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# **The Influence of Leadership on Newcomer Adjustment: How can leaders support newcomers during the onboarding process to strengthen role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance?**

Study Program Master, International Management & Leadership

Master Thesis

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## **Abstract**

### **The Influence of Leadership on Newcomer Adjustment:**

**How can leaders support newcomers during the onboarding process to strengthen role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance?**

The ability of newcomers to transition successfully becomes vital as businesses attempt to build an inclusive and productive work environment. This master's thesis investigates how leaders can support newcomers during the onboarding phase. It suggests how leaders can support newcomers during the onboarding process, increasing their level of role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance.

The results suggest that strong leadership is crucial in supporting newcomers in adjusting. The perceptions of role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance among newcomers to the organization can all be favorably impacted by leaders who actively assist in their onboarding experience. A number of leadership techniques are mentioned, such as setting clear expectations, providing mentorship and advice, encouraging pleasant social interactions, and facilitating access to resources and information.

The master thesis looks at the difficulties and obstacles that leaders could run into while putting these tactics into practice. Time restrictions, a lack of training, and scarce resources can make it difficult for leaders to provide newcomers with the complete support they need. As a result, suggestions are made regarding how to handle these difficulties and improve leadership techniques during the onboarding phase.

This master thesis contributes to the existing literature by emphasizing the critical role of leadership in promoting successful newcomer adjustment. The findings provide practical insights for organizations to develop effective leadership programs and policies aimed at supporting newcomers during the onboarding process. By implementing these strategies, organizations can foster a positive work environment that facilitates newcomers' integration, improves their job satisfaction, and enhances their overall performance and productivity.

**Keywords:** Leadership, onboarding, newcomer adjustment, self-efficacy, role clarity, social acceptance.

## **Kurzreferat**

### **Der Einfluss von Führungskräften auf die Anpassung von Neuankömmlingen:**

#### **Wie können Führungskräfte Neuankömmlinge während des Einführungsprozesses unterstützen, um Rollenklarheit, Selbstwirksamkeit und soziale Akzeptanz zu stärken?**

Die Fähigkeit von Neuankömmlingen, sich erfolgreich anzupassen, ist von entscheidender Bedeutung, wenn Unternehmen versuchen, ein integratives und produktives Arbeitsumfeld zu schaffen. In dieser Masterarbeit wird untersucht, wie sich die Unterstützung der Führungskraft auf die Anpassungsfähigkeit von Neuankömmlingen auswirkt. Sie zeigt Wege auf, wie Führungskräfte Neuankömmlinge während des Einarbeitungsprozesses unterstützen können, indem sie ihr Rollenverständnis, ihre Selbstwirksamkeit und ihre soziale Akzeptanz fördern.

Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass eine starke Führung für die Unterstützung von Neuankömmlingen bei der Anpassung entscheidend ist. Die Wahrnehmung von Rollenklarheit, Selbstwirksamkeit und sozialer Akzeptanz bei Neuankömmlingen im Unternehmen kann von Führungskräften, die aktiv bei der Einarbeitung helfen, positiv beeinflusst werden. Es wird eine Reihe von Führungstechniken genannt, wie z. B. das Setzen klarer Erwartungen, die Bereitstellung von Mentoren und Ratschlägen, die Förderung angenehmer sozialer Interaktionen und die Erleichterung des Zugangs zu Ressourcen und Informationen.

Die Masterarbeit befasst sich mit den Schwierigkeiten und Hindernissen, auf die Führungskräfte bei der Umsetzung dieser Taktiken stoßen können. Zeitliche Beschränkungen, mangelnde Ausbildung und knappe Ressourcen können es den Führungskräften erschweren, Neuankömmlingen die vollständige Unterstützung zukommen zu lassen, die sie benötigen. Infolgedessen werden Vorschläge gemacht, wie man mit diesen Schwierigkeiten umgehen und die Führungstechniken während des Onboarding-Verfahrens verbessern kann.

Diese Masterarbeit trägt zur bestehenden Literatur bei, indem sie die entscheidende Rolle der Führung bei der Förderung einer erfolgreichen Anpassung von Neuankömmlingen hervorhebt. Die Ergebnisse liefern praktische Erkenntnisse für Unternehmen, die effektive Führungsprogramme und -strategien zur Unterstützung von Neuankömmlingen während des Einführungsprozesses entwickeln wollen. Durch die Umsetzung dieser Strategien können Unternehmen ein positives Arbeitsumfeld fördern, das die Integration von Neuankömmlingen erleichtert, ihre Arbeitszufriedenheit verbessert und ihre Gesamtleistung und Produktivität steigert.

**Keywords Führung, Onboarding, Anpassung von Neulingen, Selbstwirksamkeit, Rollenklarheit, soziale Akzeptanz.**

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MAXQDA

Max Weber qualitative data analysis



## 1. Introduction

Organizations are struggling to find new qualified employees. As a result, recruiting new employees is becoming increasingly difficult. However, early in 2023, layoffs are unusually low by historical standards. This indicates that, contrary to popular belief, the job market remains extremely tight, and a candidate market exists. As a result, recruitment will remain challenging (Tarki, 2023, p. 2).

Recruiting new employees is only the first step in the process of integrating employees into the organization. Once a new employee is hired and the recruitment is complete, it is even more critical to provide the best onboarding experience possible. Onboarding is how new employees learn the necessary skills, knowledge, and behaviors to succeed in the organization (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011, p. 51). In many cases, onboarding could be performed better, and as a result, many employees leave their jobs within the first couple of months. Employee onboarding is a critical phase that marks the beginning of a new chapter in an employee's life. The first onboarding process is unique and vital for newcomers to the workforce. Companies are attempting to improve their onboarding processes but determining what is required and how it should be carried out is extremely difficult.

In Austria in 2021, 39% of newly hired employees left within the first three months, 14% after three to six months, and 16% after six to twelve months; in total, 68% in the first year (Registerbasierte Erwerbsverläufe, 2021). Given that more than two-thirds of newly hired employees leave their jobs within a year, a smooth transition from university or their previous employment with an improved onboarding process and a focus on newcomer adjustment is very important.

According to a 2010 Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Foundation survey, half of all hourly workers quit within the first 120 days of starting a new job in the United States of America (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011, p. 52).

One of the groups which are in particular very vulnerable are recent college graduates since they usually need to gain experience when it comes to onboarding and starting a new job at another or even their first company. Especially for this group, it is crucial to have a good onboarding process in place so that those individuals feel the support from the first moment on (Klemme Larson & Bell, 2013, p. 286).

To compensate for the continuous loss of new employees and long-time employees, companies are hiring a wave of recent college graduates for their first professional position to replace departing workers, making it very difficult for companies not to lose too much knowledge from the departing employees. As a result, there is an urgent need to understand better the factors influencing a newcomer's ability to adjust efficiently and how leaders can and have to support newcomers during their onboarding period continuously to guarantee that newcomers will have after a short duration of time a high level of role clarity, a high level of self-efficacy, as well as a high level of social acceptance within the organization. Considering that only 12% of employees in the United States believe their companies do an excellent job of onboarding, there is room for improvement (Gallup, 2021).

After the financial crisis in 2008, the HR consultant firm "Right Management" conducted a survey in 2009 with the outcome that up to 60% of employees wanted to leave their jobs when the economy stabilizes due to low staff morale, disengagement from increased responsibilities, and diminishing benefits (Klemme Larson & Bell, 2013, p. 285). This clearly states that most of the workforce was not satisfied with their job at that time, and one of the factors was the poor overall onboarding experience.

Challenges for companies start at a different time than the onboarding phase. Challenges begin even earlier in the so-called recruitment phase. Employee recruitment is the process by which companies attract qualified employees (Riggio, 2015, p. 81). Finding new employees is a huge challenge that takes time and money, and it may get even more complicated depending on the job characteristics, the market, and regional factors. Recruiting is increasingly getting more difficult year by year and organizations spend 50% to 60% of an employee's annual salary on recruitment (Allen, 2008, p. 3). Therefore, improving the onboarding process is even more critical for successful long-term employee retention and decreasing the company expenditure.

One of the primary reasons many new employees leave their new jobs after only a few months is ineffective newcomer adjustment and the need for more support from leaders during the adjustment process. Ineffective newcomer adjustment causes significant short-term financial losses for businesses, but these costs pale compared to the long-term consequences. In the worst-case scenario, high personnel turnover and low newcomer productivity could jeopardize a company's viability. Employee turnover may impact the organization's services and goods regarding quality, quantity, innovation, and lowering consumer satisfaction (Klemme Larson & Bell, 2013, p. 287).

Every year, numerous young adults graduate with a bachelor's or even a master's degree. Many of them enter the first-time labor force and struggle with newcomer adjustment since they have not the experience of adjusting to a new job environment. Newcomer adjustment is the process a person goes through during the first year of employment with an employer to learn how to carry out job duties and develop positive attitudes toward the company, the workplace, and job needs (Bauer et al., 2007, p. 708). In general, all new employees go through newcomer adjustment. However, the duration and process differ for each individual and new employment. Therefore, only one standardized approach won't be sufficient for all newcomers.

Newcomer adjustment has an impact on both organizations and individuals. A poor adjustment may impede young adults' professional and personal development who have recently graduated from college (Ng & Feldman, 2007, p. 115f). Individuals may experience a decline in their commitment to the organization and job contentment, leading to reduced productivity and ultimately resulting in premature departure from the position (Holton, 1995, p. 65). Financial costs, including lower productivity, rehiring, and retraining owing to disgruntled arrivals or losing fresh workers to turnover, can hinder an organization's growth and profitability (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000, p. 336f).

Leadership is a crucial element in facilitating a high-quality onboarding experience, as it encompasses the responsibilities and actions that a leader should undertake throughout the onboarding process (Pratiwi et al., 2018, p. 603). Therefore, knowing which influence leaders have on newcomer adjustment during the onboarding process and how leaders can support newcomers is essential to know and to understand throughout the onboarding process. Consequently, this master thesis will focus on how leaders can support newcomers during adjustment. In particular, how to increase the level of the following three key elements will be analyzed: role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance.

### ***Structure of this Master Thesis***

The present master thesis is structured into seven distinct chapters. The first chapter of the thesis highlights the significance of newcomer adjustment and outlines the current situation of newcomer adjustment. The second chapter delves into the theoretical underpinnings of newcomer adjustment and the current state of research on the ways in which leaders can facilitate the onboarding process for newcomers. This is followed by a thorough explanation and rationale for the chosen methodological approach to address the research question. The third chapter introduces the research question. In Chapter 4, a comprehensive methodology is presented to address the research question. Chapter 5 entails a qualitative investigation that employs semi-structured interviews to expound on the nature of assistance that newcomers necessitate from their leaders. Chapter 6 presents a comprehensive overview of the achieved outcomes, the contribution of the master thesis to the existing body of research, the limitations inherent in the master thesis, the potential implications for future research, and ultimately, practical recommendations. The concluding chapter, Chapter 7, will serve as the final component of this master's thesis.

## **2. Theoretical Basics**

To adequately answer the research question, it is necessary to comprehend the topic and analyze what previous research has discovered about newcomer adjustment. Not only is a comprehensive comprehension of the current state of the study required for the interviews but also for the interpretation of the results and the implications for future research. The subsequent sections will present and emphasize the most pertinent factors related to immigrant adaptation that is required for this master's thesis.

### **2.1 Recruitment**

Employee recruitment is how businesses entice potential employees to apply for a job. A growing number of firms are adopting strategic recruitment processes. A strong recruiting campaign begins with a grasp of the job and the types of worker traits necessary to do the job. The recruiter relies on the products of job analysis, job description, and job specifications. Defining them is also the beginning of the recruiting process, which concludes when the applicant signs the contract (Riggio, 2015, p. 81f).

### **2.2 Onboarding**

After recruitment, onboarding is the second stage of the employee lifecycle and consists of four steps. Forecasting and finding talent is the first step, onboarding is the second step, managing talent is the third step, and the fourth step is transitioning. The process of onboarding serves to assimilate newly hired individuals into an organization, acquainting them with the company's culture, values, regulations, and operational protocols, irrespective of whether the individual is an internal or external candidate. Onboarding begins after the position is offered, respectively once recruitment is completed, and ends when the new employee is considered fully functional (Graybill et al., 2013, p. 201).

Onboarding's objective is to assist new hires in smoothly settling into their jobs and to position them for long-term success (Gregory et al., 2022, p. 1f). Meetings with critical stakeholders, team-building exercises, orientation sessions, and training programs are all standard components of the onboarding process. In addition, new hires may receive information on pay, benefits, and other HR-related topics. The length and structure of an onboarding program may vary depending on the company, the position and the experience of the newcomer, but the main goal is always to make new hires feel supported and prepared for their new roles (Bauer et al., 2007, p. 707).

Onboarding is critical for a variety of reasons. To begin with, companies cannot afford to lose a new hire at the start of their tenure if considerable time and resources are expended in the search for and recruitment of new employees. Second, onboarding assists businesses in ensuring that new hires become productive as soon as possible. Third, a properly executed onboarding process will smooth new hires' transitions into the company and promote employee engagement (Graybill et al., 2013, p. 201).

The transition from a job applicant to a hired worker within a company is essential. Consequently, implementing a suitable and organized onboarding procedure can facilitate the assimilation of newcomers into their respective positions, acquaint them with their colleagues, and familiarize them with the company's objectives and mission. Merely a handful of corporations acknowledge that onboarding constitutes a crucial aspect of human resource management that can serve as a link between a candidate's initial experience and an employee's overall life cycle. The impact on engagement is significant (Pratiwi et al., 2018, p. 604).

The primary purpose of all onboarding programs is to connect new hires with key business initiatives and convey how the new employee will contribute to the organization's overall mission and vision. This may be accomplished by establishing particular goals for the new employee to work for over the first year of employment, even before the newcomer begins the first day. During the onboarding phase, many workers are on probation and are formally reviewed at regular intervals. A successful onboarding program should provide new hires with the skills and support they need to thrive while also identifying new hires who are not the best fit for the firm. In addition to individual performance, employers must assess the effectiveness of the onboarding program to identify areas for development (Graybill et al., 2013, p. 202).

### **2.3 Newcomer Adjustment**

Newcomer adjustment refers to the process of adjusting to a new environment, such as a new job or a new organization. Cultural differences, language barriers, changes to daily routines, and unfamiliar work practices or processes are just a few of the experiences and difficulties newcomers may face during the adjustment process (Saks et al., 2007, p. 452).

Irrespective of their prior work experience, individuals who commence employment at a different organization are classified as newcomers. Individuals who are new to the workforce and are transitioning from an educational setting to a professional environment are often confronted with more intricate transitions and obstacles compared to those who are transitioning from one job to another. Organizations commonly implement onboarding initiatives and supplementary support mechanisms to facilitate the assimilation of newly recruited personnel into the work environment. The establishment of a successful adjustment period for newcomers is crucial in ensuring long-term job satisfaction and success (Ashforth et al., 2007, p. 452).

Successful newcomer adjustment can benefit the organization by lowering turnover, increasing productivity, and improving employee morale and engagement. Some basic methods for assisting newcomers in adjusting to their surroundings include providing opportunities for socializing and networking, setting clear expectations, and providing ongoing support and feedback (Wilde, 2017).

According to Bauer's (2007, p. 707) research, there are three key factors that significantly impact the successful integration of new members into a group or organization. These factors include the level of clarity surrounding the individual's role within the group, newcomers perceived ability to perform their duties effectively (self-efficacy), and the degree to which they feel socially accepted by their peers. By prioritizing these three indicators, the resulting effects are expected to include improved job performance, increased job satisfaction, heightened organizational commitment, stronger intentions to remain with the organization, and reduced employee turnover. There exists a direct correlation between employees' understanding of their job responsibilities and their overall

job performance. Moreover, employees who demonstrate a greater level of confidence in their ability to successfully complete assigned tasks are more likely to achieve their goals.

Employees who are socially accepted by their colleagues may demonstrate enhanced job performance because of the social capital that is generated through their relationships with peers. The effects of socialization have been extensively studied, with particular focus on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention intentions. According to Bauer (2007, p. 710), it was hypothesized that the three attitudes would have an impact on newcomer adjustment. Due to the correlation between role ambiguity and elevated levels of stress and burnout, it serves as a significant factor contributing to dissatisfaction. The potential consequences of unclear job responsibilities include a decline in employee satisfaction and loyalty, as well as an increased likelihood of employee turnover. In addition, extensive research has established a correlation between uncertainty and diminished levels of job satisfaction (Louis, 1980, p. 247). Similarly, individuals who possess a strong sense of self-efficacy are likely to exhibit confidence in their ability to excel in crucial aspects of their professional roles. Consequently, they are more inclined to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, exhibit increased commitment towards the organization, and demonstrate reduced intentions to resign. Finally, it is imperative for both employees and leaders to have adequate social support in the workplace (Fisher, 1985, p. 40).

The advantages of employees effectively transitioning into new roles by understanding their responsibilities, feeling confident in their ability to perform their duties, and establishing strong relationships with colleagues will result in a strong sense of loyalty towards the company, thereby reducing the likelihood of them resigning. Furthermore, it is advisable for new employees to demonstrate a reduced inclination towards resigning from their positions once they have successfully acclimated to their duties and the overall work environment (Bauer et al., 2007, p. 710).

Organizations create varying work environments for newcomers, which can be characterized as either strong or weak. Newcomers can adapt to these environments through passive or active means, employing different socialization strategies. At the same time, new individuals actively seek relevant information to aid them in their process of adaptation. The objectives of organizations in relation to newcomers can differ, encompassing both adherence to rules and fostering innovation. It is crucial for newcomers to have a clear understanding of the expectations placed upon them during the transition period (Bauer et al., 2007, p. 707).

## **2.4 Role Clarity**

Developing a comprehensive comprehension of one's designated responsibilities can greatly enhance the smoothness of the transition process for incoming members. Role clarity pertains to the degree of understanding an individual has regarding their duties, expected results, and performance standards within a specific role or circumstance. The extent to which an individual can effectively acclimate to a new environment and make valuable contributions to their new organization or community, in the context of newcomer adjustment, may be influenced by a range of factors, provided that the newcomer has a clear understanding of their assigned responsibilities and obligations (Lyons, 1971, p. 99 ff).

Consequently, individuals are prone to experience a sense of self-assurance and competence in their recent role, leading to proficient performance and favorable perceptions from others. In case a

newly arrived individual is uncertain of their designated role or perceives their obligations to be ambiguous, they may encounter emotions of unease, strain, or vexation, which can hinder their capacity to acclimate and perform effectively (Bauer et al., 2007, p. 709).

According to Feldman (1981, p. 310), role clarity can be defined as the successful resolution of role demands. This involves reaching a mutual understanding, either implicitly or explicitly, with the workgroup regarding task priorities, time management, and performance expectations. Additionally, it entails arriving at mutually agreeable decisions to manage conflicts that may arise between personal and work life, as well as intergroup role conflicts within the workplace.

## **2.5 Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy pertains to an individual's level of confidence in their ability to effectively perform a given task or achieve a specific objective. The concept of social cognition theory asserts that an individual's behavior is influenced by their personal beliefs, aspirations, and expectations. The level of self-efficacy has a notable impact on an individual's motivation, behavior, and overall state of being. Individuals exhibiting elevated levels of self-efficacy are prone to approaching challenges with a sense of assurance and tenacity, persisting in the face of setbacks or obstacles. Individuals may exhibit a greater propensity towards setting and accomplishing ambitious objectives, leading to heightened levels of contentment and achievement (Maddux & Kleiman, 2016, p. 57ff).

Conversely, individuals with low levels of self-efficacy may exhibit a greater propensity to evade challenging situations or succumb to adversity with minimal effort. Individuals may exhibit elevated levels of stress and anxiety, as well as diminished self-regard. Feldman (1981, p. 310) described self-efficacy as task mastery, i.e. learning the tasks and acquiring self-confidence and consistently positive performance.

## **2.6 Social Acceptance**

The level of social acceptance that newcomers experience has a big impact on the integration process. Social acceptance can be defined as the degree to which an individual who is unfamiliar with a specific social setting feels accepted, acknowledged, and integrated within that environment. The impact of social acceptability on an individual's well-being and sense of belonging during the process of newcomer adjustment is significant. Individuals who are readily embraced by the social fabric of a new environment are inclined to experience a greater sense of comfort and self-assurance. Consequently, they are more motivated to engage with others and actively participate in the activities and initiatives of their newfound community or organization. However, if a new individual experiences feeling of exclusion or rejection, they may potentially experience emotions such as loneliness, isolation, or anxiety. These emotions can have a detrimental impact on their ability to adapt and perform effectively in their work environment (Bauer et al., 2007, p. 709).

According to Feldman (1981, p. 310) the initial definition of social acceptance was provided as follows. The process of group norms and values adjustment involves three key aspects: the experience of being liked and trusted by one's peers, the understanding of the group's norms and values, and the ability to make appropriate adaptations to fit within the group.

## 2.7 Role of Leadership during Onboarding

Regarding the process of onboarding, leadership is among the crucial components. Competent leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of support and appreciation among newly hired personnel. It is incumbent upon leaders to establish the prevailing corporate culture and standards. During the onboarding process, leaders bear a significant responsibility to establish unambiguous expectations by effectively communicating the objectives, requirements, and responsibilities associated with the position. Through this action, organizational leaders can facilitate a positive initiation process for newly recruited employees (Setlhodi, 2021).

Providing new hires with clear information about their responsibilities can enhance their comprehension and increase their self-assurance. Facilitating the success of newly recruited personnel by furnishing them with the necessary tools and assistance is a crucial responsibility of leaders. They are capable of assisting individuals in adapting to their new role. Gaining access to mentoring opportunities, training programs, or influential decision-makers can prove beneficial (Element, 2022). The process of onboarding ought to encompass more than a mere comprehension of one's job duties. The cessation occurs solely upon the completion of all the required tasks. The process of assimilating a new employee into a business can be time-consuming in order to ensure proper integration. The significance of effective leadership in fostering a sense of belonging, esteem, and worth among newly hired personnel can significantly impact their retention within the organization.

Numerous studies on newcomer organizational socialization have identified leaders as a prominent socialization agent. As a result of the strong collaboration between newcomers and their supervisors, it is not uncommon for interpersonal and work relationships to form between them (Sluss and Thomas, 2012, p 114f). These associations are anticipated to have a substantial influence on individuals who are new to the field. Previous research has indicated that leaders play a crucial role in determining the ultimate outcome of a newcomer's success or failure. Leaders play a vital role in addressing the negative outcomes that arise from unmet expectations. They provide a range of resources to promote newcomers' involvement in their work and boost their motivation to serve the public. Additionally, leaders serve a crucial function in clarifying the shared understanding and perspective for newcomers. Moreover, there is a clear positive correlation between the strong support of leaders and the outcomes of organizational socialization, particularly in relation to the social acceptance of fellow members within the organization (Gardner et al., 2022, p. 298f). Additionally, an abrupt decline in the perceived level of support provided by supervisors to newly hired employees can have adverse consequences on their overall job satisfaction, clarity regarding their roles, and level of compensation. Prior studies have thoroughly investigated the various responsibilities of leaders in facilitating the adjustment of new employees (Lee, 2023, p. 6f).

Gallup (2021) has identified eight practical recommendations that can effectively enhance the onboarding process. It is widely believed that these factors play a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of the onboarding process. Firstly, it is advisable to explore innovative approaches for establishing connections with individuals. It is advantageous for leaders to embrace non-traditional methods when it comes to onboarding remote employees, such as facilitating informal dialogues. For example, through the organization of monthly meetings held over coffee. In addition, it is advisable for leaders to actively participate in regular questioning. May I inquire about your experience during your first week? This question is intended to create a welcoming atmosphere for newly hired individuals, encouraging them to feel empowered to seek guidance and ask questions from reliable sources. Furthermore, effective onboarding programs provide a comprehensive



understanding of the company's history and origins, as well as the importance of the new hire's role in contributing to the organization's overall mission and purpose. Integrate initiatives that aptly exemplify the organizational culture of the company. Ensuring that newly hired employees are equipped with a thorough comprehension of the organization's culture and their specific responsibilities within it is of utmost importance. One potential strategy is to offer comprehensive training to newly onboarded employees, focusing on the successful assimilation and demonstration of the organization's customer-centric principles. The onboarding process may include the presentation of case studies that showcase exceptional customer service on a global level. Furthermore, the act of offering a "care package" that includes thoughtful gifts or handwritten notes can significantly contribute to fostering a heightened feeling of recognition and appreciation among recently onboarded employees. Effective leadership has the ability to utilize interpersonal relationships in order to enhance the organizational culture and core principles. This, in turn, can offer a sense of reassurance to newly hired employees, ensuring that they are aligned with the organization. Furthermore, it is advisable to implement a formalized mentoring program. It is advisable for leaders to facilitate the process of pairing newly hired personnel with a mentor or adviser. This will enable them to receive guidance and support, ultimately fostering their professional growth and increasing their job satisfaction and likelihood of staying with the organization. During the seventh step, individuals are provided with the essential skills and knowledge required to take on increased levels of accountability and leadership responsibilities. Leaders must demonstrate a strong physical presence, active engagement, and accessibility during the onboarding process for newly hired employees. Leaders possess the capacity to function as coaches by facilitating the assimilation of new employees into the organizational culture, fostering their connections with relevant personnel, and offering them the essential support and guidance through effective development and training. Leverage data to optimize the onboarding program. The presence of leaders is essential in fostering a workplace environment that is characterized by inclusivity and optimism. The development of a conducive culture that fosters support and growth for newly hired employees can be facilitated by exemplifying appropriate conduct and actively promoting positive mindsets.

According Lee (2023, p. 8) there are five factors to support newcomers: supporting the transfer of training, disseminating relevant information, clarifying the roles of newcomers, facilitating the process of sensemaking, and providing constructive feedback.

### **3. Research Question**

According to Pratiwi (2018, p. 603), the onboarding process involves various critical elements, and leadership and the corresponding responsibilities of a leader constitute one of them. Therefore, it is imperative to comprehend the impact of leaders on the assimilation of new members and the strategies that leaders can employ to facilitate the onboarding process for newcomers. The focus of this master's thesis will be on the process of newcomer adjustment. This master thesis will focus on analyzing the three fundamental elements of newcomer adjustment, namely, role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance. Acquiring knowledge on how leaders can provide assistance to new employees during the onboarding phase and comprehending the impact that leaders can exert, can aid organizations in devising effective strategies for enhancing the onboarding process through the cultivation and refinement of leadership skills. In this master thesis, the following research question will be answered.

How can leaders support newcomers during the onboarding process to strengthen role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance?

## **4. Method**

This chapter outlines the methodology for this master thesis research, design, research participants, tools used, and process. It explains why this methodology and approach will be used in this master's thesis.

### **4.1 Selection and Description of Interviewees**

The aim of this master thesis is to investigate the role of the leader for newcomer adjustment. This is implemented by means of a qualitative method with semi-structured interviews. Most of the interviewees lacked significant experience in facilitating the adjustment of newcomers in a business-oriented domain. Only a two of the nine respondents had a history of multiple employments prior to their present occupation.

The optimal sample size for a research study exhibits minimal variance across different domains of inquiry. Nonetheless, the presence of numerous interviewees may lead to temporal limitations, while a scarcity of interviewees may impede the ability to make accurate generalizations. Additionally, it may be unfeasible to verify the hypothesis in most cases (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 113f). Hence, it is imperative to establish the appropriate number of interviewees at the outset. This master's thesis involved conducting interviews with nine participants.

The tabulated data presents the primary attributes of the interviewees, namely their gender, age, academic background (bachelor's or master's degree), leadership responsibilities, employment type, organizational affiliation, tenure in the company and position held, and the size of the organization. All interviews conducted were deemed sufficient to meet the researcher's requirements and have been included in the analysis of this master's thesis.

In order to maintain confidentiality and protect the data, the researcher reached an agreement with all participants to restrict the dissemination of personal information solely to the data presented in Table 1. If any personal information, such as the name of a company or an individual, was referenced during the interview, the researcher ensured that such information was anonymized during transcription. This was achieved by replacing the specific names with generic terms such as "person," "leader," or "company."

Table 1: Interviewee Characteristics

Characteristics	Number
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	5
Male	4
<b>Age</b>	
20-29	6
30-39	3
<b>Academical Background</b>	
Bachelor	5
Master	4
<b>Leadership Responsibilities</b>	
Leader	2
Employee	7
<b>Employment</b>	
Full time	9
Part-time	0
<b>Organizational Affiliation</b>	
Industrial sector	2
Healthcare	1
Consulting	2
Food	1
Retail	1
Information Technology	2
<b>Duration in the Company</b>	
5-7m	3
7-9m	3
9-12m	3
<b>Size of Organization</b>	
≤ 49 employees	2
50-499 employees	1
500-4.999 employees	4
5.000-49,000 employees	2

#### 4.1 Research Design

The researcher had to fulfill the following tasks: First, interviewees could express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Additionally, the researcher was responsible for overseeing the entire interview process, ensuring all points were covered, keeping the interview on the topic, or bringing the interviewee back to it. Finally, the interviewee had to be informed of the researcher's specific role in the interview (Legard. R., 2003, p. 140).

This master thesis was built upon a comprehensive examination of the existing literature and extensive desk research, with a primary emphasis on newcomer adjustment factors such as self-efficacy, social acceptance, and role clarity, as well as the onboarding process and leadership. The

objective of the interviews was to ascertain the ways in which leaders can support new employees throughout the onboarding process. By acquiring knowledge, leaders have the potential to enhance the degree of newcomer adjustment in relation to three key elements, namely role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance, which were the focal points of the interviews.

The study aimed to gain a thorough understanding of how leaders can effectively support and influence newly arrived individuals during the onboarding process. This was accomplished by conducting interviews and analyzing the data, as well as reviewing relevant literature through extensive desk research. In addition, the researcher has obtained feedback from all interviewees regarding potential areas for improvement and recommendations for enhancing the onboarding process.

The master thesis employed semi-structured in-depth interviews as the primary method for data collection. One of the primary advantages of utilizing in-depth interviews as a qualitative research method is the ability to conduct a thorough exploration of the interviewees' answers, thereby gathering information from marginalized groups (Maher & Dertadian, 2018, p. 168). The qualitative method offers more in-depth data than a quantitative approach, and the researcher can closely examine the interviewees' behavior. As a result, the interviewer will thoroughly understand the subject matter ( Showkat & Parveen, 2017, p. 4).

Due to the reason that an approach with a structure could lead to too different topics during the interview, a semi-structured approach was introduced to conduct the interviews and give all interviews a certain standardization. After that, the researcher decided to add the timeline method to the interview to gain a deep understanding of all main events and their influence on the interviewees' level of satisfaction with the leader's support during the onboarding process.

During a test interview, the interviewer determined whether the proposed guideline was sufficient to answer the research question and if changes were needed to improve the overall outcome. Due to this, drawing down the line respectively the curve on the prepared graph is a challenging task for the interviewees and takes at least fifteen to twenty minutes. Therefore, the researcher decided to send in advance the chart as well as a short description to explain the central element of the interview, newcomer adjustment, role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance, to all interviewees and asked them if possible, to draw already the line/curve. This document is attached to the master thesis and is seen in Appendix A. Sending the information in advance allowed the researcher to be more efficient during the interview and focus on all main events. Also, for the interviewee, this approach was much more convenient since they had enough time to think about those critical events during their onboarding process without feeling any pressure from the interviewer waiting for them. Lastly, the duration of the interview was therefore also shorter.

All of the interviews were recorded to ease the process and also the transcription of the interviews. Only the time valid for the evaluation was recorded, not the introduction of the topic or any question not relating to the research question. All nine interviews varied between 25 to 55 minutes, with an average recorded duration per interview of 40 minutes.

## **4.2 Research Instrument**

The research question was addressed through the utilization of qualitative in-depth interviews, as outlined in section 4.1. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach, following a predetermined guideline that included key questions. Furthermore, supplementary subpoints have been devised to facilitate the interview process for the interviewer, contingent upon the response. The focal point of the interview was entailing the task of sketching a two-dimensional curve on a sheet of paper. The dimensions pertain to the actual occurrences, while the additional dimension pertains to the level of contentment experienced by the new member with regards to the support provided by the leader during the onboarding process.

Based on the researcher's desire to obtain a comprehensive understanding and gain deep insight into the expectations and requirements of newcomers with regard to their leaders during the onboarding process qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews have been selected. Furthermore, the utilization of a flexible focus by the researcher allowed for a more comprehensive exploration of specific aspects of the interview, tailored to the individual knowledge and experiences of each interviewee. This approach contributed significantly to the overall efficacy of the research process. According to Legard (2003, p. 140), there are five essential characteristics of an in-depth interview. Integrating structure and flexibility guarantees an interactive interview. Subsequently, the investigator employs a variety of probes and other methodologies to attain a comprehensive understanding of the responses. The act of conducting an interview can be considered generative in nature, as it has the potential to facilitate the creation of novel ideas or insights. The focal point lies in the profundity of the subject matter, and it is imperative that the information is recorded in its authentic state. Ultimately, it is recommended that interviews are conducted in person. The aforementioned factors have culminated in the determination that a qualitative methodology utilizing semi-structured in-depth interviews is the optimal approach for addressing the research inquiry.

## **4.3 Procedure**

Every interview was recorded and transcribed immediately after its completion. Following the completion of interviews and transcription. The thematic analysis was employed to analyze the collected data. Subsequently, the actions executed in accordance with the guidelines set forth by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 652ff). The initial stage of acquainting oneself with the accumulated data was imperative in comprehending the entirety of the data and obtaining a comprehensive overview of all the interviews. Then it was crucial to define the principal codes and all sub-codes for the analysis. Upon conducting a comprehensive analysis of all codes, distinct themes have been generated on the basis of the aforementioned codes. Afterwards, the researcher meticulously scrutinized and made slight modifications to all codes and themes. Consequently, the interpretation and analysis procedures were executed.

As stated, codes have been established to streamline the assessment procedure. The aforementioned codes were categorized into distinct groups based on their associated connotations. Upon the completion of the categorization process, the subsequent analysis of the outcomes became significantly more uncomplicated. Furthermore, it is possible for responses to comprise multiple codes, achieved by incorporating more than one code per response. Principal

codes have the potential to encompass sub-codes. In this master's thesis, the MAXQDA (Max Weber qualitative data analysis) software was utilized to facilitate the coding of each interview and the subsequent clustering of similar content into respective codes. Ultimately, the themes were successfully generated. This methodology facilitated the efficient evaluation and analysis of the interview.

Given that all interviewees were native German speakers, the interviewer, in consultation with his supervisor, opted to conduct the interviews in German. This decision was made on the premise that conducting interviews in the participants' mother tongue may yield higher quality outcomes, as both interviewer and interviewee are able to communicate more effectively. Therefore, the analysis was conducted in the German language as well. Upon completion of the analysis, the researcher selectively translated the primary segments and essential statements of the interviewees into English for inclusion in this master thesis.

#### **4.4 Interview Guideline**

All interviews started with the explanation of the topic and all relevant aspect with a special focus on newcomer adjustment. The interview started with an introduction and presentation of the interviewee and the interviewer as well as the topic. As a second step, the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality was explained. Thirdly, the interviewer explained the interview format, the approximate duration of the interview and how the interviewee can contact the interviewer at a later stage. Lastly the interviewer asked for permission to record the interviews.

During the interview the researcher asked all interviews as a minimum the questions stated in Table 2. Depending on the response the researcher asked sub questions to delve deeper into the initial response if the interviewee. The detailed interview guideline can be found in Appendix A. Since all interviews have been conducted in German, also the interview guideline is in German.

Table 2: Interview - Main Questions

Step 1 – Overview	Step 2 – Main Part	Step 3 – End of the Interview
Can you please briefly describe your experience during your onboarding so far?	Can you draw a line with the following axes (x. passage of time, y. satisfaction with your leaders support during onboarding). Please explain your high- and lowlights during your onboarding?	Is there anything else what you would like to add to the already mentioned points?
How long have you been in this role?	What exactly happened at those high- and lowlights?	Clarify any questions the interviewee may have.
Are you working remote, or in the office?	Did it impact your role clarity, self-efficacy, or social acceptance, if yes how?	Thank you for your participation and farewell.
	What actions could the leader have taken to improve the situation?	
	How should you have been supported?	

#### 4.5 Before the Interview

Before conducting the interviews, the following steps have been performed to provide an ideal preparation for all interviewees. As a first step, it was crucial to define who is the right group of interviewees and what characteristics they need to have. As mentioned, the researcher decided that young professionals starting a new or even their first employment is the ideal group for the interviews. After all, the interviewees had been selected, and the researcher sent an introduction with the mentioned graph to all interviewees to prepare them properly for the interview and give them an overview of the purpose of the interview. In addition, the interviewer also sent a document to address the terms of confidentiality to all interviewers. That documents had to be signed by all interviewees. Before the interview, the researcher explained, based on the confidentiality document, that neither their name nor their position will be stated in the master thesis. Also, the company's name will not be stated in the Master Thesis. If the document was not signed, they had to sign it the latest before the interview. Once the document was signed, the researcher explained the interview format and indicated no wrong answers. Additionally, the researcher also indicated the rough duration of the interview since this type can influence the participation of the interview. Lastly, it was essential to let all interviewees know how to contact the researcher later to see the results. All interviews have been recorded to ease the process of processing all interviews. Therefore, it was also essential to ask all interviewees for permission that the researcher was allowed to record. Only the audio was recorded and not the video. All interviewees agreed and accepted the audio recording of the interview.



## **4.6 The Interview itself**

First, a short introduction and explanation of the most relevant points of the interview were explained to give all interviewees a proper understanding of the research and ensure that all interviewees understood all unfamiliar terms discussed during the interview. However, the highest importance for the researcher was that all interviewees understand role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance since those three elements are the core elements of newcomer adjustment and the interviews. After the interviewees understood everything correctly, the researcher asked them again if they had any questions about the interview or about one of the described topics. After all the questions were answered, the interviewer started to record the interview. At the end of the interview, after all the questions from the interviewer had been asked, the interviewer asked all interviewees if they had anything else to add or if they had any questions about the interviewer or the following steps. The interviewer stopped the recording, and the interview was officially completed.

## **4.7 During the Interview**

During the interview, it was very important to keep the following elements in mind, which led to an improved overall outcome of the interviews. Additionally, considering those points decreased also the workload after the interviews had been conducted. Therefore, before each interview, the researcher tested the recording. Once the interview started, the researcher recorded with two devices to be double safe so that if one was not recording, the other recording worked properly. Staying neutral throughout the interview was also very important, which means that the researcher had to focus on not commenting or judging answers in a certain way. A better outcome was achieved with occasional nods of the head to encourage responses. Due to the recorded interviews, the researcher could focus 100% on the interviewee, so notes were not needed during the interview. During the interview, it is beneficial to pause regularly for a moment and transition between the major topics of the interview. Lastly, the researcher had to keep track of the interview and not lose control of the interview at any time. Considering and performing all these points allowed the researcher to successfully conduct all interviews in very high quality while maintaining knowledge and focusing on the right things.

## **4.8 Timeline Method**

For the detailed recording of process-related aspects, the timeline method, according to Wastian and Schneider (2007, p. 162f), was used during the interview as a supplement to the leading questions. Within the framework of the timeline method, the interview partners not only described their behavior verbally, but they also visualized the temporal course of events using a timeline diagram, which was used to validate and explore in greater depth the statements previously made in the free description during the interview.

Since the duration of newcomer adjustment can vary depending on experience and job characteristics, the time can vary from only a couple of months up to approximately 12 months

(SHRM, 2021). Therefore, it is often embedded in a larger temporal and social context, and the additional use of the timeline method offers several advantages (Wastian & Schneider, 2007, p. 162f). The visualization supports the memory of the interview partners and reduces the risk of digressing from the concrete description of the course of action into generalizing statements. Especially when describing complex situations with several participants or chronological sequences, there is otherwise the risk that interview partners will strongly condense the described contents narratively or switch from the description of the specifics of the individual situation to a rather abstract generalization. The orientation on a timeline has a structuring effect and, simultaneously, a narrative-generating effect regarding the description of concrete experiences since, parallel to the visualization, sufficient space is left for open narrative sequences. Through the specific focus on the sketches created by the interview partners an in-depth analysis of the processual character and other temporal aspects of the behavior of interest becomes possible. Finally, the timeline method opens up for the interviewer the possibility, if the interviewee digresses into less central details, to return the narrative flow to the research object by recourse to the outlined process, but without giving the interviewee the feeling that one is simply abruptly ending his narrative flow.

Figure 1 shows the template for the timeline diagram that the interviewees completed following the initial guided exploration of newcomer adjustment and the three central element's role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance. On the x-axis are the main events during the newcomer adjustment period, and on the y-axis is the level of satisfaction with the leader's support during the onboarding duration. Interviewees were asked to draw a line, respectively, a curve with all main events and their level of satisfaction from zero to ten from their first day at work until the interview was conducted. During the creation of the timeline diagram, the interviewees were repeatedly asked to explain the background to changes in the level of satisfaction and to describe the specific factors that had led to an increase or decrease in their level of satisfaction during the mentioned main events.



Figure 1: Template - Timeline Diagram

## **4.9 Analysis Methodology**

The goal of the evaluation process was a rule-guided condensation and reduction of the material collected in the interviews (Flick, 2007., p. 189). Following the selection of interview passages relevant to the current study issue, an inductive approach was utilized to discover and code how leaders supported newcomers during the onboarding process in both positive and negative ways.

According to Braun and Clark, theme analysis was utilized as the analysis method. The following measures, according to them (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 652), have been performed by the researcher: As a first step, it was critical to familiarize oneself with the collected data. The second step was to create the analysis codes. The third step was to look for the themes that were involved, and the fourth step was to choose and complete the themes, including the theme's name. Finally, the researcher was able to begin interpreting and analyzing the data.

Coding simplifies analysis by grouping all related data with similar meanings under the same code. This simplifies the examination and understanding of the interview results. It's also possible to have more than one code per answer, so answers can have numerous codes. Furthermore, subcodes can exist within codes. To facilitate the review and analysis of the interview results, the tool MAXQDA was used for this master thesis to code each interview, followed by grouping all related content into each of the codes and finally constructing the themes. This method was chosen to evaluate all interviews since it is a efficient and also easy to learn how to use the program MAXQDA and do the coding analysis.

### **4.9.1 The process of selecting situations that offer good or insufficient support**

After the transcription of the interviews, the first step was to identify those situations in which the interview partners described what they had experienced in their onboarding phase from their first day on the job until the moment the interview was conducted. To obtain a better overview of the entire interview material and the situations contained therein, a summary case description was first prepared for each situation during that the leader supported newcomers in a good way and also for those situations newcomers would have needed additional support from their leaders through content reduction and paraphrasing (Miles & Huberman, 1984, 322). Based on these case descriptions, the selection of situations was intensively analyzed to avoid possible individual bias. Only situations in which the leader supported or has not supported newcomers during the onboarding process have been selected for the analysis.

Subsequently, the text passages relevant to the research question of this master thesis were extracted from the interview transcripts and compiled in MAXQDA (Max Qualitative Data Analysis). Text passages regarding the support during the onboarding phase were considered relevant. To enable a quick assignment to the original data material, if necessary, the number of the interview and the situations with or without support, and the corresponding paragraph numbers of the interview transcript were documented for each extracted text.

#### **4.9.2 Coding of the text passages**

The content-related coding of how leaders supported respectively should support newcomers during the onboarding phase contained in the text passages was carried out in a first step as close as possible to the original text.

In this open form of content-based coding, an inductive approach was taken by using particularly distinctive aspects in the utterances of the interview partners for naming the codes without considering anything else (Corbin & Strauss, 1996). The coded units of analysis consisted of a few words, complete sentences, or sequences of sentences related to content. Each represented a common unit of meaning and referred to a characteristic in which the leader was or was not given support. If a text passage contained several different codes and or even subcodes, that passage was coded multiple times with all relevant codes involved in that particular text passage. This procedure aimed to avoid misinterpretations in the other evaluation process since even smaller units of analysis remained embedded in their respective context of meaning. In addition to the content-related coding, during the initial coding of the interview material, it was recorded for each unit of analysis whether the interviewees described the presence or absence of support from the leader.

## 5. Summary of the Results

During the interviews, all nine interviewees mentioned a variety of different factors that must be properly considered for the onboarding phase. Some of them were applicable to all interviews, and the factors changed slightly depending on the interviewee's experience and field of work. This will be highlighted in greater detail in the sections that follow.

As a rule, reaching a basic level of onboarding only sometimes necessitates a well-organized onboarding program with everything in place from the start. This is sometimes even worthwhile because the newcomer is only following the program and needs to begin to think critically about what the best way is truly. According to the interviews, this could be better because each individual will require a slightly different approach to onboarding. A well-developed onboarding program may be ideal for one person, but it may be entirely inappropriate for the next newcomer and not what they require to feel adequately treated. One significant finding from the qualitative research was that the first meeting with the leader should occur on the first day of the newcomer's new job, and then one regular meeting should occur every other week. Depending on the newcomer, every week may be necessary, and some more experienced newcomers may only require a monthly meeting with the leader.

During those meetings, it is critical to ask the newcomer how they are feeling and what has been done well and poorly up to this point. Furthermore, it is critical to discover in those meetings what should be improved and how it could be improved to achieve a better overall outcome in the next onboarding phase.

Regular meetings with the newcomer's leader will not only improve the relationship with the leader but will also help newcomers feel important and understand what the leader will expect from newcomers and until when. The overall outcome will be improved due to this direct communication with the leader.

In addition to the standard meeting, all interviewees emphasized the potential benefits of team events or similar activities during the initial weeks of employment. Such events would facilitate not only connections with the leader but also with the team and potentially even with other departments within the organization. An early event can facilitate initial networking opportunities for new employees, enabling them to comprehensively understand the organizational hierarchy and identify the relevant personnel to approach for specific matters during their onboarding process. Furthermore, these events are likely to influence the general degree of societal acceptance significantly. As per the interviewees, establishing connections with others during the initial phase of onboarding is deemed crucial and can contribute to a more positive experience.

Initiating training sessions, including on-the-job training, at the earliest possible stage is crucial in enhancing the overall onboarding process. This approach ensures that all new hires are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills, enabling them to utilize the required tools effectively. It may be advantageous to repeat certain training sessions or courses to achieve optimal results. Moreover, employing a uniform strategy may not yield optimal outcomes for this particular aspect. It is imperative for leaders to conduct routine meetings with newly arrived individuals to determine their specific support needs. Subsequently, leaders and newcomers can collaborate to identify the most suitable approach and requisite training programs, which can be modified or terminated to optimize their effectiveness.

The final aspect that was commonly cited by the interviewees pertained to the adverse effects of excessive demands during the initial stages of onboarding, which can significantly impede their overall experience and motivation. The leader must tailor their approach to each individual newcomer and assign an appropriate workload based on their experience level. Both insufficient and excessive actions can have negative consequences. Therefore, leaders must conduct regular sessions with new members to assess whether they are performing optimally or require modifications.

In the MAXQDA coding process, a total of 16 different codes were generated. Due to the researcher’s main focus on role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance, those three emblems have been selected as the themes. In total, a code was generated 367 times. In the following section, the results of each of the above-listed themes and codes will be presented, and the main points will be highlighted at the end of each section.

Next to that it must be considered that some codes can’t be assigned only to one theme, since they are valid for at least two of the three themes. Namely feedback and communication are especially very important to improve role clarity and self-efficacy. Moreover, feedback and communication can also have a positive effect to social acceptance. Therefore, feedback and communication is a generalized theme with an effect on the three other themes, role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance.

## 5.1 Feedback and Communication

As stated above, feedback and communication is a generalized theme, which can have an impact on all three other themes. Table 3 highlights the categories as well as an example statement of the codes.

Table 3: Theme 1 - Feedback and Communication

Category	Example Statement
<b>Feedback (35)</b> Leaders need to continuously give employees feedback.	I need more feedback from my leader, regardless of positive or negative. So far, I had always to ask the leader for feedback (Interview 3, 37)
<b>Communication (18)</b> Communication to and from the leader is one of the most important factors for a successful onboarding	Due to the very good communication and the structure of the onboarding process from the beginning I had a very good role clarity and a high self-efficacy (Interview 6, 24)

### 5.1.1 Feedback

The interviewees frequently mentioned the significance of feedback, particularly for individuals who are new to an organization. This underscores the significance of feedback within organizational contexts. Feedback was discussed 35 times in total by eight of the nine participants who were interviewed.

Frequently, there is a commitment to conduct feedback sessions with one's supervisor; however, it is not uncommon for such meetings to be rescheduled or canceled at the eleventh hour. Occasionally, there may be a need for more scheduled sessions, resulting in a dearth of feedback. Some of the interviewees precisely experienced that.

“The scheduled feedback sessions were ultimately implemented in a manner that deviated from the original plan. In certain cases, it may be advantageous to involve additional individuals in the feedback session and expand it to encompass the entire team” (Interview 1, 111–117).

Regular one-on-one feedback sessions with the leader would be particularly beneficial, especially during the initial weeks and months, as they provide an opportunity to discuss recent events and receive guidance for the future. The duration of said sessions may be a manageable amount of time, as a duration of approximately 20 minutes may suffice for certain topics.

“Implementing regular, brief sessions on a weekly basis at the beginning of a new job can be highly effective, even if they are of short duration. It is crucial that both parties are adequately prepared for the feedback session and have a clear understanding of the topics they wish to address. Scheduling regular check-ins is a crucial aspect that should always be prioritized. What is the status of progress on this project? What is the current status of this workflow? What is the status of the relationship with this individual? Moreover, to elevate it beyond mere operational performance towards a comprehensive, inter-organizational viewpoint, It would be beneficial to explore further the aspect of identifying deficiencies in one's role” (Interview 2, 28 – 44).

Such feedback on role effectiveness can provide valuable insights for leaders in leadership positions to enhance their performance and engage in self-reflection. “A more efficient strategy would involve the implementation of 360-degree feedback, which would involve engaging all individuals with an interface in the feedback process to achieve superior outcomes.” (Interview 2, 68).

The majority of interviewees reported that feedback was provided solely at their explicit request. Receiving feedback can be a challenging task in the absence of a proactive approach. Thus, effective communication holds significant importance and can enhance the feedback culture, as stated in Interview 3 (37 – 75).

Feedback meetings hold significant importance for both parties involved, as they provide a platform to identify and align individual and organizational expectations. Furthermore, it can be asserted that the absence of any misinterpretation between the involved parties can be established immediately. In addition to the feedback session conducted during the onboarding phase, it is recommended to schedule another feedback session at the conclusion of the probationary period. This session should aim to provide clarity on the achievements made, areas for improvement, and other pertinent factors depending on the specific process. The feedback sessions provide an opportunity for new members to perceive the company's commitment to self-improvement and acknowledgment of imperfections. As per Interview 4 (87), these sessions are equally beneficial for both newcomers and their leaders.

The proposed feedback round entails a brief meeting wherein each participant provides a succinct overview of their current progress and status. Consequently, there is a collective awareness of all current undertakings and the individuals who provide assistance, such as fellow team members (Interview 4, 105).

Out of all the interviewees, only one individual had the opportunity to engage in weekly feedback sessions with their leader. These sessions encompassed not only discussions regarding tasks but also addressed personal well-being and the overall experience of working within the team. The interviewee expressed a positive outlook toward the weekly meetings that were provided to discuss and enhance the overall situation (Interview 5, 9–51).

As per certain respondents, providing frequent feedback, with a frequency of twice a week, can yield a favorable influence on both self-efficacy and role clarity. In the absence of such sessions, it may be easier for newcomers to ascertain the level of contentment of the supervisor with their performance as well as identify areas that require improvement (Interview 6, 94). During the initial stages of employment, it can be challenging to ascertain whether one is performing their duties correctly. This lack of clarity may result in suboptimal performance, as the employee may be hesitant to exert their best efforts without a clear understanding of whether they are executing their tasks correctly. Additionally, there may be a sense of apprehension regarding the possibility of not performing tasks accurately. The quantity of feedback provided may vary significantly, necessitating the scheduling of regular feedback sessions to ensure optimal outcomes (Interview 7, 39).

### **5.1.2 Communication to and from the Leader**

The interviewees frequently brought up the importance of communication, particularly for new employees joining a new business. Eight of the nine people who participated in the interview mentioned communication a total of 17 times.

Almost every interviewee raised the issue of inadequate communication to and from the leader during the interviews. Some people have even claimed that communication is virtually nonexistent. Few people indicated that they had only one brief conversation or even none at all with their leader throughout the first few weeks. It is particularly difficult for newcomers to achieve a high degree of the three primary aspects of this thesis—self-efficacy, role clarity, and social acceptance—in the absence of communication between the leader and the workforce. This topic was raised throughout the respondents' discussions, and the majority of them expressed dissatisfaction with their leaders' communication skills. As a result, some of the interviewees had extremely low levels of at least one or even all three of the important components (self-efficacy, role clarity, and social acceptance).

There should be clear communication about the tasks and each employee's responsibilities, but even that is frequently not the case. For instance, during the interview, one of the interviewees said: "I had difficulties to determine what to do, how to do it, and when he needed to do it. If there was communication, it was more along the lines of "this is how you should finish it" as opposed to "this is what you need to do by when"" (e.g., Interview 1, 91).

One of the interviewees noted that her leader told her in the first week that she had to travel to the headquarters once a week, even though this was not discussed during the hiring process. This came as quite a shock to her and had a very negative effect on her overall level of satisfaction. In addition, she realized that the leader she met during the job interview had left the organization and that she



now had a new leader (Interview 2, 8). The communications could have been more effective in those two instances. She ought to have known about those developments earlier, so she could have been ready for them.

Another example of poor communication is how frequently leaders need to disclose to new hires the reason the person in that position departed the organization. One of the interview subjects did that. She needed to learn about the significant issue the company was having with one of her interfaces. The previous worker in that job quit for a similar reason—that interface. She was, therefore, extremely irritated that her leader had not informed her of the problem. If she had known that it's possible that she would not have taken the job at all. However, if she had agreed to it, she would have had time to prepare for it. Anyway, as a result of the inadequate communication, she ultimately quit the company (Interview 2, 24).

Additionally, it frequently occurs when a leader needs to communicate more effectively that multiple employees are performing the same job, which is obviously a waste of time. In fact, one of the respondents stated that due to inadequate communication, some people in the organization she works for are carrying out the exact same actions without realizing it (Interview 3, 79). Because of this, the interviewee's and those employees' levels of self-efficacy are likewise quite low, as is their understanding of their roles.

Clear communication is essential for success, especially when it comes to role clarity and self-efficacy. The level of role clarity and self-efficacy will be greatly enhanced with effective communication. During the interviews, the majority of the subjects brought it up. For instance, one interviewee stated that he thought it should be very straightforward with lots of clear communication, as well as that if the leaders took the time to explain tasks clearly and correctly, as well as what exactly the newcomer's role would be, the level would be greatly improved (Interview 7, 27).

## 5.2 Role Clarity

One of the primary objectives of this master's thesis was to investigate methods for enhancing the role clarity of newly hired employees during the onboarding process. Hence, the researcher emphasized exploring role clarity among the interviewees. Overall, the theme of role clarity was identified and quantified in the responses of all participants, with a cumulative frequency of 67 occurrences. Including the four codes, structure, improvement possibilities, feedback, and communication the theme was mentioned 147 times. Table 4 lists the three codes of the second theme as well as an example for each code.

Table 4: Theme 2 - Role Clarity

Category	Example Statement
<b>Role Clarity (67)</b> Leaders clearly communicate to newcomers the role and responsibilities.	The leader clearly communicated my role within the team, which was very helpful for me and all others to get a better understanding of the role clarity (Interview 1, 57)
<b>Structure (16)</b> Leaders structure the onboarding process efficiently with clear milestones and goals.	I would expect that milestones are set in the task and to achieve these milestones leaders should support accordingly (Interview 4, 81)
<b>Improvement possibilities (11)</b> Leaders should communicate responsibilities clear and to all people involved.	Responsibilities should be clearly communicated to all teammates accordingly to improve the overall level of role clarity (Interview 9, 42).

Establishing clear roles is crucial not only for the newly arrived individual but also for all other parties involved in the procedure. This implies that it is imperative to disseminate information regarding the responsibilities of the incoming employee to all other staff members. Additionally, it is crucial to communicate the start date of the newcomer and identify individuals who may need to make preparations or provide training to the incoming employee, among other pertinent details.

The interviewee expressed dissatisfaction with the need for more clarity regarding start date and department placement, which resulted in a suboptimal experience. The absence of the executives of the company was also noted on this particular day. Colleagues facilitated the departmental onboarding or induction process.

“The initial phase of my experience was challenging as there was a lack of clarity regarding my role, responsibilities, and overall situation. I needed help in determining my objectives, identifying the individuals I should assist, and comprehending the correct procedures for executing tasks. Although my new colleague attempted to provide guidance, their approach needed to align with the expectations of our leader. The lack of lucidity is evident, and it would have been preferable if this matter had been addressed during the initial stages of employment or if the department had been provided with clear directives” (Interview 1, 39 - 45).

According to Interviewee 1 (49), a beneficial approach for interviewees is to acquire on-the-job training with the guidance of a mentor. The mentor collaborates with the newcomer and provides direct demonstrations of effectively utilizing the program. Following a meeting with the team leader and a subsequent group meeting, there was an improvement in role clarity.

“As a result, I better understood my responsibilities and the expectations associated with my role. Furthermore, another interviewee mentioned that it is noteworthy that this aspect held significance for the remaining team members, as it facilitated their comprehension of my responsibilities” (Interview 1–57).

This statement suggests that effective communication regarding the expectations of new employees can lead to a better understanding of their role, resulting in a positive onboarding experience regarding role clarity.

“The situation became more intricate after receiving supplementary responsibilities and assuming a novel position. In such circumstances, it would have been imperative for the leader to provide support and instill an appropriate level of confidence. Typically, particularly in the initial stages, increased assistance and effective correspondence with the leader are necessary for comprehending my own responsibilities and executing them appropriately” (Interview 1, 81–91).

“In the initial month, we conducted multiple introductory sessions to facilitate acquaintance among all employees, wherein each individual had an opportunity to interact with one another. This was a highly informative exercise in comprehending the various roles, including one's own. The sessions were pre-scheduled at the outset and served as a pleasant and beneficial distraction from other assigned duties. It is also beneficial to have a mentor who can provide guidance and answer pertinent questions. Consequently, leaders should delegate certain responsibilities to those mentors” (Interview 2, 36-41).

Incorporating periodic consultations with the leader during the onboarding process is recommended to inquire about the status of the project, the individual's identity, and any assistance required. This approach ensures that all aspects are functioning smoothly and identifies areas where support and modifications may be necessary. According to Interview 2 (44), brief but frequent check-ins are crucial for maintaining role clarity.

Defining office days is a crucial factor in establishing role clarity. All individuals are expected to be present in the office during designated office days. In the future, it would be beneficial to have an initial meeting with the leader to discuss potential perspectives, including opportunities for professional development and prospects for alternative positions. According to Interview 2 (68), employees who possess the capability to switch roles within an organization are more inclined to remain as they are presented with a broader range of opportunities.

Effective communication of roles and responsibilities by the leader is crucial to prevent duplication of effort among colleagues. Consequently, it is necessary to arrange a meeting with the leader to establish precise boundaries for all individuals involved, ensuring that each person is aware of their respective responsibilities (Interview 3, 79–83).

### **5.2.1 Structure**

An organized strategy with a formal onboarding procedure would be excellent. Most interviewees had unfortunately not a structured onboarding process. Seven out of the nine interviewees mentioned structure during the interview, which was coded 16 times overall.

Some businesses have even begun with an organized onboarding process. However, one interviewee mentioned, for example, that it would have been preferable if the organization, or the leader, had properly planned the onboarding process before the newcomers joined. Some processes are extremely well documented, while others are not. For example, because all workers work remotely, it would have been beneficial to document how to contact other employees. A solution would have been to schedule and save all of those get to know each other sessions from the beginning (Interview 3, 59 - 67).

According to certain interviewees, it is particularly interesting that the beginning of the onboarding process is poorly structured (e.g., Interview 4, 7). It's also critical to offer everyone clear instructions, goals to achieve, and tasks to focus on. It is best to begin with studying the tools and then merely the functions without contributing anything of value to the organization and gradually increasing the pace. That strategy would have resulted next to an improved role clarity in increased self-efficacy as well as social acceptance (Interview 4, 95-99).

Approximately half of the interviewees stated that they had a difficult start since they were thrown into cold water without any training or adequate onboarding (e.g., Interview 5, 31). As previously stated, a planned and also slow start would have been the ideal option.

### **5.2.2 Improvement Possibilities**

Only five out of the nine interviewees made any mention of improvement possibilities. Eleven times in total, the code improvement possibilities were coded. Particularly at the start, within the first few days, there should be an introduction session, or briefing, on what has to be done and how the onboarding process would proceed (Interview 1, 45). Such a session would have been beneficial to gain more clarity, which would have increased self-efficacy and improved comprehension of one's own job. Another participant said:

“I wished the leader would allocate the correct responsibilities after taking his experience and ability into account” (Interview 6, 73). The majority of the improvement opportunities have already been considered in prior chapters and will eventually be addressed in the following sections.

### 5.3 Self-Efficacy

The second theme of this master thesis is self-efficacy, which was mentioned a total of 50 times during the interviews. Trust, workload, time, training, good support, insufficient support and missing support have been identified as codes under the theme self-efficacy. Including the eight codes, the theme was mentioned 166 times. Table 5 lists the eight codes of the third theme including an example statement per code.

Table 5: Theme 3 - Self-Efficacy

Category	Example Statement
<b>Self-Efficacy (50)</b> Leaders need to give employees the right tasks to the right time	The leader gave me a too complex task which was too early for me. I would have preferred to get easier and smaller tasks in the beginning (Interview 4, 48)
<b>Trust (9)</b> Leaders need to create an environment based on trust between leader and employees.	The leader should create an environment based on trust, which will impact positively the self-efficacy (Interview 2, 48).
<b>Workload (8)</b> Leaders need to consider when assigning a task also if the workload is appropriate for the newcomer.	The flood of topics that I have in my role beat me to death at the beginning. Over time, that got better (Interview 9, 55)
<b>Time (18)</b> Leaders need to schedule slots for employees to give them the chance to discuss certain topics.	More time with the leader would have been helpful because the leader was very involved in the business and didn't really have much time apart from that fist week on site (Interview 3, 63)
<b>Trainings (8)</b> Leaders need to support newcomers with the right trainings.	It is important to have certain trainings in the beginning e.g., product training, trainings regarding the structure and the requirement and many more (Interview 2, 56).
<b>Good Support (25)</b> Leaders need support newcomers in many different aspects. This code highlight's some of them.	In the first weeks my leader together with my mentor explained me very detailed the overall sales process, including all tools, how the tackle new project and many more (Interview 1, 49).
<b>Insufficient Support (25)</b> Often leaders lack in supporting newcomers in the right way.	For the preparation of a meeting with a customer and also during the meeting with the customer I have not received the support I would have needed to perform (Interview 6, 61)
<b>Additional Support (23)</b> Leaders need to try to support newcomers even more with e.g., documents or additional instructions.	As additional support a document with a clear description of all tools including functions and also all other tasks would have been helpful (Interview, 4, 53)

One of the interviewees mentioned: “Upon beginning my new role within the organization, the leader facilitated introductions to various personnel and elucidated the nature of our collaborative efforts. Additionally, the leader emphasized the significance of my role and expounded upon the tasks I would undertake this had a significant favorable influence on my self-efficacy” (Interview 1, 49).

Granting a newcomer increased responsibility and accompanying the newcomer to a client workshop can significantly enhance their self-efficacy. According to Interview 1 (65), individuals new to a particular field and lacking experience may greatly benefit from such opportunities as the described workshop. Providing proper guidance and leadership to newcomers in such circumstances to prevent them from feeling overwhelmed by their new situation or responsibilities, which could potentially result in negative consequences is very important. Consequently, the provision of assistance from the leader during such gatherings would be desirable. Particularly for newcomers, it has been observed that specific clients may not accord due regard to a professional who is relatively young and needs more support from the leader (Interview 1, 95).

The degree of trust among employees and their leaders is a significant factor that can greatly influence on the employee’s self-efficacy level, as stated in Interview 2 (20). In situations that are considered crucial, especially those that pertain to conflicts among employees, it is essential for the leader to take action and resolve the matter in a suitable and efficient manner. The occurrence took place during a minor dispute that quickly escalated but was ultimately resolved with the intervention of the leader. According to Interview 2 (36), there was a significant improvement in self-efficacy.

Occasionally, it is disheartening to observe that a newcomer must resort to escalation tactics in order to obtain the necessary assistance from leaders and that they become involved during the onboarding process (Interview 2, 36). In order to improve an individual's self-efficacy, it is crucial to acknowledge the proposition that adaptations are required for collaboration with particular individuals, that certain frameworks and procedures are still suboptimal in their functioning, and that this necessitates diligent monitoring (Interview 2, 60).

Inappropriate or excessively complex tasks can significantly undermine an individual's self-efficacy. “The task involved multiple individuals and various tools, which proved to be overwhelming for me, given my recent entry into the organization, resulting in a significant decrease in my self-efficacy” (Interview 4, 48).

The interviewee expressed a preference for receiving the task in smaller increments, accompanied by guidance from the leader, to effectively complete the task. “In addition to that, I was presented with a complex and arduous task that proved to be quite challenging for me. This was mainly due to my unfamiliarity with the tools utilized by the new organization. As such, I deemed it necessary to undergo further training, which should be facilitated by the leader. An optimal approach would have entailed the leader assigning me a less challenging task to acquaint myself with the tools rather than giving me the job in question” (Interview 4, 48).

The opportunity to consistently communicate with the leader and engage in discourse within their workspace can yield a favorable influence on one's self-efficacy according to Interviewee 5 (13). Enhancing self-efficacy can be facilitated by a leader who strategically plans and delegates tasks based on the employee's expertise and knowledge. Interviewee 6 (73) mentioned the following: “Leader's emphasis should be directed towards the individual's skills and abilities to enhance their overall contentment”.

One respondent expressed having minimal expectations, citing a common discrepancy between the job's portrayal during the interview process and the reality of the position upon commencing employment. This misalignment can lead to dissatisfaction and frustration when the job aligns differently from initial expectations. Consequently, the job description provided during the job interview should align as closely as possible with the actual job responsibilities (Interview 7, 35).

Assuming a specific responsibility and assuming sole ownership of a specific task can significantly enhance self-efficacy and garner recognition from colleagues, often resulting in positive feedback contingent upon successful task performance. Furthermore, it is advantageous to have adequate personal space while retaining the opportunity to communicate with one's supervisor in the event of any queries, thereby enhancing one's self-efficacy according to Interviewee 7 (81).

In the event of an abrupt termination of an employee without prior notification within an organization, effective communication should become even more important. "An incident occurred within our department wherein communication could have been more effectively conveyed, resulting in a challenging period for us as we needed clarification on our own job security. The adverse consequences of the situation had a significant impact our self-efficacy" (Interview 8, 33–34). However, the individual refrained from expressing their concerns due to apprehensions of potential termination. In such circumstances, effective communication regarding the incident and future course of action would have been very helpful.

### **5.3.1 Trust**

The concept of trust, specifically pertaining to the dynamic between a leader and a newcomer, was a topic of frequent discussion during the interviews. It was discovered that trust plays a significant role in the development of self-efficacy. Establishing a relationship that is founded on trust is a fundamental aspect. Trust was mentioned during the interviews nine times by four of the nine interviewees.

For individuals who are new to a particular environment, the opportunity to engage in unexpected activities can yield a highly favorable outcome. A respondent cited an instance where he was afforded the chance to accompany his superior to a client's premises for a workshop during the initial stages of onboarding.

"I participated in a prominent project in the United States, which was a significant achievement given me relative youth and limited professional background. Lastly, I was afforded the chance to accompany two leaders and several colleagues to a tradeshow in the United States" (Interview 1, 65-99). The aforementioned actions had a significant impact on the individual's self-efficacy and role clarity, resulting in heightened feelings of trust, satisfaction, and motivation.

Another participant in the interview asserted that it is the duty of the leader to establish a conducive atmosphere that fosters trust and psychological safety. Possessing this attribute ought to be deemed a fundamental skill set of an effective leader. According to Interview 2 (48), trust is a concept that may require a significant amount of time to develop and may also increase gradually over time.

### **5.3.2 Workload**

The interviewees brought up the topic of workload a few times, and they emphasized how important it is for new hires entering a new business to have the proper workload. Three out of the nine interviewees mentioned workload a total of eight times.

Both too little and too much will negatively affect self-efficacy. Regarding the proper workload, leaders must exercise extreme caution. Some interviewees stated that the initial workload was too heavy for them and that this had a detrimental effect on their self-efficacy. One interviewee stated:

“Instead of receiving the assignment all at once, I would have wanted to get it in manageable chunks, piece by piece. Because of that method, I was overwhelmed by the amount of effort and other factors involved in the endeavor at that early stage” (Interview 4, 61).

Another interviewee stated that although it had been intended for her to be solely responsible for one area, it later became clear that she was also responsible for additional areas, which was too much for her. This resulted in a very low level of self-efficacy in that situation, as well as a low level of role clarity (Interview 5, 43).

### **5.3.3 Time**

Time, specifically referring to the duration for which the leader is accessible for brief discussions or casual conversations, was frequently cited during the interviews. During the initial stage of onboarding, it is crucial for leaders to dedicate time to newcomers and address any inquiries, apprehensions, or other related matters. Time was mentioned a total of 18 times by four out of the nine interviewees.

Approximately 50% of the respondents have indicated that their leaders' constrained schedules have hindered their ability to discharge their leadership duties effectively. One of the interviewees reported: “My leader was unable to provide me with the necessary support due to being preoccupied with other responsibilities” (Interview 3, 63).

According to Interview 4 (61), participants expressed disappointment as they had to attend a customer meeting without the support of their leader, resulting in them feeling isolated and unsupported during the appointment. Therefore, it is evident that the level of self-efficacy has decreased. In particular, the availability of the leader could be improved, and therefore the quality and performance of the employees suffer.



### **5.3.4 Trainings**

The interviewers brought up training multiple times. Trainings are always vital for employees, but they are much more crucial for newbies who are learning new tools, jobs, and a variety of other things. Six of the nine respondents mentioned training a total of eight times.

To be productive and efficient at work, new hires starting a new position at another firm or even at their original employer may need specific training. For instance, one applicant noted that she would need additional product training.

“It would be best to work directly with the product rather than just at the office. To actually observe the production process would be beneficial. Therefore, additional practical instruction would be necessary to gain a deeper understanding and, subsequently, increase self-efficacy. Additionally, specific training for the demands of the structure, the requirements of the products, and many more depending on the organization and the products are required” (Interview 2, 52–56).

One interviewee mentioned: “Training is the least that leaders should do” (Interviews 4, 52).

### **5.3.5 Good Support**

Interviewees consistently emphasized the significance of effective support from leaders. Specifically, the findings suggest that support is particularly crucial for new employees navigating a novel organizational context. Good support was mentioned 25 times by all participants in the interviews. The subsequent paragraphs will delineate several statements from the interviewees regarding the support they receive from their leader and their corresponding expectations.

Providing adequate support, particularly during the initial days, is crucial to ensuring that a new member feels valued and experiences a sense of belonging from the outset. According to Interview 1 (49), during the initial days, one of the interviewees reported having multiple meetings with the team and the leader. These meetings were conducted to discuss the interviewee's assigned tasks and the necessary tools and to provide additional support to the newcomer. An additional noteworthy factor was observed when a newcomer with limited experience was given a chance to accompany the leader to a customer's location for a two-day workshop. The leader provided ample support to the newcomer during the workshop and demonstrated how to conduct such workshops independently in the future (Interview 1, 65).

Effective support during the onboarding process of new employees may be initiated prior to the commencement of their employment. One of the respondents reported receiving emails and invitations prior to commencing their new employment.

“A well-executed onboarding process should commence prior to the commencement of the new employee's role. It is imperative that pertinent information and invitations to events be communicated to the new entrant prior to the commencement of their engagement. Armed with the aforementioned information, a newcomer is better equipped to handle the demands of the newcomer's new role, thereby minimizing the likelihood of unexpected challenges” (Interview 2, 8).

During the interview, it was noted that an interviewee expressed surprise at the presence of a well-structured onboarding program within the company. This was due to the observation that many

companies lack such a program and that all necessary materials and resources are readily available for new hires (Interview 3, 24). The leader's assistance in facilitating communication with other team members was deemed satisfactory, as evidenced by Interview 3 (45).

Commencing with rudimentary duties and gradually augmenting the workload and intricacy is a prudent strategy, enabling the newcomer to acquire the requisite knowledge and skills (e.g., tools, procedures, etc.) in a low-pressure environment. One of the interviewees explicitly mentioned:

“As a result of the detailed job description and the job interview, I had a thorough understanding of the nature of the job from the start. Following that, I quickly got supported by a mentor who guided me through rudimentary tasks and gradually increased the tempo and complexity of subsequent assignments. I experienced a significant increase in efficiency and gained a significant amount of knowledge in a short period of time using this methodology” (Interview 6, 7).

Another effective strategy for providing adequate support is to ensure availability for inquiries. During the interview, interviewee 9 (10) reported: “My team members and my leader were consistently accessible for brief discussions and during such interactions, I received valuable support from both my peers and my leader”.

### **5.3.6 Insufficient Support**

Insufficient support from the leader was identified as a crucial factor during the interviews, specifically in relation to the lack of support from the leader. Insufficient support is particularly critically and can hinder the development of newcomers and was mentioned a total of 25 times by all nine participants during the interviews.

The significance of support is amplified when a newcomer is assigned supplementary and intricate tasks. During the transitional period, it is imperative for the leader to provide additional support to ensure a seamless transition. One respondent reported that he would assume additional responsibilities in the future. The lack of appropriate support for the newcomer resulted in struggle and sense of isolation, leading to a significant decrease in their level of satisfaction (Interview 1, 81). This finding suggests that inadequate or absent support can impact both role clarity and self-efficacy.

Frequently, newcomers need more support, particularly during the initial weeks of their tenure. Typically, leaders are expected to designate a mentor to oversee the onboarding process. However, new hires would greatly benefit from direct communication and support from their leader during the initial days and weeks of their employment. The majority of interviewees reported that the leader's availability could have been more active during the initial days.

“During the initial month, the leader was conspicuously absent. A mentor was assigned to me, and regrettably, I was only able to engage in discussions with the designated mentor as opposed to my supervisor. The aforementioned circumstance had a discernible adverse effect on my self-efficacy. This is attributable to the fact that I was not afforded the opportunity to establish a fundamental level of trust with the leader, which holds significant importance for me”, as indicated in Interview 2 (16 – 20).

Frequently, it is the case that individuals in positions of leadership need more competencies to guide and manage others effectively. This topic was also addressed during the interviews. An interviewee

reported receiving minimal support, attributing this to the inadequate leadership competencies of her superiors and their lack of understanding regarding the responsibilities of a leader (Interview 3, 41). The interviewee faced significant challenges in the absence of support, as she had to acquire knowledge independently and seek guidance from fellow employees within the organization. In Interview 3 (51), it was noted that the onboarding process needed to be improved, leaving the individual with a limited timeframe to become productive, as they were expected to do so within a week.

An effective leader is capable of assigning appropriate tasks at the appropriate time. Regrettably, this scenario frequently occurs when newcomers are compelled to commence their journey with exceedingly arduous and intricate undertakings. A similar occurrence was reported by several interviewees, with one individual recounting the following statement:

“The initial assignment was not appropriately determined as it encompassed a multitude of diverse programs that were beyond my proficiency level. Furthermore, the task was protracted in nature. Additionally, due to the lack of support from my supervisor in resolving the assigned task, my levels of satisfaction, role clarity, and self-efficacy were negatively impacted.”

Typically, the preferred approach would involve commencing a relatively straightforward and manageable task while receiving guidance from the supervisor. However, regrettably, the opposite scenario was encountered, as indicated in Interview 4 (48).

A significant number of employees, regardless of their tenure in a company, may need more support and autonomy in their work. Leaders, as a general rule, are required to exhibit greater agility and responsiveness in their decision-making processes. According to Interview 4 (91), employees frequently encounter situations where they must make decisions independently without the opportunity to consult with their superiors to confirm the optimal course of action.

As previously indicated, time is a crucial factor contributing to leaders' inadequate support of their employees, as they frequently face time constraints and misplaced priorities. During the course of the interviews, one respondent reported a negative experience with a customer meeting. Specifically, the individual cited a need for more professional support and preparation from their leader as the primary reason for the meeting's poor outcome. An optimal scenario would have entailed the leader being afforded the opportunity and capacity to accompany the individual to their initial client encounter (Interview 5, 61).

Certain leaders need more concern regarding the ongoing onboarding process of a new member. During interview 7 (9) the interviewee mentioned: “I had to wait for a period of approximately one and a half weeks before being granted a brief ten-minute audience with my leader”.

Frequently, onboarding procedures are established. However, regrettably, their execution is suboptimal. Commonly, individuals acquire knowledge and skills through practical experience rather than following a comprehensive and meticulously organized onboarding process. Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of all departments may be lacking due to the absence of opportunities to gain insight into other departments (Interview 9, 8–21).

### 5.3.7 Additional Support

The provision of additional support, specifically in the form of guidance from the supervisor, constituted a crucial element in the interview process. The provision of support is of utmost importance, particularly for individuals who are new to a given context, as it plays a crucial role in facilitating their growth and progress. Seven of the nine interviewees mentioned additional support during the interviews a total of 23 times.

Frequently, employees, particularly those who are new to the organization, require additional support from their leaders. It is imperative for leaders to provide the necessary support during these instances. However, this is not frequently observed. “Frequently, transparent, and truthful communication has the potential to resolve numerous issues and alleviate the burden on both the leader and employees. Hence, particularly in intra-team and inter-team communication, supplementary assistance from the leader can prove advantageous” (Interview 2, 24).

Regrettably, obtaining supplementary assistance may require escalation before it is granted. One of the respondents reported that this phenomenon occurred even more frequently following her resignation from the position. Subsequently, the leader made every effort to provide support and assistance to the individual in question in an attempt to dissuade her from departing.

“There was a notable enhancement in my role comprehension and self-assurance, which consequently led to an amelioration in the overall team dynamics compared to the previous state” (Interview 2, 36).

Regrettably, the requisite assistance from the leader was belated, and as a result, the interviewee had already resolved to embark on a fresh chapter with a different organization. This statement highlights the significance of employee support and underscores the criticality of timely support. If the support is provided belatedly, it is possible that the employee may have already departed.

A mentor or buddy system can serve as a valuable tool for providing supplementary assistance. As per the accounts of certain interviewees, the presence of a companion or guide would have proven to be highly advantageous, given that their superiors are often inaccessible. This sentiment was expressed by Interviewee 3 (32).

The majority of the interviewees expressed a desire for increased support in the realm of communication. This is due to the fact that there is a discernible impact when a leader communicates a task to an employee at the same level. Consequently, it is imperative for leaders to provide increased support to their employees in facilitating effective communication within their team as well as with other teams and departments. It is recommended that each company provide a comprehensive document outlining all processes and tool functionalities to facilitate the onboarding experience for new employees. This was emphasized in Interview 4 (63), where it was suggested that such a document should be considered a basic requirement.

## 5.4 Social Acceptance

The fourth and last theme of this master thesis is social acceptance with its code's events and overview, the theme was mentioned a total of 54 times. Table 6 lists the three codes as well as an example statement for each code.

Table 6: Theme 4 - Social Acceptance

Category	Example Statement
<b>Social Acceptance (41)</b> Leaders need to socially integrate the newcomers into the team and the organization.	We had with all employees together with the leader a coffee break to get in touch and to have a first conversation, which was very helpful for my social acceptance (Interview 8, 46).
<b>Events (6)</b> Leaders need to schedule and be part of events to foster team spirit and that all employees have the possibility to get in touch with each other	In the first week we had a team event at the headquarter to get in touch with all employees in a casual atmosphere followed by drinks (Interview 4, 23).
<b>Overview (7)</b> Leaders need to give employees early on a good overview, which could be done during a company or team session to present that.	At the beginning we had an onboarding week during which we received a very good overview of all tools, processes, company structure and many more (Interview 3, 8).

Regarding social acceptance, it may be crucial for individuals to comprehend responsibilities in order to acknowledge your presence. Insufficient knowledge among colleagues regarding the activities of a new member may result in a suboptimal level of social integration. An illustrative instance was presented during one of the interviews. The newly arrived team member was assigned a task, which was effectively communicated to all team members. Consequently, the team was aware of the newcomer's responsibilities and the potential contributions they could make. As a result, the newcomer was socially integrated into the team at an early stage (Interview 1, 77).

According to the interviews, scheduling regular sessions for team members to get to know each other and ideally including the organization or all individuals who have a certain interface with the newcomer is a crucial factor in enhancing social acceptance. One of the participants in the master thesis reported that the team in which she is working engaged in a series of routine sessions aimed at fostering interpersonal familiarity, each of which spanned a minimum of 20 minutes and extended over a period of one month. The pre-arranged meetings were duly incorporated into the calendar, rendering them a valuable asset and a pleasant deviation from routine tasks. Which resulted into an improved social acceptance. This led to a significant increase in social acceptance on both sides (Interview 2, 8). Another interviewee reported:

"A larger introductory session was organized during the initial days to facilitate team bonding and acquaintanceship among the leaders of all departments. This initial encounter proved to be highly

beneficial, as it provided an opportunity for an initial interaction with the company. Moreover, the company's gracious invitation for drinks following the session served to enhance the overall experience. The availability of an informal gathering with beverages during the initial phase proved advantageous in terms of social acceptance, as the attendees were primarily concerned with the individual rather than professional subjects" (Interview 3, 8).

Social acceptance is more readily attained when working with individuals who possess a high degree of open-mindedness. "This was precisely the scenario during my onboarding process, which facilitated a smoother onboarding experience. As a result, I experienced a heightened sense of social acceptance, leading to improved well-being and performance" (Interview 3, 45).

To enhance social acceptance, it would be advantageous to expand the scope of discussions beyond business-related topics. This would entail leaders engaging in frequent conversations about non-business-related subjects to establish a stronger rapport with employees and ultimately achieve greater social acceptance (Interview 3, 99).

It is advisable for leaders to proactively facilitate the introduction of new employees prior to their commencement of employment. As per Interviewees 5 (9), it was deemed advantageous to engage in a post-interview acquaintance session with both prospective colleagues and organizational leaders, wherein the office premises were also presented.

According to Interview 6 (24), the interviewee experienced a high level of social acceptance upon joining the company, which was attributed to the fact that the company extended a direct invitation for onboarding days at their headquarters and planned for travel and accommodations, including a high-quality hotel. Additionally, the interviewee noted that the company's consideration of its vegan diet was particularly significant for the social acceptance.

Following a personal misfortune that befell one of the interviewees in their personal life, the leader exhibited a considerable amount of empathy and compassion. The leader alleviated some of the pressure by relieving the interviewee of certain responsibilities. According to Interview 6 (41), at a certain stage of the interview process, the interviewee experienced a sense of social acceptance from their leader, which resulted in a positive emotional response. The interviewee also reported feeling supported and not experiencing any performance-related pressure.

Occasionally, a scenario may arise where a sizable cohort of individuals initiate a new endeavor simultaneously, resulting in potential challenges for certain members of the group. During the interview, it was noted that the interviewee began their career in an organization with a highly structured hierarchy. Specifically, they were hired as managers, while other new hires were brought on as senior consultants, a position one level below that of managers. As a result of varying proficiency levels, the individual encountered challenges in establishing connections with other individuals who were also new to the setting. It was anticipated that the leader would intervene and address the situation in order to facilitate social acceptance. In this scenario, it is suggested that the interviewee would have benefited from participating in supplementary team sessions or an event aimed at fostering rapport between themselves as a manager and the other senior consultants (Interview 7, 51–55).

An effective approach to fostering connections among team members, including the leader, is to provide a communal space, such as a break room equipped with a tabletop soccer game or a similar activity. This strategy is particularly advantageous in situations where employees may feel hesitant to approach their leader. In such cases, the leader can take the initiative to engage with their team by inviting them to participate in a friendly game, thereby facilitating interpersonal connections.

Taking such a hiatus would have a favorable influence on the collective societal reception and foster strong group synergy. The participation of the leader in the activity holds significance, as the absence of the leader may lead to the perception among employees that they are prohibited from engaging in the activity or that it may have adverse effects on them (Interviewee 7, 93–97).

One of the respondents claimed that their employer respectively its leaders engages in a wide range of activities, and as a result of their successful implementation, it was relatively simple to gain social acceptance quickly. The aforementioned entities are: Initially, there were numerous team-based events and sports activities. The team convenes on a monthly basis for a collective event, while every quarter of the year, a comprehensive consulting event is held. Additionally, a semi-annual gathering is organized for the entirety of the Austrian team. Next to that, the organization provides a variety of physical activities, such as soccer, beach volleyball, and running sessions, among others, to cater to individual preferences. Participants have the opportunity to engage in one or more activities (Interview 7, 97). This was only possible due to the intervention of the leaders to support their employees in the best way possible.

An additional measure of social acceptance was observed in one of the interviewees' consistent abilities to pose inquiries and receive prompt responses. The interviewee reported feeling socially accepted during the interview and did not express any concerns regarding potential negative impacts (Interview 8, 46).

One of the interviewees experienced a notable moment at the beginning of the new job. The leader was currently operating remotely, approximately five hours away from the office. On the first day of a new employee's arrival, the leader made an effort to travel from Vienna to the office to meet the newcomer in person. The newcomer felt appreciated by their leader as a result of this gesture (Interview 9, 25–26).

According to the interviews, an important consideration for a leader to achieve a high level of social acceptance is to promptly organize a team event or similar activity following the arrival of a new team member. This holds particular significance for individuals who are newly introduced to remote work, as the opportunity to engage in face-to-face communication with their colleagues can be highly advantageous (Interview 4, 23). It is particularly advantageous for new members if the upper echelon of management is present on such occasions, affording them the opportunity to engage in an initial conversation and establish a connection without delay. The positive sentiments expressed in interviews 6 (9) show that newcomers highly value the involvement of senior management. An additional option is to arrange periodic introductory meetings with various members of the team.

The limited amount of time available to build relationships with new members is a significant challenge for leaders in terms of social acceptance. Consequently, newcomers may need help in establishing contact with leaders, hindering their ability to feel socially accepted. This issue is reciprocal, as leaders may also need help to establish connections with newcomers. Consequently, it holds great significance for leaders to engage in interactions with new members and discuss matters pertaining to the business domain (e.g., Interviews 6, 29–37).

### **5.4.1 Events**

Although the researcher did not initially prioritize the code events, it was discovered that these events hold significant importance, particularly for individuals who are new to an organization. Six of the nine interviewees mentioned events seven times.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become increasingly prevalent for employees to work remotely, with some even working remotely 100% of the time. As per one of the interviewees: “It is beneficial to allocate specific office hours and days. During the designated days or time slots, it is expected that employees will be physically present in the office. This will promote a sense of camaraderie and enhance cohesion among team members. In addition, it is beneficial for the organizational culture to arrange periodic meetings, preferably accompanied by team-building activities” (Interview 2, 68).

According to Interview 4, it is beneficial for fully remote employees to have the opportunity to interact with their colleagues in person rather than solely communicating through digital means. Moreover, it is essential to arrange teambuilding activities and plan initiatives aimed at enhancing collective collaboration (Interview 6, 94). It is recommended that leaders incorporate activities such as social gatherings and strategic planning sessions into their schedules. On such an occasion, it would be appropriate to provide an overview of the present circumstances and the subsequent measures to be taken with respect to human resources, projects, and other pertinent matters, with the aim of keeping the workforce apprised.

### **5.4.2 Overview**

Only two out of the nine participants cited overview as a minor topic during the interviews. Those two cited overview six times. The main takeaway from these conversations with the interviewees was that it would be crucial to acquire a thorough initial review of the work and its obligations, particularly in the first few days or even earlier in the interview. In one instance, to be more specific, a feedback session with the leader regarding one's own performance was not the researcher's primary emphasis; yet it turned out that the interviewees frequently brought up feedback and that it is crucial, particularly for newbies joining a new company. In total, eight of the nine respondents coded the code 35 times.

“It is beneficial to plan an onboarding day, or an onboarding week, in order to obtain such an overview. The newbie has the chance to get to know everyone during that week and also get a glimpse of how things work, etc.” (Interviews 3, 8).



## 6. Discussion

Finding new, qualified employees is proving to be difficult for businesses. As a result, finding new employees is getting harder and harder. Many times, onboarding could be done more effectively, which is why many employees quit their jobs within the first few months. An important stage that ushers in a new chapter in an employee's life is employee onboarding. For new hires, the initial onboarding process is special and crucial. Companies are working to enhance their onboarding procedures, but it can be very challenging to figure out what is needed and how it should be done. Recent college graduates are one of the groups that is especially very vulnerable because they typically need to gain experience when it comes to onboarding and starting a new job at another or even their first company. It is essential to have a strong onboarding procedure in place for this group in particular so that those people feel supported right away (Klemme Larson & Bell, 2013, p. 286).

Ineffective newcomer adjustment and the need for more leadership support during the adjustment process are two of the main factors that contribute to many new employees leaving their jobs after only a few months (Klemme Larson & Bell, 2013, p. 287). Organizations and individuals are both impacted by the adjustment of newcomers. Young adults who have recently graduated from college may experience difficulties adjusting, which may impede their professional and personal development (Ng & Feldman, 2007, p. 115f). They might start to question their commitment to the company and job satisfaction, perform less well at work, and ultimately quit their job soon after (Holton, 1995, p. 65). An organization's growth and profitability can be hampered by financial costs such as lower productivity, rehiring, and retraining due to disgruntled new hires or losing fresh workers to turnover (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000, p. 336f).

As it includes the duties and activities a leader should carry out during the onboarding process, leadership is a crucial component in facilitating a high-quality onboarding experience (Pratiwi et al., 2018, p. 603). Therefore, it is crucial to understand and be aware of how leaders can support newcomers throughout the onboarding process as well as what impact they have on newcomer adjustment during the process. Therefore, the main topic of this master's thesis is how leaders can help newcomers as they adjust. The analysis will focus on how to raise the levels of the following three crucial components: role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance.

As per the statements of the interviewees, leaders must take into account various crucial factors while devising an onboarding procedure for new members to guarantee a superior degree of social clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance.

During the onboarding process, it is imperative for leaders to establish unambiguous expectations and objectives for newly arrived individuals. Effective leaders facilitate the process of onboarding by imparting a comprehensive understanding of the tasks and duties through unambiguous communication of the organization's expectations and specific role responsibilities. The provision of clear and unambiguous guidelines facilitates the establishment of unambiguous role definitions right from the outset, thereby enabling new entrants to align their actions and endeavors accordingly.

The establishment of a hospitable and all-encompassing atmosphere is imperative to promoting social acceptance. It is imperative for leaders to foster an environment that promotes inclusivity, supportiveness, and hospitality within their teams. Facilitating a constructive work environment is a means by which leaders can promote the assimilation of new team members. Establishing mentorship or buddy initiatives can prove highly advantageous as they offer new members a designated liaison who can furnish them with direction and assistance.

The development of a well-organized onboarding program is of utmost importance. The program ought to encompass significant details pertaining to the organization, including its values and culture. The training program ought to encompass comprehensive instruction on job-related duties, procedures, and technological infrastructure. An effectively structured onboarding initiative imparts not only essential information but also facilitates new hires' ability to pose inquiries, solicit elucidation, and acquire a more comprehensive comprehension of their novel responsibilities.

An additional advantageous measure involves designating a specialized mentor or supervisor for newly arrived individuals. Mentors or supervisors have the capacity to offer guidance, assistance, and constructive criticism. Experienced colleagues have the ability to support individuals who are new to the workplace in navigating the intricacies of social dynamics. Additionally, they can offer continuous support and tackle any issues or obstacles that may arise. The provision of support facilitates the process of social integration and cultivates a feeling of inclusion among individuals who are new to a particular community.

Effective communication is a crucial factor in establishing robust relationships and delineating responsibilities. It is imperative for leaders to cultivate a culture of open communication that encourages newcomers to inquire freely, express their thoughts, and solicit feedback. By encouraging approachability and openness among team members toward the ideas and perspectives of newcomers, it is possible to foster an environment that values and respects the contributions of all team members.

Facilitating avenues for skill enhancement is crucial to augmenting the self-efficacy of individuals who have recently arrived. It is recommended that leaders offer training sessions, workshops, or assignments to facilitate the development of skills and bolster the confidence of new members. Leaders exhibit a strong dedication to the professional advancement of new members and foster their self-confidence by investing in their progress.

In the process of onboarding, it is of the utmost importance to furnish constructive feedback consistently. It is imperative for leaders to furnish feedback to newcomers, acknowledging their competencies and presenting recommendations for enhancement. Providing positive reinforcement and guidance is instrumental in fostering the development of self-efficacy and a lucid comprehension of roles and expectations among newcomers.

Establishing achievable objectives and significant markers provides newcomers with a sense of direction and purpose. By setting unambiguous goals, leaders facilitate the ability of new members to monitor their advancement and acknowledge their achievements. This enhances their belief in their ability to perform tasks effectively and provides a clear understanding of their responsibilities within the organizational structure.

Sustained assistance and periodic follow-ups are beneficial for the enduring achievement of individuals who are new to a particular context. It is advantageous for leaders to uphold consistent communication and conduct regular check-ins to effectively tackle any concerns, extend support, and sustain continuous support. This exemplifies the leader's commitment to the assimilation and development of new members within the institution.

Leaders can develop an onboarding process that promotes a strong sense of role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance among new employees by considering these factors and implementing them effectively. This onboarding procedure facilitates the effective assimilation of new employees into the organization, thereby establishing a foundation for their future productivity and advancement. Figure 2 highlights the support factor leaders should consider improving role clarity, self-efficacy,

and social acceptance. Next to the mentioned factors, feedback and communication are applicable and very important for all three elements of newcomer adjustment to improve the overall onboarding phase as well as the newcomer adjustment process.

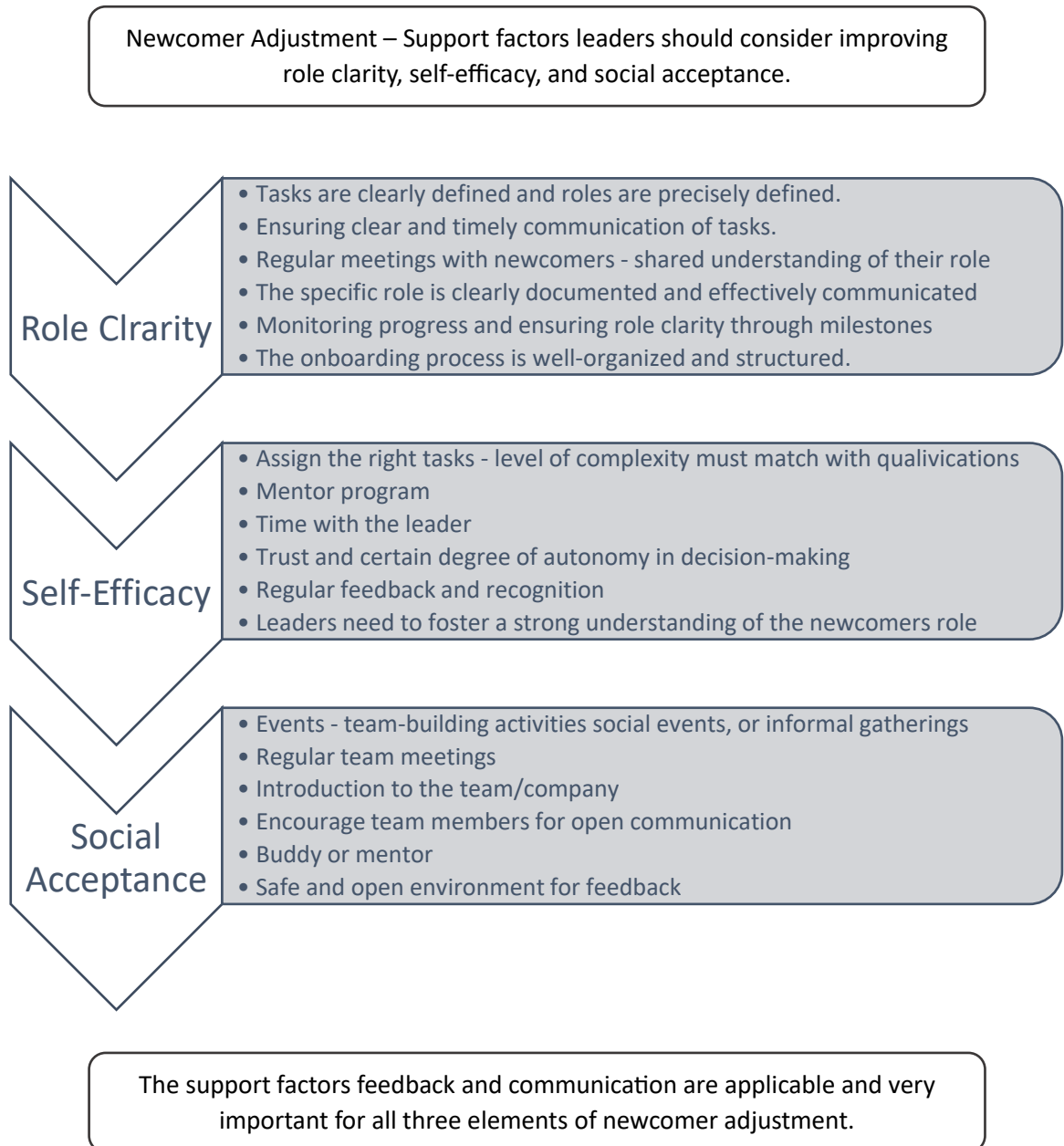


Figure 2: Main parameters to support newcomers during onboarding

Based on the interview findings there is a clear correlation between role-clarity and self-efficacy. Those two often go hand in hand. Improving the one had in many interviews also a very positive impact to the other and vice versa. Contrary to that social acceptance was not really affected by the other two. Therefore, it was possible to have a very high role clarity and or a very high self-efficacy but a very low social acceptance. In other words, none of the interviewees had a very high role clarity and a very low self-efficacy. Those two were typically on a very similar level.

## **6.1 Contribution to Research**

The present master's thesis makes a substantial contribution to the comprehension of the leadership's function in facilitating the effective assimilation and adaptation of new members in organizational settings. The thesis addresses a significant void in the current body of literature by focusing on the influence of leadership on the process of newcomer adjustment. Although extensive research has been carried out on the topics of onboarding and newcomer adjustment, the contribution of leadership in this process is only sometimes explicitly acknowledged. This thesis elucidates the pivotal function that leaders assume in facilitating the adaptation of newly arrived individuals by scrutinizing the precise tactics and assistance mechanisms that leaders can implement throughout the onboarding phase.

This master thesis contributes to the academic field by examining the influence of leadership on crucial elements of newcomer adaptation, including but not limited to role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance. The aforementioned factors exert a noteworthy influence on the process of newcomers' adjustment to their assigned responsibilities, development of self-assurance in their competencies, and assimilation into the social milieu of the organization. The Master Thesis offers pragmatic perspectives for leaders to establish a conducive onboarding process that nurtures the favorable adaptation of newcomers by comprehending how leadership can amplify these elements.

Moreover, the thesis presents valuable suggestions and tactics for leaders to support new employees throughout the onboarding phase to enhance the level of role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance among new members by pinpointing particular actions and behaviors that leaders can demonstrate. This guidance is particularly advantageous for individuals in leadership positions responsible for overseeing the onboarding and assimilation of newcomers into their respective teams and establishments.

Furthermore, the conclusions and suggestions presented in the master thesis hold practical significance for enterprises striving to enhance their onboarding procedures. The implementation of a successful onboarding process results in elevated levels of employee contentment, involvement, and tenure, thereby contributing to the overall performance and prosperity of the organization. The thesis elucidates the significance of leadership in the onboarding process for organizations and proposes empirically supported tactics to enhance the onboarding experience of new employees, leading to more efficacious integration and adaptation.

Furthermore, the thesis contributes to the existing literature on leadership, onboarding, and newcomer adjustment, thereby providing advantages to the wider academic and research community. This Master Thesis conducts a comprehensive analysis of the correlation between leadership and newcomer adjustment, enhancing theoretical comprehension and establishing a foundation for forthcoming research in this domain.

In general, the master thesis constitutes a significant addition to the discipline by underscoring the influence of leadership on the assimilation of new members and furnishing pragmatic perspectives for leaders and institutions. This master thesis addresses a previously unexplored area of research, offering concrete tactics for supporting individuals who are new to an organization. Furthermore, the findings of this master thesis have potential implications for enhancing the effectiveness of organizational onboarding processes. This thesis makes a significant contribution to facilitating the successful integration and adaptation of newly arrived individuals in the workplace. It achieves this by advancing theoretical knowledge and offering practical guidance, which is beneficial for both the individuals and the organizations involved.

## 6.2 Limitations of this Master Thesis

The extrapolation of results to a larger population can be a challenging task in qualitative research due to its exploratory and open-ended nature. Furthermore, due to the utilization of limited sample sizes in qualitative research, the identification of patterns and trends may require a considerable amount of time.

One of the limitations of qualitative research is its susceptibility to subjectivity, whereby the researcher's biases and interpretations may influence the data collection and analysis processes. Moreover, as data is often acquired through semi-structured interviews, it can take time to ascertain the accuracy and reliability of the gathered information. Qualitative research is often characterized by extensive interviews, observations, or the analysis of substantial amounts of textual or audio data, which can result in a significant investment of time and resources. An additional constraint pertains to the geographical scope of the master thesis, as the interviews are restricted to a specific locale, thereby potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to other regions. In the realm of qualitative research, the evaluation of the dependability and credibility of the research outcomes may require a considerable amount of time.

A notable constraint was the limited availability and accessibility of pertinent literature and research pertaining to the particular subject matter. Although there exists a substantial body of literature on the topics of leadership, onboarding, and newcomer adjustment, the precise intersection of these factors may need more scholarly attention. The task of identifying comprehensive and current sources that directly pertain to the research questions and establishing a strong basis for the thesis was challenging.

An additional constraint is that the results lack generalizability. The context, culture, and leadership philosophies that are particular to each organization may have an impact on the efficacy of newcomer support strategies. In order to enhance the relevance and significance of the results within a particular setting, it is advisable for the investigator to limit their scope to a particular sector, enterprise, or leadership style. This limitation is evident and warrants further investigation in future research pertaining to this subject matter.

In addition, the utilization of self-reported measures in research may introduce biases and limitations due to their subjective nature. The evaluation of role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance relies on individual perceptions and self-assessments, which may be susceptible to the influence of personal biases or social desirability. To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, it would have been advisable for the researchers to employ multiple data sources or objective measures.

Furthermore, the temporal constraints of a master's thesis served as a limiting factor, thereby restricting the capacity to capture the enduring impacts of leadership on the acclimation of new members. The process of onboarding is a time-consuming endeavor, and the potential impact of leadership support may have enduring effects that extend beyond the initial onboarding phase. Further research should include longitudinal studies or extended follow-up periods to obtain a more comprehensive comprehension of the influence of leadership on the adjustment of newcomers.

Notwithstanding the potential hazards and constraints, a study examining the influence of leadership on the assimilation of new members and tactics for facilitating their integration into the organization can furnish significant perspectives and augment the existing scholarship. By acknowledging and addressing limitations in research design, data collection, and analysis, the

researcher can enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. This, in turn, can provide practical recommendations for leaders and organizations aiming to improve the onboarding experience and facilitate the successful adjustment of newcomers.

### **6.3 Future Research Implications**

The present master thesis investigated the impact of leadership on the adjustment of newcomers during the onboarding process. Specifically, the research aimed to explore the ways in which leaders can provide support to newcomers in order to enhance their role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance. The focus of this master's thesis was to shed light on the relationship between leadership and newcomer adjustment and identify effective strategies that leaders can employ to facilitate the onboarding process. This presents several potential avenues for future investigation within the realm of organizational behavior and leadership. The discoveries and ramifications of this Master Thesis offer significant perspectives while also stimulating additional inquiry.

Subsequent studies may investigate the enduring impacts of leadership on the acclimation of newly arrived individuals. The present thesis centers on the onboarding process; however, it would be of academic interest to explore the impact of leadership behaviors and support on new employees beyond the initial period of newcomer adjustment. Conducting longitudinal studies that track the evolution and advancement of newcomers over a period of time would yield a more comprehensive comprehension of the enduring effects of leadership on their adaptation.

The central theme of the thesis is centered on the influence of leadership on the process of newcomer adjustment within a comprehensive organizational framework. Prospective investigations may delve into the impact of contextual variables such as organizational magnitude (small versus large, public versus private) or industry-specific attributes on the correlation between leadership and newcomer adjustment. A comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics can be attained by analyzing these contextual nuances.

Although the thesis acknowledges the significance of leadership support, it refrains from delving into the specifics of leadership styles or methodologies. Prospective studies could examine the impact of diverse leadership approaches, such as transformational, transactional, or servant leadership, and many more leadership styles, on the process of newcomer adjustment. Additionally, a study aimed at examining the efficacy of diverse leadership strategies, including mentoring, coaching, and role modeling, in fostering role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance in the context of onboarding could enhance our comprehension of successful leadership methodologies.

The central focus of the thesis is primarily on the influence of leadership on the process of newcomer adjustment and how leaders can support newcomers during the onboarding process, with no consideration given to potential cultural variations. Subsequent studies may explore the impact of cultural variables on the efficacy of leadership support in the context of onboarding. The examination of variations in leadership perception and experience across different cultures, along with the cultural norms and expectations that influence the adaptation of newcomers, can offer valuable insights for organizations that function in culturally diverse environments.

Studies could delve into the fundamental mechanisms that facilitate or regulate the correlation between leadership and the acclimation of new members. An exploration into the potential mediating or moderating effects of social support, communication, organizational culture, or

individual characteristics (such as personality traits and prior experience) on the influence of leadership in facilitating newcomer adjustment would contribute to a more comprehensive comprehension of the intricate interplay involved.

Conducting comparative studies across various industries, organizational sizes, or geographical locations would yield a more comprehensive comprehension of the impact of leadership on the adjustment of newcomers. A comparative analysis of leadership support strategies across different contexts has the potential to establish optimal practices and foster knowledge dissemination among diverse industries and organizations.

The master's thesis pertaining to the influence of leadership on the process of newcomer adjustment has made noteworthy contributions to the relevant academic domain. Future research may explore various areas such as long-term effects, contextual factors, leadership styles, cross-cultural perspectives, mediating and moderating mechanisms, comparative studies, and the incorporation of employee perspectives. Investigating these domains would facilitate a more comprehensive comprehension of the intricate interplay that subsists among leadership, newcomer adaptation, and organizational achievement.

#### **6.4 Practical Suggestions**

This Master Thesis offers practical suggestions for leaders to support newcomers during the onboarding process effectively. These suggestions can assist leaders in creating a positive and supportive environment that aids newcomers' adjustment.

Leaders can effectively support newcomers during the onboarding process by implementing the suggestions in the following sections, resulting in increased role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance. These actions not only help newcomers adjust successfully, but they also promote a positive organizational culture that values and supports its employees.

Leadership should prioritize clear and transparent communication with newcomers. This entails providing specific details about their roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Clear communication aids in role clarity and ensures that newcomers understand their responsibilities and how they contribute to the organization's goals.

Implementing a mentoring program can greatly help newcomers in their adjustment process. Newcomers' self-efficacy and social acceptance can be increased by pairing them with experienced employees or assigning them a mentor who can provide guidance, support, and advice. Mentors can share their expertise, offer feedback, and assist newcomers in navigating the organizational culture.

Leaders should provide relevant training and development opportunities to assist newcomers in acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their roles effectively. This can include both technical training and the development of soft skills. Leaders demonstrate their commitment to newcomers' success and help strengthen their self-efficacy by investing in their growth and development.

Promoting social acceptance among newcomers requires encouraging social integration. Leaders can facilitate interactions and build connections between newcomers and existing team members

by organizing team-building activities, social events, or informal gatherings. This makes newcomers feel welcomed, valued, and a part of the organization.

It is critical to provide regular feedback and recognition in order to improve role clarity and self-efficacy. Leaders should give constructive feedback, recognizing newcomers' strengths as well as areas for improvement. Recognizing and celebrating their accomplishments and contributions can boost their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

Leaders should keep open lines of communication open and check in with newcomers on a regular basis to address any concerns or challenges they may be experiencing. Giving ongoing support and guidance shows that leaders care about their employees' success and well-being.

Leaders play an important role in setting the tone for the organization and modeling expected behaviors. Leaders create an environment that fosters role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance by exemplifying positive leadership qualities such as approachability, fairness, and inclusivity. Newcomers observe and mimic these behaviors, which helps them adjust and integrate into the organization.

Leaders should continually evaluate and improve the onboarding process based on feedback from newcomers. By soliciting feedback from newcomers on their experiences and suggestions for improvement on a regular basis, leaders can adapt and refine their support strategies accordingly.

#### **6.4.1 Role Clarity**

The primary result of the interviews was the enhancement of role clarity. As per the statements of the interviewees, frequent meetings with newly arrived individuals are deemed crucial to assessing progress and identifying areas for improvement. These meetings facilitate the evaluation of the current situation and aid in determining the necessary steps to enhance the overall outcome. It is imperative that the job role discussed during the interview process align with the actual responsibilities assigned to the individual upon commencement of the position. It is recommended that the job role be reiterated to the newcomer to ensure a clear understanding of their role within the organization. It is imperative to document the roles of each employee within the organization in a manner that is accessible to all stakeholders.

According to the interviewees, there are numerous critical considerations for leaders to examine when establishing a newcomer onboarding process to achieve a high degree of social acceptance, role clarity, and self-efficacy.

Leaders should first establish clear expectations and goals for newcomers. Leaders lay a firm foundation for newcomers to grasp their tasks and responsibilities by clearly conveying the organization's expectations and specific position responsibilities. This clarity helps to build role clarity from the start, allowing newcomers to align their efforts appropriately.

It is vital to develop an organized onboarding program. This program should contain critical information about the organization, its principles, and culture. It should also provide substantial training on work responsibilities, methods, and systems. A well-organized onboarding program not only provides essential knowledge but also allows newcomers to ask questions, seek clarification, and get a deeper grasp of their new duties.



Clear and honest information is just as important for newcomers as the previously mentioned and listed aspects when it comes to communicating with employees. Leaders must make sure that newcomers are aware of their expectations as well as their roles and duties. This includes sharing the company's mission, beliefs, and goals, as well as any particular policies or procedures pertinent to their role. The clarity in communication helps newcomers comprehend their roles and focus their efforts appropriately.

In order to create an open and inviting environment where newcomers may freely share their thoughts and ask questions, leaders must actively listen to them and encourage them to communicate their ideas, concerns, and questions. It shows that their opinions are respected when you pay attention to their criticism and address their demands.

By encouraging newcomers to participate in dialogues and contribute their ideas actively, leaders must promote two-way communication. Regular check-ins, team meetings, or casual talks can be used to achieve this. They feel involved and like members of the team when their ideas and opinions are sought.

Being patient and empathic is another crucial element. Leaders must understand that newcomers may experience anxiety or overload during the onboarding process. Leaders must therefore exhibit tolerance and empathy while also being aware that it will take time for followers to adapt and learn. Make yourself accessible to them so you can respond to their inquiries and offer advice and help as necessary.

As a leader, it's crucial to recognize cultural variations and modify communication methods as necessary. Consider linguistic ability, nonverbal indicators, and cultural conventions while communicating with visitors from different backgrounds. Respect their cultural viewpoints while fostering a friendly atmosphere that celebrates variety and inclusion.

Leaders must be explicit in their expectations for output, due dates, and performance. They must give newcomers a roadmap or timeline outlining what to anticipate during the onboarding procedure, including any possibilities for training or mentoring. Setting attainable objectives and benchmarks enables newcomers to monitor their development and experience success.

They are giving newcomers consistent feedback and appreciation, along with both constructive criticism and good reinforcement. Leaders must acknowledge their successes and efforts while also offering comments on their areas for improvement. Whether in public or privately, acknowledge their efforts to improve their drive and sense of self. It's necessary to remember that responding to individual needs and preferences is essential to a successful onboarding process and that effective communication is a never-ending process.

It is recommended that employees receive regular feedback and that leaders also receive feedback from their subordinates. It is advisable to adopt a constructive and optimistic approach to formalizing the matter. Individuals may have varying needs when it comes to the frequency of feedback, with some requiring more frequent sessions and others finding fewer sessions to be sufficient. Therefore, it is imperative for leaders to modify their feedback strategy in accordance with the needs of new members.

### **6.4.2 Self-Efficacy**

Being afforded the opportunity to participate in diverse meetings proved advantageous in acquiring a comprehensive understanding of various subjects within a limited timeframe. Generally speaking, self-efficacy tends to be elevated when individuals possess a certain degree of autonomy in decision-making. It is recommended that responsibility areas be explicitly delineated within the team rather than assuming universal proficiency across all tasks.

The primary outcome of the interviews pertaining to self-efficacy was: In order to enhance the self-efficacy of a newcomer, it is imperative for the leader to bestow an appropriate level of trust and assign suitable tasks to the newcomer. The majority of interviewees have identified trust as a significant factor in enhancing self-efficacy. The significance lies more in the sensation of being esteemed and recognized by the newcomer than in the actual undertaking. There is a strong correlation between self-efficacy and role clarity. Based on the conducted interviews, it can be asserted that individuals who are new to a particular environment and possess a strong understanding of their roles tend to exhibit a correspondingly high level of self-efficacy, and conversely, those with a high level of self-efficacy tend to demonstrate a strong sense of role clarity. It is crucial for individuals who are new to a particular setting to be aware of the expectations and requirements set forth by the leader. This knowledge can have a beneficial effect on both role clarity and self-efficacy. Leadership requires caution and a reluctance to throw newcomers into unfamiliar situations without proper guidance. It is advisable to adopt a gradual approach rather than attempting to accomplish everything at the outset. The appropriate degree of autonomy can significantly enhance self-efficacy by instilling a sense of trust in the leader and reinforcing one's own capabilities.

#### ***Support***

As the results of the interviews show, defining good support is a difficult task. It was observed that individuals lacking experience may require a greater degree of support compared to those who possess some prior experience in the same or a related field. Based on the situation, a leader must demonstrate adaptability and flexibility in the leadership style. Through means such as feedback sessions, the leader can determine the most effective means of supporting a new team member. Effective support can be achieved through proper preparation and the implementation of a structured onboarding program. Once the new employees have commenced their roles, it is crucial for leaders to schedule regular sessions to provide support and guidance as required.

During the onboarding process, a leader has the ability to offer valuable support to new employees in order to facilitate their assimilation into the organization and successful acclimation to their respective roles. Initially, it is imperative to address the topic of expectations. It is imperative to effectively convey job duties, anticipated levels of performance, and goals to ensure clarity and understanding. Please provide a comprehensive account of the duties and obligations associated with the position, along with any particular aims or targets.

The significance of training and development cannot be overstated. Leaders must ensure that newly hired personnel undergo comprehensive training to acquire the requisite skills and knowledge for their designated responsibilities. Facilitate avenues for continuous growth and access to educational materials for perpetual learning.

It is recommended to establish periodic meetings to offer constructive feedback, attend to inquiries or issues, and evaluate the advancement of recently hired personnel. This facilitates the establishment of a positive relationship and cultivates a conducive atmosphere.

The implementation of a mentorship or buddy system is frequently deemed crucial. Consequently, it is imperative for the leader to designate a mentor or buddy to the newly hired personnel who will offer guidance, address queries, and extend assistance throughout the onboarding phase. This fosters a sense of community and facilitates the establishment of interpersonal connections.

Facilitating team integration is a crucial responsibility that falls within the purview of a leader. Hence, it is essential for the leader to facilitate the process of socialization for the newly hired personnel by aiding them in establishing connections with their peers and fostering a sense of camaraderie within the team. It is advisable to promote inclusivity and supportiveness among team members.

It is the responsibility of leaders to provide resources. Leaders are responsible to ensure that newly hired personnel are provided with adequate access to the requisite tools, technology, and resources that are essential for the effective execution of their job responsibilities. The provision of pertinent documentation, systems, and instructional resources is encompassed within the scope of the offering.

In general, the primary objective of the leader's involvement in the onboarding procedure should be centered on promoting seamless integration, fostering a constructive workplace atmosphere, and equipping the fresh recruit for accomplishment.

Although leaders are essential in providing support to new employees during the onboarding phase, there are specific domains where their support may occasionally need to be improved. Leaders need to allocate sufficient time to provide optimal support not only to newly recruited personnel but also to all other employees. In circumstances that are crucial, leader need to intervene and mitigate the situation. It is imperative for leaders to offer perspectives on the values, norms, and implicit regulations of the organization. This facilitates the assimilation of new employees into the organizational culture, thereby expediting their adaptation process. In addition to providing introductory instruction, it is recommended that leaders establish a well-defined program for the ongoing growth and advancement of the recently hired staff member. This encompasses the exploration of prospective avenues for expansion, professional trajectories, and endeavors aimed at enhancing one's competencies. It is recommended that leaders proactively promote collaboration and cultivate a collective spirit among both newly hired personnel and current team members. Facilitating team cohesion can be achieved by means of team-building exercises, cross-functional initiatives, or collaborative tasks.

### ***Feedback***

Frequently, the provision of feedback and recognition needs to be improved. Although check-ins are crucial, it is imperative for leaders to offer constructive feedback on performance and acknowledge accomplishments on a regular basis. This facilitates the comprehension of newcomers regarding their advancement and domains requiring enhancement.

A universal approach is not deemed appropriate. Leaders need to possess the qualities of flexibility and adaptability. The onboarding experience of each employee may exhibit variations, and it is imperative for leaders to demonstrate flexibility in adapting their approach to cater to individual

requirements. The enhancement of the onboarding experience can be achieved by accommodating diverse learning styles and preferences.

A considerable number of individuals who are new to a particular field or domain may need help in obtaining the necessary resources. It is imperative for leaders to guarantee convenient accessibility of pertinent resources and information for newly recruited personnel. This entails furnishing exhaustive documentation, knowledge repositories, or proprietary platforms that enable personnel to access the requisite information.

Newcomers frequently experience apprehension and a sense of being inundated by unfamiliar tools, individuals, and other elements. Consequently, leaders need to establish an environment characterized by a heightened sense of psychological safety. Establishing a climate of psychological safety is a crucial aspect of leadership that enables newly hired personnel to feel at ease in expressing their viewpoints, seeking clarifications, and raising apprehensions without any apprehension of criticism or unfavorable outcomes.

### ***Workload***

The interviewers suggested that while deciding on the right workload for new hires, executives should take a variety of criteria into account. First and foremost, leaders must make explicit the roles and responsibilities, express the newcomers' precise roles and obligations, and provide a thorough explanation of the duties, responsibilities, and expectations of their positions. The leader and newcomers will both benefit from this clarity in understanding the extent of their work.

A leader must also carefully consider the newcomers' prior work experience, education, and any pertinent certificates while evaluating their skills, expertise, and knowledge in order to ascertain their capabilities. Their readiness for particular jobs and projects will be determined with the help of this assessment.

As was also previously noted, it is crucial to gradually expose new hires to their workload, especially at first, and to start with smaller, simpler duties to help them build confidence and become accustomed to their responsibilities. Then, as they gain confidence and proficiency, they progressively increase the complexity and volume of their workload.

In order to give newcomers, the abilities and knowledge necessary to manage their workload efficiently, leaders must provide the necessary training and tools. These include workshops, online courses, coaching, on-the-job training, and mentoring. The leader must ensure that the team members have access to the resources and knowledge they require to finish their responsibilities quickly.

Leaders must understand that newcomers may initially require more time to perform tasks than experienced workers. As a result, leaders must consider the learning curve associated with their function and allocate the necessary time and resources to support their development. It's crucial to give them room to grow by allowing them to make mistakes and take advantage of learning opportunities.

It is crucial to regularly assess and modify the workload of new hires depending on their performance, feedback, and progress. This will help to keep the burden manageable and on course for their development. To maximize newcomers' output and engagement, leaders need regularly assess the progress and implement any necessary adjustments.

## ***Time***

For leaders it is very important to prioritize the onboarding process and acknowledge its significance in determining the success and productivity of new employees. It is recommended that leaders allocate dedicated time and resources toward onboarding activities. By prioritizing the allocation of time, leaders can effectively provide support and guidance to new members.

Optimize the onboarding procedure to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Develop an efficient and organized onboarding initiative that optimizes the utilization of time for both new hires and management. The proposed program aims to delineate the essential undertakings, significant achievements, and requisite resources necessary to facilitate a seamless onboarding procedure. If leaders possess a well-defined roadmap, they can allocate their time and energy toward crucial elements such as role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance.

Utilize technological resources and tools to facilitate the onboarding process. Develop an internet-based portal or platform that enables individuals who are new to a particular field or industry to independently access vital information, educational materials, and other relevant resources. The implementation of a self-guided approach can be a time-saving strategy for leaders to furnish newcomers with the requisite information and assistance.

To distribute the workload, it is advisable to engage other team members or colleagues in the onboarding process by delegating responsibilities. Assigning particular duties and obligations to individuals who possess the ability to provide assistance and direction to newcomers is recommended. One possible approach is to designate a mentor or a buddy from the team to provide assistance with clarifying roles, addressing queries, and promoting social integration.

In summary, the mitigation of time constraints in the onboarding process requires a synergistic approach involving strategic planning, resource allocation, delegation, and efficient communication. Leaders can improve role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance for newcomers by implementing these practical suggestions, even when time is limited.

### **6.4.3 Social Acceptance**

To improve the social acceptance of a newcomer, a leader can take several actions. A leader should take the initiative to introduce the newcomer to the team members. This introduction can be done in person or through a formal announcement, emphasizing the newcomer's skills, experience, and potential contributions. By actively welcoming the newcomer, the leader sets a positive tone and encourages others to be inclusive and accepting.

Leaders can encourage team members to engage in open and positive communication with the newcomer. This can be facilitated through team-building activities, collaborative projects, or informal social events that promote interaction and relationship-building. Creating opportunities for team members to get to know the newcomer personally helps break down barriers and encourage social acceptance.

Leaders can assign an experienced team member to act as a mentor or buddy for the newcomer. The mentor can provide guidance and support and serve as a point of contact for any questions or concerns. This relationship helps the newcomer integrate into the team, navigate the organizational culture, and develop a sense of belonging and social acceptance.

Leaders play a vital role in shaping the behavior and attitudes of their team members. By demonstrating inclusive behavior, respect, and empathy towards the newcomer, leaders set an example for others to follow. Consistently modeling inclusive practices and actively engaging with the newcomer sends a powerful message to the team about the importance of social acceptance.

Leaders should create a safe and open environment for feedback. They should actively seek input from the newcomer and team members to understand any concerns or challenges related to social acceptance. By addressing these concerns promptly and implementing appropriate solutions, leaders show their commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment.

Improving social acceptance requires a conscious effort from leaders to promote a culture of inclusivity, encourage interaction, and provide support. Leaders can foster an environment where newcomers feel appreciated, valued, and socially accepted by their colleagues by putting these strategies into practice.

## 7. Conclusion

Through the qualitative analysis of all situations discussed during the interviews, this master thesis generated a model with the main factors on how leaders should support newcomers during onboarding. The behavior of the leader can have a very high impact on the newcomer's role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance.

The presence of effective leadership is of great importance in providing support to newcomers throughout the onboarding process and exerting a positive influence on their understanding of their roles, belief in their own capabilities, and integration into the social fabric of the organization. This master thesis has examined a range of strategies that leaders can utilize to offer the requisite support and establish an inclusive atmosphere for individuals who are new to an organization.

Leadership can be initiated through the establishment of effective communication channels and the clear articulation of job expectations, performance standards, and organizational values. Leaders play a crucial role in enhancing organizational effectiveness by promoting role clarity and minimizing role ambiguity for newly arrived individuals. Furthermore, the implementation of a well-organized onboarding program guarantees that newly arrived individuals are provided with the necessary information and resources essential for achieving success in their respective positions. The implementation of a structured approach has been found to have a positive impact on the self-efficacy of newcomers. This is achieved by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to effectively carry out their assigned tasks.

The implementation of mentorship or buddy programs has been identified as a viable and efficacious approach to facilitating the adaptation and integration of newcomers. Mentors play a crucial role in offering guidance, support, and serving as a reliable resource for addressing inquiries and apprehensions, thereby fostering social acceptance, and facilitating the process of integration. It is important for leaders to actively promote and facilitate mentoring relationships to support newcomers in effectively navigating the intricate social dynamics within the organization.

The provision of consistent feedback and recognition by leaders plays a substantial role in enhancing the self-efficacy and motivation of individuals who are new to a particular context. Leaders play a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and facilitating the overall adjustment of newcomers by offering constructive feedback, acknowledging their accomplishments, and validating their endeavors.

Promoting networking opportunities and cultivating an inclusive work environment are beneficial for augmenting social acceptance. Leadership should facilitate the establishment of occasions for individuals who are new to a group to engage with colleagues from diverse teams or departments, through the coordination of social gatherings or team-building exercises. These initiatives facilitate the establishment of networks, foster positive interpersonal connections, and cultivate a sense of affiliation and inclusion within the organizational context.

Enhancing the self-efficacy and confidence of newcomers can be achieved through the delegation of meaningful tasks and responsibilities. Effective leaders should offer guidance and support to individuals who are new to a team, while also allowing them the freedom to exercise their autonomy in decision-making and actively contribute to collaborative projects.

Ultimately, leadership support remains consistent and continuous throughout the entire duration of the newcomer adjustment. Regular monitoring, provision of growth and development prospects,

and effective resolution of concerns and challenges are instrumental in fostering sustained adaptation and achievement.

Leaders can establish a supportive and inclusive environment that enhances role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance throughout the onboarding process by implementing these strategies. Acknowledging the significance of proficient leadership in facilitating the adaptation of newcomers is vital for organizations aiming to maximize the assimilation and efficiency of newly hired personnel.

Finally, it can be stated that sometimes a quick check-in or brief feedback can have a significant impact on overall satisfaction. As a result, leaders must devote time and maintain constant contact with newcomers.



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## **Appendix A – Interview Guideline**

### **Interviewleitfaden – Vorabinfo für Interviewees**

Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es genau zu erarbeiten, wie eine Führungskraft neue Arbeitskräfte während des Onboardings unterstützen muss, damit diese möglichst schnell ein hohes Level an Rollenklarheit, Selbstverwirklichung und soziale Akzeptanz erreichen und somit das Unternehmen effektiv unterstützen können. Titel wie auch die Forschungsfrage ist:

The influence of leadership on newcomer adjustment: How can leaders support during the onboarding process to strengthen role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance?

### **Definitionen:**

#### **Newcomer Adjustment (Anpassung von neuen Mitarbeitenden)**

Die Anpassung von neuen Mitarbeitenden bezieht sich auf den Prozess der Anpassung an ein neues Umfeld, z. B. einen neuen Arbeitsplatz oder eine neue Organisation. Kulturelle Unterschiede, Sprachbarrieren, Veränderungen der täglichen Routine und ungewohnte Arbeitspraktiken oder - Prozesse sind nur einige der Erfahrungen und Schwierigkeiten, mit denen neue Mitarbeitende während des Anpassungsprozesses konfrontiert werden können. Eine erfolgreiche Eingewöhnungsphase für neue Mitarbeitende kann für die langfristige Zufriedenheit und den Erfolg am Arbeitsplatz entscheidend sein.

#### **Rollenklarheit:**

Rollenklarheit beschreibt das Ausmaß, in dem eine Person ihre Pflichten, Erwartungen und Ziele in einer bestimmten Rolle oder bei einem neuen Arbeitsplatz kennt.

#### **Selbstwirksamkeit:**

Selbstwirksamkeit bezieht sich auf das Vertrauen einer Person in ihre Fähigkeit, bestimmte Aufgaben erfolgreich auszuführen oder bestimmte Ziele zu erreichen. Es bezieht sich auf die Überzeugung, in der Lage zu sein um die erforderlichen Fähigkeiten, Kenntnisse und Ressourcen zu mobilisieren, damit ein bestimmtes Ziel erreicht werden kann.

#### **Soziale Akzeptanz:**

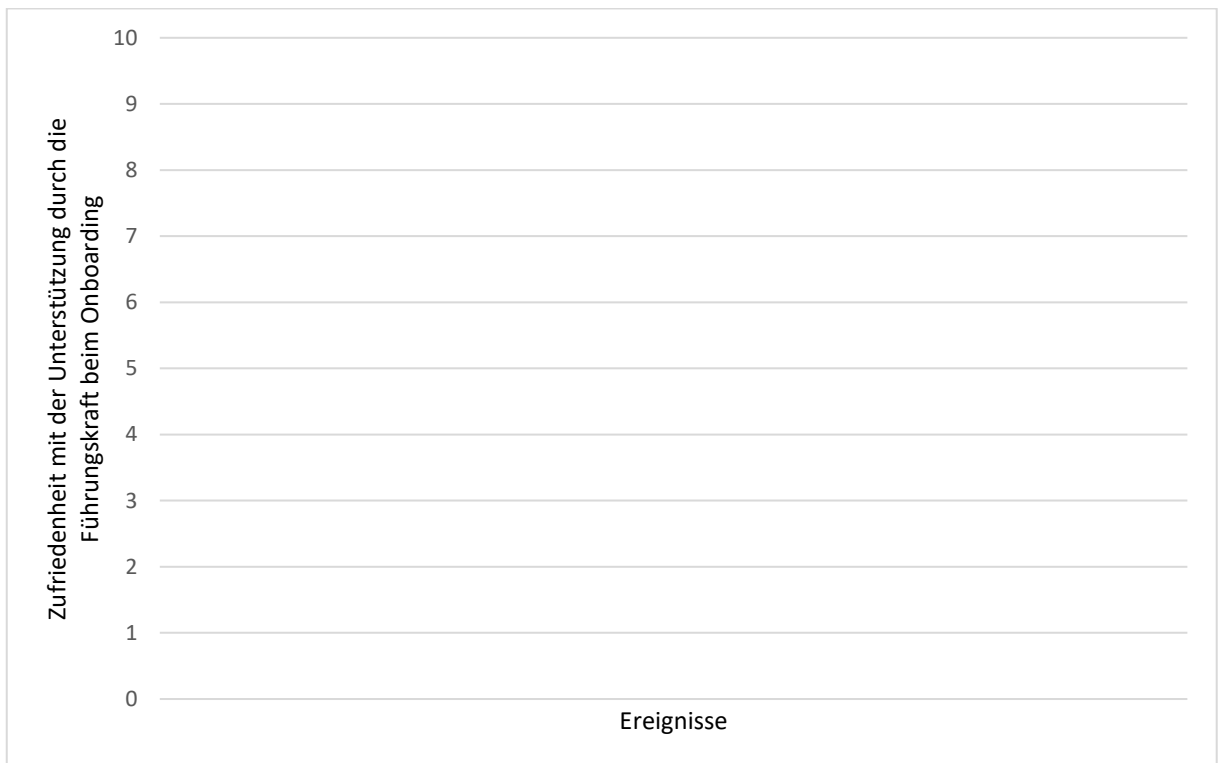
Soziale Akzeptanz beschreibt den Grad, in dem sich ein Neankömmling in seinem neuen sozialen Umfeld akzeptiert, geschätzt und einbezogen fühlt.

### Struktur des Interviews:

- Einleitung und Vorstellung der Personen wie auch des Themas
- Zusicherung von Anonymität und Geheimhaltung
- Erklärung des Interviewformates
- Dauer des Interviews
- Erklärung, wie die Interviewteilnehmer zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt Kontakt aufnehmen können.
- Um Erlaubnis fragen, ob das Interview aufgenommen werden kann.

### Interviewfragen:

- Kannst du bitte kurz deine bisherigen Erfahrungen während deines Onboardings beschreiben
  - Wie lange bist du in der position?
  - Remote oder office?
- Was waren die Hauptereignisse während deines Onboardings?
- Kannst du eine Linie aufzeichnen mit den folgenden Achsen (1. Zeitverlauf, 2. Zufriedenheit mit der Unterstützung durch deine Führungskraft beim Onboarding). Bitte erläutere deine High- und Lowlights während deines Onboardings?



- Was ist da genau passiert?
  - Hatte das Auswirkungen auf deine Rollenklarheit oder deine Selbstverwirklichung oder deine soziale Akzeptanz?
  - Was hätte deine Führungskraft machen können, um diese Situation zu verbessern?
  - Wie hättest du unterstützt werden müssen?

**Abschluss:**

- Fragen des Interviewpartners klären
- Für Teilnahme bedanken und Verabschiedung

## Statement of Affirmation

I hereby declare that all parts of this thesis were exclusively prepared by me, without using resources other than those stated above. The thoughts taken directly or indirectly from external sources are appropriately annotated. This thesis or parts of it were not previously submitted to any other academic institution and have not yet been published.

Dornbirn, 07.07.2023



Andreas Jäger