Evaluating Employee Onboarding Program in A Travel Technology Company

Arrizqiya Auliaur Rahmah[1], Henndy Ginting[2]
Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia
E-mail: arrizqiya.aulia@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of PT's onboarding program. Fly Together amid rapid expansion in the APAC region. As a travel technology company, effective onboarding is essential to enable new hires to adapt quickly and achieve organizational goals. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the onboarding program at PT. Flying Together in the Context of the Company's Rapid Expansion in the APAC Region The current practice, which involves many stakeholders such as line managers and HR, faces challenges including inconsistent execution, resource delays, and inadequate follow-up, raising concerns about program effectiveness. This study uses the Socialization Resources Theory (SRT) theory to analyze 17 dimensions of the onboarding program and their relationship with onboarding outcomes, including role clarity, self-efficacy, social integration, and cultural knowledge. The analysis showed that the average score of the onboarding results was 2.65, which indicates the program's ineffectiveness. Correlation analysis shows a strong relationship between onboarding dimensions, such as job resources and supervisor support, and key onboarding outcomes. The mixed research method combined quantitative data from 23 new hires and qualitative interviews with experts. Based on these findings, the study proposes actionable recommendations, including enhanced anticipatory socialization, a formalized friend system, and structured follow-up mechanisms. These upgrades address key gaps, allow new hires to integrate effectively, improve performance, and contribute to the company's success. The study underscores the critical role of well-structured onboarding in achieving employee satisfaction and organizational goals.

Keywords: onboarding program, socialization resources theory, proximal onboarding outcomes, organizational socialization

INTRODUCTION

The new work environment can be stressful for new employees or new joiners. (Apriyanto & Haryono, 2020). Successfully adapting to their new role and the organization requires intentional efforts from the new joiners and the company. Employee onboarding, or organizational socialization, systematically integrates new employees into the organization and its culture. This process includes activities and programs to help new joiners understand their roles and responsibilities within the company.

Research has demonstrated that effective onboarding significantly impacts employee retention and job satisfaction, contributing to long-term organizational success (Patel & Mohanty, 2023). An effective onboarding process not only helps new joiners feel welcome and integrated but also reduces turnover improves engagement and increases job performance (Becker & Bish, 2021; Frögéli et al., 2023; Klein et al., 2015; Klein & Polin, 2012). The benefits of a well-structured onboarding program extend across various industries and regions, including in

the travel and tourism industry, where employee retention and service quality are crucial for maintaining competitive advantage (Harris, 2022; Miller Jr, 2023; Tabakovic, 2024). By ensuring new joiners are correctly oriented and supported, organizations can foster a more positive work environment and enhance overall employee satisfaction and productivity (Hassan, 2020; Joseph & Sridevi, 2015; Noronha et al., 2020).

The travel and tourism industry encountered numerous challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic but has significantly recovered since 2020. By 2022, the industry's contribution to the global GDP will reach approximately US$ 7.7 trillion, further increasing to more than US$ 9.5 trillion in 2023. The travel industry is projected to contribute an additional US$ 4.3 trillion between 2022 and 2027. The Asia-Pacific (APAC) region has led this recovery, accounting for more than one-third of the global travel and tourism sector's contribution to GDP in 2019 and 2022 (1Lattice, 2024).

PT. Terbang Bersama, an Indian travel technology company, serves the B2B markets, including wholesalers and travel agents. In 2020, PT. Terbang Bersama entered the APAC region at the height of the pandemic, aiming to capitalize on emerging opportunities. The company plans to expand its business operations significantly to drive growth in the APAC region. Consequently, hiring activity, especially for sales teams in the APAC region, has doubled in 2024 compared to the previous year.

PT. Terbang Bersama provides travel and tourism products such as airline tickets, hotel bookings, attractions, cruises, and more to its customers, which include travel agents and companies. The company needs a larger sales team to capture retail and wholesale customers. The sales team manages client engagement, ensures customers purchase the company's products, and adds new travel agents to the system with the recovery of the travel and tourism industry post-COVID-19, PT. Terbang Bersama is expanding its workforce. Approximately 50% of the current sales employees joined last year, and the company anticipates a substantial influx of new joiners in the coming months and years.

According to Hartati, (2018) Based on the data analysis and discussion presented, it is concluded that the new employee orientation program influences turnover intention in PT sales. X. Employees who participated in the new employee orientation program in the control group had a lower turnover intention rate than those who did not participate in the new employee orientation program in the control group.

Being integrated with the company is very important for the regional Sales team. The onboarding program will help new joiners navigate new social and work-related expectations. They must feel confident and knowledgeable about the products, processes, escalation contacts, and systems used for selling to retail and wholesale customers. Building their confidence is crucial for effective job

performance. Without a strong foundation in these areas, they may struggle to engage effectively with clients and close sales.

The urgency of this research lies in PT's expansion strategy. Flying Together depends on the successful integration of new employees. A more effective onboarding program will increase employee retention and the productivity and success of the company's growth initiatives. By understanding the variables that play a role in the onboarding process, this study aims to propose targeted solutions that address existing inefficiencies and align the onboarding process with the company's long-term goals. The study's main objective is to assess the effectiveness of existing onboarding programs and propose improvements to integrate new employees into the organization better.

The onboarding program is expected to serve as a way for new joiners to understand and embrace the company culture in their early employment. By fostering a deeper understanding of the organization's values, norms, and practices, the program can enable new joiners to represent PT more effectively. Terbang Bersama to existing customers or potential customers. This cultural alignment enhances their ability to communicate the company's identity and helps them build stronger, more authentic relationships with clients.

RESEARCH METHODS

Data Collection

This research utilizes both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data will be gathered through questionnaires, focusing on the SRT dimensions or Onboarding Program as the independent variable and Proximal Onboarding Outcomes as the dependent variable. The secondary data are expert interview results and a literature review.

By integrating primary and secondary data, the study ensures a comprehensive evaluation, balancing academic rigor with real-world applicability. This approach strengthens the validity of the findings and enhances their relevance for organizational decision-making.

Research Methodology

Quantitative methods are particularly appropriate for evaluating onboarding programs because they allow for collecting objectives and numerical data that can be statistically analyzed (Creswell, 2014). This approach enables the author to measure and compare new joiners' perceptions across different components of the onboarding program, providing a structured and comprehensive evaluation. Using standardized questions, the research minimizes the risk of bias arising from subjective interpretation, a standard limitation in qualitative studies (Saunders, 2014). It supports identifying patterns, trends, and correlations within the data, which are critical for pinpointing areas where the onboarding program needs improvement.

However, quantitative data alone may not fully capture the underlying context or explanations for observed trends. To address this limitation, qualitative methods,

such as expert interviews, are employed to provide in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders. This qualitative component is critical for uncovering complexities and nuances not evident through quantitative analysis alone.

Combining these methods enables triangulation, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings by validating evidence from multiple data sources. (Greene et al., 1989; Ramlo, 2020). Furthermore, it ensures that the understanding of quantitative findings is enriched and contextualized by insights gained through qualitative analysis. The research seeks to deliver well-rounded and actionable recommendations for refining the onboarding program and its implementation through this integrative approach.

Data Analysis

This study employs Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 29 for data analysis. Data analysis conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of PT comprehensively. Terbang Bersama's onboarding program uses descriptive and correlational statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including mean, median, and standard deviation, are applied to analyze patterns, central tendencies, and variations within the onboarding program. These metrics provide valuable insights into how the program is perceived by new joiners, highlighting areas of consistency, variability, and opportunities for improvement.

Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis is utilized to investigate the second research question, which explores the relationship between the onboarding program and proximal onboarding outcomes (self-efficacy, role clarity, social integration, and knowledge of culture). This method measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the onboarding program and its outcomes, offering a quantitative understanding of their association.

Furthermore, Spearman's rank correlation analysis examines the correlation between individual dimensions of the onboarding program and proximal onboarding outcomes. This technique is particularly suitable for the ordinal data collected through the questionnaire, allowing for an accurate assessment of ranked responses and their relationships with the measured outcomes.

Research Design

This study follows a structured research process to examine the effectiveness of employee onboarding programs and their correlation with proximal onboarding outcomes, with a particular focus on PT. Terbang Bersama. It begins with exploring the onboarding concept and its impacts, supported by insights from existing research. The initial phase identifies gaps and inefficiencies in PT. Terbang Bersama's current onboarding practices form the central problem addressed in the study.

Building on the problem exploration, the research defines specific objectives, formulates guiding research questions, and establishes limitations. A comprehensive literature review is the foundation for developing the conceptual

framework. This framework underpins the study's approach, focusing on key dimensions of the onboarding process and their correlation with onboarding outcomes.

With the conceptual framework established, the research methodology is designed to address the research questions effectively. A mixed-method approach is adopted, combining quantitative data obtained through questionnaires from new joiners in the Sales department across the APAC region with qualitative insights derived from expert interviews. Following the data collection phase, statistical analysis uses suitable techniques to identify patterns, relationships, and significant insights. Additionally, expert interviews are incorporated to provide a deeper understanding, leveraging their experience and judgment to enrich the analysis.

The analysis results provide a deeper understanding of the onboarding process at PT. Terbang Bersama, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. Based on these findings, actionable recommendations for a new and improved onboarding strategy are developed to address the identified gaps and enhance the program's overall effectiveness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The onboarding program perception

To identify the perception of the onboarding program, this study used the average score of the dependent variable, Proximal Onboarding Outcome (POO). This variable captures new joiners' perceptions of how well they can perform in their jobs, understand their roles and expectations, feel socially accepted by peers and superiors, and comprehend the culture, politics, goals, values, and language commonly used in the organization.

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze new joiners' perceptions of the onboarding program's effectiveness. The mean score for the dependent variable, Proximal Onboarding Outcome (POO), was calculated to be 2.65. According to the response categorization outlined in the previous section, this score indicates that, on average, new joiners perceive the current onboarding program as ineffective.

This result indicates a generally unfavorable evaluation of the program's ability to achieve its intended objectives, including adequately preparing new joiners for their roles, fostering their integration into the organization, and building their confidence in their responsibilities. The low average score highlights significant gaps in the onboarding process that may contribute to dissatisfaction or unmet expectations.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis Result

Descriptive Analysis	Value
Mean	2.65
Median	2.59

	Standard Deviation	0,83

The median score is nearly identical to the mean, suggesting that the distribution of responses is symmetric, without extreme outliers. The low standard deviation indicates that most participants rated the onboarding program close to the average score.

This consistency in responses suggests that the majority of new joiners share similar opinions, leaning towards a sentiment of dissatisfaction or disagreement with the effectiveness of the current onboarding program.

A closer look at the specific dimensions of the Onboarding Program variable reveals important insights. The Anticipatory Socialization dimension (OP1) has the lowest mean score, at 1.61, with a standard deviation of 0.783. This indicates that most new joiners rated this dimension poorly, with limited response variability. The findings align with the results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted as preliminary research for this study, which highlighted that not all new joiners were contacted or reached out to before their first day at PT. Terbang Bersama. The lack of early engagement can lead to feelings of uncertainty and can hinder the initial adjustment period for new employees.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis Result

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
OP1	1.61	0.783	OP10	3.09	1.203
OP2	2.17	0.937	OP11	2.52	1.039
OP3	3.13	1.217	OP12	2.87	0.869
OP4	2.57	1.502	OP13	2.83	1.497
OP5	2.70	1.185	OP14	2.48	1.275
OP6	3.00	1.128	OP15	2.74	1.322
OP7	2.57	1.161	OP16	2.83	1.114
OP8	2.65	1.071	OP17	2.61	1.118
OP9	2.70	1.185			

(Source: Author)

On the other hand, the Proactive Encouragement dimension (OP3) has the highest mean score, at 3.13, with a standard deviation of 1.217. The mean score suggests a moderately positive perception of this aspect of the onboarding program. However, the relatively high standard deviation indicates significant response variability, indicating an inconsistency in how new joiners experience proactive encouragement. For instance, while some joiners feel encouraged to meet other team members and integrate into the organization, others do not share this experience, reflecting gaps in the program's implementation.

The data shows that the standard deviation for most dimensions exceeds 1, signaling notable diversity in how new joiners experience the onboarding program. This variability suggests that the onboarding process lacks consistency across participants, reinforcing the need for a standardized onboarding program. A more uniform approach could reduce discrepancies in experiences, ensuring that all new joiners benefit equally and leading to improved proximal onboarding outcomes across the board.

Correlations of Onboarding Program and Proximal Onboarding Outcome

To understand the correlation between the Onboarding Program variable and the Proximal Onboarding Outcome variable, this study employs Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis using SPSS version 29. The analysis reveals a strong correlation ($r = 0.854$) between the two variables, with a significance value (p-value) below 0.001. An r-value of 0.854 indicates a strong positive linear relationship, meaning that as the score of the Onboarding Program variable increases, the Proximal Onboarding Outcome variable also rises significantly.

The high r-value (close to 1) suggests a robust relationship, which, in practical terms, means that the onboarding program's quality or effectiveness substantially impacts proximal onboarding outcomes. For instance, if enhancements are made to the Onboarding Program that results in higher scores, it is highly likely that the Proximal Onboarding Outcomes, such as Self-Efficacy, Role Clarity, Social Integration, and Knowledge of Culture, will also improve.

Table 3. Pearson Product Moment Analysis Result

		Onboarding Program	Proximal Onboarding Outcome
Onboarding Program	Pearson Correlation	1	0.854
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.001
	N	23	23
Proximal Onboarding Outcome	Pearson Correlation	0.854	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
	N	23	23

Source: Author

Correlations of Onboarding Program Dimensions and Proximal Onboarding Outcomes

To identify the correlation between each dimension in the Onboarding Program and each Proximal Onboarding Outcome variable outcome, this study uses Spearman's Rank Correlation Analysis, considering the data collected in the questionnaire is ordinal. Based on the analysis, dimensions with a significance score lower than 0.05 indicate a significant correlation between Onboarding Program dimensions and Proximal Onboarding Outcomes. However, some dimensions of

the Onboarding Program have a stronger correlation with some Proximal Onboarding Outcomes than others.

Self-efficacy (POO1) is significantly and positively correlated with several dimensions of the Onboarding Program, including Anticipatory Socialization (OP1), Formal Orientation (OP2), Formal Assistance (OP4), Socialization Agents (OP6), Supervisor Support (OP7), Relationship Development (OP8), Job Resources (OP9), Personal Planning (OP10), Assignments (OP12), Feedback (OP14) and Follow Up (OP16). This indicates that the experiences of new joiners in these dimensions are closely correlated to their Self-efficacy.

Table 4. Correlations of Onboarding Program Dimensions and Proximal Onboarding Outcomes (N=23)

		POO1	POO2	POO3	POO4
OP1	Pearson Correlation	**0.543**	**0.804**	**0.545**	**0.788**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.007	<0.001	0.007	<0.001
OP2	Pearson Correlation	**0.595**	0.300	0.171	**0.460**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.003	0.164	0.436	0.027
OP3	Pearson Correlation	0.249	**0.590**	**0.525**	**0.485**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.251	0.003	0.010	0.019
OP4	Pearson Correlation	**0.596**	**0.867**	**0.603**	**0.826**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.003	<0.001	0.002	<0.001
OP5	Pearson Correlation	0.143	0.391	0.270	0.312
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.516	0.065	0.213	0.148
OP6	Pearson Correlation	**0.575**	**0.878**	**0.614**	**0.822**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.004	<0.001	0.002	<0.001
OP7	Pearson Correlation	**0.542**	**0.878**	**0.735**	**0.823**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.008	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
OP8	Pearson Correlation	**0.420**	0.312	0.199	**0.594**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.046	0.147	0.362	0.003
OP9	Pearson Correlation	**0.690**	**0.750**	**0.585**	**0.703**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	<0.001	<0.001	0.003	<0.001
OP10	Pearson Correlation	**0.644**	**0.725**	**0.620**	**0.861**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	<0.001	<0.001	0.002	<0.001
OP11	Pearson Correlation	0.398	**0.584**	**0.513**	**0.490**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.060	0.003	0.012	0.018
OP12	Pearson Correlation	**0.441**	**0.640**	**0.552**	**0.757**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.035	0.001	0.006	<0.001
OP13	Pearson Correlation	0.112	0.411	0.178	**0.451**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.611	0.051	0.416	0.031
OP14	Pearson Correlation	**0.424**	**0.523**	**0.460**	0.300
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.044	0.010	0.027	0.164
OP15	Pearson Correlation	0.176	0.341	0.282	0.347
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.423	0.111	0.192	0.105
OP16	Pearson Correlation	**0.493**	**0.722**	**0.526**	**0.701**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.017	<0.001	0.010	<0.001
OP17	Pearson Correlation	0.278	**0.563**	**0.477**	**0.712**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.200	0.005	0.021	<0.001

Source: Data processed

Among these, Job Resources (OP9) shows the strongest correlation (r= 0.690, p< 0.001), highlighting its critical role in boosting new joiners' confidence. Improving this dimension is likely to have the most significant impact on self-efficacy. Conversely, dimensions like Social Events (OP5), Training (OP11), Information (OP13), Recognition and Appreciation (OP15), and Program Evaluation (OP17) exhibit weak and non-significant correlations, indicating a limited influence on self-efficacy. These findings underscore the importance of prioritizing high-impact dimensions, particularly Job Resources, to enhance onboarding and build new joiners' self-efficacy.

The analysis shows that Role Clarity (POO2) and Social Integration (POO3) are significantly and positively correlated with several dimensions of the onboarding program. These findings highlight the strong relationship between these dimensions and how effectively new joiners understand their roles and feel accepted by their organizational peers and superiors. Dimensions significantly linked to both Role Clarity and Social Integration include Anticipatory Socialization (OP1), Proactive Encouragement (OP3), Formal Assistance (OP4), Socialization Agents (OP6), Supervisor Support (OP7), Job Resources (OP9), Personal Planning (OP10), Training (OP11), Assignments (OP12), Feedback (OP14), Follow Up (OP16), and Program Evaluation (OP17). Notably, Socialization Agents (OP6) and Supervisor Support (OP7) show the strongest correlations with Role Clarity, with ($r = 0.878$) and ($p < 0.001$), highlighting their critical role in shaping new joiners' understanding of their responsibilities. For Social Integration, Supervisor Support (OP7) stands out as a key dimension, showing a significant correlation of ($r = 0.735$) and ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that focusing on these dimensions can greatly enhance new joiners' ability to understand and perform their roles while integrating socially within the organization. Conversely, dimensions such as Formal Orientation (OP2) and Relationship Development (OP8) demonstrate weak and non-significant correlations with Role Clarity and Social Integration, suggesting minimal influence on these outcomes.

The last Proximal Onboarding Outcome is Knowledge of Culture (POO4). Based on the table above, the Knowledge of Culture has a strong correlation with Anticipatory Socialization (OP1), Formal Orientation (OP2), Proactive Encouragement (OP3), Formal Assistance (OP4), Socialization Agents (OP6), Supervisor Support (OP7), Relationship Development (OP8), Job Resources (OP9), Personal Planning (OP10), Training (OP11), Assignments (OP12), Information (OP13), Follow Up (OP16), and Program Evaluation (OP17). The Onboarding Program dimension with the highest correlation with Knowledge of Culture (POO4) is Personal Planning (OP10) with $r = 0.861$ and $p < 0.001$. Other strongly correlated dimensions, such as Formal Assistance (OP4), Socialization Agents (OP6), and Supervisor Support (OP7), further emphasize the importance of structured onboarding practices. These findings suggest that focusing on these high-impact

dimensions can significantly improve the cultural onboarding experience for new joiners.

Table 4. Top 3 Onboarding Program Dimensions with Strongest Correlations to Proximal Onboarding Outcomes

Proximal Onboarding Outcome	1st Dimension	2nd Dimension	3rd Dimension
Self-Efficacy (POO1)	Job Resources or OP9 (0.690)	Personal Planning or OP10 (0.644)	Formal Assistance or OP4 (0.596)
Role Clarity (POO2)	Socialization Agents or OP6 (0.878)	Supervisor Support or OP7 (0.878)	Anticipatory Socialization or OP1 (0.804)
Social Integration (POO3)	Supervisor Support or OP7 (0.735)	Personal Planning or OP10 (0.620)	Socialization Agents or OP6 (0.614)
Knowledge of Culture (POO4)	Personal Planning or OP10 (0.861)	Formal Assistance or OP4 (0.826)	Supervisor Support or OP7 (0.823)

Source: Data processed

To summarize the results, the table above shows the top three Onboarding Program dimensions with the strongest correlation with each Proximal Onboarding Outcome. Given their significant positive correlation with the Proximal Onboarding Outcomes, reviewing and analyzing the current practices related to these six Onboarding Dimensions can serve as a baseline for improving the existing Onboarding Program.

Current Onboarding Practice Analysis
1. Anticipatory Socialization

The current approach to anticipatory socialization at PT. Terbang Bersama primarily focuses on providing new joiners access to the necessary systems and logistics to perform their job, collecting personal data, sending a welcome email, and requesting them to sign the Code of Conduct and Non-Disclosure Agreement. However, based on the data analysis, this dimension has the lowest mean score of 1.61, with a standard deviation of 0.783. This indicates that most new joiners have rated this aspect of the onboarding process poorly, with slight variation in their responses. One possible reason for this low score is that the process is triggered

manually by the Global Onboarding team, which may result in inefficiencies or missed opportunities for engagement.

In the academic literature on onboarding, anticipatory socialization is often called pre-onboarding (Lebedzeva, 2016; Sullivan, 2015). According to Socialization Resources Theory, anticipatory socialization encompasses the efforts made by an organization to engage new joiners prior to their official start date. This pre-onboarding phase is critical, as it allows the organization to establish early connections with employees and provide them with essential information to ease their transition into the company. Additionally, Davila and Pina-Ramirez (2018) outline several key pre-onboarding activities that can help improve the overall experience for new joiners:

1. Employee accepts the employment offer.
2. The employee receives additional information about the company.
3. Paperwork related to the hiring process is completed.
4. The company arranges for necessary uniforms and personalized equipment.
5. The new employee's arrival is announced.
6. The employee receives information about what to expect upon arrival.
7. The company sends a welcome packet to the employee.
8. The employee meets other employees informally.
9. The employee begins to familiarize themselves with the company's culture

Upon reviewing the above list, PT. Terbang Bersama has implemented some of these activities, such as sending a welcome email to ensure paperwork completion and providing the necessary work equipment (e.g., laptop, email, system access) a week before the new joiner's start date. However, there is room for improvement in areas such as providing additional information about the company, offering personalized uniforms, announcing the new employee's arrival, and sending a comprehensive welcome packet that includes the onboarding schedule and an overview of the company culture.

In the current era of artificial intelligence, technology can significantly enhance the pre-onboarding experience. According to a recent survey in the United States, more than two-thirds of organizations have incorporated artificial intelligence into their onboarding procedures (Marr, 2023) since the activities related to anticipatory socialization at PT. Terbang Bersama is managed manually; introducing artificial intelligence could streamline the process, improve engagement, and create a more personalized experience for new joiners. AI-driven solutions could automate routine tasks such as sending welcome emails, scheduling meetings, and providing tailored resources, ultimately leading to a more seamless and effective onboarding process. This technological enhancement could improve the new joiners' experience and contribute to higher retention rates and a stronger overall company image.

In summary, while PT. Terbang Bersama has made some progress in implementing pre-onboarding activities; several opportunities exist to enhance this dimension. By incorporating more of the recommended practices and leveraging

artificial intelligence technology, the company could significantly improve the early stages of the onboarding journey, leading to better engagement and a more positive experience for new employees. Using digital tools can improve efficiency, reduce errors, and provide a better overall experience for new employees, which can ultimately help improve retention and productivity. (Nutsubidze & Schmidt, 2021; Sengupta & Al-Khalifa, 2022; Verma et al., 2023).

Formal Assistance

Formal assistance is a key component of onboarding programs, focusing on assigning a buddy or mentor to guide new hires during their transition at PT. Terbang Bersama, new employees are paired with a buddy to help them navigate their role's work-related and social aspects and provide support during initial client visits. While the program shows a positive correlation with outcomes such as self-efficacy and knowledge of culture, its effectiveness is limited, with a mean score of 2.57 suggesting room for improvement.

Research highlights the value of structured mentorship in supporting long-term success. Bhakta and Medina (2021) observed that mentoring new faculty members eased their adjustment to professional roles and local culture, fostering a smoother transition. In the corporate context, a well-designed buddy program provides contextual insights beyond formal onboarding, accelerates adaptation, and enhances job satisfaction. Studies by Klinghoffer et al., (2019) Moreover, White et al. (2020) propose several practical recommendations to improve the structure and impact of buddy programs.

Job Resources

The job resources dimension within the SRT framework highlights the importance of ensuring that the necessary office space, equipment, and materials are fully prepared for new joiners upon their arrival. This includes having workstations, tools, and resources readily available from the first day, enabling new employees to understand their roles and begin contributing effectively quickly (Stibitz, 2015). Job resources demonstrate the strongest positive correlation with self-efficacy outcomes among the measured dimensions. However, with a mean score of 2.70, new hires perceive this aspect of the onboarding process as somewhat ineffective.

Personal Planning

Personal planning involves how effectively a manager or organization communicates expectations, develops plans, and discusses work goals with a new hire. This process ensures that new employees understand their roles and responsibilities clearly, have defined objectives, and feel supported and guided. A

proactive approach to personal planning helps new joiners feel valued and establishes a strong foundation for their success within the organization.

Socialization agent

Socialization agents play a vital role in onboarding by supporting new joiners as they adapt to their roles and the organization. This includes actions by existing employees, such as offering help, providing guidance, and trying to introduce themselves and build rapport with new joiners. Coworkers are a key source of support and information, significantly aiding new hires' adjustment and integration process. While the mean score for this dimension is 3.00 indicating it is perceived as somewhat ineffective strongly correlates with outcomes such as role clarity and social integration.

Supervisor Support

Supervisor support reflects the degree to which immediate supervisors demonstrate care and value for new joiners by actively assisting their adjustment to the organization. Supervisors play a critical role in the socialization process, as they possess the formal authority to allocate resources, assign tasks, create development opportunities, and provide essential information and feedback. Adequate supervisor support is vital for onboarding success, as it helps new joiners clarify uncertainties, understand their responsibilities, and establish meaningful social connections within the organization.

Expert Interview result

To enhance this study's findings, the author interviewed two practitioners (Mrs. AF and Ms. AWS) specializing in Learning and Development, both of whom have extensive experience working closely with sales departments as Human Resource Business Partners and managing comprehensive onboarding programs. The interviews aimed to gather their perspectives on the effectiveness of the current onboarding program in helping new joiners adapt to the organization. The discussions also aimed to identify the program's strengths or elements worth retaining and its weaknesses or areas needing improvement. Additionally, the sessions explored gaps or missing components in the current onboarding framework. The author further sought the experts' insights into why specific dimensions of the onboarding program exhibit stronger correlations with proximal onboarding outcomes compared to others. Finally, the interviews concluded with recommendations from the practitioners on prioritizing improvements for the onboarding program.

Effectiveness of the Current Onboarding Program

The onboarding program at PT. Terbang Bersama demonstrates a structured approach aimed at helping new joiners integrate into the organization by familiarizing them with its operations, roles, and expectations. However, critical

gaps in the program prevent it from being a genuinely comprehensive onboarding experience. Mrs. AF, a VP of Learning and Development at a leading insurance company in Indonesia, observed, "*What PT. Right now, Terbang Bersama is not a full-fledged onboarding program—it's more like a basic technical induction for salespeople. A proper onboarding program should go beyond the first few weeks and include pre-onboarding activities. These early steps are vital for setting up new employees with foundational knowledge and embedding them in the company's culture.*"

Key Parts of the Onboarding Program to Retain

The current onboarding program includes several elements that are essential for the sales team's success and should be retained. One such component is the training sessions conducted by the Sales Effectiveness Team. These sessions play a critical role in building a foundation of operational knowledge by familiarizing new joiners with the company's CRM tools, core operational workflows, and overall sales organization. This structured training provides a vital starting point for understanding their roles' technical and procedural requirements.

Ms. AWS remarked, "*The training sessions delivered by the Sales Effectiveness Team are a strong aspect of the current program. However, incorporating interactive components, such as role-playing exercises and case studies, would significantly enhance them. These elements can allow new joiners to practice and refine their skills in a controlled and supportive environment.*"

Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

An effective onboarding program extends beyond simply introducing new joiners to their job responsibilities; it encompasses integrating them into the organization's culture, operations, and people. This means familiarizing them with the company's vision, mission, and values and giving them a comprehensive understanding of the general business processes across the organization. New joiners often work with teams outside their immediate department, making it essential for them to grasp how the entire company functions. Building connections and understanding the organizational structure are equally vital. Mrs. AF emphasized this: "Onboarding is about creating a seamless introduction to *the role and the organization. New joiners must see the bigger picture and know who to turn to for support.*"

Correlation Between Onboarding Dimensions and Outcomes

"*Recruitment is an exhausting process, and it doesn't end when a candidate signs the offer*," Mrs. AF reflected. "*The moment they join is when we must ensure they feel confident and excited about their decision. Factors like having their workstation ready on day one, receiving a personalized welcome kit, and being introduced to a supportive buddy can make a significant difference. These elements provide new joiners with what they need to perform their roles and foster a sense*

of preparedness and capability. When new employees feel equipped to tackle their responsibilities, their self-efficacy grows, directly impacting how quickly they settle into their roles."

Mrs. AF further highlighted the role of socialization agents, such as buddies and teams, in shaping the onboarding experience. "*A proactive buddy who helps new joiners navigate the organization and integrate into the culture is invaluable. This peer support accelerates social integration and helps new employees feel accepted and part of the team.*" She also emphasized the importance of supervisor support, noting that managers who provide clear guidance and personalized onboarding plans are instrumental in building role clarity and instilling confidence in new joiners. "*When managers take the time to align expectations and provide a roadmap for success, it ensures that new employees understand their responsibilities and see how they contribute to the bigger picture.*"

Prioritizing Improvements in the Onboarding Program

To improve the effectiveness of PT. Terbang Bersama's onboarding program must focus on areas that have the most significant impact on new joiners' adaptation and performance. One of the primary challenges identified is the fragmented nature of the current process. Responsibilities are distributed across multiple departments, leading to confusion and inefficiencies. Mrs. AF emphasized the importance of appointing a centralized figure to manage the onboarding process. "*There needs to be someone accountable for managing onboarding end-to-end,*" she explained. "*Without this, new joiners often don't know who to turn to for support, which delays their adjustment and increases frustration.*"

Solution and Proposed Implementation Plan

Improving the onboarding program at PT. Terbang Bersama requires a strategic approach informed by insights from both data analysis and expert interviews. The aim is not merely to enhance the onboarding process but to create a more effective system that facilitates new joiners' integration and reduces the time required for new sales personnel to reach full productivity. To achieve this, the proposed solutions are categorized into two approaches: low-hanging fruit initiatives and strategic improvements.

Low-Hanging Fruit Solutions

The following solutions are designed to address key gaps in the onboarding program and can be implemented with minimal investment and effort.
1. Establish Centralized Oversight of the Onboarding Process

Creating a centralized oversight mechanism for onboarding is essential to address inconsistencies and fragmentation. Data analysis highlights significant variability in how new joiners perceive support across different dimensions, suggesting that the lack of coordination exacerbates these challenges.

To address this, PT. Terbang Bersama should designate an onboarding coordinator responsible for executing the program. This role would ensure alignment among stakeholders, monitor progress, and address discrepancies in implementation. Ideally, the HR team takes this role in the onboarding process. Existing tools such as Microsoft Planner and Microsoft Teams can track tasks, set deadlines, and conduct evaluations. These tools provide a practical and cost-effective way to establish a centralized tracking and reporting mechanism, ensuring that all onboarding activities are streamlined and transparent to relevant stakeholders. An onboarding coordinator can also create a positive onboarding experience and improve new joiners' retention (Arrona, 2024).

As one expert noted, "*Centralized oversight is not just about having someone in charge—it's about creating visibility for all stakeholders into the onboarding process.*" This measure can significantly enhance communication and reduce confusion for new joiners.

2. Strengthen Pre-Onboarding (Anticipatory Socialization)

Pre-onboarding, or anticipatory socialization, was identified as a critical area for improvement, receiving the lowest mean score (1.61) among onboarding dimensions. This phase is pivotal in easing new joiners' transitions and fostering early engagement.

To improve pre-onboarding, PT. Terbang Bersama could leverage its existing branded merchandise, typically reserved for clients, to create welcome kits for new joiners. These kits could include organizational information, the company's values, and a detailed onboarding schedule, providing new joiners with essential information before their first day. This initiative would establish a positive first impression and help new employees prepare for their roles more effectively.

Deliver HR Induction

Formal orientation refers to structured sessions to familiarize new joiners with an organization's vision, mission, values, and operational practices. This element of onboarding is typically delivered by HR or senior management through online or offline platforms, in the case of PT. Terbang Bersama, the importance of formal orientation was highlighted during expert interviews and aligns with findings in academic research. Such sessions are essential for setting the tone for new joiners, helping them understand the organization's culture, and providing practical guidance on navigating their new roles.

CONCLUSION

The responses of new joiners at PT. Terbang Bersama regarding proximal onboarding outcomes comprising role clarity, self-efficacy, social integration, and knowledge of culture indicates that the current onboarding program is ineffective. The analysis of the dimensions of the onboarding program shows that anticipatory socialization has the lowest score compared to other dimensions, based on Social Resources Theory. This finding aligns with the initial Focus Group Discussion conducted with representatives of new joiners in the APAC region. A strong positive linear correlation exists between the Onboarding Program and Proximal Onboarding Outcome variables. This means that as the score of the Onboarding Program variable increases, the score of the Proximal Onboarding Outcome variable also rises significantly. While the analysis shows a strong correlation, it does not prove that a better Onboarding Program directly causes better Proximal Onboarding Outcomes. Other factors may influence both variables, which could present opportunities for future research. Experts argue that this correlation occurs because these dimensions are directly related to the employee experience, which shapes perceptions of the overall onboarding program. However, inconsistencies in execution contribute to the low effectiveness perception of the overall onboarding program from the new joiners' point of view.

REFERENCE

Apriyanto, P., & Haryono, S. (2020). Pengaruh Tekanan Kerja, Beban Kerja Dan Lingkungan Kerja Terhadap Intensi Turnover: Peran Mediasi Kepuasan Kerja. *Manajemen Dewantara*, *4*(1), 33–45. https://doi.org/10.26460/md.v4i1.7672

Arrona, K. L. (2024). Implementation Of A Technician Success And Onboarding Coordinator To Reduce Technician Turnover. *American Journal Of Health-System Pharmacy*, *81*(9), E249–E255. https://doi.org/10.1093/ajhp/zxad323

Becker, K., & Bish, A. (2021). A Framework For Understanding The Role Of Unlearning In Onboarding. *Human Resource Management Review*, *31*(1), 100730. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2019.100730

Frögéli, E., Jenner, B., & Gustavsson, P. (2023). Effectiveness Of Formal Onboarding For Facilitating Organizational Socialization: A Systematic Review. *Plos One*, *18*(2), E0281823. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0281823

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward A Conceptual Framework For Mixed-Method Evaluation Designs. *Educational Evaluation And Policy Analysis*, *11*(3), 255–274. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737011003255

Harris, A. (2022). *Strategies Day-Care Center Leaders Use To Reduce Employee Turnover And Achieve Sustainability*. Walden University.

Hartati, M. P. (2018). *Pengaruh Program Orientasi Karyawan Baru Terhadap Intensi Turnover Pada Sales Di Pt. X*. Unika Soegijapranata Semarang.

Hassan, S. H. (2020). Impacts Of Extensive Onboarding Process Implementation On Employee Retention- A Case Study From Transfers. *Master's Thesis. Tallinn University Of Technology, Tallinn, Estonia*.

Joseph, D., & Sridevi, M. S. (2015). Effective Onboarding As A Talent Management Tool For Employee Retention. *International Journal In Management & Social Science*, *3*(7), 175–186.

Klein, H. J., & Polin, B. (2012). 14 Are Organizations On Board With Best Practices Onboarding? *The Oxford Handbook Of Organizational Socialization*, 267.

Klein, H. J., Polin, B., & Leigh Sutton, K. (2015). Specific Onboarding Practices For The Socialization Of New Employees. *International Journal Of Selection And Assessment*, *23*(3), 263–283. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsa.12113

Klinghoffer, D., Young, C., & Haspas, D. (2019). Every New Employee Needs An Onboarding "Buddy." *Harvard Business Review*.

Miller Jr, J. R. (2023). *Reversing The Revolving Door: An Investigation Into Employee Turnover In The Fast-Food Industry*. Wilmington University (Delaware).

Noronha, V., Patil, V. M., Joshi, A., Menon, N., Chougule, A., Mahajan, A., Janu, A., Purandare, N., Kumar, R., & More, S. (2020). Gefitinib Versus Gefitinib Plus Pemetrexed And Carboplatin Chemotherapy In Egfr-Mutated Lung Cancer. *Journal Of Clinical Oncology*, *38*(2), 124–136. https://doi.org/10.1200/JCO.19.01154

Nutsubidze, N., & Schmidt, D. A. (2021). Rethinking The Role Of Hrm During Covid-19 Pandemic Era: Case Of Kuwait. *Review Of Socio-Economic Perspectives*, *6*(1), 1–12.

Patel, P., & Mohanty, R. (2023). Trends In Onboarding Improve The Employee Retention: An In-Depth Literature Review. *Journal Of Applied Management-Jidnyasa*, 39–50.

Ramlo, S. E. (2020). Divergent Viewpoints About The Statistical Stage Of A Mixed Method: Qualitative Versus Quantitative Orientations. *International Journal Of Research & Method In Education*, *43*(1), 93–111.

Saunders, M. (2014). *Research Methods For Business Students (6th Edn*.

Sengupta, D., & Al-Khalifa, D. (2022). Pandemic Imposed Remote Work Arrangements And Resultant Work-Life Integration, Future Of Work And Role Of Leaders—A Qualitative Study Of Indian Millennial Workers. *Administrative Sciences*, *12*(4), 162.

Tabakovic, J. (2024). *Practical Strategies To Decrease Employee Turnover In The Aviation Industry*. Walden University.

Verma, A., Venkatesan, M., Kumar, M., & Verma, J. (2023). The Future Of Work Post Covid-19: Key Perceived Hr Implications Of Hybrid Workplaces In India. *Journal Of Management Development*, *42*(1), 13–28.