

## EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING IN HUMAN RESOURCES PROCESSES

Anna ROGOZIŃSKA-PAWEŁCZYK<sup>1\*</sup>, Łukasz JANKOWSKI<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Lodz; anna.rogozinska@eksoc.uni.lodz.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-9376-6915

<sup>2</sup> University of Lodz; lukasz.jankowski@edu.uni.lodz.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-4036-113X

\* Correspondence author

**Purpose:** In today's dynamic business environment, the ability to build a competitive advantage is highly important. This can be achieved by employing high-quality specialists. After signing an employment contract, it is also crucial to introduce the new employee to their duties and conduct an acclimatization process to retain the employee and fully utilize their competencies and skills. The onboarding process is designed to help integrate the employee into the company. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the understanding of the concept of onboarding by HR specialists and to diagnose their business expectations regarding a properly conducted onboarding process in the organization.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The research objectives were achieved through a literature review and in-depth individual interviews (IDI) that were partially structured. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical and practical aspects of onboarding.

**Findings:** The results of the research allowed for an updated definition of onboarding and a synthetic analysis of its understanding between scientific sources and the perceptions of HR department employees. The research identified the challenges that businesses face in ensuring the onboarding process is successfully conducted.

**Research limitations/implications:** Certain limitations exist, such as the non-random selection of the research sample and the subjective nature of the respondents. However, the authors believe that the findings provide valuable insights that can serve as a basis for further research.

**Practical implications:** The study provides important guidelines that can inform the practice of onboarding, aiding HR departments in improving their processes to better integrate new employees and harness their full potential.

**Social implications:** The findings could influence public attitudes towards onboarding practices and potentially shape corporate social responsibility policies, improving the quality of life for new employees by ensuring they are effectively integrated into their new work environments.

**Originality/value:** This paper offers original scientific value by synthesizing existing definitions of onboarding from the literature and comparing them with practical approaches used by HR specialists. The insights gained are valuable to both academics and HR practitioners.

**Keywords:** Onboarding, HR management, competitive advantage, acclimatization process, business expectations.

## 1. Introduction

Organizational ethnography is a methodological custom that allows the study of business practices in their natural, holistic context. Ethnography itself, on the other hand, is based on two types of inference - inductive and abductive (Chomczyński, Konecki, 2011). In an ethnographic context, a researcher encounters an interesting phenomenon, which they then subject to an in-depth analysis using one or more research methods which include observation, interview and text analysis (Chomczyński, Konecki, 2011). A number of phenomena originally forming and evolving in the business environment are subjected to this type of research, and in the course of dissemination they become the object of scientific interest. An example of social innovation is the phenomenon of employee onboarding. Its origins date back to the 1950s and 1960s (Kowalska, 2018), and the peak of its development has been observed since 2000 when the American Society for Training and Development defined onboarding as a new sub-discipline of human resource management (Christiansen, Stein, 2010). Since then, onboarding has been steadily evolving, as confirmed by numerous scholarly sources (Patel, Mohanty, 2023; Samuel, Durning, Meyer, 2021). In the face of large-scale demographic shifts and rapidly changing workforce expectations, there is a need to constantly update HR concepts (such as onboarding) in not only a practical (often unwritten) context, but also a scientific one, in order to bring the state of the art and level of learning in line with current business trends. Traditional approaches described in the scientific literature available today, often several or more years old, and the prevalent trend of quoting often outdated sources (Gawlik, Kosik, 2017) without their development may not reflect the needs present in the labour market. Consequently, this may lead to the degradation of the level of teaching and further development of science in the field of human resource management and related fields. Taking the above into consideration, it is necessary to ask whether the explanations created so far still reflect the same meaning of onboarding, (Dai, De Meuse, 2007) and also whether and in what direction this concept is evolving in the context of dynamic business changes?<sup>1</sup> This line of thought led to finding a potential research gap in the form of the lack of topicality of the concept of onboarding in HR processes. Thus, the main goal of the article became the redefinition of the described concept adapted to today's times, and the side objective, proving the research gap related to its lack of actuality in the scientific texts available today. The thesis guiding the entire research article became the statement that the definitions of onboarding currently available in the scientific literature do not reflect the dynamic changes in the business environment and

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the principle that business should go hand in hand with science (see Mrozowicz, Puciato, 2010), the information on the dynamic evolution of the onboarding process in recent years under the spell of business pressures and social changes exuded here on the basis of business sources (accessed 4.02.2024):

- <https://elearningindustry.com/induction-training-and-onboarding-trends-to-drive-new-hire-engagement>
- <https://wearesimplytalented.com/onboarding-excellence-a-hiring-managers-role-in-new-employee-integration>
- <https://claned.com/onboarding-process>

employee expectations, which indicates the need to revise onboarding concepts in order to better adjust them to contemporary organizational needs and scientific standards. In order to prove the thesis outlined in this way, the authors have prepared an article, first presenting the preliminary research gap, the research procedure, the research scheme and methodology, in order to finally present the results of the study and the conclusions, which can be found in the following chapters of this article.

## 2. Research procedure

To verify the main hypothesis, the authors have planned a research procedure that will be carried out in 2 stages. The study will use desk research and web research analysis and qualitative in-depth individual semi-structured interviews (IDI)<sup>2</sup>. The first part of the study consisted of verifying the current state of knowledge derived directly from the current scientific literature and identifying potential research gaps, while the second part of the study consisted of conducting ethnographic research in the form of the aforementioned in-depth interview, aimed at learning the opinions of people creating onboarding practices in organizations in 2024 in Poland. The analysis of the statements and the development of a definition of the studied concept based on the practical knowledge of the respondents after the analysis was aimed at redefining and updating the concept of onboarding.

The literature analysis described above in the framework was designed to determine the originality of the research topic undertaken. It represents a synthesis of the current state of knowledge in accordance with the typology of literature reviews (Papaioannou, Sutton, Booth, 2012). In order to examine the degree of connection and dependence of the occurrence of scientific papers and research, for the purpose of the concept an analysis of the literature on the subject from 2015 to 2023 was carried out, based on searches in Google Scholar, Web of Science and Scopus databases. The choice of the former was dictated not only by ease of use or accessibility, but also by the wide range of scientific publications in various fields and the ability to quickly identify repetitions. The Web of Science database is a much more readily indexed source and contains reputable scientific journals, which became the main reason for its inclusion. The last database in the list is SCOPUS which has precisely developed search engine selection criteria, a wide range of respected publications and, importantly, is highly regarded in the scientific community.

---

<sup>2</sup> Interviews were conducted between January 2, 2024, and February 5, 2024.

The literature review incorporated texts published between 2015 and 2023, and the average age of the analyzed texts is less than 4 years, while the average difference between the date of performing the literature review and the vintage of the definitions cited in the analyzed texts is slightly more than 10 years (rounding according to the rules of metrology to integers).

This study adopted a six-step literature review (Lenart-Gansiniec, 2021) consisting of goal setting, definition of database search criteria, inclusion/exclusion criteria, article screening, and data extraction and synthesis. The literature review procedure took the following form:

1) Selection of research questions.

- a) What are the main objectives and benefits of effective employee onboarding in the context of human resource management?
- b) What are the key elements of a successful employee onboarding process, from the perspective of academic literature and organizational practice?
- c) What is the place of onboarding processes in employee hiring in organizations operating in the labour market today?

2) Defining the purpose of the review.

The purpose of conducting this literature review on employee onboarding in HR processes is to identify, synthesize, and analyze currently available academic research, explanations, and business practices related to the onboarding process. The deeper idea of the study is also to recognize the current state of knowledge, as well as to identify gaps in the definitions cited by the authors, and to suggest potential areas for further research and provide functional guidance for organizations in initiating, designing and implementing onboarding programs.

3) Choice of review type.

The literature review took a meta-analytic form - it integrates the results of multiple empirical studies conducted independently focused on the topic of onboarding. The meta-analysis of the literature allows not only the aggregation of data from different sources, but also the general conclusions and generalizations, which will ultimately synthesize a unified definition of onboarding created by the author of the paper based on the state of scientific research to date.

4) Notation by Boolean logic.

The transcript uses the English-language prototypes and the most accurate (according to the author) translation of them into Polish: (“onboarding” OR “adaptation and implementation process”) AND (“employer branding”).

5) Selection of literature eligibility criteria.

- a) Timeliness: only publications published between 2015 and 2023 were selected.
- b) Relevance: the literature should relate directly to the topic of HR processes (and more deeply - onboarding and employer branding). Any sources not directly related to the aforementioned topics were excluded from the search results.

c) Full text: Publications that were not available in full for independent reasons (including cost reasons, such as an additional fee for the opportunity to read the text) were not considered.

6) Keyword selection.

Because of the need to find as many definitions of the onboarding process as possible, after preliminary analysis of the topic, it was decided to search by two key phrases: “onboarding” and “employer branding” (and their translations into Polish). A summary of the preliminary study performed in this way is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

*Desk research summary*

Stages	Google Scholar	Web Of Science	SCOPUS	Sum
Number of available scientific texts in Polish and English containing the phrase “employee onboarding” and “onboarding” published between 2015 and 2023	2530	115	124	2769
The number of analyzed scientific texts in free access	160	35	63	258
Number of original definitions of the term onboarding (without repeated texts analyzed, but with source repetitions allowed)	46	10	4	60
Number of definitions quoted from another scientific source	29 (63,0%)	9 (90,0%)	2 (50,0%)	40 (66,7%)
Number of author's own definitions without clear indication of source	16 (34,8%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (25,0%)	17 (28,3%)
Number of definitions created based on knowledge/research/business experience	1 (2,2%)	1 (10,0%)	1 (25,0%)	3 (5,0%)
Time scope of the study	17-19/11/2023	28.11.2023	29.11.2023	-

Source: Own elaboration.

A review of the literature showed that 66.7% of the definitions found in scientific texts (in relation to the unique 258 texts analyzed) are verbatim quotes or paraphrases of the definition of the concept of onboarding presented by another researcher. The number of explanations proposed by the author, but without a clear indication of the source or experience on which they were based, constitutes the next largest group in terms of numbers, accounting for 28.3% of all the extracted definitions. The smallest part (5%) consists of passwords formulated in an authorial manner on the basis of various scientific studies. After excluding all duplicate sources or definitions, 60 explanations of the concept of onboarding in personnel processes occurred in the 258 texts studied. This means that for each article analyzed, less than 23.3% of the original definition (one explanation for more than 4 texts). At the same time, of the 40 formulations quoted or paraphrased, two texts were the most frequently repeated primary sources:

- nine repetitions: „Onboarding is the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly” (Bauer, 2010),
- six repetitions: „We use the term onboarding to refer to all formal and informal practices, programs and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment” (Klein, Polin, 2012).

Through the systematic analysis of the literature, it can be concluded that the cited definitions may be outdated<sup>3</sup> or defined in an ethnographically incorrect way in the context of current organizations existing in business, as they clearly do not refer to business practices. The above conclusions supported a scientific study conducted by the method of an in-depth semi-structured interview (IDI) on representatives of companies who are professionally involved in the creation and execution of a process at the borderline between adaptation and implementation called HR onboarding.

### 3. Research method

The choice of IDI methods was justified by their effectiveness in exploring individual perspectives and opinions, which is crucial when researching complex topics (Rubin, Rubin, 2012), such as employee onboarding. IDI research provides a high level of control over the research process, by using pre-planned and structured questions, the researcher is able to consistently explore specific topics with each respondent (Bryman, Bell, 2015). This type of interview allows the researcher to obtain detailed information and understand subtle nuances in respondents' answers (Rubin, Rubin, 2012). The choice of this research method was related to the possibility of comparing and contrasting data from different interviews. They allow a better comparison of the data, as all respondents answer the same questions, making it easier to identify patterns and trends in responses (Patton, 2015). The survey also took care to create an atmosphere conducive to openness and honesty in responses. To this end, a technique of neutral questions was used to avoid influencing respondents and to obtain the most authentic answers possible (Kvale, Brinkmann, 2009).

---

<sup>3</sup> Here, “outdated” in the dictionary context “one that has fallen out of use, out of custom, out of fashion” (<https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/przestarzaly.html>, 31.01.2024) and customarily “out of date” or replaceable by more recent data. Timeliness, on the other hand, can be determined by the concept of a “long period of time” defined in social science terms as:

- 10 years - Opalinski, 2013, pp. 152-171.
- 8 years - <https://orient.uw.edu.pl/dobre-praktyki-naukowe/>, 31.01.2024.
- 10-15 years - Szymanowski, 2018, pp. 11-28.

The questionnaire consisted of 27 main questions, which were developed on the basis of existing literature on employee onboarding (Bryman, Bell, 2015). These questions focused on various aspects such as:

- the essence of onboarding in HR processes,
- the duration of onboarding,
- criteria for measuring the correctness of the onboarding process,
- the objectives of the onboarding process,
- the relationship between onboarding and employee engagement.

In addition, the researcher had the opportunity to ask additional questions, which is in line with Patton's (2015) recommendations for flexibility and the ability to adapt the research process to the context and respondents' answers.

The study described in this paper focused on updating the concept of onboarding in HR processes. Based on the systematic review of the literature, it can be concluded that the very definition of the studied term has been repeatedly described from a scientific point of view, but as outlined in the introduction - these descriptions may not have been sufficiently up-to-date which led to the need for further research related to the present topic. This study focused on the redefinition of the concept of onboarding, which was an interpretation of the respondents' statements made by the authors of the paper. The interviews themselves were partially structured and performed on the basis of a pre-prepared scheme shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.**  
*In-depth interview scheme*

Topic	Information	Sample questions for the participant
Onboarding as an HR phenomenon	Causes of appearance onboarding phenomenon.	What do you think onboarding is in HR processes in general?
		Why have companies increasingly turned to onboarding as a tool to support HR processes in recent years?
	Characteristic and recurring stages (or tasks) that can be specified in onboarding processes in different companies.	Based on your career, can you detail any cyclical stages or tasks that occur in the onboarding process?
		How does onboarding support the formation of teams and how are new hires integrated into existing groups in the organization?
		Can you detail the positions/persons/departments that create onboarding processes in organizations?
	Individuals conducting and shaping onboarding.	How does onboarding support the transfer of knowledge, values and organizational norms to new hires in practice? Why is it so important?
		If you had to identify the reasons why onboarding processes are implemented, what would be among them?
	Business objectives of the onboarding process.	In your opinion, are onboarding and implementation or adaptation the same HR phenomena, or do they have some differences though?

Cont. table 2.

Correctness of the onboarding process in practical business terms	Length of the onboarding process.	How long do you think the onboarding process should take? Why?
		When does the onboarding process begin and when does it end (pre-boarding and off-boarding)?
		Can or should onboarding tasks/stages be completed in the correct order? Is there a notion of a schedule for the onboarding process?
	Timing of the onboarding process.	Is onboarding aligned with the company's strategy? If so, in what way?
		What are the main areas of risk associated with the onboarding process?
	Determinants shaping onboarding in business practice.	What mistakes on the part of the organizers can be made in the onboarding process?
		What phenomena affect the final shape of the onboarding process?
	Adapting the onboarding process to different job levels.	What situations signal the need for change?
		Does onboarding differ depending on the level of position for which the employee is hired? If so, at what stage and what are the differences?
What is the role of the board and management in creating and maintaining the correctness of the onboarding process?		
Onboarding as a socialization phenomenon	Cognitive planes of the onboarding process.	What onboarding factors affect the effectiveness of social interactions within the company?
		On what cognitive levels should onboarding be carried out to be maximally effective (e.g., emotional, procedural, social)?
	Tools used in the onboarding process.	What tools are used today in the onboarding process?
		How does onboarding adapt to the increasingly prevalent remote forms of work?
	The impact of onboarding on creating the company culture.	Is there a link between the quality of onboarding and employee engagement?
		How does onboarding affect employee attachment to the company and metrics such as retention or turnover (and others)?
Development and evaluation of the onboarding process	Analysis and evolution of the onboarding process over time.	How often is onboarding at your company (or according to your overall work experience) modified?
		When can you determine that onboarding was properly conducted?
	The success criteria by which onboarding is judged.	In your opinion, what are the criteria for evaluating the correctness of onboarding?
		Can onboarding evaluation criteria be divided into short-term and long-term? If so, what are some examples of them?
	The role of Employee Feedback in Onboarding Improvement.	Who can make the final determination of the quality of the conducted process (employee, employer or HR specialist)?
		What are the methods of measuring the effectiveness of onboarding?

Source: Own elaboration.

The data collected during the interviews underwent a detailed coding process to extract relevant themes and patterns. The collected qualitative data was subjected to vertical analysis. This step was crucial to understanding the deeper perspectives and conclusions of the study (Saldaña, 2015).



#### 4. Characteristics of the research sample

Twelve people participated in the interview<sup>4</sup> who were representatives of five companies, three of which belonged to the logistics sector and two to the banking sector, employing from 1500 (the smallest organization in terms of the number of people employed) to more than 18,000 people in Poland. The choice of the survey sample was guided and purposive which allowed a selective selection of employees meeting certain criteria (Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias, 2001), such as a managerial or specialized position in Human Resources (HR) departments and a high level of professional experience (>4 years) in the context of working with onboarding processes. The survey itself ensured anonymity for the interviewees and the organizations they represented in order to maintain full freedom of expression. The partial structuring used during the interview was intended to regulate responses while maintaining the integrity of the study. All interviews were transcribed and then analyzed to find parts in common (in order to create a consistent definition) and discrepancies occurring in the processes described between organizations. Brief characteristics of the sample, along with the professional experience of the respondents, are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.**

*Brief characteristics of the study sample*

	Size of the company where the respondent was currently employed		Respondents' work experience in personnel (HR) topics			
	>50 people	>1000 people	<5 years	5-7 years	7-10 years	>10 years
Recruiter	-	2	1	1	-	-
HR Specialist	-	6	-	4	2	-
HR Business Partner	1	-	-	-	-	1
HR Manager	-	3	-	-	2	1
Sum	1	11	1	5	4	2

Source: Own elaboration.

Based on the data presented in this way, it can be concluded that the respondents had many years of professional experience, but also that the survey group itself had gathered its experience (among other things) in large organizations or corporations, which may be relevant to the study of the onboarding phenomenon.

<sup>4</sup> The number of respondents correctly suggests that the interview described should be considered a pilot study. Confirmation that such a number of respondents is sufficient can be inferred from a brief search of other research sources such as:

- 6 IDI in-depth interview respondents: Staniszewski, 2023, p. 68.
- 10 IDI in-depth interview respondents: Kobylińska, 2020, pp. 109-127.
- 13 IDI in-depth interview respondents: Maung, Soe, Win, 2020.
- 12 IDI in-depth interview respondents: Nadarajah, Ramasamy, Shankar, Sreeramareddy, 2022, pp. 1-9.
- 15 IDI in-depth interview respondents: Marciniak, 2020, pp. 309-322.
- 12 IDI in-depth interview respondents: Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2022, pp. 23-42.

## 5. Results of the analysis of the in-depth IDI interviews. Redefining the concept of HR onboarding

Content analysis was used to interpret the results of the study. This approach, used in qualitative research, divides the message into units of analysis that are the smallest elements of the message, which are then interpreted in a broader context. This method is helpful in determining the meaning of verbal information (Eriksson, Kovalainen, 2015). Coding is of key importance here that is the assignment of categories to specific content, which is based on abstraction and conceptualization (Silverman, 2008). After preliminary analysis of the interviews, a hierarchy of codes was created based on the following main themes and subcategories determined by the most frequent statements made by respondents:

- 1) The phenomenon of onboarding - primary definition:
  - a) Definition of onboarding as a phenomenon.
  - b) Nomenclature in light of closely related terms.
  - c) Elements characteristic of onboarding.
  - d) People who shape onboarding.
- 2) Quality of the onboarding process:
  - a) Business objectives of onboarding.
  - b) Duration of the onboarding process.
  - c) Evolution and continuous improvement.
  - d) Criteria for measuring the effectiveness of onboarding.
- 3) Onboarding as a social phenomenon:
  - a) Cognitive aspects of onboarding.
  - b) Impact of onboarding on the formation of organizational culture.
  - c) Socialization aspects.
  - d) Social rules and group identification.

After a comparative analysis, the common features of the respondents' statements depicting the following state of affairs in the context of the onboarding phenomenon were discovered:

- is an HR process (283 repetitions of the phrase in all respondents' statements),  
*It is a whole process related to getting the employee to achieve results, [...] but also to making him feel comfortable in the company structure [...]*
- is a phenomenon that occurs in HR processes between implementation (a narrower but concrete concept) and adaptation (a much longer and less standardized concept),  
*[...] then we have implementation, or familiarization with tasks, [...] and adaptation is a broader term that can mean adaptation to the entire work environment.  
Adaptations in general can take a lot longer, onboarding somehow defined in time, and implementation is so strictly task-based.*

- consists of a number of elements depending on the organization, but the most common are preboarding<sup>5</sup>, the first day of work (solidifying the first impression and familiarization with the company), formal and legal training, familiarization with the team, issuance of equipment, introduction to formal tasks, adaptation to the conditions and the closest co-workers (this opinion is shared by 11 out of 12 respondents),

*Preboarding for me is that time when we say to the candidate 'hey, we welcome you to the team' and when we can devote time and interest to them even before they officially enter the company, but it is part of onboarding.*

*Further in the proper onboarding we have some formal and legal part related to training and a big socialization part [...].*
- it is shaped by three parties - the Human Resources department, the management (management) and the employees themselves who participate in the onboarding process (9 out of 12 repeated opinions),

*The process is shaped by HR, of course, but the supervisor who is an observer can also initiate something [...] the initiators of change can also be the people who are onboarded [...], or the external market, where we can follow proven solutions.*
- The specific business objectives of the process depend on the position held by the respondent, but recurring elements include: the well-being of the new hires (stress leveling), the ability to move (mentally and physically) around the organization, familiarization with the expectations of the supervisor and the company, preparation for the proper job and implementation in basic tasks that allow further development of competencies.

*A positive impression that once spoiled is hard to erase, certainly the rotation and the rate at which you will begin to use the skills and competencies you have previously acquired.*

*This is the period when the employee becomes independent [...]*

*For me, the most important thing is well-being and that such a new person feels as little stress as possible related to the change of professional environment.*
- The length of the onboarding process is enforced, as it were, by the hiring institution and usually formally lasts three months (15 repetitions in all 12 statements) from the time the contract is signed,

*Most will probably tell you that it's three months of the first contract, but to me that's the period an employee needs to feel confident in the company.*

---

<sup>5</sup> Based on the interviews, preboarding (or pre-onboarding) is the part of the onboarding process that lasts from the moment a candidate applies for a job offer until the signing of the contract. It includes all the elements that build an idea of the company in the first close contact between the pretender and the company.

- The onboarding process is a living and continuously improving process (as declared by all respondents), responding to the needs of the community and the labour market, *[...] we want them to stay with us as long as possible, especially when the 'fashion' of rotation has come in. [...] With such changes, we began to fight for the employee, [...] we had to create an onboarding process and adapt it to the market situation.*
- The most important criterion for measuring onboarding is the opinion of employees usually expressed in interviews or surveys, the customary opinion of the company expressed by the local, unrelated community, turnover (detailed by the reason for leaving declared in the "exit interview"), retention and, less frequently, the rate of productivity achieved in the case of blue-collar workers, *I think, also, that collecting feedback is important [...]. It gives them a sense that their opinion is important and taken into account from the beginning [...]*  
*[...] we have such unquantifiable costs that manifest themselves precisely in this positive PR building 'in the city' [...]*  
*The employee's performance is very important. Of course, his well-being too, but here are also those results, and from the employee's side the most important thing is that this employee feels good after onboarding, that he has the knowledge of where to go, has all the information related to who to report to on a particular issue.*  
*Yes, there are indicators such as turnover or retention, but for me the most important thing is that such an employee simply has the best possible impression after the first day in a new job.*
- The cognitive planes of onboarding in staffing processes are difficult for practitioners to clarify (only 5 out of 12 respondents provided clear information), but they can include social, professional, formal-legal, cultural, topographical, technical, among others, *At the beginning we talked about equipment, that is, we have such a plane, let's say technical, but we also talked a few times about culture, about talking to other onboarding participants, that is, we also have such a social plane [...]*  
*[...] in addition to that, they participate in mandatory training and those additional ones, but I think they also focus on the building and building the image of the company based on those first moments, tangible impressions [...]*
- Onboarding is a key element in building company culture (10 repetitions in 6 statements) through the assimilation aspect, shaping first impressions, conveying the company's mission and vision or integration with the team and applicable norms (data collected from scattered statements), *[...] not only facilitates getting to know the places in the new building, but builds the first informal group, standards of behavior, or helps to get to know the specific terms used in common language in the company.*

- Ultimately, the process affects the newcomer's greater attachment to the group (new, onboarding, and broader, employee) and the organisation, and builds public relations (PR) about the company by spreading positive opinions in the community,  
*We had such an experiment, where the whole process of adaptation and implementation took about an hour [...] this influenced less attachment, a worse opinion and quality of work.*

Based on this, an attempt can be made to redefine the onboarding process, which will take the following form:

Onboarding is a human resources process that begins with the candidate's first formal contact with the company (finding a job advertisement), aimed at ensuring the well-being and minimising the stress of newly hired employees, teaching them how to navigate the organization, implementing them in the performance of basic tasks and initial assimilation into the company, which can be assessed on the basis of indicators such as employee opinion, turnover, retention or employee productivity during the first period of their work.

However, it is worth remembering that the process itself is not only evolving<sup>6</sup>, but also varies depending on the specific organisation. Examples of such differences can be found in the content of the statements of respondents to the survey, and although the general content of their opinions and experiences is similar, in certain passages large discrepancies can emerge, an example of which is presented below:

- *I'm going to relate this onboarding a little bit to the warehouse experience, because that's what my onboarding experience is. [...] Personally, I define this moment of completion of onboarding as that moment of achieving the expected results in the allotted time.*
- *It takes 2-3 months to learn the responsibilities, but when it comes to acclimatizing to such a new environment - it takes longer. It's hard to determine exactly how long onboarding lasts.*
- *In my opinion here the first 3 months. A person after onboarding is a person after a probationary period.*

From a business point of view, it can mean that there will be many correct definitions of the process, and from a scientific point of view, it can provide an excellent basis for conducting further research.

---

<sup>6</sup> Based on (Patel, Mohanty, 2023; Samuel, Durning, Meyer, 2021) and feedback from respondents.

## 6. Summary

The main objective of the article was to redefine the concept of onboarding adapted to today's times, and the side objective, to demonstrate the research gap related to its lack of validity in the scientific texts available today. The thesis of the article was the statement that: the definitions of onboarding currently available in the scientific literature do not reflect the dynamic changes in the business environment and employee expectations, which indicates the need to revise onboarding concepts in order to adjust them to modern organisational needs and scientific standards. Based on the argument, it can be concluded that the objectives of the article have been met and the thesis itself has been proven, which can be determined by comparing the existing definitions of the onboarding process in the literature to date with the explanations derived from the IDI survey.

The literature review conducted as part of the research showed the obsolescence of the available definitions of the concept of onboarding in HR processes (the average time since the original text was published in the analyzed texts is 10 years counting from the date of the review) and the dominance of quotations and paraphrases over the author's research. At the same time, the study clearly indicates that among the explanations of the reviewed concept cited by researchers, two authors whose texts are 14 and 12 years old, respectively, dominate, which clearly indicates the potential lack of timeliness of the definition, creating a research gap in this area.

In order to fill it out, in-depth IDI interviews were conducted with 12 experienced mid- and senior-level employees directly related to HR processes. They allowed a detailed and up-to-date description of the phenomenon of onboarding, which consequently led to a redefinition and expansion of the studied concept.

The consequences of this article, in addition to the sheer need for further study of what would seem to be a well-known phenomenon, can be divided into theoretical and practical. Their concrete visualization may depend in the first line on the interpretation of potential researchers, but the authors here point out the most (in their own opinion) relevant ones:

- practical:
  - linking soft aspects such as commitment to the quality of onboarding,
  - determining the impact of onboarding quality on labour costs,
  - in-depth study and improvement of the various elements of onboarding,
- theoretical:
  - defining the “quality” of the onboarding process,
  - the need to examine onboarding performance indicators,
  - identification of global causes of changes occurring in onboarding processes.

However, the authors of this paper emphasize that due to the small group of respondents, the considerations described should be treated as a pilot before a proper large-scale study. An additional conclusion of the analysis performed is that the perception of onboarding (its essence and definition) depends largely on the organization itself and the people creating it, and may change depending not only on time and geographic region, but also of the culture of the company or the people employed in it.

## References

1. Bauer, T. (2010). *Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success*. SHRM Foundation's Effective Practice Guidelines Series, pp. 1-54.
2. Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.
3. Bryman, A., Bell, E. (2015). *Business Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.
4. Chomczyński, P., Konecki, K.T. (2011). *Słownik socjologii jakościowej, hasło: etnografia organizacji*. Warszawa: Difin.
5. Christiansen, L., Stein, M.A. (2010). *Successful Onboarding: A Strategy to Unlock Hidden Value Within Your Organization*. New York: McGrawHill.
6. Dai, G., De Meuse, K.P. (2007). *A review of onboarding literature*. Lominger Limited, Inc., a subsidiary of Korn. Ferry International.
7. Eriksson, P., Kovalainen, A. (2015). *Qualitative Methods in Business Research: A Practical Guide to Social Research*. London: Sage.
8. Frankfort-Nachmias, C., Nachmias, D., Hornowska, E. (2001). *Metody badawcze w naukach społecznych*. Poznań: Zysk i S-ka.
9. Gawlik, M., Kosik, E. (2017). *Cytowania w "Nowej Bibliotece. Usługi, technologie informacyjne i media" jako element komunikacji naukowej w świecie cyfrowym*.
10. Glinka, B., Czakon, W. (2021). *Podstawy badań jakościowych*. Warszawa: PWE.
11. Grześ, B. (2022). Kluczowe kompetencje liderów w organizacjach XXI wieku. *Management & Quality [Zarządzanie i Jakość]*, 4(4).
12. Jaciow, M., Malinowska, M., Stolecka-Makowska, A. (2013). *Techniki jakościowych badań marketingowych w Internecie*. Prace Naukowe. Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Katowicach.
13. Klein, H.J., Polin, B. (2012). Are organizations onboard with best practices onboarding? In: C.R. Wanberg, *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 267-286). USA: OUP.
14. Kobylińska, U. (2020). Kontekst relacyjny przedsiębiorczości akademickiej. *Zarządzanie Zasobami Ludzkimi*, 137(6), 109-127.

15. Kowalska, E. (2018). W Procesie Adaptacji Pracownika. *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Częstochowskiej*, 105.
16. Kvale, S., Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Sage Publications.
17. Lenart-Gansiniec, R. (2021). *Systematyczny przegląd literatury w naukach społecznych: Przewodnik dla studentów, doktorantów i nie tylko*. Warszawa: Scholar.
18. Maung, S.P.P., Soe, P.P., Win, H.H. (2020) *Qualitative Study on Domestic Violence Among Married 18-49 Years Men and Women in Hlaingtharyar Township, Yangon Region*. Doctoral dissertation. MERAL Portal.
19. Nadarajah, A., Ramasamy, S., Shankar, P.R., Sreeramareddy, C.T. (2022). Development and validation of motivators for medical specialist career choice questionnaire (MMSCCQ)-a methodological study. *BMC Medical Education*, 22(1), 1-9.
20. Opalinski, Ł. (2013). Selected aspects of research methodology of the life cycle of scientific publications. *Library Review*, 81(2), 152-171.
21. Papaioannou, D., Sutton, A., Booth, A. (2012). *Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review*. London: Sage.
22. Patel, P., Mohanty, R. (2023). Trendy w onboardingu poprawiają retencję pracowników: Szczegółowy przegląd literatury. *Journal of Applied Management-Jidnyasa*, 39-50.
23. Patton, M.Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. Sage Publications.
24. Rethlefsen, M.L., Kirtley, S., Waffenschmidt, S., Ayala, A. ., Moher, D., Page, M.J., Koffel, J.B. (2021). PRISMA-S: An Extension to the PRISMA Statement for Reporting Literature Searches in Systematic Reviews. *Systematic Reviews*, 10, 1-19.
25. Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, A. (2022). Przywództwo 4.0 w przedsiębiorstwach business services sector. *Zarządzanie Zasobami Ludzkimi*, 146 (3-4), 23-42.
26. Rubin, H.J., Rubin, I.S. (2012). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Sage Publications.
27. Saldaña, J. (2015). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage Publications.
28. Samuel, A., Durning, S., Meyer, H. (2021). Preparing Adult Learners for Success in Blended Learning through Onboarding: A pilot study. *eLearn*, 9.
29. Silverman, D. (2008). *Prowadzenie Badań Jakościowych*. Warszawa: PWN.
30. Staniszewski, R.M. (2023). Uchodźcy czy migranci? – społeczna percepcja pojęć na podstawie wyników badań opinii publicznej. *Studia Politologiczne*, 68.
31. Szymanowski, W. (2018). Foresight as an approach to predicting the future of the 21st century in the area of information society. *Annals of the College of Economic Analysis. School of Economics*, 11-28.