
Employee experience design of the employee onboarding process at a medium scale manufacturing company

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Abstract: Employee experience is a holistic perception of an employee's journey with an organisation, described by the employee life cycle. This study focuses on designing and implementing the employee experience of the onboarding stage. Using the phased transition approach, researchers have created an employee experience model considering critical touch points of the onboarding stage as described in various literature on onboarding. The model is called the 'new employee transition model of orientation-connection-socialisation'. The model is tested with the target population of new employees in a manufacturing company selected through purposive sampling. The findings indicate that each of these transitions correctly defines the growth and significantly impacts the positive employee experience of the onboarding stage for the new employees. A well-designed and executed development across these three steps of the onboarding stage creates a significant positive employee experience for the new employees.

Keywords: orientation; employee life cycle; onboarding; positive employee experience.

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Biographical notes: Vandana Mohanty has over 13 years of combined experience in academics and research. She is adept at research procedures, developmental and training activities, and development of learning materials, editorial work, and processes. Her professional horizon holds teaching and developing courses in human resource management, organisation behaviour and managerial economics. She has published number of papers in referred national journals and has attended various national conferences and presented papers. Her research interests include diversity management, gender diversity, and employee experience. Currently, three students are working under her for their PhD.

Mangesh B. Kulkarni is a professional with more than three decades of experience in the human resource management field across critical areas like succession planning, talent management, organisation development and employee experience management. He has successfully contributed to various organisations in the areas of business function and human resource management. Designing and implementing employee experience interventions is a key area of interest for him.

1 Introduction

Employee experience is an employee's perception of everything that occurs to them while they are a part of a business. As an individual, the perspective of the same activity can lead to distinct experiences for the same or numerous people. Experience is a continuum, not a static idea. It implies that when the expectations of stakeholders and the responses to those expectations change, so will the employee's experience. Over the past several years, firms have focused on employee experience to enhance employee commitment (Turner and Turner, 2020). One of the new levers for employee engagement in the hands of human resource management experts is the design and execution of an employee experience plan.

An employee's life cycle spans their time with an organisation. The employee life cycle stages include recruiting, onboarding, development, performance, and separation. The employee experience of each stage depends on the person's specific experience of process execution. An employee's view will shift depending on their expectations of the process. The processes are meant to provide uniform and consistent delivery of desired outputs based on the organisation's requirements. An employee's experience is the confluence between predefined expectations for the process and the employee's impression of the process. Each step of the employee life cycle is designed to achieve specific results through distinct procedures connected with the stage. Consequently, the employee experience at each level is unique. This research study discusses the onboarding stage, a crucial phase of the employee life cycle.

The Morgan (2017) study highlights the importance of the employee experience in a workplace, highlighting the need-to-be versus want-to-be workplaces. The want-to-be workplace provides a positive employee experience, motivating and inspiring employees to contribute to the organisation. The need-to-be workplace offers a compliant system-based environment, lacking a positive employee experience. To achieve this, organisations should design workplaces and work environments with employee expectations and needs at the centre.

The onboarding process is crucial in such workplaces, as it helps ensure productivity and facilitates the integration of new employees. Research shows that a new employee's performance within the first 30–90 days on the job influences employee engagement. A thorough onboarding program, including communication of performance metrics, strengths and weaknesses assessments, feedback, training, and networking opportunities, can increase employee performance by 11.3%. Overall, the study emphasises the importance of the employee experience in the workplace (Bradshaw, 2022).

The onboarding process is a crucial aspect of an employee's life cycle, starting with the first interaction between the employee and the employer. This process is designed to provide an employee experience that meets their needs and expectations, allowing them to be engaged with the role and the organisation. The length of the onboarding process can range from weeks to months, depending on the role, strategic impact, and organisational philosophy. The study aims to design the onboarding experience with the new employee's needs at the core of experience design. The shift from process execution to providing the employee experience has yet to be highlighted in the past. Still, this study highlights this shift and the impact of the perception shift using employee experience as a mediation concept. The study defines the relationship between employee experience and the onboarding process's design by grouping the process variables into three major categories. This study addresses the literature gap in specific

employee experience of onboarding processes and highlights the strategic impact of employee-centric design in the manufacturing industry.

2 Research objectives

This study of employee experience design of the onboarding process has the following objectives:

- R1 To integrate the concept of employee experience and employee onboarding to understand the drivers of employee experience during the onboarding process.
- R2 To explore the development of a framework for practitioners, to enable them to design new employee onboarding experiences for the onboarding process.
- R3 To validate the framework to achieve conceptualised employee experience of the onboarding process.
- R4 To validate the relationship between the conceptualised employee experience of onboarding and its effects on the outcome.

3 Literature review

A white paper (Bauer, 2013) mentions that successful onboarding offers organisations a competitive advantage in talent retention. Organisations that have a compelling new employee onboarding process have new employee first-year talent retention of 91% against those organisations that do not have focus with 30% retention. The goal achievement in the first year for the companies with effective onboarding processes is 62% versus 17% for those companies who need to be more effective in new employee onboarding.

An outstanding design of the employee experience leads to more engaged employees, and engaged employees lead to a more productive and profitable company (SAP, 2022). A recent report mentions that companies in the “top quartile of engagement realise substantially better customer engagement, higher productivity, better retention, fewer accidents, and 21% higher profitability” (Gallup, 2022).

Increasing adoption of digital technology in the onboarding process impacts the outcomes of employee onboarding. With digital onboarding, social connectedness, meaningless or meaningful work, and employee relations have positive and negative impacts. Adopting technology increases the process’s efficiency; however, it impacts the social connection between stakeholders and new employees. The human resource team needs to adopt different socialisation techniques with the adoption of digital technology in the onboarding process (Sani et al., 2023). The most effective onboarding uses a hybrid approach to balance social connectedness and digital technology. Organisations with no prior remote work culture are forced to accept technology-based processes. Post-pandemic digital technology in the onboarding has enabled speedy adjustment of the new employee, employee engagement, and employee wellbeing (Schutte and Asatiani, 2023).

Research States that spending more time with new employees during onboarding increases retention. According to the author, there are three critical dimensions of

employee experience in onboarding – organisational, technical, and social. In organisational onboarding, the focus is on helping the employee understand the organisation's language. Every organisation has a unique language for sharing information to perform day-to-day jobs, e.g., many acronyms for various activities, roles, etc. The organisational aspect of onboarding should cover the information required for the employee that is unique to the new workplace. The technical dimension of onboarding is understanding the skill sets required to perform the new job. The new employee has an expertise; however, applying the same expertise is different in different contexts. The social dimension refers to building a vital relationship early in onboarding. These relationships are mutually beneficial and help the performance of all stakeholders. The holistic onboarding program for new employees should address all these three dimensions from an employee's perspective (Carucci, 2018).

Another study focuses on the fundamental driver of the initial experience for new employees. The study separates the onboarding process into four essential components (the four Cs): compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. The study claims that firms that properly execute the four components achieve higher levels of business performance than those that do not. These organisations routinely enjoy greater worker satisfaction, increased productivity, and less turnover. A practical onboarding experience is essential for any personnel management plan. Due to the cost of recruitment, firm management must recognise the importance of adequately integrating new employees. Understanding who owns and oversees the onboarding process is critical for long-term success and sustainability. Writing a strategy is not enough for the success of new employees. The goal is to involve critical individuals and new employees in an exchange or conversation that enables them to know each other and develop a base for future interactions. A well-aligned onboarding with existing human resource practices will result in a steeper learning curve for new employees, a deeper understanding of organisational culture, and a more productive and performing team (Bauer, 2010).

The user experience is mapped using the journey mapping approach. The journey mapping of the user experience of a particular service, process, or product provides insights about the critical moments in the user journey which has the highest impact on user experience. In a research paper, the authors have proposed using a journey mapping approach to improve employee onboarding experience. According to research, positive onboarding experiences can be created by using onboarding journey mapping for a new employee, and the findings can be used to create a standard yet customised onboarding experience. The research paper explains the 'use of library' as a service to map user journey mapping experience. A similar approach can be extended to employee onboarding to create an outstanding employee experience during the onboarding stage (McKelvey and Frank, 2018).

Another research work on designing an onboarding process for maximising the employee experience of Gen Z employees states that Generation Z wants a comprehensive knowledge of an organisation's values, vision, and strategic objectives. Therefore, the first onboarding must provide the foundation for assisting recruits, grasping the business's beliefs and objectives, and reinforcing the guiding principles to align with corporate values. New hires contribute to the workplace through their experience, capabilities, and different perspectives. Investing in recruits through a successful onboarding program helps worker maximise their onboarding experience and reach their full potential by ultimately contributing to the success of the employer-employee relationship. The first day an employee interacts with a business is the day of

the interview; consequently, managers must accurately depict what the job involves. The research also states that 61% of respondents reported that their experience on the job differed from the promises projected as part of an interview. Unlike past generations, Generation Z would prefer not to perform unpaid labour. These employees often depart the firm during the first few months of employment. Successful organisations will know how to engage this demographic. The strategies outlined in the report would help HR managers successfully integrate Generation Z into the workplace (Chillakuri, 2020). More and more new hires are expecting customisation, personalisation, and flexibility in the onboarding process. They expect the learning and development to be integrated into the onboarding process to expedite new journeys and associated career growth opportunity ties. These expectations require a significant change in the existing onboarding practices, and the human resources team needs to augment the existing onboarding with these new expectations. Jeske and Olson (2021) state that the remote work arrangements started post-pandemic also have impacted the new employee onboarding process.

Research recommends revising the onboarding approach to include three stages: Before onboarding or pre-boarding, orientation, and onboarding, mainly when the selection procedures are executed using online tools, and include the least individual physical interaction. Using tactics specifically developed and enhanced during the worldwide epidemic demonstrates to candidates that they are being thoroughly considered and will be able to form ties with many organisation members. For example, more stakeholders involved in the hiring process who connect with top prospects to offer information and respond to their questions demonstrates that everyone involved, along with the hiring manager, is taking the time to get to know them and are enthusiastic about them. New hires can serve as internal consultants, adding new talents and perspectives to current procedures before becoming accustomed to routines, nomenclature, and ways of doing things. Their zeal and unusual ways of thinking may assist organisations in revitalising themselves and generating a wave of change. Organisations can also organise mutual or reverse mentorship by pairing new hires and long-term staff based on their similar interests. During business changes, such as restructuring, change management, mergers, and acquisitions, new employees can affect the organisation in less apparent ways when conditions are more stable. Experienced employees can also impact their onboarding experience by participating in events during transitions and discussing the business's intentions and ambitions under the new leadership. Employee onboarding can help employees learn by making them more aware of their environment, preparing them for change, and pointing out possible hurdles (Bhakta and Medina, 2021).

The onboarding process can be stressful for the new employee and the business. Internal surveys can help determine the effectiveness of onboarding, how new hires feel about the welcome they received from the company, their managers, and their co-workers, and their onboarding experience. Many companies still use standard generic modules of education that do not have a strong linkage to other human resource processes and need to be tailored, customised, or linked in a good way. Onboarding is a continuous process and growing practice that must be offered to new and existing employees regularly. New hires have higher expectations, and they expect a more personal, digital, fast, and rewarding onboarding experience to help them succeed (Cesário and Chambel, 2019).

The onboarding of new employees plays a vital role in the productivity of organisations operating in the contact centre industry, where labour expenses are disproportionately high. The association between employee experience and corporate profitability ratios is substantial. According to research, firms with a great onboarding experience for new employees can enhance their efficiency ratios; nevertheless, many businesses still need to significantly improve their onboarding processes. Using LEAN, case studies, and experimental design, a contact centre in Latvia introduced and adopted a new employee onboarding proposal. Positive new employee experiences double to quadruple efficiency ratios, research suggests. Despite this, 88% of organisations say their new employee onboarding practices need improvement (Koleda et al., 2022).

Employee experience expectations are shaped by new technology. The use of social media platforms to drive expectations in all areas of life has increased significantly. Positive use of social media is experienced in all situations, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The research study by Abbas et al. (2021) highlights the impact of social media in dealing with various situations. The employee experience design of various human resource processes, including the onboarding process, can leverage social media to shape and deliver expectations to provide a positive employee experience. Social networks as a business communication tool within the organisation have a significant impact on creating a positive employee experience regarding the intent of the action and the employee perception of the action.

Generation Z and millennials have expectations of a socially sensitive organisation. The social contribution of the organisation is one of the expectations of the employee groups and is an essential element of a positive employee experience. Social media marketing of social contribution as part of corporate social responsibility significantly impacts the employee perception of an organisation. Another research highlights the relationship between sustainable organisation performance and CSR through the mediation of social media marketing. The design of the employee experience of the onboarding process can leverage these newer ways of engaging the new employee and enhancing the employee experience of the process (Abbas et al., 2019a).

The literature review identifies the gap in integrating employee onboarding and employee experience. The missing link between these two concepts in the literature is a significant opportunity for the research. This study offers one of the contributions to bridge this gap.

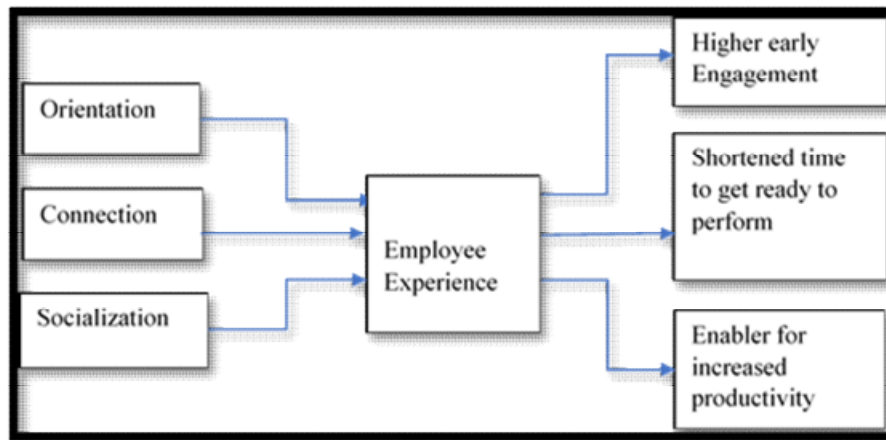
4 Conceptual framework-proposed model of employee experience in new employee onboarding process: orientation – connection – socialisation

A conceptual model is the model of an employee experience developed based on the theories, literature review, and experience of the researchers. The concept of the employee's experience of onboarding is developed based on the transition of the individual new employee over six months in the new organisation. The transition means the degree of familiarisation of the new employee with the physical, technological, and social environment of the new workplace. This transition is defined by a combination of multiple variables as the employee spends more and more time at the organisation. With time, the needs of the employee evolve and the same needs to be addressed by designing the employee experience to satisfy these expectations during onboarding.

4.1 Developing a conceptual model

The model has defined the transition using orientation, connection, and socialisation. These together provide an overall positive employee experience of transition. These three concepts are based on the different variables underlying an employee's experience of the respective transition. The employee experience then leads to the key business outcomes of higher early engagement, shorter time to get ready to perform, and acts as an enabler to the productivity of new employees. The conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

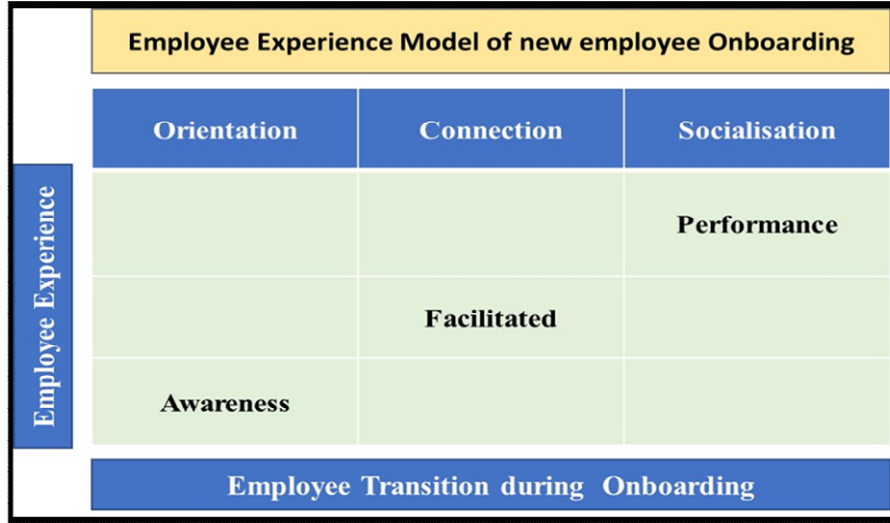
Figure 1 Conceptual model (see online version for colours)



4.1 Phase 1: Orientation/preboarding (applicable to employees who have experienced the onboarding process from 0th day to day of joining)

This phase refers to employee interactions with the organisation and members of the organisation during pre on-boarding process. The orientation starts with a potential employee receiving an invitation to consider the job opportunity in the organisation. These interactions continue until the selection decision has been completed. During the orientation phase, the candidate or potential employee experiences the recruitment and selection process and various touch points in this process (Guðmundsdóttir and Lundbergsdóttir, 2016). The various variables of employee experience included in this phase are understanding of the organisation, information about the job, periodic updates of progress, fairness of the process, understanding of human resource policies, understanding of the compensation and employee benefits, and ease of procedural steps like documentation, etc. During the orientation phase of transition, the employee's perception of his journey is defined as the employee's experience of 'awareness' as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Employee experience during the transition (see online version for colours)



4.2 Phase 2: Connection – DOJ to 8 weeks (applicable to employees who have experienced the onboarding process from 1st day of joining to 8 weeks after the day of joining)

The connection phase begins with the joining of the employee in the organisation and starts experiencing the onboarding process. Throughout the initial period of 6 to 8 weeks in the organisation, the new employee is provided with necessary information about the company, the job role, the manager, and the overall work environment. During the connection phase the employee starts connecting with organisation members and other stakeholders, the systems and processes, the necessary compliances, and other such elements of work, workplace, and work environment. As part of the connection phase employee starts his or her performance in the role with appropriate training and mentoring by reporting managers and formal training programmes by the human resources team. The various variables of employee experience included in this phase are feeling of being welcome, availability of necessary tools, support from manager, team, and peers, buddy and mentoring, early recognition of success, etc. During the connection phase of transition, the employee’s perception of his journey is defined as the employee experience of ‘facilitated’ as shown in Figure 2.

4.3 Phase 3: Socialisation – (applicable to employees who have experienced the onboarding process from 8 weeks after the day of joining to 6 months or more after a day of joining)

The socialisation phase refers to a new employee becoming a part of the team and aligning with the culture of the organisation. The employee starts by meeting the expectations of the role and develops the competencies necessary to be successful in the role. His horizon of interaction starts to expand within and outside the function. There are

quick wins and learning from failure during the socialisation phase as the employee starts integrating with the team. The team members and managers start recognising the knowledge and experience of new employees and are invited to contribute based on this understanding. He is assigned specific tasks, and involved in key discussions and decision-making processes. The new employee starts comparing the promises shared during orientation and the reality of the workplace. The socialisation process ends with the new employee becoming a full-time productive resource. The various variables of employee experience included in this phase are feedback from the manager on performance, involvement in decision-making, assignment of key tasks/projects, working with cross-functional teams, understanding of performance management, encouragement of my manager, and feeling of fulfilment of promise offered during selection, etc. During the socialisation phase of transition employee's perception of his journey is defined as the employee's experience of 'performance' as shown in Figure 2.

5 Methodology

5.1 Data collection and analysis

Employee experience is designed with the employee as a whole who experiences a journey with the organisation throughout his association. As part of the employee life cycle, an employee goes through various stages of the life cycle (Zung, 2020). This research is focused on the onboarding stage of the employee life cycle. The researcher, based on a review of the past literature on employee experience and the new employee onboarding process, has proposed the OCS model of employee experience design for the onboarding stage of the employee life cycle. This model is validated using a survey questionnaire. There are a total of 32 statements measuring the employee experience design with five dimensions onboarding/preboarding, connection, socialisation, outcomes, and positive employee experience.

The main goal of purposive sampling is to identify the cases, individuals, or communities best suited to help you answer your research question. Since this study focused on the onboarding process of the new employee, purposive sampling is most suited for the defining sample. The purposive sampling method is used to define the sample as the study focused only on the new employees of the organisation out of all employees of the organisation. The criterion for a new employee is the employee who has spent less than one year in the organisation and has joined in the previous 12 months. The target population for administering the survey is new employees joining the organisation. In the previous three years before the study, 200 employees joined the organisation under the study. The new employees considered in the manufacturing organisation are across all functions, with different roles, different years of experience, ages, educational qualifications, genders, and different locations in India are considered for the study. The questionnaire was distributed among employees joined between the periods 1 March 2021 to 28 February 2022. During this period total of 76 new employees joined across different functions, and different hierarchy levels, with different ages and total experience, genders, and locations of the organisations. The criterion applied for the selection of the 76 employees is that they have joined during the mentioned period and have experienced the onboarding cycle as part of the human resource practice of the organisation. Of the total 76 questionnaires administered, 62 completed questionnaires

with an 81% success rate were considered for the study. The online platform was used to distribute the questionnaire among the sample.

5.2 Measurement

In this research, a structured questionnaire was used to evaluate the study variables of the onboarding process defining employee experience. A five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) is used for each of the questions for respective dimensions. The questions are framed to understand the impressions of new employees at respective touch points in the onboarding stage for the organisation. The perspective of a new employee is considered during the design of the questions. The survey also included demographic variables of gender, total experience, qualification, and age.

5.3 Validity and reliability of the data

The current study was designed from the existing literature. The self-structured survey was further distributed among the target population. A structural model is presented in Figure 1. Smart PLS 3.2.8, an analytical tool was used to evaluate and analyse the questionnaire (Bentler and Bonett, 1980, Hair et al., 2014, 2020). The PLS is used for analysis because the basic aim was to validate the relationship between the conceptualised employee experience of onboarding using the OCS model and its effects on the outcome as defined by three performance-related metrics: employee engagement, onboarding speed, and productivity as a result of a positive employee experience. The Cronbach's alpha was assessed for all the constructs and items. The Cronbach's alpha value for all the constructs lies between 0.836 and 0.941 making the questionnaire reliable for the study (Nunnally, 1994). Further CFA was used to measure the convergent validity and the discriminant validity of the proposed model. The literature suggests that a minimum threshold of 0.4 will be the acceptance criteria for factor loading (Cho et al., 2020). All the parameters in the study are in the threshold score with a minimum of 0.731 to 0.892. To determine the convergent validity, the CR, AVE, and Cronbach's alpha are used. The same is tabulated in Table 1.

Convergent validity describes the validity of constructs that examine how well a certain assessment genuinely measures the construct that it was designed to assess/calculate, and it also projects a positive correlation with other alternative analyses of the same construct. It aims to display the degree of correlation among the constructs (Bentler and Bonett, 1980, Hair et al., 2014, 2020). It is observed from Table 1 that the measurement model has exceeded the recommended values of AVE Value being set to 0.5 and composite reliability with an acceptable minimum of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2014, 2020; Abbas et al., 2019b). This indicates that the convergent validity is sufficient.

To measure the discriminant validity, Fornell and Larcker (2018) measures were adopted. With this approach, the correlation between each construct and other constructs in the model should be smaller than the square root of the AVE for each construct. It is observed that the values represent a healthy relationship among the variables of the proposed model. The values also reflect that discriminant validity lies in an acceptable range. Table 2 shows the discriminant validity.

The explanatory power of the model is further evaluated by measuring the discrepancy amount in the dependent variable. The R^2 and the path coefficient are the essential measures for assessing the structural model (Chicco et al., 2021).

Table 1 Measurement model, factor loading, convergent validity, and Cronbach's alpha.

<i>Loadings</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>	<i>AVE (>0.5)</i>	<i>CR (>0.7)</i>	<i>CA (>0.7)</i>
Orientation	O1	0.761	0.762	0.908	0.892
	O2	0.731			
	O3	0.892			
	O4	0.832			
	O5	0.797			
Connection	C1	0.866	0.869	0.846	0.836
	C2	0.835			
	C3	0.752			
	C4	0.736			
	C5	0.778			
	C6	0.847			
Socialisation	S1	0.770	0.881	0.831	0.872
	S2	0.824			
	S3	0.808			
	S4	0.731			
	S5	0.821			
	S6	0.840			
Employee experience	EEX1	0.847	0.780	0.798	0.894
	EEX2	0.765			
	EEX3	0.770			
Outcome	O1	0.821	0.753	0.880	0.941
	O2	0.781			
	O3	0.864			

Table 2 Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

	<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Connection</i>	<i>Socialisation</i>	<i>Employee experience</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Orientation	0.873				
Connection	0.522	0.932			
Socialisation	0.618	0.590	0.938		
Employee experience	0.691	0.683	0.328	0.883	
Outcome	0.541	0.332	0.481	0.593	0.867

Falk and Miller (1992) have suggested the importance of the path coefficients, R^2 , f^2 effect sizes, and Q^2 predictive relevance values to evaluate the structural model. A minimal threshold of explanatory power was proposed by Cohen (1988) to need an R^2 of more than 0.10. Similarly, another study, Tenenhaus et al. (2005) also claimed that R^2 values of 0.26, 0.13, and 0.02 are strong, moderate, and weak respectively. Each independent variable's contribution to a model's ability explains the dependent variables' variation and is represented by an effect size, denoted by f^2 (Cohen, 1988). The f^2 values

of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively, reflect small, medium, and high impacts of an external latent variable on an endogenous latent variable. The absence of an effect can be inferred from effect size values that are lower than 0.02. When compared to other antecedents the PLS Algorithm results show that positive employee experience on outcome f^2 (0.493) followed by orientation f^2 (0.421) has the strongest influence on employee experience. The Q^2 value shows the model's predictive relevance. The model can forecast by repeatedly reproducing the observed values using a blindfolding process (Sarstedt et al., 2021). In the structural equation model, the value of Q^2 more than 0 represents the predictability of the model whereas a value less than zero lacks predictability. In predicting the model, the values 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, or large predictive relevance for the chosen endogenous construct (Sarstedt et al., 2021). The same is tabulated in Table 3.

Table 3 Structural path analysis

<i>Hypothesis</i>	β	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-values</i>	R^2	f^2 effect size	Q^2 effect size
Preboarding → EEX	0.514	0.060	11.006	0.000	0.67	0.421	0.39
Connection → EEX	0.447	0.050	7.451	0.000		0.196	
Socialisation → EEX	0.361	0.043	3.662	0.000		0.204	
EEX → Outcome	0.681	0.058	4.640	0.001	0.41	0.493	0.21

Table 3 reveals that orientation, connection, and socialisation have significant positive effects on the employee experience. This indicates that all the stages of onboarding do have a significant impact on the performance outcome of the employee. A successful onboarding plan enables fresh hires to settle in quickly and encourages them to stay in their new roles for the long haul, long enough to make up for the costs of finding, hiring, getting them started, and training them.

The orientation increases the awareness of the employee about the job and the organisation. With this increased awareness the employee can make the connection between his or her assumptions and reality. The heightened awareness of the work, workplace, and work environment enables the employee, as an individual, to proactively initiate necessary steps on his or her side to align with the new organisation. This makes him feel satisfied and leads to a positive employee experience.

In the next step of transition named connection, the new employee needs facilitation and support to start contributing to the performance. The ability to connect with the organisation's systems, the availability of the support form manager, the availability of the necessary tools, etc. makes him ready to deliver. The feeling of readiness to drive performance at work is the highest motivation for the new employee. This positive emotion leads to a positive employee experience of the work and overall organisation.

The socialisation stage is about embedding oneself deeply and integrating into the culture of the organisation. This takes place through working with cross-functional teams, executing projects and assignments, and other such opportunities to work with a larger set of employee groups. This integration process provides the employee with an affirmation of his or her decision to be part of the new organisation.

Socialisation builds the sense of belongingness that comes with being part of a group, having good relationships, and accepting being met in the right way. The socialisation stage is where newly joined employees, can develop productive working connections

with co-workers through official and informal socialisation activities, which leads to gains in productivity and job satisfaction. Employers should encourage employees to meet other team members and make teams that work better together. Without this important emotional and personal bond, employees are likely to leave the company because of a feeling of being apart and being alone, which leads to stress. The better employees are treated, the more they care about the organisation's goals and objectives. The positive affirmation and self-confidence to perform in a new environment lead to a positive employee experience (Hawse and Wood, 2019)

These integrated three-step transitions during the onboarding stage impact key outcome measures of engagement and productivity. The positive perception of awareness, facilitation, and performance leads to higher engagement and proactive actions to be productive at the individual level. A performing employee within the least time of joining an organisation is an outcome of the positive employee experience of onboarding.

6 Analysis and discussion

This study aimed to test a conceptual model for onboarding perceptions of how they have been welcomed and inducted into an organisation in the onboarding process. The same is achieved through testing instruments administered and data analysis. The results are consistent with prior research findings that have suggested the positive influence of the onboarding process. The various research studies highlight that an effective onboarding process leads to increased retention, decreased cost of talent acquisition, and increased productivity through higher employee engagement. The WOW employee experience of the onboarding process directly impacts the critical dimensions of the performance of new employees. Effective implementation of the three-step transition as per the OCS model of the new employee onboarding process significantly impacts engagement with the organisation, time to start performing in the role, and overall productivity in the role (Hawse and Wood, 2019). The research paper by Ibrahim et al. (2022) identifies 14 factors to address for effective employee experience onboarding. The OCS model of new employee transition supports the factors identified by the researchers.

New employee engagement is an essential measure of the success of an onboarding process. As per the theory of engagement, an engaged employee is productive. In the case of a new employee, the engagement with an organisation or new employer is a gradual process. Identifying high impact in the early stages of engagement with the new employer and providing an outstanding employee experience at these moments is critical for the onboarding process. The orientation-connection-socialisation (OCS) model attempted to identify these moments by segmenting the onboarding journey into three sub-stages. These three stages are distinct and are not sequential in a true sense. Sometimes, a new employee may experience more than one stage at a time during the onboarding journey. The OCS model identifies these three stages based on an employee's time with the new employer. Both the time spent by the employee and the number of connections through interactions during the time spent at a new workplace build the employee experience of the employer. An employee experiences the set of activities in each stage as a continuous journey across the time horizon. The experience of an employee's entire journey is called an onboarding experience. Some of the activities of the next stage may be executed in an earlier stage and vice versa depending on specific needs of speedy engagement and

higher productivity at the early stage. A series of positive employee experiences across the OCS journey define total onboarding experience and significantly impact the early outcomes of the job role. The positive correlation of each stage with the employee experience communicates the importance of positive employee perception and executing these activities with a higher level of execution. Exceptional execution of each of these stages has a linear impact on the outcomes of the job in the early stages and drives long-term retention of the new employee (Hall-Ellis, 2014).

6.1 Orientation and positive employee experience

The employee experience plays a crucial role in shaping an employee's perception of their employer during onboarding. The employee's excitement, the organisation's practices, and the approach drive expectations, and the employer strives to provide a comfortable and easy experience. The employee's motivation to engage is high during this stage, and any negative experience can significantly impact their perception of the new workplace. The highest correlation coefficient between employee experience and the orientation stage highlights the importance of positive employee experience. Organisations adopt technology-based tools to achieve a high impact during the orientation stage, offering various options from various vendors to suit their specific context (Harris and Pattie, 2020).

6.2 Connection and positive employee experience

The SHRM study by Bauer (2018) proposes the 4C model of onboarding, which focuses on compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. This model aligns with the OCS model, which emphasises building positive engagement to drive employee experience. The connection stage is crucial for the employee's desire to contribute to the organisation and their bottomless appetite for learning. The OCS model provides maximum support to the employee during this stage, with the support of managers and teams in learning. The result of the new employee is significantly related to the experience of the connection stage employee.

The various stakeholders with whom the employee is connected during this stage provide a sense of confirmation of their decision to enter the new organisation (Jeske and Olson, 2021). New employees' engagement level increases with more interactions with different stakeholders.

Organisations that are effectively onboard use various ways to build strong connections, such as giving new employees mentors, making critical introductions, checking in with key stakeholders, and using technology effectively during onboarding. These relationship-building tools aim to identify whom a new employee needs to meet and ensure regular meetings occur early in the work-employee relationship (Stewart et al., 2021).

6.3 Socialisation and positive employee experience

Socialisation is another important concept that is often mentioned in connection to onboarding. "Organizational socialization is Onboarding new hires, the process through which newcomers learn the requisite social and task knowledge to resolve role uncertainty and become organizational insiders" (Jeske and Olson, 2021).

The employee experience during the onboarding stage is crucial, as it shapes the employee's perception of involvement in the day-to-day workday. The focus is on direct contribution and performance in the assigned role, driving assimilation into workplace culture and providing achievement satisfaction. Early wins drive employee motivation and retention. This stage is critical to the employee's decision to stay with the new employer, as it leads to a sense of empowerment and a strong positive perception of the employer (Stewart et al., 2021; Brown, 2021; Bennett and McWhorter, 2021).

Role clarity is an excellent indicator of how well a new employee is adjusted, and evaluating role clarity can help businesses prevent performance issues that could lead to negative employee experience. Clear roles indicate a better onboarding process; less role conflict indicates better onboarding. Role clarity is the best predictor of positive employee experience and commitment to the organisation. The socialisation stage has relatively less significance on the outcome, in line with past research (Kowtha, 2018).

7 Employee experience and COVID-19 implications

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted employee expectations, leading to changes in the organisation's response to the employee onboarding experience. The new challenges of economic health, mental health, and overall well-being have shaped the employees' new expectations. Organisations have responded to these expectations by flexible and specific situation-based approaches, helping employees feel supported during the onboarding and across the employee life cycle. Through the transition described by the employee experience model, well-being must be included in designing the employee experience. The pandemic significantly influenced and accelerated technology adoption across many areas, as highlighted in the paper by Al Halbusi et al. (2022), including employee onboarding experience. Technology has made it possible to provide remote onboarding experience as good as physical onboarding experience. Post-COVID-19, the hybrid onboarding process has positively shaped the employee experience for both employer and employee.

8 Limitations and scope for further research

The OCS model, developed for the manufacturing industry, can be adapted to various contexts. The dimensions are based on literature reviews and researchers' experiences. To address the needs of employees in remote or hybrid workplace models, modifications to the model's dimensions are needed. The research findings are based on a sample of one year of observations, with the potential to consider more extended periods for more data analysis. By incorporating many observations across industries and geographies, the dimensions considered in the model can be modified to suit better the needs of employees in remote or hybrid workplaces.

9 Conclusions

The OCS model is a valuable approach to managing employee experience, focusing on a specific aspect of the overall employee experience. This model helps organisations and

human resource managers identify and implement the employee experience of onboarding in their respective contexts. The segmented approach to the design of employee experience across the overall employee experience during the employee's tenure enables human resource professionals to effectively design and implement the human resource process to enhance employee experience in the respective organisations. Mohanty and Kulkarni (2023) state that managers or team leaders are key players in shaping organisational employee experience, focused on maximising resource utilisation and training in functional and managerial skills. The OCS model helps managers quickly understand the onboarding-specific dimensions of the employee experience and implement necessary measures to create a positive employee experience for the new employee. The model offers flexibility for using a specific transition stage out of three stages of the OCS model, allowing for the application of different designs of employee experience. Overall, the OCS model provides valuable insights into the design and implementation of employee experience in organisations. There has yet to be a scientific definition of onboarding, which has evolved more based on the practice. The research supports this. The researcher's OCS onboarding model enabled an understanding of employee experience in each of the segments of the onboarding process. Positive employee experience during onboarding significantly increases new employee engagement and shortens the time to get ready to perform in the new environment. The ability of the new employee to start contributing early in the role leads to an increase in productivity over the length of time in the organisation. The two proposed hypotheses are accepted based on the research data analysis. The OCS model is a practical tool for designing onboarding employee experience for human resource managers. The dimensions of the OCS model are generic and can be applied across non-manufacturing environments. The OCS model can be enriched by re-examining the dimensions of employee experience concerning different contexts of the work environment of the new employee. Onboarding will become increasingly important for businesses due to the frequency of millennials changing employment, with an average tenure of 6 to 18 months. Due to the increased employee turnover rate, the onboarding procedure will be replicated multiple times (Franceski, 2017). Continuous socialisation between members substantially impacts a newcomer's learning (Connell, 2019), which is consistent with those who argue that Connection is the most crucial aspect of onboarding (Bauer, 2010). The Current study also proves that Connection remains the key driver to positive employee experience in the study. Current research contributes to the body of knowledge on both induction and employee experience. This study has focused primarily on the role of organisation in onboarding. It is essential to understand that employee onboarding is mutual and two-way. The employees themselves have the responsibility of making onboarding work. They should be encouraged to think about their roles in the onboarding process.

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