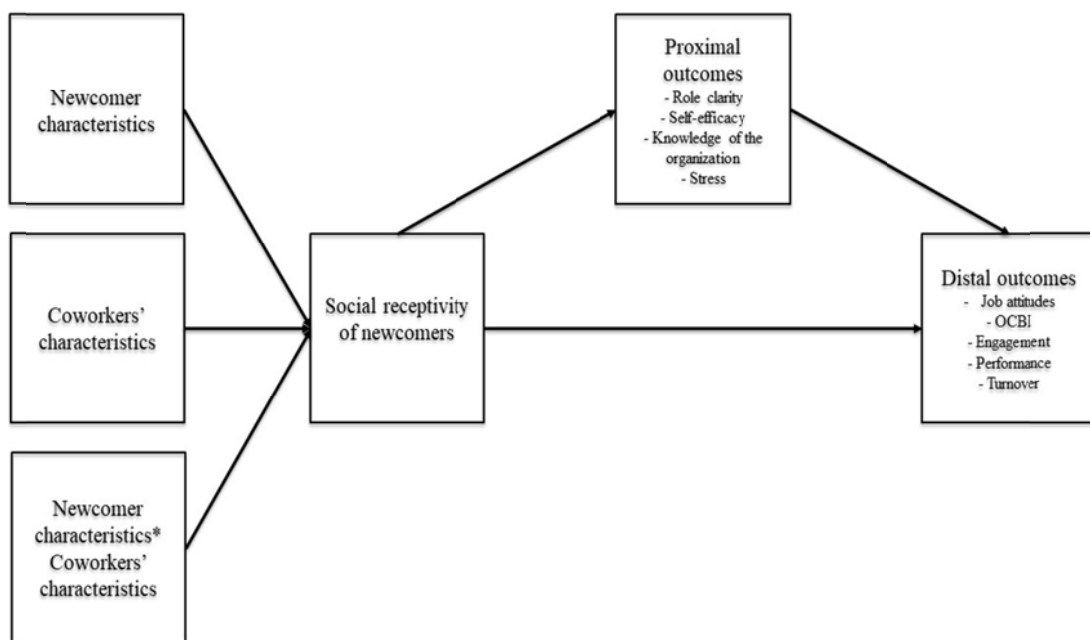
So far, the proximal indicators of individual adjustment were described. In this paragraph, it is argued that social receptivity can also have a direct role in distal outcomes. First, social acceptance has been demonstrated to directly enhance job satisfaction and commitment (Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer & Green, 1998; Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007; Valero & Hirschi, 2019). Moreover, it positively predicts Organizational Citizenship Behaviours towards Individuals (OCBI) in newcomers (Livi, Theodorou, Rullo, Cinque, & Alessandri, 2018) and negatively predicts turnover intention (Bauer et al., 2007; Livi et al., in press; Saks et al., 2007), whereas being accepted could realistically prevent real turnover (Moreland & Levine, 1982). Lastly, a positive social receptivity of newcomers can directly enhance performance at both the group and the organizational levels (Bain, Mann, & Pirola-Merlo, 2001; Phillips et al., 2009).

Social receptivity could also have a role in enhancing distal outcomes through proximal outcomes. For instance, the impact of social receptivity on job attitudes can pass through enhanced role clarity that, in turn, promotes satisfaction, commitment, and lower intention to quit (Saks et al., 2007). An important mediator of the relationship between social receptivity and distal outcomes is stress. As mentioned before, high social receptivity can result in lower levels of stress. This, in turn, can prevent intention to quit in newcomers (Nelson, Quick, & Eakin, 1988). Moreover, recently the level of perceived social receptivity was indirectly related to the extent to which the newcomers engage in OCBI (Livi et al., 2018). This indirect relationship was mediated by interpersonal stress, in a way that perceived acceptance decreased interpersonal strain, which in turn, augmented the OCBI reported (Livi et al., 2018). As discretionary behaviours, OCBI are not required by the organization but are positively related to job performance (Podsakoff et al., 2009) and negatively related to turnover intention and actual turnover (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Lastly, in a recent theoretical paper, it was proposed that work engagement can be seen as an additional indicator of newcomers' adjustment (Saks & Gruman, 2018). In this model, work engagement is proposed as a distal outcome and the effect of social receptivity can be both direct

and indirect. Specifically, work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). It can be predicted directly by social receptivity, as positive social relations at work have been demonstrated to directly predict work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). It can also be indirectly predicted through lower stress. In fact, as a positive state of mind towards individuals’ work, it has been seen as a conceptual opposite of burnout that should arise in a condition of low stress (González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006). Ultimately, work engagement is supposed to indicate a positive newcomer adjustment as other job attitudes, for instance, satisfaction and commitment. The comprehensive theoretical model proposed is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The proposed model of social receptivity of newcomers



Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was threefold. The first aim was to review two different lines of research, the one on organizational socialization and the one on group socialization. Second, it was proposed that the results from both sides are compatible and should be integrated into a multiple level research (i.e., organizational and group levels). Third, it was highlighted that studies on group receptivity should be merged with the broader literature on organizational socialization. Indeed, in the latter, social receptivity has been seen as an indicator of newcomer adjustment among others. Importantly, it was suggested to give social receptivity a central role, as an integral part of socialization that can predict all the other indicators. Ultimately, the model proposed could help designing better studies and, thus, contributing to a better understanding of an important life event as socialization.

Author Contributions

The authors contributed equally to this manuscript.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed Consent

Each participant dealt with the process of informed consent.

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