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**"Using a blended learning strategy to accelerate socialization in the delivery of Onboarding programme in a Service Industry"**

Dissertation

National
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*The college for a
learning society*

I

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of Master of Science in Learning Technologies is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been citied and acknowledged within the text of my work

Signed  mokooboh

Date   3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010

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# Abstract

A blended Onboarding program can help accelerate the socialization and integration process of new employees in an organization This thesis describes a program based on the effect of web 2 0 technology tools on the socialization and integration process of new employees to address the challenges of employee turnover, empowerment and engagement in a service industry This study has employed the use of an exploratory study describing the differences between the traditional and blended learning Onboarding of new employees in a service industry With an increase in new employee turnover during the first year in organizations, the development of a blended learning Onboarding approach is important during this transition process when relationships form and socialization between new employees and their teams commence

This research methodology is exploratory and it employed both qualitative and quantitative methods in analyzing the findings using questionnaires, focus group, telephone and unstructured interview and SPSS The participants were selected randomly from the ten different sites of Dalkia, and they were divided into two groups of twenty five participants per group for the traditional Onboarding program and blended learning Onboarding program The description of the research design and process explores the differences between the acceleration rates of the socialization process of the traditional and blended learning Onboarding approaches

The measurement of the participants in the Onboarding session is based on the acceleration rate of socialization and integration into the organization When

comparing the blended approach and traditional approach the results indicated that there was significant acceleration rate of socialization and integration process when web 2 0 technology tools were applied in the blended learning Onboarding program than in the traditional Onboarding program without the mixture of technology

Future research could employ a larger sample during the corroboration of the results process Further areas of study could explore the opportunity for organizations to employ more learning modalities in the blended learning approach The research closes with a recommendation for organizations to modify the Onboarding program to increase the socialization and integration based on the result of the study

# 1.   Introduction

A successful on-boarding program can improve an organization's bottom-line, newly recruited employees are kept up to speed with the enhancement of the traditional orientation and induction programs to include E-learning of technical skills training, industry background and soft skills training (Varma & Collins, 2007) This study is important because a gap was identified in the low turnout for the current traditional face-to-face induction program Line managers are reluctant to send new employees to the Head Office for the three days induction due to geographic reasons as the new employees are required to get on speed on clients sites immediately they join the organization

As a follow up after consultation with the Great Place to Work Institute Inc, a research and management consultancy firm, a survey was conducted last year and the feedback received indicated those who had recently joined the organization highlighted the fact that their socialization and integration process into teams and the organization is very slow There was a need for us to improve our Induction process, a blended learning Onboarding program has to be designed to ensure proper integration and socialization of the new employees into the Dalkia team and provide them with the training required into our Quality Management System, which underpins everything we do in Dalkia

As Dalkia is a people based company and we rely heavily on our people to make our business successful, this blended learning Onboarding program is a vital part of us achieving our business goals and objectives towards 2012 The new employees have to start forming and creating relationships in their teams to

create a great place to work with energy, drive and enjoy their new culture and environment. This will translate the entire workforce by creating an atmosphere of a great place to work that is fun-filled and enjoyable thus accelerating the socialization and integration process of new employees into teams and the organization.

The use of Dalkia (Veolia Energy) as a case study for this research will explore what other similar companies are doing. In depth discussion of the vital things to consider when planning a blended approach in the Onboarding of new employees will be presented.

Extensive interviews with the new employees and their line managers will be carried out; secondly, the observation of employees during the traditional orientation approach and blended learning approach will be examined. Finally, a focus group comprising of employees who have joined the company in the last twelve months will be formed to brainstorm on the introduction of technology in the Onboarding of new employees.

## 1.1 Identifying Learning Needs in Organisation

The need of learning in organisation is essential for accomplishing organisational, individual and departmental objectives and vital to improving organisational performance thus leveraging the gap between the organisations present potential and that required to deliver business results. From an organisation perspective, the need to identify the types of learning required to ensure all employees have the right skills, knowledge and attitude to perform their job thus ensuring employees have the skills available for the company to

meet its strategic objectives and business goals. At a department level, there is a need to ensure that each department is helping to fulfill the business objectives. At the individual level, the need to maximize the potential of each employee in each department is paramount to ensure each individual has the training, skills and knowledge they require to do their job. They also need to feel they have access to training when they require it and they are able to deal with changes as they develop their career. Individual learning enables employees to add to their collection of personal competencies and develop their full potential.

### *1.1.1 Blended Learning*

Many definitions have been given in literature on blended learning; Garrison & Vaughan (2008) describes the thoughtful fusion of face-to-face and online learning experiences. Littlejohn & Pegler (2007) reiterate further the definition as an access to a wide choice of alternative resources on your personal computer drawn from international, as well as institutional, digital repositories, accessed via a single log-in that personalizes the 'blend' of learning you are offered; studying online with tutors as facilitators and emphasis on co-creation within a course that is rich in online collaboration. The basis behind blended learning is the integration of face-to-face oral communication and online written communication to give learners an optimized learning experience. The main focus for learning and development practitioners is to align both learning approaches to create collaboration and engagement for learners. The main motives of a blended design are:

- Thoughtfully integrating face-to-face and online learning

- Fundamentally rethinking the course design to optimize learner engagement

- Restructuring and replacing traditional class contact hours (Garrison & Vaughan 2008)

## 2.    Literature Review: Concepts, Theories and Frameworks

The literature review will illustrate the awareness of the systematic study of blended learning in organizations It will give an overview of new employee Onboarding programs in organizations, along with the different learning styles and theories, E-learning, goals of E-learning, and will identify any gaps and limitations in previous literature, reviewing this literature will help to generate and refine specific research aims, objectives, research questions and hypotheses, of the socialization and integration process of new employees in organizations and will help to identify a suitable theoretical research framework which would be used in order to develop a focus for this report

Although the literature covers a wide range of different theories on new employee socialization and integration in an Onboarding program, this review will focus on five major themes which were highlighted repeatedly throughout the literature reviewed These themes are   the definition, scope and frameworks of blended learning, the different learning styles and theories, socialization and integration process, aspects of blended learning, barriers to blended learning and its success factors will be highlighted in this study, and finally the dimensions of organization socialization

The literature presents these themes in a range of frameworks, this research will primarily focus on their application to the socialization and integration process of new employees in the blended learning Onboarding program

The data gathering process for the literature review has used both primary and secondary research

## 2.1 E-learning

With the Internet's and digital technologies' rapid growth, the Web has become a powerful, global, interactive, dynamic, economic and democratic medium of learning and teaching at a distance (Khan, 1997) E learning is often termed in the framework as asynchronous, synchronous and blended learning The term E-learning stands for all types of technology-enhanced learning (TEL), where technology is used to support the learning process (De Praetere, T , 2008)

### 2.1.1 Goals of E-learning

The ultimate goals of any E-learning endeavor within an organization are performance and results Organizations who seek to achieve these goals must look beyond the E-learning technology as the whole solution but rather focus on how the people and the organization are key ingredients in the successful transition to E-learning (Piskurish, G M, 2003)

### 2.1.2 Success Factors of E-learning

One of the major success factors is to make sure that everyone shares a common understanding of E-learning (Allen M W, 2009) The term E-learning can be perceived differently from one organization to another, it is therefore paramount that during the introduction of E-learning it is branded and defined specifically to meet the needs of the learners A simple and effective way to drive this meaning home to learners in organizations is to decide a definition that is peculiar to the organization and publish it regularly to drive the meaning home through effective communication (Allen M W, 2009)

## 2.1.3 Barriers of E-Learning

The barriers from the implementation of E-learning in organizations range from three main factors namely peoples' natural resistance to any kind of change, to new technology and budget constraints (Henderson, A.J 2003). One or two mistakes made by organizations that imbibe E-learning are that they assume that E-learning is the same as regular learning or E-learning is totally different from regular learning (Piskurish, G.M 2003:123). This assumption has not been ruled from the training and development departments in organizations as many organizations approach most learning challenges as training problems, these two are different variables. The term E-learning means the use of technology to support learning moving from a model that transcends space and place (Rosenberg M.J 2006:4).

Natural resistance to any kind of change in an organization cannot be ruled out from employees' perceptions as humans are always resistant to any form of change of old habits, ways of doing new things, procedures, processes and organizational restructure to mention a few, E-learning will be one of these changes that will not be easy to introduce without the full support of everyone in the organization.

The barriers of technology can range from lack of knowledge of the information technology for the users and the trainers, access to internet at all times to allow learners access to the information and to complete the learning content. This is paramount for an effective blended learning program. The ease of use of the technology interface will be a major barrier. If it is not easy for learners it may

result in frustration and deter learners from completing the course There is constant change with E-learning technology and organizations must be able to manage these changes to ensure the quality of the learning design and the user experience (Piskurish, G M 2003)

There are always budget and time constraints that must be considered in choosing a blended learning mix, the time and budget allocated to training delivery, development, and course maintenance (Piskurish, G M 2003)

## 2.2 Blended Learning

There have been many definitions of blended learning in literature, it is a term that describes the fusion of face-to-face with online learning Blended learning is the combination of different modes of technology to enhance learning The term blended learning is being used rampantly in both the academic and corporate spheres In 2003, the American Society for Training and Development identified blended learning as one of the top ten trends to emerge in the knowledge delivery industry (Rooney, J E 2003)

"Blending is an art that has been practised by inspirational teachers for centuries It centres on the integration of different types of resources and activities within a range of learning environments where learners can interact and build ideas" (Littlejohn, A & Pegler C 2008) Mason & Rennie broadens this definition to include "other combinations of technologies, locations or pedagogical approaches" (Mason & Rennie, 2006)

Blended learning is a mixture of the different learning strategies and delivery methods that will optimize the learning experience of the user (Kurtus, 2004) it also describes a mixture of both the classroom based sessions, Computer-based Training (CBT) via a CD-ROM, Web-Based Training (WBT) that can be combined as a way to train learners.

The concept of blended learning is a combination of online learning with more traditional methods of learning and development. It is an opening to integrate the novelty and technological advances offered in the best traditional learning and most cannot be seen in isolation (Thorne, 2003). Garrison and Vaughan, in particular, supports a blended faculty community of inquest which combines face-to face workshops, where personal relationships can be established, with a sustainable online community for significant reflection and discussion forum (Garrison and Vaughan 2008).

CIPD (2009) defines Blended and E-learning as 'learning that is delivered, enabled or mediated using electronic technology for the explicit purpose of training in organizations'. E-learning is growing, it provides large populations with the same material, and access is flexible so that people can learn in their own time. Against this, E-learning does not appeal to everyone, and it works better for 'hard' knowledge than for softer skills like communication or leadership. It is more effective when combined with more traditional forms of learning, what has become known as 'blended learning'.

Holistically, Thorne (2003) defines blended learning as a workable solution that allows trainers and staff developers to integrate online learning with a broad

range of more traditional learning techniques. She has provided a definition that illustrates the need for collaboration amongst all key facets of learning and development.

Garrison and Vaughan describe blended learning as a coherent design approach that openly assesses and integrates the strengths of face-to-face and online learning to address worthwhile educational goals. Garrison adds that the blending of face-to-face and online learning will boost engaging and learning meaningful learning experiences in education (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). This is almost similar to MacDonald who adds that the term blend is commonly associated with the introduction of online media into a course or programme, while at the same time not discarding the traditional face-to-face contact and other traditional approaches with other students (MacDonald 2008). Stacey & Gerbic state that blended learning recognises the potential of a positive relationship between online and face-to-face environments for both learners and their teachers (Stacey & Gerbic, 2006).

Some highlight the value of blended learning as a perceived need to adopt technology in teaching and learning, in order to enable student teachers to learn contemporary pedagogies and skills through experiential learning (Ng, 2009). Stacey and Gerbic (2009) add to the growing body of literature broad definitions of blended learning revealing the broad interpretation from the combination of multiple approaches to learning, the combination of different modes of delivery, the thoughtful fusion of face-to-face and online experiences and learning experiences that is 30% - 70% of learning contents online and face-to-face. They

agree that blended learning provides opportunities for ongoing interactions with each other, creating opportunities for a social presence in our learning environments Others have been able to highlight an approach of blended learning that relates to some course meetings or training events that are conducted virtually rather than face-to-face (Mohanty, 2007, pg 44)

Elhers and Pawlowski, 2006 describe blended learning as a concept and a way to correct the so called mistakes of E-learning by adding face-to-face to it Elhers adds that the concept of blended learning is irrelevant as it merely reinforces the initial misconceptions about learning and E-learning stating that this mixed mode of training has already been in existence This is similar to Remenyi's definition, he described blended learning as the expansion of creative and innovation learning solution and experiences that can integrate information technology as an important feature of the evolving curricula rather that just face-to-face delivery (Remenyi 2006)

Khan (2007) describes a variable definition, highlighting on the "combination of blended learning as a mixture of different learning tools such as face-to-face, live E-learning and self paced learning" The combination of the different learning tools complements each other by fostering the promotion of learning and application learned behaviour Ziob and Mosher (2006, pg 97) defines "blended learning as any combination of self-paced, instructor-led, distance, and classroom delivery with various digital and print form factors to achieve a positive business outcome"

A different terminology in the definition is highlighted by Horton, he defined blended learning as the blend of diverse structure of training and education for a solitary purpose He looked at the blend as a combination of classroom, virtual, E-learning, informal, behavioural, cognitive and constructive strategies (Horton, 2006 pg, 381) Khan (2005) illustrates that the concept of blended learning is embedded in the notion that learning does not happen at one time event – rather learning is a continuous process Blending learning interventions provide numerous benefits over using a single learning delivery medium Light, Calkins & Cox (2009) illustrates this conceptual overview into two different categories Firstly, the technology v human character of this approach to learning and teaching, secondly, a number of pairs of theoretical pressure which have been linked to new technology Light et al describes the two dimensions as often wrongly misconstrue relating to human as been present during a learning intervention and technology as learning intervention happening at a distance, while this association is termed to undermine the capabilities of blended learning interventions

In summary, the term blended learning is the mixture of different learning interventions to accelerate learning and also to make the learner experience easy and enjoyable The goal of this study is to use a blended learning approach to accelerate the socialization process during the Onboarding of new employees in a service industry The adoption of a learning strategy that relies on a combination of delivery modalities in the Onboarding program comprising of face-to-face approach, welcoming phone calls and emails, interview, discussion

forum, podcasts, video, technology support, networking opportunities, virtual learning, individual learning path and health & safety training. This can convey necessary information in a context that serves to reinforce corporate culture and position the organization for strategic progression and to meet the specific learning needs of the learners to improve the socialization process for an unprecedented performance success.

## 2.2.1 Dimensions of Blended Learning

Khan (2007) describes the phrase blended learning as a mixture of the traditional and E-learning approaches using asynchronous methods of communicating information. Khan defines blended learning as a combination of one of more dimensions namely:

*Blending Offline and Online learning:*

The majority of blended learning interventions mix offline (face-to-face) and online (Internet or Intranet) to facilitate learning experiences.

*Blending self paced and live, Collaborative learning:*

The blending of the self paced and collaborative learning leads to information sharing and on demand learning that is controlled by the learners.

*Blending Structured and Unstructured learning:*

Blended learning interventions most often do not follow a formal and unprecedented pattern. Learning usually takes place in an informal or unstructured manner in most organisations, employees learn from one another by shadowing on the job, mentoring, meetings etc. A blended learning program

can capture information and knowledge from this unstructured form of learning into the learning repositories available on demand and supporting the way learners collaborate and share information that facilitates on demand learning.

*Blending Custom Content with Off-the Shelf Content:*

The term off the shelf content also means generic content; generic content is cheap and has high production value than the custom content. The blend of generic content in blended learning interventions (face-to-face and online) and custom content standards such as SCORM (Shareable content object reference model) increases the chances of flexibility of both generic and custom contents and improving the user experience while reducing cost for the organisation.

*Blending Learning, Practice, and Performance Support:*

The most efficient way to blend learning is to supplement it with practice by using job-task or business process simulation models and just-in-time performance support tools that facilitate the appropriate execution of job-tasks. Cutting-edge productivity tools provide workspace environments that package together the computer based work, collaboration, and performance tools.

## Table 2- 1 Learning approaches and choices

| Synchronous physical formats | Instructor-led classrooms & lectures |
| | Hands-on Labs & Workshops |
| | Field Trips |
| Synchronous online formats (live E-learning) | Online Meetings |
| | Virtual Classrooms |
| | Web Seminars & Broadcasts |

| | Coaching |
| --- | --- |
| | Instant Messaging |
| | Conference Calls |
| Self-paced, asynchronous formats | Document & Web pages |
| | Web/Computer Training Modules |
| | Assessments/Tests & Surveys |
| | Simulations |
| | Job Aids & Electronic Performance Support Systems (EPSS) |
| | Recorded Live Events |
| | Online Learning Communities and Discussion Forums |
| | Distributed and Mobile Learning |

Table 2 1 highlights the dimensions of blended learning and its combination of different learning interventions varying from traditional, E-learning, virtual and coaching The blend of the various interventions can be adapted to different learning styles and can be tailored to meet individual needs

## *2.2.2 Frameworks of Blended Learning*

Several factors can determine an effective learning experience of a blended learning program and these factors are consistent and co-dependent with each other Khan (2007) portrays a framework that systematically creates a meaningful flexible learning environment The framework consists of eight categories institutional, management, technological, pedagogical, ethical, interface design, resource support and evaluation

# Table 2- 2 Framework of flexible learning in an open and distributed environment

| Categories | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Institutional | The institutional category is concerned with issues of administrative affairs, academic affairs, and student services related to E-learning |
| Management | The management of E-learning refers to the maintenance of learning environments and distribution of information |
| Technological | The technological category examines sources of technology infrastructure of E-learning environments, this include infrastructure planning, hardware and software |
| Pedagogical | The pedagogical category refers to teaching and learning This category addresses issues concerning content analysis, audience analysis, goal analysis, medium analysis, design approach, organization and learning strategies |
| Ethical | The ethical considerations of E-learning refer to social and political influences, cultural diversity, geographical diversity, learner diversity, the digital divide, etiquette and legal issues |
| Interface design | Interface design refers to the overall look and feel of flexible learning programs Interface design categories encompass page and site design, content design, navigation, accessibility, and usability testing |
| Resource Support | The resource support category examines the online support and resources required to foster meaningful learning |
| Evaluation | The evaluation of flexible learning includes both assessment of learners and the evaluation of the instruction and learning environment |

Table 2 2 illustrates a framework of flexible learning in an open and distributed environment by Khan

There is a need for the eight categories in the above framework to interlink with other facets to support effective and meaningful learning, thus meeting the needs of learners in an enjoyable environment where information is shared and

transferred without hindrance. A different framework was developed by MacDonald (2008) for learners to support each other formally in a face-to-face approach and informally in a discussion forum. Table 2.1 provides the pictoral summary of contacts with groups and individuals through formal and informal means.

## Table 2- 3 Formal and Informal Framework of blended learning

| • **Live face-to-face (formal)** | **Live face-to-face (informal)** |
|---|---|
| * Instructor-led classroom | * Collegial connections |
| *Workshops | * Work teams |
| * Coaching/mentoring | * Role modeling |
| * On-the-job (OTJ) training | |
| **Virtual collaboration/synchronous** | **Virtual collaboration/asynchronous** |
| * Live E-learning classes | * Email |
| * E-mentoring | * Online bulletin boards |
| | * List servs |
| | * Online communities |
| **Self-paced learning** | **Performance support** |
| * Web learning modules | * Help systems |
| * Online resource links | * Print job aids |
| * Simulations | * Knowledge databases |
| * Scenarios | * Documentation |
| * Video and audio CD/DVDs | * Performance/decision |
| * Online self-assessments | support tools |
| * Workbooks | |

Table 2.3 Formal and Informal Framework of blended learning cited by Allison Rossett, Felicia Douglis & Rebecca V. Frazee

The above framework provides support for both the learners and the facilitators of a learning program taking into consideration the significance and contribution of informal contacts and its importance to a learning context and the learning needs of each individual and the group. In the past the focus of the Orientation

program involves communicating factual information on the policies and procedures of the organization

In choosing this learning approach, the goal is to provide an effective Onboarding program that incorporates both the formal and informal learning modalities to promote socialization and integration of new employees In the current environment, where learning needs are changing rapidly the strategy adopted for this Onboarding program plays an integral role in facilitating the process The creative blend of the different modalities comprise of the instructor-led classroom, workshops, coaching/mentoring, on-the-job (OTJ) training, work teams, modelling, email, online communities, web learning modules, simulations, video, help systems, performance support tools and knowledge database will foster socialization and integration amongst peers and managers while meeting specific learning needs

## 2.2.3 Success Factors of Blended Learning

There is no single method that is ideal for any type of training, there are different subject matters that require different training methods Mason & Rennie advocate placing the learners' needs first, in advance of the perspective or the prejudice of the instructor in making such choices Blended learning is most efficient for the delivery of training needs in an efficient manner that is most appropriate to address business needs by combining face-to-face instructor led training with other best additional methods of training

From the literature, many factors have been identified that contribute to the success of blended learning

***Ease of Implementation*** Most organisations have been using a form of blended learning without even knowing it, therefore implementation would be easier than anticipated

***Cost Effective*** Blended learning gives organizations options, allowing them to use the solutions that best meet their organizations needs. When cost is a major consideration, companies can select from those training solutions that are most economical, which will help them manage to a budget (Wilson & Smilanich 2005)

***Senior Management Team/Executive Support*** The need for full support and buy in by senior management of organization plays an integral part in the success factor of a blended learning program

**Flexibility of learning resources** The diversification of learning resources via face-to-face and other learning functions has made it easy for learners to access information at anytime, space or location

**Support of learners' diversity** Learners vary from one another in terms of learning styles, learning capability and learning needs, the need for a blend can for learning by making it possible for individualized learning and self regulated learning to happen. The use of a mixture of learning approaches can be used to provide for the needs of diverse learners and makes learning a successful experience for all

**Enrichment of Learning experience** From an educational perspective blended learning plays an integral part in enhancing the teaching practices also from the

administrators perspective, paperwork has been replaced by e-work  Fong, Kwan & Wang (2008)

## 2.2.4 Developing Blended Learning Onboarding Program in Dalkia

The success of the blended learning Onboarding program in Dalkia was facilitated by the sequence of the different modalities over a three months phase The different learning intervention was divided into the following major groups

- Instructor-led training

- Line Manager facilitated training

- Job shadowing

- Manager coaching & mentoring

- E-learning and self learning

Instructor-led training module is taught in the Learning & Development room in the Head Office by the Human Resource Generalist  The module consist of sharing with the new employees the organizational strategy and how each of them will contribute immensely to the overall strategy, sharing success stories of the organization to help the new employees develop an understanding about the social norms and the corporate culture, values and vision of the organization to accelerate their socialization process within their teams and the wider organization  Finally they will go through the practical Manual Handling training which is delivered by a member of the Health & Safety department

Line Manager Facilitated training comprise of a half day session depending on the number of new employees delivered by the line manager on job expectations, a quick tour of the site and the introduction of the new employee to the team There is a section in the evaluation form for the new employees to evaluate their line manager on how well their integration and socialization process was facilitated by him or her

Job Shadowing is the process whereby the new employee observes and models the behaviour of other team mates and line manager to enable the new employee learn and practice skills observed in their current role and also to gain an understanding of the culture of the team and organization

The line manager coaching and mentoring session commence immediately after the job shadowing process to the end of the probationary period which is the end of six months It comprises of formal and informal feedback sessions between the employee and their line manager and addresses behavioural, job and performance expectations Setting training and performance benchmarks for new employees' focuses on learning during the first 6 to 12 months and a reward mechanism is put in place on the achievement of learning goals It is during these sessions that the new employee can ask questions, request training, discuss any job issues and request feedback of job performance The combination of these formal and informal methodologies in the blended learning Onboarding process focuses on the socialization process and culture in the different domain of the organization An emphasizes on the organization social club, groups and

networks helps to facilitate the engagement, integration and socialization process of the new employees quicker in a fun-filled and enjoyable environment.

E-learning and Self Learning programs consist of the online courses, employee handbook detailing the policies of the organization; the new employees are equipped with self study modules materials on the policies and processes through Moodle which tracks their completion and assessments tracks in the course management system.

## 2.3 The Learning Organization

The significance of learning emanated from a Chinese philosopher, Confucius (551-479 BC). He believed that everyone should benefit from learning.

"Without learning, the wise become foolish; by learning, the foolish become wise" (www.see.ed.ac.uk). Change is the primary reason for the current importance being given to the learning organization and primarily, 'the skill of learning' which began to gain momentum in the 1900.

## 2.3.1 What is a Learning Organization?

Learning organizations can be termed to be organizations, which encourage learning in its employees. The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) definition of learning is 'a self-directed, work-based process leading to increased adaptive capacity'. This can be translated as an environment where individuals 'learn to learn' and possess the capabilities that enable them to do so to help their employers to build and retain competitive advantage. This definition according to CIPD is helpful in the context of an economic downturn as it alludes

to both the strategic and operational impacts of learning (www cipd ie) On the other hand, according to Boud & Garrick(1999), "learning has moved from the periphery- from something which prepared people for employment – to the lifeblood which sustains them" Klas Mellander (1993) states that "the purpose of leading is to make learning possible" that is, it creates conditions that encourages and supports learning as opposed to simply conveying information This definition can be termed to hold employees liable because understanding of learning issues is needed at all levels in organizations

The learning organization concept was made popular by the work of Peter Senge According to Senge (1990, p 3), "learning organizations are organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspirations are set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together" In this changing environment, organizations must be flexible, innovative, quality conscious, customer oriented, and is constantly endeavoring to improve their performance to remain competitive Learning is the central issue for the twenty-first century, asserts Honey (1998) Changes are bigger and are happening faster, and learning is the way for organizations to keep ahead to maintain employability in an era when jobs for life have gone It enables organizations to sustain their edge as global competition increases, learning to learn is the ultimate life skill (Beardwell & Claydon, 2001, p 260-261)

## 2.3.2 Definition of Learning

Learning is seldom used as comparable alternative for education and training in many organisations In the framework of the learning organisation, these terms have imperative distinctions It is important to note that learning may not necessarily involve some formal education or training activity, but can often result from the process of undertaking work itself Thus, the learning organisation does not necessarily require an enhanced investment in education and training (although this is likely), but will definitely require effort to ensure that learning is captured as a value added resource in the organisation To do this, it is important to review the ways in which individuals and organisations learn (Humdyn, 1996) The ability to learn often determines the quality and usefulness of the knowledge gained Some theorists have argued that only learning from experience leads to usable knowledge However, learning only by experience, without the benefit of structured education or training, is a slow "hit and miss" process (Klatt, 1999) It is important to note that learning may not necessarily involve some formal education or training activity, but can often result from the process of undertaking work itself Thus, the learning organisation does not necessarily require an enhanced investment in education and training (although this is likely), but will definitely require effort to ensure that learning is captured as a value added resource in the organisation To do this, it is important to review the ways in which individuals and organisations learn (Humdyn, 1996)

Some researches argue that a learning organization helps its people to learn Gherardi (1997, pg 542) advocates that the term learning organization as an

organization which learns, processes information, reflects on experiences, endowed with a stock of knowledge, skills and expertise

## 2.4 Learning Styles

At an individual level, it has been proposed that learning occurs by passing through a series of stages in a 'learning cycle' Honey & Mumford, (1982) refer to four different learning styles namely theorist, reflector, pragmatist and activist Roger Smith (1982) defines learning style as 'a person's highly individualized preferences and tendencies that influence his or her learning' Adults learning style varies from one to another David Kolb acknowledges in his theory the four different learning styles which are based on a four stage learning cycles seen in the diagram below He based this theory on the understanding of individual learning styles and also an explanation of a cycle of experiential learning that applies to us all

## Figure 2- 1 Kolb's learning styles

**Kolb's learning styles**

Concrete Experience
*Feeling*

Accommodating
(feel and do)
CE/AE

Diverging
(feel and watch)
CE/RO

Active Experimentation
*Doing*

Processing
*how we* ...

Continuum
... *things*

Perception Continuum
*how we think about things*

Reflective Observation
*Watching*

Converging
(think and do)
AC/AE

Assimilating
(think and watch)
AC/RO

Abstract Conceptualisation
*Thinking*
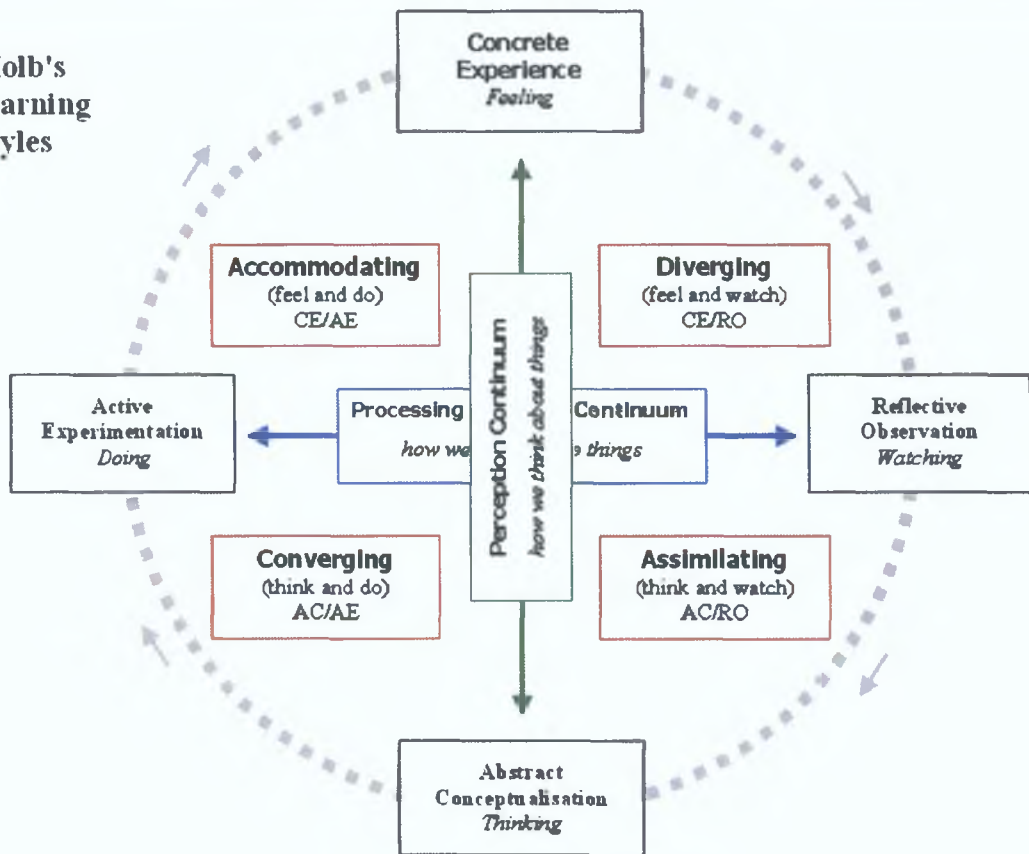
© concept david kolb, adaptation and design alan chapman 2005-06, based on Kolb's learning styles, 1984
Not to be sold or published. More free online training resources are at www.businessballs.com. Sole risk with user.

(Figure 2.1 cited from www.businessballs.com Kolb's diagram 2006)

### 2.4.1 VAK Learning Styles

The VAK learning comprises of three main groups namely visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners. Visual learners are at ease with pictures and images that aid their understanding of facts and information more than listening and verbal communication. A diagram may aid further than a conversation on the same issue. A visual learner often creates a mental picture of what is been explained during learning. Visual learners find it useful to be spoken to during learning and they have the ability to listen as well. Reading to some people is a visual action,

the visibility of the words is not a factor for processing information, and these can be processed as learners' murmur what is being learnt. There are two types of auditory learners and they are those who react to the sound of the voice to process information. They have the ability to engage in cranial exercise to determine how to forge ahead on other peoples' statement, while the auditory verbal variant known as the talkers repeat the words to themselves. Kinesthetic learners empathize with what they are working on, they are geared towards hands on activities, we can therefore understand the way this type of learner process information by listening to the words they use in describing a learning situation. While an auditory learner may say "I hear what you are saying" a kinesthetic learner may say 'I feel we are moving in the right direction' and a visual learner may say, "I see your point." Kinesthetic learners may benefit from reading and auditory learners can improve their understanding by touching what they are working on. All of these learning styles interrelate to each other and must be taken into consideration during the design process. When possible, the key factor is to understand the different learning styles and choose appropriate instructional media as facilitators. Instructional designers need to develop courses that revolve around several learning styles.

This study will focus on the different learning styles of the participants taking into consideration in the design the program to incorporate the different learning styles. The design of the blended learning Onboarding program will cater for all the needs of the participants with the knowledge that adults learn what they want to learn. The use of a variety of elements like animations, videos, pictures and a

variety of activities will help the learners to be fully involved and motivated to complete the program regardless of their preferred styles and have a good experience at the end

## 2.5 Learning Theories

Learning theory is a broad term that includes multiple theories of behavior that are related to the learning process To explain how people learn and to understand the basic concepts and principles of learning, it is vital to study the different learning theories namely behaviorism (behaviorist psychology), cognitive (cognitive psychology) and constructivism (psychology) The knowledge of how learners learn is a contributory factor in the design and development of an effective Onboarding program

## 2.5.1 Behavioral Theories

Behaviorism originated with the work of John B Watson, an American psychologist Watson argued that psychology is not about mind or human awareness rather, it is about behavior necessary to carry out an objective study whereby humans could be researched like rats and apes (DeMar, 1989)

Behavioral psychology focuses on three main factors which are observable behavior, using rewards and reinforcements and punishment to modify behavior and drill and practice Most importantly, behaviorists are mostly concerned with the external behaviors and not what is happening within the human and they will search for what triggers certain behavior and its consequences Thorndike's

(1932) 'Law of Effect' advocates that you learn something about your behavior because of the consequences that it has for you.

Three principles that dominate behaviorists learning are summarized by Kearsley, (1994):

- Positively reinforced behavior will emerge as sporadic reinforcement is predominantly effective.

- Information should be communicated in smaller chunks to reinforce responses.

- Reinforcements cut across same stimuli producing secondary conditioning.

Kearsley (1994) analyzed programmed instruction under strict order of frames that is composed of stimuli, responses and feedback (reinforcement) as examples of instructional design that is modeled on a behaviorist's pattern.

## 2.5.2 Cognitive Theories

Cognitive psychologists consider behavior variation as one-dimensional and turn to more complex social explanations and methods for organizational change (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2001). Cognitive theory began to have impact in the late 1950's and began to gain dominance in the 1960's. In the late 1970's cognitive science began to influence instructional design, with an emphasis on task analysis and learner analysis. Cognitive theorists accept that much learning involves links through connection and re-iteration. They agree to the significance of reinforcement, even though they are aware of the feedback mechanism over its role as a motivator. However, cognitive theorists view learning as acquisition

or reorganization by which humans articulate and keep information (Good & Brophy, 1990) Cognitive scientists believe that human process information is similar to computers, i e they receive, store and retrieve information, humans have internal knowledge structures called schema, they understand the information that fits into their established worldview but new information must be compared to existing schema

## 2.5.3 Constructivist Theories

Khosrow-pour (2006) defines constructivist learning theory as an active process of constructing individual mental models, in which knowledge is created in the mind of the learner Mayer (2001, 2008) describes the constructivist learning theory as active learning occurring when the learner engages in appropriate cognitive processing during learning, which includes attending to relevant incoming information, mentally organizing it into a coherent cognitive structure, and mentally retaining it with relevant prior knowledge from long term memory

Constructivists see knowledge as a matter of individual perception and understanding They view knowledge as something that is constructed by each and every individual learner during the learning process Constructivism promotes learning experiences where the methods and results of learning are not easily measured and may not be the same for each learner The challenge that constructivism poses for instructional designers, however, is that if each individual is responsible for knowledge construction, how can we as (instructional) designers determine and make sure a common set of outcomes for learning, as we have been taught to do?" (Jonasson, On-line)

## 2.5.4 Influence of Constructivism on Instructional Design

Jonasson suggests that knowledge may be constructed by

- Providing multiple representations of reality - avoid oversimplification of instruction by representing the natural complexity of the world

- Presenting authentic tasks - contextualize

- Providing real-world, case-based learning environments, rather than pre-determined instructional sequences

- Allowing time for reflection

- Enabling context and content dependent knowledge construction

- Supporting collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation, not competition among learners for recognition

## 2.5.5 Adult Learning Theory

Adult learning theory describes in detail the starting point for any training program and the blended learning Onboarding program (Lawson 2006) Knowles (1990) describes five models of human learning that is explained below

**Adults need self direction** Adults need self-direction Adult learners want to take full responsibility for their own lives, including the planning, implementing and evaluating of their learning activities

**Adults past experiences are integral** According to Knowles, each of us brings to a learning situation a wealth of experiences that provide a base for new learning and a resource to share with others Adults based their learning on past experiences, therefore the new information must be assimilated

**Adults must recognise a need to learn:** Adults are ready to learn when they perceive a need to know or do something in order to perform.

**Adults are motivated by real-world application:** Adults want the skills and knowledge to help them solve problems or complete tasks. People are moved to learn when they see the relevance to their real life scenarios and are able to apply what they have learned quickly. New employees want to know specific information about their organizations that will help them assimilate and accelerate the socialization process quickly.

**Adults need a variety of training methods:** New employees represent a variety of learning styles, so the blended learning Onboarding program will incorporate variety of methods to engage and motivate each participant.

This report will employ the adult learning, behavioral and social theory for the purpose of the Onboarding program with a focus on Gagne's nine events of instruction. Robert Gagne remains a leading researcher and contributor to the systematic approach to instructional design and training. He and his followers are known as behaviorists with outcomes as the focus of training (Kevin Kruse). Gagne produced 'events of instruction' nine-step process to connect with and deal with learning conditions when adults are presented with various stimuli. Gagne produced a nine-step process which is the events of instruction; this connects with and deals with the conditions of learning in processing the information model of the mental events that occur when adults are presented with various stimuli. The motivating factor for this choice of the different theories for the blended learning Onboarding program is because the learners are adults with

different learning styles and Gagne's nine events of instruction helps to correlate and address the conditions of learning in E-learning The incorporation of the different variety of methods in the blended learning Onboarding program will engage and create a sense of belonging for the new employees

## 2.5.6 Social Learning Theory

According to Bandura, (1997, 1986) people learn from one another through observation and copying and modelling the behavior of others, in the absence of any rewards or punishments Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences

Necessary conditions for effective modelling

- Attention — several issues increase or decrease the amount of attention paid Attention must be observed during the modelling process and this includes distinctiveness, affective valence, prevalence, complexity, functional value One's characteristics (e g sensory capacities, arousal level, and perceptual set, past reinforcement) affect attention

- Retention — remembering what you paid attention to through the use of role plays and rehearsal to retain the observable behaviour This comprises of symbolic coding, mental images, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal, motor rehearsal

- Reproduction — during the reproduction stage the learner is compelled to copy the modelled behaviour and this can most often be difficult for the

learner to reproduce the exact action For example complex physical actions are difficult to reproduce by children after observation

- Motivation — Learners have to demonstrate the modelled behaviour and there must be a good reason to emulate a certain behaviour, such motives past (i e traditional behaviourism), promised (imagined incentives) and vicarious (seeing and recalling the reinforced model)

In summary, this study will focus to employ the social learning theory because new employees' can learn from peers during job shadowing by observing what others are doing, this technique is essential to eliminate traditional stereotypes Managers and buddies are helpful in assisting new employees to acquaint with peers to develop relationships and feel a sense of commitment and bond to the organization, which in turn reinforces their satisfaction and their commitment to the organization Organizations are successful at integrating and socializing newcomers by setting realistic expectations for new employees for their tasks' accomplishment by making sure expectations are not far and above what is expected of the new starters New employees can construct the awareness of other people's knowledge and skills that allows them to tap into a network so they can be more productive and share information freely Social learning cannot become apparent if the learner is unaware of what is going on long enough to extort any meaningful information from external events In most organizations, new employees are encouraged to seek assistance from peers and managers while engaging in exploratory

communications to understand the skills, abilities and knowledge of other employees that can be help them better understand the organizations culture

## 2.6 Onboarding in Organization

Onboarding is a socialization process that is planned to shorten the productivity curve, to help new employees reach capacity quicker, increase employee engagement, and decrease turnover by helping new employees to build stronger relationships and establish credibility earlier (Cashman & Smye, 2007) The Onboarding process enables new employees to gain access to information, tools, and materials needed to become productive in their job (Snell, 2006) The entire process of Onboarding can lead to increase in efficiency fulfillment and retention, also help to guarantee that organizations value a return on investment for the cost of recruitment (Reese, 2005) The inclusion of web based tools in the Onboarding plan will provide managers with key information on relevant topics (Brodie, 2006)

# Figure 2- 2 Onboarding Conceptual Evaluation Frameworks

**Key Questions**
- What is the time to competency?
- Does the treatment group outperform control group?
- What is the attrition of the control to treatment group?
- What is the effect of manager ownership in the onboarding process?

**Onboarding task completion**
- Completed self evaluations
- Completed manager evaluations
- Completed courses
- Completed knowledge tests
- Completed end of onboarding evaluation

**Competency**
- Time to competency
- Level of productivity
- Correlation to manager perception

**Evaluation Methodology 2005**

**Retention**
- First year retention
- Correlation to success
- Correlation to quitters and stayers
- Difference between agents leaving after one year with those leaving before one year

**Evaluations**
- New hire evaluation of managers execution of process
- Manager evaluation of new hire performance

**Productivity**
- Gross Margin Dollars
- Talent Working
- Correlation between onboarding success and productivity
- Correlation between manager execution and productivity
- Comparison of onboarded new hire with existing population segments
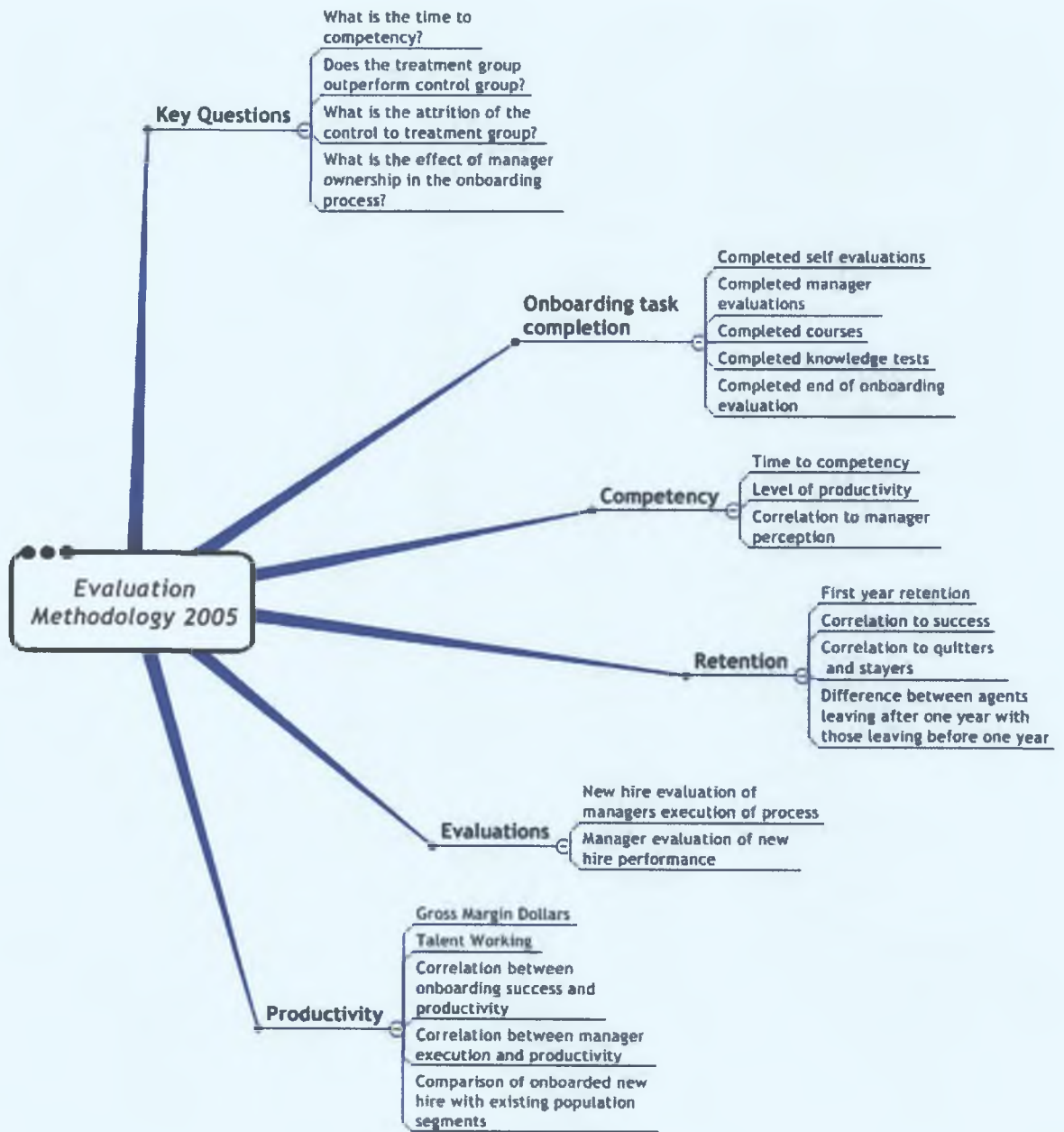
Figure 2.2 Onboarding Conceptual Evaluation Frameworks cited from Randstad case study

Very often, an Onboarding program will involve the communication of general information about the organization to the new employees in relation to policies

and procedures relating to all aspects of the organization from payroll, training and development, disciplinary policies and procedures, wellness, recreation. Most often, this information is contained in the company handbook. These policies and procedures are very important, but an effective Onboarding program must actively take into consideration the socialization strategies for new employees as employee turnover in the first year of employment is known from research to rise. A well crafted plan speeds employees' time to productivity, helps employees assimilate and socialization more quickly, creates commitment and engagement and reduces early turnover. The use of a buddy during the first few weeks to act as a guide to the new employee and the relationship formed during this stage goes a long way in creating an effective socialization process. Onboarding is a two-way process: The buddy and manager must provide facts and support, and the new employee should ask questions about his or her job and the organization. To facilitate the ongoing flow of information, there should be enough time into the Onboarding schedule to allow both parties to have an open discussion about the process.

Varma & Collins describes the concept of Onboarding as a process whereby organizations have improved and enhanced the traditional orientation program to include technical skills training, industry background and soft skills training to get new employees up to speed quickly ( Varma & Collins, 2007).

The process of helping people get started is known as Onboarding (Crumlish and Malone, 2009), but it also helps employees to move from one level to another within an organisation. Crumlish describes Onboarding as a term that was

derived from human resources and common practice of new employee orientation The systematic approach to orienting new employee to the company, department, the team, and the job is termed as Onboarding (Pell, 2003) Mathis & Jackson define Onboarding as a planned orientation of new employees to their jobs, co-workers and the organization (Mathis & Jackson, 2008) Research shows that about 75% of organizations have implemented Onboarding activities to develop their employee orientation efforts using electronic technology to enhance the Onboarding process Mathis & Jackson reiterate the effectiveness of an Onboarding process by the identification of several key purposes

- Establishes a favourable employee impression of the organization and the job
- Provides organization and job information
- Enhances interpersonal acceptance by colleagues
- Accelerates socialization and integration of new employees into the organization
- Ensures that employee performance and productivity begin more quickly (Mathis & Jackson, 2008)

According to a survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, 83% of companies report the use of a formal orientation program for new employees The most frequently used formats are group-based and individual sessions, whereas only 11% of companies conduct the orientation program using a computer-based format Compared with findings in 2004, 34% of HR professionals signified that the investment in Onboarding programs has increased in 2005

Most organizations use the term Onboarding interchangeably with orientation, along with alignment, assimilation, integration and transition. Arthur defines Onboarding as differing from all these processes, especially traditional orientation in several ways. She defines Onboarding as progressing far beyond the point at which orientation programs normally end, lasting as long as a year (Arthur, 2008). These assumptions cannot be ruled out as many organizations approach Onboarding as an alternate term for the induction of new employees but in actual fact Onboarding starts from the job offer through to letting go of the employees on-the-job. It goes beyond just ticking the induction checklist; it's about supporting the new employees decision to join the organization, empowering them with information to understand the organization and vision and reinforcing the attitude and behaviors' to set them up for success on the job.

Dalkia's Onboarding program serves three purposes; Firstly, to accelerate the socialization and integration of the new employee, secondly to accelerate the performance results of the new employees. Thirdly, to adapt the employee's skills to the new role, developing business expertise and helping them to become profoundly familiar with the organizational culture, and building critical organizational relationships. From the Senior Management Team down to the junior levels, employees are well briefed on the importance of building deep relationships and the value in developing others.

The responsibility of an Effective Onboarding program is not the sole responsibility of the HR department; the line managers play an important role in the successful Onboarding of new employees into the organization. The

responsibility for the HR personnel is to plan, follow-up and coordinates the program with the line managers and supervisors. Having a formal and systematic follow-up process will not only help evaluate the program's effectiveness, it can also identify areas for further improvement.

## 2.6.1 Employee Engagement and Empowerment on Onboarding Program

According to Cook, (2008) the term employee engagement is "the willingness and ability of employees to give sustained discretionary effort to help their organization succeed" (Cook, 2008 pg 3). New employees' productivity within an organization can be accelerated quickly when the right resources are employed in the Onboarding process thus recording high levels of employee engagement. The approach in which new employees are treated when they join an organization often impacts productivity, engagement, retention and motivation (Magoon & De St Aubin, 2007). For the purpose of this study, employee engagement is important in the blended learning Onboarding process because the way new starters are treated by peers and managers will have an impact in the overall Onboarding process. A detailed program combining different deliverables will boost the socialization of the new employees to the values, norms and beliefs of the organization whereby familiarizing the new hires to their roles, the culture, policies and procedures of organization and its workforce.

There are several definitions of the term empowerment, for the purpose of this thesis I will focus on the definition by Page and Czuba (1999). They define empowerment as a "multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain

control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people to use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important" (Page & Czuba, 1999). To throw more light on the concept broadly in relation to the specific Onboarding of new employees in organizations, the need for new employees to be empowered in developing and forming relationships within the social process of their first few months in a new organization.

It is within this important transition process that relationships form and socialization between new starters and their teams can commence in programs such as the blended learning Onboarding program. This can be invaluable for new starters, teams and the organization as a whole.

Dalkia fosters a culture that promotes excellent performance, teamwork, inclusion, leadership and growth. Employees' Onboarding experience can be made invaluable in helping them adapt to their new role. The average time for employees who experience the traditional approach to become accustomed in a new organization within six months, but with the aid of technology, it can happen within three to four months. The establishment of strong relationships in a short time is enhanced by the introduction of the blended learning modalities. The discussion forum made the learners exposed to blended learning have a strong network to rely on for feedback, assistance, and guidance and mentoring in the workplace and beyond.

Organizations need an effective orientation and socialization program for all new employees, with a more comprehensive and systematic plan to help them make

the transition to their new role. An effective Onboarding plan helps the new employee get integrated into the organization by helping them align their leadership style with the organization with the organizations culture, build relationships with peers and direct reports, and gain a better understanding of the organizations decision making process (Gierden, 2007). The use of software that collates data from employees can reduce the amount of time spent compiling and processing paperwork (Lamont, 2007).

The concept of Onboarding has been examined in a number of researches in literature, Bauer describes Onboarding as the process of getting new employees adjusted to the job, and she splits it into social and performance-related aspects of the job (Bauer, 2007). In the academic literature, it has been referred to as the socialization process, learning the ropes in a new organization, and the term Onboarding has really made it a lot more accessible for people in the industry. The use of the term socialization has been misconstrued by a lot of people who relate it to being sociable, and developing a platonic relationship but the term Onboarding has been able to drive the meaning and significance home. Two socialization factors in particular have been identified as playing a significant role in the newcomer socialization process – organizational tactics and newcomer proactively (Bauer et al., 2007).

### 2.6.2 Blended Learning and Onboarding

The use of blended learning is another approach of delivering an Onboarding program for new employees, this process is the combination of traditional face-to-face and online learning to deliver the learning content. This process allows the

employees to log on with a username and password to gain access to the learning materials Arthur (2005) describes some companies adapting this process to enhance the traditional approach of face-to-face intervention The application of blended learning to employee Onboarding allows organizations to impart critical information about an organization in an efficient yet personalized way

The blended learning process integrates the different learning styles in an organization (visual, auditory and kinaesthic), identifies the computer skills of users, and the acknowledgement of time and financial restraints of face-to-face orientation, without undermining the benefits of classroom communication and integration (Arthur, 2005)

## 2.7   What is Socialization?

The term "socialization" is applied to the processes by which an individual within an organization selectively acquires the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform a social role effectively (Merton, 1963) Huczynski & Buchanan (2001) points out that socialization process tends to encourage different standards in relation to the informal ways by which the newcomer has to learn the standards and ways of behaving and related attitudes that they involve, to be a successful and accepted member of the organization The new employees do not necessarily have to believe in the appropriate standards set before them, but they must watch and model the behaviour of fellow colleagues Bennis (1985) asserts that socialization involves a complex set of human relationships interacting in many ways He reiterates that within an organization, the

socialization process consists of the relationships formed within the workforce and beyond Hence, the behaviour of one member of staff can impact, directly or indirectly on the behaviour of others This means that the social system exceeds boundaries and goes beyond formal programmes Brim's (1966) definition of socialization as "the manner in which an individual learns that behaviour appropriate to his position in a group through interaction with others who hold normative beliefs about what his role should be and who reward or punish him for correct or incorrect actions"

Mathis & Jackson (2008) gave a holistic view of the term socialization as a process in which new employees and their initial commitments to the organization are positively affected by orientation This process enhances the person/organization fit, which reinforces the employee's positive view of the job, colleagues, and the organization The integration of the new employees into the organization quickly can lead to the overall organizational performance when the new starters feel that they are part of the organization and they begin to contribute quickly to their teams and the organization as a whole Werner & DeSimone asserts that socialization is a process of adjusting to a new organisation (Werner & DeSimone, 2008) Socialization is usually achieved without a planned intervention Huczynski & Buchanan (2001) describe the process as a means of giving rewards such as praise, encouragement, privilege and promotion for correct behaviour and socialization can be achieved by negative reinforcements and punishments, like being ignored, ridiculed or fined for behaviour that is inappropriate

Organizational socialization refers to the process by which an individual acquires the attitudes, behaviour and knowledge needed to participate as an organizational member" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) Organizational socialisation has been linked to a number of important organizational outcomes including increased organizational commitment, job involvement, role orientation, and tenure (Allen & Meyer, 1990a, Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998, Fisher, 1986) Van Maanen & Schein (1979) described organizational socialization in a manner consistent with Bauer et al, (2007) They claim that there are two socialization factors namely organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity have been identified as playing a significant role in the new employees' socialization process (Bauer et al, 2007) Organizational socialization is an ongoing process and it is a method used in the Onboarding programme to acquaint new employees with peers and managers It is a knowledge acquisition process that helps new employees adapt, form work relationships and find their place in the organization (Noe, 2005)

(Noe, 2005) describes three main segments of the socialization process of new employees in the organization

> 1 *Anticipatory socialization* This phase occurs prior to new employees joining the organization In the course of interacting with delegates of the organization (e g , recruiters, managers), new employees build up anticipation about the company and the role

*2 Accommodation 'Breaking In'* This phase commence the encounter with the organization Whilst new employees embark on a new job, they start to learn about job tasks and obtain training Managers can exercise their superiority by helping new employees understand their roles and tasks Also, by understanding the stresses and issues that newcomers experience, managers can help nurture a good work relationship with new employees One method for organizations to deal with the accommodation phase of socialization is to have an Onboarding program that can integrate new employees properly into the organization

*3 Role Management* New employees begin to feel comfortable with their job demands and social relationships They will be interested in the company's evaluation of their performance and in learning about potential career opportunities within the company (Feldman, 1976)

Organizations that adhere to the right process of orienting and socializing their new hires provide long lasting benefits to both the organization and the individual It is believed that this process plays an integral part in engaging the employees and reducing turnover rate ( Magoon & De St Aubin, 2007) O'Malley adds to this notion by highlighting two goals for new employees Onboarding namely, to get the employees to be socially and technically proficient so they can be productive and have a sense of belonging to the team and organization at large ( O'Malley, 2000)

## A Model of Organizational Socialization

## Figure 2- 3 Diagram of a model of organizational socialization.
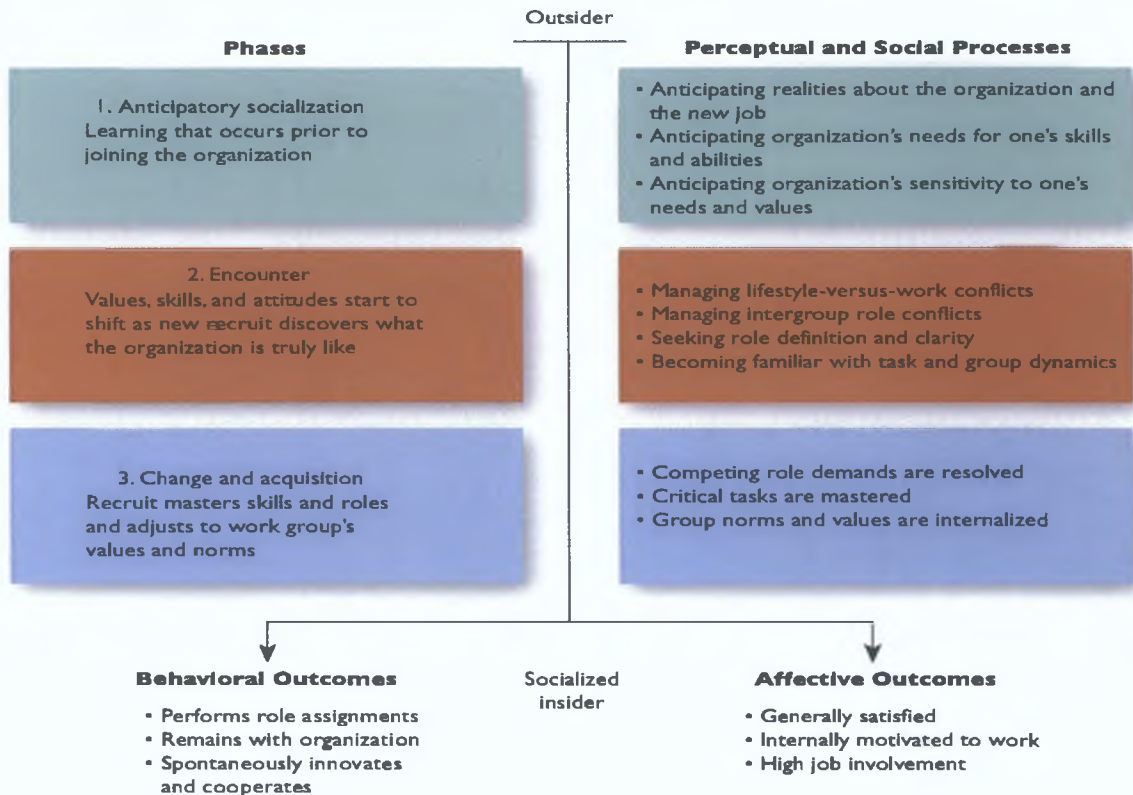


Figure 2.3 Diagram of a model on organizational socialization cited from Feldman, 1976

The knowledge of the policies and procedures of an organization is essential for new employees to function in the organization, but the relationships built during the Onboarding process are important to foster a sense of belonging for new employees and facilitate the socialization process.

## Table 2- 4 Organizational socialization process.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Table 2.4: Socialization Content** | |
| Performance proficiency | Learning and mastering the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the required work task. |
| People | Establishing successful and satisfying work relationships with organizational members. |
| Politics | Gaining information regarding formal and informal work relationships and power structures. |
| Language | Understanding the profession's technical language as well as acronyms, slang and jargon unique to the organization. |
| Organizational goals and values | Understanding the rules or principles that maintain the integrity of the organization. |
| History | Learning the organization's traditions, customs, myths, personal background of other members. |
| Source: Chao, G. T., O'Leary-Kelly, A. M., Wolf, S., Klein, H. J., & Gardner, P. D. (1994). Organizational socialization: Its content and consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79,* 5, 730-743. | |

This research will focus on the acceleration rate of new employees' socialization in the organization and the process of forming relationships and gaining access to peers and managers to achieve effective socialization within the organization.

A better understanding of this general question will be answered in the three research questions in this study In particular this study will focus on evaluating the impact of a formal and informal Onboarding training program, a common approach used in the socialization of new employees There are different levels of socialization, Fisher describes socialization as a learning process in which individuals need to acquire a variety of information and behaviours to become an effective organizational member (Fisher, 1986)

Organizations can effectively embed new employees successfully into teams and the organization as a whole based on the nature of the socialization activities employed Allen suggest that for organization can achieve this through 1) involving experienced organization members in the socialization process as role models or mentors, 2) providing newcomers with positive feedback as they adjust to the new environment, 3) structuring orientation activities to allow newcomers to experience the activities together, and 4) providing clear information about the stages of socialization process (Allen, 2006)

# Figure 2- 4 Developmental Relationship Diversity.

## Developmental Networks Associated with Mentoring

**Developmental Relationship Strength**



Key: D, developer; P, protégé
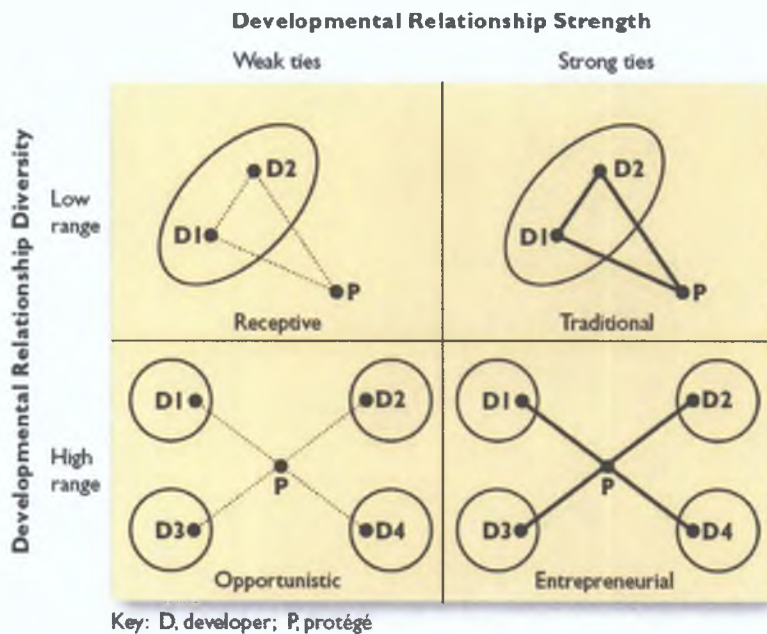
Werner & DeSimone identified two main approaches to facilitate organizational socialization, namely the realistic job review and employee orientation. They reiterate the benefits of these approaches to both employees and the organization. (Werner & DeSimone, 2009)

## 2.7.1 Concept of Organizational Socialization

Werner & DeSimone identified three fundamental concepts: organizational roles, group norms and expectations (Werner & DeSimone, 2009). Socialization is a natural process and it is an organizations attempt to socialization its employees with respect to attitudes and behaviors related to the acquisition and

development of new knowledge, creativity, innovation, flexibility and readiness for

change (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2001)

## Table 2- 5 Theoretical Framework of Socialization Tactics in Organizations.

| Tactic | Description |
|---|---|
| Collective vs. individual | Collective socialization consists of grouping newcomers and exposing them to a common set of experiences rather than treating each newcomer individually and exposing him or her to more or less unique experiences. |
| Formal vs. informal | Formal socialization is the practice of segregating a newcomer from regular organization members during a defined socialization period versus not clearly distinguishing a newcomer from more experienced members. Army recruits must attend boot camp before they are allowed to work alongside established soldiers. |
| Sequential vs. random | Sequential socialization refers to a fixed progression of steps that culminate in the new role, compared to an ambiguous or dynamic progression. The socialization of doctors involves a lock-step sequence from medical school, to internship, to residency before they are allowed to practice on their own. |
| Fixed vs. variable | Fixed socialization provides a timetable for the assumption of the role, whereas a variable process does not. American university students typically spend one year apiece as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. |
| Serial vs. disjunctive | A serial process is one in which the newcomer is socialized by an experienced member, whereas a disjunctive process does not use a role model. |
| Investiture vs. divestiture | Investiture refers to the affirmation of a newcomer's incoming global and specific role identities and attributes. Divestiture is the denial and stripping away of the newcomer's existing sense of self and the reconstruction of self in the organization's image. During police training, cadets are required to wear uniforms and maintain an immaculate appearance, they are addressed as "officer," and told they are no longer ordinary citizens but are representatives of the police force. |

SOURCE: Descriptions were taken from B E Ashforth, *Role Transitions in Organizational Life: An Identity-Based Perspective* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001), pp 149–83.

The above diagram illustrates a theoretical framework that describes the mechanism for new employees to lead to effective socialization and highlight the importance of social interactions and relationships with organization human capital in accelerating new employee's socialization.

This research will develop such a theoretical framework in the socialization process of new employees by introducing the new employees to the organization culture and to the accepted practices of their individual teams, divisions and overall business unit and these factors are determining factors for a successful Onboarding program.

## 2.7.2 Aim of the Blended Learning Onboarding Program

More recently, the need for a strong blended Onboarding program gave birth to two main corporate initiatives from the Veolia group: rapid growth in Headcount and retention of the corporate culture which is rooted in our values. The emphasis on growth and corporate culture are consolidated by the four divisions of Veolia Environnement. The need to revaluate the processes of the current Induction program was realized from the focus group formed incorporating employees from the different sites and departments of the organization to brainstorm on issues they found during the formal program. Issues raised were the connectivity of the employees from the different sites; employees revealed that it took them longer time to integrate into the organization and networking and socializing with other colleagues was slow.

To address these challenges, the need to expand the Induction process far beyond the ticking of boxes to include a blended Onboarding program that will include skilled competencies, knowledge of organizational policies and processes and acceleration of the integration and socialization processes for the new employees quicker. Having a comprehensive plan in place ensued that the

process was followed through to meet the objectives of the blended Onboarding program The program will employ the most favorable forms of formal and informal learning and support strategies that comprise of the blending of different deliverables to accelerate the integration and socialization process The combination of formal learning and role that "informal learning" elements can provide as an integral part of an overarching blended learning solution

The results analyzed from the surveys completed after the blended Onboarding program signified the importance of the different learning modalities discussion forum, coaching & mentoring, informal and formal learning, cascade meeting and social club activities facilitating the acceleration of the socialization process amongst employees through collaboration The activity found to be very successful in socialization process was informal meeting between employees and the senior management team over lunch in the sixth week of the program and the objectives of this lunch is to

- To allow new employees to develop relationships from an organizational, individual and team perspective, giving the new starters a medium to socialization and form networks
- To create a forum whereby new employees can ask questions and receive feedback on any issues that they may require more concrete answers from a broad audience

- To provide managers with a broad understanding of the employees skills and knowledge from previous companies and get to know the expectations and interests of the new employees.

### 2.7.3 Summary

The term socialization is about learning the cultures and norms of an organization. Newcomers must learn the standards and ways of behaving and related attitudes that they involve, to be a successful and accepted member of the organization. The use of blended learning is a popular medium in the delivery of an Onboarding program and it reduces the cost and time constraints for the organization without undermining the socialization and integration process of the traditional approach.

There are advantages and disadvantages of blended learning as a medium for rolling out training, but the effective combination of a variety of approaches is adding value, taking into consideration the different learning styles and these can be tailored in the development of the course by instructional designers, the provision of offline support and flexibility of learning is another factor.

Applying a blended learning intervention in the Onboarding of new employees is specific to different organizations and the goal of blended learning in the Onboarding program is to concurrently sustain organizational objectives and meet the exclusive developmental needs of each individual while optimizing the cost of program delivery. The use of case study from Intel to bring out the similarities of the Onboarding program to see how their Onboarding process differs from Dalkia can be found in the appendix.

A search of the literature review highlights that there is consistent results on blended learning as a strategy in delivering new employees Onboarding program in organizations Several of the authors shared the same perspectives on blended learning, which combines the traditional face-to-face and e-learning approaches taking into account the learning styles of learners and students both in organizations and often with a higher education student population in colleges

## 3.0 Research Question

This research incorporated a collective resource perception with present work on organizational socialization to answer these three research questions.

- What are the effects of technology on the integration and socialization of new employees?
- Does a blended approach of an Onboarding program accelerate employee socialization quicker than a traditional face-to-face approach?

When comparing the blended approach and traditional approach of delivering the orientation program, the study will identify during the observation of participants to find out the acceleration rate of socialization when technology tools were applied and when it was done in an instructor led approach.

The critical factors to be considered for the success of this blended learning approach are how the learning strategy employed engage the new employees. How the learning content was delivered and made accessible to the learners? The provision of support mechanism for the new employees to review and reference back to the online content must be put into consideration to set the pace for the learning and development of the new employees.

The concept for this approach was that socialization of the employees needed to be quick, smooth and enjoyable to foster full integration into the team and the organization. The measurement of the participants in the Onboarding session is based on the acceleration rate of socialization and integration into the organization. When comparing the blended approach and traditional approach of delivering the orientation program, the study will identify during the observation of

participants to find out the acceleration rate of socialization when technology tools were applied and when it was done in an instructor led approach

## 3.1 Research Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to examine the choice for the appropriate research design while aiming to answer the research questions It will provide the reason for the choice of selection of the research design and research process and the implementation of the different methods The characteristics of the participants will be defined taking into consideration the mode of contact The choice of the different tools will be highlighted and the problems encountered in the distribution and gathering of the questionnaires will be highlighted The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods in analyzing the findings using questionnaires, focus group and telephone and unstructured interview for the qualitative data gathering process and SPSS for the quantitative data gathering process This study employed the use of questionnaire because it is easy to gather information and focus group meetings are chaired by a facilitator and it was useful for brainstorming various topics amongst participants The participants consist of different employees from the organization gather information on the problems they encountered as new employees during their induction program and suggestions were given on the way forward

The use of telephone and unstructured interviews was another method employed to communicate with the line managers and the new employees to discuss the impact the training undertaken has on the employees performance in relation to the objectives listed in the evaluation sheet 1 The telephone interview was

effective in communicating with the line managers from the different sites that were part of the focus group but could not make it to the meeting to get their contribution and feedback The unstructured interview is another approach that the line managers used to gather information from the new employees on any area of difficulties or uncertainties they were facing and also to give them constructive feedback

The research methodology is exploratory, the report summarizes the evaluation of the effect of web 2 0 technology tools on the socialization process of new employees, and the design approach was the development of the blended Onboarding program incorporating the use of podcasts, discussion forum, telephone conversation, email, and video

This study explores the difference between the acceleration rates of the socialization and integration process of the traditional Onboarding program, this is a condition where the learners are subjected to learning content in an instructor-led training in a room The blended learning Onboarding program is a condition that combines different learning modalities with the learning content, part of the condition is done online giving participants the opportunity to take the learning at anytime and anywhere, and the other part is instructor-led training in a room

A group of 25 new employees participated in the traditional Onboarding program, the sample group was selected randomly from different sites comprising of technicians, client operation manager, helpdesk administrator, plumbers and site managers They are new intakes by direct employment and transfer of

undertaking from another organization popularly known as TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) The second sample group comprise of 25 new employees in the blended learning Onboarding program selected randomly from different sites comprising of technicians, administrators, plumbers, carpenters, apprentices and warehouse operatives

The new employees completed a survey at the end of six weeks to measure the socialization process that shows if they are beginning to identify with the organizational goals and values, culture, structures, processes, people and performance ability

# Figure 3- 1 Welcome message in Blended Learning Onboarding Program
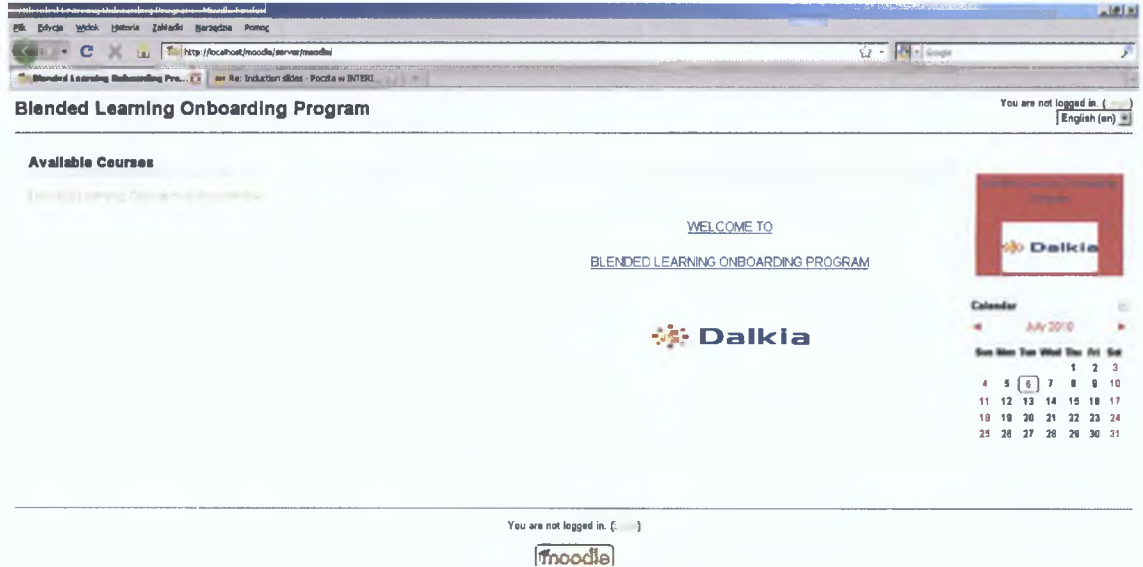


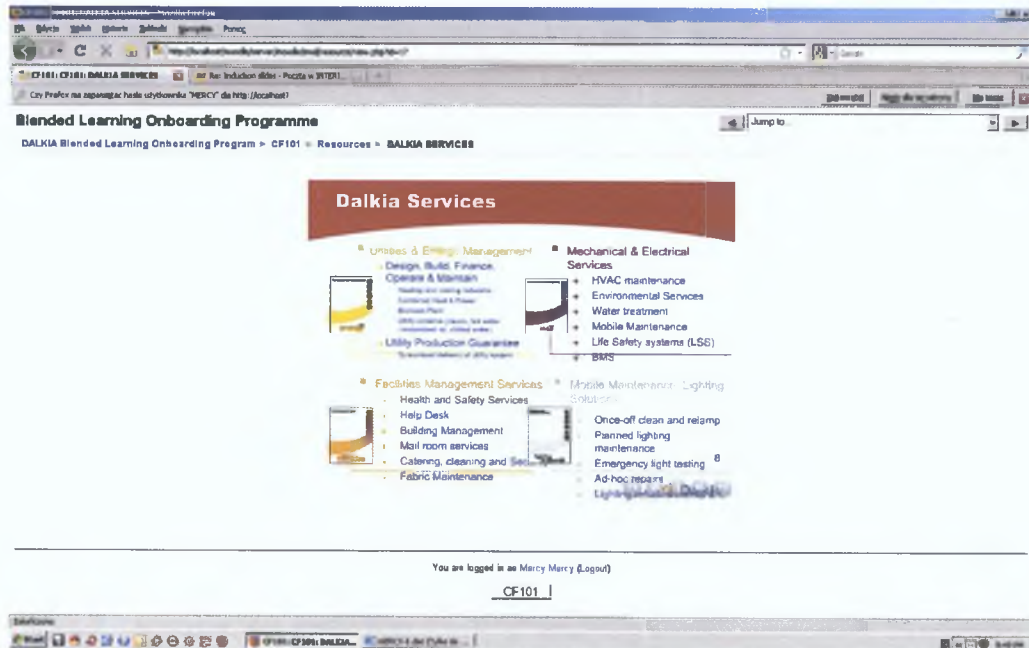# Figure 3- 2 Screenshot of a slide with breakdown of the Dalkia.

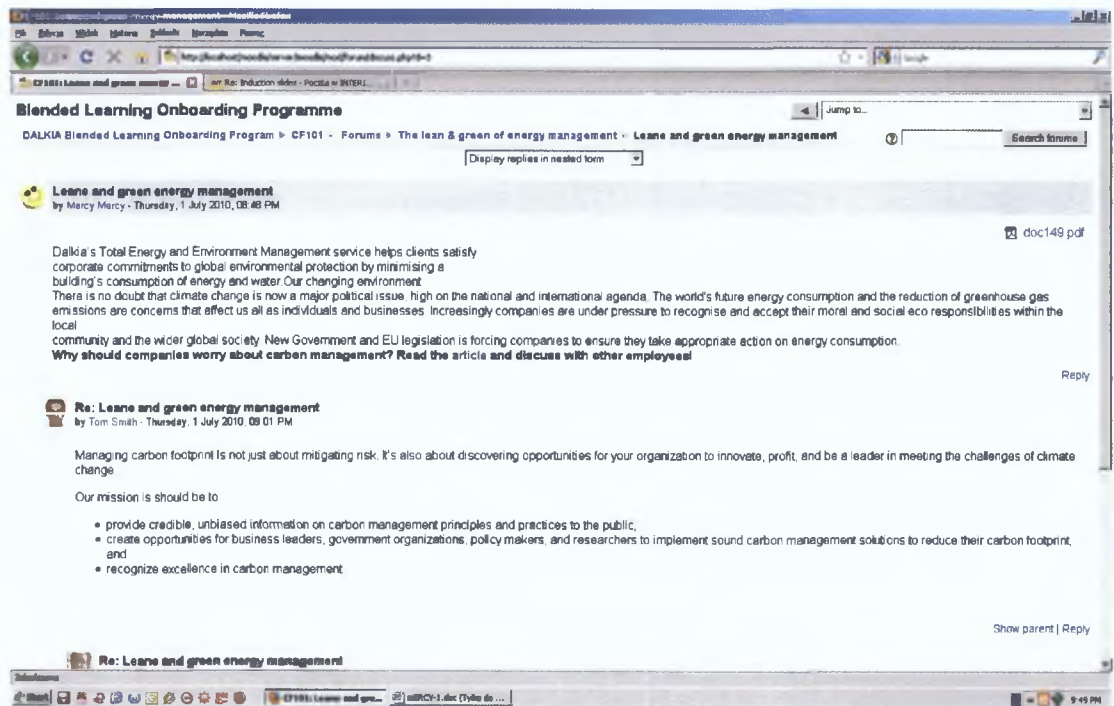# Figure 3- 3 Screenshot of the discussion forum - sharing knowledge and information.



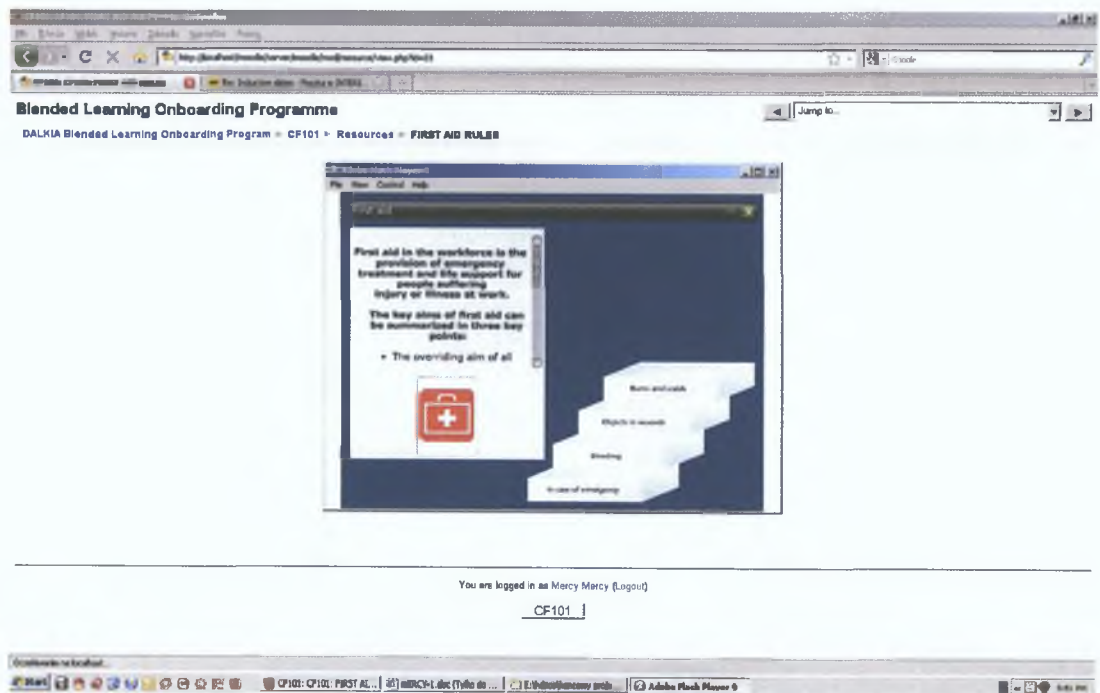# Figure 3- 4 Screenshot of a module on First aid.

**Figure 3- 5 Screenshot on an assessment in the blended learning Onboarding program.**
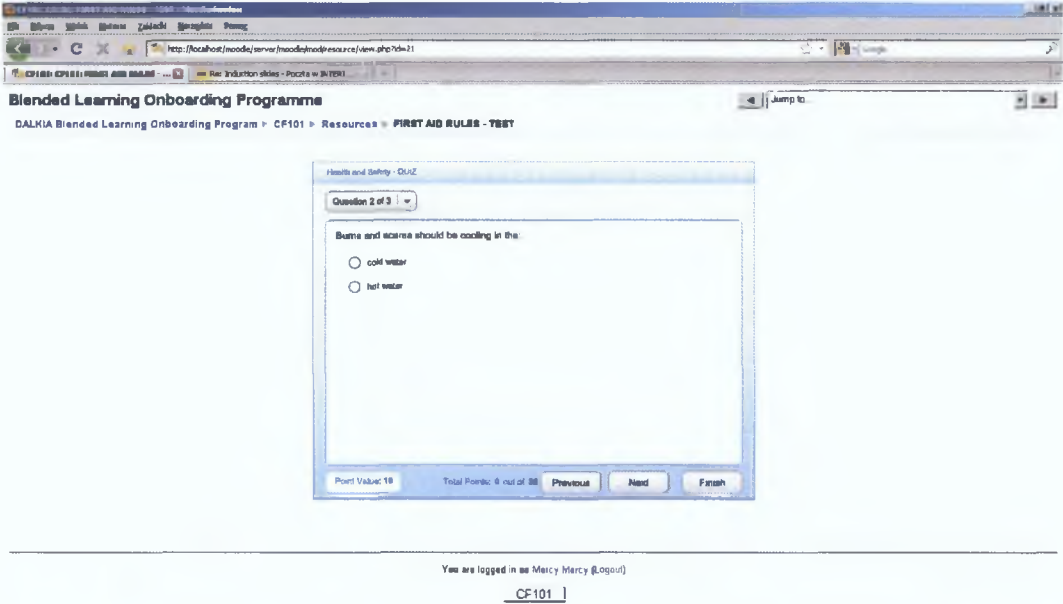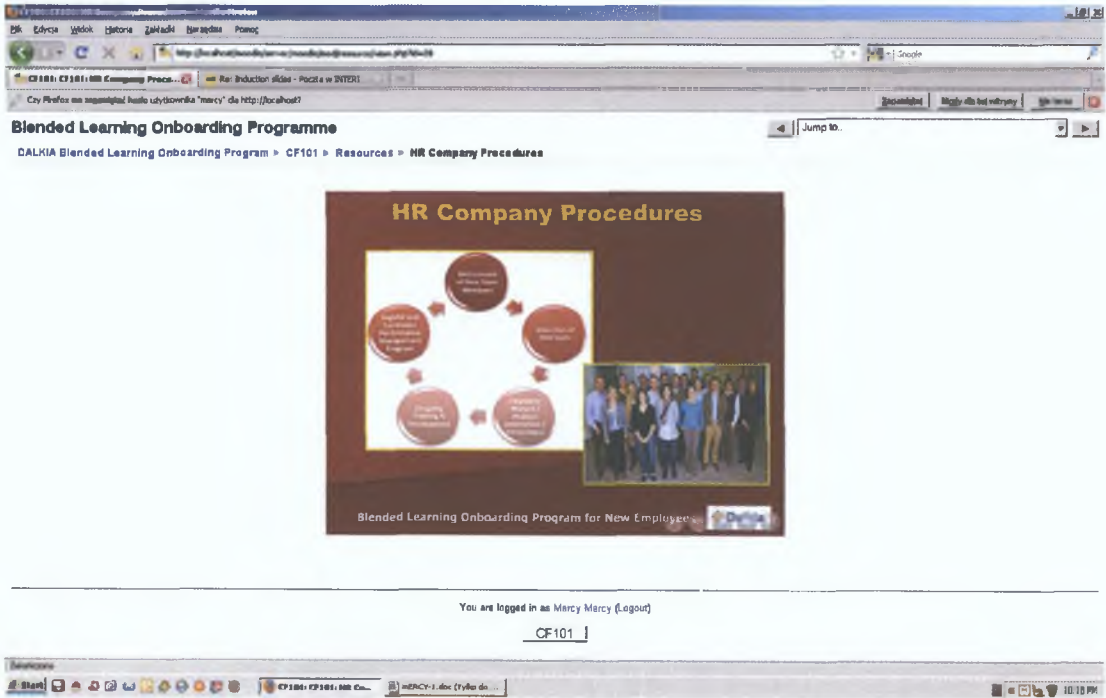


**Figure 3- 6 Screenshot of the HR Company Procedures.**

As shown in Figure 3 1 to 3 6, the blended learning Onboarding commenced with a welcoming message for the new employees At the end of the welcome message, employees are given a general overview of the organization which includes a virtual tour of the different sites Then the new hires are introduced to the discussion forum where they can share and collaborate with peers and managers The learning content is broken down into smaller chunks to enable the new employees assimilate easily taking into consideration the different learning styles At the end of each module, the new employees take a comprehensive test

**Welcoming new employees into the company**

- Each employee when being offered a role with Dalkia receive a pack which includes
    - o The Welcome letter – explaining what information needs to be completed and returned to the Recruitment Manager
    - o Letter of offer
    - o Terms and conditions of employment
    - o E-mail and internet policy
    - o Personal details form
    - o Hibernian Healthcare/ Bupa application form if provided with the level of position
    - o Invitation is also included to next Formal Company Induction at Head Office in Swords (once per month)
    - o Request for P45 and tax certificates

- An explanatory note on when the employee will receive their first payroll and for what period this will cover.

- Details on the employee discount group scheme

- Details of the One4All smart planner savings scheme

- Details of the Bikes 4 Work Scheme

- Welcome to Dalkia Newsletter with useful introductory information and useful contacts to be used from day one of employment.



- If the new employee is a manager they will also receive a copy of

  - the Dalkia Manager Guidelines and

  - an invitation to the next management Onboarding program (which takes place on a Quarterly basis.) in addition to attending the standard employee Onboarding program.

4 weeks Onboarding program consist of – HR, Finance, Business Development and HSQE.

- Site Onboarding program is completed on the first day on site – to ensure employees are familiar with the Health & Safety for the particular site and policies and procedures that all employees on site must adhere to.

Employees also receive their Personal Protective Equipment on this day and any company mobile phones and laptops required for relevant roles.

- When a new employee joins the company, the HR department ensures a buddy is assigned to the new employee. The buddy works with the new employee in the first few weeks to ensure they have someone who can offer them advice and guidance regarding the day to day aspects of working at Dalkia on their particular site. Their buddy also helps introduce them to the Dalkia culture. This helps employees feel they have made the right decision to join Dalkia and they will stay longer with the company and see a long term career with Dalkia. This is of major importance when welcoming new employees as Dalkia business takes place on numerous sites.

Buddy guidelines were developed and communicated to the management of Dalkia alongside the benefits of the initiative. This process is monitored and details are recorded and monitored by the HR department at Induction, in order to ensure that all new employees are receiving a buddy.

- Formal and Informal Company Onboarding program – This is a Key Performance Indicator which we measure ourselves against to ensure orientation takes place on the first day of employment. This is a half day session, which covers:

    o Dalkia Company Vision, Mission, Values.

    o Dalkia Company History, Products and Services offered.

o HR Policies and Procedures

o HR Team roles and contact list to assist any queries

o Benefits of Working in Dalkia- Details on Great Place to Work Journey

o Sports and Social club information and details on how to join

o Communication Policy – Information on the types of meetings that are held and the type of communications that are issued For example the Quarterly Communication Ambassador Meetings – which are cascade to all employees to ensure they are updated on the business and any developments on an ongoing basis

o Check that all employees have received MyDalkia access and E-mail/ Phone as appropriate

o Contact List of all employees – and where to locate it

o Organisation chart detailing every employee and where to locate it

o Quality Management System Training

o Health & Safety Training

o Manual Handling Training

A tour of Head Office also takes place as part of instructor-led orientation

**The following items are also distributed,**

• How to Guides – Recently developed and launched to ensure that new and existing employees have an easy reference guide to refer to help

integrate them into the Dalkia Culture   straight away, for e.g. How to Participate and Innovate



- New Employee Handbook- Recently updated to include all Northern Ireland Employee legislation.

- Health & Safety Lanyards with Employee ID Cards

- Crisis Management and Good Saves Cards

- We also have available a Dalkia Corporate Onboarding for new managers – 4 days - Campus Veolia – Paris – which encourages cultural fit into the larger corporate VE Company.

- Managers also complete six weekly interim reviews with employees during this welcome period in order to ensure that they are happy with their new employment with Dalkia, they are settling into their role and to check for any training requirements to ensure we understand what is working well. This process also allows the employee to communicate any opportunities they feel may be exist in their welcome period to Dalkia.

## *3.2 Organizational Background of Dalkia*

Dalkia Ireland is rapidly growing with over 547 employees in Ireland; Dalkia is Europe's leading company in Energy Management, Utilities and Facilities solutions. Dalkia Ireland provides a wide range of technical and administrative solutions to companies who desire to outsource these services from their core business activity. Dalkia believes that its greatest resource is its people. There are 452 males and 95 females in Dalkia ranging from 18 years to 65 years old. Dalkia Ireland, a part of Dalkia group (has presence in 41 countries) is the Energy division of Veolia Environment. Dalkia has a strong reputation of 26 years as energy management, utilities management and Technical facilities support services to municipalities in Ireland with a turnover in 2008 of €108 million. Dalkia Ireland is a multi site organisation with over 30 sites within the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

**Figure 3- 7 Dalkia Ireland - Resources and Staff breakdown.**
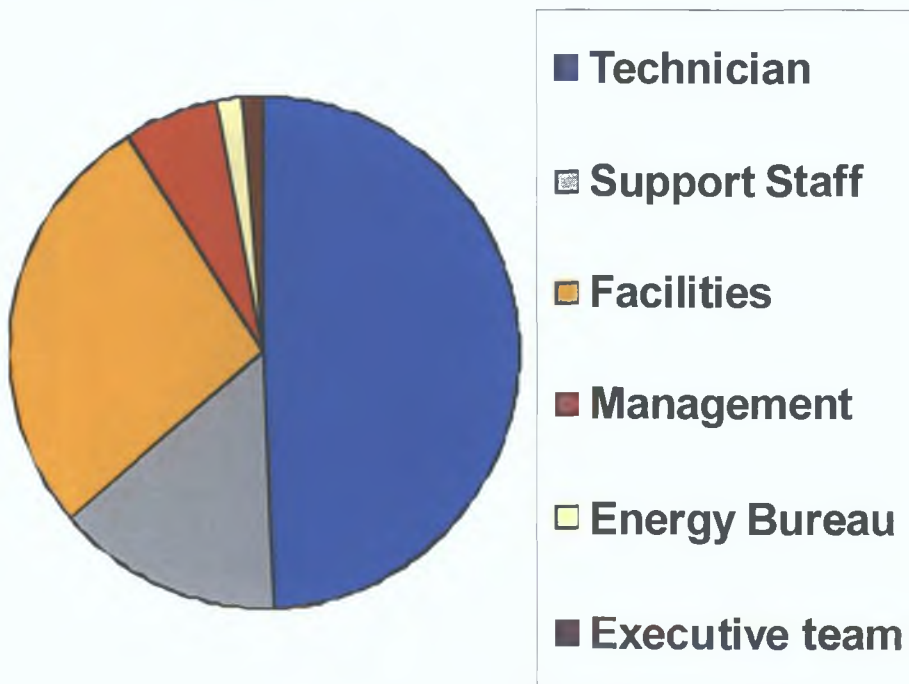
The figure above summarizes the divisional structure of Dalkia Ireland; it is divided into six different categories namely technical, support staff, facilities, management, energy bureau and the executive team respectively. The majority of the total human capital comprise of technicians, which form half of the total organisation, followed by the facilities staff and the support staff that comprise of human resources, finance, health and safety, helpdesk/receptionists and business development/marketing staff. The energy department and management staff makes up the rest of the employees in Dalkia.

## 3.3  Problem Description

The main factor responsible for the development of the blended learning Onboarding program is the structure of the organization; Dalkia is a multi-site company with presence on the sites of various clients. Employees found they were not able to integrate with a large group of individuals as they will only meet on the day of the Induction in the Head Office and may never communicate or see them unless they were on a training program. Secondly following up from the recent Senior Management Team meeting in September 2009, which looked at Dalkia's Induction process from an organizational point of view, a gap was identified regarding the causes of high staff turnover rate and feedback from exit interviews conducted by the human resource team to have a more in-depth analysis of the orientation process. It was decided during the meeting that the Learning & Development department within the Human Resources Team will be responsible for defining a more robust process in the induction of new employees. This gave birth to the idea of developing a blended learning

Onboarding program that will help new employees adapt, accelerate the socialization process and assimilate more quickly and successfully into their roles, teams and the organization as a whole. Based on this research, a focus group was formed consisting of employees who have been employed in the past twelve to eighteen months to obtain their feedback regarding their experiences as new hires and good information was obtained as to gaps in the current process. The human resource team had to look at the processes in place to determine what works and what does not work. This study explores the differences between the two deliverables of the traditional and blended learning approaches on organizational socialization outcomes. A group of new employees (50) participated in the traditional Onboarding program and the blended learning Onboarding program.

## *3.4   Research Objective*

To give a framework on which to build this justification in comparing the participants of the traditional and blended learning Onboarding program, we have to identify the timeframe it took the participants to accelerate the socialization process with peers and managers. This study seeks to identify the acceleration rate of new employees' socialization within the organization with the embeddings of technology.   Based on the socialization perspective of new employees in promoting critical relationships networks for collaboration, it is paramount to measure how socialization tactics relate to new employees socialization and integration. A sample of 50 new employees who participated in the Blended learning and Traditional Onboarding programs completed multiple surveys that

measured individual perceptions of the socialization tactics, rating the importance of employee socialization in the organization and employee integration The survey responses were gathered from the first questionnaire after both Onboarding programs, the second questionnaire six weeks into the job and finally the third questionnaire three months after the programs were completed The objective for each survey was geared towards the Onboarding experience, socialization and integration process The use of the multiple surveys is to identify that breakeven point when the new employees tend to lose their initial enthusiasm and are contemplating leaving the organization The findings from this study suggest that the process of organizational socialization is achieved in the Onboarding of new employees by the inclusion of web 2 0 technologies in the program, providing new employees with constructive feedback as they adjust to the new environment, coaching and mentoring new employees to make them productive, the use of buddies in the socialization process as role models and providing clear information about the socialization process

## 3.5   Research

## Table 3- 1 Descriptive Statistics of Mann-Whitney Test
Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Mean | Std  Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I    think    the    current Onboarding    program supports  total  integration and    empowerment    of employees  into  teams  and the organization? | 50 | 4 04 | 1 087 | 1 | 5 |

# Mann-Whitney Test

**Ranks**

|  | condition | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I think the current Onboarding program supports total integration and empowerment of employees into teams and the organization? | traditional | 25 | 20 74 | 518 50 |
|  | blended | 25 | 30 26 | 756 50 |
|  | Total | 50 |  |  |

**Test Statistics (a)**

Table 3 1 Man Whitney-U

|  | I think the current Onboarding program supports total integration and empowerment of employees into teams and the organization? |
|---|---|
| Mann-Whitney U | 193 500 |
| Wilcoxon W | 518 500 |
| Z | -2 455 |
| Asymp Sig (2-tailed) | 014 |

a grouping Variable condition

Participants were asked whether they think the current Onboarding program supports total integration and empowerment of employees into teams and the organization Participants in the blended learning condition (Mean = 30 26, SR = 756 50) tended to agree more with this statement than participants in the

traditional condition (Mean = 20 74, SR = 518 50) An independent Man-Whitney test reveals that this difference is of statistical significance (U-test = 193 5, p= 014

These results suggest that the use of podcast, discussion forum and video really does have an effect in the integration and socialization process of new employees in the blended Onboarding program Specifically, the results suggest that there was significant acceleration rate of socialization and integration process when web 2 0 technology tools were applied in the blended learning Onboarding program than in the traditional Onboarding program without the mixture of technology

This research has employed the use of Man-Whitney U Test in the quantitative analysis because it is a method used for the comparison of two independent random samples and the rating data is ordinal scale As a second measure of socialization and integration in the company, participants were asked how many people they had interacted with since joining the company Testing the significant difference between traditional and blended conditions, it was observed that participants in the traditional condition have interacted with significantly less colleagues since joining Dalkia (Mean = 27 52, SD = 15 33) The results suggest that the blended learning condition facilitated more contacts with colleagues than the traditional condition

## Table 3- 2 T-Test.

**Question 9·** How many colleagues have you interacted with so far since joining Dalkia?

| New Employees | Traditional Approach | Blended Approach |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 12 | 16 |
| 2 | 12 | 22 |
| 3 | 17 | 23 |
| 4 | 23 | 35 |
| 5 | 17 | 23 |
| 6 | 35 | 39 |
| 7 | 49 | 66 |
| 8 | 5 | 10 |
| 9 | 30 | 32 |
| 10 | 20 | 28 |
| 11 | 21 | 33 |
| 12 | 23 | 36 |
| 13 | 43 | 67 |
| 14 | 17 | 24 |
| 15 | 15 | 21 |
| 16 | 13 | 18 |
| 17 | 14 | 19 |
| 18 | 16 | 27 |
| 19 | 24 | 34 |
| 20 | 20 | 45 |
| 21 | 5 | 10 |
| 22 | 3 | 8 |
| 23 | 9 | 14 |
| 24 | 28 | 29 |
| 25 | 7 | 9 |
| Variance | 128.52 | 235.09 |
| Mean | 19.12 | 27.52 |
| t-test: | 0.016 | |

## 3.5.1 Summary

The survey of 25 employees who participated in the blended learning Onboarding program reported that they felt better prepared for their jobs as a result of the training they received. Specifically, 75 percent said their socialization process was quicker with their teams and colleagues, 85 percent felt their

integration into the teams was accelerated due to the buddy that was assigned to them and 81 percent said the program helped clarify the expectation of the new manager and their roles in the teams  Overall, the employees reported that they felt they had performed 50 to 60 percent better during their transition as a result of the Onboarding program

Comparing the employees who participated in the traditional Onboarding and the blended learning Onboarding sessions, those who were in the blended learning Onboarding session reported slightly higher levels of socialization in the content areas of rating the socialization acceleration and on the number 8 question if the blended learning approach encourage socialization and a sense of belonging, and no significant differences on the more general dimensions of Onboarding program reducing workplace anxiety  Consequently, contrary to the argument that the use of computer based sessions are likely to be ineffective in helping newcomers adjust to their new organizations, this study demonstrates that a blended learning Onboarding program and the choice of training methods can have an effect on socialization outcomes for employees

Compared with participants of the blended learning Onboarding program, those in the traditional Onboarding program reported lower levels of socialization in the content areas of people, and organizational goals and values, and no significant differences on the more information-based dimensions of culture, structures, language and performance ability  Therefore, contrary to the perception that only the traditional Onboarding program enhances the socialization and integration of

new employees into teams and the organization, this study demonstrates that the use of blended learning approach can accelerate the socialization, assimilation and integration process of new employees into teams and the organization through an achievable and effective choice of the different learning modalities employed during the blended learning Onboarding program

## 3.6 Approaches to Primary Research

The research approach employed in this report is the experimental design to measure the effects of manipulating the blended learning Onboarding program on the traditional Onboarding program  The research approach focused on three key areas and questions related to those areas

- Target group  Who are the participants of the Blended Learning and Traditional Onboarding program?

- Needs  Does the blended learning strategy accelerate the socialization process of new employees quicker? If yes how is this measured?

- Drivers and Barriers  What are the drivers of the Onboarding program? What are the effects of technology on the integration and socialization of new employees? What are the barriers of the Onboarding program? Does a blended approach of the Onboarding program accelerate employee socialization?

These three areas provide the framework for the data collection process and analysis  The characteristics of the participants will be analysed to provide the study with a clearer understanding of the participants and this analysis will be useful in the end of the study for the analyses of data and conclusion  The

participants of the blended learning and the traditional Onboarding program are divided into two groups of 25 new employees

## 3.7 Research Sample

There were 50 participants in both the traditional and blended learning Onboarding program. They comprised of 6 Mechanical Technicians, 4 Plumbers, 3 Administrators, 5 Facilities Manager, 2 Energy Managers, 5 Handyman, 3 Carpenters, 2 Operatives, 2 Mobile Receptionists, 1 Clients Operations Manager, 4 Mailroom Attendants, 2 Shift Technicians, 4 Helpdesk Administrator, 2 Site Supervisors, 1 Shared Services Manager, 4 District Heating Managers. The average age of the new employees is 34 years, 80% of them are male, 20% female, while 38% of them have worked in similar organisational unit for more than 5 years in similar positions. The professional background of the participants range from technicians with trade qualification in plumbing, electrical and mechanical engineering, facilities management and energy management degrees, leaving certificates and computer skills training. They are from different sites within the republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and would not know each other. 95% of the participants have had prior knowledge of some of the general policies and procedures from previous work experiences and 5% are new starters in a proper organization and would not have any basic knowledge of some of the general organizational policies and procedures. Their knowledge of information technology varies from basic, intermediate to advanced levels and this has been taken into consideration in the design of the blended learning Onboarding program

## 4. Data Collection

The timeframe for the data collection process cover the first 90 days in the job This report employed the use of online questionnaires in collecting information in a standardized form constructed to ask the participants standard format questions (e g likert scale model) Non-scaleable questions and open-ended written questions about their integration and socialization experience to obtain mainly qualitative responses to seek their opinions and perception of the quality of the learning experience The job tasks, direct managers and team members' role in accelerating their socialization process and meeting the expectations held before joining the organization and rating the different learning modalities

The use of the course evaluation questionnaire at the end of the program, provided feedback to the organization in evaluating the methods employed in the blended learning Onboarding and traditional Onboarding programs to determine if the objectives mentioned at the beginning of the training was achieved Secondly, the next part was the questionnaire at the end of two months to determine what went well during the Onboarding process and if there are any difficulties with the job, role, socialization and integration process This helps to find ways to meet the expectations of the new employees and distinguish the performance disparity at the organizational, team and individual level

Finally, in the third month the new employees complete the second part of the evaluation form to determine if there is a transfer of knowledge to their jobs and roles and to measure the impact of their socialization and integration process into the teams and the organization The third part of the evaluation form is completed

by the line manager or supervisor to measure the impact the Onboarding program has had on the new employees' performance in relation to the objectives listed at the beginning of the training

The measurement of the above stages indicates that the organization is keen to receive feedback and make changes where necessary to improve the Onboarding process and the feedback provided through a confidential employee survey and focus group surveys to improve and have a positive impact on the policies, procedures and processes of the organization and more importantly engage, empower and integrate the new employees into teams and the organization Furthermore, the measurement of the evaluation process enables the human resource department to identify potential hindrances that prohibit the success of the blended Onboarding program from fully integrating into the organization and disrupts the socialization process of the new employees

## Table 4- 1 Timeframe - Data collection process for the Onboarding program.

| Indicative time frames for the completion of the online survey and questionnaires | Dates - Timeframe | Analysis of Feedback |
|---|---|---|
| Step 1 – Complete Part 1 of Evaluation form at the end of the training | Mid February | End of February |
| Step 2 – Complete the Online survey after 2 months | Mid April | End of April |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Step 3 – Complete Part 2 of the Questionnaire after 3 months | End May | End of May |
| Step 4 – Complete Part 3 of the Questionnaire by line managers after 3 months | End May | End of May |
| Step 5 – Results of all questionnaire findings | Mid June | End June |

Above is a table detailing each step in the data collection process?


## *4.1 Data Collection and Analysis for the Research Questionnaires*

The results shown below are from the research study and are drawn from a range of the questions  The survey of 25 participants of blended learning Onboarding program and 25 participants of traditional face-to-face Onboarding program which took place in April 2010 compared the results of both programs

## 4.1.1 Blended Learning and Traditional Onboarding Survey

Question one: Participants Demographics – Site Breakdown

## Figure 4- 1 which sites are you based?
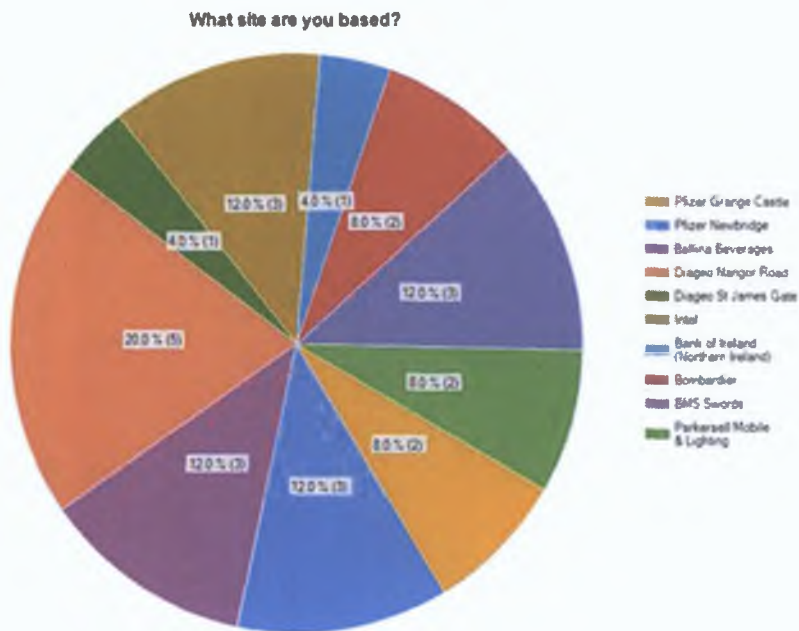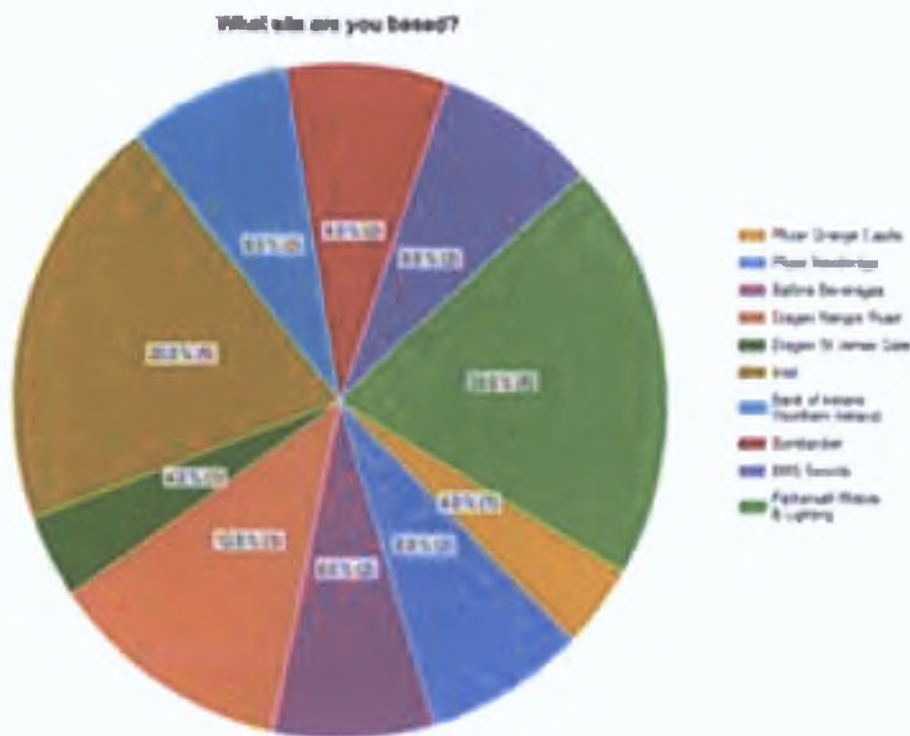
Question 1 – Blended Learning Onboarding



What site are you based?

# Figure 4- 2 which sites are you based - Traditional Onboarding Program.

Question 1: Traditional Onboarding Program



What site are you based?

The participants of both the blended learning and traditional Onboarding program are from ten various sites within the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland; they comprise of technicians, electricians, facility managers, plumbers, mailroom attendants, apprentices and helpdesk administrators.

Question two: How will you rate the level of your socialization in the company?
(Rate according to most effective 1 to 5. 1 being least)

**Figure 4- 3 Question 2 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program**
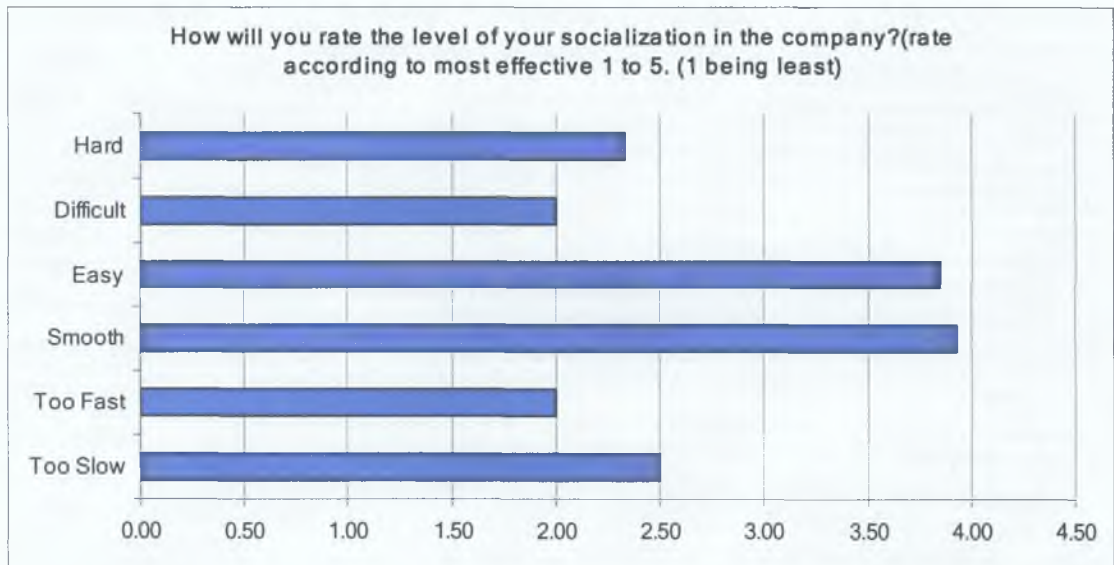
Question 2: How will you rate the level of socialization in the company? (Rate according to most effective 1 to 5. (1 being least)

## Figure 4- 4 Question 2 - Traditional Onboarding Program.



How will you rate the level of your socialization in the company?(rate according to most effective 1 to 5. (1 being least)

From the above charts of the blended learning and traditional Onboarding program, participants of the blended learning and traditional Onboarding programs identified that the socialization process was easy and smooth, with more participants in the traditional approach identifying that the socialization rate was more difficult in the traditional approach than in the blended approach. Based on these findings, we can draw on the hypotheses that the socialization process is more difficult in the traditional approach than in the blended learning approach.

*Question three: How will you rate the importance of employee socialization?*

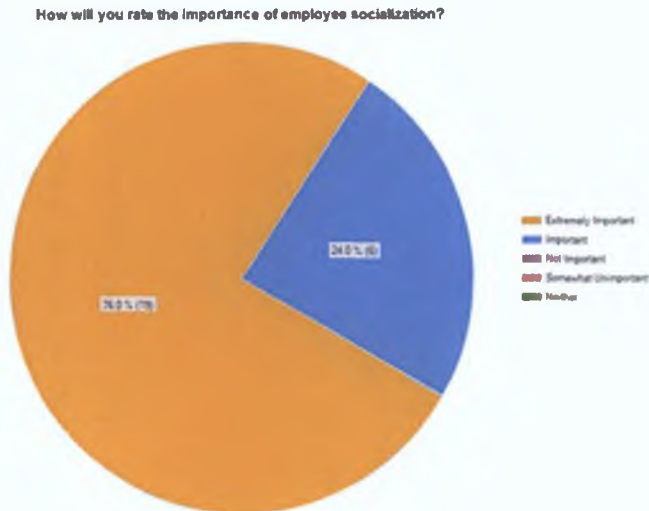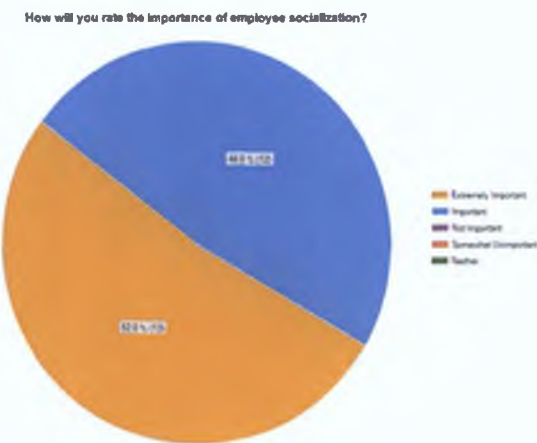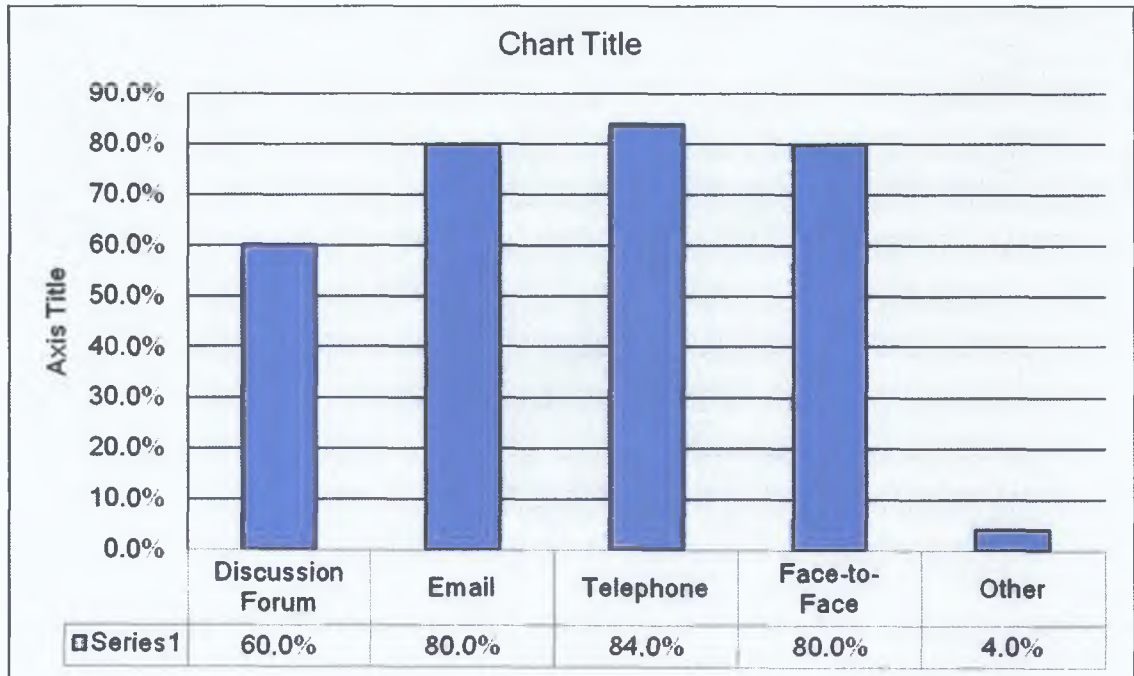## Figure 4- 5 Question 3 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.



How will you rate the importance of employee socialization?

## Figure 4- 6 Question 3 - Traditional Onboarding Program.



How will you rate the importance of employee socialization?

Based on the charts above, it was identified that 76% rated employee socialization as extremly important in the blended learning approach compared to 52% in the traditional approach. This shows the importance of this study as it highlights the gap identified in Dalkia and reiterates the fact that socialization in the Onboarding of new employees plays an integral part in engaing the employees.
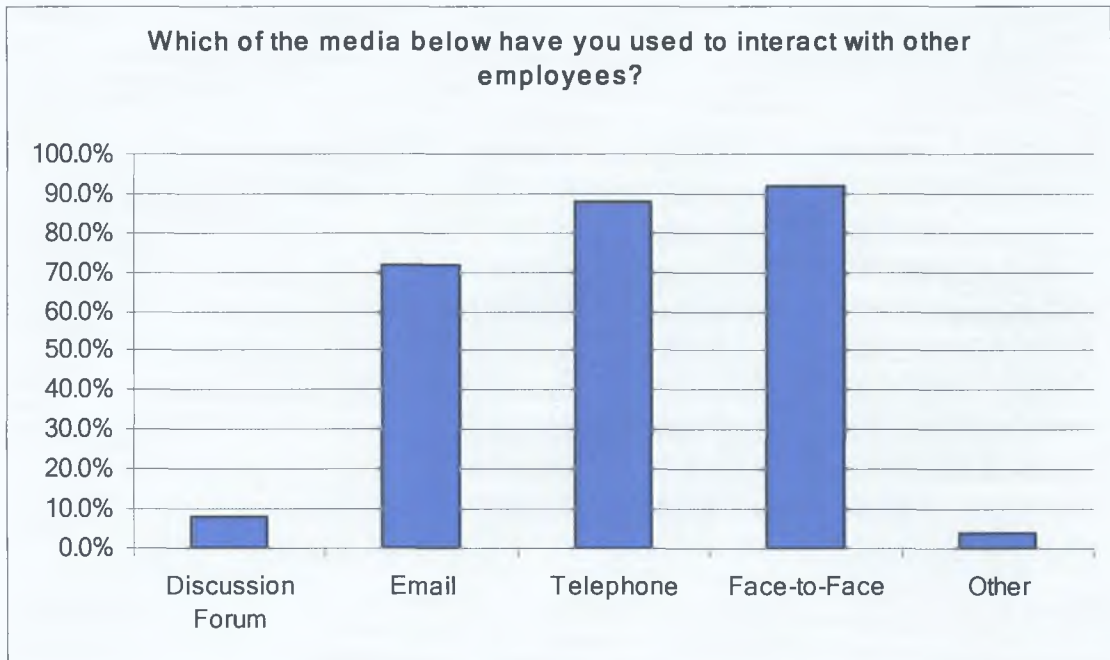
Question four: Which of the media below have you used to interact with other colleagues?

**Figure 4- 7 Question 4 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**



| | Discussion Forum | Email | Telephone | Face-to-Face | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Series1 | 60.0% | 80.0% | 84.0% | 80.0% | 4.0% |

Question 4: Which of the media below have you used to interact with other employees?
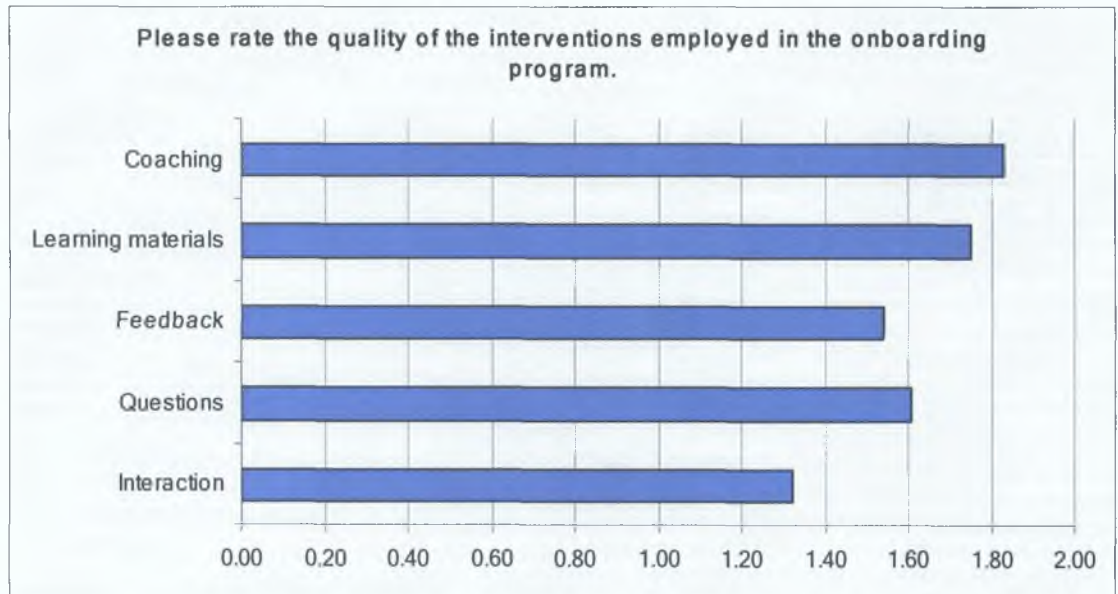
**Figure 4- 8 Question 4 - Traditional Onboarding Program.**



The medium of interaction in the above charts identified that 60% of participants in the blended learning approach have used the discussion forum to interact with other employees compared to less than 10% in the traditional approach. More participants in the traditional approach have interacted more with face-to-face and telephone compared to the blended learning approach. The reason for this can be linked to how the learning strategy employed engaged the participants during the delivery of the learning content. The discussion forum provided a support mechanism for the participants to build formal and informal networks to accelerate the new employees socialization and integration process into teams.

Question Five:

**Figure 4- 9 Question 5 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**



Please rate the quality of the interventions employed in the onboarding program.

Question 5: Please rate the quality of the interventions employed in the Onboarding program.

## Figure 4- 10 Question 5 - Traditional Onboarding Program.



Please rate the quality of the interventions employed in the onboarding program.
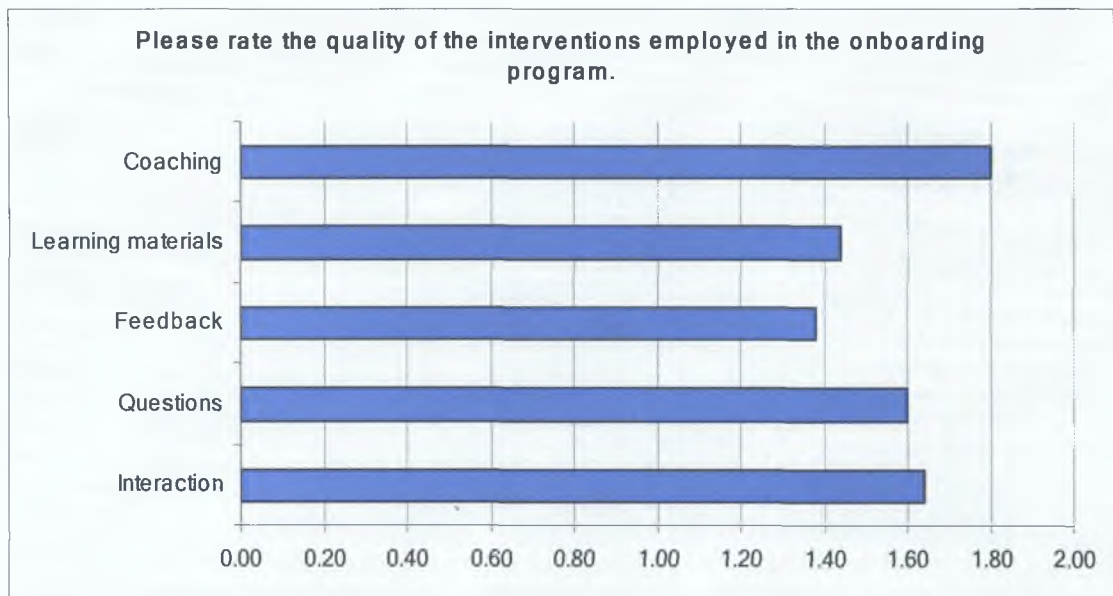
Participants in the blended learning approach rated all interventions except interaction higher than those in the traditional approach, while participants in the traditional approach rated interaction as more significant in the Onboarding program. The choice of training methods employed in the Onboarding programs had a significant effect on the integration outcomes of the participants.
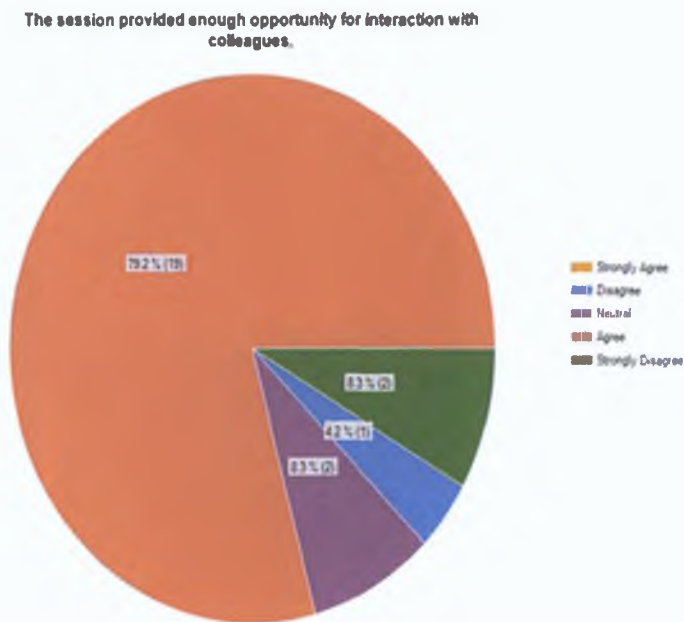
Question Six: The session provided enough opportunity for interaction with colleagues.

**Figure 4- 11 Question 6 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**



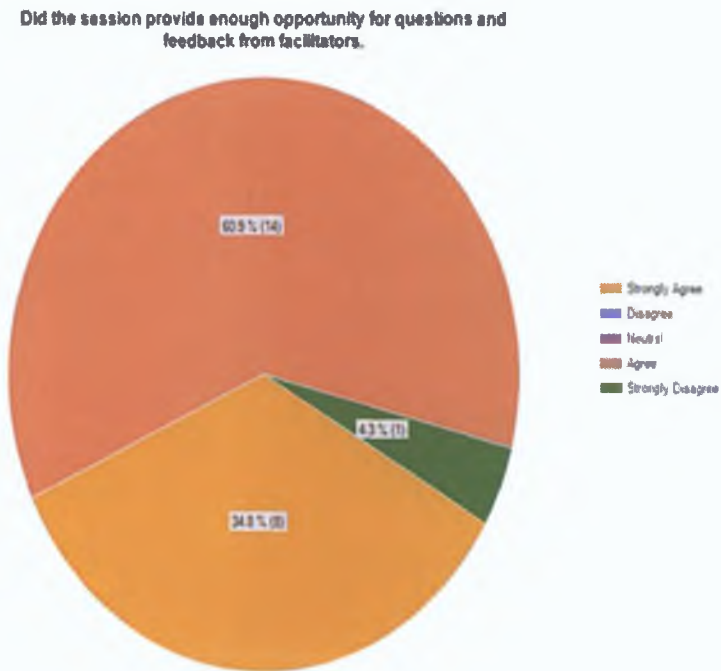The session provided enough opportunity for interaction with colleagues.
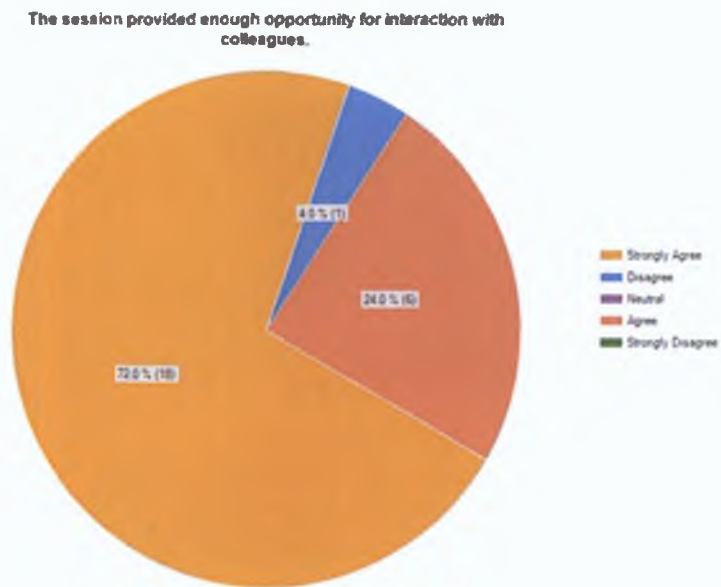
Question 6: The session provided enough opportunity for interaction with colleagues.

**Figure 4- 12 Question 6 - Traditional Onboarding Program.**



The session provided enough opportunity for interaction with colleagues.

The above charts highlight the significant difference in the rating of the interaction process in the Onboarding programs. 72% strongly agreed that the blended learning session provided enough opportunity for interaction with colleagues compared to 79.2% that agreed the traditional session provided enough opportunity for interaction with colleagues. This signifies that those in the blended learning approach reported slightly higher levels of interaction.
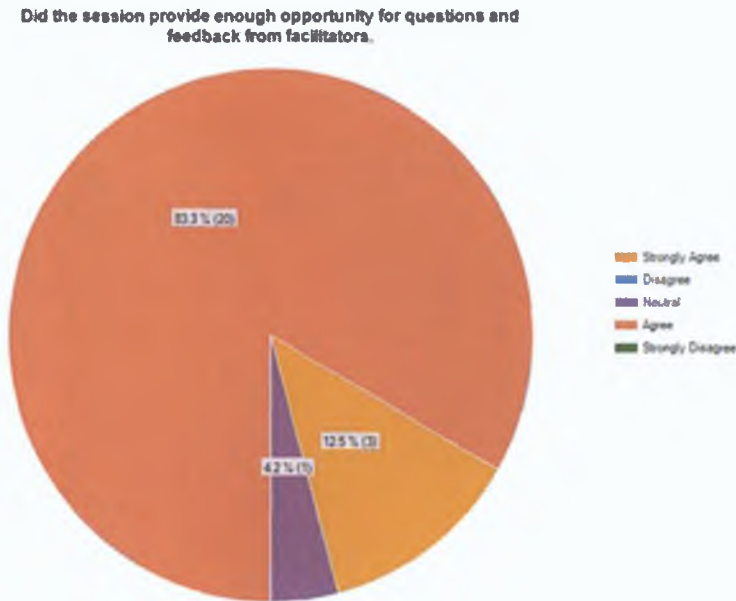
Question 7: Did the session provide enough opportunity for questions and feedback from facilitators?

**Figure 4- 13 Question 7 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**



Did the session provide enough opportunity for questions and feedback from facilitators.

Question 7: Did the session provide enough opportunity for questions and feedback from the facilitators?

## Figure 4- 14 Question 7 - Traditional Onboarding Program.



Did the session provide enough opportunity for questions and feedback from facilitators.

83.3 % (20)

12.5 % (3)

4.2 % (1)

Strongly Agree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Disagree

.Most participants of the blended learning and traditional approaches agreed that the session provided enough opportunity for questions and feedback from the facilitators. 4% of participants in the blended learning approach strongly disagreed that the session provided enough opportunity for questions and feedback from facilitators.
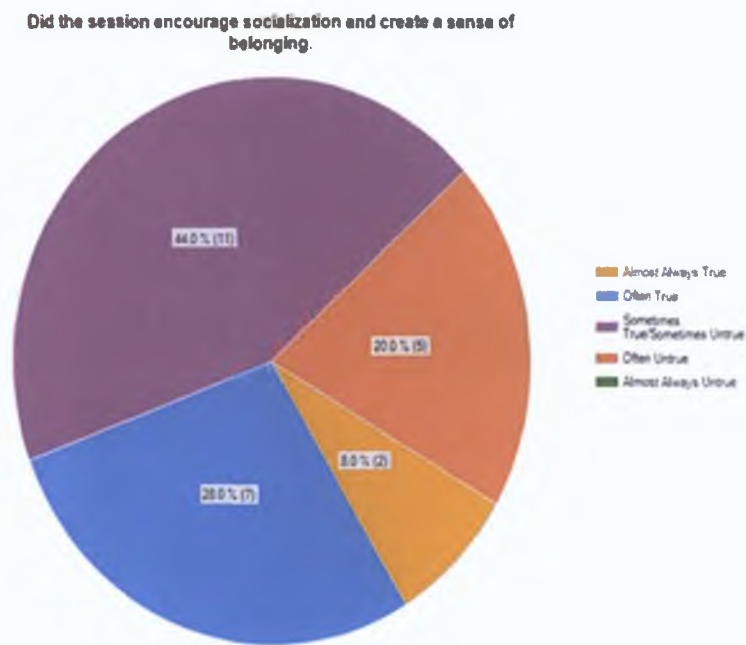
Question Eight: Did the session encourage socialization and create a sense of belonging?

**Figure 4- 15 Question 8 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**
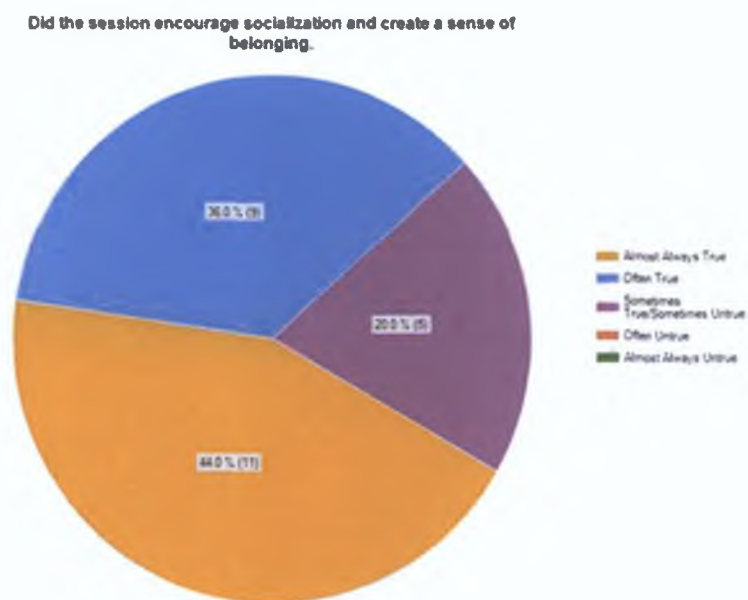
Question 8: Did the session encourage socialization and create a sense of belonging?

**Figure 4- 16 Question 8 - Traditional Onboarding Program.**



Did the session encourage socialization and create a sense of belonging.

Almost Always True
Often True
Sometimes True/Sometimes Untrue
Often Untrue
Almost Always Untrue

Participants of the blended learning approach agreed that the session encouraged socialization and created a sense of belonging compared to 20% of participants in the traditional approach who agreed that the statement was often untrue. Based on this finding, organizations must allow new employees to develop relationship and provide them a medium to accelerate socialization and form networks.

Question Nine: How many colleagues have you interacted with so far since joining Dalkia?

## Figure 4- 17 Question 9 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.

Employee Onboarding Program (Blended Approach)

| How many colleagues have you interacted with so far since joining Dalkia? | |
|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Count |
| | 25 |
| *answered question* | 25 |
| *skipped question* | 0 |

All participants in the blended learning and traditional approaches indicated that they have interacted with several colleagues since joining the organization. Compared to participants in the traditional approach, participants in the blended learning approach have interacted with more colleagues. This significant difference was possible because of the discussion forum medium to form networks, forum to ask questions and receive feedback on any issues.

The table of figures can be found in the appendix.

Question Ten: Do you think the blended approach (combination of face-to-face and online learning) of the Onboarding program accelerated the extent of socialization quicker?

**Figure 4- 18 Question 10 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**

Do you think the blended approach(combination of face-to-face and online learning) of the onboarding program accelerated the extent of socialization quicker?



36.0% (9)

4.0% (1)

12.0% (3)

48.0% (12)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Strongly Disagree
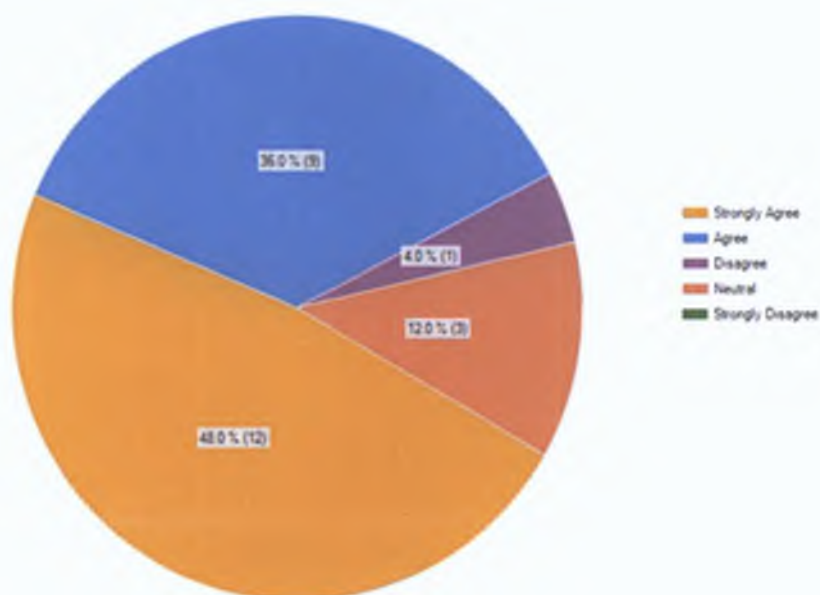
Question Ten: Do you think the traditional approach (face-to-face learning) of the Onboarding program accelerated the extent of socialization quicker?
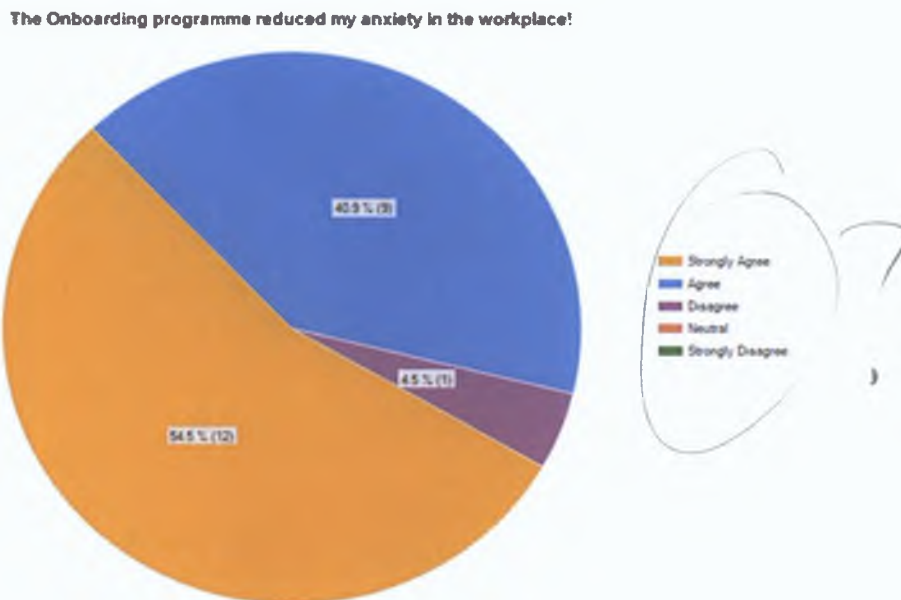
**Figure 4- 19 Question 10 - Traditional Onboarding Program.**



Do you think the traditional approach( face-to-face learning) of the onboarding program accelerated the extent of socialization quicker?
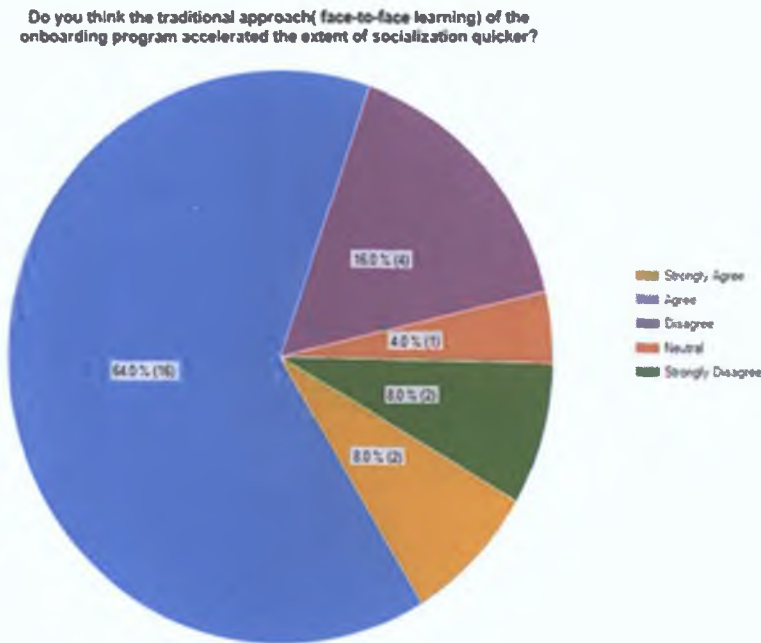
Most participants of the blended learning and traditional approaches believed the Onboarding program accelerated the extent of socialization, 24% of participants in the traditional approach disagreed compared to 4% of participants in the blended learning approach. The findings signified that the importance in the combination of a variety of different modalities: discussion forum, coaching & mentoring, informal and formal networks, individual learning styles and social club activities accelerated the socialization and integration process of the new employees in the blended learning approach compared to the traditional approach.

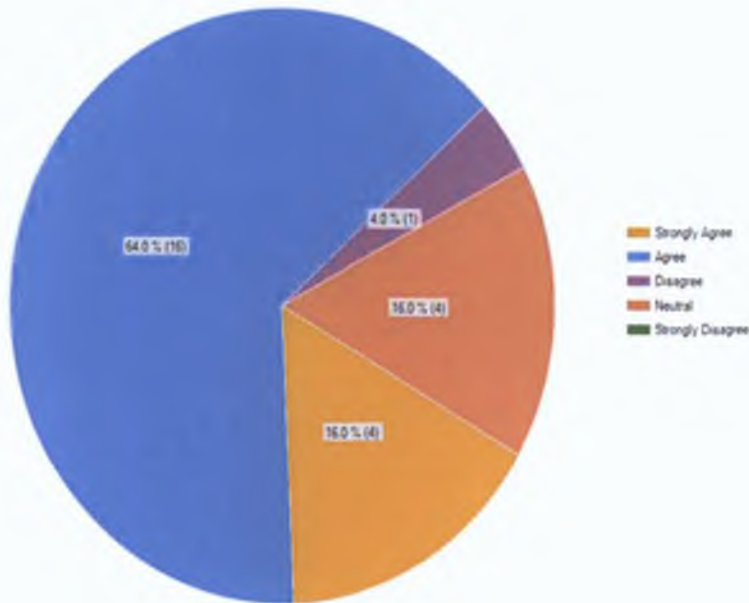Question Eleven: The Onboarding program reduced my anxiety in the workplace!

**Figure 4- 20 Question 11 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**



The Onboarding programme reduced my anxiety in the workplace!

Question 11: The Onboarding program reduced my anxiety in the workplace!

## Figure 4- 21 Question 11 - Traditional Onboarding Program.

The Onboarding programme reduced my anxiety in the workplace!



There was a general perception amongst participants of both approaches that the Onboarding program reduced their anxiety in the workplace. 4% of participants disagreed on the notion. There was no significant difference in both conditions as measures was put in place by the Organization to put everything in place before the arrival of the new employees. The administrative tasks related to log in details, payroll and sitting location and materials were provided beforehand to alleviate the stress for the new employees before their first day at work.

Organizations role in facilitating a smooth and pleasant transition of new employees in the first weeks on the job allow the new employees to focus on integrating into the new role and culture.

Question Twelve: Please rate the factors that you found important in the Onboarding session.

## Figure 4- 22 Question 12 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.
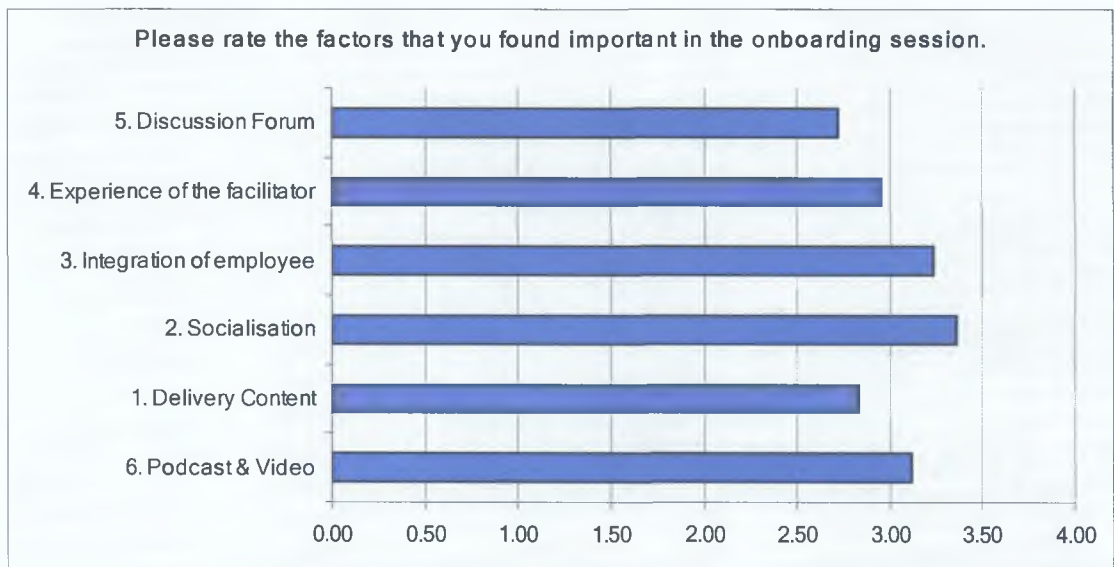


Please rate the factors that you found important in the onboarding session.

Question Twelve: Please rate the factors that you found important in the Onboarding Program.

**Figure 4- 23 Question 12 - Traditional Onboarding Program.**
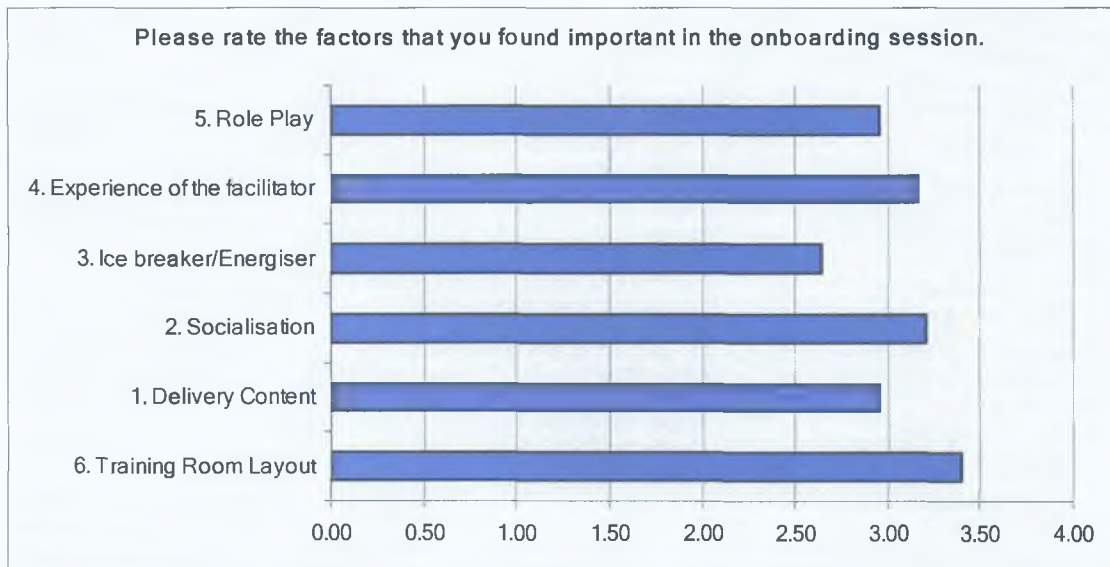


The participants of the blended learning approach rated socialization, integration of new employees and podcast & videos as most important to them in the Onboarding session compared to the participants of the traditional approach who had no inclusion of discussion forum and podcast & video in the Onboarding session, but rated the training room layout, experience of the facilitator and socialization as most important in the Onboarding program. The highlight of socialization as important by both groups signifies its importance in the overall Onboarding process, organizations who value the importance of its workforce as its lifeblood must have an effective Onboarding process that fully integrates and accelerates the socialization process to foster an engaged workforce.

Question Thirteen: Integration of Employee: I think the current Onboarding program supports total integration of employees into teams and the organization?

**Figure 4- 24 Question 13 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**
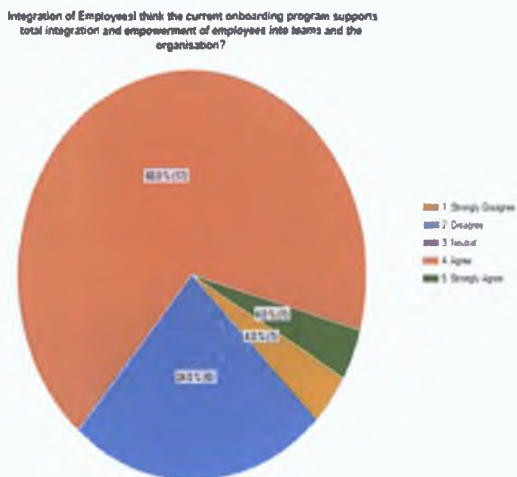
Question 13: Integration of Employees: I think the current Onboarding program supports total integration and empowerment of employees into teams and the organization?

**Figure 4- 25 Question 13 - Traditional Onboarding Program.**
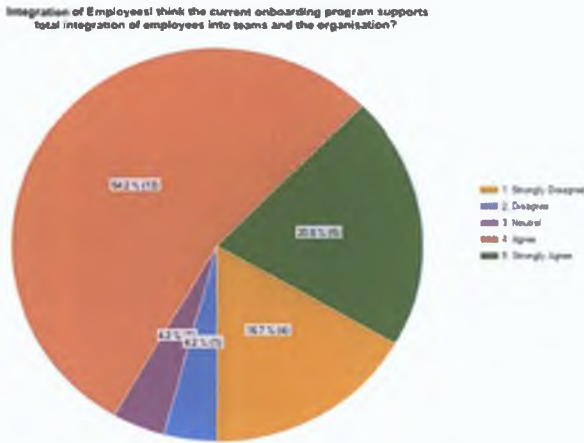


54% of participants agree that the traditional Onboarding program supports total integration of employees into teams and the organization, while 16% strongly disagree that the program supports total integration into teams. 20% of participants strongly agree that the program supports total integration into teams and the organization. 4% of participants were neutral and 4% disagree that the Onboarding program supports total integration of employees into teams and the organization.

Question Fourteen: What measures do you think the company has taken to assess employee socialization?

**Figure 4- 26 Question 14 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**



What measures do you think the company has taken to assess employee socialization.
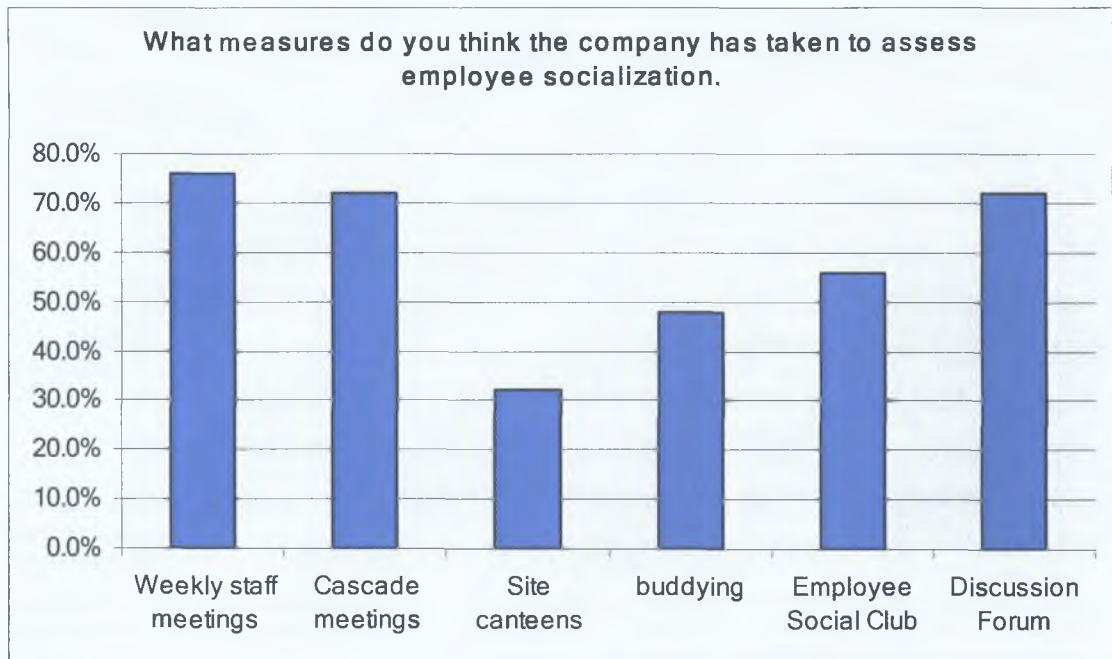
76% of participants felt that the company has taken used the weekly staff meetings, 72% cited that cascade meetings was the media used by the company to assess socialization, 56% of participants felt employee social club was used to assess employee socialization, 32% felt site canteens has been used to assess socialization of employees, while 48% felt the organization has used buddying and 72% felt discussion forum has been used by the organization to assess employee socialization.

The measures taken by the organization to assess employee socialization is divided into 6 categories, an effective Onboarding program employs the manager to be part of the Onboarding process. This survey shows that the relationship with the manager, the new hire and other employees in the team is one of the

most significant in a new employee's work life. Most employee turnover is ultimately caused by that relationship (or lack of it), which makes the ability to take on board new employees an integral role of managers. An employee's immediate manager controls all career progression, educational opportunities, and the assignment of projects. So a manager who takes time to discuss issues with a new employee, who shows concern over that person's integration and socialization and who knows the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the employee will be able to provide feedback and build relationships over time.

Question Fourteen: What measures do you think the company has taken to assess employee socialization?

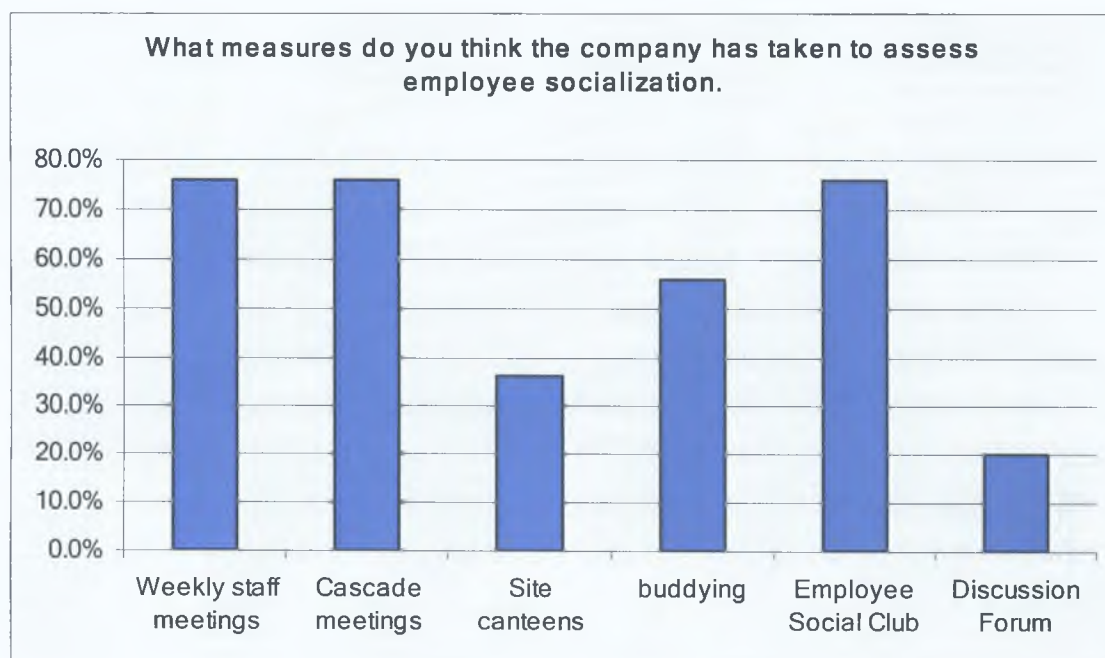**Figure 4- 27 Question 14 - Traditional Onboarding Program.**



75% felt the company has taken weekly staff meetings, cascade meetings and employee social club to assess employee socialization, 55% felt buddying was

the measure used by the company to assess employee socialization, 35% cited site canteens and 20% cited discussion forum.

Question Fifteen: Do you think the mixture of the delivery methods for the blended learning Onboarding program incorporated all the different learning needs of the participants?

# **Figure 4- 28 Question 15 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**

Do you think the mixture of the delivery methods for the blended onboarding program incorporated all the different learning needs of the participants?
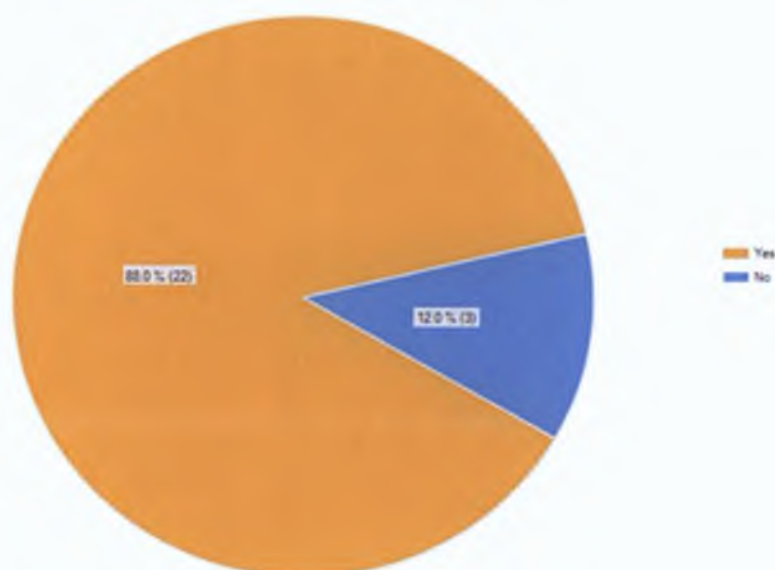


88% of participants felt the mixture of the different modalities for the blended learning Onboarding program incorporated all the different learning needs of the participants, 12% of participants did not agree that the different modalities for the blended learning Onboarding program incorporated all the different learning needs of the participants. This signifies that there was added value to the Onboarding program because of the combination of the different modalities.

Question fifteen: Do you think the mixture of the delivery methods (role play, questions/feedback etc) for the traditional Onboarding program incorporated all the different learning needs of the participants?
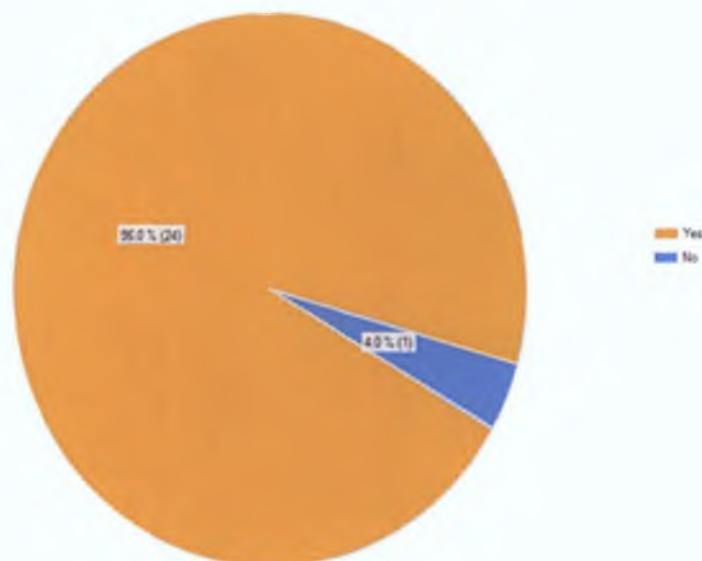
**Figure 4- 29 Question 15 - Traditional Onboarding Program.**

Do you think the mixture of the delivery methods (role play, questions/feedback etc) for the traditional onboarding program incorporated all the different learning needs of the participants?



96% felt the mixture of the delivery methods in the Onboarding program (role play, questions/feedback, ice breakers, energizers etc) incorporated all the different learning needs of the participants compared to 4% who disagreed. The combination of the delivery methods signifies that participants could participate in the session and this kept them motivated throughout the program.

The blended learning approach employed a mixture of technology tools compared to the traditional approach that used interventions of role play, ice breakers and energizers to keep them active throughout the program.

Question Sixteen: Would you say that the organizations' commitment to employees' integration is effective?

**Figure 4- 30 Question 16 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.**

Would you say that the organisations' commitment to employee integration is effective?
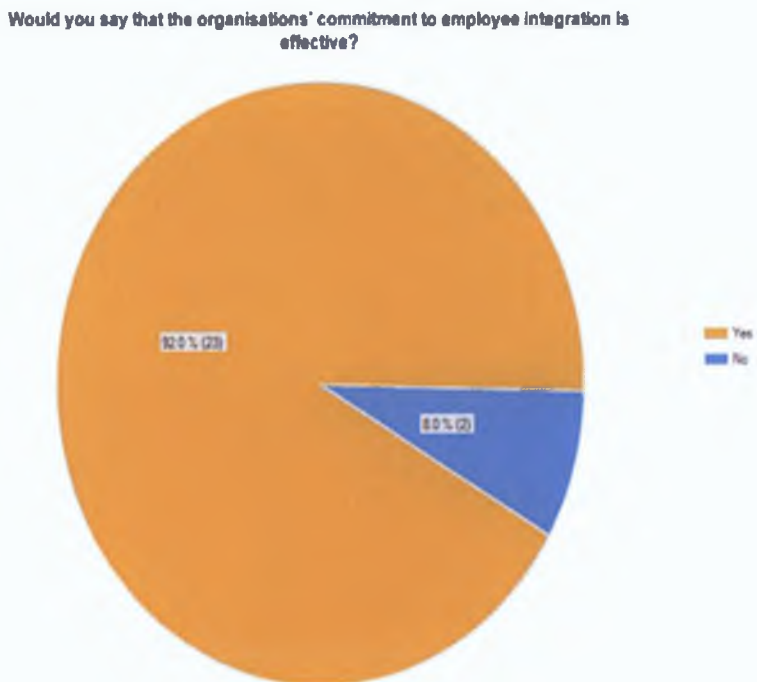


From the charts above and below most participants of blended learning and traditional approaches agreed that the organizations commitment to employees' integration is effective. 16% of participants in the traditional approach disagreed to this notion compared to 8% of participants in the blended learning. The results signifies that organizations that must succeed should not look at the Onboarding of new employees as an event rather as a process to enable new hires learn their jobs faster, increase engagement and motivation levels to enhance employee satisfaction in the workplace.

# Figure 4- 31 Question 16 - Traditional Onboarding Program.

Question 16: Would you say that the organizations' commitment to employee integration is effective?

Would you say that the organisations' commitment to employee integration is effective?



# Figure 4- 32 Question 17 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.
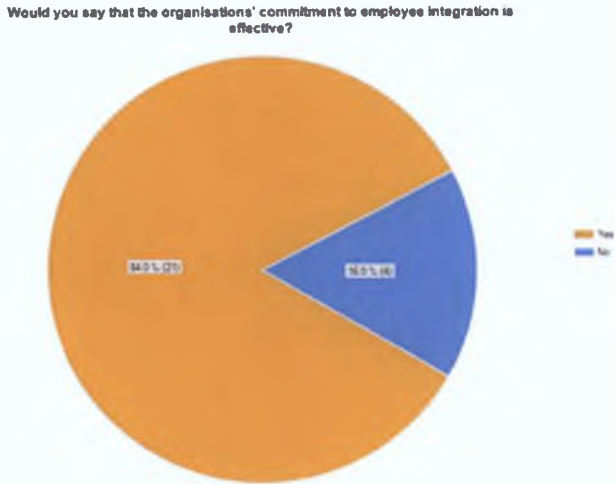
Question Seventeen: Tell me about your integration experience.

**Employee Onboarding Program (Blended Approach)**

| Tell me about your integration experience. | |
| --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Count |
| | 23 |
| *answered question* | **23** |
| *skipped question* | **2** |

23 participants responded to the above question and 2 participants skipped the question. Compared to the traditional Onboarding program, 20 participants responded and 5 skipped the question. Responses of participants are shown in a figure of table in the appendix.

Question Eighteen: Are there obvious effects of discussion forum and video on the socialization process in the Onboarding program?

## Figure 4- 33 Question 18 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.

Employee Onboarding Program (Blended Approach)

| Are there obvious effects of discussion forum and video on the socialization process in the Onboarding program | |
|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Count |
| | 23 |
| *answered question* | 23 |
| *skipped question* | 2 |

23 participants of the blended learning program responded to the above question and 2 participants skipped the question while in the traditional program 20 participants responded and 5 skipped the question. Responses of both approaches are shown in the table of figures in the appendix.

These results suggest that the use of podcast, discussion forum and video really does have an effect in the integration and socialization process of new employees in the blended Onboarding program. Specifically, the results suggest that there was significant acceleration rate of socialization and integration process when web 2.0 technology tools were applied in the blended learning Onboarding program than in the traditional Onboarding program without the mixture of technology.

Question Nineteen: Have you started building relationships with your colleagues? If yes how can you describe the pace of the relationship?

## Figure 4- 34 Question 19 - Blended Learning Onboarding Program.

Employee Onboarding Program (Blended Approach)

| Have you started building relationships with your colleagues? If yes how can you describe the pace of the relationship? | |
| --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Count |
| | 23 |
| answered question | 23 |
| skipped question | 2 |

23 participants in the blended approach responded to the above question and 2 participants skipped the question while 20 participants responded in the traditional approach and 5 skipped the question. Responses of both groups of participants are in the appendix.

### 4.1.2 Summary

The combination of variety of different tools helped to accelerate the integration process of new hires; the Onboarding program used numerous distinctive tools to create a fun-filled, not too formal learning environment that was engaging and interactive. The use of technology - discussion forum to foster a corporate social network amongst employees, the use of podcast and videos to facilitate the experience and provide the new employees with the corporate history, the values of the firm, an overview of the strategy and fiscal goals, welcome address by the Managing Director and the tour of the various sites and facilities via video

narrated by the HR Manager All of these tools and activities set up the pace and prepared the employees for productive, aligned and focused period with the organization The socialization and integration process was rated as important by the employees as the delivery of information about the culture and history of the company is paramount in making the employees feel integrated and engaged to the organization

Overall, there has been positive feedback from both the blended and traditional approaches but some participants suggested that the Onboarding program supports total integration and empowerment of employees into teams and the organization while a few felt otherwise Others suggested that both programs reduced their anxiety in the company and accelerated their socialization rate The feedback from both approaches has been taken into consideration and this will help design the course when rolling out the program in the next section

## 4.2 Data Collection for Focus Group

The focus group was made up of 2 different groups, the first group comprised of 25 line managers hired within the past eighteen months from the various sites throughout the company to explore the socialization and integration process within their teams and how the company can help accelerate the process for new employees The following information was identified by the Human Resource Generalist who was the facilitator

- A better understanding of the culture and structure of the organization

- A buddy who will act as a guide for the new employee in first two to three weeks of joining the organization

- Support from the team they work including mentoring and coaching by the line managers

- A discussion forum where new employees can share information and socialization with other team mates in the different sites

- Providing the necessary tools that the new employees will need to accelerate their performance in the organization

- Informal learning through job shadowing that will help the new employees model the required behavior quickly

The second group of 25 employees selected randomly from the different sites and only has started in the last eighteen months A facilitator from the human resource department chaired the group session taking notes and asking questions relating to the participants experience in the current induction process in place in the organization The meeting started with the facilitator introducing herself and stating the purpose and duration of the meeting, then the introduction of each participant giving their name, site, position and length of time with Dalkia Information on the problems they encountered as new employees were discussed and suggestions on the way forward were given by the participants The facilitator thanked everyone for attending and promised to send feedback on decisions made by the human resource and senior management team

## Table 4- 2 Feedback from Focus group.

| Questions | Employees Responses |
|---|---|
| What effects did the induction process have on your job satisfaction? | <ul><li>None</li><li>Little or no effect</li><li>Some effects</li></ul> |
| What effects did the induction process have your socialization into teams and the organization? | <ul><li>Majority mentioned very little support from peers</li><li>Socialization process was very slow</li></ul> |
| What effects did the induction process have on your engagement in the organization? | <ul><li>Lack of manager / team support</li><li>Took long time to acclimatize to the organization culture</li></ul> |
| How did the induction process aid in your integration into the team and the organization? | <ul><li>Slow process of integration because of rigid process of induction</li><li>Line managers were helpful, but the process could be better due to the structure of the organization</li><li>More support from team mates</li></ul> |

| How did the induction process empower you into the role, team and organization? | • Learn their ways around quickly<br><br>• Motivation from the human resource staff<br><br>• Good policies and procedures in the company |
|---|---|

Above is the table with questions asked during the meeting with the focus group?

The human resource department collated all the information at the end of the Focus group meeting and came up with a business case to develop a blended learning Onboarding program for new employees that would accelerate their socialization and integration process and provide them the support they need within their roles. During the quarterly cascade meeting in January 2010, the human resource team was able to convince the senior management team that they would be able to improve the retention rate by implementing a blended Onboarding program. The senior management team consented to the plan and provided them with the resources they needed to develop the blended learning Onboarding program just in time with the pilot group in April 2010. Based on this information gathered from the first group meeting with the line managers, the human resource team decided that a five week Onboarding program would boost the skills and knowledge required to make them effective in their roles whilst also accelerate the integration and socialization process of the new employees with a blend of different learning modalities comprising of discussion forum, podcasts, face-to-face training, video and informal learning like job shadowing, coaching

and mentoring  The need for a medium through which they can communicate and

share information through an intranet portal was decided by the team

## 5.   Evaluation of Blended and Traditional Learning Onboarding Program

CIPD defines evaluation as 'the process of gathering information with which to make decisions about training activities" (Bramley, 2003) This definition implies that evaluation is about the use of data gathering techniques designed to examine a particular aspects of the learning process (Garavan, Costine, & Heraty 1997) The evaluation of training is important in order to assess its effectiveness in producing the learning outcomes specified when the training intervention was planned and to indicate where improvements or changes are required to make the training even more effective He went further to explain that it is at the planning stage the basis of the different levels of evaluation should be determined, obtained and analysed Evaluation is an integral feature of training and is an essential part of the planning stage of any training programme (Armstrong, 1999)

There are many methods of evaluation available in training, they are post program assessments, Pre-Post Programme Tests, Job behaviour questionnaires, Trainee interviews, Records of Performance, Repertory Grids and Assessment/Development centres For the purpose of the blended learning and traditional Onboarding program, the method employed to evaluate the Blended learning and traditional Onboarding programs are the post programme assessments, commonly referred to as 'happy sheet', questionnaires, 360 degree feedback from peers, clients and managers There are many methods of evaluation, selection of a method depends on the purpose of the evaluation, the

measurement levels and the design and cost of data collection and analysis There were several reasons for the success of these blended learning and traditional Onboarding programs based on the analysis of the evaluation Sufficient time allocated to the programs, knowledge and expertise of the facilitators and the human resource management team, trust in the facilitator and good resource of different learning modalities and tools Finally, the objectives of the training was met, based on the information gathered from the evaluation and feedback form that was received from the learners, almost all participants agreed that the content and activities supported the learning objectives, the session provided enough opportunity for practice/questions and feedback and the information was relevant to the integration and socialization of the new employees Copies of the evaluation forms and questionnaires can be found in Appendix

The department, organizational and team training and development was set out in a similar way to the Performance Appraisal However, simply compiling a list of team members' training needs may result in a list of individually identified needs and not a plan that is aligned with organization and teams objectives The onus is on the line manager to ensure that there is a maximum overlap so that individuals work well within the team and that the team works well together to complete the task

**Figure 5- 1 Organizational Goal Performance.**
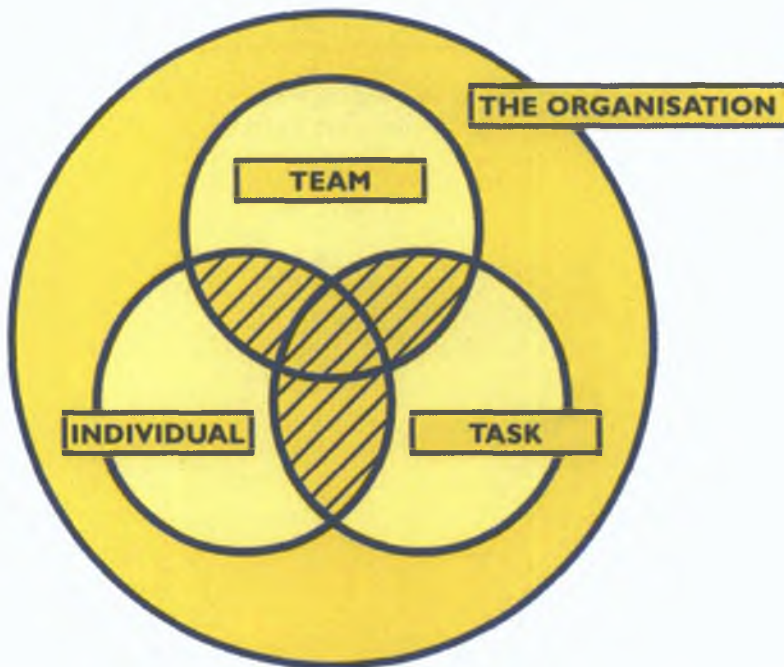


Figure 5.1 shows the diagram of how the individual and team performance links into the overall organizational goal.

Following on from the blended learning Onboarding and traditional Onboarding programs, an assessment of the individuals' knowledge and competence following the learning intervention to ensure and measure the effectiveness of the training covering the learning objectives. The evaluation at the end of the program was important for the new employee and the line manager to determine whether the program has been effective and this can be interpreted in the figures below.

Level 1 was completed at the end of the Onboarding program and returned to the human resource department and the form with the questions can be found in the appendix.

- 95% responded that the each objective was covered in the program

- 5% responded that some of the objectives were not covered because they did not tick the box

- 90% responded that the trainers/facilitators ability was excellent

- 10% responded that the trainers/facilitators ability was average

- 95% responded "excellent" to the question that the learning activity fulfilled their objectives

- 5% responded "average" to the question that the learning activity fulfilled their objective

- 100% responded "excellent" to the quality of the learning materials

- 100% responded "excellent" to rating the learning activity overall

- 100% responded "excellent" to been briefed on the session prior to the program taking place

- 100% responded "excellent" to the standard of the training facilities

Level 2 evaluation questionnaire was completed six weeks after the learning intervention happened, this document was sent to the line manager for further completion

- The participants responded that they have applied 80% - 100% of the new skills/knowledge to their jobs

- 90% responded that they have had positive impact on their jobs

- 10% responded that they still believe they can contribute more with more coaching from their line managers

- 100% responded that they have had a huge impact in the team/department

- 80% responded that they have been "very" active in the discussion forum – sharing information and socializing with other colleagues

- 92% responded that their socialization and integration process has had a positive impact in the team/organization and this has made them have a sense of belonging and are motivated to increase their performance level

- 8% responded that their socialization and integration process has not been too fast due to certain factors affecting their sites

- 20% responded that they have not been too active in the discussion forum – sharing information but more of socializing with team mates and little interaction with employees from other sites

Level 3 evaluation questionnaire is the final assessment and was completed by the supervisor/line manager and returned to the human resource department

- 88% of the supervisors/line managers responded that 4 week blended learning Onboarding program had a significant impact on the new employee's socialization, assimilation, integration and productivity into the teams/organization thereby increasing their performance, satisfaction and motivation to remain in the organization

- 12% felt that the blended learning Onboarding program has some significant impact but more importantly was the fact that the combination of the coaching and mentoring support from them was a determining factor for the overall success of the program.

## Figure 5- 2 Training and development cycle and process.

The training and development cycle.
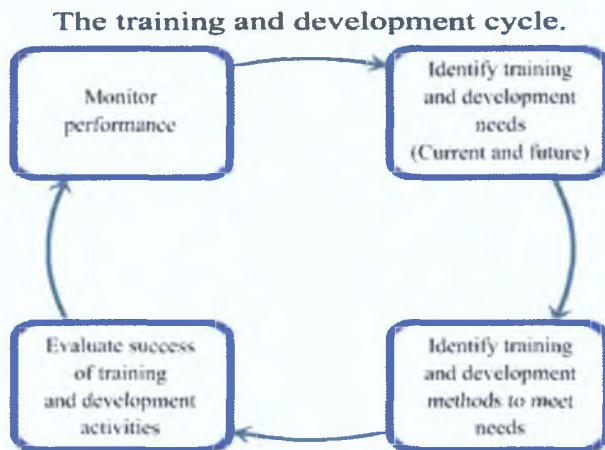


## 5.1 Assess Component Performance of New Employees

This research employed the four principles in assessing the competence performance of the new employees:

- planning out assessments with the individual

- observing the individual carrying out the task

- questioning the individual to determine his/her understanding of the task

- Feeding back the results of the assessment to the individual and recording the result.

## 5.2 Evaluation of On-the-Job Shadowing

The evaluation of the on-the-job shadowing was simple and straightforward as there is a long-standing formula for on-the-job training where the new employee models the behavior of the buddy or the team member who shows them how to carry out their tasks effectively

- I do it - we do it, you do it

- I do it – I will show you how to carry out the task

- We do it – We will do it together until you are ready

- You do it – Once you are confident you can do it on your own.

At the end of the job shadowing the mentor or coach watches and evaluates the new employee performing task and the 360° degree feedback from peers, managers, colleagues and clients are an effective tool to evaluate the new employees and also relate feedback

**Figure 5- 3 The Learning Cycle.**
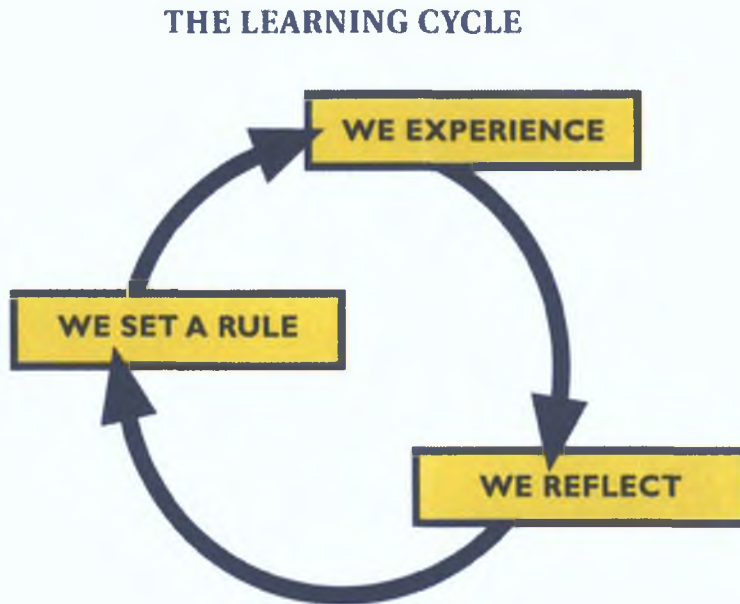
THE LEARNING CYCLE



Figure 5.3 shows the learning circle from setting the rule, to the learning experience and finally to the reflection and evaluation stage.

## *5.2.1 Summary*

At the end of the blended learning Onboarding program, the new employees received instruction on the Stop, Start and Continue method. This method enabled the employees address what they need to start performing in their role. It also looked at the factors that contributed to them not performing as well in their role and this is what they need to stop doing. Finally they also looked at what worked well and what they needed to continue doing.

Below is the chart that forms part of the assessment review of the training analysis to assist the HR department in assessing the success of the learning intervention.

**Figure 5- 4 Training and Development Assessment - Review.**

| STOP | 3 MONTHS PROGRESS REVIEW |

| START | 3 MONTHS PROGRESS REVIEW |

| CONTINUE | 3 MONTHS PROGRESS REVIEW |

Figure 5.4 shows the chart to be completed by each new employee as part of the assessment review

## 6. *Generalization and Limitation of Findings*

The research has explored the effects of web 2.0 technologies in the blended learning Onboarding program of new employees in the organization, factors that enhance the perception of the integration and socialization process of new employees into teams and the organization. The question was addressed using a comparative study of two groups of 25 participants each for the blended learning and traditional Onboarding program using the Man-Whitney U Test and T-Test in the quantitative analysis and questionnaire in the qualitative analysis.

The Man-Whitney U Test suggested that there was significant acceleration rate of integration and socialization process when web 2.0 technology tools were applied in the blended learning Onboarding program than in the traditional Onboarding program without the inclusion of technology.

The results from the second measure of the integration and socialization in the company suggested that testing the significant difference between traditional and blended conditions, it was observed that participants in the traditional condition have interacted with significantly less colleagues since joining the company than the participants in the blended condition.

The socialization process in the Onboarding of new employees as outlined by (Cashman & Smye, 2007) as a process that is planned to shorten the productivity curve, to help new employees reach capacity quicker played an integral role in the blended learning Onboarding program.

The use of the online survey in the data collection process of the qualitative analysis was efficient and easy to collate as most of the participants were in the

different sites of the clients, it reduced cost and saved time to send and receive the forms back. The online survey was significant in collating the information faster and proved that in the future, rather than printing out forms as in the case in the past, this will be a method employed by the company.

The results from the research proves that Dalkia as a multi site organization, this made it suitable for the blended learning because it bridged the communication and interaction gap with the aid of the discussion forum, new employees were able to communicate with other employees from different sites across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland thereby accelerating the integration and socialization process. The results suggest that the blended learning Onboarding program facilitated more contacts with colleagues with the inclusion of web 2.0 technologies. Secondly, new employees did not have to take valuable time out from their jobs to sit in a classroom during the Onboarding program, but were able to access the learning content from the online resources from their sites.

Some organizations might find the traditional approach of face-to-face more convenient because they are not multi site and can gather new employees into a room to be inducted but such organizations must ensure that the new employees should be made to have a sense of belonging in the new environment and create ways to minimize the integration and socialization process into teams and the organization.

### 6.1   Limitation of Scope

The use of 50 participants for this report made the result more constant and assumable. The participants were selected from all the different sites of the

company for each sampling group and this ensured an accurate feedback from the participants The breakdown of Dalkia employees are skills oriented, specific skills are required eg Technician, plumber, carpenters, engineers and apprentices and the nature of their jobs would require team work and collaboration with other team mates and clients Developing a blended learning Onboarding program helped to streamline the integration and socialization process of the skilled individuals thereby allowing the new employee to complete the program at their own pace and time using web 2 0 technology tools

The use of the same number of participants might not be applicable in other organizations as they might not have a large number of new intakes at a particular given time, thereby reducing the sampling group might not generate accurate results There is a need for a methodology development to help decide when to use podcast, discussion forum, telephone/ video conference call, and when to build a comprehensive model in a blended learning online program Other organizations might not require such specialized skills and this might have an impact on the program because they would not require a blended Onboarding program for less staff due to financial and time constraints

An effective Onboarding strategy allows an organization to utilize the skills of the new employees quickly so that the reason you hired them provides a positive return on investment From a strategic view, as described by (Rosenberg 2009) "the length of hiring time it takes an organization to hire a new employee requires the organization to ensure that the new employee can fit into the organization and "ramp them up" as quickly as possible, quickly become engaged and

productive and the time for return on investment in that individual is greatly

enhanced"

# 7.   Discussion   of   Findings,   Future   Perspectives, Recommendations and Conclusions

## 7.1   Discussion of Findings

This study is focused on finding how blended learning Onboarding program works in similar organizations like Dalkia and also from the perspective of trying different blending modalities, organizations can employ more or less extremes, more online support, more online deliverables, and more online components in the blended learning Onboarding program The use of relatively simple blending methods can also have the same effect on more complex blending methodologies

This most salient finding of this thesis has been to demonstrate that there is significant difference when technology tools were employed in the delivery of Onboarding program to new employees The main focus of the research was to determine the acceleration rate of new employees' socialization in the organization and the process of forming relationships and gaining access to peers and managers within the organization

A larger study outlined can determine a number of issues and effects of the different modalities employed to determine other than the integration and socialization process, but look into the domain of cost while taking into consideration the risk, time and budget The simple cost equation for blended learning Onboarding program is the transaction between development cost and delivery cost The issue of job retention for new employees will help

organizations save cost of recruitment, training and development and time for the organization

Organizations need to be more proactive in this current recessionary period by augmenting the Onboarding process through corporate branding This requires performing a SWOT analysis (strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats) on the teams to identify strengths and weaknesses and development opportunities These development opportunities can help enrich corporate culture and bolster employee engagement (Ruehle, 2010)

## 7.2 Future Perspectives

Another future research issue will be for Organizations to use components of the blended learning Onboarding program for individuals and managers who were promoted into new roles within the organization to get them up-to-speed as quickly as possible This research employed the use of 25 participants each for both the blended and traditional conditions, organizations could employ sampling a larger group of participants to determine if there will be significant difference in the socialization and integration process of new employees

This research described in detail the difference between the traditional and blended learning Onboarding programs Current and future developments point towards the financial impact of Onboarding, taking into consideration the length of time it takes new employees to become competent at their job Ian Creamer, VP HR, Informatica (2010) describes that anything that can be done to shorten

the time to competence of new employees can have a significant implication for a company's profitability

Line managers' involvement in the Onboarding process is very significant, therefore they require supervisory and management training to be on top of their game in the coaching and mentoring process of the new employees The competence and attitude of the line managers will go a long way in fostering relationships amongst new employees and their peers

The focus for organizations is to determine which modalities works well for their organizational culture and employ such to support the needs of the new employee while maintaining a business focus and emphasis on the bottom line

## 7.3 Recommendations

The results in the research suggested that there was significant acceleration rate of integration and socialization process when web 2 0 technology tools were applied in the blended learning Onboarding program There is opportunity for organizations to employ different learning modalities in the blended learning approach However, this approach may not be feasible for smaller organizations and some blended learning methods can work better in certain situations than in others and some work together in better combinations than others The need to identify the desired learning outcome and business case will help organizations to better balance the blended learning approach

Another option would be an opportunity for organizations to reassess its overall approach to the Onboarding program of all employees who were promoted using a creative blend of delivery methods designed to minimize anxieties and transition difficulties and increase development success by assigning the aid of a mentor to help these individuals be as effective and efficient in the shortest time

The evaluation of these different delivery methods plays an integral part irrespective of the size of the organization in identifying the impact on business performance as well as effects on employee commitment and job retention Finally, the cost of developing a blended learning Onboarding program or any other course content and the vendors to choose from are factors organizations need to take into consideration

## 7.4 Conclusions

This exploratory study has demonstrated the different variations of blended learning and traditional learning strategies employed in the delivery of an Onboarding program for new employees in a service industry The outcome of this study provided a firm conclusion that there was significant difference in the acceleration rate of the socialization and integration process of new employees when technology tools were employed in the blended learning Onboarding program

Testing the significant difference between traditional and blended conditions, it was observed that participants in the traditional condition have interacted with significantly less colleagues since joining Dalkia The results suggest that the

blended learning condition facilitated more contacts with colleagues than the traditional condition, these findings made it easy to draw conclusions on the Onboarding program

This study demonstrates that the inclusion of different learning modalities in the blended learning Onboarding program accelerated the socialization process for the new employees, the data on hand suggested that the participants in the blended approach felt that the session encouraged socialization and created a sense of belonging Alternatively, there were no significant differences on the program reducing workplace anxiety

This research will recommend the combination of traditional face-to-face and online learning taking into consideration the different learning styles of participants in the delivery of an Onboarding program The research further reveals that it is imperative to first, identify the learning needs of an organization so as to accomplish individual, departmental and corporate objectives

Blended learning therefore addresses the fusion of face to face and online (internet interaction) learning experiences to impact positively on learners by providing a wide platform of alternatives through internet resource repository

After identifying and reviewing the gaps and limitations to refine research aims and objectives, it is important to state that it is the ultimate goal of e-learning and as a social tool of change, it is also essential to brand e-learning The barriers however, include resistance to change, new technology and constraints

That's the definition of blended learning and cannot be the conclusion of your research

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The general consensus of definitions proffered by various scholars is summarized as a perceived need to adopt technology in teaching and learning, in order to enable students/teachers to learn contemporary pedagogies and skills through experiential learning. Having a plan in place facilitates the blend of a structured and flexible overall process that starts from the recruitment phase to the end of the first year of the new employee.

The development of blended learning Onboarding programme in Dalkia took the different learning intervention of face-to-face training, job shadowing, manager coaching and mentoring and self learning. The creation of formal and informal networks and the use of buddy system plays an integral role to accelerate the socialization and integration process of new employees into teams and organization.

Finally, the different learning styles are brought to bear on blended Onboarding program which provides an environment for multiple representation of reality, and supports collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation. The adult learning theory suggests that past experiences and real world applications are integral to blended learning Onboarding method of teaching.

The ownership of the blended learning Onboarding process is not for the human resource team but the organization should take ownership thereby aligning the process to the overall corporate goal.

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# Appendices

## *Appendix A: Questionnaire*

Question 17  Tell me about your integration experience

Figure 4 17  Blended Learning Onboarding Program

| 1 | very good |
|---|---|
| 2 | Ok |
| 3 | There is so much motivation from peers and supervisor |
| 4 | Fine |
| 5 | My colleagues and manager have been very effective in mentoring me to get to speed with my job |
| 6 | N/A |
| 7 | quite good |
| 8 | N/A |
| 9 | exciting and wonderful |
| 10 | it was a good experience, sometimes communication from managers is poor |
| 11 | REVEALING, REWARDING AND SATISFYING |
| 12 | From my integration experience,i found out that my team is not friendly |
| 13 | my experience has not been to smooth, my line manager has not been effective in delegating task to me |

| 14 | my integration into the company has been smooth with the help of my colleague and line manager |
|----|---|
| 15 | was very helpful |
| 16 | It's been wonderful, support from colleagues & managers |
| 17 | it was a wonderful opportunity to meet with experienced colleagues who gave their own personal experiences |
| 18 | Interesting |
| 19 | It reduced my anxiety and I made me comfortable |
| 20 | I felt very happy that information was not just thrown at me, but the company took the time get to know me |
| 21 | I have enjoyed the whole integration experience |
| 22 | The integration process has been smooth with a little hiccups |
| 23 | My manager ensured I was assigned a buddy from my first day and this made it easy for me to find out some basic information about my team and its expectations for me |

Figure 4.17: Traditional Onboarding Program

| | |
|---|---|
| . | Good |
| 2. | Ok |
| 3. | Ok |
| 4. | Alright |
| 5. | Ok |
| 6. | I have enjoyed joining the organization and I look forward to integrating fully into the team. Team mates are great and helpful |
| 7. | so far, good |
| 8. | I have been welcomed by the team and the buddy assigned to me has been very helpful in showing me around |
| 9. | Ok |
| 10. | Easy |
| 11. | Yes |
| 12. | Yes |
| 13. | N/A |
| 14. | Wonderful |
| 15. | my integration experience has not been so smooth because the integration into the team has not been communicated effectively |

| 16. | My integration experience has been ok but not fantastic. |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 17. | the experience was okay could have been better. |
| 18. | the experience was okay could have been better. |
| 19. | rewarding, re-assuring & satisfying |
| 20. | My integration into the organization has not been effective. I am still coming to terms with the whole process and procedures of the company |

## Figure 4.18: Blended Learning Onboarding Program

| 1. | Yes |
|-----|-----|
| 2. | Yes |
| 3. | None that I know of |
| 4. | Yes |
| 5. | Yes |
| 6. | I do not know for now |
| 7. | N/A |
| 8. | N/A |
| 9. | Yes |
| 10. | yes, the discussion forum helped with interaction of other employees, while video gave a good tour of |

| | |
|---|---|
| | the diff sites and made it easy to fully understand the organizations business |
| 11 | YES POSITIVE EFFECTS |
| 12 | No I prefer to deal with face to face |
| 13 | yes the blend of the video and discussion forum made it easier to understand the culture of the company |
| 14 | yes, the video gave a tour of the different site and the discussion forum helped to accelerate the socialization process |
| 15 | made it easier in understanding the company structure |
| 16 | Yes because discussion forum is a good medium for interaction with other colleagues |
| 17 | Good networking with other colleagues' learning to the sharing information it is a good knowledge repository |
| 18 | Yes |
| 19 | Yes, i was able to put faces to names of my colleagues |
| 20 | Yes |
| 21 | The discussion forum has been effective for me because I am shy and I can hide behind the tool to socialization with other colleagues and feel comfortable about it |
| 22 | Made communication with colleague faster |
| 23 | The discussion forum has been very helpful, when I am on the intranet, I find other colleagues from other sites asking me if I am new and welcoming me onboard I have been able to interact with some other colleagues in different sites that I have not met via the discussion forum |

Figure 4.18a: Traditional Onboarding Program

| 1. | yes |
|----|-----|
| 2. | ok |
| 3. | yes |
| 4. | certainly |
| 5. | not sure |
| 6. | Yes |
| 7. | yes |
| 8. | yes |
| 9. | yes |
| 10. | some positive effects |
| 11. | yes |
| 12. | yes |
| 13. | N/A |
| 14. | yes |
| 15. | no |
| 16. | The interventions employed did not fully accelerate the socialization process. |

| 17. | Yes, the socialization process was slow , first encounter with colleagues so no time for integration. after the process no further contact with colleagues on other site. |
|-----|---|
| 18. | Yes, the socialization process was slow , first encounter with colleagues so no time for integration. after the process no further contact with colleagues on other site. |
| 19. | Yes. Positive effect |
| 20. | The effects have not been encouraging, Dalkia is a multi site company and you will not get to see most people again after the Onboarding program. |

## Figure 4.19: Blended Learning Onboarding Program

| 1. | very good, it is a good place to work and there is lots of support from everyone |
|----|---|
| 2. | steady |
| 3. | Good |
| 4. | yes |
| 5. | Fast |
| 6. | slow and steady |
| 7. | good |
| 8. | N/A |
| 9. | yes, very cordial relationship |

| | |
|---|---|
| 10 | yes, the pace is great, the culture of the organization stimulates a friendly environment making the socialization process easy |
| 11 | YES ENCOURAGING |
| 12 | No, the process is slow, because the site is isolated |
| 13 | yes, slow and steady progress |
| 14 | the pace has been rapid due to the support of colleague and the culture of the company |
| 15 | yes i have and it is moving very fast |
| 16 | Yes, fast |
| 17 | yes, good socialization and interactions with both internal and external colleagues has been great the culture of the company fosters bonding between staff |
| 18 | yes Growing steadily |
| 19 | Yes Very easy and smooth |
| 20 | Yes very well Quite fast and smooth |
| 21 | Sure, and the pace is very fast due to the discussion forum and the social club outing in Carlton Hotel |
| 22 | Yes, fast |
| 23 | The working environment of Dalkia is very friendly and it is a company culture for you to be taken round the site, asked to go to the canteen with other colleagues, I will say the pace of relationship is faster than I expected |

Figure 4.19 Traditional Onboarding Program

| 1. | fine |
|---|---|
| 2. | good |
| 3. | ok |
| 4. | all is fine |
| 5. | ok |
| 6. | good |
| 7. | Smooth |
| 8. | Good |
| 9. | Smooth |
| 10. | Good |
| 11. | Fine |
| 12. | yes. Smooth |
| 13. | N/A |
| 14. | Yes |
| 15. | yes, the pace have been slow due to the fact that the structure of the company has been multi-size |
| 16. | Yes. the pace has been slow due to the fact the organization is a multisite company , and the nature of the business is diverse all over Ireland and northern Ireland, it makes socialization difficult. |

| 17 | yes I have at a slow pace |
|----|--------------------------|
| 18 | yes I have at a slow pace |
| 19 | Yes  Consistent and Encouraging |
| 20 | I have started building relationships but it is slower than I expected |

## Appendix B: Additional Material

## Case Study

## Intel

California Intel Corporation is the world's largest chip maker and also a leading manufacturer of computer, networking, and communication products It can boast of many distinguished awards, among them being named to Fortune's 2004 list of Blue Ribbon companies, one of the world's most sustainable corporations, and one of the Best workplaces for commuters, as recognized by the U S Environmental Protection Agency It has been voted one of the 100 Best Corporate Citizens five years in a row, and one of the 100 Best Companies for Working Mothers for three consecutive years

Intel provides a great deal of information during a new hire orientation session At its conclusion, employees are provided with relevant online links so they can access additional information While the company supports a blended learning approach, it is a strong advocate of human interaction that comes from classroom interaction

The first part of Intel's orientation consists of a full day devoted to providing administrative data as well as information about the corporate culture This session is followed by matching new hires with buddies who show them around and help reduce anxiety One to three months later, employees are required to attend a one day "Working at Intel" class where they are taught how to work at Intel The process may be described as a fast-paced, application-learning experience using interactive techniques where employees learn about core

practice tools, such as team development and how to conduct effective meetings After an additional three to six months have passed, employees meet in an "Executive Staff Member New Hire Forum" where they can ask strategy questions of senior staff This senior staffs queries the not-so-new employees as well Intel believes this approach stresses the importance of treating orientation as an ongoing process rather than an event The company also believes it's important to stress two issues that are most important to employees, "Did I make the right decision? And "How will I succeed in this work environment" (Arthur, 2008)

## *Appendix C: Evaluation Form & Feedback Sheet*

### Training Evaluation

**Name:**                                    **Course:**

**Date:**                                    **Provider:**

### Form Instructions

**Part 1:** Complete immediately after the training has taken place

**Part 2:** Complete approximately 3 months after the training has taken place

**Part 3:** Please notice the Management comment box – Your Line Manager will receive this evaluation document once you have completed it. S/He will then comment on how the training has impacted on your performance.

**Record:** This document will then be kept as a record of training undertaken and its level of success.

### Part 1

1. Please indicate whether each objective was covered in the training
   Leave % Success Rate field blank – for HR purposes only.

**Objectives**                                  **Where the objectives**

                                                **Covered? Select the box If Yes**

☐                                                ☐
☐                                                ☐
☐                                                ☐
☐                                                ☐
☐                                                ☐
☐                                                ☐

**% Success Rate of Objectives Achieved**

| Please tick the appropriate box (5 being Excellent) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. How would you assess the trainers/facilitator's ability? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. To what extent did the learning activity fulfil your objectives? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. How would you assess the quality of the material? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. How would you rate the learning activity overall? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. To what extent were you briefed on the session prior to it taking place? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. How would you rate the venue? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

8. Would you recommend using this provider/form of learning again? Yes ☐   No ☐

**STOP** Once you've completed Part 1, please return this document to HR.

## Part 2

9.  How have you applied the new skills/ knowledge to your job?


10. What impact have they had on your job?


11. What impact have they had on the team / department?


12. What impact has your socialization and integration process had on the team/organization? If you are not sure, speak to your Line Manager as all training would have a link to Business goals?
    (Write objective here again)


13. Have you been active using the discussion forum to share information and active socialization with colleagues/other employees?


Once you've completed Part 2, please pass this document to your manager for further completion.

## Part 3

To be completed by the Supervisor / Line Manager

What impact has the training undertaken had on the employee's performance in relation to the objectives listed above?

Once you've completed Part 3, please pass this document to HR for final assessment.

# NPar Tests

**Notes**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Output Created | | 06-JUL-2010 15:42:48 |
| Comments | | |
| Input | Data | W:\courses\MSCLT\Dissertation\Merc yOKooboh\question13.sav |
| | Active Dataset | DataSet6 |
| | Filter | <none> |
| | Weight | <none> |
| | Split File | <none> |
| | N of Rows in Working Data File | 50 |
| Missing Value Handling | Definition of Missing | User-defined missing values are treated as missing. |
| | Cases Used | Statistics for each test are based on all cases with valid data for the variable(s) used in that test. |
| Syntax | | NPAR TESTS |
| | | /M-W= rating   BY group(0 1) |
| | | /STATISTICS= DESCRIPTIVES |
| | | /MISSING ANALYSIS. |
| Resources | Processor Time | 0:00:00.00 |
| | Elapsed Time | 0:00:00.02 |
| | Number of Cases Allowed(a) | 112420 |

a  Based on availability of workspace memory.

[DataSet6]  W:\courses\MSCLT\Dissertation\MercyOKooboh\question13.sav

**Question 9·** How many colleagues have you interacted with so far since joining Dalkia

| New Employees | Traditional Approach | Blended Approach |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 12 | 16 |
| 2 | 12 | 22 |
| 3 | 17 | 23 |
| 4 | 23 | 35 |
| 5 | 17 | 23 |
| 6 | 35 | 39 |
| 7 | 49 | 66 |
| 8 | 5 | 10 |
| 9 | 30 | 32 |
| 10 | 20 | 28 |
| 11 | 21 | 33 |
| 12 | 23 | 36 |
| 13 | 43 | 67 |
| 14 | 17 | 24 |
| 15 | 15 | 21 |
| 16 | 13 | 18 |
| 17 | 14 | 19 |
| 18 | 16 | 27 |
| 19 | 24 | 34 |
| 20 | 20 | 45 |
| 21 | 5 | 10 |
| 22 | 3 | 8 |
| 23 | 9 | 14 |
| 24 | 28 | 29 |
| 25 | 7 | 9 |
| Variance | 128 5266667 | 235 0933333 |
| Mean | 19 12 | 27 52 |
| t-test | 0 016 | |

## 1. What site are you based?

○ Pfizer Grange Castle

○ Pfizer Newbridge

○ Ballina Beverages

○ Diageo Nangor Road

○ Diageo St James Gate

○ Intel

○ Bank of Ireland (Northern Ireland)

○ Bombardier

○ BMS Swords

○ Parkersell Mobile & Lighting

## 2. How will you rate the level of your socialization in the company?(rate according to most effective 1 to 5  (1 being least)

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Too Slow | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Too Fast | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hard | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Smooth | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Easy | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Difficult | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## 3. How will you rate the importance of employee socialization?

○ Extremely Important

○ Important

○ Not Important

○ Somewhat Unimportant

○ Neither

## 4  Which of the media below have you used to interact with other employees?

☐ Discussion Forum

☐ Email

☐ Telephone

☐ Face-to-Face

☐ Other

## 5. Please rate the quality of the interventions employed in the onboarding program.

| | Extremely Important | Important | Sometimes Important | Often Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interaction | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Questions | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Feedback | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Learning materials | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Coaching | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

## 6. The session provided enough opportunity for interaction with colleagues.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Disagree

## 7. Did the session provide enough opportunity for questions and feedback from facilitators.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Disagree

## 8 Did the session encourage socialization and create a sense of belonging.

◯ Almost Always True

◯ Often True

◯ Sometimes True/Sometimes Untrue

◯ Often Untrue

◯ Almost Always Untrue

## *9 How many colleagues have you interacted with so far since joining Dalkia?

[                              ]

## 10 Do you think the blended approach(combination of face-to-face and online learning) of the onboarding program accelerated the extent of socialization quicker?

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Strongly Disagree

## 11. The Onboarding programme reduced my anxiety in the workplace!

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Strongly Disagree

## 12. Please rate the factors that you found important in the onboarding session.

| | Not important | Quite important | Very important | Essential | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Delivery Content | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| 2. Socialisation | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| 3. Integration of employee | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| 4. Experience of the facilitator | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| 5. Discussion Forum | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| 6. Podcast & Video | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

Other (please specify)

[                              ]

## 13. Integration of Employees

**I think the current onboarding program supports total integration and empowerment of employees into teams and the organisation?**

◯ 1. Strongly Disagree

◯ 2. Disagree

◯ 3. Neutral

◯ 4. Agree

◯ 5. Strongly Agree

Other (please specify)

[                              ]

## 14. What measures do you think the company has taken to assess employee socialization.

☐ Weekly staff meetings

☐ Cascade meetings

☐ Site canteens

☐ buddying

☐ Employee Social Club

☐ Discussion Forum

**15  Do you think the mixture of the delivery methods for the blended onboarding program incorporated all the different learning needs of the participants?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**16. Would you say that the organisations' commitment to employee integration is effective?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

## 2. Integration

1. Tell me about your integration experience.

[                              ]

2. Are there obvious effects of discussion forum and video on the socialization process in the onboarding program

[                              ]

3. Have you started building relationships with your colleagues? If yes how can you describe the pace of the relationship?

[                              ]

## 3. Thank you!

I will like to take this medium to thank you for taking part in this survey
Your confidentiality can be assured

Mercy Kesiena Clement-Okooboh
HR Generalist
01-8701206

## 1. What site are you based?

◯ Pfizer Grange Castle

◯ Pfizer Newbridge

◯ Ballina Beverages

◯ Diageo Nangor Road

◯ Diageo St James Gate

◯ Intel

◯ Bank of Ireland (Northern Ireland)

◯ Bombardier

◯ BMS Swords

◯ Parkersell Mobile & Lighting

## 2 How will you rate the level of your socialization in the company?(rate according to most effective 1 to 5. (1 being least)

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Too Fast | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Smooth | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Easy | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Too Slow | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Hard | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Difficult | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

## 3 How will you rate the importance of employee socialization?

◯ Extremely Important

◯ Important

◯ Not Important

◯ Somewhat Unimportant

◯ Neither

## 4 Which of the media below have you used to interact with other employees?

☐ Discussion Forum

☐ Email

☐ Telephone

☐ Face to-Face

☐ Other

**5 Please rate the quality of the interventions employed in the onboarding program**

| | Extremely Important | Important | Sometimes Important | Often Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interaction | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Questions | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Feedback | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Learning materials | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Coaching | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

**6 The session provided enough opportunity for interaction with colleagues.**

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Disagree

**7 Did the session provide enough opportunity for questions and feedback from facilitators.**

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Disagree

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**\* 9. How many colleagues have you interacted with so far since joining Dalkia?**

[                              ]

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◯ Agree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Strongly Disagree

## 11. The Onboarding programme reduced my anxiety in the workplace!

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Strongly Disagree

## 12 Please rate the factors that you found important in the onboarding session

| | Not important | Quite important | Very important | Essential | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Delivery Content | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2 Socialisation | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3 Ice breaker/Energiser | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4 Experience of the facilitator | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5 Role Play | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6 Training Room Layout | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Other (please specify)

[                    ]

## 13 Integration of Employees

## I think the current onboarding program supports total integration and empowerment of employees into teams and the organisation?

○ 1 Strongly Disagree

○ 2 Disagree

○ 3 Neutral

○ 4 Agree

○ 5 Strongly Agree

Other (please specify)

[                    ]

## 14 What measures do you think the company has taken to assess employee socialization.

☐ Weekly staff meetings

☐ Cascade meetings

☐ Site canteens

☐ buddying

☐ Employee Social Club

☐ Discussion Forum

**15. Do you think the mixture of the delivery methods (role play, questions/feedback etc) for the traditional onboarding program incorporated all the different learning needs of the participants?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**16. Would you say that the organisations' commitment to employee integration is effective?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

## 2. Integration

1. Tell me about your integration experience.

[        ]

2 Are there obvious effects of the learning interventions on the socialization process in the onboarding program

[        ]

3 Have you started building relationships with your colleagues? If yes how can you describe the pace of the relationship?

[        ]

## 3. Thank you!

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