

ONBOARDING EXPERIENCE IN LARGE TECH ORGANIZATIONS IN TIER I CITIES OF
INDIA POST PANDEMIC & ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

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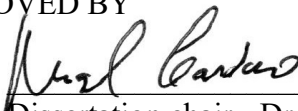
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ABSTRACT

ONBOARDING EXPERIENCE IN LARGE TECH ORGANIZATIONS IN TIER I CITIES OF
INDIA POST PANDEMIC & ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER - A FOCUS ON
MANAGERIAL AND PEER SUPPORT

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Purpose: This study aims to analyze the onboarding experience in large tech organizations located in Tier I cities of India post the COVID-19 pandemic, with a specific focus on how managerial and peer support affects employee turnover rates.

Employing a Quantitative method approach, this research includes surveys of new employees within few organizations to understand their onboarding experiences and support systems. Quantitative data analysis is conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

Preliminary findings suggest that effective managerial and peer support significantly enhances the onboarding experience, reducing stress and improving job satisfaction among new hires, which subsequently lowers turnover rates. However, the lack of structured support mechanisms during remote onboarding led to higher levels of disengagement and turnover.

The findings underscore the importance of robust managerial and peer support systems in enhancing the onboarding experience in large tech organizations. The study recommends

implementing structured support programs to facilitate better employee integration and retention, especially in the context of hybrid or remote work environments.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Every Organization today seem to be dealing with challenges related to People Sustainability. Experiences now especially after pandemic seem to play a very important role in defining Employee's definitive state of mind to build connections, deliver to their full potential and create a fulfilling journey for themselves.

One of the critical stages of Employee Lifecycle within an Organization is Onboarding. The 1st image that comes to mind when the word Onboarding is announced is that of a parked airplane with boarding stairs placed and everyone manages to catch their seat to go from Destination A to B. The Customer loyalty towards the airline is not just a function of the experience the passenger had during the journey but is a function of every stage. Right from the time, tickets were issued at the counter to boarding the flight to deboarding, every stage counts. Take this back to the Organization, the Onboarding seems to thus play a critical role in setting the tone of how Employee experiences the Organization right from Day 1.

Onboarding is the process of making a new employee feel comfortable and integrated into their new work environment. This involves not only introducing them to their specific job responsibilities but also familiarizing them with the company's culture, values, and social dynamics. Effective onboarding can significantly impact an employee's productivity, engagement, and long-term retention within the organization since every individual needs to feel safe in an environment where they operate in.

Referring to MacLean's triune brain model, one of the parts of brain i.e. basal ganglia is referred to as the reptile or primitive brain which constantly scans our environment for any threat & oversees our intrinsic and automatic self-preserving behaviour patterns, guaranteeing our as well as our species survival. In *The Fearless Organization* (2019), she states on page 14 that when a person enters a foreign environment, their reptile brain becomes active and overrides their

reasoning brain. One would either go into Fight or Flight mode due to the unknown and consequent terror. Although we are likely not to face physical assault because we are a part of the social infrastructure and are constrained by psychological, and social standards, our system still responds to threats as if we would be, and this is shown through disengagement or exiting in organizations.

The typical employee retention rate in the US ranges from 70% to 85%, according to Oracle. Since 90% or more is considered a "good" retention rate, there is opportunity for improvement in those numbers. This is where onboarding may assist. When done well, onboarding immediately raises retention rates, employee engagement, and productivity. It is all about how businesses integrate new hires and train them for new tasks. Numerous advantages of onboarding have been discussed in the same article, including decreased manual labor, quicker production, and higher employee retention. The case for a robust ROI is further strengthened by published data: According to article published in UrbanBound, UrbanBound. (n.d.). Corporate Relocation Statistics 2021. Available at: <https://www.urbanbound.com/resources/corporate-relocation-stats-2021-infographic> [Accessed 11 Sep. 2024]., US and UK businesses spend \$37 billion a year to hold onto incompetent workers, yet astonishingly, 35% of those companies do not spend a single penny on onboarding.

In her 2019 book *The Fearless Organization*, Amy C. Edmondson states that "the belief that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk taking" is known as psychological safety. (page 8). And even prior to Onboarding, a sense of it is ingrained through interactions that the system as a whole has with the Individual at numerous touchpoints.

1.2 Research Problem

A study on Employee Onboarding & Counterproductive workplace behavior (Ibrahim et al., 2022) mentions about Employee onboarding having two key impacts: immediate and remote (Becker & Bish, 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2022c). Immediate onboarding results include role clarity, social integration, person-organization fit, mission mastering, workgroup integration, and

socializing (Bauer, 2010; Klein et al., 2015). Remote outcomes have been associated with success, job satisfaction, intention to quit, and withdrawal behaviors (Meyer & Bartels, 2017; Salau et al., 2014). Furthermore, according to Chillakuri (2020), good onboarding programs serve three major purposes: improving recruits' confidence, assisting workers in rapidly becoming fully productive, and fostering a favorable relationship between the firm and its employees. With the aid of a well-designed onboarding program, recruits' fears and misunderstandings may be eased, and their roles defined and understood (Sharma & Stol, 2020). Consequently, recruits will be more prepared for their employment, resulting in positive outcomes such as improved retention rates and more positive behavior (Meyer & Bartels; Sharma & Stol, 2020). Conversely, previous research, such as Hendricks and Louw Potgieter (2012), has shown that ineffective onboarding can lead to various negative behavioral and job-related consequences. Those who experienced quality onboarding expressed feelings of satisfaction with their jobs and greater allegiance to their programs than those with poor experiences.

Study by Ibrahim et al. (2022), also mentions about tenets of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which holds that an employer and employee are in an exchange relationship in which perceived fair treatment is rewarded by productive and extra-role conduct, whereas perceived unfairness is met by counterproductive behaviour (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Greenberg, 2018), which may lead to employee turnover.

A preliminary review of the literature reveals that previous research has mostly concentrated on understanding the role that onboarding plays in attrition; however, this study will assist in examining the effect of onboarding in tech companies in Tier 1 cities in India under the unique, constantly-evolving conditions brought about by the pandemic. There hasn't been much progress in comprehending this particular restriction. An all-encompassing and organized strategy for handling the shifting environmental restrictions is what the earlier research has failed to provide.

The top three reasons given by employees for leaving their jobs were that they didn't feel appreciated by their employers (54 percent), that their managers (52 percent), or that they didn't feel like they belonged at work (51 percent), according to a September 8, 2021, McKinsey article titled The Great Attrition or Great Attraction - The choice is yours. According to a recent report by the Society of Human Resource Management, one of the main causes of employees' changing needs is the pandemic (COVID 19). It appears that the 2020 pandemic has fundamentally changed people's views on their own selves, their families, their jobs, and society at large. According to Dr. Steve Sugden, "trauma has significant long-term effects." Research has shown that, similar to freedom revolutions and world wars, this era has permanently altered people's cognitive processes, either as individuals or as a nation. The emphasis has shifted from where I am in terms of the world's economic or social structure to me and what I desire. Values such as purpose, self-nourishment, and self-care have supplanted security and financial independence. Consequently, it is now even more crucial to properly onboard new hires.

This reflection indicates that the onboarding experience is an essential prerequisite for employee engagement, which can help reduce employee turnover and build sustainable business success, especially when dealing with uncertainties in the post-pandemic era and that People Manager & a cohesive team has a bigger role to play in smooth acclimatization of an employee in the organization. The following research questions need to be addressed:

1. What can be an effective Onboarding experience for all Individuals?
2. How can businesses create a standardized yet flexible onboarding experience that encourages new employees to take efficient ownership of their roles and how can the Manager contribute to make the experience more effective?
3. What stops Large Organizations to bring a personalized Onboarding experience and what can they do to make it more effective & personalized?
4. How has the pandemic impacted the workforce experience when they enter the organization?

1.3 Purpose of Research

The proposed research has a long-term goal of providing a better understanding of Onboarding New employees in organizations with a more thoughtful & systemic approach and help them become an integral part of the system.

It will support in reducing Infant attrition & enhancement in P&L by reducing the bottom line which incurs as a result of leaving of employees & hiring replacement employees. According to one of the studies from Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), (2022). The Cost of Hiring an Employee: Explanation and Formula. [online], the average cost per hire is nearly \$4,700 and this cost could go up as well if we must include other factors like the time invested by the Hiring Manager, Recruitment team etc.

The objective of the research is to oversee the applicability of the past theories in the current context.

More specifically, the research has the following sub-objectives:

1. To develop a better understanding of changing Business scenarios & its impact on the Psychology of the new employees & how its non-consideration may affect the engagement factor of employees.
2. To clarify the differences between the impact of Onboarding on fresh hires vis-à-vis lateral hires.
3. To provide recommendations and advice to HR professionals active in the Employees experience function. The outcome of this research will be helpful and valuable to HR professionals in linking the sentiment of the employees to various stages of their experience within the organization.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The pandemic-induced changes have disrupted traditional onboarding practices, posing new challenges and opportunities for organizations. This research aims to delve into the

onboarding experience in large tech organizations in Tier I cities of India post-pandemic, with a specific focus on the role of managerial and peer support. By examining the impact of these support mechanisms on employee turnover, the study seeks to provide actionable insights that can help organizations enhance their onboarding processes and improve employee retention.

The importance of this research lies in its potential to address the evolving needs of the tech industry in a post-pandemic world. As companies navigate the complexities of remote and hybrid work environments, understanding the critical factors that influence onboarding success is paramount. Through a mixed-methods approach, this study will explore the perceptions of new employees, managers, and peers, providing a comprehensive analysis of the onboarding experience and its implications for organizational success.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Framework

One of the pioneers in the field of study of Organization socialization has been John Van Maanen & Edgar H Schein wherein they had done a study on Organization socialization in the early 1950s. They have elaborated the importance of Organization socialization for an individual joining the organization since they don't just do a job but they experience a completely different way of life which has its own ways, social compliances, demands & future growth opportunities. Sometimes, an individual finds a match to their natural way of working but it is quite possible where an individual might struggle with how the Organization functions in terms of social, political, economical & so on so forth. This might leave an individual feeling incapable of the job or role which might not be the case at all.

Prior to their study, various studies of work behavior have focused primarily on what kinds of attitudes & behavior are needed to be effective or efficient in a job while much less attention has been given to how can we inculcate such behaviors in new individuals & help them acclimatize to the culture of the organization. Cambridge dictionary defines Culture as "the way of life, especially the general customs & beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time." Van Maanen & Schein, both have tried to elucidate the importance of culture & that of insiders vs outsiders through various examples like Gene pools, church loyalty, Organization own survival.

They highlighted the fact that incase the expectation is that the cultural norms/ traditions must stay intact, it is hence important that the experienced members of the organization need to teach or ensure the newcomer learns the ways of working, acquires necessary social knowledge & skills regarding the role and this process is referred to as Organizational Socialization process. He also highlights the fact that O.S. is a ubiquitous, persistent & forever phenomena but only

becomes more significant & prominent in case of entry of newcomer, however, it prevails in case of role, location or even assignment change.

The biggest challenge comes in how the description of the role (what people do) gets transmitted from one person to another. Schein (1971a) developed an Organization model to define role in terms of 3 dimensions – 1) Functional (like Talent acquisition, Learning & Development, Rewards management etc. within Human Resource Department) 2) Hierarchical which creates people reporting structure of who would manage who 3) Interactional & for me the most critical one – which refers to an individual being included in the organization.

They have further gone ahead & taken up Individual level on how they respond to Organizational Socialization process specifically in terms of role components i.e. Knowledge base (capability to solve problems & find solutions at cognitive level), Strategy (ground rules for choosing solutions) & Mission (justify the ends for a solution to support the strategy). Hughes (1958) called Organizational role as “bundle of tasks”.

They also referred to the responses to socialization in terms of Role where he defined 2 extremes with Role Custodian at one end (where the individual accepts the role as is & does not question the status quo) and innovative (Role as well as Content innovation) at another end. Apart from individual's personal background, they have focused on Organizational socialization process itself as the causal mechanism behind the extremes individual play.

Van Maanen (1978) has identified 6 major tactical dimensions which provide a structural view to O.S. process & can guarantee results based on which side of continuum of tactical dimension is chosen and thereby deduces the response of the newcomer as Custodial or Innovative. They are:

1. Collective vs. Individual socialization process – Collective is when group of new recruits are taken through the Orientation process together
2. Formal vs Informal
3. Sequential vs Random steps

4. Fixed vs Variable
5. Serial vs Disjunctive
6. Investiture vs Divestiture

Most likely Collective will result in custodial orientation since lot of social processes related to Group conformity comes into play.

Also, they have highlighted the interplay of the tactics which might result in variation from Custodial to Content Innovation to Role Innovation. Like Custodial response is most likely to arise from the combination of Sequential, Variable, Serial & Divestiture process, While the conditions which might stimulate Content innovation would likely be a combination of Collective, Formal, Random, Fixed & Disjunctive. And for Role innovation it will be most likely to happen with a combination of Individual, Informal, Random, Disjunctive & Investiture processes.

A study on Organizational Socialization: Making sense of the past & present as a prologue for the Future by Saks A & Ashforth B in 1997 is further to all the studies done in the past on the same topic. They start their research base by stating that Fisher in 1986 highlighted the existence of less than 15 empirical longitudinal studies on Organizational socialization and that there is a strong need to understand the subject which was further reemphasized by Wanous & Colella in 1989.

A Multi-Level Process Model of Organizational Socialization

Saks & Ashworth have done a sincere attempt to integrate all the theories to come up with a model whose focus is primarily information & learning which is consistent with various researches outlaying the fact that O.S. is essentially a learning process (Bauer & Green, 1994; Chao, O'Leary Kelley, Wolf Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992 & Holton, 1996, Miller & Jablin, 1991). The model shared by them is an exhaustive model in terms that it considers the Contextual factors (Extra-Organizational, Organizational, Group & job role level),

Socialization factors (Organizational, Group, Individual) at the Influential stage. These factors when combined with Cognitive sense making processes influence the information acquisition which further leads to Uncertainty reduction & enhanced learning in the newcomer. This learning is fundamental to Proximal outcomes (e.g., role clarity, person–job and person–organization fit, skill acquisition, social integration, social identification, motivation, personal change, and role orientation). Proximal outcomes influence wide variety of more distal outcomes at the organization and group levels (e.g., stronger culture, higher morale and cohesion, more stable membership, higher effectiveness, and reputation) and the individual level (e.g., lower stress, absenteeism, and turnover; higher job satisfaction, organization commitment, organization citizenship behaviors, and performance; and, depending on the group's and organization's values, some mix of role conformity and role innovation).

Socialization tactics

Various researchers have based their research on the work done by Van Maanen & Schein (1979) & further refined by Jones (1986). Based on URT, it was found that Institutionalized socialization tactics were directly related to reduction in role ambiguity, role conflict & intentions to quit & increase in job satisfaction & organizational commitment (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Mignerey et al., 1995; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). While Individualized socialization tactics are focused towards Role innovation (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Black & Ashford, 1995; Mignerey et al., 1995; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Black (1992), however, found that the collective tactic was directly proportional to role innovation incase of expatriate managers.

Baker in 1992 found that there is no impact on socialization w.r.t. 6 tactics incase of Union or non-union setting. Orpen (1995) suggested that Institutionalized socialization was positively related to salary growth or the number of promotions received but inversely related to career satisfaction. While Mignerey et al. (1995) also related Institutionalized satisfaction positively to communication satisfaction. Ashforth & Saks in their studies in 1996 & 1997 found that institutionalized tactics were related to task mastery, lower stress & higher organizational

identification & negatively related to anxiety while individualized tactics were related to higher self-appraisal performance.

In few of the studies, specific focus was given to investiture & collective tactic. Black in 1992 found that expatriates with longer tenure could experience role innovation with collective tactic & negative role innovation with serial tactic for expatriates with short tenure. Laker & Steffy (1995) basis self-efficacy theory found that self-efficacy did not impact any relation between socialization tactics & goal-directed behavior & organizational commitment.

Research on socialization tactics should focus on their influence on newcomers' adjustment, with recent studies examining the processes underlying these tactics. Mignerey et al. (1995) argue that newcomers' success depends on obtaining sufficient information and reducing uncertainty, and that institutionalized socialization is related to increased information/feedback-seeking behavior. Saks and Ashforth (1997) found that institutionalized socialization, including collective, serial, and investiture, is positively related to newcomers' feedback and observation, and that these tactics mediate the relationship between socialization tactics and outcomes.

Laker and Steffy's study found that individualized socialization tactics positively affect goal-directed behavior, while Baker's analysis in 1995 identified two latent factors: interaction with job incumbents and role certainty. Fullagar et al. (1994, 1995) found that individualized socialization positively influenced attitudes towards a labor union, while institutionalized socialization was ineffective and counterproductive. However, their operationalization of these tactics was suspect, as they were limited to the duration of formal orientation sessions and the number of topics covered.

The study by Fullagar et al. (1995) analyzed 14 informal experiences of individualized socialization, focusing on the role of union members. The findings suggest that these experiences, while influenced by individual and informal tactics, also reflect institutionalized socialization through serial and investiture tactics, suggesting that the positive effect cannot be solely attributed to individualized socialization.

Socialization Training

Feldman (1989) highlights the importance of formal training programs in socialization for newcomers, as they help them adjust to their new job settings. However, research in both areas has often overlooked the other. Recently, there has been a push to integrate these two research streams. A study by Nelson and Quick (1991) found that formal orientation was more available but not related to adjustment, and offsite training was only related to psychological distress symptoms. Newcomers without offsite training reported increased psychological distress, and the effectiveness of formal orientation or offsite training did not significantly impact adjustment.

Saks (1996) found that newcomers' perception of training helpfulness is significantly related to their work outcomes. Chatman (1991) found that attending firm-sponsored events and spending time with a mentor positively influenced newcomers' person-organization fit, but formal training was not. These findings suggest that formal training in accounting firms may focus more on technical aspects than firm norms and values.

Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, and Cannon-Bowers (1991) studied the aspect of training fulfilment in case of military trainees socialization and found that training fulfilment positively impacts post-training organizational commitment, motivation, and self-efficacy. Anderson et al. (1996) found that most British organizations provide formalized induction training within 4 weeks of entry, primarily covering health and safety, employment terms, and human resource management policies. Organizations relying on reaction measures were less satisfied with their training programs and socialization process.

A study by Waung (1995) compared an experimental group who received self-regulatory training to another group which received negative job information for new hires in entry-level service jobs. The experimental group reported higher organizational supportiveness after the training and job satisfaction, but higher turnover too. However, no differences were found in self-efficacy, organizational commitment, anxiety, or quit intentions. Several studies have examined the role of self-efficacy in newcomer adjustment.

Proactive Socialization

The traditional approach to organizational socialization views newcomers as passive recipients (Morrison, 1993a), while proactive socialization has emerged in recent years (trend observed by Fisher (1986)). This approach views newcomers as agents actively reducing uncertainty in their work environments. As the stereotype of one-organization career fades, organizations are shifting focus from centralized socialization and training programs to task-centered learning opportunities. Information seeking and acquisition have been the primary methods of newcomer proactivity in socialization research for the past five years. Studies have found that newcomers' acquisition of information is related to their knowledge of different contexts, higher satisfaction, commitment, adjustment, lower turnover intentions, and stress, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992). Miller and Jablin's model of newcomers' information-seeking behaviors explains how different types, methods, and sources affect the use of seven tactics to reduce role ambiguity and conflict.

Ostroff and Kozlowski's (1992) study on newcomers' information acquisition in task, role, group, and organization domains found that they primarily rely on observation and interpersonal sources, with supervisors being the most influential. Newcomers with mentors rely more on observation of others and their mentors for information & comparatively acquired more information on organizational issues & practices, while those without mentors rely on observation and co-workers.

Morrison's study on newcomers revealed that they use monitoring more frequently than inquiry and use different modes and sources for different types of information. They seek less normative and technical information and less social feedback over time, but more referent and performance feedback. This stability in information seeking behavior is related to socialization tasks.

Proactive socialization behavior, including self-management, networking, and career-enhancing strategies, has been studied by Saks and Ashforth (1996), Ashford and Black (1996),

and Feij et al. (1995). Studies show that proactive behavior reduces anxiety and stress, improves work outcomes, and increases job satisfaction and performance. However, feedback seeking is not related to job satisfaction or performance. Career-enhancing strategies predict support, innovation, and continued use of behaviors even after 1 yr.

Studies have explored the antecedents of proactivity. Like Feij et al. (1995) found that supportive co-workers and positive discordance positively influence career-enhancing strategies. Black in 1996 found that Newcomers with a high desire for control are more likely to seek information, socialize, and negotiate job changes. Institutionalized socialization tactics and value for feedback predict information/feedback-seeking behavior, which is related to innovative role orientation and attributional confidence.

Saks and Ashforth (1997) linked proactive socialization with situationalist perspectives, finding that institutionalized tactics positively affect information acquisition, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, task mastery, and job performance. Major and Kozlowski (1997) found that task interdependence, physical accessibility to insiders, and self-efficacy affect information seeking in coop students. Task interdependence was positively related to information seeking frequency, particularly for newcomers with low self-efficacy and high insider accessibility.

Socialization Learning & Content

Studies on socialization over the past five years have focused on newcomers' internalization of content, socialization processes, and the relationship between learning and socialization outcomes. Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) found that newcomers' knowledge was highest in the group domain & task domain (after 5 yrs) and lowest in the organization domain, and knowledge was positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and adjustment.

Bauer and Green (1994) found that newcomer involvement in work-related activities provides opportunities to learn about roles, jobs, coworkers, and the organization. They found that

doctoral students' involvement in professional activities predicted accommodation and productivity. Chao et al. (1994) conducted three studies to assess the content dimensions of learning, changes in dimensions as employees mature, and the relationship between dimensions and career outcomes. They identified six dimensions: performance proficiency, people domain, politics, language domain, organizational goals and values, and history domain.

Chao et al. (1994) found that job incumbents had the highest levels of socialization on five content dimensions, with organizational goals and values being most strongly related to career effectiveness and low organizational turnover. Adkins (1995) found that perceived task competence was related to self-rated performance, while role ambiguity and conflict were related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Holton (1996) proposed a taxonomy of learning tasks, dividing them into individual, people, organization, and work domains. He argued that newcomer learning is a cyclical process involving orientation programs, job-training programs, and workplace learning. Although no research has tested this taxonomy or interventions, it offers a useful framework for future research.

Group Socialization

Wanous et al. (1984) suggested integrating organizational socialization and group development due to their similarities. Major, Kozlowski, Chao, and Gardner (1995) noted that socialization occurs interactively within groups, with the proximal work group being the focal point for organizational culture transmission. Many newcomers consider work group socialization more important than organizational socialization. However, group socialization research has been neglected in organizational socialization literature.

Moreland and Levine's (1982) model postulates Group socialization as a psychological process involving ongoing evaluations of relationships, commitment, and role transitions. Moreland and Levine's model, which consists of five phases of group membership (investigation, socialization, maintenance, resocialization, and remembrance), explains this process. The group

tries to change individuals to contribute more to the group's goals, while individuals try to change the group to satisfy their needs. When commitment levels reach the acceptance criterion, individuals undergo the role transition of acceptance and become a full member. The model has been expanded to include other small group phenomena and processes, such as role transitions, commitment, innovation, group development, work group cultures, and intergroup relations.

Anderson and Thomas (1996) argue that Moreland and Levine's model for work groups is limited due to its lack of consideration of individual, group, and organizational characteristics. They propose a three-stage bidirectional process model for work group socialization, incorporating anticipation, encounter, and adjustment stages. They argue this model should be considered a distinct research topic.

Cini et al.'s 1993 study found that understaffed student groups on college campuses were more open to new members, less harsh on problematic newcomers, and had lower acceptance criteria for full group membership.

Moderators, Mediators, and Individual Differences

Critics argue that socialization research has overemphasized situationalist perspectives and neglected individual differences, leading to calls for an interactionist approach that considers both individual and situationalist factors. Understanding why individuals react differently to socialization practices and being more process-oriented are also recommended. In the past five years, research has begun to address these concerns.

Individual Difference Variables

The review period focused on individual difference variables as predictors of socialization outcomes. Self-efficacy, a prominent variable in socialization research, has been found to be positively related to newcomers' ability to cope, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance. However, it has been negatively related to anxiety, intentions to quit, and turnover (Bauer & Green, 1994; Laker & Steffy, 1995; Saks, 1994, 1995; Tannenbaum et al., 1991).

Motivational orientation, as per Nicholson's work role transitions theory, has mixed support. Recent studies found that desire for feedback is positively related to personal development (Black & Ashford, 1995), while desire for control is unrelated to role development but negatively related to personal development (Ashford & Saks, 1996). Ashforth and Saks (1995) suggest that newcomers' motives may be influenced by situation-specific and life-stage factors, such as role ambiguity and destabilizing transitions like relocation.

Previous work experience significantly impacts socialization, as it helps individuals make sense of unexpected challenges during role transitions. Studies have shown that those with prior correctional experience are less likely to accept employment offers or remain on the job during probationary periods. Adkins' research suggests that previous experience inhibits adjustment in mental health specialists due to a "false confidence" effect, causing newcomers to be less attentive to formal instructions and organizational cues.

Bauer and Green (1994) found that prior research experience positively impacts doctoral students' research activities, professional involvement, and submissions, while Ashforth and Saks (1995) found it positively impacts role development.

Demographic variables: Jackson, Stone, and Alvarez (1993) suggested that a newcomer's demographic dissimilarity to team members can hinder social integration. They argued that this dissimilarity can cause others to perceive the newcomer as an outgroup member, leading to stereotypic attributes and denied social support. The problem is not about gender, race, ethnicity, or age, but rather the extent to which one is perceived to be different from others. Kirchmeyer's 1995 study found minimal on-the-job discrimination against female and minority managers, but those managers most different from their work group experienced less job challenges and poorer integration. Colella (1996) introduced a new argument about social identity contrasting with the socialization of newcomers with disabilities.

Moderating and Mediating Variables

A moderator is a variable which can impact the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable. In recent years, research has focused on moderating variables in socialization experiences. Self-efficacy has been identified as a moderating variable in studies, with studies showing that self-efficacy moderates the relationship between training method and anxiety (Saks, 1994). Additionally, initial self-efficacy moderates the relationship between training amount and adjustment, with a greater amount being more helpful for newcomers with low self-efficacy.

Major and Kozlowski's 1997 study found self-efficacy moderates task interdependence and insider accessibility in newcomers' proactive information seeking. However, it did not moderate socialization tactics, organizational commitment, or self-regulatory training effects on newcomer adjustment.

Black in 1992 shows that tenure moderates socialization tactics and role orientation, and Black and Ashford (1995) found that job discretion is more likely to result in job change for newcomers with low person-job fit. Situational variables also moderate socialization variables and outcomes. Major et al. (1995) found that positive role development relationships with supervisors or co-workers can help newcomers overcome reality shock and adjust to their new roles.

Mediating variables

Socialization research has been criticized for ignoring psychological and social processes that mediate the relationship between programs and outcomes (Wanous & Colella, 1989). Ashford & Black (1996) study have shown that cognitive framing, newcomers' anxiety, information acquisition, and organizational supportiveness mediate these relationships. Reduction in anxiety and increased self-efficacy also mediate the relationship between training and newcomer adjustment. Waung's 1995 study reveals that organizational supportiveness moderates the relationship between self-regulatory coping information and organizational commitment.

2.2 Theory of Reasoned Action

Human Society Theory – Study of Organization socialization

Saks A & Ashforth B have tried to review the past 5 yrs of research done on O.S. & identify links between past & present. They have reviewed the researches done on 6 major areas - socialization tactics; socialization training; proactive socialization; socialization learning and content; group socialization; and moderators, mediators, and individual differences. They have summarized 4 theoretical perspectives i.e. Van Maanen & Schein's (1979) model of socialization tactics, Uncertainty Reduction theory, Social cognitive theory & Cognitive & sense making theory.

Van Maanen & Schein talked about 6 bipolar tactics & how they or the interplay of them impact an individual's socialization. Jones in 1986 further suggested that 6 tactics in different combination can be termed as Institutionalized or Individualized socialization.

Uncertainty reduction theory (Falcione & Wilson, 1988; Lester, 1987) is one the most common framework driving socialization research. Every individual is motivated to reduce uncertainty in all aspects of life, especially in their job. When they are newcomers to an organization the environment is highly uncertain in terms of Role, Relations, culture & so on which is reduced by gaining more & more information & is enabled through communication channels. This theory is also further recognized by various researchers & recently acknowledged through the concept of Psychological safety. Baker (1995) also highlighted that Role certainty is a critical element of socialization tactics. Miller & Jablin (1991) created a model of newcomer need to seek information which is further related to their desire to reduce uncertainty.

Social Cognitive theory

Bandura's (1986, '1987) social cognitive theory which talks about human behavior & psychosocial functioning through triadic interplay of behavior, cognitive & social factors, and environment events; as well as Self-efficacy theory which talks about the self-efficacy perceptions created through enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion & Physiological, affective states and its effects on behavior & well being. Bandura's concepts were used in various studies to understand socialization process. Some called Self-efficacy as a direct,

moderating as well as a mediating variable & some have used to integrate socialization & training literatures. Ostroff & Kozlowski (1992) realized through their study that the relation of social cognitive theory & Org socialization i.e. newcomers would seek information from their supervisors or peers, after which they achieved mastery of role through continuous experimentation & observation.

Cognitive and Sense Making Theory

This theory talks about the empirical existence of a human in an environment with strong cognitive capability which enables them to think & make meaning out of a situation. Various researchers like Louis (1980), Katz (1980), Falcione & Wilsone, 1988; Weick, 1995 have attempted to define how newcomers try to acknowledge surprises (new information) & make meaning out of it basis their own mental models (Peter Senge), social interactions & their understanding of Organizational reality.

2.3 Impact of Organization Socialization on Performance Management, Employee Engagement

Organizational socialization is a performance management concern that focuses on employee commitment and job satisfaction, which are linked to turnover intention. It can be voluntary or involuntary, and can be influenced by factors such as multiple job opportunities, financial situations, job dissatisfaction, and globalization. Effective socialization can have long-lasting productive impacts on employees by increasing person-organization fit and job fit, as well as organizational commitment. Organizations increasingly recognize that employees are the key to their success and view the employer-employee relationship as mutually beneficial. Hosein & Shirin evaluates the effect of factors such as organizational socialization, career aspiration intention, and commitment on turnover intention in a social security organization of Iran. Organizational commitment is crucial for job satisfaction, motivation, and performance, while turnover can lead to counterproductive behaviour. Changes in economic, social, governmental, and technological conditions have caused tensions in employee-management relationships, necessitating changes in employee management styles and a process for employee professional development.

Voluntary turnover incurs significant costs, including replacement, recruitment, temporary staff, management time, morale, learning expenses, product/service quality, organizational memory, and loss of social capital (Dess & Shaw, 2001).

Organizational commitment positively impacts job satisfaction, motivation, and performance, while negatively affecting turnover and counterproductive behavior, according to Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran (2005) and Dalal (2005).

Chao et al. (1994) found that organizational socialization content positively impacts job satisfaction, while role ambiguity and conflicts can result from absence of the same.

Taormina (1997) categorizes Organizational socialization dimensions into four constructs: training received, employee understanding of role and company, co-worker support, and future employer prospects.

Organizational commitment refers to employees' loyalty, willingness to work for the organization, and desire to maintain their membership, Bateman and Strasser (1984). Internal careers are psychological attractions that guide, stabilize, and integrate an individual's career. A strong self-concept, called a "career anchor," holds the internal career together despite changes in external careers. This anchor influences career choices, decisions to leave, future views, and employee reactions to work experiences. Schein, 1975; Bigliardi et al., 2005, study considers nine internal career orientations i.e. Autonomy, job security, geographical stability, technical-functional competence, general managerial competence, entrepreneurial creativity, service, pure challenge, and a life style are essential aspects of personal and professional growth. These include ensuring job security, maintaining geographical stability, developing technical-functional competence, and overcoming obstacles.

Bigliardi et al. (2005) found that external career opportunities are linked to an organization's support for internal career anchors, enabling job restructuring to meet individual needs.

Perceived organizational career situations involve objective categories like job titles, promotions, and status. Employee satisfaction depends on personal motivation and eligible external career situations, Jiang et al., 2001.

Continuance commitment refers to an employee's willingness to stay with a firm due to nontransferable investments, such as retirement or unique benefits, Reichers (1985). Normative commitment is a feeling of obligation to the workplace, a generalized value of loyalty and duty, Bolon (1997). It is influenced by societal norms and can be compared to other commitments like marriage, family, or religion. Research of Meyer et al. 1993, Wiener (1982), shows that employees with strong affective commitment remain with an organization because they want to,

continuance commitment because they have to, and normative commitment because they feel they have to.

According to Price & Mueller (1981), Career opportunity refers to the perceived availability of job options in the labor market, which can reduce faculty intent to stay and increase turnover (Tanwir & Adnan, 2011). External factors, such as attractive offers, are associated with faculty decisions to leave, while internal factors like working conditions are less significant.

Turnover intention is a mental decision an employee makes about continuing or quitting a job, directly linked to turnover behavior, (Hussain & Asif, 2012). Indirect costs include reduced morale, work overload, and loss of social capital. This study focuses on voluntary turnover, seeking better opportunities or financial stability.

Navigating Uncharted Waters: Newcomer Socialization through the Lens of Stress Theory

Organizational socialization scholars study how newcomers navigate uncertain jobs and adjust to their work environment. The average baby boomer changes jobs 10 times, and future generations are expected to do so more frequently. Organizational socialization is considered as a process which reduces uncertainty stress for newcomers, allowing them to feel confident and contribute effectively to their new organizations, Berger & Calabrese, 1975.

The current understanding of stress's role in socialization is limited, as it has largely developed independently. Work-related stress contributes to lower physical and psychological health, reduced performance, poor job attitudes, and increased turnover, M. A. Griffin & Clarke, 2011. It costs organizations \$300 billion annually in the US, Rosch (2001). Newcomer socialization studies often focus on attitudes and workplace behaviors, neglecting well-being effects.

Studies have explored stress literature constructs like role ambiguity, anxiety, and burnout, as suggested by T. D. Allen, McManus, Russell, Kammeyer-Mueller, Simon, & Rich, 2012; Thomas & Lankau, 2009.

The role of stress in socialization has been a topic of interest for over 25 years, but progress has been slow. Nelson and Saks and Gruman (2012) argue that understanding socialization from a stress-oriented perspective is important. A comprehensive review of socialization literature using stress models can provide insights into conceptual overlaps and potential areas for future investigation, given increasing interest in the socialization process and stress.

Organizational socialization reduces uncertainty in new job entry by providing newcomers with information and sense making to assess their fit with the organization and understand expected attitudes and behaviors. Successful socialization facilitates learning and clarity around work tasks, appropriate behavior, and cultural norms. The primary goal is to provide information that helps reduce uncertainty and stress, ensuring employees have a clear sense of their role and understanding of the organization's history, language, and people. (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, Klein & Heuser, 2008).

The study by Ellis et al. , 2015 examines the impact of stress on newcomers' socialization through various models of work stress, including the job demands-resources model, transactional theory of stress, and challenge-hindrance stressor framework. It identifies individual and work-related factors contributing to stress for newcomers and suggests ways to build resources for coping with new work demands. The review also presents a framework for evaluating newcomer stress and suggests potential areas for future research to expand socialization theory and practice.

Uncertainty in new tasks, roles, and social relationships can be stressful (Jackson, Schuler, & Vredenburg, 1987) and hinder positive attitudes among newcomers. Research shows role stressors, such as conflict and ambiguity, are indicators of effective socialization and employee attitudes (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998; Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007). Therefore, uncertainty reduction is crucial for reducing stress for newcomers.

Role stressors can negatively affect adjustment and performance, as they cause strain associated with uncertainty. This suggests that models of organizational socialization that focus on

role stressors may not address other demands that impact employee well-being and adjustment. Nelson (1987) argued that newcomers face various task, role, and interpersonal demands, suggesting an expanded approach to studying these demands.

Studies on stress and burnout in newcomers' socialization are limited, with only a few applying theories of work stress to their experiences. These studies vary in their operationalization and theoretical explanations. Kleinman (2002) framed socialization as an indicator of organizational learning, while Thomas and Lankau (2009) used uncertainty reduction to reduce role stress and burnout. Taris and Feij (2004) found high strain jobs impeded newcomer learning, and Liang and Hsieh (2008) found understanding people and organizational goals negatively related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

Study by Ellis et al (2015) emphasizes the importance of understanding the factors that mitigate newcomer stress, the demands they face, and how socialization can buffer stressor-strain. It proposes a person-centric and stress-oriented approach to understanding the relationship between organizational socialization and outcomes, offering a framework for future research. The model acknowledges the influence of organizational context, individual differences, and newcomers' work experiences on the cognitive appraisal process. It also highlights the importance of proactive personality (e.g., Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003), Big Five personality factors (e.g., Gruman & Saks, 2011; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000; Wang, Zhan, McCune, & Truxillo, 2011), and trait curiosity (Harrison, Sluss, & Ashforth, 2011), as precursors to organizational and individual tactics, which may affect cognitive appraisal, stress experience, and socialization outcomes. The JD-R model suggests strain arises from the mismatch between job demands and resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). Organizational socialization tactics and individual proactive tactics can serve as sources of demands and resources for newcomers, potentially enhancing or buffering the relationship between stressful circumstances and subsequent appraisal. The model suggests that newcomers' cognitive appraisals in response to demands are influenced by tactics, such as inventory of available resources. This process involves

determining the extent of resources available to meet demands, with research suggesting that resources should be matched to individual demands for effective use.

The appraisal process assumes that newcomers will either perceive the demand as a hindrance, leading to physical and psychological stress, or as an opportunity to overcome and engage in meeting the demand, enabling the acquisition of other resources. Individuals are motivated to protect, maintain, and acquire resources, and will engage in specific actions to effectively manage them. For example, if newcomers perceive the stressors as challenging, they may engage more.

The study suggests that resource management decisions impact newcomer adjustment and proximal outcomes, which in turn influence distal outcomes. Proximal outcomes involve the acquisition of personal, relational, and structural resources, while distal socialization outcomes include job attitudes, performance, talent retention, and understanding organizational culture. The model also includes reciprocal arrows, as resources acquired by newcomers influence other aspects over time.

Sources of Demands and Resources: Individual and Organizational Socialization Tactics through the Lens of Stress

Organizational socialization has a long history of theorizing and empirical investigations, emphasizing the role of both organizational and individual tactics in the process (Reichers, 1987). These concepts have been consistently reviewed (e.g., Chao, 2012; Wanberg, 2012) and supported in meta-analyses (e.g., Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007; Saks et al., 2007) and empirical studies (e.g., N. J. Allen & Meyer, 1990; Ashforth et al., 2007; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Bauer & Green, 1998; G. R. Jones, 1986; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Saks, Gruman, & Cooper-Thomas, 2011), demonstrating their importance in facilitating socialization.

Research indicates that institutionalized socialization tactics are more beneficial for proximal outcomes like role clarity, self-efficacy, and social integration (Bauer et al., 2007; G. R. Jones, 1986), while individualized approaches result in lower levels of clarity, efficacy, and social

integration. Organizational tactics also influence proximal outcomes like perceptions of fit (Chao, 2012; Ostroff, 2012), which are related to distal outcomes like performance, satisfaction, commitment, and intentions to stay with the organization (Bauer et al.; Saks et al., 2007).

The model suggests that individual and organizational tactics impact newcomers' stress experiences and their ability to cope with demands in their new environment (Hobfoll, 1989; Saks & Gruman, 2012). Newcomers seek to accumulate and maintain organizational resources essential to stress and adjustment. This article provides a basic overview of these areas, focusing on work stress literature, focusing on acquiring resources through individual tactics and how organizational tactics facilitate resource building.

Individual Tactics

Griffin, Neal, and Parker's job performance model emphasizes the importance of employees' proactivity in dynamic environments. They argue that while task proficiency increases effectiveness in stable environments, adaptive and proactive behavior is more effective. Proactive behavior involves self-directed action to initiate change, challenge the status quo, and understand work roles. Research suggests that employees are more likely to engage in proactive behavior when faced with ambiguous situations (e.g., Ashford & Black; Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Callister, Kramer, & Turban, 1999; Morrison, 1993a; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

Proactive behavior in socialization involves newcomers using tactics to achieve work goals or facilitate their own socialization. Ashford and Black (1996) identified three main categories: sense making, relationship building, and positive framing. Seeking feedback helps new employees understand their roles and gain clarity. Socializing, networking, and building relationships contribute to social acceptance and group adjustment. Positive framing is a cognitive self-management mechanism that enhances job performance by altering understanding of uncertainty.

Newcomer proactive behaviors positively impact socialization outcomes like task mastery, learning, and role clarity (Ashforth et al., 2007; Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Gruman et al., 2006), as

well as job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Increased proactivity leads to better adjustment and assimilation, aligning with the literature on employee proactivity benefits (A. E. Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000; Morrison, 2002; Saks & Ashforth, 1997).

The model suggests that newcomers' strategies, such as seeking task information and building relationships, can help them gain crucial job and psychological resources. These resources can reduce stress and improve their ability to cope with demands (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Employees with these resources, such as greater role clarity, positive competence beliefs, and a strong social network, are more likely to view demands as achievable challenges and exhibit positive responses (LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005).

Organizational Tactics

Research on organizational socialization has focused on organizational tactics, with Van Maanen and Schein's influential typology defining six tactics used by organizations. Jones later expanded on this by classifying tactics into higher order categories like collective and investment.

Cable and Parsons (2001) supported the "buckets" of tactics proposed by Jones, which are related to socialization outcomes. Research shows that newcomers prefer institutionalized practices for successful socialization, as they reduce stress and facilitate positive coping. Taormina and Law (2000) found that newcomer training negatively impacts emotional exhaustion and coworker support negatively affects personal accomplishment. Formal practices facilitating learning and relationship building can affect adjustment through stress.

Saks and Gruman (2012) proposed socialization resource theory to summarize organizational activities and emphasize the importance of resources in facilitating socialization experiences. They argued that institutionalized tactics are more effective than individualized tactics, and focused on new employee resources.

Research shows that individual and organizational tactics are crucial for positive newcomer adjustment, as they provide potential resources for better adjustment (M. A. Griffin et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). Engaging in these tactics influences cognitive appraisals of job

demands and provides coping resources for new employees, influencing their stress or engagement experiences.

Newcomer Stress Appraisal Process

Occupational stress research often highlights the negative effects of stressors (Boswell et al., 2004), but inconsistent findings have been found (e.g., Boswell et al.; Cavanaugh et al., 2000). The challenge-hindrance stressor framework suggests two categories of stressors: hindrance stressors, such as red tape and role ambiguity, thwart goals and result in negative outcomes, and challenge stressors, like workload and time pressure, can lead to positive outcomes like goal achievement and well-being. Employees cope with challenge stressors effectively, while hindrances are often addressed with avoidant or emotion-focused strategies.

The challenge-hindrance stressor framework offers valuable insights into how appraisals of demands as challenges or hindrances influence outcomes. However, it is limited in its ability to explain stress processes (B. D. Edwards, Franco-Watkins, Cullen, Howell, & Acuff, 2014; Van den Broeck, De Cuyper, De Witte, & Vansteenkiste, 2010). The transactional model of stress suggests that reactions to stressors depend on how they are perceived by the perceiver. Stressful experiences involve the interplay of person and environment, with primary appraisal assessing threat to goals and well-being, followed by secondary appraisal and coping efforts (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; LePine et al., 2005).

Integrating the transactional model of stress and the challenge-hindrance stressor framework B. D. Edwards et al. (2014), can reveal affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions to stress processes closer to work-related outcomes. This approach simplifies disentanglement between environmental stressors and individuals' perceptions, unlike the rigid categorization in the challenge-hindrance stressor framework. The JD-R model, as defined by Bakker and Demerouti, highlights the importance of job resources in addressing occupational stress. Job resources are physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects that help achieve work goals, reduce demands, and stimulate personal growth. They are particularly crucial for employees

in high-demand situations, such as entering new roles, where resources are needed to effectively cope with stress.

Job demands are physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that require sustained effort or skills. They positively relate to strain outcomes and moderate job resource impact on motivation. The challenge-hindrance stressor framework informs the JD-R model.

Empirical results support the importance of considering demand nature in the JD-R model. Challenge stressors, hindrance stressors, and resources are distinct constructs, explaining 50% more variance in engagement. Both challenge and hindrance demands predict burnout, while hindrance demands are negatively related to engagement. Resources negatively predict burnout and positively predict engagement.

Newcomers often perceive certain demands as challenging and others as hindering, according to the JD-R and challenge-hindrance stressor perspectives. However, individual differences in resources may lead to variations in job demands' nature, severity, and level. Resources and socialization tactics that reduce uncertainty could significantly influence newcomers' perception of stressors.

Resource Management

The study suggests that stress during the socialization process can predict whether a new employee withdraws or actively participates. The JD-R model is based on the conservation of resources framework (Hobfoll, 2001), which suggests individuals monitor and manage their resources to protect, recover from, or acquire new resources. The interplay between resource loss and acquisition affects employee well-being and can influence work behavior, Halbesleben and colleagues (2014).

Newcomers who lack resources to cope with uncertainty and demands in their new environment may disengage from the learning process and take measures to protect themselves, leading to reduced engagement, reduced adjustment, and potential negative job attitudes or

turnover (Bauer et al., 2007). This can also affect newcomer health and well-being, including burnout, depression, and adverse physiological outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial for newcomers to adapt and maintain their well-being, (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

Newcomers who perceive adequate resources are more likely to interpret environmental demands as opportunities for growth and invest resources to further their integration with the organization (Hobfoll, 2001). Research supports the idea that individuals consciously invest resources for the sake of acquiring or accessing other valued resources (Hakanen, Peeters, & Perhoniemi, 2011). This can lead to increased engagement, investment in learning about the organization, and early voice of concerns to protect themselves from future resource loss (Ng & Feldman, 2012).

Socialization Resources in the Context of Newcomer Stress Appraisal

The review discusses newcomer resources during socialization, highlighting similarities between socialization and stress literatures. It identifies three categories of newcomer resources: personal, relational, and structural. The proposed model can help understand the mechanisms underlying these associations and identify areas for future research.

Personal Resources during Newcomer Socialization

Personal resources are individual characteristics that promote positive adjustment in a new work role. They serve as resistance against stressors and are motivating, Hobfoll (1989). Personal resources can result from and contribute to positive cognitive appraisals of work demands for newcomers. Organizational tactics that help build a sense of mastery can reduce perceptions of demands and increase employees' propensity to invest more time and effort. Personal resources may also represent individual differences that newcomers draw upon when faced with demands.

Research indicates that personal resources such as self-efficacy, proactivity, Big Five personality traits, and adaptability sub-traits play a crucial role in socialization outcomes for newcomers, suggesting that active engagement in the socialization process is essential for effective adjustment.

Self-efficacy, a belief in one's ability to perform at a certain level, has been studied as a precursor to socialization outcomes, including proactive behaviors, intentions to return, and subsequent socialization outcomes like social acceptance, satisfaction, performance, organizational commitment, and turnover.

Self-efficacy has been found to directly affect newcomers and interact with other contextual variables, such as tactics. Studies have shown that low self-efficacy negatively impacts innovative role orientation, high self-efficacy increases satisfaction and intentions to quit, and low self-efficacy leads to more information seeking, G. R. Jones (1986). Additionally, low self-efficacy negatively impacts organizational commitment and identification. Therefore, newcomers may react differently to their environments based on their self-efficacy levels, Sluss, Ashforth, and Gibson (2012), Major and Kozlowski (1997). Proactive personality, a tendency to influence environmental change (Bateman & Crant, 1993), is linked to newcomer adjustment (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003), career satisfaction (Kim, Hon, & Crant, 2009), perceived insider status (Kim et al.), and proactive intentions (Gruman & Saks, 2011). It is a crucial factor in socialization outcomes, as proactive behaviors are key to success. Newcomer curiosity, a concept that influences adaptation behaviors, has been found to promote positive framing and information seeking (e.g., Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Gruman & Saks; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), (Harrison et al., 2011).

The Big Five personality factors, including extraversion (e.g., Gruman & Saks, 2011; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), neuroticism (e.g., Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller), conscientiousness (e.g., Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller), agreeableness (e.g., Gruman & Saks), and openness to experience (e.g., Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller; Wang et al., 2011), have been found to impact various socialization indicators, according to studies.

Individual differences, such as job involvement (Ashford & Cummings, 1985), affect (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2007), need for control (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Black & Ashford, 1995), feedback (Black & Ashford), tolerance for ambiguity (Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams, 1992), and

learning goal orientation (van der Rijt, Van den Bossche, van de Wiel, Segers, & Gijssels, 2012), have main effects on socialization outcomes. Career goals (e.g., Colarelli, Dean, & Konstans, 1987), work-related values, and age also play a role. Perceived demographic similarity is related to proactive behavior among newcomers, and four types of adaptability—cultural, work stress, interpersonal, and learning adaptability Wang et al. (2011) —improve person-environment fit perceptions among newcomers.

Work stress literature supports the relationship between individual characteristics and stress, coping efforts, and work-related outcomes. Studies show that high neuroticism is associated with burnout, while low neuroticism combined with high extraversion and mobility leads to engagement. Proactive personality is related to job strain, with job demands varying degrees when proactivity or control are low, Parker and Sprigg (1999). Self-efficacy is also associated with work engagement, Halbesleben (2010).

Studies have integrated personality, stressors, and strains into socialization research. Spector and O'Connell (1994) found negative affectivity, locus of control, and Type A personality related to stress and strain outcomes after new employment. Jones et al. (2005) found neuroticism's effects on mental and physical health and sickness absence in new healthcare workers. Bauer and Truxillo (2000) found personality's effects on temporary worker selection success.

The literature on socialization and stress/well-being shares similarities in personality variables and findings. Personal characteristics are essential resources for newcomers, positively affecting their appraisals of demands and engagement. Further research is needed to examine the relationship between stress appraisals and subsequent behavior to acquire resources and understand within-person variation in personal resources.

Relational Resources during Newcomer Socialization

Relational resources are essential aspects of the social environment that promote positive integration and acceptance. Newcomers develop relationships with supervisors, coworkers, and

mentors, which are crucial for embedding in the organization (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Integration into work groups, learning roles, and confidence gain are critical indicators of newcomer adjustment, Bauer et al. (2007).

Socialization literature highlights the importance of relational resources in facilitating better adjustment for newcomers by improving their understanding of their tasks and work context. Studies have shown that having a mentor (Ostroff and Kozlowski (1993)), managerial clarifying behaviors, and reduced perceived supervisor support can improve organizational adjustment. These findings support the notion of resource management, which involves investing resources for the purpose of acquiring new resources. Relational identification with supervisors is crucial for newcomers' adjustment and performance, as it can influence their emotional responses and overall performance. Therefore, understanding relational resources is essential for successful socialization.

Relational resources, such as similarity to coworkers and network size, density, departmental diversity, and status, play a crucial role in socialization. These resources influence task mastery and role clarity, highlighting the importance of similarity to coworkers in fostering a more effective work environment.

Research shows that relationships directly affect job performance and organizational attachment. Satisfaction with one's team negatively impacts turnover intentions. Fitting in with supervisors and being helpful to coworkers is associated with organizational commitment and retention. Developmental feedback and social exchanges with coworkers influence task performance, supporting the direct relationship between relationships and motivational behaviors.

Interpersonal relationships at work significantly influence stress levels and strain (Johnson & Hall, 1988). Leader-member exchange (LMX) quality, which includes one's immediate supervisor, has been found to negatively relate to time-based stress (Kinicki & Vecchio, 1994) and other stressors. Mentors also play a role in stress management, with studies showing a negative relationship between supportive mentors and work-family conflict, Nielson, Carlson, and

Lankau (2001). Both LMX and mentoring are negatively related to role stress and burnout, Thomas and Lankau (2009).

Studies show that meaningful relationships and social support can mitigate work stress and improve workplace experiences. A meta-analysis of 68 studies found that social support moderates stressor-strain relationships and is a more relevant predictor of burnout, (Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999), Halbesleben (2006).

Relational resources may indirectly reduce strain by buffering the negative effects of job demands on strains, (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), according to a study in the socialization literature. However, studies on such associations are limited.

Nelson and Quick's study found that supervisor and coworker helpfulness negatively predicts distress symptoms in newcomers. Jones and colleagues' study found no support for this association. Fisher's research showed social support reduces newcomer stress. Other studies suggest a relationship between relational resources and newcomer empowerment, Chen, 2005; Chen & Klimoski, 2003. Understanding how helpful behaviors, role modeling, and high-quality exchanges with insiders may relate to burnout, stress, and anxiety during organizational entry is crucial.

The socialization process of newcomers is influenced by interactions with coworkers, mentors, and supervisors. Strong social ties provide resources and encourage long-term learning, ultimately promoting effectiveness. Stress research can provide insight into when things go wrong, such as workplace conflicts and aggression. Current employees may feel threatened or harbor unhelpful cognitions about new employees, and the extent of interactions between new and current employees is an underexplored area of socialization research.

Structural Resources during Newcomer Socialization

Structural resources, such as person-organization (P-O) fit and role clarity, are crucial for understanding and performing in one's work role. As per Kristoff (1996), P-O fit is defined as the compatibility between people and organizations, where at least one entity provides what the other

needs, shares similar fundamental characteristics, or both. Research supports the importance of other forms of fit, such as person-vocation fit (Holland, 1959), in relation to socialization and newcomer stress and well-being. Value congruence is an especially important structural resource, as values transcend other aspects of the job and work environment, provide rationale for actions, and are fundamental and enduring (Kristof; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).

Role clarity is a crucial structural resource, requiring adequate information about one's responsibilities, priorities, and goals. Role ambiguity, or lack of clarity, is often a stressor, making it the most structurally determined stressor. Role clarity, the opposite of ambiguity, is fitting to position as a structural resource.

The socialization literature on P-O fit is based on Schneider's attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) framework, which suggests individuals join organizations based on perceived compatibility with the organization. Acculturation, or helping employees learn about and adjust to the organization's culture, is a key element of the socialization process, helping to reduce the likelihood of unfavorable outcomes for employees and organizations due to initial misfit. This helps to align employee and organizational values and reduce the likelihood of incongruences, (Cooper-Thomas, van Vianen, & Anderson, 2004; De Cooman et al., 2009). Research indicates that enhancing P-O fit in organizations is beneficial for various socialization outcomes, such as intentions to stay (Chatman, 1991; Saks et al., 2007; van Vianen, 2000; Wang et al., 2011), commitment (Chow, 2002; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Saks et al.; van Vianen), turnover (Carr, Pearson, Vest, & Boyar, 2006; Chatman; van Vianen & Prins, 1997), expected tenure, job satisfaction (e.g., Chatman; Cooper-Thomas et al.; Saks et al.; Wang et al.), performance (Saks et al.), role orientation (Saks et al.), career satisfaction, and job satisfaction. Fit also acts as a mediator between socialization tactics and newcomer characteristics, resulting in more distal outcomes (Carr et al.; Cooper-Thomas et al.; Saks et al.; Saks & Gruman, 2011; Wang et al.).

Morrison emphasized role clarification as a crucial part of socialization, predicting long-term outcomes (e.g., Bauer et al., 2007; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Saks et al., 2007).

Studies show it positively impacts newcomers' job performance, satisfaction, commitment, and intentions to stay. Additionally, role clarity partially mediates relationships between socialization tactics and information seeking.

Stress, strain, and structural resources

Person-environment fit (P-O fit) is a key factor in reducing stress and enhancing well-being. According to French, Caplan, and Harrison (1982), there is positive correlations between P-O fit and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions, while negative correlations exist with stress or poor well-being. This suggests that P-O fit is a resource that independently decreases stress, highlighting the importance of alignment between individuals and their work environments.

Role ambiguity, often viewed as a hindrance stressor, is negatively related to stress and well-being outcomes. It is associated with negative outcomes like personal accomplishment, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction, (Örtqvist & Wincent, 2006), while positively affecting anxiety, tension, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, propensity to quit (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Örtqvist & Wincent), and physiological stress symptoms (Nixon, Mazzola, Bauer, Krueger, & Spector, 2011). Additionally, it has been linked to performance outcomes (Fisher & Gitelson; Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008), with negative correlations found between role ambiguity and various job performance ratings.

Meta-analyses confirm the negative effects of role ambiguity, showing hindrance stressors positively relate to strain, negatively to motivation, performance, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and positively related to turnover intentions, withdrawal behavior, and turnover, LePine et al. (2005).

Structural resources: Implications of stress research for the socialization process

Research from socialization and stress literatures shows that Person-O fit and role clarity have positive outcomes for individuals, influencing stress, engagement, adjustment, and performance. Studies often do not integrate socialization and stress perspectives, but the findings

suggest that these concepts can be framed as resources within the JD-R framework, shielding individuals from stress and facilitating coping with job demands.

The concept of P-O fit and role clarity as structural resources can inform stress and socialization literatures. It expands the range of resources studied in work stress literature, empowering individuals and organizations to increase employee well-being. This perspective also explains how these resources can influence how stressful organizational socialization tactics or job demands affect strain and related outcomes. Further research is needed to fully understand their benefits.

Resources That Matter

The model provides a framework for categorizing resources and suggests that they can contribute to and result from the socialization process. It suggests that stress-based research could expand on current studies by examining the resources that matter to socialization, their mechanisms, and how they can be developed through socialization practices. The model suggests that resources beyond traditional socialization literature may be critical for mitigating stress, especially when matched to newcomers' demands. Further research is needed to understand how resources work together and identify socialization practices contributing to enhanced resources for new employees.

The Role of Time

The socialization process for new employees is influenced by the experience of stressors, which can accumulate over time and lead to strain. To optimize the socialization experience, it is crucial to understand the role of time, with more intense socialization occurring within the first 30-60 days. Socialization practices that provide relevant resources for newcomers should be matched with experienced stress to be most successful. However, further research is needed to examine the trajectory of stress experienced by newcomers, as well as the impact of organizational tactics and newcomer efforts on these trajectories. Additionally, understanding how socialization practices can break or spur gain cycles is valuable both theoretically and practically.

Social Context

The social context plays a crucial role in the socialization process, especially for newcomers. The relationship climate of a work group can affect stress experienced by newcomers. While social support can buffer stressors, negative interactions can be a major source of stress. Even in supportive teams, strain may still occur when joining highly interdependent groups. Formal socialization tactics, such as segregation and training, may reduce stress for both newcomers and current team members. Factors like team support and cohesion can either hinder or enhance stressful interactions.

Health and Well-Being Outcomes

Socialization research has found a connection between proximal adjustment outcomes like role clarity and organizational outcomes like job attitudes and performance. These indicators may serve as job or personal resources that influence employee motivation and engagement. Integrating stress theories can help examine constructs like need satisfaction, work engagement, and flow, which positively affect employee well-being. Understanding how stress affects newcomer work and non-work outcomes related to health and well-being is crucial for socialization research. The model proposed can guide future research and provide insight into the impact of newcomer stress on the socialization experience and its outcomes.

Organizational Socialization: The Effective Onboarding of new employees

As per Bauer & Erdogan research in 2011, Organizational socialization is more about helping a newcomer move from being an outsider to an insider and is different from occupational socialization, which is about understanding the norms of the profession like being a police officer, nurse, scientist etc.

Research proves that Organizational socialization is important because it helps newcomers to adjust quickly into their environment & thereby enhance their effectiveness, satisfaction, & commitment (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo & Tucker, 2007). As per Reichers, 1987, interactionist perspective is the process where in both organizations & newcomers work to have

mutual influence like organizations spend time, effort, money to train new employees & newcomers also spend time & effort to attain Organizational membership.

Trajectory of newcomer adjustment

Researchers have always been concerned about defining the length of time newcomers take to adjust within the organization. Bauer, Morrison & Callister (1998) have done various studies & tried to gather information at various intervals of employee joining (3-6-9-12 months). Boswell, Boudreau, & Tichy (2005) questioned whether a new joiner experiences a “honeymoon” phase upon entry, however, Louis (1980) brought a different angle to this assumption when he said that the newcomer may experience “shock” as well. Chatman, 1991, said that it takes time to understand the inner aspects/ workings of an organization. It is yet not clear whether the entry of newcomer in organizational setting will follow a downward or an upward trajectory of adjustment.

In a study by Bauer et al 2007, there was an increase in self-efficacy after few months of new hire & then there was a steady decrease after about 3 months. And was opposite for Role clarity which decreased in first few months & then increased after 3rd month. Mean social acceptance declined in 1st 6 months & then increased beyond that time. The convergence & divergence of these 3 variables indicates that when a newcomer joins an organization they appear more efficacious/ confident about the new role but then realize that the role is more complex & more clarity is required.

Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, And Tucker came up with a model of newcomer adjustment during socialization. This model examines role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance as indicators of newcomer adjustment. It proposes information seeking and organizational socialization tactics as antecedents, and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, intentions to remain, and turnover as outcomes. The model is proposed for three reasons: theoretically, it focuses on uncertainty reduction, individual

adjustment, and practical application, highlighting commonly studied constructs in newcomer socialization.

Socialization researchers have studied adjustment indicators in various ways, including resolution of role demands, task mastery, and social acceptance. Role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance are commonly used as indicators of newcomer adjustment. However, researchers have taken different approaches to measure adjustment, with some measuring it as a latent construct, while others focus on actual learning and knowledge acquisition. Some researchers have developed specialized measures of adjustment that directly tap into learning regarding specific aspects of the job and organization. Despite their promise, none of these measures have been consistently used across the socialization literature.

Saks and Ashforth's summary model of socialization suggests information seeking and socialization tactics as antecedents of newcomer adjustment. Organizations create situations for newcomers to adjust, resulting in different socialization tactics. Newcomers seek information to help them adjust, with organizational goals ranging from conformity to innovation, influencing their adjustment process.

Van Maanen and Schein's theory of socialization suggests that newcomers reduce uncertainty to create predictable environments. Information seeking, particularly from social interactions with superiors and peers, is crucial for the sense-making process. Organizational insiders serve as "sounding boards" and provide background information, helping newcomers diagnose and interpret surprises.

Miller and Jablin's 1991 article on information seeking identifies three adjustment types: referent information (role clarity), appraisal information (self-efficacy), and relational information (social acceptance). These types of information seeking and adjustment indicators overlap.

E. W. Morrison (2002) highlighted the difficulty in comparing information-seeking measures across studies due to their varying approaches. The study examined the relationship

between information seeking and outcomes using moderation analysis, examining results on facets and aggregate measures.

Organizational socialization tactics are strategies used by organizations to facilitate adjustment in new roles. These tactics can be categorized into six dimensions: collective versus individual, formal versus informal, sequential versus random, fixed versus variable, serial versus divestment, and investiture versus divestment. The purpose of these tactics is to reduce uncertainty experienced during early socialization, shaping the type of information newcomers receive, the source of this information, and the ease of getting information. Jones (1986) proposed that the six tactics could be classified as content (collective, formal), context (sequential, fixed), and social (serial, investiture) aspects of socialization. However, this higher order classification has received little attention. A study by Cable and Parsons (2001) found that these dimensions were differentially related to outcomes, suggesting the importance of examining the differential relations between socialization dimensions and outcomes.

Newcomer adjustment is often linked to performance, job attitudes, and retention outcomes (Bauer et al., 1998). Clear role expectations, social acceptance, and high self-efficacy are expected to improve performance (Bauer & Green, 1994). Job attitudes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to remain, are also related to adjustment. Role ambiguity, uncertainty, and lack of social support can lead to dissatisfaction and burnout. High self-efficacy and social support are crucial for job attitudes (Fisher, 1985; Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983). Successful adjustment to new roles and a strong attachment to the organization can prevent employees from leaving their jobs Wanous (1980). However, the nature of these relationships remains unclear due to conflicting findings and a lack of individual studies.

Understanding Onboarding from the view of Generation Z

Research on millennials has been a topic of interest, but the new generation, Generation Z, is also gaining attention. A study by a Network of Executive Women and Deloitte predicts that Generation Z surpasses millennials, with over one-third of the population identifying as such.

Understanding the differences between Generation Z and the rest of the generation is crucial for organizations to successfully onboard them. Effective onboarding strategies are essential for the success of both employees and the organization. However, the literature on Generation Z has been limited (Scholz, 2014; Turner, 2015; Bencsik et al., 2016; Chillakuri and Mahanandia, 2018), with little research on organizations' readiness to accommodate the cohort of new Gen Z employees. As organizations start recruiting Generation Z, it is essential to develop a well-established onboarding program to successfully onboard the new cohort.

Generation Z, born after 1995, makes up 32% of the global population (Miller & Lu, 2019). Research on their characteristics is still in its early stages (Dwivedula et al., 2019) due to differing opinions among scholars. Each generation is unique and needs to be understood differently. Generation Z is particularly influenced by the internet, and the lack of empirical studies on their traits adds confusion. Some argue that Generation Z is more concerned about job fit than job security.

Generation Z shares many characteristics with millennials (Wiedmer, 2015; Kebritchi and Sharifi, 2016; Chillakuri and Mahanandia, 2018; Schroth, 2019), including being early starters (Cameron and Pagnattaro, 2017), entrepreneurial (Lanier, 2017; Christensen et al., 2018), tech-savvy (Opris and Cenusa, 2017; O'Boyle et al., 2017; Francis and Hoefel, 2018), independent (Chillakuri and Mahanandia, 2018; Francis and Hoefel, 2018; Robertson, 2018;

Dwivedula et al., 2019), and preferring autonomy at work (Wiedmer, 2015). They are also influenced by social media, technology use, and workplace expectations. Previous literature on Generation Z has focused on inter-generational differences (Lanier, 2017; Grow and Yang, 2018), values towards achieving goals (Bencsik et al., 2016; Gutfreund, 2016; Christensen et al., 2018; Grow and Yang, 2018; Berge and Berge, 2019), education and learning styles (Iorgulescu, 2016; Chicca and Shellenbarger, 2018; Pousson and Myers, 2018; Berge and Berge, 2019), career expectations (Loveland, 2017; Grow and Yang, 2018; Fratri cova and Kirchmayer, 2018; Dwivedula et al., 2019; Berge and Berge, 2019), and the impact of social media on Generation Z

(Turner, 2015; Wozniak, 2016; Duffett, 2017; Dwivedula et al., 2019). However, studies on their onboarding expectations have been lacking. This study aims to address this gap by examining their buying behaviors and onboarding expectations.

The literature on Generation Z is limited, with few studies on their values, learning styles, and workplace expectations. This study aims to understand their expectations in the initial days of joining the workplace, focusing on the bidirectional relationship between employees and organizations. It seeks to understand Generation Z and their onboarding expectations, enabling organizations to address these expectations effectively.

Recruiting talent is crucial for an organization's success, and a top-grade onboarding program is essential (Becker, 2010; Becker and Bish, 2019) to ensure employees are up and functioning early. Onboarding varies from organization to organization and helps employees integrate with the organization, culture (Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer, 2010; Watkins, 2016), and access to information (Becker and Bish, 2019). A well-designed program reduces anxiety and uncertainty, providing clarity and understanding of their role (Schroth, 2019). Organizations treat onboarding as a strategic program, as the impression created during the initial days can have a lasting impact on the organization's success.

Prior Research (Allen et al., 2004; Harris et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 2007; Meyer and Bartels, 2017) shows that effective onboarding leads to increased performance, job satisfaction, and loyalty. Organizations need to provide necessary input for new hires to succeed. Onboarding programs aim to increase confidence, boost productivity, and build positive associations (Guðmundsdóttir and Lundbergsdóttir, 2016). However, there is a gap between Generation Z's expectations and what is delivered. The study focuses on welcoming and integrating Generation Z into organizations, equipping them with the necessary information and skills for effective work.

Onboarding, a recent HR phenomenon, is based on organizational socialization theory (Klein and Heuser, 2008; Daskalaki, 2012). Scholars have developed various models, including six tactical dimensions, 12 content areas, an Inform-Welcome-Guide model, and a 4Cs model

Bauer (2010). These models emphasize the importance of learning in the onboarding process, leading to increased perceived organizational support, commitment, and job satisfaction. Those who receive all levels, including connections, report higher perceived support and job satisfaction.

Generation Z, the first digital natives, expects a seamless onboarding process. They are comfortable collecting information and integrating virtual and offline experiences (Francis and Hoefel, 2018). The onboarding process should start before employees enter organizations, as they may perceive a lack of digital thinking (Deloitte, 2019). While most organizations provide a digital onboarding experience, some processes are still paper-based, making the process slow. Understanding these expectations helps HR professionals redefine and readjust their onboarding programs.

Managing expectations of Generation Z in organizations is challenging due to their idealistic view of meaningful work. Employees may feel their job is boring or repetitive, leading to a decline in their contribution. Managers must help employees understand their work's significance to the organization's success. Meaningful interactions with colleagues, managers, and clients positively affect employee innovation and creative work solutions (Zhou and Shalley, 2003; Pradhan and Jena, 2019). In today's business world, work is less defined, making it difficult to discuss in onboarding orientation programs. Employees are motivated to contribute beyond financial gains when their work purpose is known. Automating redundant tasks is essential for new hires.

Generation Z values organizations' values, vision, and strategic goals, and their initial onboarding should align with these values. A survey by Network of Executive Women and Deloitte found that 77% of Generation Z choose organizations based on their values and ethics, rather than innovative products or resources. To attract talent, organizations should highlight their efforts in social activities and embody these values in their onboarding program. They prefer job security (Iorgulescu, 2016; Lazanyi and Bilan, 2017; Lanier, 2017) and purposeful work.

Generation Z prefers instant feedback (Lanier, 2017; Chillakuri, 2018) and frequent conversations with managers, as they are digital natives and prefer in-person feedback (Lazanyi and Bilan, 2017; Lanier, 2017). They value timely feedback for learning and improvement, and 66% of respondents suggest instant and real-time feedback. They believe in candid feedback, as it allows them to focus on areas for improvement rather than waiting for year-end reviews. Multinational companies like Accenture, Deloitte, KPMG, Microsoft, and Adobe have shifted from a bell curve approach to a future-oriented performance management system, recognizing the importance of frequent employee discussions and the need for career advancement opportunities (Chillakuri, 2018).

Generation Z, who have grown up during recession and economic uncertainty, wants to understand the performance management system in their organization. They are career-hungry, eager to learn, and question the status quo. They expect high salaries (Deloitte, 2019) and feel ready for promotion within a few months (Bencsik et al., 2016; Lazanyi and Bilan, 2017; Lanier, 2017). Therefore, organizations should discuss performance management and outline the career path for Generation Z during their initial days.

Generation Z, a generation that experienced the Great Recession, prioritizes salary, perks, and job security (Iorgulescu, 2016; Lazanyi and Bilan, 2017; Lanier, 2017); while also valuing work-life balance and flexibility in the workplace (Opris and Cenusă, 2017; Chillakuri and Mahanandia, 2018; Dwivedula et al., 2019; Berge and Berge, 2019). They believe that organizations should provide flexibility to increase productivity and efficiency (Chillakuri and Mahanandia, 2018), and that open, unreserved arrangements should be available for all employees. Generation Z is more pragmatic (Lanier, 2017), believing that as long as work isn't affected, there should be no reason to reject flexibility.

A Priceline study found that 24% of Generation Z feel guilty about taking time off work, fearing it could be judged. They prefer flexibility, as they can work during vacations and are digital natives (Ozkan and Solmaz, 2015). They are open to relocating for a career, but expect

equal employer flexibility. The study suggests that Generation Z appreciates flexible work arrangements to meet personal obligations.

Digitalization and collaboration tools have led to increased remote work (Felstead and Henseke, 2017; Bathini and Kandathil, 2020), providing flexibility and balancing personal and professional goals. However, personal connections with managers and team members are crucial for quick absorbedness and performance. Technology often overshadows the personal experience gained through in-person discussions with colleagues and leaders, making personal connections more valuable in career advancement (Grow and Young, 2018).

Generation Z, often assigned small, redundant tasks by seniors and managers, is more tech-savvy and believes in automation to reduce human errors and ensure quality. They value college education, preferring full engagement and participation in the learning process. A study by Barnes and Noble College (2018) found that 40% of Generation Z pursue careers that align with their interests, and one-third have their own businesses or plan to have in the future.

Generation Z is ambitious, self-confident, and self-directed, preferring challenging work (Bencsik et al., 2016; Chillakuri and Mahanandia, 2018). However, they often experience anxiety about work expectations, which hinders job success. Leaders should set the stage for their onboarding program, including expectations and details related to their day-to-day work. Understanding the job and necessary information is crucial for job success.

Generation Z is a self-directed, independent learner who values autonomy and hands-on experience. They prefer internships and are digitally native, requiring ongoing training to stay relevant. They expect employers to provide necessary training and support for soft skills like communication, collaboration, and time management. To meet their learning styles, organizations should adapt to technology, offer self-learning courses, and be comfortable with this tech-savvy group. They prefer virtual teamwork and prefer complete knowledge about their work. They are also uncertain about future requirements and seek learning opportunities within their organizations.

Effective onboarding programs are crucial for new hires to meet their potential and contribute to employer-employee success. Organizations must design a well-structured program that understands their expectations, values, attitudes, and behaviors. Onboarding solutions should be consistent, personalizing, and provide a positive experience. Generation Z employees are more likely to leave the organization during the initial months, and organizations must engage in a psychological contract (Schroth, 2019), to prevent poor performance and high turnover. Strategies for integrating Generation Z into the workplace are essential. Empirical studies on Generation Z are still in its early stages, and future research should consider a diversified set of respondents and other methodologies to establish objectivity.

Employee retention is a critical issue in the recovering economy, with many companies focusing on high turnover rates. Research shows that tenured employees drive greater value than those "cycling through" the business. The total cost of losing an employee can range from tens of thousands of dollars to 1.5-2X annual salary. Factors such as hiring, onboarding, lost productivity, lost engagement, customer service, errors, training costs, and cultural impact are all significant. It is crucial to remember that people are an "appreciating asset" and that the longer employees stay, the more productive they become, learning systems, products, and working together.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of employee retention and onboarding in healthcare. A successful onboarding program can improve workplace culture, reduce turnover, and immerse new professionals in existing teams. This program provides a local cultural context through videos of the workforce in action, helping new joiners navigate their new environment.

The Multiple Socialization of Organization Members: A Longitudinal Study - Daniel Charles Feldman, Northwestern University

The paper explores the various ways new organization members are socialized, including work skills development, role acquisition, group norm adjustment, learning organizational values, and career preparation. It presents longitudinal empirical data on how these experiences influence

progress in each process and highlights common themes throughout the multiple socialization of organization members.

The model tested here proposes a three-phase socialization process: anticipatory socialization, accommodation, and role management. It involves learning before joining an organization, adjusting to the organization's values and goals, and dealing with conflicts between work group and other groups' demands. This model is similar to Feldman's 1976a model.

The research uses three types of variables: process variables, outcome variables, and performance measures. Process variables measure the extent to which an individual has successfully completed a particular activity in the socialization process, reflecting the consequences of day-to-day organizational events on individual feelings about a particular aspect of the socialization experience. Process variables include realism about the job, realism about the organization, initiation to the task, initiation to the group, role definition, resolution of outside life conflicts, and congruence of evaluation. Outcome variables reflect individual perceptions of overall success in mastering the socialization process, including general satisfaction, internal work motivation, congruence of skills, values, and role definition, manager. Performance measures include undergraduate grade point average and score on the Graduate Management Aptitude Test, mid-year and end-year grades.

Socialization as Development of Work Skills and Abilities:

Dunnette (1966) suggests that candidate ability levels significantly impact job performance, suggesting that undergraduate GPA and GMAT should be significantly related to management school GPA.

Hall and Schein's success spiral syndrome suggests that early career success leads to opportunities and a desire for success, with pre-entry ability measures like GPA and GMAT potentially influencing performance and self-perceptions later in life.

The congruence of evaluation with prior performance results is correlated with subsequent results. Positive feedback is fairer, while negative feedback is harder. Individuals who perceive

their performance ratings as inequitable may see no connection between performance and rewards and perform lower.

Socialization as the Acquisition of a Set of Appropriate Role Behaviors

Realistic expectations about the organization and job are correlated with initial role definition, which helps recruits discover expectations. Role definition is correlated with initiation to the task, leading to increased competence. Role management is correlated with congruence of evaluation, as supervisors may provide more opportunities for learning and high rewards if tasks and priorities align with supervisor preferences. Individuals may use their own priorities to judge the justification of supervisor feedback.

Socialization as Adjustment to the Work Group and Group Norms

The initiation to the task and group is strongly predicted at accommodation, with new recruits facing resistance until trust and friendship develop. GPA is hypothesized to be significantly correlated with general satisfaction, as feelings of satisfaction with the new job and work situation are intertwined.

Socialization as the Learning of Organizational Values

The study suggests that initiation to a group and congruence of values are closely linked. Increased interpersonal attraction between recruits and organization members leads to increased exposure to information supporting dominant beliefs. As new recruits become accepted, they are reinforced for maintaining certain attitudes and values.

Socialization as Preparation for Future Roles within an Organization or a Career Path

Initiation to the group and task is linked to learning the managerial role. Technical and social skills are acquired through school courses and summer job experiences. Many specific role requirements are not taught in professional programs, often passed on by experienced members.

2.4 Summary

Summary of Literature Review:

Over the past years, research on organizational socialization has enriched the literature, supporting Jones' (1986) findings that socialization tactics are negatively related to role ambiguity, conflict, and quit intentions, but positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and custodial role orientation. Training has become an essential part of the socialization process, with most organizations using induction training, which has been found to be related to socialization outcomes.

Over the past years, research has shown that newcomers are proactive during socialization, which is related to work adjustment. The types, methods, and sources of feedback and information acquisition have also been studied. Research on socialization content and learning has provided a better understanding of what newcomers learn during socialization, the processes influencing learning and knowledge, and the relationship between learning and adjustment. However, research on group socialization has shown little empirical research, suggesting more empirical work is needed. The effectiveness of socialization programs depends on newcomer characteristics and the processes underlying their effects.

Organizational socialization is a continuous process that begins before an individual enters an organization, involving activities such as occupational choice, attraction, and selection. It involves change, such as relinquishing certain attitudes, values, and behaviors, acquiring new self-images, involvements, values, and accomplishments, and learning the organization's goals and required behavior patterns. Socialization is a two-way process involving both individuals and organizations, with each party changing expectations and behaviors as they observe others. As socialization progresses, individuals perceive responsibility for achieving activities as their own, rather than those of socialization agents. Socialization does not produce conformity to a single standard but decreases extremes in behavior and attitudes. As socialization progresses, members

become more concerned with their immediate environment, such as co-workers, supervisors, and work group norms. The work group is a crucial mediator in the socialization process.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a shift to remote work, causing challenges for organizations. This study examines digital onboarding processes in a higher education institution during the pandemic. Interviews with 11 newcomers reveal four dimensions impacting newcomer adjustment: relationship building, responsibility and accountability, managing well-being, and information seeking. The study contributes to the discussion on digital onboarding and the approaches used by newcomers.

The successful onboarding of newcomers is crucial for a healthy work environment, but remote work often lacks this component. Newcomers need to engage with their workplace through digital tools, which can increase the likelihood of failed onboarding and newcomer maladjustment. This can lead to lower productivity, job satisfaction, and higher turnover intentions. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought remote work into the mainstream, causing issues of personal well-being, morale, engagement, and retention. Newcomers hired during the pandemic were especially affected as they felt isolated and disengaged from their work. Existing research on improving the onboarding process and newcomer adjustment is primarily focused on traditional, collocated working environments. The COVID-19 restrictions forced organizations to hire and onboard new employees without meaningful face-to-face interaction, leading to ad hoc, reactive approaches to digital onboarding.

Remote work adds complexity to the onboarding process, as it reduces face-to-face interactions and disrupts the socialization process. To address this, organizations often encourage newcomers to integrate with their new work environment, set specific objectives, and provide role clarity. However, in predominantly remote work environments, digital onboarding is a practice that aims to create virtual experiences for newcomers to socialize and adjust. Organizations may resort to socialization substitutes, such as structural changes or information artifacts, to compensate for the absence of face-to-face interaction. The COVID-19 pandemic has further

challenged remote newcomer onboarding, with few studies conducted on the process. However, studies suggest that proactive communication, team building, and introducing an 'onboarding buddy' can contribute to positive outcomes of digital onboarding. As remote work environments become more prevalent, investigating digital onboarding in remote work environments is highly relevant.

Onboarding is a two-way process that requires action from both newcomers and the organization. Four actors involved in the process are line managers, team members, designated onboarding buddies, and newcomers themselves. Mismatched expectations and confusion regarding roles and responsibilities can lead to social isolation and negatively impact newcomers' wellbeing. In a collocated work environment, newcomers engage organically with actors, but in a remote setting, peers need to be specifically informed about their role in onboarding. Introducing a buddy as a primary guide can accelerate newcomer integration, but expectations must be clear to both parties. Newcomers need to be made aware of their responsibilities in the onboarding process and their responsibilities in a remote work environment. Facilitating informal communication among newcomers and peers is crucial, but top-down initiatives may create conflict between work and non-work communication. Organizations should encourage establishing informal communication channels and inform newcomers about and engaging in them early on.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many organizations to adopt remote working practices, making newcomer onboarding a challenging process. A study at a Dutch higher education institution found four dimensions impacting newcomer adjustment: relationship building, responsibility and accountability, managing well-being, and information seeking. The study also revealed approaches to overcome challenges during the pandemic. The digital onboarding process remains understudied, highlighting the need for better theories and understanding.

There is a lot of literature available in silos on Organizational Socialization, but what could not be found is the holistic study that will provide an overview on How Onboarding is done in Large Tech Organizations in Tier I cities in India & How it impacts Employee turnover.

While much of the related research has been done outside India mainly in US or UK, this research will help understand the similar impacts in India. Understanding the impact of Onboarding on turnover will help Organizations create a strong & process-oriented Employee Onboarding Experience strategy to overcome the impact of Employee attrition due to poor Onboarding experience during post-pandemic scenarios.

As is presented above there is a lot of research done on Individual personality, Organization induced stresses, resources, however, very few research studies talk about the impact of pandemic, Hybrid work, Shift in employees' expectations, shift in Organization expectations, drift of power centres on how Organization socialization.

With changing times, there is a strong need to adopt different practices & mindset to ensure there is less infant attrition & higher employee engagement. This will help Organizations to be aware of the changing needs of the society, external dynamics & what needs to be adopted within Organizations as a new approach.

The literature has pointed out the success and the availability of a talent pool but it is important to retain & engage the new employees to operate at higher efficiency & operating profits & continue to build on the talent pool.

The next chapter discusses the methodology, data collection methods, data analysis, validity, and reliability of the study.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic framework that guides the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data in scholarly inquiry. It encompasses both qualitative and quantitative approaches, each rooted in distinct epistemological traditions. Ranjit Kumar (2011) outlines an eight-step model that includes formulating a research problem, designing the study, and selecting appropriate instruments for data collection, emphasizing the importance of methodological rigor in producing valid and reliable findings. Historical research methods, as discussed in the *ENG 311 Research Methods* guide, rely on primary sources to reconstruct past events, demonstrating how methodology adapts to disciplinary needs. The Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP) exemplifies a multi-level methodology that integrated structured surveys with in-depth interviews to capture both statistical and experiential data, highlighting the value of mixed methods in social research. These foundational studies underscore that methodology is not merely a technical tool but a philosophical stance that shapes how knowledge is constructed and understood.

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

In large tech organizations, the onboarding process has evolved from a routine orientation to a strategic driver of employee engagement and retention. Historically known as organizational socialization, onboarding became a recognized HR function in the 1990s, with Bauer & Erdogan (2010) establishing its importance in transitioning new hires into productive, culturally integrated team members. Cable, Gino & Staats (2013) later emphasized the role of personal empowerment during onboarding—suggesting that when employees apply their individual strengths early on, they exhibit higher levels of engagement.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted traditional onboarding norms, accelerating the shift to virtual and hybrid models. Tech firms, known for their dynamic environments, faced new challenges—such as ensuring role clarity, fostering inclusion, and maintaining cultural alignment—all without physical contact. Post-pandemic research, including

insights from SHRM and NASSCOM, revealed that remote onboarding done poorly leads to isolation and reduced morale, while thoughtful, tech-enabled onboarding increases connection and performance.

Organizations that adopted flexible, personalized onboarding journeys—featuring digital collaboration tools, mentorship, and employee feedback mechanisms—reported improved retention (up to 82%) and a 70% rise in new hire productivity. Westover (2024) highlighted that clear communication and social integration are now critical pillars of onboarding success in remote-first workplaces.

In the Indian tech sector, where hybrid work is now the norm, NASSCOM's reports show that 67% of companies cite employee engagement as their top HR challenge in virtual environments. This emphasizes the need for onboarding programs that go beyond procedural tasks and instead cultivate a sense of belonging and purpose.

This research seeks to examine how onboarding practices have evolved in large tech organizations post-COVID. It is also focused on analyzing the connection between onboarding models and long-term employee engagement. This study will also highlight how transitioning from physical ways of onboarding to hybrid or online mode can impact the 4Cs of Onboarding highlighted by Bauer in the study.

This chapter specifies the research design and outlines the various variables that underpin the study and how they are inter-related. It also spells out the procedure and sources for data collection.

The chapter delineates the research design, specifying the variables under investigation and their hypothesized interrelationships. It adopts a quantitative methodology, leveraging secondary data sourced from organizational employee health and engagement surveys. These surveys are administered to employees with a tenure of one year or less, thereby capturing insights from individuals in the critical early stages of their employment lifecycle. This cohort is particularly relevant, as their onboarding experience is likely to have a pronounced impact on their

initial engagement levels, sense of belonging, and intent to stay. By focusing on this population, the study aims to generate evidence-based insights into how onboarding practices can be optimized to support sustained engagement in a hybrid work paradigm.

3.2 Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

The key theoretical constructs in this study will be operationalized as referred in Table 1.

Table 1 Key theoretical constructs in this study

Construct	Operationalization	Measurement Approach
Onboarding	Onboarding activities, effectiveness, and employee perceptions	Surveys, number of sessions, quality ratings, and feedback
Manager Support	Emotional support, task support, accessibility	Employee self-report, frequency of feedback
Employee Engagement	Job satisfaction, motivation, organizational commitment	Surveys (Likert scale), retention intention, motivation assessments

To enable rigorous empirical investigation, this study operationalizes its core theoretical constructs—onboarding and employee engagement—by translating them into measurable dimensions using validated scales. These definitions draw upon prior literature and are tailored to the post-COVID tech workplace context to ensure relevance and precision in measurement.

In order to examine the relationship between onboarding practices and employee engagement within large technology organizations, this study employs precise operational definitions of its key theoretical constructs. The process of operationalization ensures that abstract concepts are translated into observable and measurable indicators, facilitating empirical investigation and analytical clarity.

Onboarding is conceptually defined as the structured integration of new employees into an organization, encompassing the acquisition of necessary knowledge, role-related skills, and cultural understanding. Bauer and Erdogan (2010) describe onboarding as a multifaceted process that enables employees to transition from outsiders to fully engaged organizational members. For this study, onboarding is operationalized through four dimensions: role clarity, social integration,

cultural alignment, and training effectiveness. Role clarity pertains to the extent to which employees understand their job responsibilities and expectations. Social integration reflects the frequency and quality of interactions with team members and mentors. Cultural alignment captures the degree of perceived resonance between employees' personal values and the organization's mission. Finally, training effectiveness refers to employee feedback on onboarding modules and their preparedness for assigned duties. These elements have been adapted from the Onboarding Effectiveness Scale developed by Cable, Gino, and Staats (2013), and are contextualized to reflect the shift towards hybrid and remote onboarding models following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Employee engagement, in turn, is conceptualized as the psychological state reflecting an individual's involvement, enthusiasm, and commitment to their work. Kahn (1990) initially framed engagement as a deep emotional and cognitive investment in professional roles, while Macey and Schneider (2008) refined the construct to include behavioral manifestations of vigor, dedication, and absorption. In this study, engagement will be measured using the Rich Scale (Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010), which captures these three dimensions. In addition, the ISA Scale developed by Soane et al. (2012) will be employed to assess intellectual, social, and affective components of engagement. Responses will be collected using five-point Likert scales.

To account for the evolving nature of the workplace post-COVID, the study also incorporates contextual variables related to remote and hybrid work environments. These include the perceived effectiveness of digital onboarding tools, frequency of virtual interaction, and employee satisfaction with flexible work arrangements. These constructs have been adapted from recent work by Poljsak-Rosinski and Roedenbeck (2025), who emphasize the moderating impact of remote onboarding on employee engagement.

Together, these operational definitions provide a robust foundation for quantitatively exploring the interplay between onboarding practices and employee engagement in the post-pandemic technology sector.

3.3 Research Purpose & Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of onboarding processes in large tech organizations and examine how manager support during onboarding influences employee engagement especially post COVID. Specifically, this research aims to understand the ways and means in which Onboarding programs are structured and delivered in large tech organizations post pandemic. It will also support in exploring the types and levels of support managers provide to new hires during their onboarding period. The impact of effective onboarding and manager support on job satisfaction, motivation, and retention intentions among new employees.

The proposed research has a long-term goal of providing a better understanding of Onboarding New employees in organizations with a more thoughtful & systemic approach and help them become an integral part of the system.

Ultimately, the goal of this research is to provide insights into how onboarding strategies, combined with manager involvement, can enhance employee engagement and contribute to overall organizational success. The findings will be useful for HR professionals, managers, and organizational leaders aiming to optimize onboarding processes and improve employee engagement in large tech firms.

In this research, the following main questions and their sub-questions are set in order to achieve the purpose of this study:

1. What can be an effective Onboarding experience for all Individuals?
2. Are the changing times post pandemic forcing us to adopt newer methods of onboarding talent into organization?
3. How can businesses create a standardized yet flexible onboarding experience that encourages new employees to take efficient ownership of their roles and how can the Manager contribute to make the experience more effective?
4. What stops Large Organizations to bring a personalized Onboarding experience and what can they do to make it more effective & personalized?

5. How has the pandemic impacted the workforce experience when they enter the organization?

3.4 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive and correlational research design to examine the relationship between onboarding practices and employee engagement within large technology organizations, particularly in the post-COVID context. The design is non-experimental in nature, aiming to identify and quantify associations between variables without manipulating organizational environments or onboarding protocols. This approach is well-suited to examining real-world phenomena as they naturally occur, thereby enhancing ecological validity.

A quantitative approach has been selected to enable systematic measurement of onboarding dimensions and engagement outcomes across a diverse sample of employees. This approach facilitates statistical analysis and generalization of findings, while allowing for the inclusion of contextual variables such as remote onboarding experiences, hybrid work adaptation, and organizational tenure. The use of structured instruments ensures consistency in data collection and supports replicability.

The research is both longitudinal and cross-sectional in nature, with data collected at a single point in time as well as over a period of time to assess current onboarding practices and their perceived impact on engagement pre & post COVID. While longitudinal designs offer insights into temporal changes, the cross-sectional format is appropriate for capturing a snapshot of post-pandemic onboarding realities and identifying immediate patterns and correlations.

To ensure methodological rigor, the study employs structured questionnaires comprising validated scales for both onboarding and engagement constructs. These instruments have been adapted to reflect the hybrid and remote work environments prevalent in large tech firms following the COVID-19 pandemic. The inclusion of demographic and contextual variables allows for subgroup analysis and exploration of moderating effects.

The research design also incorporates deductive reasoning, beginning with established theories of organizational socialization and employee engagement (e.g., Bauer & Erdogan, 2010; Kahn, 1990), and testing their applicability within the contemporary tech sector. By grounding the study in existing literature and operationalizing constructs through empirical measures, the design ensures both theoretical alignment and practical relevance.

Ethical considerations, including informed consent and data confidentiality, are embedded within the design framework, and approval will be sought from the appropriate institutional review board prior to data collection.

3.5 Population and Sample

The philosophy underpinning sampling in research centers on the strategic selection of a representative subset from a larger population to enable generalizable and valid conclusions. This principle is foundational to empirical inquiry, as it ensures that research findings accurately reflect the characteristics and diversity of the broader population while balancing methodological rigor with practical constraints such as time, cost, and accessibility.

In clinical research, representativeness is particularly critical to minimizing sampling error and bias. Elfil and Negida (2017), in their educational review on sampling methods, emphasize that the sample must closely mirror the target population to avoid substitution and incompleteness, thereby safeguarding the external validity of the study. A well-chosen sample enhances the reliability of clinical inferences and supports evidence-based decision-making.

In qualitative research, sampling is guided by the principle of information richness rather than statistical representativeness. Purposeful sampling is widely employed to identify individuals or groups with deep knowledge or lived experience of the phenomenon under investigation. Palinkas et al. (2015) highlight that this approach is especially valuable in implementation research, where the goal is to maximize insight and contextual relevance within resource constraints. Purposeful sampling strategies—such as criterion-based, maximum variation, or

expert sampling—allow researchers to explore complex social and organizational dynamics with depth and nuance.

Across both quantitative and qualitative paradigms, sampling methods must be both systematic and context-sensitive. Whether the aim is statistical generalization or thematic saturation, the integrity of the sampling process directly influences the validity, reliability, and applicability of research outcomes. A thoughtfully constructed sample thus serves as the bridge between theoretical constructs and real-world evidence.

This study focuses on employees working in large technology organizations operating within India's metropolitan regions. The target population comprises full-time professionals who have joined their respective organizations within the past 12 months and have undergone formal onboarding processes. This population is selected to ensure relevance to the study's objective of assessing onboarding practices and their impact on employee engagement in post-COVID hybrid work environments.

Given the scale and diversity of the Indian tech sector, it is neither feasible nor methodologically practical to study the entire population. Therefore, a representative sample will be drawn using random sampling. Inclusion criteria will require participants to be full-time employees, have completed onboarding within the past year, and be working in hybrid or remote settings.

Forty-three (43) respondents chose to respond to the survey and permission was taken from the respondents to provide their responses. To ensure representativeness, efforts were made to include participants across diverse roles—engineering, product management, HR, and operations—and across gender and age groups. Although the sample size is modest, it was considered appropriate given the targeted nature of the population and the exploratory scope of the research. The participant pool reflects a meaningful cross-section of new hires within hybrid settings, a group that is inherently limited in size. Additionally, the sample size was shaped by practical constraints related to data access and collection timelines, which are common in

organizational research. Importantly, the responses provided sufficient variability and thematic saturation to identify patterns in onboarding experiences and engagement outcomes. As Lakens (2022) notes, sample size adequacy should be evaluated not only by statistical power but also by the informational value it provides—an approach that supports the use of smaller samples in exploratory studies where the aim is to uncover trends and generate hypotheses rather than to generalize findings across large populations.

The study also incorporates data triangulation by incorporating data from other sources which includes Attrition data (past years), Onboarding survey data (past years) with 2 technology forms which has an employee base of more than 1000.

Ethical protocols were followed including informed consent and confidentiality assurances. All participants were provided with an informed consent form explaining the study's objectives, data collection methods, confidentiality assurances, and their rights to withdraw from the study at any point and all personal information and responses were kept confidential and anonymized for analysis and reporting purposes. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, with participants free to withdraw at any time without consequence.

3.6 Participant Selection

Participants for this study were selected using a simple random sampling technique, ensuring that each eligible individual within the defined population had an equal probability of inclusion. The sampling frame comprised employees who had recently joined large organizations and had completed approximately six months of tenure. This tenure threshold was chosen to ensure that participants had sufficient exposure to the onboarding process while still retaining recall accuracy regarding their initial experiences. Survey was circulated through social media platforms and participants were encouraged to respond to the survey through regular communication.

The rationale for selecting employees at the six-month mark is grounded in onboarding literature, which suggests that engagement outcomes and perceptions of onboarding effectiveness

begin to stabilize within the first 90 to 180 days of employment (Bauer & Erdogan, 2010; SHRM, 2023). By this point, employees are typically integrated into their teams, have completed core training modules, and have begun contributing meaningfully to organizational goals—making them well-positioned to reflect on the onboarding experience and its impact on their engagement.

Random selection was conducted by leveraging the existing 30-60-90 survey forms filled by the targeted employees and also gathering data from population spread across the industry.

This approach enhances the internal validity of the study by minimizing selection bias and ensuring that the sample reflects a diverse cross-section of new hires across departments and roles. It also supports analytic generalization, allowing insights to be extended to similar organizational contexts within the tech sector.

3.7 Instrumentation

This study utilized both primary & secondary methods. Primary employs a structured survey instrument designed to capture both onboarding experiences and levels of employee engagement among new hires in large technology organizations. The instrumentation strategy is grounded in established measurement frameworks and adapted to reflect the post-COVID hybrid work context.

The survey comprises three main sections. The first section collects demographic and contextual data, including tenure, department, onboarding format (virtual, hybrid, or in-person), and work arrangement (remote, hybrid, or on-site). These variables serve as control and moderating factors in the analysis.

The second section operationalizes the construct of onboarding using a multi-dimensional scale adapted from the Onboarding Effectiveness Framework proposed by Cable, Gino, and Staats (2013). Items are designed to assess role clarity, social integration, cultural alignment, and training effectiveness. Each dimension is measured using multiple Likert-scale items ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale has been contextualized to reflect digital

onboarding tools, virtual mentorship, and asynchronous training modules commonly used in post-pandemic tech environments.

The third section measures employee engagement which captures intellectual, social, and affective engagement. This instrument has demonstrated strong psychometric properties in prior organizational studies and is particularly suited for assessing engagement in knowledge-intensive sectors. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale, and internal consistency will be evaluated using Cronbach's alpha for each sub-dimension.

The survey instrument was reviewed by a panel of HR professionals and academic experts to ensure content validity and contextual relevance.

Data was collected electronically using a secure survey platform, ensuring accessibility for participants across remote and hybrid work settings. The instrument is designed to be completed within 12–15 minutes, minimizing respondent fatigue while capturing comprehensive insights into onboarding and engagement experiences.

This study will use a descriptive-correlational research design, which is well-suited to investigate relationships between variables, in this case, onboarding, manager support, and employee engagement. By gathering data on how these variables are related, we can draw conclusions about the extent to which manager support influences employee engagement during onboarding.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

This study employed a structured and ethically guided data collection process to gather quantitative insights into onboarding practices and employee engagement within large technology organizations. The procedures were designed to ensure methodological rigor, contextual relevance, and participant confidentiality, in accordance with institutional research ethics protocols.

Data were collected using a self-administered online survey, distributed to participants via secure organizational channels. The survey instrument was hosted on a GDPR-compliant

platform, enabling accessibility across remote and hybrid work environments. Prior to distribution, the instrument underwent expert review and pilot testing to ensure clarity, reliability, and contextual alignment with post-COVID onboarding realities.

Participants were randomly selected from collaborating organizations, with inclusion criteria specifying full-time employees who had completed approximately six months of tenure. This tenure threshold was chosen to ensure that respondents had sufficient exposure to onboarding processes while retaining accurate recall of their experiences. Randomization was applied using a computer-generated selection protocol to minimize sampling bias and enhance internal validity.

Upon selection, participants were shared the survey link through social media messenger outlining the purpose of the study, estimated completion time, and assurances of confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained electronically prior to survey access, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were anonymized prior to analysis.

The survey remained open for a period of three weeks, during which reminder emails were sent at regular intervals to encourage participation. Response rates were monitored in real time, and data integrity checks were conducted to identify incomplete or inconsistent submissions. Only fully completed surveys were included in the final dataset.

To ensure data quality, the survey incorporated forced-response logic for critical items and embedded attention checks to validate respondent engagement. All collected data were securely stored in encrypted formats and accessed only by the survey administrator.

This procedure enabled the collection of robust, contextually grounded data on onboarding experiences and engagement outcomes, facilitating meaningful analysis and interpretation within the scope of the study.

Data was also collected through organizations authentic sources from Organization X & Y based out of India, which involved Organization database to capture employees experience after

60 or 90 days of them joining the organization, Organizations employee dashboard which also highlighted the exit trends specifically focusing on Infant attrition.

3.9 Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study employed a multi-source, quantitative approach to examine the relationship between onboarding practices and employee engagement, with particular attention to early-stage retention patterns in large technology organizations. By integrating both primary and secondary data sources, the analysis offers a comprehensive view of onboarding effectiveness and its implications for employee experience and attrition.

Primary data were collected through a structured online survey administered to randomly selected employees who had completed approximately six months of tenure. This survey captured perceptions of onboarding quality and engagement levels using validated instruments, including the Onboarding Effectiveness Framework (Cable et al., 2013). Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize demographic variables and onboarding formats, followed by reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha to ensure internal consistency across sub-dimensions.

In addition to survey data, the study incorporated organizationally authenticated secondary data from two key sources which included, first, the Post-Onboarding Experience Records: Internal HR databases provided longitudinal feedback collected at 30-, 60- and 90-day intervals post-joining collected from global Organizations (Organization X & Y) based in India. These records included structured reflections on onboarding satisfaction, role clarity, and integration outcomes. The data were analyzed using time-series techniques to identify trends in employee sentiment and adaptation over the onboarding period, and, second, the Employee Dashboard Analytics which offered real-time metrics on infant attrition, defined as voluntary exits occurring within the first six months of employment. Attrition trends were segmented by onboarding format (virtual, hybrid, in-person), department, and demographic variables. These data were used to conduct predictive attrition modeling, enabling the identification of onboarding-related risk factors associated with early turnover.

The data analysis for this study was conducted using a combination of Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics, both of which are widely recognized tools for quantitative research. Excel was used for initial data cleaning, organization, and visualization, while SPSS facilitated more advanced statistical procedures, including descriptive analysis and correlation testing.

Given the study's descriptive-correlational design, the primary method of analysis was descriptive statistics, which enabled the summarization of key variables such as onboarding scores, engagement levels, tenure, and demographic attributes. Measures of central tendency (mean, median) and dispersion (standard deviation, range) were calculated to identify patterns and variability across the sample. Frequency distributions were used to examine the prevalence of specific onboarding experiences across different employee segments.

To explore relationships between onboarding practices and engagement outcomes, Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied. This allowed for the quantification of the strength and direction of associations between variables such as onboarding modality, tenure, age, and psychological safety. Where appropriate, cross-tabulations and subgroup analyses were conducted to compare onboarding perceptions across grade levels, age cohorts, and onboarding formats (e.g., remote vs. hybrid).

The interpretation of results was guided by both statistical significance and practical relevance. Patterns were contextualized using existing literature on organizational socialization and employee engagement (Bauer & Erdogan, 2010; Kahn, 1990), allowing for theory-informed insights. Findings were also compared against benchmarks from industry reports (e.g., SHRM, NASSCOM) to assess alignment with broader trends in post-pandemic onboarding.

This analytical approach ensured that the data was not only statistically robust but also meaningful in its application to real-world organizational contexts. By combining descriptive and correlational techniques, the study was able to uncover both surface-level trends and deeper relational dynamics between onboarding design and employee experience.

The integration of survey responses with organizational data enhanced the validity and depth of the analysis, allowing for triangulation of findings and identification of actionable insights.

3.10 Research Design Limitations

While the research design adopted in this study offers a structured and empirically grounded approach to examining the relationship between onboarding practices and employee engagement in large technology organizations, it is not without limitations. Acknowledging these constraints is essential to contextualize the findings and guide future research.

One notable limitation stems from the cross-sectional nature of the study. Data were collected at a single point in time, which restricts the ability to capture longitudinal changes in employee engagement or onboarding effectiveness. Although cross-sectional designs are efficient for identifying correlations, they do not allow for causal inferences or the observation of temporal dynamics, such as how engagement evolves beyond the initial onboarding period.

The use of self-reported survey instruments introduces potential biases, including social desirability and recall bias. Participants may overstate positive experiences or underreport dissatisfaction, particularly when reflecting on onboarding processes that occurred several months prior. While validated scales such as the ISA Scale (Soane et al., 2012) and the Onboarding Effectiveness Framework (Cable et al., 2013) were employed to mitigate these risks, the subjective nature of self-assessment remains a methodological constraint.

Although the study incorporated random sampling from organizational databases, the sample was drawn exclusively from employees who had completed approximately six months of tenure. This selection criterion, while methodologically justified, may exclude insights from employees who exited earlier due to poor onboarding experiences—thereby limiting the study’s ability to fully capture infant attrition dynamics. To address this, secondary data from organizational dashboards were included; however, these datasets may lack the qualitative depth needed to understand the nuanced reasons behind early exits.

Another limitation relates to the generalizability of findings. The study focused on large technology firms operating in metropolitan regions of India, which may not reflect onboarding practices or engagement outcomes in smaller firms, non-tech sectors, or organizations in different cultural or geographic contexts. While analytic generalization is possible, caution must be exercised when extrapolating results beyond the sampled population.

Finally, the integration of organizationally authenticated data sources, such as 30-, 60- and 90-day onboarding feedback and attrition dashboards, enhances the robustness of the analysis but also introduces variability in data formats and completeness. These sources were not originally designed for academic research, and inconsistencies in data capture across organizations may affect comparability and interpretation.

Despite these limitations, the research design remains methodologically sound and offers valuable insights into onboarding and engagement in the post-COVID tech workplace. Future studies may consider longitudinal designs, mixed-method approaches, and broader sampling frames to address these constraints and deepen understanding.

3.11 Conclusion

The research methodology employed in this study has been designed to effectively address the research questions surrounding the relationship between onboarding processes, manager support, and employee engagement in large tech organizations. By adopting quantitative data collection and analysis method, this methodology provides a robust framework for exploring the complexities of the topic.

The quantitative component, using structured surveys, allows for the collection of broad, generalizable data regarding employee experiences with onboarding and manager support, as well as their engagement levels. This approach ensures that patterns, correlations, and statistical relationships can be identified between the key variables. The use of reliability testing (e.g., Cronbach's alpha), correlation analysis, and regression modeling enhances the validity of the

findings and provides a comprehensive understanding of how manager support influences employee engagement.

On the other hand, the independent leveraging the data received from Organization health surveys that focuses specifically on the experience of new employees in the organization provides deeper insights into the lived experiences of employees. This data allows for the exploration of expansive nuanced perspectives that focused survey questions could not capture.

By integrating both data sets, this research methodology ensures a holistic understanding of the research problem. The combination of survey data for broad patterns and Org health data for detailed insights allows for a more thorough and well-rounded exploration of the topic. Furthermore, the use of triangulation ensures the reliability and validity of the findings, as patterns from different data sources were cross-verified.

In terms of practical implications, the methodology provides actionable recommendations for improving onboarding processes and enhancing manager involvement in large tech organizations. However, it also acknowledges limitations, such as potential sampling biases and the cross-sectional nature of the study, which limit causal inferences. Future studies could build on this methodology by adopting a longitudinal approach to explore the long-term effects of onboarding and manager support on employee engagement.

In conclusion, the research methodology utilized in this study has effectively balanced quantitative approaches to answer the research questions. The combination of surveys, and thorough data analysis methods ensures that the study provides meaningful, reliable, and actionable insights into how onboarding practices and manager support can enhance employee engagement in large tech organizations.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the major findings of this research and there are two sections that elaborates the study case and data analysis created by research instruments of questionnaires & Health surveys.

The chapter is started by presenting the description of 2 Organizations under study.

Organization X was founded in 1967 in Grenoble, France, initially as a data processing and enterprise management company called Sogeti. Over the years, it expanded through strategic acquisitions and rebranding efforts. In 1974, it acquired Gemini Computer Systems, which led to the name Cap Gemini Sogeti. By 1996, the company became Organization X in 2017.

Organization X's growth has been marked by significant acquisitions, such as Ernst & Young Consulting in 2000, iGate in 2015, and Altran in 2019, which was its largest acquisition to date. These moves have helped Organization X strengthen its global presence and diversify its expertise in IT services, consulting, and digital transformation.

Today, Organization X operates in over 50 countries and employs more than 340,000 people worldwide. Its journey reflects a commitment to innovation and adaptability in the ever-evolving technology landscape. While Company X is headquartered in France it maintains a significant presence in India's metropolitan regions, with large-scale teams and infrastructure supporting their global operations. The Indian office was the specific focus of my study, and all data collected pertains to employees based in India.

In comparison, Accenture, founded in 1989, has a shorter history but quickly became a major player by focusing on strategy, consulting, and technology services. Its global reach and innovation-driven approach make it a strong competitor. IBM, established in 1911, has a much longer history and is known for its pioneering role in computing and IT services. Its legacy gives it a distinct advantage in terms of brand recognition and expertise. Tata Consultancy Services

(TCS), founded in 1968, shares a similar timeline with Organization X. TCS has leveraged its parent company, Tata Group, to become a dominant force in IT services, particularly in India and globally. Infosys, founded in 1981, has focused on innovation in areas like artificial intelligence and cloud solutions, carving out a niche in the IT consulting space.

Each firm has its unique strengths, but Organization X's emphasis on acquisitions and adaptability has been a key driver of its success.

Organization X in India, a global leader in consulting, technology, and digital transformation, has been recognized for its innovative approaches to employee onboarding and engagement. The company emphasizes structured onboarding processes to ensure new hires feel supported and prepared for their roles. Organization X's Collaborative Engagement Onboarding Platform, for instance, provides personalized learning experiences and role-specific training, fostering a seamless transition for new employees.

Managers and peers play a pivotal role in Organization X's India onboarding strategy. Managers are trained to create a supportive environment, while peers are encouraged to assist new hires in acclimating to the organizational culture and tasks. This collaborative approach not only enhances knowledge transfer but also strengthens team cohesion and employee satisfaction.

Organization X India also prioritizes employee engagement through initiatives that focus on well-being, career development, and recognition. The company believes that empathetic managers and a culture of support are key to fostering a positive work environment. These practices align closely with your research topic, showcasing how Organization X leverages managerial and peer support to drive effective onboarding and engagement.

In contrast, the study will look at 2nd organization i.e. Organization Y. Organization Y is a leading provider of operations, maintenance, and engineering services for critical infrastructure in the United States. The company specializes in sectors such as telecommunications, renewable energy, electric vehicle (EV) charging, and energy storage. With a strong focus on safety, innovation, and quality, Organization Y operates nationwide, offering 24/7/365 support to its

clients. Headquartered in Paso Robles, California, the company employs over 3,000 highly trained professionals and has a presence in 28 locations across the U.S.

Organization Y has a presence in India with its 2 offices in Gurgaon and is known for its commitment to sustainability and cutting-edge solutions, making it a key player in supporting mission-critical infrastructure.

While Organization X India has a broader, technology-driven focus with a global footprint, Organization Y Services in India concentrates on outsourcing services to maintain critical infrastructure within the U.S., emphasizing operational sustainability and reliability. Each organization demonstrates leadership within its respective domain.

Table 2 : Comparison between Organization X and Organization Y Services

Aspect	Organization X	Organization Y Services
Industry	IT services, consulting, and digital transformation.	Operations, maintenance, and engineering services for critical infrastructure.
Founded	1967	Not specified, but established as a leader in U.S. infrastructure services.
Headquarters	Paris, France	Paso Robles, California, U.S.
Core Focus	Technology solutions including cloud computing, AI, and cybersecurity.	Maintenance of telecommunications, renewable energy, EV charging, and energy storage systems.
Global Presence	Operates in over 50 countries with 340,000+ employees worldwide.	Primarily operates across the United States, with 28 locations and 3,000+ employees.
Special Strengths	Expertise in digital transformation and client-specific solutions.	Expertise in sustainability-focused, 24/7/365 mission-critical infrastructure support.
Target Market	Serves businesses across industries worldwide.	Focuses on industries requiring critical infrastructure, such as energy and telecom sectors.
Employee Strength in India	Over 180,000 employees.	Approximately 1,500 employees

People Practices	Focuses on structured onboarding, career development, and fostering a supportive culture through managers and peers. Known for leveraging technology to enhance employee experience and engagement.	Emphasizes safety, skill development, and innovation in operations. Provides 24/7/365 support and prioritizes employee training for critical infrastructure roles.
Work Environment	Offers hybrid work models and personalized learning experiences to adapt to modern workforce needs.	Focuses on service based roles with a strong emphasis on operational sustainability and reliability.
Engagement Initiatives	Implements programs for well-being, inclusivity, and recognition to boost employee satisfaction.	Prioritizes safety and quality in operations, fostering a culture of accountability and excellence.

Here's a refined summary focusing on HR practices and leadership approaches at both companies within India: While Organization X in India emphasizes structured onboarding, career development, and a tech-driven employee experience. Managers and peers play a key role in fostering a supportive workplace culture. Leadership prioritizes digital transformation and global collaboration, ensuring inclusivity and engagement through structured programs, however, Organization Y India focuses on safety, skill training, and operational reliability. Leadership is centered on maintaining a high-performance culture for mission-critical infrastructure, ensuring employees are equipped with specialized knowledge. HR initiatives prioritize continuous training and accountability. Both companies excel in creating tailored people practices suited to their respective industries.

There are various data sources that have been included which supports our philosophy of data triangulation.

1. Pulse surveys for New joiners in Organization X in India (Table 3)
2. Quantitative information of Attrition data in Organization X in India which supported to elucidate & emphasize the importance of structured & effective Onboarding program in an organization where it highlights the attrition of people with different overall experiences & stay in organization.
3. Onboarding survey data over 3 intervals in Organization Y, India (Table 4)
4. Anonymous survey designed to seek inputs across industries within India (Table 5)

Table 3 Questionnaire to capture Pulse surveys for New joiners in Organization X

S.No.	Stage	Question
1	Pre-Onboarding	I was provided with all the information that I needed about the company during the recruitment process (i.e., culture, benefits, projects etc.)
2	Pre-Onboarding	The recruitment process was efficiently managed (from my first contact to signing the employment contract).
3	Pre-Onboarding	After accepting the offer, CC kept me well-engaged until my first day.
4	Pre-Onboarding	Overall, the recruitment process was great.
5	Pre-Onboarding	I was well informed about the role during the recruitment process.
6	Onboarding	I have been provided with the equipment necessary for me to start working.
7	Onboarding	I have been well onboarded to start working in my specific role.
8	Onboarding	I am getting the support I need
9	Onboarding	Overall, my onboarding to CC has been excellent.
10	Onboarding	I have a clear understanding of my priorities for the next few months

Table 4 Onboarding survey over 3 intervals (90 days, 6 month & 1 yr) in Organization Y

90 days
I understand my job expectations.
I have all the tools needed to do my job.
I understand how to use the systems needed to perform my job duties.
I know who to contact if I have a question or concern about my job duties.
My supervisor provides performance feedback (touchpoints) and tells me when my work needs to improve.
I know who to contact if I have a question or concern about my pay.
I understand the employee benefit package and how to enroll.
On a scale of one to 10, how likely are you to recommend Organization Y to a friend or relative?
6 month
I am satisfied with my employee benefits package.
I have clear goals and understand what strong job performance means.
My supervisor provides performance feedback (touchpoints) and tells me when my work needs to improve.
On a scale of one to 10, how likely are you to recommend Organization Y to a friend or relative?
My supervisor notices and acknowledges when I meet or exceed my responsibilities.
I have a good working relationship with my coworkers.
I feel physically safe and know what it means to work safely in my work environment.

1 yr
I understand career path options at Organization Y and know what it will take to advance.
I have clear goals and understand what strong job performance means.
My supervisor provides performance feedback (touchpoints) and tells me when my work needs to improve.
On a scale of one to 10, how likely are you to recommend Organization Y to a friend or relative?
I am familiar with and understand the Company Values.
On my team, Managers/Supervisors and employees consistently demonstrate the Company Values.
Organization Y communicates useful information that helps me stay informed with what is going on in our business.
I lead by example when it comes to working safely.

Table 5 Anonymous survey designed to seek inputs across industries

Category	Question
Motivation	I am really enthusiastic about the work I am doing for my company
Onboarding impact	I have had a smooth Onboarding experience in my existing organization which provided me clarity on: [Job Role]
	I have had a smooth Onboarding experience in my existing organization which provided me clarity on: [Ways of working]
	I have had a smooth Onboarding experience in my existing organization which provided me clarity on: [Organizational Policies & Procedures]
	Effective onboarding helped me build good bonding & rapport with my teammates
Role of Manager	My manager played an important role in getting me smoothly onboarded into the new role.
	I believe the People Manager has a very important role in the smooth onboarding of an employee
	During the first 6 months of my joining, my manager ensured there is a channel of communication established with all my key stakeholders
	My manager played an important role in integrating me within the team.
	My manager clearly communicated my job responsibilities and expectations.
	My manager constantly had informal check-ins to understand how well I was assimilating within the team & the organization
	My manager used to have check-in with me atleast once in a fortnight during my onboarding period?

	My manager was helpful in providing the resources and tools that were needed to perform my job effectively.
	The feedback and guidance provided by my manager was effective & helpful in my onboarding.
	The behavior & actions of my manager impacted my confidence (positive or negative) in my role.
	My manager made me feel safe to share my ideas/ concerns/ mistakes.
	During my onboarding, I felt comfortable to approach my manager with questions or concerns during onboarding.
Role of Peers	The overall support provided by my Peers/ Team members made my onboarding effective.
	I had periodic interactions (formal/ informal) with my peers/ team members during my onboarding period.
	My peers provided necessary guidance & support (whenever I needed) to help me understand my job responsibilities and expectations
	The behavior & actions of my peers/ Team members impacted my confidence (positive or negative) in my role.
	My peers have helped me a lot in understanding the company culture.
	During my onboarding, I felt comfortable to approach my peers with questions or concerns during onboarding
Psychological Safety	During my onboarding, I was made to feel comfortable in brainstorming out loud, voice half finished thoughts, openly challenge status-quo, share feedback & work through disagreements together during team meetings.
	During my onboarding, I was made to feel free to ask for help, admit mistakes, raise concerns, suggest ideas & challenge ways of working & the ideas of others on the team, including the ideas of those in authority.
	During my onboarding, I felt psychologically safe around the people I worked with.

This section presents the analytical findings of the study, derived from both primary survey responses and organizationally authenticated data sources spanning structured onboarding metrics, employee dashboard analytics, grade-wise sentiment trends, and open-ended feedback from participants. The results illuminate critical linkages between onboarding practices, employee engagement, and early retention outcomes within large technology organizations operating in a post-COVID hybrid work landscape.

4.2 Data Analysis

a. Pulse surveys for New joiners in Organization X, India (Questionnaire)

The dataset comprised pulse survey responses from approximately 2,200 employees collected over a three-year period (2022–2024). The survey instrument comprised of a structured questionnaire containing 10 items. Drawing on prior experience, the researcher thematically grouped these questions into two primary phases of the employee lifecycle—Pre-Onboarding and Onboarding. Each phase was further delineated into sub-domains: Pre-Onboarding included Pre-Role Clarity and Pre-Engagement, while Onboarding encompassed Initial Support, Role Clarity, and Successful Integration. This categorization enabled a nuanced analysis of employee perceptions across different stages of the onboarding continuum.

The participants were the New joiners who would have typically spent 6 months in the organization. The participants of the survey were asked to rank each question on a scale of 1 to 10 of their experience (1 being low & 10 being high).

On an average it was observed through scores that the ranking for Pre-boarding experience has been consistently higher than that of Onboarding experience over the years. Refer Table 6 for the scores.

The observed trends in onboarding scores from 2022 to 2025 align closely with existing literature emphasizing the critical role of pre-onboarding engagement in shaping employee experience. As highlighted by Bauer and Erdogan (2010), early socialization efforts—such as pre-engagement and role clarity—serve as foundational mechanisms for successful onboarding. The consistently higher ratings for pre-onboarding dimensions (e.g., pre-engagement: 8.14; pre-role clarity: 8.02) reinforce findings from recent studies that underscore the value of structured pre-arrival communication and expectation-setting in fostering newcomer confidence and commitment. Conversely, the lower score for successful onboarding (7.69) echoes concerns raised by Shufutinsky and Cox (2019), who found that inadequate post-induction support can hinder integration and retention. The peak in overall experience in 2023 (average: 8.22) may reflect

targeted interventions, consistent with recommendations from onboarding frameworks that advocate for iterative program design and feedback loops (Mohanty & Kulkarni, 2024). These results substantiate the argument that onboarding effectiveness is not solely contingent on formal induction, but is deeply influenced by pre-boarding strategies that build psychological safety and role clarity from the outset.

Table 6 Onboarding experience of new joiners (average score)

Category	2022	2023	2024	2025	Grand Total
Onboarding	NA	8.15	7.74	7.78	7.87
Initial Support	-	8.05	7.79	8.20	7.87
Role Clarity	-	8.32	7.97	7.64	8.05
Successful Onboarding	-	8.09	7.45	7.53	7.69
Pre-Onboarding	8.37	8.23	7.86	8.23	8.08
Pre - Role clarity	8.37	8.17	7.79	8.19	8.02
Pre-engagement	8.37	8.29	7.93	8.28	8.14
Grand Total	8.37	8.22	7.83	8.11	8.03

The gender-disaggregated findings presented in Table 7 resonate with existing literature that explores nuanced differences in onboarding experiences across demographic lines. While the overall satisfaction gap between male (8.37) and female (8.22) respondents is modest, the divergence in specific dimensions—particularly role clarity—echoes prior research suggesting that men may navigate structural aspects of onboarding with greater ease, potentially due to clearer alignment with organizational norms or expectations (Shtrikova et al., 2020). Conversely, the slightly higher female ratings in initial support and pre-engagement activities align with studies emphasizing the importance of relational and communicative onboarding elements for women, who often prioritize socio-psychological integration during early tenure (Mosquera & Soares, 2025). The consistently high scores across pre-onboarding domains for both genders reinforce Bauer and Erdogan’s (2010) assertion that early clarity and engagement are foundational to onboarding success. Notably, the lowest ratings in the successful-onboarding dimension for

both groups (7.71 for males; 7.66 for females) mirror concerns raised by Shufutinsky and Cox (2019) regarding the long-term integration challenges faced by new hires, underscoring the need for sustained post-induction support. These findings suggest that while gender-based onboarding experiences are broadly comparable, targeted enhancements—particularly in role clarity for women and integration pathways for all—could yield more equitable and effective outcomes.

Table 7 Onboarding experience Average score (across Gender)

Category	Male	Female
Onboarding	7.92	7.79
Initial Support	7.85	7.90
Role Clarity	8.21	7.81
Successful Onboarding	7.71	7.66
Pre-Onboarding	8.12	8.03
Pre - Role clarity	8.11	7.91
Pre-engagement	8.13	8.14
Grand Total	8.37	8.22

The grade-wise analysis of onboarding satisfaction (Table 8) reveals a non-linear trend across organizational hierarchy, with scores declining progressively from entry-level to managerial grades, followed by a notable uptick at the leadership level. This pattern aligns with literature suggesting that onboarding experiences are often stratified by role seniority, with tailored programs for executives yielding more favorable outcomes (Dai & De Meuse, 2007; Bauer, 2010). The dip in satisfaction at mid-levels may reflect a lack of differentiated support or role-specific integration mechanisms, a concern echoed in onboarding critiques that highlight the “missing middle” in program design (Pinco & Crisan, 2025). The resurgence in satisfaction at the leadership tier corresponds with findings from Caldwell and Peters (2018), who emphasize the strategic onboarding of senior hires through customized interventions that accelerate cultural assimilation and strategic alignment. These results underscore the importance of role-sensitive onboarding frameworks and suggest that extending leadership-level onboarding principles—such as structured immersion and executive mentoring—could enhance experiences for managerial cohorts and bridge the satisfaction gap across grades.

Table 8 Onboarding experience Average score (across Grade)

Category	A (Entry level)	B (Individual Contributor)	C (Team lead)	D (Manager)	E (Leadership)
Onboarding	8.44	7.91	7.38	7.52	8.05
Initial Support	8.69	7.77	7.36	7.42	8.40
Role Clarity	8.45	8.13	7.65	7.87	8.45
Successful Onboarding	8.20	7.85	7.13	7.28	7.31
Pre-Onboarding	8.24	8.16	7.83	7.93	9.16
Pre - Role clarity	8.08	8.12	7.81	8.31	9.25
Pre-engagement	8.41	8.20	7.84	7.54	9.07
Grand Total	8.39	8.08	7.67	7.59	8.73

This multi-dimensional analysis of onboarding experiences from 2022 to 2025 aligns with and extends existing literature on organizational socialization and differentiated onboarding design. The temporal decline in satisfaction, followed by a recovery, mirrors findings from Pinco et al. (2025), who emphasize the impact of evolving onboarding formats—particularly hybrid and remote models—on employee perceptions over time. Gender-based nuances, such as females rating initial support and pre-engagement more favorably, resonate with Mosquera and Soares (2025), who found that relational onboarding elements contribute more significantly to workplace well-being for women, while men respond more positively to structural clarity. Hierarchical disparities, especially the dip in satisfaction among mid-level hires, reflect critiques by Caldwell and Peters (2018) regarding the “missing middle” in onboarding program design, where tailored support often bypasses managerial cohorts. The elevated scores among leadership hires corroborate Dai and De Meuse’s (2007) assertion that executive onboarding—when strategically designed—can accelerate cultural assimilation and performance alignment. Collectively, these findings reinforce the argument that onboarding effectiveness is contingent not only on timing and content, but also on demographic and positional sensitivity, necessitating a tiered and inclusive approach to onboarding architecture.

Here are a few comments that highlight issues due to the post-COVID environment:

- "No POC and No SPOC with No HR at any point since onboarding to project allocation."
- "Hardly get replies from recruiters on queries."
- "During the interview process, the HR did not communicate properly. When we called again, they were not responding to that call and mail."
- "Not good enough experience after onboarding."
- "Only laptop is given, no headset, no mouse."
- "I was helpless during the onboard process."
- "Onboarding was not very smooth - 1) IT assets issue 2) Still no clarity on adding family members to health insurance."
- "They gave me refurbished OS crashed laptop, had to replace it thrice."
- "Mouse was not given along with laptop allocation. I have raised a request for that still was not allocated."
- "Clueless after joining regarding what and whereabouts of project."
- "I have so many doubts regarding reimbursement facility, but no POC is available for more clarity."
- "Interview process was smooth, but document submission online and physically was kind of duplicate efforts, no clarity on the project or role before joining, accurate information was not provided during the interview or after the interview."
- "No response from SPOC."
- "Faced lot of issues on the day of joining."
- "Not everything like headset not provided."

These comments reflect some of the challenges faced in the post-COVID environment, such as communication gaps, delays in asset provision, and lack of clarity in project allocation.

Here are a few verbatim comments that highlight a lack of manager support:

- "The manager is not getting in touch to discuss the next steps as a new joiner, there is only one-way communication in which I am providing regular updates."
- "No communication from my manager. Even I'm not sure who is my manager."
- "I have received almost no KT for several areas of my role, there wasn't proper tracking of KT and a month into the project, I still don't have access to several things because there is no access tracker."
- "My joining got rescheduled multiple times which made me feel this way."
- "I have had very bad experience with the way the recruiter handled the whole process. I have expected better professionalism from CC recruiter."
- "No one communicated for further process, only we are trying to contact Recruiter for all the process and no they are no were bothered about employee joining formalities."
- "The recruiter was not there to provide any guidance or support."
- "Onboarding was not good at all, no proper information being provided during the physical onboarding. Struggled to find the things."
- "HR should take more responsibility."

These comments indicate areas where manager support and communication could be improved to enhance the onboarding experience for new joiners.

Few of the additional comments that highlights the perceived lack of Manager support post COVID times:

- "Till date i.e. today 16.01.2025, I am still not aware of my team, my reporting to office, not met nor spoken to my manager, my HR. So basically still waiting for all the information. Hopefully, will get an answer to all soon."
- "The manager is not getting in touch to discuss the next steps as a new joiner, there is only one-way communication in which I am providing regular updates. There is

no buddy assigned who can help us with the basics such as timecards, trainings etc."

- "No communication from my manager. Even I'm not sure who is my manager."
- "I was not informed about the JD or my day-to-day role in CG. I had to give back-to-back calls and ask for more details. I had clearly asked the recruitment team to set up a call with my manager, but this wasn't done ever."
- "Not getting the required support for seat booking in Chennai PCT location. I raised a ticket and they closed it without proper resolution three times, asking me to book in another location as they look only to give preference to Account managers to be able to book seats and no one else."
- "No proper response from the project team, like BGV team not responding even to my senior managers and Directors, feels lack of ownership and responsibilities from the supporting teams."
- "There is no conversation with manager or supervisors regarding work."
- "Bench manager is not replying and providing the correct details."
- "Priorities not yet set since I joined. Not even a single discussion happened with my manager."
- "My manager does not respond to my queries."

Here are some key points and insights from the comments:

Positive Feedback:

- **Timely Provision of Assets:** Access cards and necessary assets were provided on time, with clear instructions for setup. Employees were generally satisfied with the provision of necessary equipment like laptops and chargers.
- **Responsive HR:** HR was generally responsive and helpful.
- **Smooth Onboarding:** Some users found the onboarding process smooth and well-managed.

- Supportive Recruitment Team: The recruitment team provided good support and guidance.
- Clear Communication: Job roles and responsibilities were clearly communicated. Clear and timely communication was appreciated by several employees.
- Work-Life Balance: Multiple comments highlighted a good work-life balance.
- Team Collaboration: Positive remarks about team collaboration and support.
- Professionalism: The recruitment process was described as professional and smooth by some.
- Quick and Efficient: Some users found the process quick and efficient.
- Helpful Recruiters: Specific recruiters were mentioned as being helpful and responsive.
- Supportive Environment: Many employees felt supported by their managers and colleagues.
- Engagement before Joining: Organization kept new joiners well-engaged with regular updates and onboarding materials before their first day.

Areas for Improvement:

- Communication Gaps: There were several mentions of communication gaps between departments and with HR, leading to delays and confusion.
- Asset Provision: Requests for standard equipment like headphones and mouse for experienced joiners were noted, with some not receiving these items.
- Redundant Processes: The onboarding process was seen as repetitive, with multiple requests for the same documents.
- Recruitment Delays: Long waiting times for offer letters and project assignments were a concern.

- **Project Allocation:** Delays in project allocation and lack of information about projects were highlighted. Delays and lack of clarity in project assignments, with some employees still on the bench.
- **Support for Experienced Joiners:** Experienced joiners felt they were treated like freshers and faced issues with seating arrangements and travel.
- **Redundant Processes:** Repeated requests for the same documents and lack of centralized processes.
- **Support for Relocation:** Lack of response to requests for relocation allowances.
- **Cultural Adjustment:** Some employees experienced cultural shocks and felt unsupported during the transition.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- **Improve Communication:** Enhance communication between departments and with HR to reduce delays and confusion.
- **Streamline Processes:** Simplify the onboarding process to avoid redundant document submissions.
- **Timely Updates:** Ensure timely updates on project allocations and other important information.
- **Better Support for Experienced Joiners:** Provide better support and respect for experienced joiners, including appropriate seating arrangements.
- **Standardize Equipment:** Provide new and functional laptops, headsets, and mice to all joiners.
- **Timely Project Allocation:** Ensure timely and clear communication about project assignments to avoid prolonged bench periods.
- **Support for Relocation:** Provide clear guidelines and timely responses for relocation allowances and support.

b. Quantitative information of Attrition data in Organization X

Table 9 Attrition data in 2024 across Yrs of exp with Organization X

Exp range	Fresher	Lateral	Grand Total
0-6M	294	488	782
6-12M	217	874	1091
1-2yr	1524	3861	5385
2-3yr	4571	8240	12811
3-4yr	3516	2878	6394
4-5yr	558	819	1377
5-10yr	818	2181	2999
Greater than 10 yrs	43	709	752
Grand Total	11541	20050	31591

Table 9 presents the 2024 attrition profile at Organization X, disaggregated by tenure band and hire type (fresher vs. lateral). In total, 31,591 employees exited during the year, of whom 11,541 (36.5 per cent) were freshers and 20,050 (63.5 per cent) were lateral hires.

The attrition profile across tenure bands reveals a pronounced concentration in the early-to-mid stages of employment, with over 78% of total exits occurring within the 1–4 year window. This peak—most notably among employees with 2–3 years of service (40.6%)—suggests a critical inflection point in the employee lifecycle where retention risks escalate significantly. In contrast, minimal turnover at both the initial (0–6 months: 2.5%) and long-tenure (10+ years: 2.4%) stages supports prevailing literature that links early attrition to onboarding gaps, and longer tenure to cultural assimilation and job embeddedness (Allen & Shanock, 2013; Gupta et al., 2018).

The moderate attrition observed between 6–12 months and 4–5 years further reinforces the view that retention challenges persist beyond initial integration, possibly reflecting unmet role expectations, limited career visibility, or ineffective support structures. These tenure-based insights align with Mosquera and Soares (2025), who advocate for sustained onboarding and role evolution programming well beyond the first 90 days.

The hire-type disaggregated attrition profile reveals distinct churn trajectories between lateral and fresher cohorts, echoing patterns documented in recent literature. The disproportionately high exit rates among lateral hires in the first year—62.4% in the 0–6 month band and 80.1% in the 6–12 month band—align with findings from Meyer and Bartels (2017), who argue that experienced recruits often face integration challenges due to misaligned expectations and insufficient contextual onboarding. This early-stage volatility supports the Socialization Resources Theory (Saks & Gruman, 2012), which advocates for differentiated onboarding strategies tailored to prior experience and organizational familiarity.

In contrast, the delayed attrition spike among freshers in the 3–4 year band (55.0%) may reflect unmet developmental aspirations or stagnation in career progression, consistent with Sharma and Stol (2020), who emphasize the importance of structured growth pathways and mentorship for early-career talent. The dominance of lateral exits in long-tenure bands (94% beyond ten years) suggests that even well-integrated hires may disengage over time due to plateauing roles or evolving career priorities, a phenomenon explored by Gupta et al. (2018) in their work on job embeddedness and cultural alignment.

These patterns highlight a pronounced “mid-tenure peak” in turnover and divergent churn trajectories between freshers and lateral recruits. The data suggest that retention efforts should be intensified around the 1–4 year mark, with differentiated interventions for freshers—who display a notable exit spike in years 3–4 yrs and lateral hires, whose attrition is highest in the first year and in long-service cohorts.

The early attrition trends—particularly the 6% exit rate within the first year and the cumulative 63% turnover within the first three years—underscore a critical vulnerability in the onboarding and early engagement ecosystem. These findings are consistent with research by Shufutinsky and Cox (2019), who observed that ineffective onboarding within the first 90 days significantly increases the likelihood of voluntary turnover within the first year. The stronger

retention among employees with 5+ years of tenure aligns with Gupta et al. (2018), who link long-term stability to cultural assimilation and accrued organizational capital.

c. Onboarding survey data over 3 intervals in Organization Y

Table 10 Onboarding survey after 3 months of joining

90 days	
Questions asked	Average score
I understand my job expectations.	2.72
I have all the tools needed to do my job.	4.42
I understand how to use the systems needed to perform my job duties.	4.63
I know who to contact if I have a question or concern about my job duties.	4.66
My supervisor provides performance feedback (touchpoints) and tells me when my work needs to improve.	3.15
I know who to contact if I have a question or concern about my pay.	4.55
I understand the employee benefit package and how to enroll.	4.22
On a scale of one to 10, how likely are you to recommend Y to a friend or relative?	4.40

The 90-day onboarding feedback from Company Y reveals a bifurcated experience that aligns with broader literature on early tenure adjustment. High ratings for operational readiness—such as clarity on job contacts (4.66), system usage (4.63), and access to tools (4.42)—suggest that logistical onboarding components are well-executed, consistent with Bauer and Erdogan’s (2011) emphasis on compliance and clarification as foundational onboarding pillars. However, the markedly lower scores for job expectation clarity (2.72) and supervisory feedback (3.15) point to gaps in developmental onboarding, echoing findings from Mosquera and Soares (2025), who argue that relational and feedback-driven onboarding is critical for fostering workplace well-being and retention.

The moderate advocacy score (4.40) on the recommendation scale further underscores the ambivalence new joiners feel—while they are equipped to perform tasks, they lack the contextual and developmental scaffolding that drives engagement. This divergence supports the Socialization

of Resources Theory (Saks & Gruman, 2012), which posits that onboarding must extend beyond transactional orientation to include timely feedback, role clarity, and manager-led integration.

Table 11 Onboarding survey after 6 months of joining

6 months	
Questions asked	Average score
I am satisfied with my employee benefits package.	4.60
I have clear goals and understand what strong job performance means.	4.47
My supervisor provides performance feedback (touchpoints) and tells me when my work needs to improve.	2.94
On a scale of one to 10, how likely are you to recommend Pearce to a friend or relative?	4.21
My supervisor notices and acknowledges when I meet or exceed my responsibilities.	4.07
I have a good working relationship with my coworkers.	4.62
I feel physically safe and know what it means to work safely in my work environment.	4.59

The six-month data from Pearce paints a nuanced picture of onboarding progression—marked by consolidation of relational and environmental supports, but persistent gaps in developmental scaffolding. High satisfaction with benefits ($M = 4.60$), coworker relationships ($M = 4.62$), and physical safety ($M = 4.59$) suggests that foundational workplace conditions are well-established, aligning with Westover’s (2024) findings that systematic onboarding enhances job satisfaction and perceived organizational support. The strong clarity around goals and standards ($M = 4.47$) and recognition for performance ($M = 4.07$) indicate that cognitive alignment is improving, likely aided by clearer role framing and peer reinforcement.

However, the continued lag in supervisory feedback ($M = 2.94$)—despite gains in other areas—signals a structural weakness in Pearce’s feedback architecture. This echoes Mosquera and Soares’ (2025) argument that onboarding must extend beyond environmental integration to include sustained developmental input, particularly from managers. The slight dip in advocacy ($M = 4.21$ vs. 4.40) reinforces the idea that initial goodwill may erode without ongoing reinforcement, a phenomenon supported by Bauer and Green’s (1994) assertion that early attitudes tend to stabilize and shape long-term engagement.

Table 12 Onboarding survey after 1 year of joining

1 yr	
Questions asked	Average score
I understand career path options at Pearce and know what it will take to advance.	4.89
I have clear goals and understand what strong job performance means.	4.55
My supervisor provides performance feedback (touchpoints) and tells me when my work needs to improve.	2.93
On a scale of one to 10, how likely are you to recommend Pearce to a friend or relative?	4.23
I am familiar with and understand the Company Values.	4.37
On my team, Managers/Supervisors and employees consistently demonstrate the Company Values.	4.11
Y communicates useful information that helps me stay informed with what is going on in our business.	4.11
I lead by example when it comes to working safely.	4.32

The one-year onboarding data from Company Y reveals a compelling maturation in cognitive and cultural alignment, yet a persistent deficit in developmental feedback—an issue that has remained static across all measured intervals. The exceptionally high score for career-path clarity ($M = 4.89$) and strong ratings for performance goals ($M = 4.55$) and values familiarity ($M = 4.37$) suggest that employees have internalized organizational expectations and ethos. These findings align with Bauer and Erdogan's (2011) framework, which emphasizes the importance of role clarity and cultural integration in long-term onboarding success.

However, the consistently low ratings for supervisory feedback ($M = 2.93$) across 90 days, six months, and one year indicate a systemic shortfall in developmental support. This stagnation suggests that feedback mechanisms are not evolving in tandem with employee tenure, potentially undermining growth and retention. Mosquera and Soares (2025) argue that onboarding must be dynamic, with feedback touchpoints recalibrated to match employees' shifting developmental needs—a principle clearly unmet here.

The steady but moderate advocacy score ($M = 4.23$) further reinforces this tension: employees appreciate the clarity and culture but hesitate to fully endorse the organization, likely due to unmet expectations around growth and coaching. This pattern supports the Socialization of Resources Theory (Saks & Gruman, 2012), which posits that without sustained access to developmental resources—especially feedback—employees may disengage despite strong environmental and cognitive alignment.

d. Anonymous survey designed to seek inputs across industries

In order to bring a cross industry exposure to the research topic, an anonymous survey was designed wherein 43 participants shared their inputs. They represented a very heterogeneous demographic profile with 42% female, 53% Male and 5% preferred not to share.

Their age was diversely spread across age-groups. 12% of the population were in 18 ~ 24 yrs, 33% in 33 ~ 40 yrs, 30% in 25 ~ 32 yrs, & remaining 26% were more than 40 yrs. With

respect to the industry representation, there were 43% of participants from IT/ ITES/ Consulting background and remaining 56% from other industries like Automotive, FMCG, Real estate etc.

21% of the participants were either Individual contributors or were at the entry level of an organization, 37% were from Mid-management & 42% were in the leadership / Senior Management level.

Table 13 Survey results across parameters w.r.t No. of yrs with current organization

Exp. with current Organization	Motivation	Onboarding impact	Role of Manager	Role of Peers	Psychological Safety
< 1 yr	3.47	3.18	3.51	3.37	3.42
1 - 2 yrs	3.63	3.50	3.52	3.23	3.38
2 - 5 yrs	3.29	3.46	3.46	3.19	3.10
5 - 10 yrs	3.63	3.34	3.52	3.60	3.58
> 10 yrs	4.40	4.20	4.48	4.53	4.27
Grand Total	3.68	3.54	3.70	3.58	3.55

The tenure-based variation in employee experience at Company Y offers a compelling lifecycle narrative—one that mirrors the U-shaped engagement curve observed in organizational psychology literature. The lowest onboarding impact (3.18) and modest motivation (3.47) among new joiners (<1 year) reflect transitional strain, consistent with early-stage uncertainty and limited social capital. This aligns with Mosquera and Soares’ (2025) findings that onboarding must extend beyond orientation to include sustained relational and developmental support.

The 1–2 year cohort’s uptick in motivation (3.63) and onboarding impact (3.50) suggests successful acclimatization, yet the subsequent dip among 2–5 year employees—particularly in psychological safety (3.10)—signals a plateau effect. This mid-tenure lull is well-documented in the literature as a period of stagnation, often exacerbated by unclear growth trajectories and

diminished novelty. Without targeted re-engagement strategies, this group risks disengagement despite prior gains.

The rebound in the 5–10 year group and peak scores among >10 year employees (e.g., motivation 4.40, psychological safety 4.27) underscore the stabilizing influence of long-term integration. These employees likely benefit from accrued trust, role mastery, and deeper cultural alignment, reinforcing the Socialization of Resources Theory (Saks & Gruman, 2012) which posits that sustained access to socialization resources fosters engagement and retention.

Table 14 Survey results across parameters w.r.t Age bracket

Age bracket	Motivation	Onboarding impact	Role of Manager	Role of Peers	Psychological Safety
18-24 yrs	2.80	3.05	3.13	3.00	3.07
25-32 yrs	3.54	3.35	3.28	3.15	3.28
33-40 yrs	3.86	3.82	3.98	3.74	3.55
40-50 yrs	4.22	3.56	4.06	4.06	4.15
50+ yrs	1.50	1.75	2.63	2.67	2.50
Grand Total	3.60	3.44	3.62	3.49	3.49

The curvilinear trajectory across age cohorts offers a rich lens into how engagement and support perceptions evolve—and regress—over the employee lifespan. The lowest scores among the youngest group (18–24 years) for motivation (M = 2.80), onboarding impact (M = 3.05), and peer support (M = 3.00) reflect early-career vulnerability, likely stemming from limited workplace experience, underdeveloped networks, and a need for structured scaffolding. This aligns with Eccles and Roeser’s stage-environment fit theory (2011), which posits that developmental misalignment can hinder adjustment and belonging.

The steady rise through the 25–32 and 33–40 age cohorts, culminating in peak scores for onboarding impact (M = 3.82), managerial support (M = 3.98), and peer support (M = 3.74), suggests that mid-career employees benefit from accumulated social capital, clearer role identity, and greater organizational embeddedness. These groups are well-positioned to serve as “onboarding champions,” reinforcing peer-led integration and modeling cultural alignment.

The 40–50 cohort’s apex in motivation ($M = 4.22$) and psychological safety ($M = 4.15$) underscores the stabilizing effect of tenure and maturity, consistent with Saks and Gruman’s Socialization of Resources Theory (2012), which emphasizes the compounding benefits of sustained access to developmental and relational resources.

However, the sharp decline among employees over 50 (motivation $M = 1.50$; onboarding impact $M = 1.75$) signals a critical disengagement inflection point. This may reflect generational mismatches in communication style, digital fluency, or perceived relevance of onboarding content. It also raises questions about age-inclusive design and the adequacy of support structures for late-career professionals.

4.3 Research Question One

What can be an effective onboarding experience for all individuals?

The data highlights that Pre-Onboarding scores (avg. 8.08) were consistently higher than Onboarding scores (avg. 7.87), suggesting that employee experience often dips after joining. This pattern aligns with emerging research that underscores the strategic value of preboarding in shaping early employee perceptions and long-term engagement. According to AIHR (2025), a well-structured preboarding process can increase new hire retention by up to 82%, while employees who undergo effective onboarding are 30 times more likely to report high job satisfaction.

An effective onboarding experience should therefore extend beyond Day 1 into the first 3–6 months (aligned with Organization X’s pulse survey for new joiners). Combine functional readiness (IT access, clarity in roles) with relational integration (manager support, buddy systems). They also need to be tailored by grade since, Organization X's Table 8 shows that middle-tier employees (Grades B–D) reported the weakest experience, while entry-level and leadership received structured programs and scored higher.

One-size-fits-all models fail mid-level joiners the most, hence, by weaving together bespoke pre-boarding, rigorous expectation management, manager-led feedback, peer engagement

and ongoing career support, organisations can elevate both “first impression” scores and sustained advocacy, reducing mid-tenure churn and creating an onboarding experience that resonates across gender, hierarchy, tenure and age.

4.4 Research Question Two

Are changing times post-pandemic forcing newer onboarding methods?

Yes—and the verbatim comments illustrate this shift with urgency. Post-COVID themes include Tech provisioning issues ("refurbished laptops", no peripherals) created logistical dissatisfaction. Managerial disengagement and lack of SPOC ownership left joiners feeling “helpless.” The anonymous cross-industry survey (Table 10) reflects low psychological safety for employees with less than 2 years’ tenure (avg. 3.38 or below), possibly amplified by remote onboarding gaps.

The profile of our data shows that, despite exceptionally high pre-arrival scores (pre-onboarding M = 8.08; pre-engagement M = 8.14), the post-arrival “success” dimension languishes at just M = 7.69, and early feedback checkpoints remain chronically weak (90-day performance touchpoints mean = 3.15; six-month mean = 2.94; one-year mean = 2.93). These deficits dovetail with attrition spikes in years 2–3 (12,811 leavers; 40.6 %) and pronounced disengagement among both the youngest cohort (18–24 year-olds reporting motivation mean = 2.80; onboarding impact M = 3.05) and mid-career employees (2–5 years’ tenure scoring psychological safety M = 3.10). The pandemic’s shift to remote and hybrid work has exposed the limits of traditional, in-person orientations, making it imperative to adopt a digital-first, hybrid approach. By layering role-specific e-learning modules and micro-learning bursts into pre-boarding portals, convening virtual “coffee roulette” cohorts to spark peer connection, and deploying AI-driven pulse surveys that automatically trigger manager or buddy check-ins when engagement dips, organisations can marry the efficiency of technology with the empathy of structured human touchpoints. Such an evolved blueprint not only addresses the feedback vacuum highlighted by our data but also creates a resilient, inclusive onboarding journey that resonates across ages, tenures and work modalities.

4.5 Research Question Three

How can businesses create standardized yet flexible onboarding—and how can managers enhance this?

Drawing on our data, businesses can achieve the twin goals of consistency and personalization by designing a modular onboarding framework that reflects both the high-impact pre-boarding scores (pre-onboarding $M = 8.08$; pre-engagement $M = 8.14$) and the chronic post-arrival feedback gaps (successful onboarding $M = 7.69$; 90-day feedback $M = 3.15$; one-year feedback $M = 2.93$) – that are aligned with findings from onboarding studies that emphasize the role of early socialization in long-term retention (Frögéli et al., 2023; Cable et al., 2013). The standardized “core” module should cover mission and values, compliance, IT access and system training—delivered via a centrally managed digital portal to guarantee uniform comprehension wherever hires are located. Around that base, flexible “tracks” informed by tenure, role and demographic insights tailor the experience: entry-level hires (< 1 yr tenure), who report the lowest onboarding impact ($M = 3.18$) and motivation ($M = 2.80$ for ages 18–24), receive enhanced expectation-setting sessions and peer-mentoring cohorts; mid-career employees (2–5 yrs), who exhibit the sharpest engagement dip and face the highest attrition in years 2–3 (40.6 % of total exits), engage in career-pathing workshops and targeted manager coaching; and senior hires benefit from bespoke pre-onboarding briefings that drove their exceptional scores (pre-role clarity $M > 9.0$).

Managers are pivotal in activating this design: they must co-author individualized 30-, 90- and 180-day plans—with clear, documented goals linked to both core and track content—and conduct structured 1:1s using shared agendas that surface skill gaps and aspirations. Armed with pulse-survey dashboards, they intervene when clarity or motivation flags, ensuring that the low supervisor-feedback ratings at 90 days, six months ($M = 2.94$) and one year ($M = 2.93$) are addressed in real time. By marrying a reliable digital backbone with data-driven personalization and disciplined, empathy-led manager touchpoints, organisations can convert the strong first

impressions evident in our pre-boarding metrics into sustained engagement, lower mid-tenure churn and a more universally positive onboarding journey.

4.6 Research Question Four

What stops large organizations from personalizing onboarding—and how can they improve?

Large organisations often struggle to personalise onboarding because the very scale that drives their growth also entrenches one-size-fits-all mindsets, rigid processes and siloed ownership. When pre-boarding scores are uniformly high (pre-onboarding $M = 8.08$; pre-engagement $M = 8.14$) yet post-arrival “successful onboarding” languishes ($M = 7.69$) and feedback ratings at 90 days, six months and one year all hover near 3.0, it becomes clear that standard modules eclipse individual needs. Complex hierarchies make it difficult to adapt content to specific roles or demographics: entry-level and younger hires—who report the lowest motivation ($M = 2.80$ for ages 18–24) and onboarding impact ($M = 3.18$ for < 1 yr tenure)—get lumped into the same programme as senior-leader cohorts whose pre-role clarity exceeds 9.0. Meanwhile, mid-career employees (2–5 yrs tenure), who exhibit the steepest slump in psychological safety ($M = 3.10$) and drive the highest attrition between years 2–3 (40.6 % of total exits), rarely see targeted interventions, because data collection and analysis remain either decentralized or superficial.

To bridge this gap, large organisations must embrace a modular, data-driven architecture that retains standardisation at the core while layering on dynamic personalisation. First, centralise onboarding metrics—linking tenure, age, hire type and attrition data—to generate micro-segments (e.g., 18–24 yrs; 2–5 yrs tenure) and assign them bespoke tracks: younger cohorts receive enhanced expectation-setting and peer-mentoring; mid-career groups access career-path forums and targeted manager coaching; senior hires benefit from executive briefings. Second, equip managers with integrated dashboards and shared agenda templates for 1:1 check-ins at 30, 90 and 180 days, directly addressing the chronic feedback vacuum (touchpoint scores $M \approx 3.0$). Finally,

automate pulse surveys and AI-driven alerts to flag dips in clarity or motivation—ensuring that a drop in onboarding impact or psychological safety triggers immediate, personalised support. By marrying a stable, centrally managed foundation with real-time, segment-specific interventions and disciplined manager enablement, large organisations can turn strong first impressions into sustained engagement and markedly reduce mid-tenure churn.

4.7 Research Question Five

How has the pandemic impacted the workforce experience when they enter organizations?

The pandemic has fundamentally reshaped the new-hire experience by shifting the emphasis from in-person immersion to digital-first touchpoints. Drawing on Bauer's (2010) onboarding framework, which emphasizes role clarity, social integration, and performance alignment, the initial digital enhancements—such as pre-boarding portals and virtual introductions—appear to support early affective commitment - evidenced by strong pre – onboarding ($M = 8.08$) and pre – engagement ($M = 8.14$) scores—to make up for the loss of face-to-face introductions, yet this has not translated into a fully successful post-arrival transition (successful onboarding $M = 7.69$). New joiners consistently report robust system training and access to tools but continue to struggle with clarity of expectations and developmental feedback, with performance touchpoints languishing around 3.0 at 90 days, six months and one year mirroring concerns raised by Klein and Pollin (2012) about the dilution of onboarding efficacy in low-touch environments.

Early-career employees (18–24 years) and those in their first year (< 1 yr tenure) exhibit the lowest motivation ($M = 2.80$) and perceived onboarding impact ($M = 3.05$), suggesting that digital platforms alone cannot replicate the social bonding and real-time coaching of co-located environments. This corroborates findings by Saks and Gruman (2014), who assert that psychosocial support—including real-time coaching and informal bonding—is critical for newcomer adjustment and engagement. At the same time, high attrition among 2–3 year tenures (40.6 % of exits) hints that hybrid entry experiences may yield fragmented integration,

undermining long-term retention echoing Allen's (2006) insights into the long-term implications of onboarding quality on turnover. In sum, while the pandemic accelerated the adoption of scalable, digital onboarding frameworks, it also exposed the critical need for intentional human touchpoints—structured manager check-ins, peer mentoring and small-group rituals—to restore connection, clarity and continuous feedback in the “new normal.”

4.8 Summary of Findings

The data reveal a clear tension between strong pre-arrival engagement and weakened post-arrival integration. Pre-onboarding (mean 8.08) and pre-engagement (8.14) consistently outperform the “successful onboarding” measure (7.69), and average onboarding scores dipped from 8.37 in 2022 to 7.83 in 2024 before a partial rebound to 8.11 in 2025. Such fluctuations align with Klein and Polin's (2012) assertion that onboarding effectiveness hinges not only on access and orientation but also on sustained feedback and role clarity. Attrition mirrors this pattern: minimal exits in the first six months (2.5 %) and after ten years (2.4 %), but a dramatic peak in years 2–3 (40.6 % of departures), driven primarily by lateral hires early on and freshers in the 3–4-year band. This mid-tenure drop-off supports Allen's (2006) findings that onboarding quality has long-term implications for retention, and suggests that hybrid or fragmented entry experiences may undermine integration, belonging, and career momentum.

The cohort-based findings reinforce the imperative for differentiated onboarding strategies, consistent with literature emphasizing the intersection of demographic and positional variables in shaping employee experience (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011; Mosquera & Soares, 2025). While gender-based differences appear minimal—both male and female respondents consistently rate feedback mechanisms poorly—the sharp divergence across hierarchical levels suggests that onboarding efficacy is unevenly distributed. Entry-level hires report the highest satisfaction ($M = 8.39$), whereas team leads and managers score significantly lower ($M = 7.67$ and 7.59), echoing critiques by Caldwell and Peters (2018) regarding the “missing middle” in onboarding design. Senior leaders, by contrast, rate pre-boarding elements such as pre-role clarity above 9.0, aligning

with Dai and De Meuse's (2007) assertion that executive onboarding benefits from tailored immersion frameworks. Tenure and age analyses further reveal U-shaped engagement trajectories, with dips among employees in the 2–5 year tenure band and those aged 18–24, followed by rebounds in mid-career and 40–50-year cohorts, before declining sharply among employees over 50. These patterns mirror findings from Eccles and Roeser (2011) and Raisiene (2017), who highlight the need for age-responsive engagement scaffolding and mid-tenure reactivation strategies.

Time-based surveys confirm a persistent feedback gap. At 90 days, new hires score system knowledge (4.63/5) and contact clarity (4.66) highly but job-expectation clarity (2.72) and performance touchpoints (3.15) poorly. By six months, relational and safety measures improve (all ≥ 4.07), yet supervisory feedback remains low (2.94) and net promoter scores dip. At one year, career-path clarity peaks (4.89) and cultural alignment holds steady (4.37), but manager-led feedback still registers the lowest score (2.93), anchoring overall advocacy at a moderate level (4.23/10). These findings align with Klein and Polin (2012) and Saks & Gruman (2014), who argue that onboarding must evolve beyond transactional orientation to include sustained developmental input. Taken together, these findings point to the urgent need for structured expectation-setting and sustained, manager-driven feedback to transform strong first impressions into enduring engagement.

This report synthesizes onboarding and attrition data from Organization X, Organization Y Services, and a multi-industry survey to highlight the need for reimagining onboarding as an extended, personalized journey—especially in a hybrid post-pandemic world. Key themes include manager enablement, mid-tier experience gaps, psychological safety, and the early-career attrition cliff.

The onboarding experience has become a decisive factor in employee engagement and retention.

4.9 Conclusion

These findings reinforce the positioning of onboarding as a strategic engagement lever rather than a procedural necessity. Consistent with Edmondson's (2024) research on psychological safety erosion among new hires, the data indicates that pre-onboarding impressions diminish rapidly when operational and relational supports are weak. Organizations that invest in segmented, manager-led, and digitally enabled onboarding ecosystems—such as those advocated by Mosquera and Soares (2025)—can mitigate early-career attrition and foster sustained engagement and psychological safety.

The study reveals a robust correlation between tenure, age, and employee satisfaction. Employees with tenure exceeding 10 years and those aged 40–50 exhibit the highest levels of motivation, onboarding impact, and perceived support from managers and peers, aligning with longitudinal findings by Dobrow Riza et al. (2015) that job satisfaction increases with age but is moderated by tenure. These cohorts appear to benefit from relational stability and embeddedness within organizational networks (Mishra et al., 2020).

New joiners (<1 year tenure) and younger employees (18–24 years) face lower scores in critical areas like motivation and psychological safety. Adjusting to the workplace might be overwhelming, and onboarding programs need strengthening to address their needs.

Mid-tenure employees (2–5 years) and those aged 50+ show a noticeable decline in satisfaction, particularly in psychological safety and motivation. This aligns with findings from Mercer (2025) and HRFuture (2024), which highlight the risk of disengagement among employees lacking clear growth trajectories or feeling undervalued due to age-related biases.

Across all demographic segments, the role of managers and peers emerges as a critical determinant of psychological safety and motivation. The absence of relational support correlates with diminished engagement, particularly among younger and mid-tenure employees, reinforcing the importance of empathetic leadership and inclusive team dynamics (BCG, 2024; TalentCulture, 2020).

Finally, the data suggests that while motivation tends to increase with tenure, it declines with age—underscoring the need for differentiated engagement strategies. This supports the introduction of a three-tier employee lifecycle segmentation model (see Table 15), which enables targeted interventions for Continuous Onboarding. As proposed by Kerrissey and Edmondson (2024), onboarding should be viewed as an iterative process occurring at multiple inflection points—such as post-promotion or mid-tenure transitions—rather than a one-time event. Tailoring onboarding approaches to distinct employee segments can enhance retention, performance, and long-term organizational commitment.

Table 15 Three-tier Employee lifecycle segmentation Guide

Segment	Tenure	Age Range	Key Challenges	Strategic Focus for Onboarding
Early Career	<1 year	18–24	Low psychological safety, onboarding fragility	Preboarding clarity, peer scaffolding, manager coaching
Mid-Tenure	2–5 years	25–50	Motivation plateau, unclear growth paths	Career mapping, stretch assignments, feedback loops
Late Career	>10 years	50+	Disconnection, undervaluation	Legacy roles, reverse mentoring, recognition rituals

This study highlights that satisfaction and engagement in the workplace are influenced by both tenure and age, with early career, mid-tenure, and late-career employees requiring distinct support strategies to thrive. Focusing on strong onboarding, continuous career development, and inclusive practices can help improve overall employee experience and retention.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Results

The findings of this study reveal a persistent disconnect between exceptionally strong pre-arrival socialization and weakening post-arrival assimilation among new joiners. Pre-boarding and pre-engagement scores ($M = 8.08$ and 8.14 , respectively) consistently outperformed the “successful onboarding” dimension ($M = 7.69$), and performance feedback ratings remained low at all three checkpoints—90 days ($M = 3.15$), six months ($M = 2.94$) and one year ($M = 2.93$). Attrition data from Organization X mirrored this pattern: minimal exits in the first six months (2.5 %) yet a mid-tenure peak in years two to three (40.6 %). Cohort analyses further showed negligible gender gaps but pronounced U-shaped engagement curves by tenure and age, with early- and late-career employees reporting the lowest motivation and psychological safety. These patterns underscore the need to revisit the encounter and metamorphosis stages of organizational socialization (Bauer 2010; Van Maanen and Schein 1979), which appear under-resourced relative to the strong pre-arrival interventions. Organization X’s multi-year dataset (2022–2025) revealed that *Pre-Onboarding* experiences were consistently rated higher (average: 8.08) than *Onboarding* (average: 7.87), suggesting early expectations are not sustained once the formal induction begins. This aligns with Bauer’s (2010) onboarding framework, which stresses the importance of continuity across onboarding stages—from pre-arrival to full integration. Respondents also highlighted operational breakdowns, including delayed IT asset delivery and lack of follow-through from HR or recruitment, indicating a disruption in the experience flow post-offer.

In theoretical terms, the disparity between pre-arrival readiness and post-arrival support aligns with Bauer’s (2010) model of organizational socialization, which emphasizes the importance of both anticipatory and encounter-phase tactics. While anticipatory tactics (role previews, digital learning modules) have been optimised, encounter-phase processes—role clarity, on-the-job feedback and cultural immersion—remain inadequate. This gulf manifests in the

chronically low supervisory touchpoint scores and moderate recommendation likelihood (4.2/10 at one year), suggesting that new hires struggle to translate initial optimism into sustained self-efficacy and belonging (Saks and Gruman 2018). Managerial involvement emerged as a critical experience gap across datasets. Organization Y onboarding survey recorded persistently low feedback scores (ranging from 2.93 to 3.15) for supervisory guidance even after 12 months. Similar concerns were echoed in Organization X's joiner feedback, with employees stating they received "no communication from [their] manager" post-joining. This substantiates research by Ellström and Kock (2008), who argue that early learning and role clarity depend heavily on immediate managerial feedback and relational support.

A second theoretical implication concerns the centrality of manager-led feedback in newcomer adjustment. Leader-Member Exchange theory posits that early, high-quality exchanges foster trust and performance (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995). Yet our data show that managers are not capitalizing on structured check-ins: the average performance-feedback score never exceeds 3.2/5 across any interval. This shortfall likely contributes to the mid-career engagement slump (tenure 2–5 years; motivation $M = 3.29$) and attrition peak, underscoring that even robust buddy systems and digital portals cannot substitute for disciplined, empathetic coaching (Morrison 1993).

Age and tenure cohorts reveal further nuance. Younger employees (18–24 years) report the lowest engagement and safety perceptions (motivation $M = 2.80$; safety $M = 3.07$), which may reflect generational preferences for guided pathways and frequent feedback (Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons 2010). Likewise, the mid-career trough among 2–5 year incumbents—who also drive peak attrition—suggests that plateauing role challenges and unclear advancement criteria undermine long-term retention (Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013). Conversely, those with over ten years' tenure and the 40–50 year bracket record the highest scores across all dimensions, indicating that sustained role mastery and internal networks buffer against turnover.

Despite these tenure- and age-based inflection points, gender differences in onboarding perceptions were minimal—both males and females rated feedback and post-induction integration

poorly—pointing to an equally distributed experiential gap. However, intersectional vulnerabilities may still exist: female joiners’ slightly higher pre-engagement scores suggest that empathy-driven touchpoints (affinity groups, buddy systems) resonate, but these supports have not been extended into formal feedback regimes (Ely and Meyerson 2000). Gender-based ratings also showed male participants consistently scoring onboarding experiences marginally higher than females, suggesting room for improvement in inclusivity and experience parity. These findings mirror research by Kulik and Roberson (2008), who emphasize that perceived inclusion and fairness influence early workplace adjustment.

Attrition patterns further validate these insights. Lateral hires dominate early exits—particularly in the first year (0–12 months)—while freshers disproportionately churn in the 3–4 year band. This bifurcation implies that lateral onboarding must emphasize rapid cultural immersion and expectation alignment, whereas fresher programmes require clear career-path forums beyond the initial induction to sustain engagement into year three. Organization X’s attrition records show that 63% of exits in 2024 occurred within the first three years of tenure, with a sharp spike during the 2–3 year range. These patterns suggest that initial onboarding deficiencies can have delayed but significant consequences. Existing research confirms this link; Bauer et al. (2007) noted that well-structured onboarding reduces early attrition by up to 50%. The findings also reflect Rousseau’s (1995) psychological contract theory, whereby unmet early expectations can trigger disengagement and turnover.

Practically, the data argue for a modular onboarding architecture that combines a standardized digital core with dynamic, cohort-specific modules. Core content—mission, values, compliance, IT training—should be delivered uniformly via a central portal, preserving scale efficiencies. Around this, segmented tracks can address the unique needs of early-career (enhanced feedback and peer mentoring), mid-career (career-path workshops and manager coaching) and senior hires (executive briefings). Equipping managers with shared 1:1 agenda

templates and real-time pulse-survey dashboards will help close the persistent performance-feedback gap and prevent mid-tenure slumps.

Limitations of the current study include reliance on self-report surveys and data from a single organization, which may limit generalizability. Future research should incorporate longitudinal designs, multi-organisational samples and qualitative interviews to unpack the mechanisms by which manager touchpoints and peer networks affect newcomer trajectories.

In conclusion, although organizations have excelled at pre-arrival socialization, the encounter and metamorphosis phases remain under-resourced. Addressing this imbalance through manager-enabled feedback, cohort-tailored tracks and continuous real-time monitoring will be key to transforming strong first impressions into enduring engagement and reducing costly mid-career attrition.

Thematic analysis of qualitative data highlights several post-pandemic pain points: delayed hardware provisioning, lack of clear points of contact (SPOCs), and poor remote communication. Employees reported feeling “helpless” or “confused” during virtual induction stages. These findings correspond with recent literature noting that remote onboarding often lacks immediacy and social reinforcement (Stein & Christiansen, 2020). The anonymous industry survey further validates this, with employees in the 1–5 year bracket reporting lower levels of psychological safety (average: 3.10–3.42), which can hinder knowledge sharing and role confidence (Edmondson, 1999).

While classic onboarding literature emphasizes the role of structure, feedback, and socialization (Bauer et al., 2007), this study adds contemporary nuance by demonstrating how pandemic-induced hybrid models have disrupted the delivery of these elements. Unlike traditional face-to-face onboarding—where physical presence naturally facilitates bonding and informal mentoring—virtual systems have exposed systemic gaps in IT preparedness, managerial consistency, and inter-departmental accountability (Stein & Christiansen, 2020). Moreover, the study contributes to current scholarship by identifying mid-tier employee experience gaps—an

area often overlooked in onboarding research, which tends to focus either on entry-level hires or senior leadership assimilation (Wanberg, 2012).

5.2 Discussion of Research Question One

What can be an effective onboarding experience for all individuals?

The research illustrates that onboarding effectiveness hinges not only on process efficiency but also on human-centric touchpoints. Organization X's data (2022–2025) shows higher *Pre-Onboarding* scores (avg. 8.08) than *Onboarding* (avg. 7.87), signaling that initial expectations—driven by branding and pre-joining communication—often decline once candidates officially join (Organization X, 2024). An effective onboarding model, therefore, must maintain early momentum by ensuring clarity of role, timely IT provisioning, and managerial engagement beyond Day 1.

Literature supports this framing: Bauer et al. (2007) advocate for multi-stage onboarding that integrates administrative, social, and performance components to facilitate adjustment. Additionally, Edmondson (1999) highlights that psychological safety—absent in many new joiner experiences—is foundational for engagement and innovation. Your data echoes this, particularly in feedback from mid-tenure employees who reported lower levels of safety and support across industries.

5.3 Discussion of Research Question Two

Are the changing times post-pandemic forcing us to adopt newer methods of onboarding?

Undoubtedly. Verbatim feedback across Organization X highlights critical pandemic-era disruptions: unresponsive managers, refurbished laptops, and lack of clarity in processes, particularly under hybrid models. These findings reflect Stein and Christiansen's (2020) notion that remote onboarding must compensate for the absence of social cues and hallway learning.

The pandemic has shifted onboarding from in-person orientation events to experience-led, modular journeys—a transformation your data captures well. Joiners articulated “helplessness” due to poor follow-ups, and Organization Y's persistently low feedback scores over one year (avg.

<3.15) suggest remote systems still lack structured support. This underlines a need for digital-first onboarding tools and deliberate human check-ins.

5.4 Discussion of Research Question Three

How can businesses create a standardized yet flexible onboarding experience—and how can managers contribute?

Organization X’s survey by grade level demonstrates why one-size-fits-all onboarding fails: Grades B–D consistently report lower satisfaction than entry-level or leadership hires, suggesting that tailored onboarding by role and seniority is essential (Organization X, 2024).

Standardization is still useful for organizational compliance and cultural immersion (Bauer, 2010), but flexibility can be achieved through modular pathways—an approach supported by Korte et al. (2015). For example, lateral managers could receive curated business updates and peer connects, while entry-level hires get role primers and onboarding buddies.

Managerial involvement, as evidenced in your data, is both critical and currently under-leveraged. Organization Y’s findings showed inadequate supervisor feedback even after one year. Moreover, Organization X comments frequently cited “no manager communication,” spotlighting the absence of middle-management accountability. Manager toolkits, onboarding calendars, and first-90-day checklists can turn passive participants into active enablers.

5.5 Discussion of Research Question Four

What stops large organizations from personalizing onboarding—and what can they do to improve?

Large organizations often default to one-size-fits-all onboarding because their sheer scale and complexity penalize bespoke solutions. Centralized systems and rigid learning-management platforms favor standardized modules—mission overviews, compliance training and core IT access—leaving little room for tailored tracks even though our data show wide variation in needs: entry-level hires under 1 year report abysmal motivation ($M = 2.80$ for ages 18–24; onboarding impact $M = 3.05$) and mid-career employees (2–5 years’ tenure) suffer the steepest engagement

slump (psychological safety $M = 3.10$) just as they face peak attrition in years two to three (40.6 %). Content ownership often resides in functionally siloed teams, making it difficult to coordinate role-specific materials. Data likewise remain fragmented—performance touchpoints score no higher than $M \approx 3.15$ at 90 days and $M \approx 2.93$ at one year—so organizations lack the real-time insights needed to trigger personalized interventions. Manager bandwidth compounds the problem: without integrated dashboards or shared 1:1 templates, supervisors struggle to move beyond ad-hoc, superficial check-ins.

To break free from this cookie-cutter mold, large enterprises must adopt a modular, data-driven onboarding architecture that balances a standardized “core” with dynamic, cohort-specific tracks. First, consolidate all onboarding metrics—tenure, age, hire type, feedback scores—and use them to define micro-segments (e.g., 18–24-year-old freshers; 2–5-year mid-career staff). Then, deliver core content via a centralized portal while automatically assigning personalized learning paths: expectation-setting workshops and peer-mentoring for early-career hires, career-path forums and manager-coaching sessions for mid-career employees, and executive briefing modules for senior leaders. Empower managers with real-time pulse-survey dashboards and shared agenda templates for structured 1:1s at key milestones (Day 30, 90, 180), directly tackling the persistent feedback vacuum (touchpoint scores $M \approx 3.0$). Finally, embed AI-powered alerts that flag drops in clarity or motivation—prompting targeted buddy check-ins or microlearning nudges. By marrying scale-efficient core modules with automated, segment-tailored interventions and disciplined manager enablement, large organizations can transform strong pre-boarding impressions into sustained engagement and materially reduce mid-tenure churn.

5.6 Discussion of Research Question Five

How has the pandemic impacted the workforce experience when entering organizations?

The pandemic has redefined what “joining” means. The data paints a vivid picture of virtual disorientation—no POC, no manager contact, and asset delays—leading to emotional detachment. In the anonymous cross-sector survey, employees with 1–5 years’ tenure reported the

lowest psychological safety and peer support (average scores between 3.10 and 3.42), reinforcing the sense of fragmentation (Anonymous Survey, 2025).

These findings resonate with Wanberg's (2012) assertion that informal interactions often build onboarding success—yet these are absent in remote or hybrid settings. The data suggests that belonging, responsiveness, and psychological anchoring have replaced traditional welcome kits as the new determinants of a successful onboarding experience.

CHAPTER VI:

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

This study synthesizes onboarding data from Organization X, Organization Y Services, and a multi-industry survey to evaluate onboarding effectiveness in hybrid and post-pandemic contexts. The data paint a vivid picture of an onboarding journey that begins with exceptionally strong anticipatory engagement yet falters once new hires arrive on the job. Pre-boarding and pre-engagement activities both average above 8.0 on a 10-point scale ($M = 8.08$ and $M = 8.14$, respectively), yet the “successful onboarding” metric immediately drops to 7.69. This decline only deepens in real time: performance-feedback scores languish around 3.1 at 90 days ($M = 3.15$), fall to 2.94 at six months, and remain at 2.93 by the one-year milestone. Attrition patterns at Organization X mirror this trajectory, with just 2.5 percent of departures in the first six months and 2.4 percent after ten years, contrasted sharply by a 40.6 percent turnover peak during years two to three—largely driven by lateral hires early on and freshers in their third and fourth years. Cohort analyses further reveal that entry-level employees and senior leaders rate their onboarding experiences most favourably, while team leads, managers, 18–24 year-olds ($M = 2.80$ for motivation, $M = 3.05$ for onboarding impact) and mid-career staff (2–5 years’ tenure; psychological safety $M = 3.10$) occupy the lowest rungs of engagement and safety.

Pre-Onboarding experiences outscore Onboarding phases, with operational handoffs and relational integration as primary weak points (Organization X, 2024). Managerial support is inconsistent, with Organization Y reporting persistently low feedback scores. Attrition correlates strongly with onboarding quality: over 63% of Organization X’s attrition occurs within the first three years, especially between 2–3 years. Grade and gender disparities reveal that mid-level hires and female joiners experience lower onboarding satisfaction. The pandemic has introduced new experience gaps, including asset delays, unstructured virtual onboarding, and diminished psychological safety among early-tenure employees.

6.2 Implications

These findings underscore a critical imbalance within the organizational socialization process: while anticipatory tactics are finely tuned, the encounter and metamorphosis stages suffer from under-resourcing. The steep drop from pre-arrival enthusiasm to post-arrival adjustment difficulties suggests that role clarity and early feedback mechanisms are insufficiently integrated, inhibiting newcomers' self-efficacy and belonging. Leader-Member Exchange theory highlights that high-quality manager–employee interactions are foundational for trust and performance, yet structured check-ins are conspicuously absent, as evidenced by consistently low feedback scores across all intervals. Moreover, the U-shaped engagement curves by tenure and age demonstrate that a uniform onboarding programme cannot address the disparate needs of distinct cohorts: younger employees and mid-career professionals face unique barriers to motivation and psychological safety, while senior incumbents benefit from tailored communications that yield pre-role clarity scores above 9.0.

High Pre-Onboarding scores suggest strong employer branding, yet post-offer execution gaps erode trust. This misalignment can compromise employee engagement and increase early-tenure turnover (Rousseau, 1995).

Onboarding success is directly linked to early manager contact, feedback cycles, and clarity of expectations (Bauer et al., 2007). Current gaps highlight the need to reposition managers as primary onboarding enablers. Experienced employees benefit from higher managerial involvement, emphasizing the need for structured mentorship and leadership programs to improve retention.

With 40% of attrition occurring between 2–3 years, onboarding must extend beyond Day 1, anchoring career pathways and relational networks early on.

Female and mid-tier hires report marginally lower experiences, indicating a need for inclusive design and persona-specific journey mapping (Kulik & Roberson, 2008).

The hybrid workforce necessitates modular onboarding, improved digital infrastructure, and enhanced psychological safety to substitute for the loss of informal office culture (Stein & Christiansen, 2020). While onboarding structures are effective, motivation and engagement may decline if continuous support isn't maintained. Career progression concerns in mid-level roles – Employees in the 2–5-year range show lower motivation and psychological safety, suggesting uncertainty in role expectations and growth opportunities.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

To build on the insights derived from this study, future research can focus on Longitudinal Analysis of Employee Engagement wherein tracking how motivation, onboarding impact, and psychological safety evolve over time. It can also identify key moments where employee satisfaction rises or falls to inform retention strategies.

A study around deeper exploration of Psychological Safety can investigate specific factors that enhance or hinder psychological safety across different tenure and age groups which can be conducted through qualitative research (interviews, focus groups) to understand personal experiences.

It can also be researched around Technology and Employee Experience where it can examine how digital tools, remote work policies, and AI-driven engagement strategies affect motivation and onboarding impact. Assess the role of flexible work arrangements in improving scores across tenure and age groups.

By exploring these areas, organizations can develop data-driven strategies to enhance employee engagement, improve retention, and foster a supportive workplace culture.

6.4 Conclusion

This study underscores the vital role of onboarding in shaping early employee experiences, engagement, and long-term retention. Across datasets from Organization X, Organization Y Services, and a multi-industry sample, the evidence consistently highlights gaps in post-offer

execution, managerial engagement, and inclusive design—especially in hybrid and post-pandemic work environments.

While Pre-Onboarding touchpoints remain strong, the transition into the formal organization often lacks continuity, clarity, and care. The findings affirm that effective onboarding must be extended, experiential, and embedded into the larger employee value proposition. Moreover, the marked disparities across role levels, gender, and tenure stages emphasize that personalization and psychological safety are no longer optional—they are strategic imperatives.

As organizations evolve, onboarding must be reconceptualized not as an event but as a critical first chapter in the employee lifecycle. A chapter where operational readiness, relational scaffolding, and inclusive leadership converge to create lasting impact.

The analysis highlights three key areas where improvements can create a more engaged and satisfied workforce which includes Post-Onboarding Support, Mid-level employee retention & Leadership & Managerial influence. While structured onboarding works well for entry-level employees, motivation and psychological safety decline after the first year. Continuous engagement initiatives, mentorship programs, and career development check-ins are essential for sustaining momentum. Employees in individual contributor and team lead roles often struggle with unclear career progression and lower engagement, leading to stagnation and potential attrition. Organizations should strengthen role clarity, upskilling opportunities, and managerial coaching to improve retention. Long-tenured employees thrive due to strong managerial and peer support. Expanding mentorship networks and leadership development programs can ensure similar engagement levels across all experience levels.

By addressing these key findings, organizations can create an onboarding experience that not only welcomes employees but supports their long-term growth and satisfaction. Investing in tailored support for all employee levels will cultivate a motivated and engaged workforce.

Practical Implementation Strategies:

To turn these insights into actionable steps, organizations can adopt targeted interventions at different employee levels like strengthening Post-Onboarding Support for Early-Career Employees (<1 Year) which might include introduction of structured career check-ins every 3-6 months to ensure continued engagement. Implementation of peer networking programs to help employees build relationships beyond their immediate teams. Creation of early recognition & rewards systems to reinforce motivation and psychological safety and offering continuous learning & micro-training modules for skill-building beyond initial onboarding.

Improving Mid-Level Employee Retention & Career Growth (2-5 Years) might include defining clear career pathways, including potential promotions, lateral moves, and specialized projects, providing mentorship programs, pairing mid-level employees with experienced leaders, conducting role clarity workshops where employees receive guidance on expectations and growth opportunities and expanding upskilling initiatives to align employee capabilities with evolving business needs.

Enhancing Managerial & Leadership Support (5+ Years) can include establishing mentorship networks where senior employees guide newer team members, introduction of leadership transition programs to develop future leaders within the organization. Implementation of innovation initiatives, encouraging experienced employees to lead change and improvement projects and maintenance of regular engagement discussions focused on leadership development and strategic alignment.

These interventions will create a holistic, engaging, and sustainable onboarding experience that supports employees throughout their journey.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY COVER LETTER

SURVEY TO GAUGE IMPACT OF MANAGER & PEERS BEHAVIOR ON EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING & FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

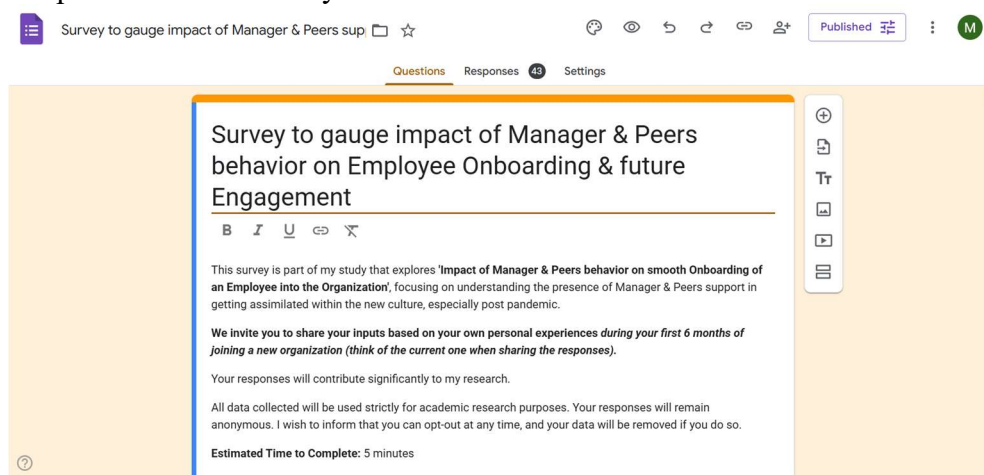
This survey is part of my study that explores '**Impact of Manager & Peers behavior on smooth Onboarding of an Employee into the Organization**', focusing on understanding the presence of Manager & Peers support in getting assimilated within the new culture, especially post pandemic. **We invite you to share your inputs based on your own personal experiences *during your first 6 months of joining a new organization (think of the current one when sharing the responses)*.** Your responses will contribute significantly to my research.

All data collected will be used strictly for academic research purposes. Your responses will remain anonymous. I wish to inform that you can opt-out at any time, and your data will be removed if you do so.

Estimated Time to Complete: 5 minutes

Thank you for your participation and valuable insights!

Snapshot of actual survey:



APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

Your responses will contribute significantly to my research.

All data collected will be used strictly for academic research purposes. Your responses will remain anonymous. I wish to inform that you can opt-out at any time, and your data will be removed if you do so.

APPENDIX C
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

SURVEY TO GAUGE IMPACT OF MANAGER AND PEERS BEHAVIOR ON EMPLOYEE
ONBOARDING AND FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

1. Gender
 - a. Male b. Female c. Transgender d. Prefer not to share
2. Work location
 - a. Metro b. Non-Metro
3. Age bracket you belong to
 - a. 18-24 yrs b. 25-32yrs c. 33-40 yrs d. 41-50 yrs e. 50+ yrs
4. Years of experience you have
 - a. 0-5 yrs b. 5-10 yrs c. 10-15 yrs d. 15-20 yrs e. 20+ yrs
5. Experience with current Organization
 - a. < 1yr b. 1-2 yrs c. 2-5 yrs d. 5-10 yrs e. >10 yrs
6. Current level
 - a. Leadership b. Senior Management c. Middle Management d. Individual contributors e. Entry level
7. Date of joining of current organization
MM/DD/YYYY
8. Industry you are working with
 - a. Automotive b. FMCG c. IT/ITES d. Financial services e. Consulting f. Manufacturing g. Pharmaceuticals h. Real estate i. Healthcare j. Education k. Hospitality l. Any other
9. I am really enthusiastic about the work I am doing for my company
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
10. I have had a smooth Onboarding experience in my existing organization which provided me clarity on: [Job Role]
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
11. I have had a smooth Onboarding experience in my existing organization which provided me clarity on: [Ways of working]

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

12. I have had a smooth Onboarding experience in my existing organization which provided me clarity on: [Organizational Policies & Procedures]

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

13. My manager played an important role in getting me smoothly onboarded into the new role.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

14. I believe the People Manager has a very important role in the smooth onboarding of an employee

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

15. During the first 6 months of my joining, my manager ensured there is a channel of communication established with all my key stakeholders

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

16. My manager played an important role in integrating me within the team.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

17. My manager clearly communicated my job responsibilities and expectations.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

18. My manager constantly had informal check-ins to understand how well I was assimilating within the team & the organization

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

19. My manager used to have check-in with me atleast once in a fortnight during my onboarding period?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

20. My manager was helpful in providing the resources and tools that were needed to perform my job effectively.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

21. The feedback and guidance provided by my manager was effective & helpful in my onboarding.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

22. The behavior & actions of my manager impacted my confidence (positive or negative) in my role.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

23. The overall support provided by my Peers/ Team members made my onboarding effective.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

24. I had periodic interactions (formal/ informal) with my peers/ team members during my onboarding period.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

25. My peers provided necessary guidance & support (whenever I needed) to help me understand my job responsibilities and expectations.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

26. The behavior & actions of my peers/ Team members impacted my confidence (positive or negative) in my role.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

27. My peers have helped me a lot in understanding the company culture.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

28. Effective onboarding helped me build good bonding & rapport with my teammates

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

29. My manager made me feel safe to share my ideas/ concerns/ mistakes.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

30. During my onboarding, I was made to feel comfortable in brainstorming out loud, voice half finished thoughts, openly challenge status-quo, share feedback & work through disagreements together during team meetings.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

31. During my onboarding, I was made to feel free to ask for help, admit mistakes, raise concerns, suggest ideas & challenge ways of working & the ideas of others on the team, including the ideas of those in authority.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

32. During my onboarding, I felt comfortable to approach my manager with questions or concerns during onboarding.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

33. During my onboarding, I felt comfortable to approach my peers with questions or concerns during onboarding

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

34. During my onboarding, I felt psychologically safe around the people I worked with.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree