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Avoiding the Restart Button: Examining the Critical Factors of the Onboarding Process that Encourage Team Cohesion

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Avoiding the Restart Button: Examining the Critical Factors of the Onboarding
Process that Encourage Team Cohesion

by

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Abstract

Title: Avoiding the Restart Button: Examining the Critical Factors of the

Onboarding Process that Encourage Team Cohesion

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The process of onboarding new employees critically impacts a firm's overall success. Previous studies have looked at the relationship between onboarding and outcomes such as employee satisfaction, turnover intention, and performance. One area understudied is the correlation between onboarding processes and team cohesion. The topic is relevant to the business sector because there is an increase in firms that are organizing employees into teams.

Using a sample population of resident assistants and reserve officers' training corps cadets from six different teams, this quantitative study implemented a survey to explore if there was a positive correlation between new team member onboarding experiences and team cohesion. Discovering what organizational efforts support team cohesion allows organizations to design and modify their onboarding processes to encourage team cohesion. Bauer and Erdogan's (2011) proposed onboarding model is the theoretical model to guide the research. Their model accounted for specific employee characteristics and behaviors but there is also a section of the model that relied on the firm's efforts in the onboarding

process called organizational efforts. The organizational effort section of the model was the focus of this study because it is the section of the model organizations have the most influence over. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between organizational efforts in the onboarding process and team cohesion. It seeks to distinguish what steps organizations can take during the onboarding process to increase the chances that a team will be more cohesive.

First, the results provided evidence that there is a medium, positive correlation between new team member onboarding experiences and team cohesion. A second finding from the study was that an employee's relationship with his/her peers explained the most variance in team cohesion. Further, the researcher found this relationship was partially mediated by self-efficacy. The implications of this study are reviewed and suggestions for future research are recommended.

Keywords: onboarding, team cohesion, relationship with peers, self-efficacy

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Acknowledgment

First, I want to thank my wonderful parents for all their support and the encouragement they have given me throughout my life. They have always believed in my abilities and have been my biggest cheerleaders.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents. I thank God for the blessing of such great parents. You both have made many sacrifices for me throughout my life. There is no way I would be anywhere close to the person I am today without your support and love. Thank you for believing in my abilities, helping me grow, and encouraging me to go after my dreams.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Each spring as the academic year comes to an end, universities become the home to varied emotions: first-year students are eager to return home to share their experiences, administrators start to ponder what preparations are needed for a successful fall semester, and graduating students are excited about their future. It is also a time that signals change as those graduating students leave the teams they have spent countless hours being members of during their time in college. These could be teams such as student organizations, fraternities or sororities, resident assistants (RAs), cadets in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), and student government. These teams all have one thing in common; they will need to focus on how to successfully onboard their new members into the existing fabric of their teams the next semester.

Onboarding is defined by Bauer and Erdogan (2011, p. 51) as "the process through which new employees move from being organizational outsiders to becoming organizational insiders. Onboarding refers to the process that helps new employees learn the knowledge, skills, and behaviors they need to succeed in their new organizations." Both "onboarding" and "organizational socialization" are used in this paper as the terms have a similar meaning as cited by both Korte and Lin (2013) and Bauer and Erdogan (2011). This is also supported by Feldman's (1981, p. 309) proposed definition of organizational socialization as "the process by which

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employees are transformed from organization outsider to participating and effective members."

There is an abundance of literature available on the topic of onboarding. Articles have been written providing insight as to the best practices related to onboarding, and other professional sources have discussed the benefits of having an onboarding program. However, one area understudied in the onboarding literature is how onboarding efforts impact the outcome of team cohesion. Team cohesion is defined by Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, and Gilson, (2007, p. 428) as "the commitment of team members to the team's overall task or to each other." There is a trend toward having more employees working in teams. In addition, organizations are becoming flatter regarding organizational structure (Whiting & Maynes, 2016; Zoltan & Vancea, 2016). With the increase in having more employees working in teams, it is necessary for organization leaders to consider how their onboarding practices are influencing team cohesion. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between organizational efforts in the onboarding process and team cohesion. It distinguishes what steps organizations can take during the onboarding process to increase the chances that a team will have more cohesion.

Bauer and Erdogan (2011) discussed how each organization has different processes and methods for onboarding new employees. For example, the format and length of the orientation program might be different. The role that

organizational insiders, such as a mentor, have in helping the new employee get acclimated to their new environment also varies (Bauer and Erogan, 2011). These are the organizational efforts of onboarding and can be thought of as the policies, procedures, and practices that an organization uses to onboard new employees.

There is a discussion in the literature about whether "teams" and "work group" refer two separate concepts or can be used interchangeably (Sundstrom, McIntyre, Halfhill, & Richards, 2000). Sundstrom, et al. (2000) argued that most experts in the field have used the terms complementarily and therefore "teams" and "groups" have the same meaning in this paper. Teams are "composed of two or more individuals who exist to perform organizationally relevant tasks, share one or more common goals, interact socially, exhibit task interdependencies, maintain and manage boundaries, and are embedded in an organizational context that sets boundaries, constrains the team, and influences exchanges with other unit in the broader entity (Kozlowski & Bell, 2001, p. 6)."

An attempt was made to define the term "new employee" but as Rollag (2007) stated, although "new employee" is used quite often in the literature, there is a lack of a clear definition of the term. In a study, Rollag (2007) found peers generally considered the bottom 30% of the organization in terms of tenure as new employees but also states that previous studies have considered a new employee to be someone who is in the first two or three years in a position. Finally, Rollag (2007) stated the specific industry can impact what is considered a new employee

because if there is consistent turnover within a firm, someone with only a few months of experience might be one of the most tenured employees. Now that the definitions of "onboarding," "teams," and "team cohesion" are established, the background of the problem is explained.

Background of the Problem

Onboarding

Having an active onboarding program for new employees is vital to optimize employee performance and reduce the chances of employee turnover. Onboarding practices can be incorporated into a firm's strategy to help increase job satisfaction and employee retention to ensure the firm can fully capitalize on its investment in the new employee (Reese, 2005). Many organizations incorrectly assume new employees are already proficient in how to make connections within the organization, so they do not spend proper time helping new employees form these relationships (Dai, Meuse, Gaeddert, 2011). To try and impress potential employee recruits, recruiters often are not upfront about the negative aspects of a firm. Peers can help new employees navigate some of these obstacles in the new environment (Louis, 1980). When employees are moving into a new job, there will be some uncertainty (Feldman & Brett, 1983). For example, new employees might be hesitant to ask questions because they fear this will make it appear they lack the skills to be successful in the position (Rollag, Parise, & Cross, 2005). This can lead to new employees wasting time and effort by not using all the resources the

firm has at its disposal (Rollag, et al., 2005). Similarly, Cable and Parsons (2001) added how trying to navigate a new work environment can be stressful for new employees. When someone enters a new environment, and he or she is not sure what to expect, this uncertainty can cause stress. The employee could be nervous about making a strong first impression on their peers.

Previous research studies have mostly focused on onboarding and topics such as organizational entry, newcomer proactivity, and job embeddedness. For example, Swann Jr., Milton, and Polzer (2000) found it was important for individuals to feel a sense of self-verification from their peers when they joined an organization. It has also been shown if employees used their peers and supervisor as resources in the work environment, they were more likely to have higher job satisfaction (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Proactive behavior displayed by new employees has been shown to increase learning, well-being, and work engagement (Cooper-Thomas, Paterson, Stadler, & Saks, 2014). Allen and Shanock (2012) looked at job embeddedness and found it increased as new employees increased in socialization.

Competitive Advantage

Onboarding outcomes influence a firm's success in industry as human capital can be a form of competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is defined as follows: "a firm is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitor and these firms are not

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able to duplicate the benefit of the strategy (Barney, 1991, p. 102)." Barney's (1991) resource-based view stated firms can obtain or possess resources that enable the firm to have a competitive advantage. The three types of resources identified by Barney (1991) are physical capital, human capital and organizational capital. Bassi and McMurrer (2007, p. 1) stated "…for many companies, people are only source of long-term competitive advantage." Mankins, Harris, and Harding (2017) also argued human capital is the pathway to achieving competitive advantage. Innovative product ideas, such as Apple's iPhone, allow a company to separate themselves from other firms in industry and these great ideas come from employees (Mankins, et al. 2017). Teams can be a source of competitive advantage too. English, Griffith, and Steelman (2004) argued that to have success in the future, organizations will need to use teams if they wish to stay competitive in industry. Aguinis, Gottfredson, and Joo (2013) supported English et al. (2004) and also stated that a firm can turn teams into a competitive advantage. Aguinis et al. (2013) pointed out the United States 1980 ice hockey team that won the gold medal as an example of a team that had a competitive advantage. The hockey team was assembled to build the best team and not necessarily the best players (Aguinis, et al., 2013). Human capital allows firms the opportunity to distance themselves from their peers in their industry and create a competitive advantage.

Teams

Many jobs that were once stable and predictable are quickly changing in their design because companies want employees who can be adaptive and step in to fill roles when other employees are out of the office to help increase productivity (Singh, 2008). Teams are more innovative and can respond faster to situations compared to an individual employee (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Mortensen and Gardner (2017) mentioned one reason for an increase in teams in the workplace is that it helps firms to be able to take more advantage of their resources. For example, a technology specialist can support multiple groups instead of only supporting one unit and sitting on the sideline when their skillset is not needed during a part of a project. Caouette and O'Connor (1998) pointed out that compared to individuals, teams use resources better, are more efficient at getting results, and are stronger at solving problems. Akan (2005, p. 59) stated, "the future workplace requires managers who understand how to use groups and teams to achieve organizational success." To summarize, in competitive markets, the practical use of teams has the potential for firms to gain an advantage over their peers if they can use their human capital resources efficiently.

Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem is designed to help clarify what outcomes and benefits the study provides (Jacobs, 2013). For this study the statement of the problem is:

Onboarding employees is essential for organizational success because it expedites the opportunity for new employees to contribute to their organization and influences employee turnover (Watkins, 2013; Krasman, 2015). However, the business environment is changing as more firms are using teams in the workforce. There is a need for organizational leaders to learn more about the relationship between teams and onboarding experiences (Kozlowski & Bell, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

Data shows employees have navigated through the onboarding process quite a bit in their career. Michael Watkins (2013) mentioned in a study of 580 leaders, the average leader had 18.2 years of experience and had 13.5 transitions consisting of either switching firms, switching departments within firms, or changing geographic locations. With the frequency of these transitions, employees will need to navigate the process of integrating into new teams many times throughout their career as they join multiple new organizations. Onboarding helps describe the process these employees go through as they become contributing members within their new organization.

The onboarding experience an employee has can impact a firm's bottom line. When employees join new organizations, they often form attitudes about their new employer in the first few weeks. These opinions do not quickly change, making it essential for firms to ensure a positive experience for new employees in the first few weeks (Johnson & Senges, 2010). The cost for firms to replace

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employees who leave can be significant and so employee retention is critical to a company's bottom line (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, & Erez, 2001). Also, new hires can be an excellent source of creativity and a fresh set of eyes on firm practices, but it is difficult for firms to be able to take advantage of this until the new employee has been onboarded (Rollag, et al., 2005). Ensuring employees have a smooth onboarding experience will help firms get the most production out of their employees and decrease the chances of costly employee turnover.

Although the topic of onboarding has been studied in the literature, there is limited research related to onboarding employees and team cohesion. Kozlowski and Bell (2001) alluded to this and stated how there is a need to look beyond when individuals enter a new organization and focus on what happens when an individual joins a team in a new organization. Kozlowski and Bell (2001) also mentioned how a new employee joining a group can cause disruptions because the new employee is trying to understand and adapt to his/her team. The new employee causes some changes in the team because the new individual brings in a unique skillset and his/her personal goals might conflict with the team goals (Kozlowski & Bell, 2001). For example, a new team member might come in and try to become the leader of the team, but this can cause friction within the team if the new team member has not established credibility with the team. Anderson and Cooper-Thomas (1995) also called for more research on how groups influence the integration of new employees and stated studying teams is even more critical

because most of the socialization process occurs between the employee and his/her fellow teammates.

The analogy of new students entering an elementary school classroom during the middle of the year can be useful in helping to explain this situation. The new students must learn the school schedule, the rules of the school, and intellectually try and catch-up on the subject material. In addition, the new elementary students also need to learn what desks are unoccupied, what games the students play at recess, and what roles each of their fellow students has in the classroom. In a similar fashion, when new employees join a firm and are working with a team, the new employees must learn the policies and procedures of the new firm, how to log into their work computer, and the processes for ordering supplies. Additionally, when new employees are integrating into their new firm in a team environment, they need to identify their role in the team and build a relationship with their peers. The key concept in both of these situations is that individuals are not only trying to integrate into their new environment, but they are also trying to build a relationship with their peers. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between organizational efforts in the onboarding process and team cohesion. It distinguishes what steps organizations can take during the onboarding process to increase the chances that a team will have more cohesion.

Questions that Guided the Research

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between organizational efforts in a new employee's onboarding experience and team cohesion?

2. What organizational efforts of an onboarding process support team cohesion?

3. Does self-efficacy mediate the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion?

Definition of Terms

This section provides a definition of key terms used in the document. Words can sometimes be interpreted differently by researchers, so it is essential to provide clarity on how each term is being utilized.

Competitive Advantage: A firm is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitor and these firms are not able to duplicate the benefit of the strategy (Barney, 1991, p. 102).

Embeddedness: Network of relationships that can create a web of restraining forces and make voluntary turnover less likely (Allen & Shanock, 2012, p. 355).

Employee: Anyone who performs services for you is your employee if you can control what will be done and how it will be done (Internal Revenue Services, 2018).

Frequency Table: Array of table by assigned numerical value, with columns for
percent, valid percent (percent adjusted for missing data), and cumulative
percent (Cooper & Schindler, 2014, p. 407).

Job Satisfaction: Pleasurable, positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal
of one's job or job experience (Morrison, 2008, p. 332).

Newcomer Proactivity: Means by which newcomers engage with their work
environment through proactive socialization strategies such as seeking
information about their role and work environment to reduce uncertainty
(Saks, Gruman, & Cooper-Thomas, 2011, p. 36).

Onboarding: The process through which new employees move from being
organizational outsiders to becoming organizational insiders. Onboarding
refers to the process that helps new employees learn the knowledge, skills,
and behaviors they need to succeed in their new organizations (Bauer &
Erdogan, 2011, p. 51).

Organizational Commitment: The strength of an individual's identification with
and involvement in a particular organization (Porter, Steers, Mowday, &
Boulian, 974, p. 604).

Orientation: The period immediately following organizational entry which helps
newcomers cope with entry stress (Wanous, 1992, p. 165).

Person-Organization Fit: The congruence between patterns of organizational
values and patterns of individual values (Chatman, 1991, p. 459).

Relationship with Peers: Relationships between employees at the same hierarchical

level who have no formal authority over one another (Silas, 2009, p. 58).

Self-Efficacy: Individuals' judgments regarding their capacity to successfully

perform specific tasks and behaviors (Gruman, Saks, & Zweig, 2006, p. 93).

Self-Verification Striving: Bringing others to know you for who you really are

(Cable, & Kay, 2012, p. 360).

Social Support: Transactions with others that provide the target person (i.e., the

recipient) with emotional support, affirmation of the self, and appraisal of

the situation, instrument support, and information (Vinokur & Van Ryn,

1993, p. 350).

Supervisor-Employee Relationship: Workplace relationships in which one partner

(the supervisor) holds direct formal authority over the other (the subordinate

employee) (Silas, 2009, p. 20).

Teams: Composed of two or more individuals who exist to perform

organizationally relevant tasks, share one or more common goals, interact

socially, exhibit task interdependencies, maintain and manage boundaries,

and are embedded in an organizational context that sets boundaries,

constrains the team, and influences exchanges with other unit in the broader

entity (Kozlowski & Bell, 2001, p. 6).

Team Cohesion: The commitment of team members to the team's overall task or to

each other (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2007, p. 428).

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Team-Member Exchange: Reciprocity between a member and his or her team with

respect to the member's contribution of ideas, feedback, and assistance to

other members and, in turn, the member's receipt of information, help, and

recognition from other team members (Seers, Petty, & Cashman, 1995, p.

21).

Work Group Socialization: Newcomer acquisition of knowledge, abilities and

attitudes needed to perform a work role, and the assimilation of the

newcomer into the proximal work group via exposure to its norms,

psychological climate, rituals and *rites de passage*, and the concurrent

accommodation of the work group to the newcomer over time (Anderson &

Cooper-Thomas, 1995, p. 5).

Significance of the Study

There are gaps in the literature about the effect of onboarding practices on

team cohesion. In addition, if there is a relationship between onboarding and team

cohesion, there will be a need to identify the specific onboarding practices that

facilitate team cohesion. As Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Rubenstein, and Song

(2013) mentioned, much of the research on onboarding has been related to

socialization tactics or the individual efforts new employees exert such as

information seeking. However, there is a gap in which onboarding processes are

most beneficial to new employees. Klein, Polin, and Sutton (2015) critiqued

current research associated with onboarding practices and state there is a need for

more research on specific aspects of the onboarding process because much of the present research is too broad. Managers often face time constraints related to initial employee orientation and training because firms want contributions from their new employees as soon as possible. If managers can identify which onboarding practices provide the best return on investment, they can create a more effective onboarding process. This is important because as Holden (1996) stated, organizational socialization impacts the bottom line through impacting job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee retention.

There is also a call for more research on teams and how new team members impact the team dynamics. Chen (2005) stated there was a need for more research on teams in different industries and multiple newcomers joining the same group. Many of the previous studies only looked at the experience of groups when a single newcomer joined the group (Chen, 2005). Hollenbeck and Jamieson (2015) suggested it would be beneficial to have more research focus on the correlation between groups and the social relationship employees have with each other. This need is also highlighted by Ellis, Bauer, Mansfield, Erdogan, Truxillo, and Simon (2015) as they called for studies looking at the social context of teams and how this impacts the stress in new employees.

Theoretical Framework

      Bauer and Erdogan (2011) proposed a model of socialization that indicates there are three factors that influence an employee's onboarding experience: new employee characteristics, new employee behaviors, and organizational efforts. These three factors, when combined with how employees adjust to their onboarding experience, will lead to the outcome of the onboarding process. This study incorporated the organizational efforts, adjustment, and outcome section of the model. The organizational effort section of the model is influenced by firms, so this should be the part of the model that firms have the most control over. The researcher decided to focus on this section because the findings would help organizations develop and design their onboarding programs. The model by Bauer and Erdogan (2011) is shown in Figure 1. Figure 2 is a simplified version of the model showing the three parts of the model that this study mostly addressed. The model by Bauer and Erdogan (2011) is reprinted with permission from the American Psychological Association.
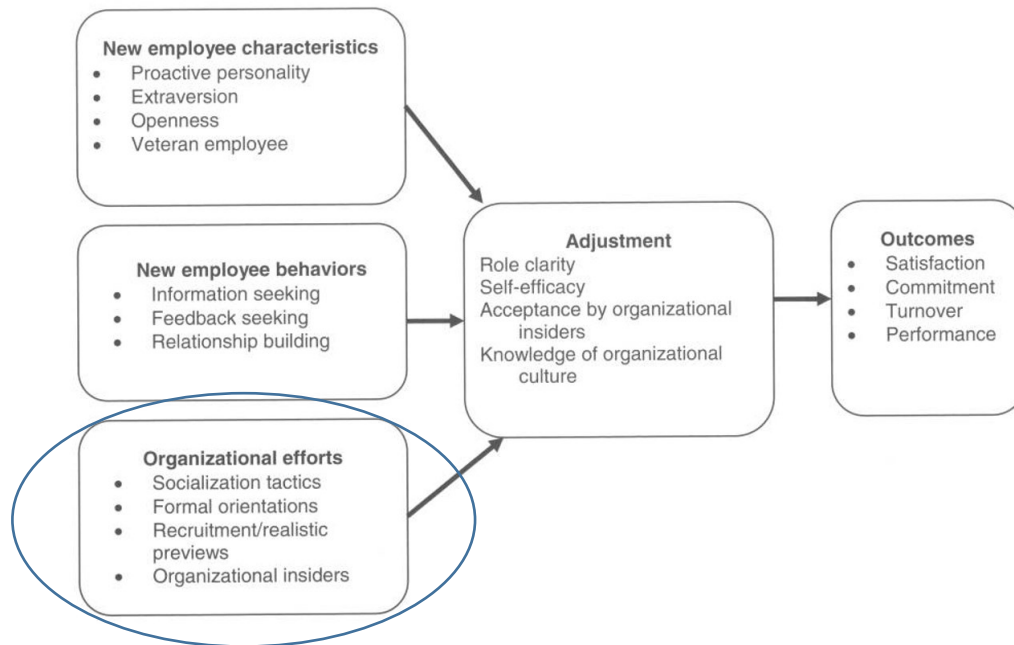
Figure 1 – Bauer and Erdogan's Model

Organizational Efforts ⟹ Adjustment ⟹ Outcome
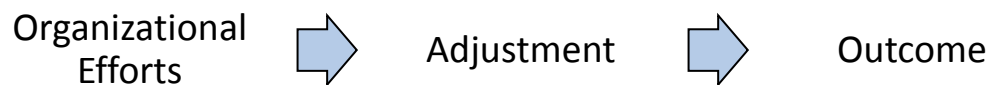
Figure 2 – Applying Bauer and Erdogan's Model to the Current Study

Although this study focused only on specific aspects of the model, the entire model is described to provide insight into how the model was applied to the study. New employee characteristics are elements about the employee that might help him/her in the onboarding process (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). For example, Bauer and Erdogan (2011) stated how studies have shown individuals who are more

extroverted are likely to have increased success at adjusting to their new work environment. Also, employees who have switched jobs several times can utilize their experience from previous transitions and apply it to the new environment to assist them in the transition process (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011).

The actions new employees take can impact their own onboarding experience, and this is new employee behavior (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). For example, they can use information seeking strategies such as asking questions to peers and actively try to understand the culture of the new firm (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). Additionally, if employees are trying actively to get feedback on their performance from their supervisor and their peers, this can speed up the transition into their new firm (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). Finally, the efforts employees exert into building relationships with their peers assists them in the socialization process (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011).

The final factor that impacts an employee's onboarding experience is the practices and efforts the organization puts into place to aid the employee in his/her adjustment to the firm (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). This would include whether or not the organization provides an orientation and how much of an accurate job preview the organization provides during the recruitment process (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). If the employee is able to connect with someone inside the organization, such as a mentor, this can significantly assist the employee in the onboarding process too (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011).

In the middle of the model is newcomer adjustment, which Bauer and

Erdogan (2011, p. 57) described as "how well a new employee is doing as he or she

transitions from being an organizational outsider to an organizational insider."

These are variables that can mediate the outcomes of the onboarding experience.

Bauer and Erdogan (2011) stated there are many adjustment variables, but

mentioned that role clarity, self-efficacy, acceptance by organizational insiders, and

knowledge of organizational culture have been studied extensively.

The outcomes of the onboarding process are the last part of the model.

Again, Bauer and Erdogan (2011) explained there is an extensive list of outcomes,

but some of the more popular ones that have been researched are job satisfaction,

turnover, and performance. One outcome not addressed in the current onboarding

literature, including Bauer and Erdogan's (2011) model, is team cohesion. The

current study looked extensively at the organizational efforts section of Bauer and

Erdogan's (2011) model to explore how these strategies correlated with team

cohesion. The organizational effort section of the model was the focus of the study

because this is the part of the model that individual organizations have the most

control over. Discovering what organizational efforts support team cohesion

allows organizations to design and modify their onboarding processes to encourage

team cohesion.

Organization of the Study

There are five chapters in this dissertation. This chapter introduced the study and justified why there is a need for such a study to be conducted. The questions that guided the research were also outlined in this chapter. Key definitions were provided and the theoretical model for the study, Bauer and Erdogan's (2011) model, was explained in detail. Chapter 2 is the literature review and dictates how the literature review was conducted. The existing literature, including significant theories, related to onboarding and team cohesion are discussed. The next chapter describes the procedures and methodology of the research study. It includes information on the sample population and why the population was chosen. The survey instrument the researcher implemented is introduced and how the survey was created is explained in detail. Chapter 3 also includes the ethical considerations the study incorporated, including the submission to the Institutional Review Board and methods to protect the identity of the participants. Chapter 4 explains the findings of the study. In the chapter, the researcher distinguishes the steps taken to clean the data and how missing data was handled in the study. In addition, the researcher reviews if each of the four hypotheses were supported. The final section, Chapter 5, provides an in-depth explanation of the significance of the findings. Also, there is a discussion on future research and discussion on the limitations of the study. How the study addressed each of the three research questions is examined.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Overview

This chapter describes how the sources for the literature review were obtained and reviewed. Hart (2002) mentioned a literature review is helpful in demonstrating the researcher has prior knowledge of a topic. The literature review for this study included journals and books ranging from 1979 to 2019. In 1979, the socialization tactics were introduced by Van Maanen and Schein and this is the key publication many researchers referred to when discussing socialization/onboarding. The main topics for the literature review search were onboarding, organizational socialization, team cohesion, new employees, self-efficacy, orientation, and employee training.

Questions which Guided the Research

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between organizational efforts in a new employee's onboarding experience and team cohesion?

2. What organizational efforts of an onboarding process support team cohesion?

3. Does self-efficacy mediate the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion?

Method for Reviewing the Literature

The initial literature review was conducted by reviewing human resource related textbooks and reviewing the reference section of chapters related to onboarding. Additional sources were obtained using keyword searches in electronic databases from the library at Florida Institute of Technology. The primary database used was *Business Source Complete,* but *Google Scholar* was also utilized to locate articles. *Business Source Complete* allows the user to limit searches to only peer-reviewed journals and has access to over 4,000 journals according to the description of the database. The journals used in the study were some of the key business and psychology journals such as the *Academy of Management* and *Journal of Applied Psychology.* Key search terms were "onboarding," "new employee socialization," "orientation," and "team cohesion." The initial search was limited to include only materials that had been peer-reviewed and additional articles were collected by reviewing the reference section of the relevant items collected. A search was also conducted using the *Harvard Business Review* website to find published articles related to onboarding.

Books related to the study were identified by performing a search using *Amazon's* and *Thriftbook*s websites to seek out books related to onboarding and organizational socialization. The literature review starts with Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) model on socialization tactics. This source was cited the most by

other authors during the review of the literature and appeared to be the earliest

article on socialization that impacted the field.

Method for Analyzing the Literature

The literature was analyzed by reading the articles thoroughly and paying

particular attention to those theories and studies that were frequently cited.

Previous doctoral students and professors had stressed the importance of having a

method to organize articles in the literature review process. A notetaking strategy

was utilized to group the pieces into different themes, and as the review of the

literature continued, these themes were narrowed down. The publication and

author's credentials were accounted for when deciding which articles to include in

this dissertation. In the case of reviewing books, the chapter titles and subject

indexes were utilized to find relevant chapters related to the topics being examined.

Onboarding Frameworks/Theories

There are different theories and views related to onboarding and this section

briefly reviews some of the more historical and current theories to provide some

background context. The approaches covered here were chosen because they are

frequently cited in the literature and helped to develop many of the concepts and

thoughts related to onboarding that exist today. Theories by Van Maanen and

Schein (1979) and Feldman (1981) are two of the earliest theories related to

onboarding new employees and are discussed first along with Jones' (1986)

simplified version of Maanen and Schein's (1979) theory. Bauer (2010) and

Solinger, van Olffen, Roe, and Hofmans (2013) are included to provide two more recent views and help provide context to the onboarding field.

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) provided one of the first theories of organizational socialization, and they proposed six dimensions of the socialization process: collective versus individual, formal versus informal, sequential versus random steps, fixed versus variable, serial versus disjunctive, and investiture versus divestiture. The literature review proved this to be one of the seminal works in this field. Collective processes would be when an organization brings its new employees together as a group compared to an individual process where the new employee would have a more customized onboarding process (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Formal processes are when the new employee is separated from existing employees as he/she goes through the new member processes while informal processes are when the employee is usually interacting with experienced members of the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Sequential and random step processes are related to how scripted the process is for the new employee to reach a specific occupational role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Along similar lines, fixed and variable socialization describes the timeline before an employee can move to the next employment level in a firm (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Fixed socialization is if an employee needs to complete a specific number of years of experience before he/she is eligible to move to another position (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Variable socialization would be if there are

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several internal and external factors that impact when an employee might switch

jobs in the organization; for example, a down economy might cause a firm to

reduce the number of managerial positions needed (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

The distinction between serial and disjunctive socialization is explained by whether

or not the new employee has a role model or veteran employees whom are helping

the new employee adjust to the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Finally, investiture socialization and divestiture socialization are about the personal

characteristics of the new employee (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). If the firm

supports the employee and his/her individual characterisics, this would be

divestiture socialization. However, if the firm wants the employee to leave behind

most of his/her identity and fit more into a personality form created by the

organization, this would be investiture socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Several studies have expanded on the tactics proposed by Van Maanen and

Schein (1979). Cable and Parsons (2001) found that person-organizational fit was

higher when organizations used sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture

socialization tactics. Their study overall showed person-organizational fit was

highest when organizations were able to minimize uncertainty for the new

employee. Jones (1986) viewed the tactics on a continuum of institutionalized and

individualized, and each end of the continuum would produce different role

orientations and explain how employees adjusted to their new job environment.

Institutional tactics were found to promote job satisfaction, commitment, and lower

intention to quit in comparison to individualized tactics (Jones, 1986). Figure 3 has

a chart of the breakdown of the tactics by individualized and institutionalized

groups (Jones, 1986).

Tactics concerned mainly with:	INSTITUTIONALIZED	INDIVIDUALIZED
CONTEXT	Collective Formal	Individual Informal
CONTENT	Sequential Fixed[b]	Random Variable
SOCIAL ASPECTS	Serial Investiture[b]	Disjunctive Divestiture

Figure 3 – Jones Individualized and Institutionalized Tactics

Feldman (1981) is another one of the early organizational socialization

scholars. He created one of the first models to identify outcomes of the

socialization process.   Feldman's (1981) proposed model stated there were three

stages of the socialization process. The anticipatory phase happens before the new

employee joins the organization (Feldman, 1981). The encounter stage is when the

employee first joins the organization (Feldman, 1981). Finally, the change and

acquisition stage is the longest stage and includes when the new employee becomes

proficient in his/her skills (Feldman, 1981).

A more recent template related to onboarding is proposed by Bauer (2010), who discussed the Four C's in onboarding: Compliance, Clarification, Culture, and Connection. Compliance is mostly the legal requirements and going over firm-specific policies the employee needs to know (Bauer, 2010). Clarification is helping the employee understand the roles related to his/her job within the new company and the expectations of the firm has of the new employee (Bauer, 2010). Culture is helping the employee understand the unwritten and written traditions and ways of the firm (Bauer, 2010). Connection is assisting the employee in building relationships with the key individuals and building networks (Bauer, 2010). Meyer and Bartels (2017) did a study using Bauer's Four C's and found individuals had more perceived utility, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived organizational support if they were onboarded using Bauer's model.

Solinger, van Olffen, Roe, and Hofmans (2013) found evidence of five possible views in their research of onboarding. The first is what they called learning to love, which is when an individual slowly builds relationships with the organization in a series of predictable steps (Solinger, et al., 2013). The second is called honeymoon-hangover, and the employee gets very excited about being a part of the organization but eventually this excitement declines as unrealistic expectations are not met (Solinger et al., 2013). Boswell, Boundreau, and Tichy (2005) added to this stage and stressed the importance of firms' making sure they are normalizing employee honeymoon-hangover emotions. It has also been shown

that the higher the rise in job satisfaction during the honeymoon phase, the stronger the decline will be in job satisfaction during the hangover phase (Boswell, Shipp, Payne, & Culbertson, 2009).

The final scenario of the Solinger et al. (2013) model has three different levels which are high-match, low-match, and moderate-match. The low-match situation is one when the employee possibly did not have enough of an opportunity in the selection process to find out about the organization or made a poor decision in joining the organization (Solinger, et al., 2013). Employees in a low-match situation will most likely eventually leave the firm (Solinger, et al., 2013). Support for the high-match scenario often comes from the perspective that employees try to join an organization that fits their own values and goals (Solinger, et al., 2013). The moderate-match scenario is when individual components of the job instill organizational commitment in the new employee (Solinger, et al., 2013). For example, they might have a robust social network but not yet have strong connections to the organization's values (Solinger, et al., 2013).

Components and Outcomes of the Onboarding Process

This section of the literature review starts by exploring the factors at the organizational and individual level that can influence the onboarding process. The subheadings are orientation/training, recruitment/pre-arrival, relationship with supervisor, relationship with peers, organizational socialization, and proactive behavior. Next, the section reviews studies that have looked at onboarding and

self-efficacy. The final subsection on practical implications helps to answer the

question of why onboarding should matter to firms. The current literature as it

relates to onboarding components and outcomes is discussed below.

Orientation/Training

Orientation is defined as "the period immediately following organizational

entry which helps newcomers cope with entry stress (Wanous, 1992, p. 165)."

Wanous (1992) indicated employee orientation is essential to help reduce the stress

new employees are going through as the stress is caused by the role transitions the

new employee is experiencing. Previous research on the results of orientation

programs have had mixed results. Studies have shown new employees can find

orientation processes to be overwhelming (Dunn & Jaskinski, 2009). However,

strong orientation programs can add confidence to new employees (Cirilo &

Kleiner, 2003). New employees might benefit more regarding organizational

socialization and be more productive if they partake in activities in their firm

compared to attending a formalized orientation (Bauer & Green, 1994). In a study

comparing new employees who participated in an orientation training to those who

did not participate in the orientation session, a higher level of organizational

commitment was found in those employees who did attend the orientation training

(Klein & Weaver, 2000). Cooper-Thomas, Anderson, and Cash (2011) found

similar results in their qualitative study and recommended organizations provide

opportunities for new employees to engage in socialization experiences, such as

networking, outside of formalized programs. Waung (1995) found evidence that delivering coping strategies during orientation to help employees navigate through negative job information led to an increase in turnover. However, there was an increase in job satisfaction if employees remained with the firm for four weeks if they were offered coping strategies (Waung, 1995). Korte, Brunhaver, and Sheppard (2015) found employees felt orientation trainings were filled with too much information and thought they needed more context to be able to use the information they were told during orientation sessions effectively. One of the pitfalls that frequently occurred is different offices do not spend the time to coordinate their roles in the onboarding processes (Stier & Zwany, 2008). For example, human resources needs to coordinate with the employee's manager about what information is covered during orientation, so the manager is appropriately prepared to continue the onboarding process after orientation ends.

Initial employee training can also be a part of the onboarding process. Saks (1996) discussed how employee training is crucial because it is an opportunity to quickly integrate new employees into the organization and improve the skillset of the employee. Saks and Belcourt (2006) found after a year, employees were only applying 34% of the material they learned during training. Saks and Belcourt (2006) stated it is crucial for organizations to focus on providing activities before and after training that can aid in the employee's ability to implement the material learned in training. The amount of training has been shown to be positively

correlated with job satisfaction, job performance, ability to cope, and training helpfulness (Saks, 1996). Also, the intention for employees to quit was reduced with more training (Saks, 1996). Using meta-analysis, Tharenou, Saks, and Moore (2007) found training helped improve organizational performance and human resource outcomes but did not see a strong correlation between training and financial performance.

Other researchers have examined the design of training programs. Duguay and Korbut (2002) recommend a two-phase training program for new employees with the first phase being all the new employees together and the second phase dividing the employees into their functional assignments. Riordan, Weatherly, Vandenberg, and Self (2001) found when employees were trained in a group instead of on an individual level, this was more likely to promote turnover. Two explanations were provided by the researchers to explain this: one being firms might train employees in a group setting if the position is prone to have more turnover to reduce their training costs and have a larger pool of employees that are prepared for the position. The other possible explanation provided was that group training was not detailed enough and the employees left because the job offered too much stress (Riordan, et al., 2001). New employees are often confused and may not know some of the necessary office routines such as the process for getting office supplies (Wallace, 2009). Other times, new employees do not have favorable experiences when starting a new job because they do not have access to

the resources they need, such as computer access (Lavigna, 2009). A useful onboarding program can provide the training and knowledge necessary so the employee can be aware of these resources (Lavigna, 2009). Perrot, Bauer, Abonneau, Campoy, Erdogan, and Liden (2014) found it was not necessarily the onboarding approach the organization implemented that was important, but more so that new employees felt the organization cared for their well-being and created a welcoming environment.

Although there has been extensive research related to employee training, some gaps in the literature that still exist. For example, Arthur, Bennett, Edens, & Bell (2003) recommend additional research is needed on how different training methods are correlated with specific content. Riley, Michael, and Mahoney (2017) called for more research on an organization's return on investment on the money and time spent on employee training. These future studies could contribute to human resource staff and managers making wiser decisions on employee training and onboarding practices.

Recruitment/Pre-Arrival

It is essential before an employee arrives at an organization that the firm provides a realistic image of the job; otherwise, this can impact a new employee's onboarding experience (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). Bradt and Vonnegut (2009) stressed the importance of organizations coordinating their recruitment, training, orientation, and management efforts to ensure the best onboarding experience

possible. Additionally, Watkins (2009) discussed how successful onboarding starts with effective recruiting. To get the maximum benefit out of new hires, Watkins (2009) recommends firms align their recruiting and onboarding practices.

Relationship with Supervisor

Prior research has also looked at the role supervisors play in the onboarding experience. The supervisor-employee relationship is defined by Silas (2009, p. 20) as "workplace relationships in which one partner (supervisor) holds direct formal authority over the other (subordinate employee)." Studies have shown positive supervisor humor has helped new employees adjust to their new environment (Gkorezis, Petridou, & Lioliou, 2016). Employees reported supervisor support correlated with reduced job clarity and job satisfaction after entering the organization (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2009). Kammeyer-Mueller, et al. (2013) found turnover in new employees was especially prone to happen if supervisors were undermining the employee. Sluss and Thompson (2012) found there was a strong, positive correlation between newcomer job satisfaction and the use of supervisor socialization tactics. Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) explored what sources of information new employees utilize to learn about their new environment and found most rely on observing others in the organization to obtain information. Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) also found if employees used their boss and peers as an information source, the employee was more likely to have an increase in job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Relationship with Peers

New employees and their relationship with their peers can also impact onboarding outcomes. Relationship with peers is defined as "relationships between employees at the same hierarchical level who have no formal authority over one another (Silas, 2009, p. 58)." Cable and Kay (2012, p. 360) discussed how, during organizational entry, individuals struggle with self-verification striving, which they define as "bringing others to know you for who you really are." In their study, Cable and Kay (2012) found job satisfaction and organizational commitment were positively correlated with high self-verifying job applicants. Swann, Jr. (1987) discussed how individuals are reluctant in the self-verification process to take on roles they do not feel will end in success. This can impact a new employee if an established employee already occupies the role he/she feels the most comfortable filling in a team. Studies have also shown how performance is better when individuals are self-verified by their fellow group members, especially when the task requires creativity (Swann, Jr., et al., 2000). Hewlin (2003) noted how new employees will often take cues from their co-workers on how they should act. This can cause stress for the employees if they feel they are forced to choose between the organization's values and their own values (Hewlin, 2003). Feldman and Brett (1983) found differences between employees who were new to a firm and employees who changed jobs within the same organization. The new employees were more likely to reach out for support from their peers to try and cope with their

new environment compared to those individuals who changed jobs within the firm (Feldman & Brett, 1983). However, the study found those who changed positions within the firm had more power in the organization (Feldman & Brett, 1983).

Korte and Lin (2013) found quality relationships with peers and supervisors were especially meaningful in promoting the socialization process for new employees. Kammeyer-Mueller, Livingston, and Liao (2011) discovered new employees were more likely to engage in proactive, information seeking behavior with their peers if they felt they shared similar surface-level characteristics with their peers such as education and race with the exception of age. Surprisingly, the study found individuals were more likely to reach out to individuals who were different compared to them in age (Kammeyer-Mueller, et al., 2011). The researchers suggested this could be due to either older employees being viewed as a resource because they probably had more experience or younger employees who had recently graduated school being seen as a resource since they would be educated on the new trends (Kammeyer-Mueller, et al., 2011).

Organizational Socialization

Other studies have explored how employee socialization contributes to onboarding experiences. Gruman et al. (2006) found newcomers were more likely to implement proactive behaviors such as information seeking and socializing with their peers when socialization was more formalized. Ashforth and Saks (1996) found institutional tactics tended to support a more committed and loyal employee

but were negatively related to performance and role innovation. Ashforth and Saks (1996) argued, how although it seems like organizations might need to decide between the positives and negatives of institutional or individualized tactics, it should be possible for firms to modify their new employee integration programs to reap the benefits of both processes. Perrot, et al. (2014) found it was not so much which type of socialization tactics firms used in helping new employees adapt to their new environment, but it was important that the employee felt supported and cared about by the organization. Cable, Gino, and Staats (2013) suggested instead of trying to teach new employees about the organization's culture during onboarding, there might be more benefits to implementing what they called personal-identity socialization. This is when employees are encouraged to utilize their talents and strengths to find their place within the organization (Cable, et al., 2013). Cable, et al. (2013) gave an example how if a salesperson is excellent at teaching, he/she could be used by the firm to help teach other new employees. In their study, they found when onboarding practices were focused on the individual's identity instead of the organization's identity, this led to higher job satisfaction and reduced turnover (Cable, et al., 2013). Allen and Meyer (1990) studied the socialization tactics named by Maanen and Schein (1979) and concluded it was important for firms to use a blend of investiture and disjunctive tactics as this supported both organizational commitment and employee innovation.

Saks, Uggerslev, and Fassina (2007) found institutional tactics were positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and role orientation while decreasing role conflict and role ambiguity. Saks and Ashforth (2000) conducted a longitudinal study looking at factors that helped determine how new employees would adjust to work and found entry stressors such as role ambiguity and role conflict were a better predictor compared to dispositional factors. A higher level of core self-evaluations was found to moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational socialization tactics compared to individuals with low core self-evaluations (Song, Chon, Ding, & Gu, 2015).

Proactive Behavior

Much of the early research related to organizational socialization focused on the steps organizations took to bring new employees into the fabric of the firm, but recent studies have concentrated on proactive behavior, which looks at the role the individual employee plays in his/her own onboarding experience (Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000). Newcomer proactive behavior can be defined as the "means by which newcomers engage with their work environment through proactive socialization strategies such as seeking information about their role and work environment to reduce uncertainty (Saks, et al., 2011, p. 36)." Saks, et al. (2011) found newcomer proactivity led to proactive outcomes. For example, when employees sought feedback, this led to task mastery (Saks et al., 2011).

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Conducting a study using temporary workers, Cooper-Thomas, et al. (2014) found learning, well-being, and work engagement were all correlated positively with proactive behaviors. Studies have also shown when new employees wanted more control in their job, they were more likely to network and seek out resources to try to obtain more information (Ashford & Black, 1996). Brousil and Zukerman (2016) discussed how employees should take responsibility for their onboarding process. They stated employees should create a learning plan, compare their new job to their past experiences to evaluate their personal strengths and weaknesses in relation to the position, establish relationships with key players in the organization, and build credibility within the organization (Zukerman & Brousil, 2016). It has been shown that employee proactive behavior is essential compared to socialization tactics when it comes to employee learning (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). In a longitudinal study, Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) found when new employees were more extroverted and open to new experiences, they were more likely to display proactive behavior.

Self-Efficacy

Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, and Tucker (2007) looked to see if the antecedents of newcomer information seeking and organizational socialization tactics and the outcomes of increased performance, increased job satisfaction, increased organizational commitment, increased intention to remain, and decreased turnover were mediated by role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance. Their

meta-analysis provided evidence that social acceptance mediated all the outcomes; self-efficacy mediated all the results except organizational commitment and job satisfaction; and all the outcomes except turnover were mediated by role clarity (Bauer, et al., 2007). Gruman, et al. (2006) also found there was a positive correlation between proactive behaviors and self-efficacy in new employees. Saks (1995) found low self-efficacy moderated the training outcomes of job performance and the intention to quit in new employees.

Practical Implications

Employee transitions are quite common in the business environment. Stein and Christiansen (2010) reported that after two years, at least one-third of new employees hired externally are no longer with the firm. If the employee leaves, this means the time and money the firm has spent recruiting, selecting, and training the new employee is lost. The role someone plays at work is essential because employees often associate their identity with work (Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2010). Kammeyer-Mueller, et al. (2013) found newcomer's initial impressions of the social situation at his/her place of work was important.

There are a variety of benefits to firms taking the time to properly onboard their new employees. The learning curve of a new employee can be reduced if a firm's onboarding practices are correctly implemented, and this will improve a firms' bottom line (Taleo, 2006). Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis (2017) reported how an adequately organized onboarding process can reduce by a third the

amount of time executives can function at their peak regarding understanding the organization they are leading. Onboarding practices can also reduce turnover and reduce the costs associated with increased recruitment and training new staff because onboarding practices can help employees manage the challenges associated with joining a new organization (Krasman, 2015). Another benefit to firms is effective onboarding can make employees more innovative (Bauer, Erdogan, & Taylor, 2012). Studies have also shown how the chances a new employee will leave an organization can be predicted by their organizational commitment, critical events, and the employee's anticipated cost of leaving the position (Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, & Ahlburg, 2005). It is also crucial for the organizations to balance using technology to make processes more efficient and still having personal interactions with the new employee (Bielski, 2007). When individuals first join an organization, they might be more likely to confer with individuals outside their organization to make sense of what is happening at work because the employee has not yet developed relationships within the organization (Settoon & Adkins, 1997). Settoon and Adkins (1997) stated to overcome this, organizations need to create opportunities for new employees to interact with their peers and feel comfortable asking job-related questions.

Chan and Schmitt (2000) found supporting evidence in their study that employees will decrease their relationship-building activities the longer they are with an organization. Relationship-building activities would include visiting co-

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workers to engage in conversation or arranging social outings with fellow employees (Chan & Schmitt, 2000). Reimer (2017) acknowledged the importance of communication about crucial stakeholders when onboarding a new CEO so the CEO better understands the politics of the organization. In a qualitative study using new librarians in an academic environment, Keisling and Laning (2016) found the participants identified three vital areas in the onboarding process, which were alliances, efficacy, and expectations. With alliances, the participants wanted to learn who the key stakeholders were in the organization and who could help them navigate their new environment (Keisling & Laning, 2016). Efficacy was about procedures and processes in the organization such as what forms to use (Keisling & Laning, 2016). Expectations were related to making sure the new employees were performing at an acceptable level but also understanding some cultural expectations around topics such as work/life balance (Keisling & Laning, 2016).

Krasman (2015) provided four guidelines needed for onboarding processes to be successful. The first is the onboarding process needs to be connected to the firm's strategy (Krasman, 2015). Second, the onboarding process needs to be comprehensive and be an ongoing process in the new employee's tenure at the firm (Krasman, 2015). Third, onboarding needs to be consistent and be utilized for all hires (Krasman, 2015). Finally, onboarding processes need to be measured so the firm can make improvements and adjustments as needed (Krasman, 2015).

Job embeddedness and stress are two constructs that have been researched in organizational socialization literature. "Job embeddedness theory suggests employees become embedded in a network of relationships that can create a web of restraining forces and make voluntary turnover less likely (Allen & Shanock, 2012, p. 355)." Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez (2001) found job embeddedness was negatively correlated with turnover intention and helped predict turnover intention more than other turnover constructs of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Allen (2006) found on-the-job embeddedness was positively correlated with the socialization tactics of fixed, investiture, and collective tactics. Perceived organizational support and job embeddedness were also found to be linked to organizational socialization (Allen & Shanock, 2012). Mentors can provide social support and help new employees navigate the office culture which aids in reducing stress for new employees (Ellis et al., 2015). Similarly, Chatman (1991) found there was a connection between person-organizational fit and the new employee having a mentor.

This section of the literature review mostly looked at research studies pertaining to onboarding. Many of these studies concerned the effects of onboarding on a single new employee. For example, the relationship between an employee and his/her supervisor is concerned with how this dyad relationship impacts the new employee. The next section of the literature review is going to shift to a focus on teams.

Teams

  The team section of the literature review has four subsections: Team-Member Exchange (TMX), onboarding into teams, teams and self-efficacy, and team cohesion. Studies that focused on TMX are relevant to this study because TMX focuses on the relationship between an individual and his/her teammates and these studies are described in the team-member exchange subsection. The onboarding into teams section has information on how organizational socialization and teams are connected. Research on the role managers play in integrating new employees into teams is also described. The teams and self-efficacy section explored studies that looked at how self-efficacy impacts teams. In the team cohesion subsection, studies that looked specifically at team cohesion and what impacts this construct are outlined.

Team-Member Exchange

  TMX is an area of research that explores the relationship between an employee and his/her peers. Seers, Petty, and Cashman (1995, p. 21) defined TMX as the "reciprocity between a member and his or her team with respect to the member's contribution of ideas, feedback, and assistance to other members and, in turn, the member's receipt of information, help, and recognition from other team members." The relationship between an employee and his/her peers should impact the outcome of team cohesion. Similarly, a previous study found workplace

friendship and TMX had a positive correlation (Tse, Dasborough, & Ashkanasy, 2008).

Seers, et al. (1995) found there was a higher level of TMX in teams that were self-managed compared to more traditional teams where managers take the lead. Seers. et al. (1995) also found there was a positive correlation between TMX and efficiency in the team's production. In a meta-analysis study, it was found that an increase in TMX was linked to an increase in job performance, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and reduced turnover intention (Banks, Batchelor, Seers, O'Boyle Jr., Pollack, & Gower, 2014). An increase in TMX has been shown to lower depression in employees (Schermuly & Meyer, 2016) and an increase in co-worker identity (Farmer, Kamdar, & Van Dyne, 2015).

Farh, Lanaj, and Ilies (2017) looked to see under what circumstances TMX led to an increase in performance. Specifically, the authors argued TMX might lead team members to feel a sense of requirement to work with their fellow team members in situations when other members of the organization might be a better resource. For example, in elementary school, if two students were captains picking teams for a competition, there might have been a sense of obligation to pick the best friend of a captain even if the best friend was not the best person for the task. Farh. et al. (2017) found TMX increased performance when supervisors were a low resource because the teammates could compensate for the lack of skills and

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knowledge of the supervisor. TMX was also found to be beneficial when

teammates were a high-quality resource (Farh, et al., 2017).

Onboarding into Teams

Saks and Belcourt (2006) stated if an employee has a secure social network,

this can significantly support his/her ability to incorporate the material learned in

training. Brass (1995) stated a robust social network might be the most critical

aspect when it comes to employee socialization. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998)

mentioned how social capital is essential for firms and how networks of

relationships can turn into an advantage. De Jong and Elfring (2010) found in on-

going teams, trust was positively correlated with performance. Also, this study

found that unlike previous studies that had used short-term teams, the relationship

between trust and team performance was moderated by team effort and team

monitoring (De Jong & Elfring, 2010). Chen (2005) found managers played an

essential role in helping new employees integrate into teams and that when

newcomers joined groups that were already effective, the new team member was

more likely to have improved performance. Based on the study, Chen (2005)

recommended managers should set high goals for existing teams as this will push

the new employee to perform at his/her best.

Gersick (1988) proposed time and deadlines had an impact on team

effectiveness based on her study. She suggested there was a Phase 1 that consisted

of the group members exploring a framework on how to proceed with the tasks at

hand. Once the group hit the halfway point of the time allocated to reach the goal, there would be a significant transition which Gersick (1988) described as similar to halftime in a football game. The team creates a revised game plan for the second half of the project. Phase 2 is a final push to strive for the completion of the task to satisfy the manager's expectations (Gersick, 1988). Perry, Jr., Karney, and Spencer (2013) argued team development is cyclical and dynamic. In their model, members of a team can be in different places in the team formation (Perry Jr. et al., 2013). For example, someone might be trying to figure out his/her their role in the group while another member of the team is taking a leadership role in gathering the group together (Perry, Jr., et al., 2013).

A study by Chen and Klimoski (2003), using high-tech teams, suggested it was important for new employees to feel empowered as this was correlated with new employee performance. It has been shown in situations when employees reported negative relationships with their peers at work, they were more likely to leave their position and had less organizational commitment (Morrison, 2008). The relationship between culture and socialization in teams has also been studied; it was found that cooperative groups promoted more socialization between new employees and existing employees compared to competitive teams (Chen, Lu, Tjosvold, & Lin, 2008). This makes sense because if employees are competing against each other on a team, they will be probably less likely to support each other and there would not be as much communication between the members. Kramer

(2010) noted how a new employee's fellow team members have some of the most substantial impact on the behavior of the new employee, even more than the supervisor. Kramer (2010) also stated that employees will interact more with their peer group compared to their direct supervisor. Hollenbeck and Jamieson (2015) mentioned how job satisfaction has been shown to be positively correlated with employees developing social relationships with their peers. Another study showed organizational commitment and job satisfaction are positively correlaled to the new employee feeling there is a cooperative goal interdependence within the team (Lu & Tjosvold, 2013). Using professional basketball players in teams as the sample population for the study, Beus, Jarrett, Taylor, and Wiese (2014) found there was a positive correlation between previous transition experience and employee performance. Professional basketball is a business and it involves the need to integrate new players into the dynamic of the team the same way other businesses must bring in new employees. The results of the study indicate if managers value being able to quickly onboard a new employee onto a team, the manager might want to focus on finding a candidate who has more experience transitioning into different teams.

Teams and Self-Efficacy

There have also been studies that have looked at how self-efficacy impacted individuals in teams. Bandura (2009) stated it is important for organizations to provide role modeling peers to new employees to help increase self-efficacy. Yoon

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and Kayes (2016) found supporting evidence that an increase in self-efficacy in an individual led to more perceived individual learning in a team environment. This result is important because many organizations count on teams helping to facilitate individual learning (Yoon & Kayes, 2016). Dierdorff and Ellington (2012) found similar results as they discovered that an increase in individual self-efficacy correlated with an increase in team efficacy, team cooperation, and decision-making within the team. Sonnentag and Volmer (2009) had different findings in their study as they found that as individuals had a higher level of self-efficacy, they were more likely to have a decrease in the level of problem-solving analysis at the team level.

A high level of self-efficacy has been linked to an increase in individual performance on teams when there was low task interdependence (Katz-Navon & Erez, 2005). Buenaventura-Vera (2017) found support that team-member exchange mediates the relationship between self-efficacy of a leader and innovative work behavior in a team member. It has also been shown that there is positive correlation between team potency and self-efficacy (Monteiro & Vieira, 2016).

Team Cohesion

Several studies have looked at team cohesion and wheter it led to an increase in performance. Carless and De Paola (2000) mentioned team cohesion is an important part of effective teams. Hall (2015) looked to see if team cohesion was correlated with group development throughout the different stages of group

development. The study showed evidence that team cohesion did have a positive

correlation with group development regardless of what stage the team was in (Hall,

2015). The results of the study are important because a group with stronger

development should lead to a better performing group. It has been shown that team

cohesion mediated the correlation between trust and team performance (Mach,

Dolan, & Tzafrir, 2010). There is also support that the positive relationship

between team cohesion and performance increases as the workflow of the team

intensifies (Beal, Cohen, Burke, & McLendon, 2003). Wech and Bennett (1998)

found support for as team cohesion increased, so did an employee's organizational

commitment and his/her performance. Similar results were reported by Podsakoff,

MacKenzie, and Ahearne (1997) who found production increased in teams with

more cohesion. The significant correlation between organizational citizenship

behaviors and performance has been shown to be mediated by team cohesion (Lin

& Peng, 2010). Huang (2009) found team cohesion led to an increase in team

performance for research and development teams.

Mullen and Cooper's (1994) research suggested team cohesion led to an

increase in performance in their meta-analysis. A more recent meta-analysis by

Beal, Burke, McLendon, and Cohen (2003) also found team cohesion could impact

performance but found it mattered how much task independence was required by

the members of the team. If an individual was able to accomplish most of his/her

work without the assistance of other employees, an increase in team cohesion

would not necessarily lead to an increase in production (Beal, et al., 2003).

However, team cohesion did lead to an increase in performance when team

workflow was also increased (Beal, et al., 2003).

Several studies have examined how team cohesion and supervision are

connected. Dobbins and Zaccaro (1986) found employees in teams that had a high

level of team cohesion were more satisfied with their supervisor. Michalisin,

Karau, and Tangpong (2004) looked at team cohesion in the top management of a

team and found evidence that organizations could gain a competitive advantage if

there was team cohesion between the members of upper management. Post (2015)

discovered female leaders of teams led to more team cohesion when the team was

larger and more diverse. Transformational leadership has also been shown to

encourage more team cohesion (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003).

Team cohesion has been linked to other organizational benefits. For

example, team cohesion has been shown to be positively correlated with

organizational trust (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). In a study using nurses as the sample

population, team cohesion was shown to decrease burnout and stress (Li, Early,

Mahrer, Klaristenfeld, & Gold, 2014). Nurses often work in teams to support

multiple patients and if an unexpected situation arises that requires a nurse to

dedicate more time to one particular patient, the level of team cohesion should

impact how the team responds to ensure the rest of their patients receive proper

care. Perceived organization support for the team and team cohesion have also

been found to a have positive correlation (Howes, Cropanzano, Grandey, & Mohler, 2000). Kozlowski and Chao (2012) found evidence that team cohesion helps individuals build a social network, share knowledge, and assist each other.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature related to onboarding. It started by describing some of the prominent theories and models related to onboarding. Next, some of the components and outcomes of the onboarding process were outlined, such as orientation and an employee's relationship with his/her peers. Finally, the literature review shifted to outlining previous studies related to teams. TMX was included in the literature review because TMX involves relationships between employees. Other topics covered in the literature review related to teams included onboarding into teams and team cohesion. Based on the researcher's literature review, there is a substantial amount of literature available that describes how onboarding and team cohesion leads to positive outcomes. However, there is a lack of studies testing if the two constructs are correlated. The next chapter explains the methodology behind the researcher's study design to explore the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Overview

This chapter explains the methodology implemented in the research study. It describes the population and sample used in the research and the ethical considerations that were implemented to minimize the risk to the participants. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between organizational efforts in the onboarding process and team cohesion. It distinguishes what steps organizations can take during the onboarding process to increase the chances that a team will have more cohesion. The socialization model presented by Bauer and Erdogan (2011) was the theoretical model supporting the study. Bauer and Erdogan (2011) stated new employee characteristics, new employee behavior, organizational efforts in the onboarding process, along with how the employee adjusts during the process, resulted in the onboarding outcomes. Research studies looking at the onboarding process and team cohesion are not apparent in the literature, and this study explored this literature gap.

The research plan is described in more detail in this chapter but below is a timeline of the research methodology utilized:

1. Early August 2018 – Survey questions were submitted to expert panel for review.

2. August 20, 2018 – The Institutional Review Board application was submitted.

3. September 10, 2018 and September 11, 2018 – Pilot study was conducted.

4. September 30, 2018 – Initial data collection for study began.

5. October 2018 – Data collection was completed.

6. November 2018 and December 2019 – Data analysis was carried out.

Worldview

The study utilized the postpositivist worldview. Creswell (2014) described how the postpositivist worldview is about creating experiments to discover outcomes. Creswell (2014) also stated postpositivists usually utilize quantitative methods. Finally, Creswell (2014) mentioned how postpositivists use experiments to better explain relationships between variables in the world. This quantitative study explored the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion. The data helped determine what variables impacted the outcome of team cohesion. Based on the results of this study, the researcher plans to continue studying team cohesion and onboarding after the completion of this study. For example, each of the organizational efforts in Bauer and Erdogan's model could be explored in a deep-level context to better understand the specific events and behaviors that encourage team cohesion.

Organization of the Remainder of this Chapter

The rest of this chapter is divided into seven sections. First, there is a reminder of the research questions that prompted the need for this study. Next, the four hypotheses for the study are described. Third, the research methodology is explained. In this section, the researcher explains why a quantitative approach was selected for this study. In addition, the different variables in the study are outlined. The third section discusses the population and sample. RAs and ROTC cadets were selected as the sample for this study and there is a detailed explanation as to the rationale for choosing this sample. In the fourth section, the survey instrument is introduced. A survey instrument was implemented for this study and this section describes the strategy behind the design of the survey. Sample survey statements are also provided in the section. In the fifth section, the procedures the researcher initiated to conduct the study are dictated. For example, the researcher explains the statistical analysis used to determine if each of the hypotheses were supported in the study. Sixth, validity and trustworthiness are outlined. This section has information on the expert panel utilized to validate the study and the ethical considerations that were accounted for in the study. Finally, the researcher's positionality is described including his extensive background knowledge related to residence life. The chapter starts with a reminder of the research questions.

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between organizational efforts in a new employee's onboarding experience and team cohesion?

2. What organizational efforts of an onboarding process support team cohesion?

3. Does self-efficacy mediate the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion?

Hypotheses

There are four hypotheses in this study:

H1: *A new team member's onboarding experience is positively correlated with his/her perceived team cohesion.*

Entering a new work environment can be a stressful experience for a new employee (Cable & Parsons, 2001). A new employee might be afraid to ask questions initially because the employee fears it will create a sense of incompetence (Rollag, et al., 2005). Think about the first time a significant other meets his/her partner's family. In preparation for the meeting, questions about the personality of the family members, specific interests of the family members, and how the individual should dress for the occasion are likely to arise. When the meeting with the family members occurs, the significant other probably looks for social cues as to the unwritten rules in the family such as where to sit at the dining room table. The significant other's partner can help the onboarding process into the family by

sharing information about the different family members, making introductions, and explaining those unwritten rules just the same way that onboarding can help a new employee feel welcomed into thenew work environment.

The onboarding process should also help lead to team cohesion if it provides time for the new employee to build a relationship with his/her peers. Icebreakers and socialization opportunities allow employees to engage in dialogue with each other. These opportunities also give the team a chance to work together to decipher the stengths of the team members and the roles individuals will play in the team.

H2: *The relationship between a new team member's onboarding experience into his/her team and team cohesion is mediated by self-efficacy.*

If a new employee has self-efficacy, competence in his/her ability to assist the organization, this could lead to an increase in team cohesion. As mentioned in *H1*, new employees might be hesitant to ask questions (Rollag, et al., 2005). However, if the new employee has confidence in his/her ability to perform his/her job functions, this could enable the individual to feel more comfortable asking clarifying questions. Self-efficacy and proactive behavior have been shown to have a positive correlation in a sample of new employees (Gruman, et al., 2006). Ashford and Black (1996) found proactive employees were more likely to try and network and obtain resources in the work place.

H3: *The organizational effort of relationship with peers will explain more*

variance in team cohesion compared to other organizational efforts.

The researcher believed the organizational effort, "relationship with peers" may have an impact on team cohesion above and beyond other organizational efforts because the new employee's team is composed of their peers. New employees look to their peers for signals on how they should act (Hewlin, 2003). Kramer (2010) pointed out in most cases, peers have the most impact on a new employee, even more than their supervisor, because the new employee generally interacts the most with the peers. Team cohesion has also been shown to help employees build connections and establish resources to assist each other (Kozlowski & Chao, 2012). Building networks with peers during the early part of a new job should make it easier to work with these same peers in a team setting.

H4: *New team members will rank relationship with peers as the most impactful strategy in the onboarding process while supervisors will rank the relationship with the supervisor as the most impactful strategy.*

This final hypothesis is more exploratory in nature. The focus of this study is the correlation between what occurs in the onboarding process and team cohesion. However, the researcher believed it would be intriguing and serviceable to see if employees and supervisors agreed on what is important during the onboarding period. This is a potential future research topic and is included to

deduce if there is reason to study the similarities and differences between new employees and supervisors further.

Through observation, most onboarding plans started with the employee meeting with human resources, who hands the employee off to his/her supervisor to complete the process. However, since employees usually spend most of their time collaborating with their peers (Kramer, 2010), the researcher predicts new employees will indicate their "relationship with their peers" has the most impact on the onboarding experience.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

The three main types of research studies are either qualitative, quantitative, or a mixed method approach (Creswell, 2003). A quantitative approach was selected for this study. Creswell (2003, p. 18) defined a quantitative approach as "one in which the investigator primarily uses postpositivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories), employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data." A quantitative approach was chosen because there is a deficiency in the current research linking onboarding and team cohesion and this study allowed the researcher to explore how multiple variables impacted this relationship. Also, the

researcher collected data from two different populations and multiple subpopulations. It would require extensive interviewing to be able to draw themes out from all these different populations if a qualitative approach was used. Finally, this quantitative study is ideal for discovering what potential variables matter in the connection between onboarding and team cohesion. Once these variables are identified, a qualitative study can be conducted in the future to learn more about the participants' experiences. For example, if the data showed developing peer relationships during onboarding processes significantly increases team cohesion, it would be important to do a qualitative study to explore more about how these relationships were formed. This would enable organizations to learn how to adjust their onboarding processes accordingly.

Research Design

The instrument for this study was a survey, with most of the questions utilizing a 7-point Likert scale, but the last set of questions on the survey used a ranking system. The 7-point scale was chosen based on the recommendation by several researchers. Preston and Colman (2000) found participants viewed scales with 5, 7, and 10 options as the easiest to use and those with 7 and 10 options as the most reliable. Lewis (1993) and Finstad (2010) identified 7-point scales as more accurate compared to 5-point scales.

Emory (1985) stated ranking scales are utilized when the researcher is trying to compare items. Emory (1985) also recommended a rank order scale

instead of having participants pick just the best option as this helps with interpreting the data. For example, if participants were asked to pick which hotel provided the best customer service out of four hotel brands, the data might show Hotel A 27%, Hotel B 26%, Hotel C 24%, and Hotel D 23%. The percentage between the four hotels is very close, and none of them received an overall majority of the votes. In results such as these, it would be important to include which hotel brand the participants ranked as being the second, third, and fourth so the data could tell more of the story.

Variables Studied

The variables in this study are:

1. Organizational Effort – Recruitment/Pre-Arrival (Independent Variable)

2. Organizational Effort – Orientation/Initial Training (Independent Variable)

3. Organizational Effort – Relationship with Supervisor (Independent Variable)

4. Organizational Effort – Relationship with Peers (Independent Variable)

5. Organizational Effort – Socialization (Independent Variable)

6. Self-Efficacy (Mediation Variable)

7. Team Cohesion (Dependent Variable)

8. Extraversion (Control Variable)

9. Information Seeking (Control Variable)

Population and Sample

The population for this study was college students who were going through the onboarding process at institutions in the southeast United States. The predominant professional housing organization for collegiate housing officials is the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I). ACUHO-I is divided into regions, and one of these is the Southeastern Association of Housing Officers (SEAHO). According to SEAHO's website, the region includes institutions from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The participants in this study were either RAs or ROTC cadets from collegiate institutions in the SEAHO region. The term "residence life" is sometimes used in this dissertation. Residence life refers to the organizations that includes RAs and their supervisors. RAs and ROTC cadets were ideal candidates for this study because they are part of teams in which the members need to rely on each other to complete their tasks. Beyond just including new employees in the study, the supervisors of the new team members were also surveyed to see if the leaders and new team members agreed on the critical aspects of the onboarding process. This information can be used by firm leaders to adjust their onboarding processes.

Some individuals might have concerns about the transferability of the study since it used college students, but a closer evaluation shows there are many similarities between this population and full-time employees. College students are still exposed to stress and the requirement to balance their commitments such as academics, employment, and extracurricular activities. This mirrors the work-life balance of full-time employees. Also, ROTC cadets are still considered civilians and do not fall under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The Uniform Code of Military Justice is a military code of law and outlines the regulations pertaining to miltary court-martials (Military.com, 2019). The Internal Revenue Services (IRS) (2018) defined an employee as follows: "anyone who performs services for you is your employee if you can control what will be done and how it will be done." Students in both groups have supervisors who give direction to the members, so the IRS definition of employee fits the members of both groups. The supervisors of RAs and ROTC cadets can terminate individuals from the group for poor performance or violating organization rules. RAs and ROTC cadets are often compensated for their work either through a stipend or a scholarship. Becoming an RA or ROTC cadet is often a competitive process and the individuals wishing to join the organizations go through a selection process. Finally, each of these groups impacts the bottom line of the institution they represent. The ability to recruit ROTC cadets helps to bring in tuition dollars for the institution and RAs aid in retention efforts by assisting freshman as they adjust to college.

There are several benefits of using individuals in a collegiate environment. First, these team members are more likely to have had fewer employment opportunities because of their average age. Experienced employees are more likely to have had more job transitions and that should translate into being able to onboard into new firm more effectively. Second, using these two sample populations allowed for the predictability of the timeline as to when new employees joined the organization. Third, these organizations are established and have had the opportunity to experiment with onboarding employees. Having onboarded employees in the past gives the organization the opportunity to evaluate and revamp their onboarding practices if necessary. Existing organizations also have peers and mentors who can assist with onboarding new employees. Tompkins (2000) stated in many cases when individuals are mentioning teams, they are referencing individuals who come together and share ideas, but their work is not impacting the other members of the team, so these are pseudo teams. It is important to study team cohesion in an environment where the members need to rely on each other to be successful. Otherwise, team cohesion will not have as much impact on the organization's success. RA and ROTC team members must rely on each other if the team is going to be successful. These are all compelling reasons to conduct the study in a college environment.

The final sample size of the study was 172 participants. Fowler (2009) mentioned that in most cases, collecting a sample size of 150 participants is adequate to represent population sizes of 15,000 and 15 million. Emory (1985) provided a similar example stating that a sample of 100 people for a population of 5,000 or 20 million does not provide much difference in accuracy. Emory (1985) mentioned it is more about the variance in characteristics of the sample population compared to the actual sample size. The current study included participants from six different teams, so this will help to account for this variance.

New Employee

Earlier in this dissertation, the researcher mentioned how it was difficult to define "new employee" and research by Rollag (2007) supported this concept. Rollag (2007) stated the specific industry influences what is considered a new employee. The participants in this study are in college. In a collegiate environment, an academic year is often used to categorize students. For example, a junior is considered to be a third-year student. Following this guideline, the study considered new employees to be those team members who were in the first year of their position.

Selection of Participants

The researcher contacted organizational leaders through email from residence life and ROTC teams explaining the purpose of the study and the survey procedures in addition to requesting permission to visit the site location to collect

data. A sample of this correspondence can be found in Appendix A. When the researcher did get communication back from the leaders, the researcher explained the purpose of the study in more detail and ensured the organization had an orientation/initial training program in place. Two organizations that replied to the initial inquiry to participate in the study were eliminated because they self-identified that they did not have an orientation process in place for new employees.

If the organizational leaders expressed the willingness to participate in the study, the researcher and site leaders engaged in further discussion to organize a time for the researcher to visit the team members. The researcher also ensured all organizations had conducted orientation/initial training at least a month prior to visiting the team to ensure the onboarding process had a chance to be initiated. When the researcher visited a site location, all of the individuals present were asked to participate in the study if they were members of the sample population.

Instrumentation

It is helpful to refer back to the theoretical model proposed by Bauer and Erdogan (2011) when discussing the instrument:
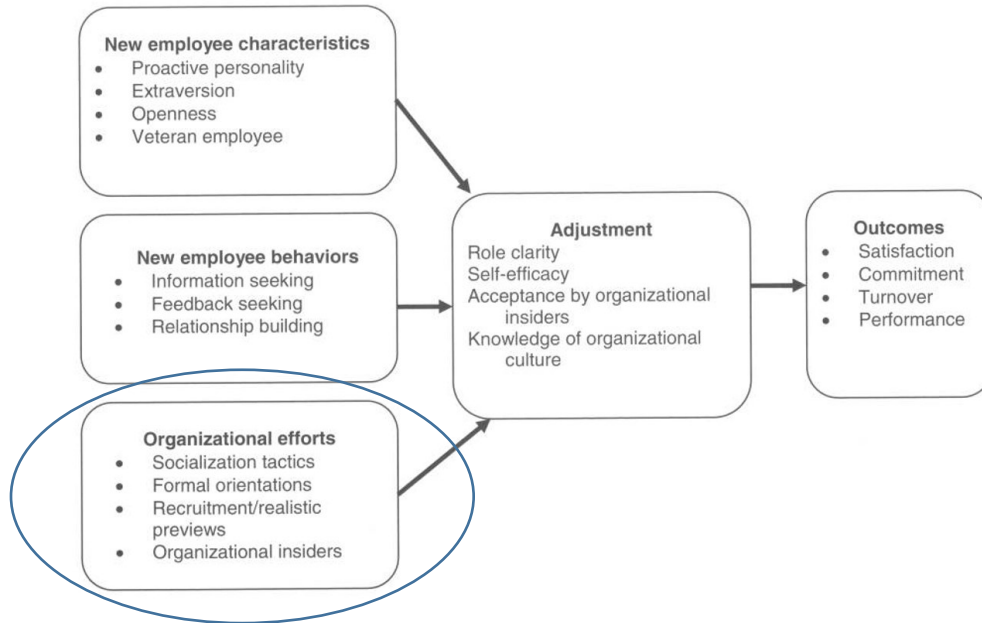
Figure 4 – Review of Bauer and Erdogan's Model

The instrument for this study was a survey that was composed by combining existing surveys and statements that were developed by the researcher. Bauer and Erdogan's (2011) proposed model has the sections including new employee characteristics, new employee behavior, organizational efforts, adjustment, and outcomes and each was utilized in the development of the research instrument. The majority of the statements in the instrument were developed around the organizational efforts section of the model. To control for new employee characteristics, participants responded to statements about their

extraversion. Similarly, to control for new employee behaviors, statements were included on information seeking. Statements on self-efficacy represented the adjustment section of the model, and the outcome section of the model is where the team cohesion statements are in the survey. Simon and Goes (2018) suggested putting the easier questions in the beginning of the survey to help build momentum as this increases the chances the participant will finish the survey. This strategy was implemented, and the demographic section was placed first in the survey, followed by the Likert-scale questions, and last the forced ranking questions.

Four versions of the survey instrument were utilized depending on which organization the participant was involved with, residence life or ROTC, and if the participant is a new employee or supervisor. The leadership roles in both organizations are slightly different so separate versions were created to utilize the terminology of each organization. The organizational effort questions and team cohesion questions are only for the new team members, so these questions were omitted from the supervisor survey. Appendixes B, C, D, and E have the four separate surveys. Appendix F outlines the scale for the survey questions.

If the results of the study indicated onboarding and team cohesion are correlated, it would be necessary to determine if certain populations in the study tended to respond to the survey in a certain manner. The demographic section of the survey enabled the researcher to isolate the data by background characteristics of the participants. The demographic section asked questions such as the sex of the

participant and current college-level classification. This enabled the researcher to control for these varables in the study.

Organizational Effort Statements

The organizational efforts statements are sorted into five subcategories: recruitment/pre-arrival, orientation/initial training, relationship with supervisor, relationship with peers, and socialization. Bauer and Erdogan (2011) discussed how having an organizational insider, or a mentor, can benefit a new employee during the onboarding process. A decision was made by the researcher to have statements about the relationship with the supervisor and the relationships with peers instead of asking about mentorship because it takes time for the mentorship role to be established. The importance of building a relationship with a supervisor can supported through leader-member exchange theory (LMX). LMX theory suggests the relationship between a supervisor and an employee results in the employee either being part of the in-group or out-group in the firm (Northouse, 2016). When the relationship between the pair is strong, the employee puts forth additional effort beyond what is expected, and the supervisor does the same for their employee (Northouse, 2016). Employees in the out-group do not have as strong a relationship with their supervisor and are more likely to just perform their basic job responsibilities (Northouse, 2016). The relationship with peers is important because as Kramer (2010) pointed out, this is usually the group of individuals the new employee will spend the most time with. Having a strong

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relationship with a supervisor and peers is the foundation for developing mentorship that Bauer and Erdogan mentioned in their model.

When designing the survey, the researcher found a list of questions from Grillo and Kim (2015) that were beneficial, but it was later discovered these questions were taken from the *Office of Personal Management's* website. It was difficult to find a contact person from the *Office of Personal Management* to obtain permission to use some of the questions for the survey, so these were not included in the survey. The researcher still wishes to acknowledge the valuable input from Grillo and Kim (2015) and the *Office of Personal Management* in helping develop some of the concepts for the survey.

A sample statement for each category is below:

a. Recruitment/Pre-Arrival – "I was satisfied with the support I received from the organization prior to my first day on the job."

b. Orientation/Initial Training – "The organization's mission was emphasized throughout the orientation/initial training."

c. Role of supervisor – "My supervisor has initiated conversations with me to ensure I understand my job."

d. Relationship with peers – "My peers attempted to get to know me."

e. Socialization – "The organization has provided social gatherings/teambuilders for the employees (examples: holiday parties, team outings, cookouts)."

Self-Efficacy Statements

Bauer and Erdogan (2011, p. 57) described the newcomer adjustment section of their model as "how well a new employee is doing as he or she transitions from being an organizational outsider to an organizational insider." One of the more commonly researched topics related to newcomer adjustment is self-efficacy. To test to see if self-efficacy mediated the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion, the self-efficacy scale by Gruman, Saks, and Zweig (2006) was adapted to be included in the survey instrument. A sample statement from the scale is, "I can handle the expectations of my role in the organization." The items from the original scale were modified to fit this study. For example, the wording of the fourth question in the scale was modified from "I can function according to the organization's values and norms" to "I feel my performance is aligned with the organization's standards." The researcher felt the word "norms" might confuse some of the participants.

Team Cohesion Statements

Team cohesion statements comprise the next set of statements in the survey. These statements were taken from a scale by Tekleab, Quigley, and Tesluk (2009). The entire six statement scale was used in the survey, and a sample statement is "the members of this team stick together." The wording of the statements in the scale was adjusted slightly to fit the teams of RAs and ROTC cadets. An example of one of the original statements is: "The members of this team help each other

when working on our project." This was modified to: "The members of this team help each other when working on tasks or projects."

Information Seeking and Extraversion Statements

The participants answered four statements related to information seeking to control for the new employee behavior section in Bauer and Erdogan's (2011) model. These statements were created from a scale by Ashford & Black (1996) and a sample statement is "I have asked for feedback on my performance." Likewise, to account for the new employee characteristics section of the model, four statements were included in the survey on extraversion. Although these statements were mostly re-created by the researcher, they were modified from a scale by Okun, Pugliese, and Rook (2007). A sample statement from the extraversion scale is, "I am social."

Ranking Scale Statements

To obtain data on which of the five organizational efforts participants felt aided them the most in the onboarding process, the next section asks the participants to rank ten statements on organizational efforts during onboarding from most impact (#1) to least impact (#10). Each of the five organizational efforts are represented by two statements. The ten organizational effort statements are listed below with the organizational effort given in parenthesis:

1. Accurate job description (Recruitment/Pre-Arrival)

2. Team builders during orientation/initial training (Orientation/Initial-Training)

3. Social events after orientation/initial training (Socialization)

4. Having a peer you can go to with questions (Relationship with Peer)

5. Time set-aside for conversations with supervisor (Relationship with Supervisor)

6. Presentations during orientation/initial training on how to perform job functions (Orientation/Initial Training)

7. Informal conversations with peers during tasks (Socialization)

8. Having a point-of-contact prior to arrival (Recruitment/Pre-Arrival)

9. Having peers that support you (Relationship with Peers)

10. Having clear expectations from your supervisor (Relationship with Supervisor)

Procedures

Data Collection

For those organizational site locations that the researcher was able to coordinate a visit to, the researcher either attended a staff meeting, class, or lead lab to collect the data. Lead lab is a weekly leadership event where ROTC cadets come together for physical and instructional training. During the meeting with the participants, the researcher provided a short, personal introduction and explained

the purpose of the dissertation. Next, the researcher handed out the consent form and gave the participants about two minutes to read over the consent form. A copy of the consent form is in Appendix G. After allocating time for the participants to read the consent form, the researcher read a prepared script and handed out the survey to the corresponding participants.   The scripts can be viewed in Appendixes H and I. Participants were instructed to submit their consent form and surveys into two separate piles. Having the consent form separate from the survey increased the confidentiality of the participants because the participants did not record their names on the survey. To allow for the onboarding process to be initiated, no data was collected until the members in the organization had been in class for at least a month at the institution. The participants indicated the start date of their training on the survey instrument as an added measure to ensure at least a month had passed since the participant had been in the organization.

Data Collection Timeline

SilkRoad (2016) found in a study that the onboarding process lasted the first three months in 27% of the firms, one month in 21% of the firms, and one week in 23% of the firms. Most collegiate institutions in the SEAHO region start their academic calendar in August. To assist with events at the start of the year and complete necessary training, RA and ROTC members start the onboarding process prior to the beginning of classes in the fall semester. In deciding when to start data collection, the researcher felt it was important to ensure the onboarding process had

time to be initiated while also making sure too much time had not passed so the participants could not clearly remember their orientation/initial training experiences.

Data collection started Sunday, September 30, 2018. Data collection continued through the month of October and had to vary due to the researcher physically attending campus locations and coordinating dates with organizational leaders. The organizations where the RA data was obtained only brought all the RAs together about once a month so the researcher did not have much flexibility in when the data was collected. The ROTC teams met more frequently, as the organizations tended to bring the entire battalion together about once a week. This difference allowed the researcher to collect data on more dates from the ROTC organizations and in general made scheduling site visits easier.

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis software program, IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), was used to analyze the data. Schwartz, Wilson, and Goff (2018) recommend using SPSS because the software is easy to use and has the capabilities to run most of the statistical calculations a researcher needs. The first and third hypotheses were evaluated using a bivariate correlation. Schwartz, et al. (2018) stated a bivariate correlation can be implemented when a researcher wants to study the relationship between two variables. Pallant (2016) discussed Pearson correlation and Spearman rho as two primary types of correlations. Pearson

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correlation is used for continuous data and Spearman rho is used for ordinal data (Fink, 2013). There is a debate in the literature whether Likert-scale data should be considered continuous or ordinal. Multiple threads on the topic are present on the researcher social network site, *researchgate.net*. Murray (2013) discussed the disagreement in the field on the topic and conducted a study that showed the conclusions from a Likert-scale study were not impacted if the researcher used Pearson correlation or Spearman rho. The researcher decided to use Pearson correlation because the researcher believed the data from the Likert-scale was continuous data. The results of the Pearson correlation are presented in this dissertation. However, the researcher did run a correlation using Spearman rho on all of the variables in the study and found there was no difference between which variables were significantly correlated. The researcher used an alpha level of less than 0.05 when conducting the study. Schwartz, et al. (2018) stated this alpha is the most commonly accepted alpha by journal editors. When the alpha level was less than 0.01 or 0.001, the researcher utilized these alpha values in describing the data analysis results to provide more accurate findings.

The researcher wanted to control for extraversion and information seeking in participants to explore how much onboarding was influencing beyond these two variables. This can be done through a hierarchical multiple regression. A good example of applying hierarchical multiple regression is if a researcher wanted to study the relationship between the weight of a dog and how many days it was in an

adoption shelter before being adopted. However, the age of the dog might also influence this relationship. So, the researcher would first run a regression between the age of the dog and how many days it was in the shelter before it was adopted. Next, the researcher would run the regression again, but this time add in the weight of the dog into the model to see how much more variance, or *r* square change, the new model adds in comparison to the first model. This process allows the researcher to explore how much influence variables add to the equation model.

H1: *A new team member's onboarding experience is positively correlated with his/her perceived team cohesion.*

H3: *The organizational effort of relationship with peers will explain more variance in team cohesion compared to other organizational efforts.*

A hierarchical multiple regression was used to see if the data supports the second hypothesis. David Kenny (2018) recommends using a four-step process of multiple regression to test for mediation. The hierarchical multiple regression approach allows the researcher to control for extraversion and information seeking.

H2: *The relationship between a new team member's onboarding experience into his/her team and team cohesion is mediated by self-efficacy.*

A frequency table was used to evaluate the final hypothesis. A frequency table is "array of table by assigned numerical value, with columns for percent, valid percent (percent adjusted for missing data), and cumulative percent (Cooper & Schindler, 2014, p. 407)." Cooper and Schindler (2014) expressed that the benefits

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of a frequency table are that it often makes it quicker to interpret values and percentages when there are many values being displayed. The frequency table allows the researcher to evaluate which of the ten statements participants selected as being the most impactful.

H4: New team members will rank relationship with peers as the most impactful strategy in the onboarding process while supervisors will rank the relationship with the supervisor as the most impactful strategy.

Validity and Trustworthiness

Expert Panel and Pilot Study

There was no existing instrument that addressed all the research questions to the knowledge of the researcher, so parts of previous studies were combined with statements the researcher created to design the survey for the study. To assist with establishing validity, an expert panel was utilized to provide feedback on the directions and the statements presented in the study. The expert panel included four faculty members from Florida Institute of Technology. Two of the faculty members were from the College of Business and one was from the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts. One additional faculty member from the College of Business was utilized because he had strong experience in survey design. These faculty members were chosen because of their knowledge of the dissertation topic and their experience in research study design. In addition, the Assistant Director of Residence Life and a Lieutenant Colonel of ROTC from Florida Institute of

Technology were included in the expert panel. Both full-time employees were also doctoral students, so they were able to provide insight related to their respective fields but also had a background in research methods.

Valuable feedback was obtained from the expert panel. The *VREP Validation Rubric for Expert Panel*, created by Jacquelyn White and Marilyn K. Simon, was provided to the panel as a guideline for providing feedback (Simon & Goes, 2018). Face validity, construct validity, and content validity can all be supported by the VREP Rubric (Simon, & Goes, 2018). The panel identified that some of the original statements in the survey were double-barrel statements. For example, one of the statements originally was "I feel the job description and recruitment process accurately reflected my job responsibilities." This statement can be difficult for the participant to answer because he/she might have different evaluations on the job description compared to the recruitment process, but the participant is being asked to only provide one score on the survey instrument for both criteria. To correct this, the statement was separated into two statements with one focusing on the job description and one focusing on the recruitment process. The expert panel helped make suggestions on how some of the wording of the statements could be improved to ensure they were addressing the construct they were meant to test. Another contribution of the expert panel was that originally, the participants were instructed to write the number of their response on a blank line by each statement. The survey was redesigned so the participants could circle

their response, which minimized the amount of handwriting the researcher needed to potentially decipher.

A pilot study was conducted before the distribution of the survey to the participants in the study. The pilot study was implemented September 10, 2018, and September 11, 2018. Connelly (2008) recommended having a pilot study that is about ten percent of the overall sample size. A total of 35 participants were included in the pilot study. There were four new ROTC cadets, nine new RAs, eleven returning RAs, eight ROTC supervisors, and two RA supervisors who completed the pilot study. Utilizing a pilot study helped to increase validity of the instrument, allowed the researcher to gain valuable feedback on if the wording in the survey was clear, and ensured the procedures used to analyze the study were correctly implemented (Simon, & Goes, 2018). The majority of the changes that came from the pilot study were in the wording of the demographic section. For example, one of the questions asked, "What is your staff name?" and some of the participants provided their personal name instead of answering the name of their staff. The question was revised to "What staff are you on?" In addition to completing the survey, all the participants in the pilot study were asked to answer an open-ended question about the clarity of the instructions in the survey. All of the participants indicated the survey instructions were clear. The new team members who were responding to the survey were asked to provide information on confusing questions and the only feedback from this section was that some of the

demographic questions were confusing. For example, the question that asked the participants if they had changed teams since they went through orientation/initial training was unclear. They were unsure whether the question was referring to just the current year or the time period since the employee joined the organization. Returning RAs were also completing the survey to collect data for a future study and this question was confusing for them. The researcher reworded the question to indicate that the question was referring to just the current year.

Multiple Data Sources

The participants from this research study were from three RA teams and three ROTC teams for a total of six different teams. Data was gathered from five different organizations. To clarify any confusion as to how data was collected from five different institutions and a total of six teams, the researcher was able to collect data from both RAs and ROTC at one of the institutions that participated in the study. Collecting data from multiple sources helped reduce the chances that the results were due to an abnormal sample. Why is this important? Suppose a study was conducted looking at onboarding at Facebook. Facebook's engineers go through an onboarding process called Bootcamp (Bhaswati, 2016). The process lasts six weeks and during that time, the engineers are learning about the firm as it is not until the end of the camp that the new employees pick the projects they are passionate about working on (Bhaswati, 2016). The onboarding process at Facebook looks very different compared to most companies and so if a study were

done using Facebook employees as the sample population, the results might not apply to most firms. This study is trying to account for these differences by using multiple sources of data.

Researcher Present

Fowler (2009) stated interviewer-administered surveys allow the researcher to help clarify situations compared to a survey that is self-administered. The researcher was present when the survey was distributed to the participants. This allowed the researcher to be available if the participants had any questions on who was eligible to participate in the study. For example, at one of the institutions, a participant had gone through training as an alternate candidate but had been hired after the year started due to a vacancy. The researcher decided to omit this participant from the study because the time away from the team might impact the onboarding experience for the individual. Having the researcher present also allowed for the consistency of the administration of the survey. Finally, the researcher could introduce himself, explain the purpose of the study, and help to make sure participants understood the concept of onboarding. The objective of the researcher in trying to ensure the participants understood why the survey was being administered was to come across as relatable to the participants. College students are familiar with needing to complete assignments for class and the researcher believed if the participants could relate to the researcher as a student, this might

lead to a high response rate. The response rate was 95.98% for the study and is

discussed more in depth in Chapter 4.

Ethical Considerations

It is important to ensure there are minimal risks to the participants and the

data collected is secured. The study was submitted to the Institutional Review

Board at Florida Institute of Technology to ensure these conditions are accounted

for in the study design. A copy of the approval of the study by the Institutional

Review Board is in Appendix J. Participants in the study were able to freely decide

to participate without any potential negative consequences if they opted out of the

survey. Before starting the study, the participants were given an informed consent

form that also clearly stated participation in the study was voluntary. Participants

in the study were not asked for their name or any contact information on the survey

instrument. The researcher also completed and passed the qualifying exams for the

Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research, *Humanities Responsible*

Conduct of Research, *Conflict of Interest*, and *Social & Behavioral Research*

modules as part of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative program.

Researcher Positionality

The researcher has worked in a collegiate environment for 15 years with

most of his experience being in residence life. Having a strong understanding of

the residence life culture benefited in developing the study. For example, the

researcher understood the recruitment processes and the typical timeline most RAs

go through when starting a position. The idea for this study came through the researcher's observation that teams in residence life are not static. If it takes several months for a team to become a cohesive team and the new member to be onboarded into the organization, this only leaves a few months of the team operating at high capacity before the cycle starts over again. The goal of the study is to explore the relationship between organizational efforts in the onboarding process and team cohesion. It distinguishes what steps organizations can take during the onboarding process to increase the chances that a team will have more cohesion. These results should be practical to managers in a variety of settings. The decision to include ROTC in the study was done to make the results more transferable beyond just residence life. Also, the major advisor of the researcher has a strong background supervising ROTC teams in the past, and so his knowledge of the ROTC culture was infused into the study. Leaders in a variety of fields and occupations can apply the results of this study to make adjustments to their own onboarding processes when operating in a team environment.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the research study implemented to address the research questions and test the four hypotheses in the study. It described the population for the study and why the population was selected. The instrument used to test the hypotheses and how the instrument was designed was introduced. Measures that were taken to address validity and ethical considerations were also

addressed. The next chapter reveals the results of the study and how the data was

analyzed.

Chapter 4 – Findings

Overview

Chapter 4 discusses how the researcher analyzed the data and discusses the findings of the study. Before reviewing the findings, it is beneficial to revisit the statement of the problem that helped shape this study. The statement of the problem that was addressed in the study was the following:

Onboarding employees is essential for organizational success because it expedites the opportunity for new employees to contribute to their organization and influences employee turnover (Watkins, 2013; Krasman, 2015). However, the business environment is changing as more firms are using teams in the workforce. There is a need for organizational leaders to learn more about the relationship between teams and onboarding experiences (Kozlowski & Bell, 2001).

The first part of the chapter summarizes the results of the data collection and the decisions the researcher made with respect to missing data on some of the surveys. To assist in ensuring the reliability of the data, Cronbach Alpha tests were conducted, and the results of this analysis are discussed. Next, the review of the findings as they pertain to each of the hypotheses is explained in detail.

Research Findings

Data Collection Results

The researcher visited three residence life organizations and three ROTC organizations to collect data. The first data collection with an ROTC organization

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was during a military science class composed of first-year cadets. The other two data collections from ROTC organizations were during lead labs and involved data collection from first-year cadets and their supervisors. All three data collections from residence life teams were obtained at an all-staff meeting, which is a staff meeting that includes all RAs and their supervisors.

There were six RA surveys that were completed where the participant did not indicate enough information for the researcher to distinguish if the participant was a new team member or a returning team member. In all six situations, the participant did not provide the complete start date he/she began initial training. For example, the participant provided the month and day he/she started training but did not provide the year. The researcher made the decision to omit these surveys from the study. There were eight participants who elected not to complete surveys. Combining the surveys from ROTC and residence life, there was a total of 191 surveys for which the data were inputted into SPSS. The response rate for the survey was 95.98 percent. Fink (2013) and Fowler (2009) both indicated there is not a recognized standardized response rate for surveys. Fowler (2009) described several factors such as the population being surveyed, methodology design, and geography can impact survey response rate expectations.

Missing Data

The initial data collection resulted in 191 surveys collected, but a review of the surveys indicated not all the surveys met the criteria to be included in the study.

There were six surveys where the participant did not answer at least one of the survey statements but completed most of the questions on the survey. The participants completed enough questions that the researcher had results from at least 7 out of the 9 variables in the study. Pallant (2016) discouraged researchers from calculating the mean score of the missing data because she argues this can skew the results. Instead, Pallant (2016) suggested using "exclude cases pairwise" in SPSS to account for these missing data points. In this approach, the data collected for a participant are incorporated into the research analysis if all the necessary data points for that particular calculation are available. For example, if a participant did not answer one of the recruitment/pre-arrival statements, his/her responses were not included in any data analysis that involves recruitment/pre-arrival. However, if this is the only statement the participant omitted, his/her responses would be included for all the other data analyses.

There were 15 participants who completed the new member survey who indicated they had changed teams since completing orientation/initial training. These 15 participants did not meet the criteria for the study and their data were excluded from the study. There were also three new team members who answered "7" for every statement and the researcher made the decision to remove these surveys from the data pool, believing the participants did not take the time to properly complete the survey. Huang, Curran, Kenney, Poposki, and DeShon (2011) refer to situations where individuals provide the same answer to a survey

repeatedly as insufficient effort responding. Accounting for insufficient effort responding in surveys can lead to better estimates when testing the relationship between variables (Huang, et al., 2011). Finally, there was one participant who completed the survey and indicated a start date after orientation/initial training, so this survey was omitted because the participant did not meet the criteria for the study. The final breakdown of participants whose data were included in the study is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 – Final Breakdown of Participants by Group

Group	# of Participants	Percentage of Population
New ROTC	49	28.5
New RA	64	37.2
Supervisor ROTC	41	23.8
Supervisor RA	18	10.5
Total	172	

The data collection resulted in 69.5% of the supervisors from the study being members of ROTC. ROTC programs were observed to have more leadership positions in the organizational structure. It was explained to the researcher in conversation with ROTC leaders that returning cadets generally become leaders in the organization during their second year. In many residence life programs, an RA

is not eligible to transition into a formal leadership role in the organization until after graduation. These changes in organizational structure might explain why more than two-thirds of the supervisors in the study were from ROTC. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the participants by college classification.

Table 2 – Breakdown of Participants by College Classification

College Classification	New RA	New ROTC	Supervisor RA	Supervisor ROTC
Freshman	-	41	-	-
Sophomore	32	4	-	33
Junior	17	3	2	3
Senior	13	-	5	5
Graduate	1	1	6	-
Full-Time	-	-	5	-
No Response	-	1	-	-

Cleaning the Data

Pallant (2016) discussed how researchers need to clean their data and look for errors. As Pallant (2016) suggested, this researcher went through each of the variables within the SPSS data sheet to ensure the data inputted made logical sense given the response options for the survey. For example, the researcher sorted the data entered for each variable in ascending order to ensure the minimum and maximum numbers entered into SPSS were within the corresponding answer choices in the survey. As an added measure, a scatterplot was run using the overall onboarding score and team cohesion score of the survey participants, which is shown in Figure 5.
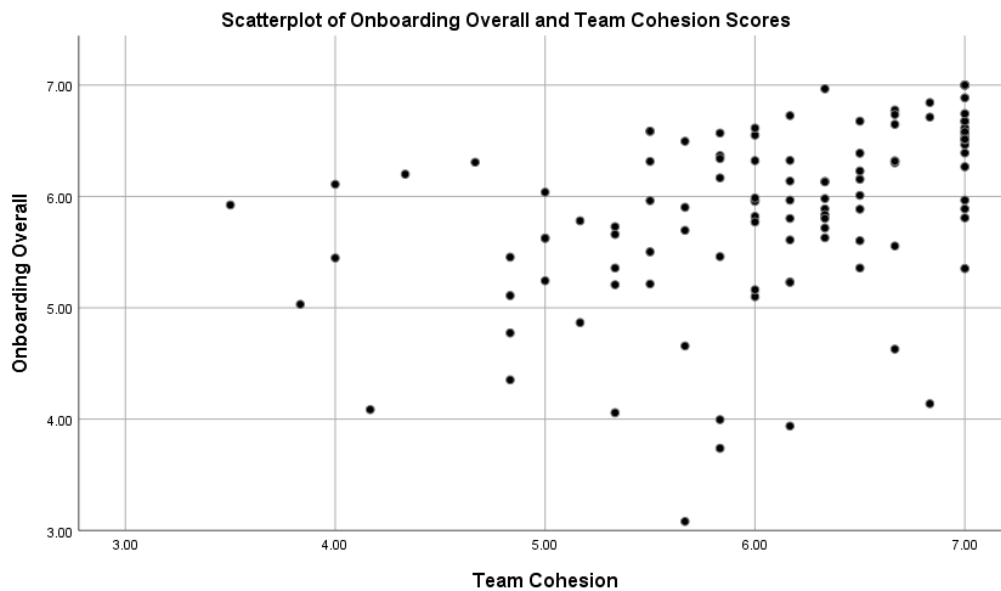
Figure 5 – Scatterplot of Onboarding and Team Cohesion

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Finally, the researcher checked to see if there were any outliers in the data using boxplots for each variable in the study. The results of the boxplot are in Appendix K, and while the results indicated no extreme outliers, there were some outliers. Pallant (2016) suggested comparing the means and the 5% trimmed means of variables to ensure outliers do not have too much of an impact on the results of the study. The 5% trimmed mean is the mean if the lowest 5% and highest 5% data entry points are removed from the study. Pallant (2016) does not define what constitutes a significant difference between a mean and a 5% trimmed mean. The researcher explored the topic of how to treat outliers by reading different opinions on *ResearchGate* and other scholarly sources. As Osborne and Overbay (2004) stated, there is not an agreement in the field in how to treat outliers with exception that most agree that outliers due to errors, such as data entry errors, need to be removed. The researcher believed the outliers in the study were due to participants who rated their onboarding experience different from the majority of the other participants. Many of the participants indicated on the survey they had a favorable experience and thus individuals that had a negative experience were more likely to be identified as outliers. Removing these data points from the study could potentially be skewing the results since it would be eliminating the experience of these participants from the study. After consulting with the major advisor, the researcher decided not to eliminate any of the survey data points that were identified as outliers. Also, the researcher believed including all the surveys would

provide more accurate and realistic results. The mean and trimmed mean scores are in Table 3.

Table 3 – Mean and 5% Trimmed Mean

Variable	Mean	5% Trimmed Mean
Recruitment	5.74	5.81
Orientation	5.79	5.85
Relationship with Peers	6.04	6.16
Relationship with Supervisor	5.91	6.03
Socialization	5.83	5.89
Self-Efficacy	6.09	6.14
Extraversion	5.61	5.67
Information Seeking	5.47	5.52
Team Cohesion	6.02	6.08

Cronbach Alpha Scores

Simon and Goes (2018) recommended using Cronbach Alpha scores for Likert scales to account for internal reliability. Scores on a Cronbach Alpha test can range from 0 to 1.0 with scores closer to 1.0 indicating more consistency. Cronbach Alpha tests were implemented on the data collected during the pilot study and all those scores were above 0.7. Pallant (2016) and Simon and Goes (2018) stated scores of 0.7 or above are considered acceptable when using Cronbach Alpha to test for reliability. Cronbach Alpha tests were run again with the data collected from the participants in the final study and the results indicated again that all the scores were above 0.7. The results of the Cronbach Alpha revealed the statements on the survey were measuring the same construct. Table 4 shows the Cronbach Alpha scores for each of the variables in the study.

Table 4 – Cronbach Alpha

Variable	Cronbach Alpha Score
Recruitment	0.817
Orientation	0.822
Relationship with Peers	0.862
Relationship with Supervisor	0.831
Socialization	0.788
Self-Efficacy	0.769
Extraversion	0.750
Information Seeking	0.740
Team Cohesion	0.865

Computing Variables

Since each variable in the study was represented by multiple statements on the survey, the researcher needed to create an average score for each variable in order to run the bivariate correlation analysis and the hierarchical multiple regression. This was accomplished by adding up the total of the participants' responses on the survey to those statements that represented the variable and dividing it by the number of statements on the survey for that particular variable.

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For example, there were six statements on the survey to measure orientation/initial training, so the total score of the responses to these six statements would be added up and divided by six. This created the participant's orientation/initial training score. The researcher wanted to be able to test if a participant's overall onboarding experience, across all five organizational efforts, was correlated with team cohesion. To get an overall onboarding experience score for each participant, the average score of each of the five onboarding organizational efforts (recruitment/pre-arrival, orientation/initial training, relationship with supervisor, relationship with peers, and socialization) was added up and divided by five.

This strategy was implemented to weigh the variables equally during the analysis since the number of statements on the survey that pertained to each variable in the study varied. For example, the survey had six statements on recruitment/pre-arrival but seven statements on orientation/initial training. If an average response score for each of the variables was not calculated, orientation/initial training would have been weighted more in the survey since there were more statements related to that variable. The breakdown of which statements aligned with each specific variable can be found in Appendix F.

Testing Hypothesis 1

H1: *A new team member's onboarding experience is positively correlated with his/her perceived team cohesion.*

Before going to the first set of data analyis, the researcher wanted to define the termininology when describing effect size of variables when explaining the results of the bivariate correlation. Cohen (1988) provided guidelines to determine if the effect size of a correlation was small, medium, or large. Cohen (1988) suggested that an *r* between 0.10 and 0.29 was small, 0.30 to 0.49 was medium, and 0.50 to 1.0 was large. This study used Cohen's effect size when describing the results of the correlations.

To test *H1*, a bivariate correlation was conducted between the overall onboarding experience variable and the team cohesion variable. The results of the Pearson correlation indicated there was a medium, positive correlation between team cohesion and overall onboarding, $r = 0.422$, $n = 108$, $p < 0.001$. The *r* square value indicates 17.8% of their team cohesion score was explained by a participant's onboarding experience. To state this result in another way, if an organization was striving to improve team cohesion, based on this study the organization could influence 17.8 % of perceived team cohesion in an employee through his/her onboarding experience. *H1* was supported.

It is possible that the results of the study might have been influenced by a strong correlation from members of one type of organization. To explore this, the

test was performed again dividing the data into the participant's organization membership. Again, the results of the Pearson correlation still supported *H1* in both types of organizations. The Pearson correlation for ROTC was 0.54, $n = 47$, $p < 0.001$ and for residence life it was 0.479, $n = 61$, $p < 0.001$. It is interesting to note that onboarding and team cohesion have a large effect size according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines when conducting the test for ROTC and a medium effect size when conducting the test for residence life. These results indicate that a new employee's onboarding experience explained a larger part of their team cohesion score if the participant was in ROTC compared to residence life.

The researcher wanted to ensure that the correlation between a participant's overall onboarding experience and team cohesion was not impacted by the sex of the participant. To control for the sex of the participant, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. When the sex of the participant is controlled, the overall onboarding experience explained an additional 16.9% percent of a participant's team cohesion score and $p < 0.001$. In comparison, a participant's sex only explained 2.4% of the variance in his/her team cohesion score or nearly eight times less than their overall onboarding experience. See Table 5.

Table 5 – Controlling for Sex

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
Sex	0.154	0.024	0.024	2.578	0.111
Sex/Onboarding	0.440	0.193	0.169	22.049	0.000

The researcher also wanted to test if college classification of the new members impacted the results of the study. College classification was identified for the participants by indicating if they had freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student status. When the college classification of the participants' was controlled using a hierarchical multiple regression, overall onboarding experience and team cohesion still had a positive correlation. A participant's college classification only explained 1.3% of his/her team cohesion score while the participant's overall onboarding experience explained an additional 19% percent of their team cohesion score when controlling for college classification. See Table 6.

Table 6 – Controlling for College Classification

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
Class	0.114	0.013	0.013	1.389	0.241
Class/Onboarding	0.451	0.203	0.190	25.051	0.000

Referring to the model by Bauer and Erdogan, there were three initial elements that the authors suggested impacted onboarding: new employee characteristics, new employee behaviors, and organizational efforts. This study focused on the organizational efforts since that is the component of the model that organizations can directly impact the most. However, the researcher wanted to explore if organizational efforts were impacting team cohesion in excess of new employee characteristics and new employee behavior. The participants answered statements related to their own extraversion (new employee characteristics) and information seeking (new employee behavior) to account for these additional elements in Bauer and Erdogan's (2011) model. The researcher wanted to determine if a participant's onboarding experience still had a significant impact on team cohesion when extraversion and information seeking were controlled.

The results of the Pearson correlation for extraversion and team cohesion revealed there was a medium, positive correlation between the two variables. The analysis found $r = 0.449$, $n = 111$, $p < 0.001$. This result indicates that the more

extraverted a participant was, the higher score he/she had on the team cohesion

scale on the survey instrument. This supports the need to control for extraversion

in the study. The Pearson correlation for information seeking and team cohesion

also found a medium, positive correlation between these variables. Results

indicated $r = 0.408$, $n = 112$, $p < 0.001$. Similarly, these results suggest that the

more information seeking behavior a participant engaged in, the higher his/her team

cohesion score was on the survey. It is also necessary to control for information

seeking behavior in the study. When extraversion was controlled using a

hierarchical multiple regression, onboarding experience still had a significant

correlation with team cohesion as it explained an additional 8.4% percent of the

variance. See Table 7. Similar results were found when information seeking was

controlled as another 5.5% of the variance was explained. See Table 8.

Table 7 – Extraversion Controlled

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
Extraversion	0.449	0.202	0.202	26.798	0.000
Extraversion/Onboarding	0.534	0.285	0.084	12.294	0.001

Table 8 – Information Seeking Controlled

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
Information	0.408	0.166	0.166	21.128	0.000
Information/Onboarding	0.470	0.221	0.055	7.387	0.008

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to examine if a new team member's onboarding experience still had a positive correlation with team cohesion when extraversion and information seeking were controlled. The results revealed the relationship still had a positive correlation (r square change of 0.038, $n = 108$, $p < 0.05$). *H1* was supported even when controlling for both extraversion and information seeking.

Testing Hypothesis 2

H2: *The relationship between a new team member's onboarding experience into his/her team and team cohesion is mediated by self-efficacy.*

A mediator variable is described by Baron and Kenny (1986, p. 1176) as a variable that "accounts for the relation between predictor and the criterion," "speak to how or why such effects occur" and "explain how external physical events take on internal psychological significance." David Kenny (2018) stated multiple regression can be used to test for mediation; however, first the researcher needs to

establish that there is a relationship to be mediated. In this hypothesis, that

relationship was that overall onboarding experience predicted team cohesion. As in

H1, the researcher controlled for extraversion and information seeking in the

participants. The linear regression testing this relationship provided $B = 0.238$, $n =$

108, $p < 0.05$. Kenny (2018) also stated that the researcher needed to run a linear

regression investigating if the predictor variable is correlated with the mediator

variable. A linear regression was conducted to explore if overall onboarding

experience and self-efficacy were correlated and the corresponding results

indicated there was a positive and significant relationship as $B = 0.248$, $n = 109$, p

< 0.05. Third, Kenny (2018) stated the researcher needed to run a multiple

regression with the predictor variable, the mediator variable, and the outcome

variable. Testing the correlation between self-efficacy and team cohesion provided

a significant and positive relationship as $B = 0.235$, $n = 108$, $p < 0.05$ when

controlling for overall onboarding.   Finally, Kenny (2018) stated the researcher

needed to run the entire model to distinguish if the predictor variable still has a

correlation with the outcome variable when controlling for the mediation variable.

Overall onboarding experience still had a significant correlation with team cohesion

when self-efficacy was controlled with $B = 0.180$, $n = 108$, $p > 0.05$. Kenny (2018)

mentioned that following these steps to check for mediation in an equation, if all

four steps produce a meaningful B value as this study discovered, there is partial

mediation but not full mediation. In order to have full mediation, the B value in

step four would need to equal zero (Kenny, 2018). The significance level was indicated for each step but Kenny (2018) cautioned researchers from focusing too much on the significance level when using this process to test for mediation. These findings indicate that onboarding activities can increase self-efficacy in new employees and self-efficacy leads to team cohesion. This study found the relationship between onboarding, self-efficacy, and team cohesion resulted in partial mediation, which means that self-efficacy impacts the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion, but it is not the only variable impacting this relationship. *H2* was partially supported.

Testing Hypothesis 3

H3: *The organizational effort of relationship with peers will explain more variance in team cohesion compared to other organizational efforts.*

To test *H3*, a bivariate correlation was conducted between team cohesion and each of the organizational efforts of recruitment/pre-arrival, orientation/initial training, relationship with supervisor, relationship with peers, and socialization to see which strategy explained the most variance with team cohesion.

Although all the organizational efforts had a positive correlation with team cohesion, the variable of relationship with peers explained the most variance with team cohesion. Relationship with peers explained 22% of the variance, socialization explained 16% of the variance, orientation/initial training explained 12% of the variance, recruitment/pre-arrival explained 10% of the variance, and the

relationship with supervisor explained 7% of the variance. These results indicate that a participant's relationship with peers influenced the largest percentage of his/her team cohesion score on the survey.

The researcher was interested in exploring the variance each organizational effort explained when the other four variables were controlled. Also, when performing this analysis, the researcher controlled for extraversion and information seeking. This analysis was performed using a hierarchical multiple regression. For example, when testing the variable relationship with peers, the variables recruitment/pre-arrival, orientation/initial training, relationship with supervisors, socialization, extraversion, and information seeking were all controlled. The r square difference between the two regressions is listed in Table 9 as a percentage.

Table 9 – Explained Variance of Team Cohesion

Variable	Percentage (R Square Difference)
Relationship with Peers	6.7%
Relationship with Supervisor	2.6%
Orientation/Initial Training	1.2%
Socialization	0.4%
Recruitment/Pre-Arrival	0.0%

The results stress the importance of organizations being deliberate and strategic in designing the onboarding program for new employees to engaged with their peers to encourage team cohesion. *H3* was supported.

Testing Hypothesis 4

H4: *New team members will rank relationship with peers as the most impactful strategy in the onboarding process while supervisors will rank the relationship with the supervisor as the most impactful strategy.*

The final hypothesis was mostly exploratory in nature as the researcher wanted to explore if new members and supervisors agreed on what was impactful in the onboarding process. The topic of supervisors and new members agreeing on what was impactful in the onboarding process was not something the researcher found when conducting the literature review and this hypothesis was created to see if the topic needed to be further investigated. The results and implications of H4 are briefly explored below because this hypothesis is not connected to any of the research questions that are discussed in Chapter 5. Also, it is helpful to be able to refer back to the data tables when reviewing H4, so a discussion of the hypothesis at this point is easier for readers.

At the end of the survey, new members and supervisors were asked to rank ten statements in order of which had the most impact in the onboarding process. Each of the organizational efforts presented earlier (recruitment/pre-arrival, orientation/initial training, relationship with supervisor, relationship with peers, and

socialization) were represented by two of the statements. As a reminder, the

statements for this scale were:

1. Accurate job description (Recruitment/Pre-Arrival)

2. Team builders during orientation/initial training (Orientation/Initial Training)

3. Social events after orientation/initial training (Socialization)

4. Having a peer you can go to with questions (Relationship with Peer)

5. Time set-aside for conversations with supervisor (Relationship with Supervisor)

6. Presentations during orientation/initial training on how to perform job functions (Orientation/Initial Training)

7. Informal conversations with peers during tasks (Socialization)

8. Having a point-of-contact prior to arrival (Recruitment/Pre-Arrival)

9. Having peers that support you (Relationship with Peers)

10. Having clear expectations from your supervisor (Relationship with Supervisor)

To test this hypothesis, a frequency table was coordinated through SPSS.

There were 56 supervisors who completed this part of the survey out of 59 and 103

new employees out of 113. The majority of the 13 surveys that were omitted were

because the participant did not follow the directions correctly for the ranking scale

and answered the statements using repeated values. For example, the participant would rank multiple statements with a score of 1.

The statement that supervisors selected most frequently as being most impactful was, "Having peers that support you," with 14 out of the 56 supervisors selecting this statement. This represents 25% of the supervisors who participated in the study. See Table 10.

Table 10 – Supervisor Results of Ranking Scale

Statement	# of Responses	Percentage
Accurate job description	5	8.9%
Team builders during orientation/initial training	6	10.7%
Social events after orientation/initial training	2	3.6%
Having a peer you can go to with questions	8	14.3%
Time set-aside for conversations with supervisor	0	0%
Presentations during orientation/initial training on how to perform job functions	3	5.3%
Informal conversations with peers during tasks	3	5.3%
Having a point-of-contact prior to arrival	4	7.1%
Having peers that support you	14	25%
Having clear expectations from your supervisor	11	19.6%

In evaluating the responses from the new members, the statement "Having a peer you can go to with questions" was selected the most with 18 responses indicating it was the most impactful in the onboarding process. This is 17.5% of the survey responses. See Table 11.

Table 11 – New Member Results of Ranking Scale

Statement	# of Responses	Percentage
Accurate job description	11	10.7%
Team builders during orientation/initial training	8	7.7%
Social events after orientation/initial training	5	4.9%
Having a peer you can go to with questions	18	17.5%
Time set-aside for conversations with supervisor	6	5.8%
Presentations during orientation/initial training on how to perform job functions	13	12.6%
Informal conversations with peers during tasks	3	2.9%
Having a point-of-contact prior to arrival	14	13.6%
Having peers that support you	16	15.5%
Having clear expectations from your supervisor	9	8.7%

The statement "Having peers that support you" and "Having a peer you can go to with questions" both represented the organizational effort of relationship with peers. The data indicates that the supervisors and new members both agree that the relationship with peers is the most impactful organizational effort in the onboarding process. Based on the responses from the new members and the supervisors, organizations should ensure opportunities exist in the onboarding process for new members to build relationships with their peers. Another take away from the frequency table is that supervisors ranked "Having clear expectations from your supervisor" as being the second most impactful in the onboarding process, receiving 19.6% of the first-place votes. However, the new members ranked this statement as the sixth most impactful with a response of 8.7%. It appears the supervisors and new members disagree on how impactful supervisor expectations are in the onboarding process.

Beyond just looking at how many times the participants ranked a statement as being the most impactful in the onboarding process, it is also useful to note what the mean score of each statement was. It is important to examine the mean score because a statement could be ranked second or third on many of the surveys but have very few first-place rankings. The mean score results revealed that "Having a peer you can go to with questions" and "Having peers that support you" were the lowest mean scores among new members but "Having clear expectations from your supervisor" and "Having a peer you can go to with questions" tied for the lowest

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mean score from the supervisor participants. Again, the supervisors placed an

increase emphasis on having clear expectations compared to the new members.   It

is important to remember in the ranking scale that participants were ranking the

statement that had the most impact, starting with the number one. Those statements

with lower mean scores would represent the statements that were indicated as being

the most impactful.   The results of these analyses are in Table 12.

Table 12 – Mean Score of Ranking Scale

Statement	New Members	Supervisors
Accurate job description	5.47	6.25
Team builders during orientation/initial training	5.28	4.66
Social events after orientation/initial training	6.52	6.79
Having a peer you can go to with questions	4.37	4.18
Time set-aside for conversations with supervisor	5.82	6.0
Presentations during orientation/initial training on how to perform job functions	5.5	5.8
Informal conversations with peers during tasks	6.28	6.1
Having a point-of-contact prior to arrival	5.91	6.3
Having peers that support you	4.64	4.63
Having clear expectations from your supervisor	5.08	4.18

One interesting point is when the responses are broken down into the type of organization that the participant was a member in, the lowest mean score from new ROTC members was "Having a point-of-contact prior to arrival" with a mean score of 4.76. However, this statement had the highest mean score from the new residence life participants with a mean score of 6.7. The supervisors in ROTC gave the statement a mean score of 5.89, which placed it as the fifth ranked statement in their group. One potential reason for the difference between the new RA members and new ROTC members expressing different importance on the role a point-of-contact has prior to arrival is that the RA job responsibilities might be more visible to potential new members prior to joining the organization. During the process of completing this study, the researcher had the opportunity to spend valuable time with ROTC teams. In each of the three organizational sites that the researcher attended to collect data, the offices of ROTC seemed isolated from the rest of campus and were in a separate building. Also, the researcher noticed that often ROTC members were conducting physical training in the very early morning hours before classes at their respective universities had started. However, the RA position generally is more visible to non-RAs as RAs often greet new students when they first start at college, host events, and are required to interact with non-RAs as part of the job description. The researcher feels having a point-of-contact prior to arrival might be more important to ROTC members because the responsibilities and day-to-day schedule of an ROTC cadet are not as visible prior

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to joining the organization. It could also be that there is a need for new members joining ROTC to understand the physical requirements the position will entail prior to joining the organization. Finally, a third explanation is that ROTC welcomes freshman students while the RA position generally requires someone to be a sophomore status or above. New ROTC members could be adjusting to college and joining ROTC at once.

Overall, the data seems to show partial support for *H4*. New members and supervisors indicated the relationship with peers will have the most impact in the onboarding process. The researcher predicted the new members would indicate this on the ranking scale but did not predict the supervisors would also express that the relationship with peers had the most impact.

Synthesis and Summary of Data

To summarize, the data showed support for *H1* and *H3* and partially supported *H2* and *H4*. The study found evidence that there was a positive correlation between onboarding and team cohesion and, to the knowledge of the researcher, this is the first extensive evaluation of research that examined these two concepts together. Another key takeaway from the data analysis is the important role that relationship with peers appears has in the onboarding process. It was the organizational effort that dictated the most variance with team cohesion. The overall results of the ranking scale indicated supervisors and new members were selecting statements that represented relationship with peers as having the most

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impact on the onboarding process too. Finally, the study found self-efficacy

partially mediated the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion. The

theoretical framework presented by Bauer and Erdogan identified self-efficacy as

one of the variables that would impact the outcomes of the onboarding process.

Chapter 5 – Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

Overview

This chapter explains the importance of the study and the findings. In the beginning of the chapter, each of the research questions is reviewed and how the data addressed each question is discussed. Next, the results of the study are applied to Bauer and Erdogan's (2011) model to explore if the data supported the model. Third, the implications and limitations of the study are elaborated. Chapter 5 concludes with recommendations for future research that would either expand upon this research study or for research that should be done to determine if the results from this study apply in other environments. The chapter begins with the contributions of the study.

Contributions of the Study

This section of the chapter reviews each of the three research questions in the study and shows how the study addressed each question. It also explains why the knowledge gained in addressing the question is beneficial to organizational leadership. As a reminder, each research question is restated at the start of discussion.

Research Question 1 – Is there a relationship between organizational efforts in a new employee's onboarding experience and team cohesion?

Before going into how this research question was addressed in the study, it is important to discuss why it is important if onboarding leads to team cohesion.

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Onboarding employees is going to continue to be a relevant topic in the future.

Employees are switching jobs at higher rates and will go through the onboarding

process repeatedly as a result. Franceski (2017) discussed how onboarding is going

to increasingly be necessary for firms because of the frequency that millennials

switch jobs, with an average tenure of between 6 and 18 months. Watkins (2013)

discussed the importance of a break-even point when an employee's value

outweighs the cost of resources it took to bring him/her into the organization.

Watkins (2013) found firm leaders stated it took on average of about 6.2 months for

a newly hired mid-level manager to reach this break-even point. If organizations

can identify strategies to expedite the integration of a new employee into the team,

the organization can reduce the amount of time it takes for an employee to reach

the break-even point.

As the workforce becomes more reliant on teams, team cohesion will

continue to be an important outcome in the business sector. There is a shift in

many organizations from tasks being completed by teams as compared to

individuals (Salas, Cooke, & Rosen, 2008; Gully, Incalcaterra, Joshi, & Beaubien,

2002). There are benefits to organizations utilizing teams. English, et al. (2004)

and Aguinis et al. (2013) stated organizations will need to use teams to stay

competitive in their business sector. Teams use resources better and are able to

react to situations at a quicker rate in comparison to an employee working alone

(Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Previous studies have shown team cohesion is linked

to organizational trust (Gilbert & Tang, 1998), production in teams (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Ahearne 1997), performance (Huang, 2009), and organizational commitment (Wech & Bennett, 1998). There are also other organizational benefits to team cohesion as it encourages employees to combine their individual talents and provide support to each other (Kozlowski & Chao, 2012). Much of the previous research that has looked at new employees joining an organization has focused on the employee joining the firm and has not investigated what happens when a new employee joins a team (Kozlowski & Bell 2001). Identifying how an organization can jumpstart the growth of team cohesion through onboarding will be critical to firms that are using teams. Discovering that there are strategies a firm can incorporate into the onboarding process to increase team cohesion would help firms evaluate and design their onboarding programs to endorse team cohesion.

This study found there was a medium, positive correlation between a participant's overall onboarding experience and team cohesion. Another pivotal finding was onboarding explained a significant variance in team cohesion even when the variables extraversion and information seeking were controlled in the response of the participants. These results suggest that even if an organization can recruit extraverted employees who are comfortable asking questions in their new environment, it is still valuable to have a strong onboarding program when it comes to trying to encourage team cohesion. The results of the study are also meaningful because there is a cost associated with onboarding employees. These costs include

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employing the personnel to conduct the onboarding process but also the cost in lost time when the new employee is going through the onboarding process, compared to performing the job tasks the individual was hired to perform. The results of the study indicate organizations will be rewarded from the initial investment of implementing an onboarding program through team cohesion.

Research Question 2 – What organizational efforts of an onboarding process support team cohesion?

The focus of this question was to identify how firms could design their onboarding processes to encourage team cohesion. Much of the current literature related to onboarding is too broad and there is a need for more research exploring the specific aspects of the onboarding process (Klein, Polin, & Sutton, 2015). Many of the other outcomes related to onboarding, such as organizational commitment or turnover intention, are generally looked at on an individual level. Team cohesion is different from these two items in that the outcome is influenced by the employee's peers. This study sought to find which organizational effort in the onboarding process explained the most variance in team cohesion. Finding the relationship with peers was the organizational effort that explained the most variance with team cohesion is important to firms. The results support organizations' need to be intentional in their design of onboarding programs to help foster relationships with the employees' peers. Also, organizations should involve peers in the various onboarding processes. For example, it might be beneficial if

during orientation peers could engage with new employees in a panel so the new employees could ask questions about their new employer. It was interesting to find that the relationship with the supervisor explained the least amount of variance with team cohesion when a bivariate correlation was conducted among all the organizational effort variables in the study. A participant's relationship with the supervisor did explain the second most variance when the hierarchical multiple regression test was conducted, but it still explained 4.1% less variance compared to relationship with peers. Again, this further supports that other employees, besides just supervisors, need to be involved in the onboarding process of new employees.

Research Question 3 – Does self-efficacy mediate the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion?

The results of the study indicated self-efficacy partially mediated the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion. This finding is important because organizations can help improve employee self-efficacy. As Bandura (2000) stated, organizations can support the self-efficacy of their employees by providing mentors or job enrichment opportunities. For example, if an organization uses specific software programs that are pivotal to the operations of the organization, the firm might want to consider offering separate training courses to help new employees feel more comfortable in the functions of the software. Supervisors can apply the results of the study in understanding that it is necessary to build up confidence in an employee's ability to perform his/her job functions and

that increasing this confidence will assist in promoting team cohesion. During the recruitment process, firms could strategically look for employees who have self-efficacy as the study provided evidence these employees would have some advantage in developing team cohesion. Previous studies have shown the value of employees having self-efficacy for motivation (Tracey, Hinkin, Tannebaum, & Mathieu, 2001), performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), and job satisfaction (Judge & Bono, 2001). Overall, the results of the study added another outcome to employees having self-efficacy, and that is team cohesion.

Results and Theoretical Model

The data from the study supported the categories in the model proposed by Bauer and Erdogan (2011). The elements of new employee behavior, new employee characteristics, and organizational efforts all had a positive correlation with team cohesion. The study only had one variable representing employee behavior and employee characteristics. As a result, future research should explore other variables in these two factors. Each of the variables representing the organizational efforts section of the model did have a positive correlation with team cohesion, and this result supports that organizations can encourage team cohesion through their onboarding practices. Self-efficacy represented the adjustment section of the model and the study found that self-efficacy partially mediated the relationship between a participant's onboarding experience and team cohesion. Future studies could explore other variables in the adjustment section of the model,

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such as role clarity and organizational culture. However, the research from this study provided evidence that a slightly modified version of the model is needed.

Discussion and Implications

Implications

The results of the study provide support that if organizations take time to properly onboard their new employees, onboarding programs can have long lasting dividends for the firm. This is the first study to the knowledge of the researcher that investigated the relationship between an employee's onboarding experience and team cohesion. This study provides evidence that firms will be able to get a return on their investment if they take the time to properly onboard their employees. Perhaps the best evidence of how onboarding can impact team cohesion is that the employee's overall onboarding experience still made a significant impact on team cohesion when the other parts of Bauer and Erdogan's (2011) model were controlled. The overall onboarding experience accounted for an additional 8.4% when extraversion was controlled and 5.5% when information seeking was controlled. Applying previous studies such as Wech and Bennett (1998) that found employee performance had a positive correlation with team cohesion, the results of the current study provide evidence that a strong onboarding program can lead to an increase in organizational performance.

Another important takeaway from this study for organizations is that the relationship with peers explained the most variance in team cohesion. This implies

that organizations should incorporate time and activities in the onboarding process that allow the new employee to interact with their peers. Settoon and Adkins, (1997) stated new employees are more likely to seek assistance from individuals outside the organization because they have not established relationships yet with employees inside the organization. Organizations can expedite the new employee making connections within the organization by deliberately planning strategies to facilitate interactions between employees (Settoon & Adkins, 1997). For example, the organization could assign the new employee a peer mentor to help guide them in their transition. Another idea would be for organizations to design spaces in the office facility that encourage the employees to dialogue during the day. For example, organizations could arrange to have a comfortable break room so employees are encouraged to take meal breaks together. These opportunities also help employees to learn about each other's personalities so that when employees do need to work together, there is hopefully a greater sense of comfort among the group. As Cable and Parsons (2001) mentioned, it can be stressful joining a new organization because the employee is trying to figure out the office culture and policies. Enabling new employees to develop relationships with their peers gives them a valuable resource so they are not navigating their new environment by themselves.

Implications for Residence Life and ROTC

Organizational leaders of RAs and ROTC cadets might be limited in how much time can be allocated to onboard new members at the start of the year. RAs and ROTC cadets are students so organizational leaders need to navigate around the class schedule of the new members during the academic year. The new members might not be living locally during the summer and there are costs associated with housing and feeding new members when they arrive on campus prior to the start of the school year. These obstacles add to the importance of discovering what aspects of an onboarding process are going to provide the greatest return on investment. Finding evidence showing that the relationship with peers is one of the key important indicators of team cohesion enables organizational leaders to make strategic decisions when deciding what activities, events, and sessions to incorporate into an onboarding process for RAs and ROTC cadets.

Strengths of Study Design

The study had several key components in the design that will help increase the odds that the results of the study will be applicable to organizations. One of the essential values of the study is it was a field study that involved the participants completing the survey based on their real-life experience compared to a lab study that attempts to create a fictional, mock situation. The study also was able to capture the experience of the participants when they were going through the onboarding process. By using participants who joined teams at the start of the

college academic year, the researcher was able to successfully predict when the onboarding process would start for these participants. This allowed the researcher to gather data from a large group of subjects who fit the study's needs.

Another strength of the study design is multiple teams from two different types of organizations were included in the study. This reduces the chances the results of the study were due to an abnormal sample population. Finally, since this is the first study the researcher knows that evaluated the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion, the quantitative nature of the study provides concrete numbers supporting the fact that onboarding and team cohesion are correlated. The quantitative study enabled the researcher to capture the experiences of many participants and it would have been difficult to have had a qualitative study with a sample size as large as this study.

Limitations

Participants' High Scores

The Likert scale statements on the survey were based on a 7-point scale. Overall, all the means for each variable were above the middle-point score of "4" on the survey, suggesting the majority of the participants at least "agreed" with the statement. A large majority of the participants indicated they had a good experience during the onboarding process, and this might have impacted the results of the study. For example, if more participants had reported a negative experience in their organization, the recruitment/pre-arrival strategy might have increased in

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variance if employees felt the organization was not upfront with the new members about the work environment. It is also possible that the six organizations that participated in the study had abnormally successful onboarding programs. If this were the case, the results of the study would be limited to individuals working in firms with above average onboarding programs. Further studies are needed to evaluate how the overall high scores on the survey influenced the results.

Conduct Study with Different Populations

As is the situation with most studies, the results of this study are confined to the sample population used in the study. Future studies should be done using other populations and in different industries to see if the results are consistent. Conducting the study with new candidates in a police or fire department would be ideal since the training dates for the new employees are predictable and both organizations rely strongly on team cohesion to be successful. Also, it would be interesting to see if the results of the study were the same if participants who had more experience in onboarding were used. The age of the participants in the study was not collected but in general, an assumption can be made that most of the participants were in their late teens or early twenties and this might be their first onboarding experience. Similar studies could be conducted in industries that were employees have more work experience to explore if a participants' previous onboarding experience impacted the results of the study.

Study Design Limitations

The design of the study does not allow the researcher to conclude that a participant's experience in the onboarding process leads to team cohesion. There could be other factors that influence both the onboarding process and team cohesion. If a firm really puts a priority on their employees, that firm might have a strong onboarding process and also have great team cohesion. For example, suppose a study looked at the price of food in restaurants and customer satisfaction of the food. The study might find that as the price of food increases, so does customer satisfaction, but other factors could be influencing this relationship. The relationship between higher price and customer satisfaction of food could be driven by restaurants that are using better ingredients, experienced chefs, and offering more exotic dishes that require the restaurant to charge more for their food.

Recommendations for Further Research

Relationship with Peers/Socialization

The study found that the relationship with peers explained the most variance in team cohesion. The study also found supervisors and new employees ranked the relationship with peers as the most impactful in the onboarding process in the ranking scale. However, in the ranking scale portion of the survey, the new members ranked the two statements that represented socialization as being the least impactful to the onboarding process. This is an interesting and important finding, especially because organizations are potentially spending large sums of money to provide picnics, BBQs, and other social outings for employees to build

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connections. Yet the new employees in this study indicated these events are not impactful in the onboarding process. The second hypothesis in the study distinguished which organizational efforts explained the most variance with team cohesion; socialization was the second highest organizational effort at 16%. These two findings stipulate the need to further establish what specific activities and organizational strategies should be implemented to encourage relationship building between peers. Also, studies should be conducted that focus on the timing these activities occur in the onboarding process. For example, is there a difference in the outcome of relationship building if socialization activities occur in the very beginning of the onboarding process compared to several weeks after the new employee has been in the organization?

Influence of Having an Onboarding Program

When some institutions were contacted about participating in the study, their leaders indicated the organization did not have an onboarding program for new members. Another study could be done to explore if having an onboarding program increased team cohesion compared to an organization that did not have a formal onboarding program. This study would assist the researcher in finding evidence if onboarding programs lead to team cohesion. If strong team cohesion was found in organizations without an onboarding program, the study might suggest that team cohesion was not the variable that was influencing team cohesion.

Impact of Organizational Culture

Through observations, the researcher noted organizational culture differences in the teams included in the study. Schein (2010) mentioned how there are different levels of cultures that can impact a firm. At the broad level, there is the culture of the firm or the organizational culture, but there is also the culture of teams within the firm, Schein (2010) refers to these as subcultures. For example, one of the ROTC organizations seemed to focus more on team cooperation and transformational leadership. During lead lab, the cadets were doing a variety of physical challenges and the military science instructors decided to also participate in the activities to show encouragement for the cadets. Another of the ROTC organizations seemed to have a more formal and transactional style of management. The leaders of the organization tried to separate their accomplishments from those of the cadets. There was one institution that the researcher visited that has a strong diversity component and the students are required to achieve diversity credits prior to graduation. It was interesting that the four individuals who indicated they would prefer not to indicate their sex when completing the survey were all part of this institution. Future studies could investigate if racial, ethnic, or sexual orientation impacted the relationship between onboarding and team cohesion. Previous studies have found organizational culture impacts organizational outcomes; for example, Gregory, Harris, Armenakis, and Shook (2009) found support that organizational culture influenced patient satisfaction in hospitals. Future studies should explore

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how the culture of the organization and subcultures impact team cohesion and onboarding.

Team-Efficacy

This study explored if an individual's self-efficacy impacted the correlation between onboarding and team cohesion. There is additional type of efficacy called team-efficacy, or collective efficacy. Team-efficacy is the "team's belief that it can successfully perform a specific task (Gully, et al., 2002, p. 820)." Bandura (2000) mentioned how studies have shown that an increase in team-efficacy led to an increase in performance and motivation in groups. It would be interesting to explore if team efficacy mediated the relationship between overall onboarding and team cohesion.

Impact of Participant Age

It would be interesting to factor in the age of the participants in future studies. Almost all of the participants in this study were college students. Although there were some non-traditional college students participating, the researcher's familiarity with the sample populations allows him to generalize that most of the participants were traditionally-aged college students. Future studies could ask for the age of the participants to explore if age influenced how the participant responded to the survey questions. Other studies could explore if generation gaps in age impacted responses to statements regarding relationships with peers and relationship with supervisors. In this study, the peers were generally

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within a couple of years in age of each other. However, if an employee is working with peers who are much older or younger than him/her, will this change how important the employee views the relationship with peers?

Study Other Outcomes

This study provided some valuable evidence as to how firms could increase team cohesion through the design of the onboarding process. It would be beneficial to compare team cohesion to other outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment to see what organizational efforts helped predict an increase in these outcomes. This would help firms balance potential tradeoffs when designing an onboarding program. This study indicated support that the relationship with the supervisor was the least important strategy when developing team cohesion, but another study potentially might show that the relationship with the supervisor is strongly correlated to with organizational commitment.

Explore Other Components of Bauer and Erdogan's Model

This study took a deep dive into the organizational effort section of Bauer and Erdogan's model. Future studies should focus on new employee characteristics and new employee behavior to explore how strongly those sections of the model are correlated with team cohesion. Other components of the adjustment section of the model could be studied besides self-efficacy. This would help to better define the practices firms can initiate to encourage strong team cohesion in the firm.

Qualitative Study

Now that there is some evidence supporting the correlation between onboarding and team cohesion, it is necessary for future studies to hear the lived experience of those individuals going through the onboarding process. A study such as this would help to discover specifically what occurrences or encounters happened during the onboarding process that were meaningful in stimulating team cohesion. For example, this study found signs that the relationship with peers is vital in the onboarding process, but a qualitative study would hopefully enable the researcher to discover what facilitates these types of relationships. Such a qualitative study would provide further useful information for organizations that are evaluating their onboarding processes to encourage team cohesion.

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Appendix A – Communication to Organizational Leader

(Name of Organizational Leader)

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Business at Florida Institute of Technology. My research study is looking at the relationship between a new employee's onboarding experience and team cohesion. The sample population for this study is members of the reserve officers' training corps (ROTC) and residence life.

The study will utilize two surveys: one for new team members and one for supervisors/leaders of the organization. The new team member survey should take about 15 minutes to complete and the supervisors/leaders survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. To allow time for the potential participants to review the consent form and initial instructions, I am requesting about 20 minutes of time where I can visit some of your staff members.

I believe lead lab at (Name of Institution) takes place on Wednesday afternoons. Would it be possible for me to visit your cadets on **October 24th** to explain my study and ask if the cadets would volunteer to complete the survey? Also, the study is designed to be anonymous.

I will bring all the necessary supplies (the paper survey and pencils) for the study so the only room requirement I would have would be that the participants have desks or a hard surface that they can use to complete the survey.

This study has been approved by the institutional review board at Florida Institute of Technology. If you have any questions about the study, do not hesitate to contact me at 321-537-7145 or gconnell@fit.edu. You may also reach out to my major advisor, Dr. Troy Glassman at tglassma@fit.edu.

Thanks for your time and consideration. I hope the start of the school year is going smoothly for you and your team,

Greg

Appendix B – ROTC New Cadet Survey

Onboarding in Teams (New ROTC)

Please remember, your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Your name should not be written on your survey to protect your identity. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask the researcher.

A. Demographics

1. What is your sex?
   a. Male

   b. Female

   c. Prefer Not to Answer

2. What is your current college-level classification?

   a. Freshman

   b. Sophomore

   c. Junior

   d. Senior

   e. Graduate Student

3. What institution are you currently enrolled at?

4. What squad/platoon/company are you assigned? You may also state "Prefer Not to Answer."

5. Approximately when did you start your orientation/initial training? (For example, August 1, 2018)

6. Have you changed teams since you went through orientation/initial training this year?

    a. Yes

    b. No

For the following section, use the scale from 1-7 (see below) and circle the number that best represents your level of agreement with each statement.

Scale:
1 – Strongly Disagree
2 – Disagree
3 – Slightly Disagree
4 – Neutral
5 – Slightly Agree
6 – Agree
7 – Strongly Agree

B. Prior to Orientation/Initial Training: For the following statements, reflect on your experiences **prior** to starting orientation/initial training in the organization

1.	I was satisfied with the support I received from the organization prior to my first day on the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I was satisfied with the information I received from the organization prior to my first day on the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I feel the job description accurately reflected my job responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I feel the recruitment process accurately reflected my job responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	The organization provided me with a contact person prior to my arrival if I had questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I felt comfortable approaching the contact person prior to my arrival if I had questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

For the following section, use the scale from 1-7 (see below) and circle the number that best represents your level of agreement with each statement.

Scale:
1 – Strongly Disagree
2 – Disagree
3 – Slightly Disagree
4 – Neutral
5 – Slightly Agree
6 – Agree
7 – Strongly Agree

C. Orientation/Initial Training: For the following statements, reflect on your experience **during** orientation/initial training

1.	The organization's mission was emphasized throughout the orientation/initial training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	My individual role in the organization's mission was explained during orientation/initial training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Attending orientation/initial training provided the information needed to perform my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	Attending orientation/initial training helped develop the skills needed to perform my job in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	The materials provided by the organization during orientation/initial training were relevant to my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	The organization provided activities to build a bond with my peers during orientation/initial training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. During orientation/initial training there   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
was time set aside for me to build a
bond with my supervisor.

For the following section, use the scale from 1-7 (see below) and circle the number that best represents your level of agreement with each statement.

> *Scale:*
> 1 – Strongly Disagree
> 2 – Disagree
> 3 – Slightly Disagree
> 4 – Neutral
> 5 – Slightly Agree
> 6 – Agree
> 7 – Strongly Agree

D. After Orientation/Initial Training: For the following statements, reflect on your experience **after** orientation/initial training

1. Organizational guidelines provided time   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
for my supervisor and me to meet.

2. My supervisor has initiated   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
conversations with me to ensure I
understand my job.

3. My supervisor has established clear   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
expectations of me.

4. My supervisor has attempted to get to   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
know me.

5. My peers supported me.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

6. My peers encouraged me to ask   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
questions if I had any.

7. My peers attempted to get to know me.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

8. I have at least one peer in the   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
organization I can go to if I need advice.

9.	The organization has provided social gatherings/teambuilders (examples: holiday parties, team outings, cookouts).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	My peers have organized social gatherings for the team members (examples: dinners, movies, playing sports).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	My supervisor encourages collaboration between members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I have had opportunities to interact with my peers while performing organizational tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	I can handle routine work-related problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	I can handle the expectations of my role in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	I am a valuable member of my team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	I feel my performance is aligned with the organization's standards.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	Our team is united in trying to reach the team's goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	Team members take responsibility on this team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	Our team members communicate freely about each of our personal responsibilities in getting tasks done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	The members of this team help each other when working on tasks or projects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	The members of this team get along well together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	The members of this team stick together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

23.	I have asked for feedback on my performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	I have asked my supervisor for his/her opinion of my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	I have participated in social events to meet people in the organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.	I have tried to learn the organization's policies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27.	I am social.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28.	I am self-confident.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29.	I would prefer to work in a group compared to working alone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30.	I seek out opportunities to work/interact with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E. Ranking

Please rank the following statements on how much you think they aided you in the onboarding process. The statement which you think had the most impact should be #1 and the statement which had the least impact should be #10. **Each number 1-10 should only be used once**. You can cross the numbers off below as you use them to help you keep track of which numbers have been used.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Most Impact   Least Impact

_____ Accurate job description

_____ Team builders during orientation/initial training

_____ Social events after orientation/initial training

_____ Having a peer you can go to with questions

_____ Time set-aside for conversations with supervisor

_____ Presentations during orientation/initial training on how to perform job functions

_____ Informal conversations with peers during tasks

_____ Having a point-of-contact prior to arrival

_____ Having peers that support you

_____ Having clear expectations from your supervisor

This completes the survey. Thank you for taking the time to participate in the study!

Onboarding in Teams (Supervisors ROTC)

Please remember, your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Your name should not be written on your survey to protect your identity. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask the researcher.

A. Demographics

1. What is your sex?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Prefer Not to Answer

2. What is your current college-level classification?

    a. Freshman
    b. Sophomore
    c. Junior
    d. Senior
    e. Graduate Student
    f. Full-Time Staff

3. What institution are you affiliated with?

4. What squad/platoon/company are you assigned? You may also state "Prefer Not to Answer."

5. What is your title?
    a. Team Leader
    b. Squad Leader
    c. Platoon Leader
    d. Platoon Sergeant
    e. Company Level Leadership or Above

B. Ranking

Please rank the following statements on how much you think they aided new team members in the onboarding process. The statement which you think had the most impact should be #1 and the statement which had the least impact should be #10. **Each number 1-10 should only be used once**. You can cross the numbers off below as you use them to help you keep track of which numbers have been used.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Most Impact   Least Impact

_____ Accurate job description

_____ Team builders during orientation/initial training

_____ Social events after orientation/initial training

_____ Having a peer you can go to with questions

_____ Time set-aside for conversations with supervisor

_____ Presentations during orientation/initial training on how to perform job functions

_____ Informal conversations with peers during tasks

_____ Having a point-of-contact prior to arrival

_____ Having peers that support you

_____ Having clear expectations from your supervisor

This completes the survey. Thank you for taking the time to participate in the study!

Appendix D – Residence Life New Staff Member

Onboarding in Teams (RA)

Please remember, your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Your name should not be written on your survey to protect your identity. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask the researcher.

Demographics

1. What is your sex?
    a. Male

    b. Female

    c. Prefer Not to Answer

2. What is your current college-level classification?

    a. Freshman

    b. Sophomore

    c. Junior

    d. Senior

    e. Graduate Student

3. What institution are you currently enrolled at?

4. What staff are you on? You may also state "Prefer Not to Answer."

5. Approximately when did you start your orientation/initial training the first time you joined the organization? (For example, August 1, 2018, August 7, 2016, etc.)

6. Have you changed teams/staffs since you went through orientation/initial training this year?

      a. Yes

      b. No

For the following section, use the scale from 1-7 (see below) and circle the number that best represents your level of agreement with each statement.

**Scale:**
1 – Strongly Disagree
2 – Disagree
3 – Slightly Disagree
4 – Neutral
5 – Slightly Agree
6 – Agree
7 – Strongly Agree

B. Prior to Orientation/Initial Training: For the following statements, reflect on your experiences prior to starting orientation/initial training in the organization

1. I was satisfied with the support I received from the organization prior to my first day on the job.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

2. I was satisfied with the information I received from the organization prior to my first day on the job.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

3. I feel the job description accurately reflected my job responsibilities.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

4. I feel the recruitment process accurately reflected my job responsibilities.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

5. The organization provided me with a contact person prior to my arrival if I had questions.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

6. I felt comfortable approaching the contact person prior to my arrival if I had questions.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

For the following section, use the scale from 1-7 (see below) and circle the number that best represents your level of agreement with each statement.

> *Scale:*
> 1 – Strongly Disagree
> 2 – Disagree
> 3 – Slightly Disagree
> 4 – Neutral
> 5 – Slightly Agree
> 6 – Agree
> 7 – Strongly Agree

C. Orientation/Initial Training: For the following statements, reflect on your experiences **during** orientation/initial training

1.	The organization's mission was emphasized throughout the orientation/initial training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	My individual role in the organization's mission was explained during orientation/initial training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Attending orientation/initial training provided the information needed to perform my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	Attending orientation/initial training helped develop the skills needed to perform my job in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	The materials provided by the organization during orientation/initial training were relevant to my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	The organization provided activities to build a bond with my peers during orientation/initial training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	During orientation/initial training there was time set aside for me to build a bond with my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

For the following section, use the scale from 1-7 (see below) and circle the number that best represents your level of agreement with each statement.

Scale:
1 – Strongly Disagree
2 – Disagree
3 – Slightly Disagree
4 – Neutral
5 – Slightly Agree
6 – Agree
7 – Strongly Agree

D. After Orientation/Initial Training: For the following statements, reflect on your experience **after** orientation/initial training

1.	Organizational guidelines provided time for my supervisor and me to meet.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	My supervisor has initiated conversations with me to ensure I understand my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	My supervisor has established clear expectations of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	My supervisor has attempted to get to know me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	My peers supported me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	My peers encouraged me to ask questions if I had any.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	My peers attempted to get to know me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	I have at least one peer in the organization I can go to if I need advice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	The organization has provided social gatherings/teambuilders (examples: holiday parties, team outings, cookouts).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. My peers have organized social gatherings for the team members (examples: dinners, movies, playing sports).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My supervisor encourages collaboration between members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I have had opportunities to interact with my peers while performing organizational tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I can handle routine work-related problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I can handle the expectations of my role in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I am a valuable member of my team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I feel my performance is aligned with the organization's standards.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Our team is united in trying to reach the team's goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Team members take responsibility on this team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Our team members communicate freely about each of our personal responsibilities in getting tasks done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. The members of this team help each other when working on tasks or projects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. The members of this team get along well together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. The members of this team stick together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I have asked for feedback on my performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24. I have asked my supervisor for his/her opinion of my work.　　　1　2　3　4　5　6　7

25. I have participated in social events to meet people in the organization　　　1　2　3　4　5　6　7

26. I have tried to learn the organization's policies.　　　1　2　3　4　5　6　7

27. I am social.　　　1　2　3　4　5　6　7

28. I am self-confident.　　　1　2　3　4　5　6　7

29. I would prefer to work in a group comparted to working alone.　　　1　2　3　4　5　6　7

30. I seek out opportunities to work/interact with others.　　　1　2　3　4　5　6　7

Please rank the following statements on how much you think they aided you in the onboarding process. The statement which you think had the most impact should be #1 and the statement which had the least impact should be #10. **Each number 1-10 should only be used once**. You can cross the numbers off below as you use them to help you keep track of which numbers have been used.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Most Impact   Least Impact

_____ Accurate job description

_____ Team builders during orientation/initial training

_____ Social events after orientation/initial training

_____ Having a peer you can go to with questions

_____ Time set-aside for conversations with supervisor

_____ Presentations during orientation/initial training on how to perform job functions

_____ Informal conversations with peers during tasks

_____ Having a point-of-contact prior to arrival

_____ Having peers that support you

_____ Having clear expectations from your supervisor

This completes the survey. Thank you for taking the time to participate in the study!

Onboarding in Teams (Supervisors Residence Life)

Please remember, your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Your name should not be written on your survey to protect your identity. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask the researcher.

A. Demographics

1. What is your sex?
    a. Male

    b. Female

    c. Prefer Not to Answer

2. What is your current college-level classification?

    a. Freshman

    b. Sophomore

    c. Junior

    d. Senior

    e. Graduate Student

    f. Full-Time Staff

3. What institution are you affiliated with?

B. Ranking

Please rank the following statements on how much you think they aided new team members in the onboarding process. The statement which you think had the most impact should be #1 and the statement which had the least impact should be #10. **Each number 1-10 should only be used once**. You can cross the numbers off below as you use them to help you keep track of which numbers have been used.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Most Impact   Least Impact

_____ Accurate job description

_____ Team builders during orientation/initial training

_____ Social events after orientation/initial training

_____ Having a peer you can go to with questions

_____ Time set-aside for conversations with supervisor

_____ Presentations during orientation/initial training on how to perform job functions

_____ Informal conversations with peers during tasks

_____ Having a point-of-contact prior to arrival

_____ Having peers that support you

_____ Having clear expectations from your supervisor

This completes the survey. Thank you for taking the time to participate in the study!

Appendix F – Survey Scale

Scale

Section B: Questions 1 – 6: Organizational Effort Pre-Arrival/Recruitment

1. I was satisfied with the support I received from the organization prior to my first day on the job.
2. I was satisfied with the information I received from the organization prior to my first day on the job.
3. I feel the job description accurately reflected my job responsibilities.
4. I feel the recruitment process accurately reflected my job responsibilities.
5. The organization provided me with a contact person prior to my arrival if I had questions.
6. I felt comfortable approaching the contact person prior to my arrival if I had questions.

Section C: Questions 1 – 7: Organizational Effort Orientation/Initial Training

1. The organization's mission was emphasized throughout the orientation/initial training.
2. My individual role in the organization's mission was explained during orientation/initial training.
3. Attending orientation/initial training provided the information needed to perform my job.
4. Attending orientation/initial training helped develop the skills needed to perform my job in the organization.
5. The materials provided by the organization during orientation/initial training were relevant to my job.

6. The organization provided activities to build a bond with my peers during orientation/initial training.
7. During orientation/initial training there was time set aside for me to build a bond with my supervisor.

Section D: Questions 1 – 4: Organizational Effort Relationship with Supervisor

1. Organizational guidelines provided time for my supervisor and me to meet.
2. My supervisor has initiated conversations with me to ensure I understand my job.
3. My supervisor has established clear expectations of me.
4. My supervisor has attempted to get to know me.

Section D: Questions 5 – 8: Organizational Efforts Relationship with Peers

5. My peers supported me.
6. My peers encouraged me to ask questions if I had any.
7. My peers attempted to get to know me.
8. I have at least one peer in the organization I can go to for advice.

Section D: Questions 9 – 12: Organizational Effort Socialization

9. The organization has provided social gatherings/teambuilders (examples: holiday parties, team outings, cookouts).
10. My peers have organized social gatherings for the team members (examples: dinners, movies, playing sports).
11. My supervisor encourages collaboration between members.
12. I have had opportunities to interact with my peers while performing organizational tasks.

Section D: Questions 13 – 16: Self-Efficacy

13. I can handle routine work-related problems.

14. I can handle the expectations of my role in the organization.

15. I am a valuable member of my team.

16. I feel my performance is aligned with the organization's standards.

Section D: Questions 17 – 22: Team Cohesion

17. Our team is united in trying to reach the team's goals.

18. Team members take responsibility on this team.

19. Our team members communicate freely about each of our personal responsibilities in getting tasks done.

20. The members of this team help each other when working on tasks or projects.

21. The members of this team get along well together.

22. The members of this team stick together.

Section D: Questions 23 – 26: Information Seeking

23. I have asked for feedback on my performance.

24. I have asked my supervisor for his/her opinion of my work.

25. I have participated in social events to meet people in the organization

26. I have tried to learn the organization's policies.

Section D: Questions 27 – 30: Extraversion

27. I am social.
28. I am self-confident.
29. I would prefer to work in a group compared to working alone.
30. I seek out opportunities to work/interact with others.

Section E: Ranking Questions are for what the participant feels is important in the onboarding process.

Appendix G – Informed Consent Form

Florida Institute of Technology
High Tech with a Human Touch™

Informed Consent

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study. The researcher will answer any questions before you sign this form.

Study Title: Avoiding the Restart Button: Examining the Critical Factors of the Onboarding Process that Encourage Team Cohesion.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between organizational efforts in the onboarding process and team cohesion. It will help distinguish what steps organizations can take during the onboarding process to increase the chances that a team will have more cohesion.

Procedures: This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The first set of questions is to collect some basic demographic information. In the next three sets of questions, the participant will read a statement and indicate their level of agreement to the statement using a 7-point Likert scale. Finally, the participant will read some statements and rank the statements in order of importance in the onboarding process. The study is being conducted with members of residence life teams and the reserves officers' training corps on college campuses.

Potential Risks of Participating: This study has minimal risks to the participants and the risks are deemed to be no more than everyday life.

Potential Benefits of Participating: The benefits of this study are that it will help businesses better design their onboarding programs. This should lead to higher job satisfaction and a decrease in employee turnover.

Compensation: There is no monetary compensation for participating in the study.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. To help protect your identity, you will not be asked to write your name on your survey. The names of the institutions where the data was collected will not revealed in the study analysis. The completed surveys will be stored in a locked file cabinet for 5 years, at which point the surveys will be shredded.

Voluntary participation:
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. You may omit any of the questions.

Right to withdraw from the study:
You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:
        Gregory Connell, Doctor of Business Candidate
        3110 Country Club Rd
        Melbourne, FL 32901
        Email: gconnell@fit.edu Phone: 321-537-7145

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:
        Dr. Lisa Steelman, IRB Chairperson
        150 West University Blvd.
        Melbourne, FL 32901
        Email: lsteelma@fit.edu Phone: 321-674-8104

Agreement:
I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description. I also am signing that I am at least 18 years of age.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix H – Script for ROTC

(Hand out consent form)

Hello everyone and thank you for allowing me to visit your staff. My name is Greg Connell and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Business at Florida Institute of Technology. This study has been approved by the institutional review board at my institution. My dissertation topic is exploring the outcome of onboarding. Onboarding is defined by Bauer and Erdogan (2011) as:

> "the process through which new employees move from being organizational outsiders to becoming organizational insiders. Onboarding refers to the process that helps new employees learn the knowledge, skills, and behaviors, they need to succeed in their new organizations."

The goal of the study is to better understand how organizations can design their onboarding processes to lead to positive outcomes for both the organization and the employee.

The survey will also use the terms "supervisor" and "team."

For the purpose of this survey, your supervisor is the person that you directly report to and evaluates your progress.

Team is referring to the specific squad you are on.

There are two versions of the survey. One is for new cadets and one is for the supervisors/leaders in the organization.

New cadets are defined as those cadets which completed (insert name of orientation/initial training program specific to organization) from July 2018 or later. To ensure accurate data collection, if for some reason you are a new cadet but did not participate in (name of orientation/initial training program), I would ask that you do not complete the survey.

Supervisors/leaders are team leaders, squad leaders, platoon leaders, platoon sergeants, or members of the company.

It is estimated that the new cadet survey will take 15 minutes to complete and the leader survey will take 5 minutes to complete.

For those individuals that will be completing the new cadet survey, please pay extra attention to the directions for each section. Some of the statements will ask you to

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respond to the statements referencing your experience once you were hired by the organization but prior to you starting orientation/initial training. Some of the statements will ask you to respond to the statements referencing your experience during orientation/initial training. Finally, some of the statements will ask you to respond to the statements referencing your experience after orientation/initial training.

In order to protect the identity of the participant's, the survey will not ask you for your name and the name of the specific institutions where the data was collected will not be identified in the dissertation.

Can I please have the new cadets raise their hand, so I may distribute the survey to you?

(Distribute survey)

Can I please have supervisors/leaders raise their hand, so I may distribute the survey to you?

(Distribute survey)

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. No one under the age of 18 may participate in the survey. If you wish to volunteer to participate in the study, please review the consent form and sign the bottom of the form. I will collect both the completed consent form and survey once you are finished. If you do not wish to participate in the study, you may bring the consent form and survey up to me at any point once the other individuals have started the survey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to let me know. Thank you for your consideration to participate.

Appendix I – Script for Residence Life

(Hand out consent form)

Hello everyone and thank you for allowing me to visit your staff. My name is Greg Connell and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Business at Florida Institute of Technology. This study has been approved by the institutional review board at my institution. My dissertation topic is exploring the outcome of onboarding. Onboarding is defined by Bauer and Erdogan (2011) as:

> "the process through which new employees move from being organizational outsiders to becoming organizational insiders. Onboarding refers to the process that helps new employees learn the knowledge, skills, and behaviors, they need to succeed in their new organizations."

The goal of the study is to better understand how organizations can design their onboarding processes to lead to positive outcomes for both the organization and the employee.

There are two versions of the survey. One is for resident assistants and one is for the supervisors in the organization.

To ensure accurate data collection, if for some reason you are a new resident assistant but did not participate in (name of orientation/initial training program), I would ask that you do not complete the survey.

The survey will also use the terms "supervisor" and "team."

For the purpose of this survey, your supervisor is the person that you directly report to and evaluates your progress.

Team is referring to the specific staff you are on.

Supervisors are professional staff, graduate staff, or head resident assistants that have oversight over staff.

It is estimated that the resident assistant survey will take 15 minutes to complete and the supervisor survey will take 5 minutes to complete.

For those individuals that will be completing the resident assistant survey, please pay extra attention to the directions for each section. Some of the statements will ask you to respond to the statements referencing your experience once you were hired by the organization but prior to you starting orientation/initial training. Some

of the statements will ask you to respond to the statements referencing your experience during orientation/initial training. Finally, some of the statements will ask you to respond to the statements referencing your experience after orientation/initial training. If you are a returning staff member, please use this current year as your frame of reference when answering the questions.

In order to protect the identity of the participant's, the survey will not ask you for your name and the name of the specific institutions where the data was collected will not be identified in the dissertation.

Can I please have the resident assistants raise their hand, so I may distribute the survey to you?

(Distribute survey)

Can I please have supervisors raise their hand, so I may distribute the survey to you?

(Distribute survey)

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. No one under the age of 18 may participate in the survey. If you wish to volunteer to participate in the study, please review the consent form and sign the bottom of the form. I will collect both the completed consent form and survey once you are finished. If you do not wish to participate in the study, you may bring the consent form and survey up to me at any point once the other individuals have started the survey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to let me know. Thank you for your consideration to participate.

Appendix J – Institutional Review Board Approval

Notice of Exempt Review Status

Certificate of Clearance for Human Participants Research

Principal Investigator:	Gregory Connell
Date:	August 26, 2018
IRB Number:	18-128
Study Title:	Avoiding the restart button: Examining the critical factors of the onboarding process the encourage team cohesion

Your research protocol was reviewed and approved by the IRB Chairperson. Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.101, your study has been determined to be minimal risk for human subjects and exempt from 45 CFR46 federal regulations. The Exempt determination is valid indefinitely. Substantive changes to the approved exempt research must be requested and approved prior to their initiation. Investigators may request proposed changes by submitting a Revision Request form found on the IRB website.

Acceptance of this study is based on your agreement to abide by the policies and procedures of Florida Institute of Technology's Human Research Protection Program (http://web2.fit.edu/crm/irb/) and does not replace any other approvals that may be required.
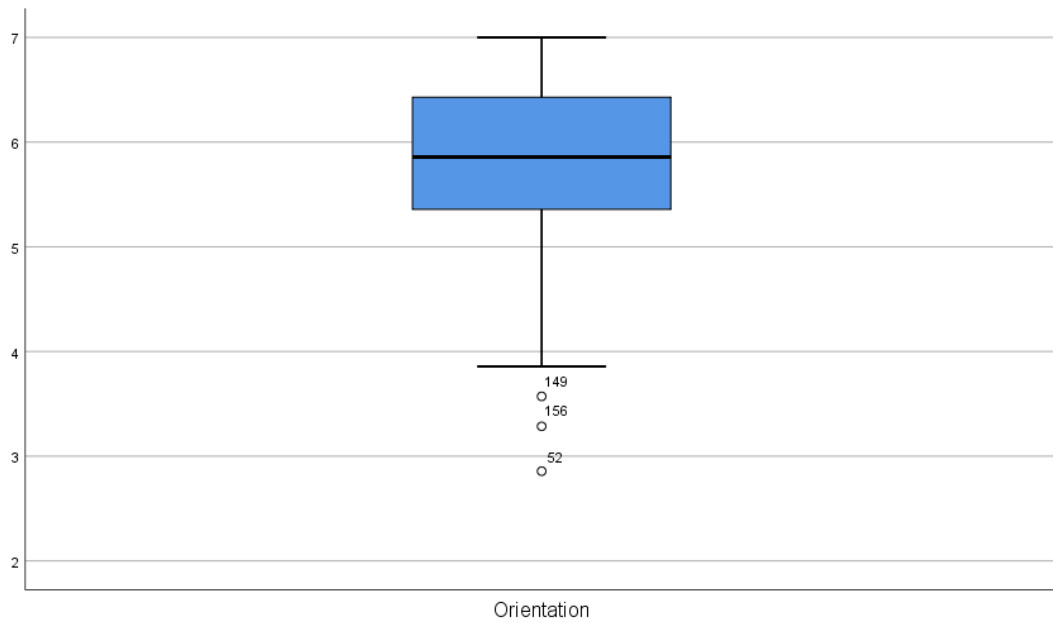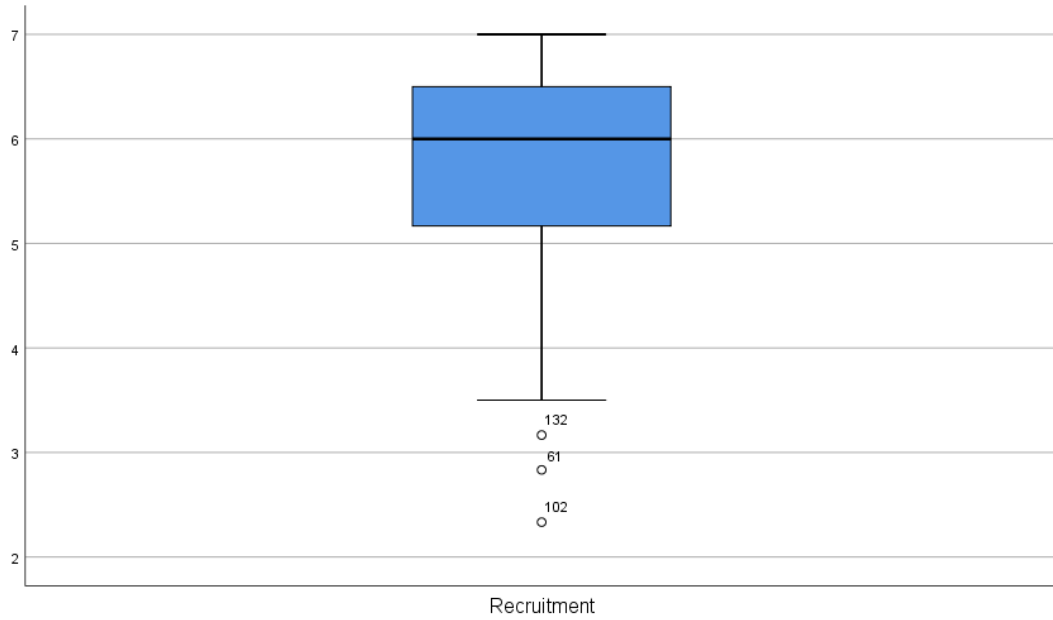
All data, which may include signed consent form documents, must be retained in a secure location for a minimum of three years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained on a password-protected computer if electronic information is used. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.
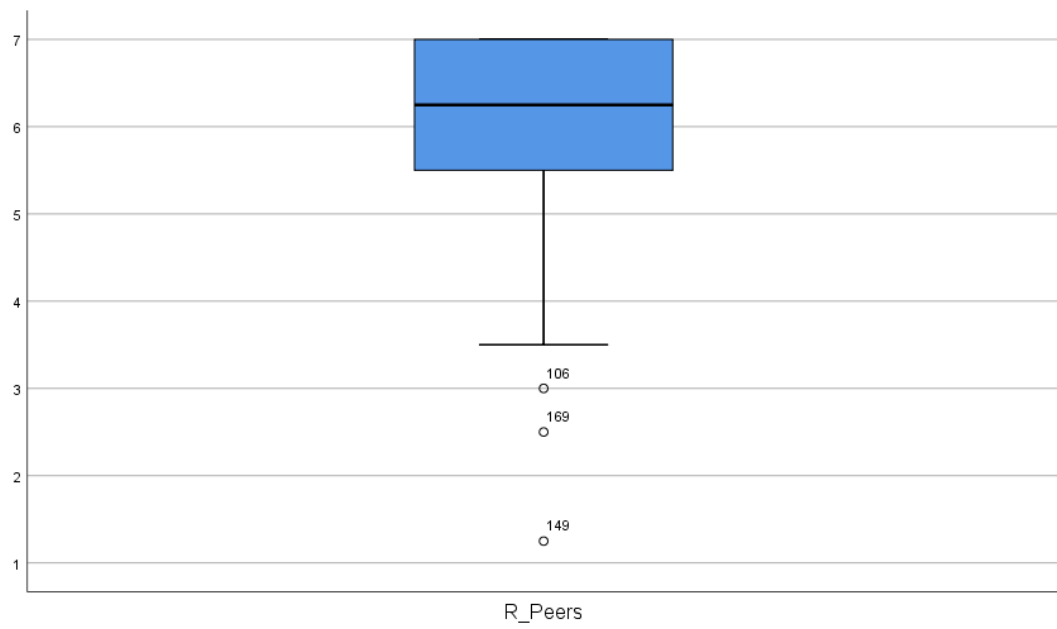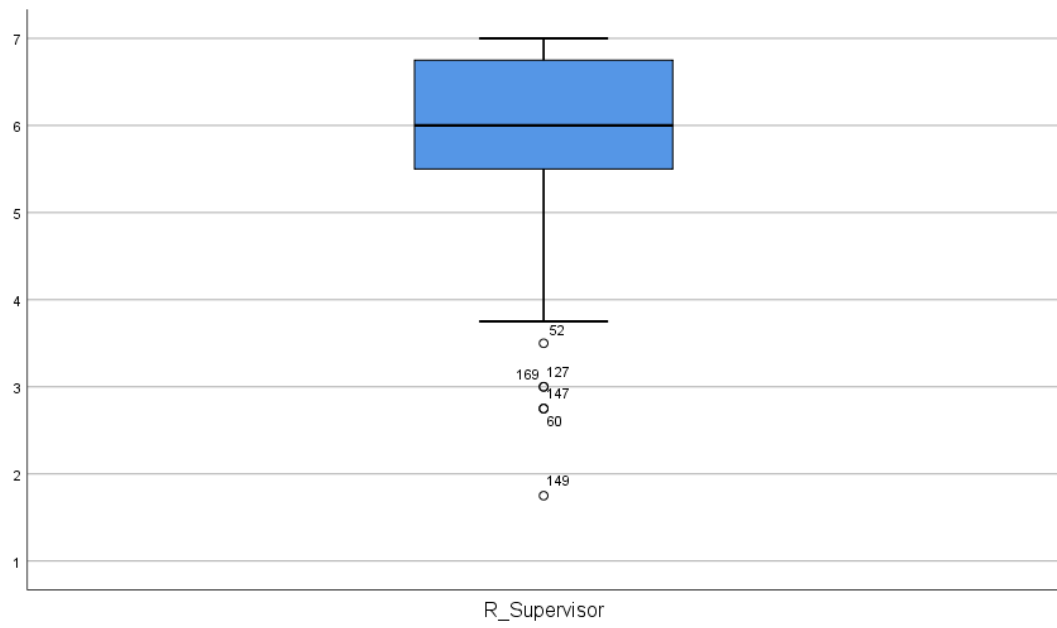
The category for which exempt status has been determined for this protocol is as follows:
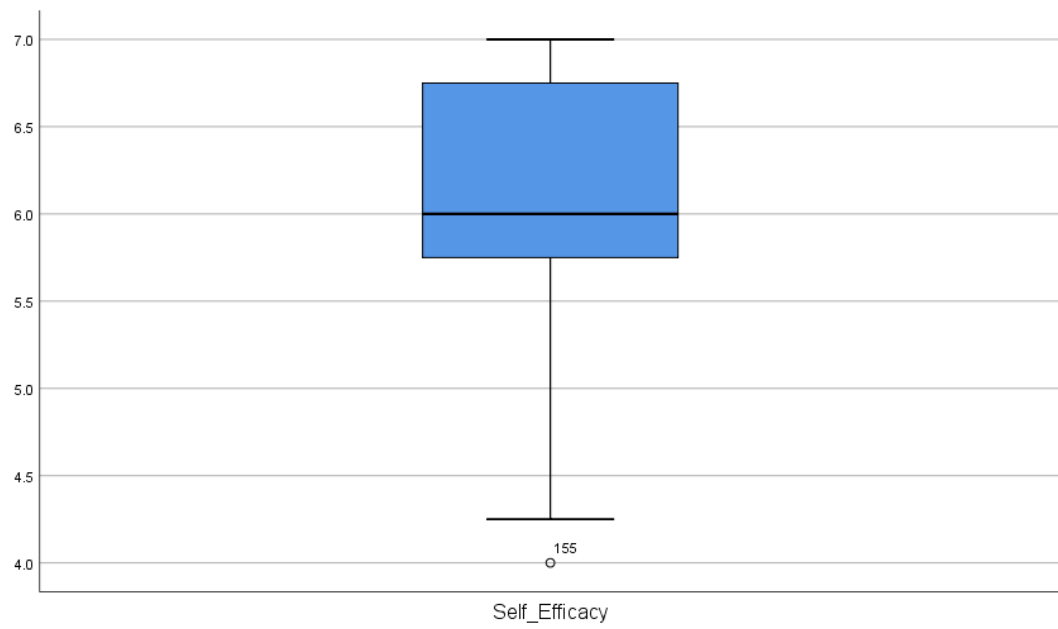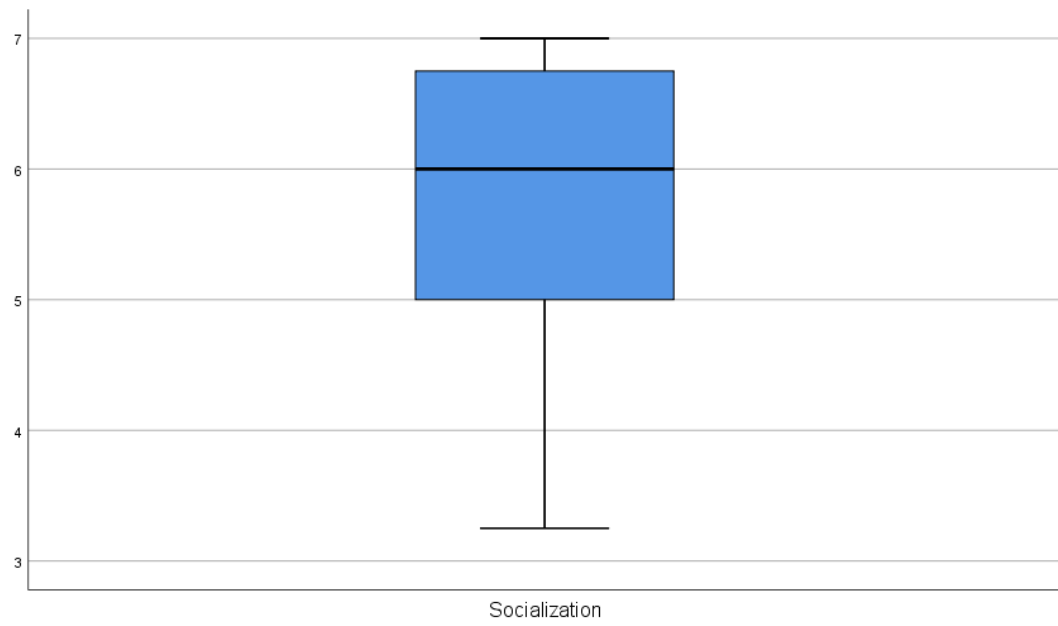
2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior so long as confidentiality is maintained.
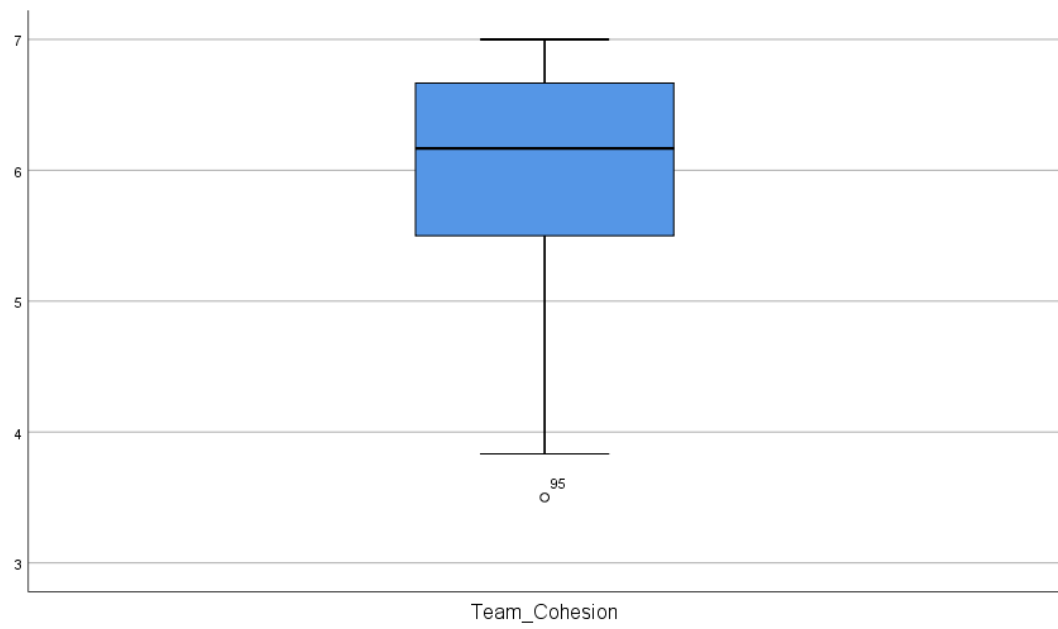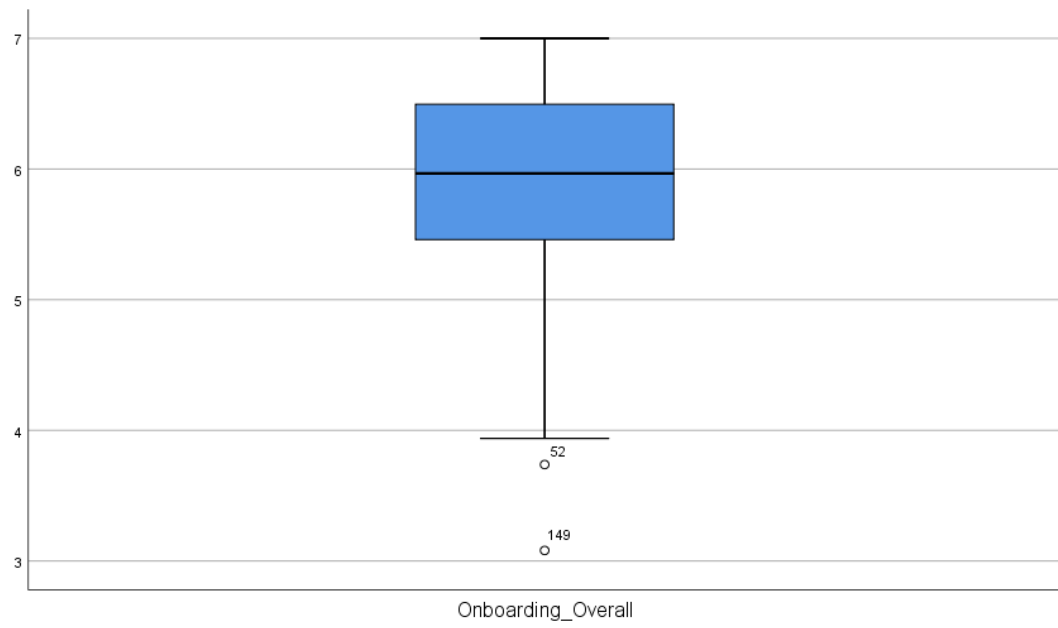
  a. Information is recorded in such a manner that the subject cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participant and/or

  b. Subject's responses, if know outside the research would not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing, employability, or reputation.
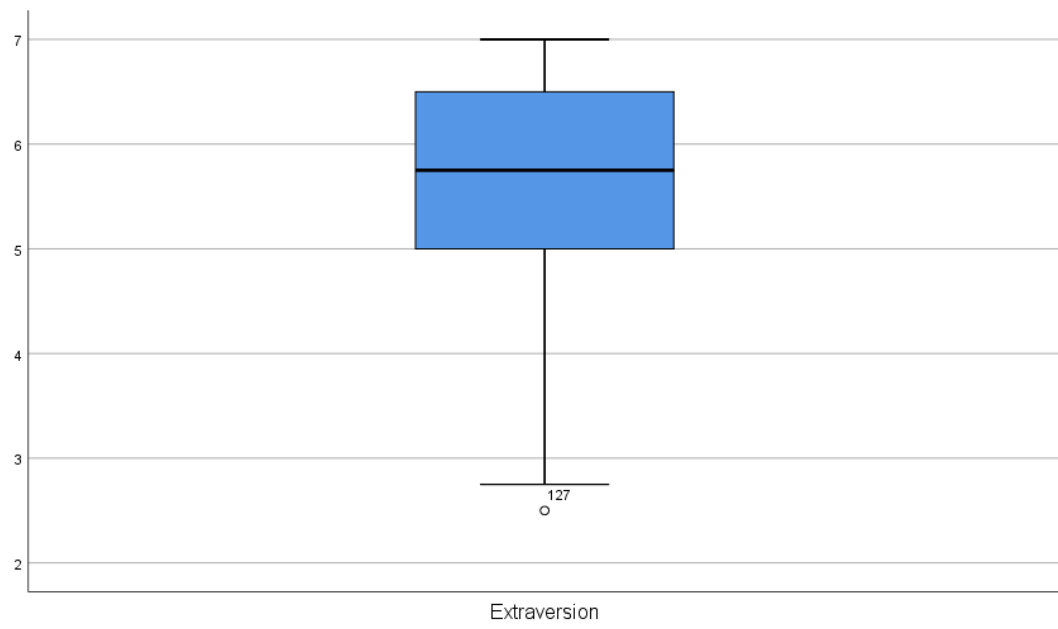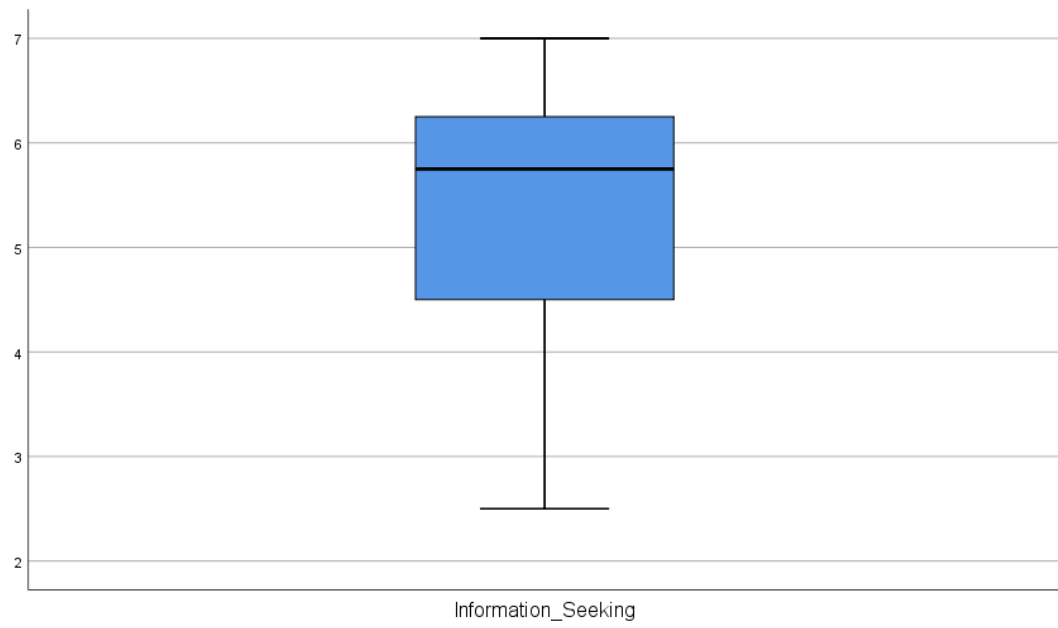
Appendix K – Boxplot for Outliers

Recruitment

Orientation

R_Supervisor

R_Peers

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Socialization

Self_Efficacy

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Onboarding_Overall

Team_Cohesion

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Information_Seeking

Extraversion

Appendix L – Correlation Matrix (Pearson Correlation)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. R	-	.699***	.551***	.392***	.460***	.424***	.408***	.324**	.765***	.316**
2. O	.699***	-	.768***	.484***	.564***	.316**	.364***	.308**	.857***	.350**
3. RS	.551***	.768***	-	.570***	.524***	.316**	.460***	.272**	.852***	.262**
4. RP	.392***	.484***	.570***	-	.564***	.319**	.484***	.254**	.751***	.474***
5. S	.460***	.564***	.524***	.564***	-	.305**	.553***	.262**	.772***	.403***
6. SE	.424***	.316**	.316**	.319**	.305**	-	.350***	.502***	.406***	.463***
7. IS	.408***	.364***	.460***	.484***	.553***	.350***	-	.419***	.560***	.408***
8. E	.324**	.308**	.272**	.254**	.262**	.502***	.419***	-	.333***	.422***
9. OO	.765***	,857***	.852***	.751***	.772***	.406***	.560***	.333***	-	.422***
10. TC	.316**	.350***	.262**	.474***	.403***	.463***	.408***	.449***	.422***	-

** $P < 0.01$ level (Two-tail), *** $P < 0.001$ (Two-tail)

Key: R – Recruitment/Pre-Arrival, O – Orientation/Recruitment, RS – Relationship with Supervisor, RP – Relationship with Peers, S – Socialization, SE – Self-Efficacy, IS – Information Seeking, E – Extraversion, OO – Overall Onboarding, TC – Team Cohesion