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A Study on Employee Onboarding Programs: Practices, Challenges, and Outcomes – A study with special reference to Tech Mahindra, Hyderabad

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Abstract

The current research paper focuses on employee onboarding programmes, practices and challenges in software companies with special reference to Tech Mahindra, Hyderabad. Onboarding is a vital process that helps newly hired employees become familiar with an organization's culture, work practices, and job responsibilities, enabling them to reach productive performance levels within a shorter period. This study explores the onboarding programs implemented at Tech Mahindra, Hyderabad, focusing on their practices, challenges, and overall outcomes. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 100 employees who had recently completed the onboarding process. The research examined key components of onboarding, including orientation programs, training initiatives, mentoring support, and organizational integration.

The findings indicate that most employees were satisfied with the onboarding experience and considered it effective in enhancing role clarity and preparing them for their responsibilities. The study further revealed that technical training programs significantly improved employee confidence and productivity, while mentoring and support mechanisms helped employees adapt more smoothly to the organizational environment. Overall, the onboarding process contributed positively to employee engagement, commitment, and integration within the organization.

The study concludes that a well-structured onboarding program plays an important role in improving employee performance, job satisfaction, and retention in software companies. These findings reinforce the view that effective onboarding serves as a strategic tool for strengthening workforce development and supporting long-term organizational success (Bauer, 2010; Bauer & Erdogan, 2011).

Key Words: Employee Onboarding, Engagement, Retention, Training, Organizational Culture, Challenges, Onboarding practices, etc.

Introduction

Employee onboarding can be defined as a human resource management strategy that assist newly hired employees to adjust with the organization through understanding the job roles and responsibilities, organizational culture, policies and performance expectations from them. Onboarding is directly correlated with engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and retention. Research by Bauer (2010) has shown that a systematic approach to onboarding can provide new hires with role clarity, social integration and self-efficacy which all contribute positively to optimal performance.

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Onboarding has also become more significant than before amid the changing landscape of the software industry which is fueled by technological advancements and competitive market landscapes that require rapid adaptation. Software companies spend a lot to build onboarding programs that help employees learn quickly and become productive in no time. Onboarding is an important mechanism that reduces uncertainty among new hires and allows for early engagement towards organizational expectations (Saks & Gruman, 2018). To begin the employment relationship on a right footing, organizations provide training sessions, mentoring initiatives and cultural orientation programs to create a positive employee experience.

Software industry exists in an environment of low employee tenure, a constantly evolving work setting and whirlwind of technology transformations. Hence, Onboarding programs have a crucial influence on retaining the professionals and decreasing turnover intention. Klein and Polin (2012) show that more comprehensive onboarding produces increased employee commitment, while Williams (2004) finds a reduction in voluntary attrition. Good onboarding improves not only individual performances but also inter and intra-team collaboration and therefore boosts organization capability.

Tech Mahindra is an Indian multinational technology company that specializes in information technology and business process outsourcing services, which has a massive employee strength across their offices in Hyderabad as well. Being a knowledge-intensive organization, structured onboarding programs are followed at Tech Mahindra so that employees are trained to take up intricate projects or interact with clients and live upto organizational expectations. By understanding how effective onboarding practices work at Tech Mahindra, we can gain insights into workforce integration and employee development in software companies.

The paper will address some onboarding practices practiced by Tech Mahindra, Hyderabad and discusses the backdrops faced during onboarding and results achieved through onboard in terms of employee and organization. This study will provide additional insight towards the knowledge of employee onboarding and improve onboarding strategies in software companies.

Research Problem

Especially in software companies, employees need to learn new technologies, new project requirements and a completely different organizational culture. However, even with significant time and money investments in onboarding programs, many organizations still struggle with information overload, poor role clarity, lack of socialization and early attrition. Ineffective onboarding can have negative implications on employee engagement, performance and retention (Bauer, 2010).

The growing use of tech tools and the overall complexity of work environments in software organizations has made it even more difficult to onboard remotely given that for most, these work arrangements are different than what had been used before. Research shows that onboarding programs do not tailor to employees learning needs, leading to dissatisfaction and longer adjustment times (Klein, Polin & Sutton, 2015). This causes organizations to potentially fall short of the desired impact of onboarding programs.

Many large software firms, such as Tech Mahindra, Hyderabad, hire workers from wide ranging education and professional backgrounds. Structured onboarding programs are meant to provide a smooth entry into the company

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process, but does this always meet employee expectations or organizational needs? Existing research also indicates that onboarding design and employee experiences may be at odds with each other, potentially undermining productivity, engagement and retention (Saks & Gruman, 2018).

Hence, the research problem of this study thus, is to study different practices of onboarding used by Tech Mahindra Hyderabad and to understand what challenges newly hired employees face in Onboarding process and how it has a bearing on the effectiveness of these programs in terms of employee experience, adjustment (to new job culture), engagement level at work and its impact on organizational involvement. This study aims to find out if the present onboarding practices support new employee integration and help contribute to positive outcomes for the organization.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the effectiveness of the onboarding program in enhancing employees' understanding of their job roles, responsibilities, and organizational expectations.
2. To assess the influence of the onboarding process on employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall workplace adjustment.
3. To identify the key strengths and areas for improvement in the onboarding practices implemented at Tech Mahindra, Hyderabad.
4. To analyze the relationship between onboarding effectiveness and employee retention, commitment, and long-term organizational integration.
5. To provide recommendations for improving onboarding strategies to enhance employee experience, productivity, and organizational outcomes.

Study Design

A Descriptive Research Design for Exploratory study has been adopted. A descriptive design is a great fit as it will systematically investigate employee experiences and perceptions of in-depth onboarding processes without changing the work environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The present study adopts a quantitative research design, collecting primary data from recently onboarded employees through a standardized questionnaire. We utilized a 35-item questionnaire comprising either close-ended questions (measured using a five-point Likert scale) or open-ended elements to evaluate orientations, efficacy of training, availability of mentoring guidance and satisfaction.

A convenience sampling strategy is utilized, with a sample size of 100 employees. Secondary data is collected from journals, books, publications done by a company or from previous studies conducted on onboarding. Descriptive statistical tools, including percentages and frequency distributions, are used to analyze data. The purpose of the study is to assess onboarding impact on employee adjustment, engagement and productivity since effective onboarding has been associated with higher organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Bauer, 2010; Bauer & Erdogan, 2011).

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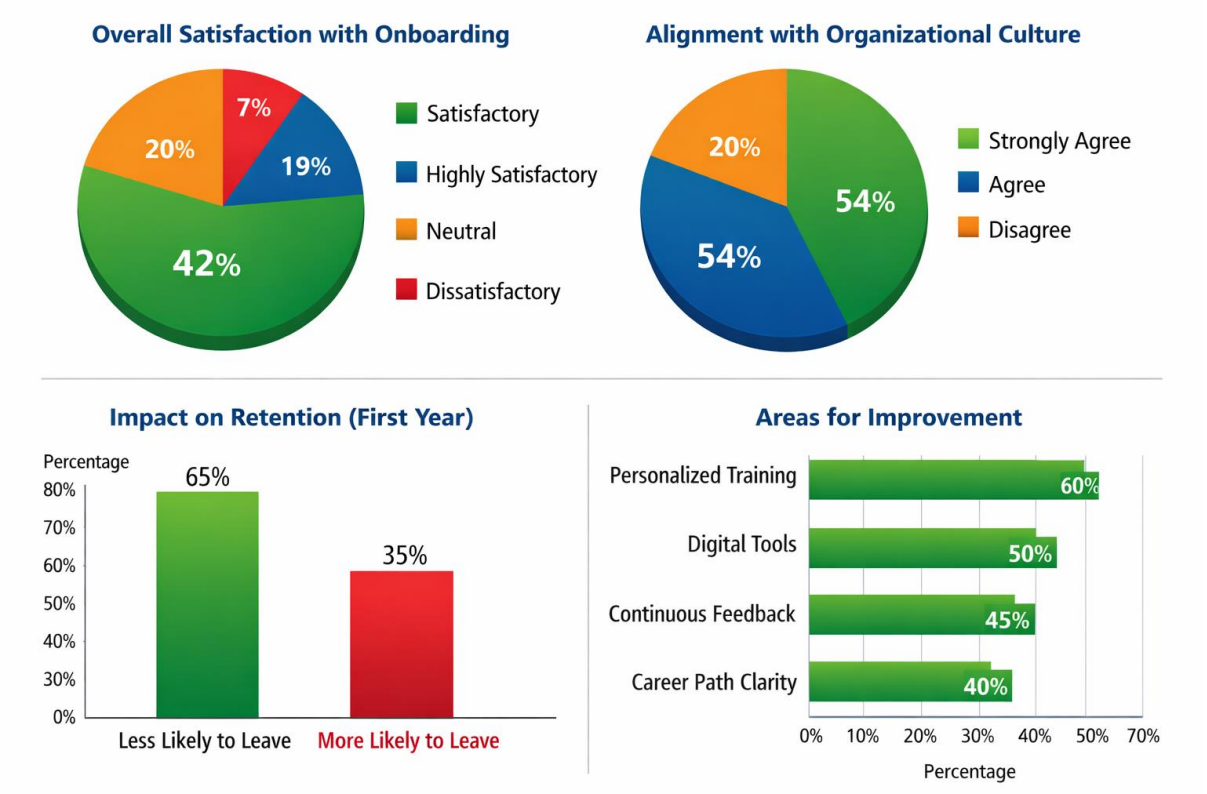
Interpretation and Discussion of Results

The collected data been analyzed by using descriptive statistics and other tools. The detailed results are discussed below

Table – 1 Overall Satisfaction Levels

Parameter	Satisfactory %	Highly Satisfactory %	Dissatisfactory %	Neutral %
Orientation Sessions	70	20	5	5
Training Effectiveness	68	22	6	4
Mentorship Support	72	18	6	4
Cultural Assimilation	75	20	3	2
Feedback Mechanisms	65	15	12	8

Figure – 1



Overall Satisfaction Levels of Employees

It is evident from the above table and figures that; A combined **61% of employees (42% + 19%)** report being

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satisfied or highly satisfied with the onboarding process. The largest segment (**42%**) considers the onboarding experience satisfactory, indicating that the program generally meets employee expectations. Nearly **one-fifth (20%)** remain neutral, suggesting that while the onboarding process is acceptable, it may not create a highly engaging or memorable experience for all employees. Only **7%** express dissatisfaction, demonstrating relatively low levels of negative sentiment toward the onboarding process.

Alignment with Organizational Culture

A majority of employees indicate that onboarding helps them understand organizational culture, values, and expectations. Strong agreement suggests that onboarding successfully communicates the company's mission, vision, and workplace norms. The 20% disagreement rate indicates that a notable proportion of employees may not fully connect with the organizational culture during the onboarding phase.

Impact of Onboarding on Employee Retention (First Year)

65% of employees report being less likely to leave the organization due to their onboarding experience. This finding demonstrates that onboarding significantly contributes to employee retention. Conversely, 35% indicate they are more likely to leave, suggesting that onboarding alone may not fully address employee expectations or workplace challenges.

Potential Implications

It looks like the onboarding program is effective, since it gives new employees some familiarity with the organization. The existence of neutral responses, however, signals potential to make onboarding an experience that is better engaging, personalized and employee-friendly.

CLEAR – Successful cultural integration is a key deliverable and outcome of onboarding. People who can recognize and embrace the values of an organization are generally more engaged, committed and productive. In the disagreement section, it calls for striking an appropriate balance of cultural orientation practices, fellowship mentoring and being able to interact and exchange ideas with leaders.

Studies demonstrate over and over again that a good onboarding experience improves commitment to the organization, reducing early turnover. The data suggests the onboarding program has a positive impact on retention for the majority of employees. The relatively high fraction of employees still contemplating leaving must strike a note of caution, with continued support beyond initial onboarding always beneficial.

Closing Thoughts

The results suggest that the onboarding program is working for the most part, helping employees integrate into their role, organizational culture fit and retention. Most employees are satisfied by onboarding experience and there is a lesser probability of leaving the organization post onboarding. However, employees are revealing multiple areas for improvement, specifically in the areas of tailored training, digital support aids, feedback rounds and career development pathways. Tackling these issues could bolster employee engagement, improve the efficacy of onboarding programs and enhance long-term retention and business performance.

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