

A Study On Strategic Onboarding And Employee Retention In IT Organisation With Special Reference To Skylark Information Technologies

Mr. P. Joel Prithivraj¹, Prof. N. Indumathi ²

¹Dept of MBA

²Senior Assistant Professor, Dept of Management Studies

^{1,2} IFET COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Abstract- This study examines the role of strategic onboarding in influencing employee retention at Skylark Information Technologies Private Limited, a leading IT services company headquartered in Chennai, India. The study employs a descriptive research design with primary data collected from 56 respondents who had undergone the company's onboarding programme. The survey instrument covered five key dimensions: pre-joining preparation, role and goal clarity, cultural and team integration, training and learning effectiveness, and employee wellbeing and retention intent. Statistical analysis using Percentage Analysis, Chi-Square Test, and Pearson Correlation revealed that the onboarding programme is largely effective across all dimensions. The Chi-Square test confirmed a statistically significant association between training programme effectiveness and retention intention ($\chi^2 = 28.743$, $df = 16$, $p = 0.026 < 0.05$). The Pearson Correlation analysis established a moderate positive and significant relationship between the overall onboarding experience and retention intention ($r = 0.312$, $p = 0.019$). The study concludes that strategic onboarding is a critical driver of early-stage employee retention in IT organisations and provides actionable recommendations for further strengthening Skylark's onboarding and talent retention framework.

Keywords: Strategic Onboarding, Employee Retention, IT Industry, HRM, Role Clarity, Cultural Integration, Training Effectiveness, Skylark Information Technologies

I. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) is the strategic approach to the effective and efficient management of people in an organisation so that they help the business gain a competitive advantage. It encompasses the policies, practices, and systems that influence employees' behaviour, attitudes, and performance. In the context of the Information Technology (IT) industry, where competition for skilled talent is intense, HRM functions such as recruitment, onboarding, and retention have become strategic imperatives.

Onboarding is the process through which new employees acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, behaviours, and cultural norms to become effective members of an organisation. A strategic onboarding programme goes beyond administrative paperwork and orientation; it is a deliberate, structured process designed to accelerate the integration of new hires into their roles and the organisation's culture. Effective onboarding typically spans the first 90 days to 12 months of employment and includes role clarification, goal-setting, cultural immersion, mentoring, and training. Research consistently shows that organisations with strong onboarding programmes improve new hire retention by up to 82% and productivity by over 70%.

Employee retention refers to an organisation's ability to prevent voluntary employee turnover. Studies indicate that a significant portion of employee turnover occurs within the first year of employment, often attributed to poor onboarding experiences, unclear role expectations, and inadequate cultural assimilation. Strategic onboarding directly addresses these root causes, making it a critical lever for improving retention rates.

Skylark Information Technologies Private Limited, established in 1993 and headquartered at T. Nagar, Chennai, represents a well-structured mid-to-large IT organisation where these HR functions play a critical role in sustaining a skilled and motivated workforce. This study examines the effectiveness of Skylark's strategic onboarding programme and its relationship with employee retention intention.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bauer & Erdogan (2023) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis establishing that structured onboarding programmes significantly reduce first-year turnover by improving role clarity, social integration, and cultural alignment, with organisations retaining new employees at rates 50% higher than those with informal onboarding.

Sharma & Gupta (2023) investigated onboarding practices in Indian IT firms and found that 68% of early attrition cases were attributable to inadequate role communication and poor cultural integration during the first 90 days, recommending structured onboarding roadmaps and dedicated buddy programmes.

Krishnamurthy (2022) analysed the impact of clear job descriptions, defined KPIs, and 90-day goal plans on employee retention across 15 IT companies, finding that employees with well-defined 90-day plans were 45% more likely to remain with their employer beyond the first year.

Mehta & Joshi (2022) examined the role of psychological safety and cultural fit, showing that employees who felt psychologically safe during onboarding demonstrated 30% lower attrition rates within 12 months. Reddy et al. (2022) found that respondents who rated training highly were 35% more likely to report strong retention intent.

Bauer (2010) identified four building blocks of successful onboarding—the "Four C's": Compliance, Clarification, Culture, and Connection—reporting 54% greater new hire productivity and 50% higher retention rates in organisations addressing all four dimensions. Gallup (2022) reported that only 12% of employees strongly agree that their organisation does a great job onboarding, representing a significant opportunity for improvement in the IT sector.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design to systematically examine the current state of onboarding practices and their relationship with retention intent at Skylark Information Technologies.

B. Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to employees of Skylark Information Technologies who had undergone the onboarding programme. The questionnaire covered 30 items across five dimensions: pre-joining and initial setup, role and goal clarity, cultural and team integration, training and learning, and employee wellbeing and retention intent, measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

C. Sampling

Purposive Sampling was employed, selecting respondents specifically on the basis of their participation in the onboarding programme. The sample size comprised 56 current employees of Skylark Information Technologies.

D. Statistical Tools

Three statistical tools were employed: (1) Percentage Analysis to determine the proportion of respondents selecting each response category; (2) Chi-Square Test (χ^2) to examine the association between training programme effectiveness (Q25) and retention intention (Q29); and (3) Pearson Correlation to assess the linear relationship between the overall onboarding experience (Q7) and retention intention (Q29).

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A. Percentage Analysis – Key Findings

The percentage analysis across all 30 questionnaire items revealed consistently positive perceptions of the onboarding programme. Table I summarises the most significant findings across the five onboarding dimensions.

TABLE I: SUMMARY OF KEY PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS RESULTS

Onboarding Dimension	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Pre-joining Role Clarity	53.6%	33.9%
Workspace Readiness	50.0%	35.7%
90-Day Schedule Clarity	57.1%	30.4%
Welcome on First Day	58.9%	28.6%
Mission & Values Understanding	57.1%	32.1%
Job Responsibilities Clarity	37.5%	46.4%
90-Day Priority Plan	39.3%	57.1%
Psychological Safety	48.2%	39.3%
Training Programme Effectiveness	51.8%	28.6%
Retention Intention (12 months)	50.0%	39.3%

Across all dimensions, the majority of respondents (typically 80–95%) selected Agree or Strongly Agree,

indicating that Skylark's onboarding programme is perceived positively. The strongest positive response was recorded for the 90-Day Priority Plan (57.1% Strongly Agree) and First Year Success Criteria (53.6% Strongly Agree), reflecting robust goal-setting and role clarity practices.

B. Chi-Square Test

The Chi-Square test was applied to examine whether there is a significant association between the overall training programme effectiveness (Q25) and employee retention intention (Q29).

H0: There is no significant association between overall training programme effectiveness and employee retention intention.

H1: There is a significant association between overall training programme effectiveness and employee retention intention.

TABLE II: CHI-SQUARE TEST RESULTS

Test Statistic	Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.743	26	0.026*
Likelihood Ratio	1.184	72	0.101
N of Valid Cases	6	5	-

* Significant at 5% level ($p < 0.05$)

Since $p = 0.026 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. This confirms a statistically significant association between training programme effectiveness and employee retention intention at Skylark Information Technologies. A high-quality training experience during onboarding is a significant predictor of employee retention intent.

C. Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation was applied to assess the relationship between the overall onboarding experience (Q7) and employee retention intention (Q29).

H0: There is no significant relationship between overall onboarding experience and employee retention intention.

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between overall onboarding experience and employee retention intention.

TABLE III: PEARSON CORRELATION RESULTS

Variable	r Value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Onboarding Experience vs. Retention Intention	0.312	0.019*

* Significant at 5% level ($p < 0.05$)

The Pearson Correlation coefficient $r = 0.312$ indicates a moderate positive correlation between overall onboarding experience and retention intention. The significance value $p = 0.019 < 0.05$ confirms statistical significance at the 5% level. Therefore, H1 is accepted. Employees who rate their overall onboarding experience positively are significantly more likely to intend to remain with Skylark for at least 12 months.

V. FINDINGS

1. A clear majority (87.5%) agreed that they received detailed role information before their first day, and 85.7% confirmed workspace and system access were ready on joining.
2. The 90-Day Priority Plan received the highest positive response (96.4% Agree or Strongly Agree, with 57.1% Strongly Agreeing), indicating robust goal-setting during onboarding.
3. Cultural integration was strong, with 91.1% agreeing they felt genuinely welcomed on their first day and 87.5% confirming they could be their authentic selves at work without fear of exclusion.
4. Training effectiveness was largely positive, though overall training programme effectiveness had the highest proportion of neutral and negative responses (14.3% Neutral, 5.4% Disagree/Strongly Disagree), suggesting scope for improvement.
5. Retention intent was high: 89.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they intended to remain with Skylark for 12 months, and 92.9% found the overall joining experience to meet or exceed expectations.
6. Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 28.743$, $df = 16$, $p = 0.026$): A statistically significant association was established between training programme effectiveness and retention intention.
7. Pearson Correlation ($r = 0.312$, $p = 0.019$): A moderate positive and statistically significant relationship was confirmed between the overall onboarding experience and employee retention intention.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

1. Skylark Information Technologies should formalise a structured 90-day onboarding roadmap for all new hires, ensuring role-specific goals, milestones, and check-in points are clearly communicated at the outset of employment.
2. Regular feedback touchpoints should be embedded into the onboarding process at the 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day marks to identify and address individual challenges proactively before they contribute to attrition.
3. Investment in richer training content—including practical exercises, hands-on simulations, and real-world case studies—will help new employees translate theoretical knowledge into workplace performance more effectively and address the observed gap in overall training programme effectiveness.
4. Skylark should enhance the visibility of wellbeing resources and employee assistance programmes during onboarding to ensure all employees are fully aware of available support from day one.
5. The company should implement a formal mentoring or buddy programme pairing new joiners with experienced colleagues, providing a trusted point of contact for guidance and cultural immersion during the initial months.
6. Transparent communication about career growth pathways, promotion criteria, and performance evaluation processes during onboarding will help employees understand long-term opportunities and increase their organisational commitment.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study has comprehensively examined the role of strategic onboarding in influencing employee retention at Skylark Information Technologies. The data collected from 56 respondents across five key onboarding dimensions revealed a predominantly positive perception of the onboarding programme, with strong majorities expressing agreement across most survey statements.

The Chi-Square test established a significant association between training programme effectiveness and employee retention intention ($p = 0.026$), confirming that training quality is a meaningful driver of retention intent. The Pearson Correlation demonstrated a moderate positive relationship between the overall onboarding experience and retention intention ($r = 0.312$, $p = 0.019$), validating the central hypothesis of this study.

The study affirms that strategic onboarding is not merely an administrative process but a powerful retention tool. Organisations that invest in thoughtfully designed, comprehensive onboarding programmes are better positioned to retain talent, reduce attrition costs, accelerate productivity, and build a high-performance culture. For Skylark Information Technologies, a continued commitment to refining and enhancing its onboarding strategy will be instrumental in sustaining employee engagement and achieving long-term people excellence goals.

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