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Digital onboarding - an integrated conceptualization

The role of technology, individual, and organization in the onboarding process

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The ongoing digitalization, further accelerated through the effects of the CoViD-19 pandemic, forced a widespread shift to a more digital workplace. This also influenced the hiring and onboarding of new employees, which is an important element for newcomer integration at the workplace. With proper onboarding processes, organizations experience less turnover, better job attitudes and performance (Ellis & Bauer 2017).

Prior research has addressed the role of technology related to the onboarding process from various perspectives. For example, with regard to the socialization of new employees in the virtual space or the support of communication technologies in the information exchange of newcomers (Ahuja & Galvin 2003). Yet, due to the inherently interdisciplinary nature of the phenomenon, many aspects of digital onboarding warrant further investigation. The human resource management discourse looks at onboarding as part of larger employee management process. Psychologists study newcomer perceptions and integration/socialization in new groups and to new norms and environments. From a knowledge management perspective, the effective and efficient transfer of relevant knowledge to newcomers is a key aspect. From a technological perspective, the role of different digital tools as well as process digitalization are highly relevant. Taken together, digital onboarding represents a well-suited phenomenon for the development of an integrated perspective on the shoulders of the information systems (IS) discipline. This is further motivated through previous IS research on distributed software engineering (SE), which holds numerous insights related to digital onboarding that can be tested and further studied for their applicability outside the SE domain (Britto et al., 2018; O'Leary et al., 2012).

In this TREO Talk paper, we draw on preliminary insights from an interdisciplinary systematic literature review on digital onboarding. We present an integrated conceptualization of the phenomenon and highlight the focus areas and potential blind spots that each disciplinary focus holds. Finally, we discuss how a systematic, integrated research agenda may be formulated.

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