

New Employee Orientation:  
A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes

Curt E. Allee

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of  
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Psychology

June 6, 2012

UMI Number: 3546786

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI 3546786

Published by ProQuest LLC (2012). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

Unpublished Work  
Copyright (2012) by Curt E. Allee  
All Rights Reserved

New Employee Orientation:  
A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes

---

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of  
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Psychology

---

Curt E. Allee

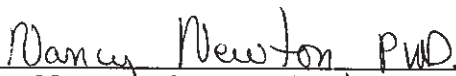
2012

Approved By:



---

Keith Carroll, PhD, Chairperson  
Chair, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology



---

Nancy Newton, PhD, Member  
Professor, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

## Acknowledgements

I wish to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Drs. Keith Carroll, Nancy Newton, Nancy Davis, Jennifer Thompson, and Michael Barr for their continual guidance, feedback, and support throughout my doctoral education. Specifically, I would like to thank Drs. Carroll and Davis for serving as my chairs at various points in my dissertation process.

I owe a large debt of gratitude to my friends, Drs. Michael Stowers and Kevin King, for their statistical expertise, support, and guidance. I must also recognize Kortney Peagram and Melissa Young for their willingness to review drafts of this work in its various stages of completeness and Cari Falkiewicz and James Frank for providing their expert opinion as I developed the New Employee Orientation Experience Survey.

Lastly, I wish to thank my family. The support of my parents, Carl and Ruby Allee, and my sisters, Lisa Brown and Shelbie Schatzer, has been invaluable. The memory of my grandparents, Loy and Erma Allee, and my brothers, Larry Pearson and Terry Pearson, has been a tremendous source of motivation.

## Abstract

### New Employee Orientation: A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes

Curt E. Allee

This dissertation explores the influence of new employee orientation on certain self-report organizational outcomes. Previous research indicates that the inclusion of relationship-building activities, experiential learning, peer interaction, supervisor interaction, and learning evaluations in orientations can influence participant self-report levels of workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave. The purpose of this study is to include commonalities into a single study and assess their influence on self-report outcomes from two samples. Data was collected from a Midwestern graduate school and compared to data from multiple organizations to assess the influence of commonalities on participant outcomes. The data collected from these two samples support stating that orientations can significantly influence on levels of workplace stress and intent to leave. The data also supports the inclusion of peers and supervisor involvement in an orientation. The data did not support stating that orientations could influence levels of commitment, performance, or satisfaction. The importance of these findings, the limitations of this study, and suggestions for further research are discussed in detail.

## Table of Contents

Copyright.....	ii
Signature Page.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem Statement.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	6
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
New Employee Orientation.....	9
Pre-Boarding.....	10
Ad-Hoc.....	10
Standardized.....	11
Relationship to Training.....	12
Purpose of New Employee Orientation.....	14
Developing an Orientation.....	16
Managerial Support.....	17
Orientation Development.....	17
Orientation Outcomes.....	29
Stress.....	29

Commitment.....	30
Performance.....	31
Satisfaction.....	32
Retention.....	33
Outcome Effect Duration.....	34
Issues in New Employee Orientations.....	36
Delivery Options.....	37
Onsite Orientations.....	37
Online Orientations.....	38
Information Overload.....	38
Organizational Socialization.....	39
New Employee Orientation at a Midwestern Graduate School.....	45
History.....	46
Development.....	46
Inception to March 2009.....	48
March 2009 to November 2009.....	54
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	65
Participants.....	66
Design.....	67
Measures.....	69
NEO Experience Survey.....	69
Procedure.....	73



CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	79
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	103
Outcome Results.....	106
Reasons for Lack of Statistical Support.....	110
Data Correlation.....	113
Research Questions.....	114
Limitations.....	116
Next Steps for Testing.....	119
Conclusion.....	121
REFERENCES.....	123
APPENDIX A: NEO EVALUATION QUESTIONS (INCEPTION TO MARCH 2009).....	129
APPENDIX B: NEO EVALUATION QUESTIONS (APRIL 2009 - PRESENT).....	131
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT.....	133
APPENDIX D: NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION EXPERIENCE SURVEY.....	134
APPENDIX E: SECOND PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL.....	140
APPENDIX F: THIRD PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL.....	141
APPENDIX G: LAST PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL.....	142
APPENDIX H: INITIAL PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL.....	143
APPENDIX I: CONGRATULATORY EMAIL.....	144
APPENDIX J: LUNCHEON INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	145
APPENDIX K: LUNCHEON INVITATION EMAIL.....	146

## List of Tables

Table 1: <i>Hypothesis 1 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	80
Table 2: <i>Hypothesis 2 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	82
Table 3a: <i>Hypothesis 3 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	84
Table 3b: <i>Hypothesis 3 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	85
Table 4a: <i>Hypothesis 4 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	86
Table 4b: <i>Hypothesis 4 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	87
Table 5a: <i>Hypothesis 5 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	89
Table 5b: <i>Hypothesis 5 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	90
Table 6a: <i>Hypothesis 6 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	92
Table 6b: <i>Hypothesis 6 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	93
Table 7: <i>Hypothesis 7 Non-Significant Results</i> .....	95

## List of Figures

Figure 1: <i>Supervisor and Peer Interaction and Continuance Commitment</i> .....	97
Figure 2: <i>Supervisor and Peer Interaction and Workplace Stress</i> .....	98

## Chapter 1: Introduction

During the first few months of a job, newly hired employees tend to be a drain on organizational resources. New hires typically are less productive because they are less familiar with the organization, policies, and procedures when compared to incumbent employees. Due to this lack of knowledge, new hires drain limited time and financial resources. Simultaneously, new employees can be a source for unbiased insight and uninfluenced ideas that may benefit the organization (Rollag, 2007; Rollag, Parise, & Cross, 2005). Because of these reasons, many organizations use a new employee orientation process, also known as on-boarding, to help new hires become more productive and contribute ideas more quickly.

New employee orientation is one of the most common employee development activities organizations provide to employees (Holton, 1996; Wesson & Gogus, 2005). The main purpose of orientation programming is to help new hires learn information and to build a shared understanding of the organization in order to successfully function in their new workplace (Caruth, Caruth, & Pane Haden, 2010; Louis, 1980). The delivery method for orientations may vary from ad-hoc, on-the-job, or as needed instruction to standardized, multi-day, multi-topic sessions. Organizations that fail to provide some type of orientation for new employees may experience undesirable side effects including lower productivity, lower commitment, lower satisfaction, increased turnover, or increased employee stress (Holton, 1996; Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983).

Research indicates that well-oriented employees are more likely to approach their jobs with higher levels of confidence and commitment to the organization (Cirilo &

Kleiner, 2003). Individuals who receive structured, objective, interactive, and relationship-focused orientations are typically better able to respond to stressors, adapt more quickly, and tend to be more productive, satisfied, and committed in the new environment. These individuals are also more likely to remain with the organization longer than individuals who received an ineffective orientation or none at all (Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983; Caruth et al., 2010).

Due to the drain in resources inherent with new employees and the benefit of their fresh ideas, it is clear that orientations are an important component of employee development activities (Rollag et al., 2005). Unfortunately, many organizations that provide orientations may implement programs with minimal research into the importance, best practices, or the desired outcomes of on-boarding initiatives. A lack of forethought in the development of on-boarding sessions may result in programs that are ill conceived, counter-productive, or produce negative side effects.

### **Problem Statement**

New employee orientation practices vary based upon organizational factors and the experience of developers. Organizational factors may include funding, time and technological resources, and managerial support. Experiential factors may range from staff members who have never created an orientation to staff who have created several over the course of their careers. Additionally, those who have developed a number of orientations may know little about creating effective on-boarding practices and may rely upon opinion or unsound research in trade magazine literature. Although there are many

factors that may influence the existence and execution of orientations, there are commonalities shared by effective on-boarding programs.

Based upon a review of the new hire orientation, organizational socialization, and training evaluation literature, there are commonalities shared between effective on-boarding processes: (a) the orientation focuses on relationship-building, (b) the orientation provides experiential learning opportunities, (c) the orientation provides structured peer and supervisor interaction, and (d) the orientation assesses new hire learning.

Historically, orientations have been lecture-based and focused on providing new hires with a plethora of organizational and departmental information regarding policies and procedures. Although developers may think this method provides new employees with the information they need to know in order to operate within their new workplace, it excludes a relational framework for navigating the work environment. Relational approaches to orientation introduce new hires to the people best able to provide assistance with policies and procedures. This approach establishes a network of reliable sources for information that will help new employees become more productive (Rollag et al., 2005).

The lecture-based format provides little opportunity for participants to practice what they are learning. Specifically, new hires are unable to practice using certain computer software required for payroll purposes, information technology systems, or informational websites. There may also be limited interaction with the presenters beyond a brief question-and-answer session in which new employees may decline participation

because they lack information or confidence to formulate questions. Including an experiential or hands-on component that allows participants to interact with instructors or key information-holders from their departments has been shown to enhance learning and transfer of information to the workplace (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Rollag, 2007). Experiential training may initially lower participants learning scores, but the knowledge gained is more likely to transfer to the workplace and be adapted by the new employee for everyday use (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008).

Incorporating an interactive component into orientations is shown to assist new hires with information retention and the use of their supervisors and peers as role models would help build collegial relationships. Focusing on establishing relationships between the new hire and the individual's supervisor and peers helps build a common ground on which to connect (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). The formation of a foundational relationship may be done in several ways, using a structured discussion during the orientation that continues in some way into the first few weeks of employment or establishing a mentoring relationship between the new hire and the individual's supervisor and one or more peers (Caruth et al., 2010; Collis & Winnips, 2002).

Many orientation programs incorporate a mechanism for evaluation, yet some of these evaluations focus mainly on gathering reaction data and may fail to assess participant learning, transfer of knowledge to the job, or the applicability of the orientation to the workplace. Ensuring that participants enjoy their on-boarding experience is important, but orientation developers concerned with a return-on-investment (ROI) strive to make the on-boarding sessions valuable beyond a simple

“warm welcome.” If the purpose of the orientation is to teach new hires about the organization and provide instruction on critical systems, it is important that program facilitators assess whether the information is being learned and to ensure the knowledge is relevant to the individuals, their jobs, and the organization (Brown, 2005).

In sum, many organizations might improve their new employee orientation practices by: (a) Reducing their emphasis on communicating policy and procedure information and focusing on building relationships between new hires and current employees, (b) Including participative learning opportunities that encourage new hires to interact with systems and procedures, (c) Incorporating goal oriented peer and supervisor interaction that allows the new employees to learn more about the individuals with whom they will be working, and (d) Evaluating the new hire orientation session to ensure new hires are learning and retaining the information they need to function effectively in the workplace.

Regardless of the business factors and variance in staff experience, organizations that choose to modify their orientation practices as detailed in the previous paragraph might realize one or more of the organizational outcomes of having a more effective onboarding process. The outcomes include a reduced level of stress and intention to leave among newly hired employees and an increased level of commitment, satisfaction, and productivity (Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996; Louis, et al, 1983). As of yet, no research found incorporates these orientation components and their expected organizational attitude outcomes into a single study.



## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to incorporate the orientation components and their expected organizational attitude outcomes into a single study. The orientation components include (a) Involving coworkers in relationship-building activities, (b) Including participative learning opportunities, (c) Incorporating goal oriented peer and supervisor interaction, and (d) Evaluating the new hire orientation session. Organizations that incorporate the components of effective orientations are expected to have employees who report lower levels of stress and intention to leave, and higher commitment, satisfaction, and performance levels.

To achieve the stated purpose, this research will assess orientation practices and the organizational attitudes of commitment, performance, satisfaction, stress, and intention to leave at one organization and compare those data to other organizations with similar orientation practices. The well-documented orientation process at a Midwestern graduate school serves as a case study for this research. It evolved from an inconsistent or non-existent effort to a daylong structured session and, based upon the research, the inclusion of an orientation process might relate to an increase in organizational attitude outcomes. The attitudes of employees that may change after the inclusion of the orientation session are the employees' stress level and intention to leave, which are likely to decrease, and their commitment, satisfaction, and performance levels, which are likely to increase, when compared to employees who hired without participating in the orientation process.

Additionally, the study will compare data collected at the Midwestern graduate school with data collected from other organizations. Each group studied at the school will be compared with data from organizations with a similar practice. This benchmark comparison will determine if the organizational attitudes at the school are comparable to those at other organizations. Companies that incorporate the components of effective orientations are expected to have employees who report lower levels of stress and intention to leave, and higher commitment, satisfaction, and performance levels.

The data collected in this study will capture orientation practices at several institutions and the resultant organizational attitudes of performance, satisfaction, commitment, retention, and stress. The data may be used to inform orientation administrators about the effectiveness of the orientation process and help them understand which components are most influential on attitudinal outcomes. Given the time and financial resources required to help a new hire be productive, orientation administrators will be able to focus their efforts on certain components to receive the benefit of organizational outcomes more quickly.

Based upon a review of the literature, organizations that incorporate the orientation components into their on-boarding process are more likely to benefit from positive organizational outcomes including increased performance, satisfaction, and commitment along with decreased stress and intention to leave. Used individually, the components may result in one or more attitudinal benefits, but there is limited research that combines all components into one study to determine which combination of components are the most influential upon organizational outcomes.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

A well-managed, well-planned, and well-executed new employee orientation program can be a powerful asset to organizations (Beasley, 1978; Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996). Many organizations use formal orientation programs to familiarize new employees with the organization and to meet their coworkers (Caruth et al., 2010; Klein & Weaver, 2000). The use of employee orientation programs is beneficial to organizations because they are shown to increase the likelihood that new employees will be productive more quickly, more committed to the organization, and more satisfied with their jobs (Boswell, Shipp, Payne, & Culbertson, 2009; Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983; Taormina, 2004). Other beneficial outcomes of orientations include reduced stress during the transition to the new job and an overall decrease in intent to leave during employees' tenure (Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983). Although the benefits of conducting orientations for new employees are well-documented, organizations continue to use them ineffectively.

Some organizations have governing bodies such as the Joint Commission on Accreditation and Hospitals (JCAH) that require all new employees receive certain information during their new hire orientation. These regulations frequently fail to specify the way in which the information is to be delivered and organizational pressures tend to result in a rushed on-boarding session with limited usefulness to new employees (Wolgin & Fluke, 1987). Although a governing board or an external source may dictate content, this is insufficient action to ensure an effective and easily comprehensible orientation.

Organizations without governing bodies like the JCAH identify the usefulness of orientation programming and create curriculum content using their own resources. In developing the on-boarding program, the knowledge of experienced training and development, organizational development, or human resources (HR) professionals may be used to help ensure program effectiveness. If experienced employees are unavailable, inexperienced staff members may be charged with creating orientation programming and having these individuals develop the program may unintentionally result in an ineffective orientation. Unfortunately, in some organizations, orientations may not be used at all due to a lack of support from management.

With this lack of consistency in the development, administration, and support for orientations, a variety of opinions and practices regarding on-boarding protocol are available to orientation developers. Some of these practices may be the result of inexperienced orientation administrators, managers requesting changes based on opinion, or lack of preliminary or informative research when developing the program. Understanding the purpose behind the implementation and the options available before developing an orientation may prove beneficial to developers.

### **New Employee Orientation**

New employee orientations are the most common form of training designed for a specific group of individuals, those who are new to an organization or position (Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996). Although orientations may be commonplace, the content and effectiveness of orientations can vary greatly (Klein & Weaver, 2000). In a later section,

an example of how an orientation was developed, implemented, and evaluated is used to elucidate the ideas presented. Generally, orientation programs are short in duration and designed to provide an introduction to the organization, a platform for meeting coworkers, and alleviate some of the stress associated with entering the new work environment (Wanous, 1992; Caruth et al., 2010). In general, there are three different types of orientation: pre-boarding, ad-hoc, and standardized programming.

**Pre-Boarding.** Some organizations use a pre-orientation process to prepare new employees for work in advance of their first day. During the time between the acceptance of the employment offer and the first day of employment, newly hired employees may receive access to organizational or job related information or employment and benefit paperwork. They may be contacted by peers or their supervisor or invited to participate in short informational meetings prior to their first official day of work (Cirilo & Kleiner, 2003). If used in conjunction with an ad-hoc or standardized orientation, a pre-orientation may allow additional time for other information and activities. Some organizations may rely solely on a pre-boarding orientation, expecting new employees to read the information and complete the forms prior to beginning work on their first day.

**Ad-Hoc .** Other organizations may choose to provide informal or ad-hoc orientations that may or may not be part of a larger program. In an ad-hoc orientation, new employees are typically given a self-paced “orientation checklist,” new hire manual, or similar outline to complete at work on their own within a predetermined timeframe.

Their supervisor or coworkers may help guide the ad-hoc orientation by leading them through certain parts of the checklist or providing information upon request. As a result, the effectiveness of ad-hoc orientation programs may vary greatly due to the lack of centralized administration and ineffective facilitation by coworkers and supervisors (Klein & Weaver, 2000). Ad-hoc orientations are frequently used when an organization's human resources or training departments are small or non-existent, when the new hire is separated geographically from a central human resources department, and in organizations where HR efforts lack managerial support and individual departments provide orientations to the best of their limited abilities.

**Standardized.** More developed organizations that recognize the merit of employee development activities tend to use standardized orientations. In this type of orientation, facilitators present information in a structured way and may encourage new employees to respond in specific, procedural ways when faced with certain situations. The information presented may reference unwanted behaviors in a discouraging way to limit their use, even if those methods are common practice (Jones, 1986). Standardized orientation programming delivered with predetermined learning outcomes is the focus of this research.

The three different types of orientations described may be used individually or combined. For example, the pre-orientation may be paired with an ad-hoc or standardized program. Similarly, an ad-hoc department-level orientation may be paired with a standardized organizational-level orientation. The modes of delivery may vary from in-

person classroom orientations to self-guided virtual sessions, or blended options that are a mixture of classroom and online programming. On the surface, orientation programming seems similar to training and development initiatives, yet differences exist.

**Relationship to Training.** Although orientation programming seems similar to training, it may be beneficial for administrators to view it as a separate initiative. The two share similar development processes, delivery formats, and evaluation methodologies, but key differences include the context of the information being relayed, achievement of the stated performance expectations, and the time frame of information delivery.

Orientations impart information about the context of performance such as the organizational environment in which work is performed, whereas training typically relays specific information about task performance and how one can improve in his or her current position (Holton, 1996; Wanous & Reichers, 2000; Wesson & Gogus, 2005). For example, in an orientation new employees may learn how the organization has grown and changed over time to meet increased demands versus learning about the tasks within their department and specific to their role in a specialized training. Orientation facilitators are less concerned about the nature of the work and focus their efforts on informing new hires about the cultural and organizational environment in which the work will be performed.

Orientations provide insight into how new hires will aid the organization in advancing its mission, while training may be geared toward the achievement of department goals or objectives (Holton, 1996; Wanous & Reichers, 2000). For example,

in an orientation, new employees may learn how the success of their department helps the organization reach its goals versus learning how individual goals help the department reach its objectives in a specialized training. Facilitators discuss how the work done by employees is tied to the success of the organization. Training programs typically enhance employee skills for professional development or aid in the achievement of department level initiatives.

The time frame for participation in new hire orientation occurs soon after entry into the organization (Caruth et al., 2010), whereas training typically occurs later and with more regularity in an employee's tenure (Wanous & Reichers, 2000). New hires typically attend orientation within their first few weeks of employment, while job specific and ongoing skill advancement training occurs after the individual has been introduced to the organization. One caveat to the timing of orientation versus training is that some organizations provide new employees with entry-level job-specific training soon after hire.

Similarities between new hire orientation and training include the process for development, use of similar delivery modalities, and evaluation methodologies. Typically, both orientation and training development begins with a needs assessment and consultation with subject matter experts (SMEs). Both can be delivered via self-paced computer-based programs, webinar, classroom, or virtual delivery. Orientations and trainings are concerned with imparting information to employees that will benefit their work experience and evaluating the learning that is taking place (Wanous & Reichers,



2000). Both can be stand-alone programs versus a process interwoven for a grander purpose and both are evaluated in a similar fashion (Wanous & Reichers, 2000).

Whether choosing to implement ad-hoc or standardized orientations, either of which may be enhanced with a pre-boarding process, administrators may benefit from recognizing that on-boarding programming is separate and distinct from any existing training curriculum. Understanding the differences between orientation and training helps developers, facilitators, and administrators focus their efforts to achieve the desired outcomes.

### **Purpose of New Employee Orientation**

The purpose of new employee orientation programming is to provide individuals with workplace information and to help them build a shared understanding of the organization. On-boarding may provide participants with a realistic preview of the job they will be doing, the department in which they will work, and the organization in which they are expected to function (Caruth et al., 2010; Louis, 1980). Based upon information new hires received during the recruitment process and their experiences in other organizations, individuals may have skewed perceptions of the organization and the work they will do. Orientations attempt to correct this disparity and introduce new employees to their place of employment in a realistic way.

During the recruiting process, HR representatives and hiring managers typically discuss and emphasize positive traits and benefits of working for an organization to entice and encourage candidates to accept offers of employment. Agents of the

organization may only briefly mention the reality of working for the company while completely omitting undesirable traits. Overemphasizing the positive aspects of the organization during the recruiting process may lead new hires to develop unrealistic expectations of their new work environment. Positively-biased recruitment information paired with a variety of experience levels results in new hires entering an organization with a set of preconceived perceptions, attitudes, and values (Verlander & Evans, 2007).

The new employees' preconceptions developed before their first day of work may help or hinder their success within the organization. One objective of the orientation process is communicating the culture and values of the organization to new hires (Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996) in order to mediate any unrealistic expectations new hires may have about the organization or the work they have been hired to perform (Louis, 1980). Qualified employees with unmet expectations are more likely to leave an organization within the first year of employment, thus the identification of these employees and the recalibration of their expectations benefits the organization with increased performance and decreased turnover (Verlander & Evans, 2007).

Ideally, an individual's cultural fit is evaluated during the hiring process and the organizational values are reinforced during orientation. Recruiters typically seek to hire individuals with cultural values and personal business habits similar to those espoused by the organization. Additionally, candidates typically look for an organization with values that mirror their own. A mismatch may occur when an organization misrepresents its culture or a candidate misidentifies with an organization (Chatman, 1991).

By communicating expectations and recalibrating new hire perceptions to align with the organization's culture and performance expectations, effective orientations increase the likelihood that new hires will experience less stress and be more productive and committed employees. Organizations that forego new hire orientation risk experiencing the effects of an ineffective process including increased stress, negative work attitudes, lower performance, and increased turnover (Boswell et.al., 2009; Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983).

The purpose of orientation programming is to help new employees better understand the organizational culture and to develop a shared understanding of relationships and processes to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes (Holton, 1996). Understanding the purpose behind conducting new employee orientations helps developers convince organizational decision makers of the merit inherent in on-boarding programming. Developing an orientation program that discusses the culture in an honest way and creates a shared understanding of the organizational intricacies is a difficult process.

### **Developing an Orientation**

The implementation and central management of new employee orientation is one of the main ways companies can help ensure that newly hired individuals have a positive experience when entering the organization (Holton, 1996). When conceptualizing the program, orientation developers take several preliminary steps including acquiring managerial support, determining the program content and objectives, identifying a

delivery format, and establishing an evaluation component (Duguay & Korbut, 2002). Incorporating each of these steps is essential to help ensure the program is met with little resistance, includes valuable information delivered in an enjoyable and understandable way, and consistently evaluated by participants and administrators.

**Managerial Support.** As with many other human resource initiatives, orientation developers may have to convince organizational decision makers of the initiative's benefits prior to implementation. This process usually includes discussing the purpose of the proposed on-boarding program, estimating the cost, and emphasizing the ROI benefits other organizations realize after its use, which include increased productivity, satisfaction, and commitment along with reduced stress and turnover (Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983). After decision makers approve the orientation initiative, the next challenge is to develop the program content.

**Orientation Development.** The content of new employee orientations will be different for each organization and perhaps for each entity within an organization. When developing the content for the orientation program, it may be helpful to consider the following questions: (a) Who will participate in the orientation? (b) When will the orientation be delivered? (c) What content will the orientation include? (d) How will the orientation be delivered? and (e) Why should we continue the program? (Wanous & Reichers, 2000).

### *Orientation Participants.*

“Who will participate in the orientation?” When answering this question during orientation development, administrators might consider the type of individuals who will be participating in the program. Generally, participants will fall into one of two groups, either they will be: (a) employees who are new to the organization or (b) employees who currently work for the organization and are moving to a new position, department, division, etc. (Wanous & Reichers, 2000). As they are already familiar with certain aspects of the organization, current employees transferring to a different division generally require a different type of orientation. The focus of this research is on individuals who have little to no knowledge of their new company’s history, mission, benefits, and internal relationships.

### *Orientation Timing.*

“When will the orientation be delivered?” After deciding who will be participating in the orientation, developers may then determine the timeframe in which the orientation is offered to new employees. Organizations are free to schedule the orientation at any time, but new hires will benefit most if the session is offered early in their tenure. Most organizations choose to offer on-boarding either on the new hire’s first day of employment or within the first few weeks of an employee’s start date (Caruth et al., 2010; Wanous & Reichers, 2000). New hires are most receptive to organizational information at the beginning of their employment and waiting too long to offer orientation may result in diminished learning motivation and increase the likelihood that

new employees will receive biased, misleading, out-dated, or incorrect information from other employees (Verlander & Evans, 2007).

*Orientation Content.* “What content will the orientation include?” The next challenge for developers is to determine the informational and relational content of the orientation session. When deciding upon content for the orientation, it is important for developers to solicit input from SMEs. Orientation developers might ask SMEs what information and which individuals new hires need to know within the first few days or weeks of employment (Duguay & Korbut, 2002). Specifically, information collected from managers may include what they are teaching their new employees about the organization within the first few days of the job. Information collected from current employees may include who and what they wished they had known during their first few weeks on the job. Typically, content includes organizational information, cultural information, policies and procedures, meeting supervisors and coworkers, and other basic yet essential information (Caruth et al., 2010).

*Organizational Information.* New employees receive organizational information in many ways, formally through participation in an orientation and informally by talking with peers and their supervisor. Peers and supervisors tend to forgo organizational information and provide more department or task level information initially, with organizational information presented secondarily and over time (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). To ensure new hires are receiving the same information, an overview of the

organization's history and mission can be included in structured orientation programming.

*Cultural Information.* Culture is one of the many factors that mitigate how well an individual will function within an organization (Chatman, 1991). During the orientation, new hires typically learn about the organization's values, the expected work ethic, and the climate of the workplace. Initial perceptions of an organization's culture affect the productivity, satisfaction, commitment, and retention rates of new employees (Kopelman, Brief, & Guzzo, 1990). Those who identify with the organization are likely to have a longer tenure when compared to those who have different cultural expectations.

*Policies and Procedures.* Traditionally, imparting organizational policies and procedures has been a major component of new employee orientation. In some cases, it may have been the only component (Beasley, 1978). In the early days of orientations, it was common for the facilitator to read policies and procedures from the employee handbook, delineating what employees could and could not do in the workplace. Examples of this practice may include outlining the anti-harassment or drug-free workplace policies and benefit enrollment procedures. Although this type of information is important, more recently it has become secondary to the demonstration of behavior and development of relationships (Rollag et al., 2005).

*Organizational Socialization.* Organizational socialization is the process of new employees learning about their jobs, responsibilities, and adapting to the implicit and explicit expectations and regulations of the organization (Klein & Weaver, 2000; Louis et al., 1983). Involving peers and supervisors in the new employee orientation process is likely to have positive effects on employees' satisfaction, commitment, and rapid assimilation to the organization (Caruth et al., 2010; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Interestingly, peer and supervisor involvement in orientation influences different employee attitudes.

Specifically, peers assist with orienting new employees by providing subtle values, norms, or expectations that may not be presented or understood by orientation facilitators or supervisors (Louis et al., 1983). Peers tend to provide new hires with more useful information about group process, how coworkers relate to one another and how the dynamic changes when the supervisor is involved (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Initially, relationships with coworkers are shown to positively influence new hire job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Holton, 1996), but this influence may diminish over time (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

Supervisors tend to provide new hires with more useful information about the organization when compared with peers (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Research into leader-member exchange indicates that the first five days of supervisor-new hire interaction are crucial in the establishment of expectations that predict future performance (Holton, 1996). Supervisor involvement in the orientation process impacts



new hire success or failure and has been linked to increased commitment, satisfaction, and tenure (Louis et al., 1983).

Creating an effective and comprehensive orientation may be a challenge for developers given all that is involved. It is important for developers to include an organizational overview, limit their reliance on policies and procedures to make up the bulk of the session, and include a behavioral and organizational socialization component. After developers have received approval for the orientation program, determined who will be included in the orientation sessions, when sessions will occur, and what information and behaviors will be included, its time to choose a delivery method.

*Orientation Delivery.* “How will the orientation be delivered?” When answering this question, developers are attempting to identify a delivery method for the orientation content. Information delivery can range from lecture-based classroom delivery to self-guided online resources or a blended format, which is a combination of several methodologies. In addition to determining how the information is to be delivered, developers may consider whether standardizing information for all employees or customizing it based upon employee type, location, or other variable is more appropriate.

Onsite and classroom-based orientations provide new employees with several benefits not possible with online delivery modules. Conducting the session onsite allows new hires to network with one another and meet the individuals presenting information to them. Many centrally administered orientations choose to present information in a structured group setting due to time and financial constraints (Wesson & Gogus, 2005).

By having the participants present onsite, developers may be tempted focus on relaying information and inadvertently omit more interactive experiences such as experimental learning or peer and supervisor interaction even if including these interactive component would enhance the orientation's outcome (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

Online orientations can be a useful tool as they provide employees with constantly updated sources for organizational and departmental information that is available for future reference, but they tend to lack an interpersonal component. Appropriate modeling of desired behavior is an important aspect of an effective orientation. Using organizational representatives to act out or model skills, allowing discussion of the modeled actions, and allowing participants to practice the behavior add an important component to the development of new hire interpersonal skills (Wanous & Reichers, 2000). Many of these benefits are not available or are more difficult and costly to administer with online orientations (Wesson & Gogus, 2005).

The way in which information is presented affects employees' attitudes as well. Presenting information in a structured group setting tends to increase satisfaction, commitment, and reduce intention to leave. Whereas, presenting information in an individually customized format can increase innovation and may result in lower levels of role conflict and ambiguity (Jones, 1986). Whether or not the information is structured or customized, the desired outcomes of both are important to consider.

When deciding upon a delivery method, developers choose between the more time-consuming in-person sessions versus a more easily updated and maintained online orientation. At the same time, developers determine the level of customization, be it a

standardized organizational orientation for all new hires or customized for groups of new employees based upon department, level, or other employment variable. After developing the content and choosing a delivery method, administrators may consider the best way to evaluate the success of their orientation.

***Orientation Evaluation.*** “Why should we continue the program?” The final question developers might consider refers to their ability to demonstrate the achievement of desired outcomes through an ongoing evaluation process. Organizations that have a structured orientation program typically collect some type of feedback. Common evaluation methods include assessing participant satisfaction with the information being presented, the delivery method or presenter, and a measure of overall satisfaction. Feedback may be used to modify the orientation once trends are identified and to support the viability of the program to organizational decision-makers (Brown, 2005).

Donald Kirkpatrick developed one of the more commonly used and comprehensive training evaluation tools (Brown, 2005) which includes four levels of evaluation: (a) reactions to the training, (b) what participants learned, (c) how well new behaviors transfer to the job (more commonly known as transfer of training), and (d) does the training bring about the desired outcomes. The levels of evaluation are rank ordered; meaning the first is the easiest to collect with the last being the most difficult or time-consuming. Of these four levels, the first two are used most frequently when evaluating orientation practices (Holton, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1996).

*Reactions.* Reactions to content and delivery methods are the most frequently used forms of feedback collected by orientation administrators (Brown, 2005; Holton, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1996). Collection of this type of data typically occurs immediately after the conclusion of the orientation session. An evaluation form is completed by participants who rate each question based upon how much they liked each portion of the orientation and submit it to the administrator for collection, review, and analysis (Brown, 2005).

When gathering reaction data, orientation administrators who ask specific questions, use written comment sheets, tabulate and quantify responses, keep the evaluation anonymous, and allow for additional comments typically receive more useful feedback (Kirkpatrick, 1996). Reaction information benefits orientation administrators because it gives an indication of how much participants liked the experience, more commonly known as “customer satisfaction,” and what can be done to improve the likability of the on-boarding program (Kirkpatrick, 1996; Brown, 2005). These results are typically considered a valid assessment of the orientation at an aggregate or overall level, given that the attitudes and motivations of participants will sway individual ratings (Brown, 2005).

*Learning.* To determine how much participants learn during the orientation, evaluators can develop a method for assessing the extent to which the principles, facts, or behaviors were absorbed by new hires. Assessing participant learning can be done in many ways, through either a testing protocol or topic specific quizzes. Administrators

may choose a pre- and post-test protocol to actively show that learning is taking place during the orientation session (Kirkpatrick, 1996).

In a pre- and post-test scenario, administrators give participants an initial assessment, also called a pre-test, prior to receiving new information to determine their initial knowledge or skill level. After the orientation is complete, the administrators give participants a second assessment, also known as a post-test. Comparison of the two test scores is an indication of how much was learned during the session (Kirkpatrick, 1996). Guidelines for creating pre- and post-test assessments for orientation learning include the use of SMEs to assist with question development, incumbent employees to answer and evaluate questions, and standardizing the orientation delivery and test protocol to prevent bias and priming from entering into the administrations of the assessments (Kirkpatrick, 1996).

Whether choosing to administer pre- and post-test assessments or to assess learning with quizzes or other measures, orientation administrators are encouraged to quantify the results. To ensure their assessment is valid and reliable, evaluators can attempt to measure learning objectively, use a control group to compare results, and statistically analyze learning data. The statistical process required may be beyond the abilities of some developers (Kirkpatrick, 1996). At the very least, simple computations, such as comparing the average before and after scores to determine if more questions were answered correctly, can be done to show participants are absorbing the information.

*Behavior.* Behavioral transfer of training is usually measured by the extent to which the information, techniques, or principles becomes ingrained in noticeable workplace changes. The concept of training transfer is based upon the idea that simply because people know the information or techniques is a poor indication that they actively use that knowledge appropriately in the workplace (Kirkpatrick, 1996). Individuals may simply be answering the questions in a socially acceptable way to receive a high score on the assessment or to avoid negative repercussions.

When addressing behavior results, training administrators who understand that in order for learning to transfer to the workplace participants must want to change, recognize their performance weaknesses, work in a climate responsive to change, and have a qualified training instructor (Kirkpatrick, 1996). Typically, the behavioral transfer of training is evaluated using a multi-rater evaluation system, a 360-degree performance assessment for example, approximately three or more months after training was administered. In the evaluation, subordinates, peers, and the employee's supervisor rate the participant, a comparison of these scores with self-ratings in an indication that behavioral change has occurred (Kirkpatrick, 1996).

*Results.* Assessing the results, also known as return-on-investment, of orientation includes determining its effects on bottom-line business measures such as cost reduction and productivity or personnel measures such as performance, attitude, and retention. Typically, ROI information is the most difficult to collect as there may be multiple moderating or confounding factors that influence how well an individual performs, how

the employee feels about the organization, and whether or not the employee intends to stay with the company (Kirkpatrick, 1996).

Providing return-on-investment data for orientation effectiveness may prove difficult for many orientation administrators who are unskilled in empirical research. Typically, gathering data at the reaction and learning levels satisfies the needs of most departments as behavioral and ROI data are more difficult and potentially more costly to gather (Kirkpatrick, 1996). Using the evaluation data from the first two levels, orientation administrators are able to assess what information new hires are learning, where they are having difficulty, what they like about the session, and what they dislike. The information can then be used to increase the effectiveness of the orientation programming.

Creating an effective, goal-oriented new employee orientation process can be a substantial undertaking for developers. Researching the purpose of orientations and how they benefit organizations is an important first step. Effectively communicating that information to gain managerial support is necessary to decrease resistance to the new initiative. Once achieved, developers have many questions to answer about the content, delivery, and evaluation of the orientation, but when done effectively their efforts may positively influence orientation outcomes which include increased commitment, satisfaction, and productivity, along with decreased stress and turnover (Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983).

## **Orientation Outcomes**

Employees who participate in a well-constructed orientation respond to the challenges of a new position more positively than those who receive little or no initial guidance (Cirilo & Kleiner, 2003). Managers may see anecdotal evidence of orientation outcomes, such as new employees asking fewer process and procedure questions, asking more informed organizational questions, or knowing the location of organizational support resources. Research into the organizational attitudes of employees who participate in an on-boarding process supports the assertion that employees who receive new hire orientation have increased levels of retention, commitment, satisfaction, and productivity, along with decreased levels of stress (Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983).

**Stress.** Stress is the somatic reaction to the demands in life and it can have both constructive and destructive effects on a person's well being. Constructive effects of stress can provide motivation to complete a task or prepare more thoroughly for a new experience. Destructive effects of stress can cause changes in a person's behavior that are detrimental to workplace performance such as a decrease in performance or ineffective coping mechanisms (Seegers & Elderen, 1996; Tricas Moreno et al., 2010). Heightened levels of stress that go unaddressed can lead to burnout, which can manifest as changes in health status, emotional turmoil, or negative attitudes and result in a loss of productivity (Freudenberger, 1975; Seegers & Elderen, 1996).

Employees new to an organization will experience a certain amount of stress associated with meeting new people and trying to learn new information while navigating



an unfamiliar environment. New hire stress includes feelings of uncertainty, unknowing, and powerlessness in the workplace. An effective orientation processes helps to decrease the destructive aspects of stress by providing individuals with useful information and tools to use throughout their tenure with the company to cope with the demands of their position. Employees who do not receive an orientation may be left to their own initiative to learn how to navigate the demands of the new workplace, which may result in an increase in their workplace stress (Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983).

**Commitment.** Organizational commitment is defined as an individual's psychological attachment to an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Glazer & Kruse, 2008). Individuals will typically exhibit one of three forms of commitment: (a) affective commitment – the individual identifies with and enjoys membership in the organization, (b) continuance commitment – the individual is financially or socially invested in the organization or lacks suitable opportunities outside the organization, or (c) normative commitment – the individual wishes to remain with the organization because of his or her sense of duty or obligation. Regardless of the primary mode of attachment, commitment levels can have a positive or negative impact on intention to leave the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Orientations effect new hire commitment through the establishment of a psychological contract between the individuals and the organization, which can contribute to feeling valued by and attached to the organization. Organizations that pay little attention to this process may be showing a lack of concern for new hires, which

might result in lower commitment to the organization. Conversely, organizations that place more emphasis on orienting new employees may increase their workplace commitment (Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983; Taormina, 2004; Wesson & Gogus, 2005).

Forming a psychological contract is only one aspect of commitment between new employees and their workplace, understanding and relating to the organization's cultural values is also important. When new employees have values that align with the organization's cultural values, this synergy results in a positive correlation with commitment (Chatman, 1991). Additionally, effective socialization of new employees with their peers and supervisor is strongly correlated with organizational commitment (Holton, 1996). High levels of commitment help moderate the relationship between job-related stress and a person's intention to leave the organization (Glazer & Kruse, 2008).

**Performance.** Employees who receive an effective orientation typically perform better and at a higher level than those who do not receive an orientation. It is important for supervisors to establish frequent communication routines with new hires early in the employment relationship. In so doing, the supervisor is actively managing the relationship, building trust, and increasing the performance of employees who value the supervisory relationship. Employees who find less value in the communication with their supervisors or who distrust their supervisor are likely to have lower levels of performance (Kacmar, Witt, Zivnuska, & Gully, 2003; Rich, 2001).

Organizations that ask supervisors to convey performance expectations during the orientation may receive the positive effects of increased performance levels from new

employees (Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983; Wesson & Gogus, 2005). As mentioned previously, the first five days of supervisor-new hire interaction are crucial in the establishment of expectations that predict future performance (Holton, 1996). When the organization and supervisors communicate expectations early and often, this typically results in higher levels of performance from new employees.

**Satisfaction.** Organizations that provide new employees with support and information during the orientation process may be directly influencing the new hire satisfaction level in a positive way. When employees are satisfied with their jobs they are able to identify with the purpose of their position and how it relates to the organization. When new hires receive accurate and organized information that prepares them for their position within the organization, a positive correlation with satisfaction can result (Boswell et al., 2009; Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983; Taormina, 2004; Wesson & Gogus, 2005).

Another factor present during orientation that influences satisfaction is socialization with peers and supervisors. When new hires have the opportunity to meet and socialize with their coworkers and supervisor during orientation their subsequent employee attitudes show a strong correlation with job satisfaction (Holton, 1996). Having peers and supervisors involved in the new hires orientation may result in individuals feeling more welcome and subsequently increase their satisfaction level. Building the initial relationships with peers and supervisors has become increasingly important and a new focus for orientation administrators (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

**Retention.** Orientation practices are shown to influence the retention of newly hired employees. Positive perceptions of the on-boarding process typically result in longer tenure with less intention to leave, while negative perceptions typically result in shorter tenure and a greater intention to leave (Boswell, et.al., 2009; Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983). Because perceptions of the orientation itself can be influential, it is important for administrators to monitor the satisfaction level with an appropriate evaluation tool.

Organizational socialization is a factor that can influence the retention rate of new employees. Ineffective socialization processes contribute to an increase in turnover (Holton, 1996). New hires who have a bad experience when being introduced to their peers and supervisor are likely to leave the organization sooner than new employees who have a positive experience. Effective organizational socialization practices have been linked to increased tenure (Caruth et al., 2010; Klein & Weaver, 2000; Louis et al., 1983). Interestingly, the relationship between the new hire and supervisor may have been partially established during the recruitment process.

Prior to new employee orientation, the relationship between the candidate and the hiring manager has been one of selling, negotiating, and convincing. The supervisor may be describing the positive aspects of the job and minimizing the negative realities to entice the candidate. Once the candidate accepts the position, the interaction changes to one of relationship-building and trust. A psychological contract is formed and must be upheld in fairness for both parties as any deviations may negatively influence the new hires' retention (Verlander & Evans, 2007).

**Outcome Effect Duration.** As evidenced in the previous sections, effective new employee orientation programs can have a positive influence on employee stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and retention. The benefits of on-boarding and its positive organizational outcomes can lead to an increase in productivity for the company (Cirilo & Kleiner, 2003; Klein & Weaver, 2000). The post-orientation duration of these positive effects can vary depending on the organizational outcome in question.

*Stress.* Orientation programs that are designed well can alleviate the stress caused by the transition into a new employment situation. During the session, if new hires learn about the organization, meet their supervisors and peers, and gain knowledge about their position, they may benefit from immediate stress reduction (Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996). Orientation sessions that provide new employees with information on stress reduction tactics and connect them with available social support can benefit from employees who are better able to manage their stress over time (Tricas Moreno et al., 2010).

*Commitment.* Organizations that establish an on-boarding process for new hires are taking a proactive step toward increasing employee commitment. When compared with employees who received no on-boarding support, newly hired employees that received an orientation in one study reported higher levels of organizational commitment up to six months after starting their new position (Klein & Weaver, 2000). Based upon

the literature reviewed, it remains unclear whether attending new employee sessions will have an effect on employee commitment beyond six months.

*Performance.* Performance of employees can vary depending on how well they relate to their supervisor and how well they understand what is expected. The presence of supervisors at orientation sessions coupled with a discussion of performance expectations and role clarification can lead to an initial increase in a new employee performance. Maintaining frequent communication in a constructive supervisor-employee relationship post-orientation can lead to increased performance over time (Kacmar et al., 2003). Conversely, if the communication within the supervisor-employee relationship established during the orientation becomes infrequent or negative, employee performance begins to diminish (Kacmar et al., 2003).

*Satisfaction.* Whether or not a new employee receives a positive socialization process can affect how satisfied the individual is with their position. Individuals who are denied the opportunity to socialize with coworkers and their supervisor report having consistently lower job satisfaction scores when compared to employees who receive an orientation (Boswell et al., 2009). The impact of an effective socialization process is most apparent early in employee tenure and tends to abate after about one-year of employment (Boswell et al., 2009).

*Retention.* One of the reasons organizations host on-boarding sessions is to welcome newly hired employees to the company. Individuals who feel appreciated by the organization are more likely to remain employees (Cirilo & Kleiner, 2003) and organizations that provide formal orientation programs benefit from employees who report a lower intention to leave when compared to employees who receive little or no on-boarding support (Holton, 1996). It remains unclear what effect orientation programs can have on the duration of a person's intent to remain with an organization.

When properly executed, orientations may reduce the stress of new employees by providing them with the information they need to navigate the initial weeks of employment and the tools to locate additional direction if needed. On-boarding sessions serve to reduce turnover if employees are satisfied with the process and receive proper socialization. Although the duration of outcomes effects may vary, orientations increase initial levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and productivity through the formation of a psychological contract and establishing performance expectations. With the information provided in a well-developed orientation, new employees can comfortably transition to their new positions.

### **Issues in New Employee Orientations**

As with any employee development initiative, there are issues that influence the effective delivery of new employee orientations. Some of these issues arise as organizations grow and feel pressure to offer a variety of orientation delivery options, either with multiple timeframes or methodology options. Other issues arise as developers

try to communicate too much information that may result in overload and decreased learning.

**Delivery Options.** As organizations grow, the delivery options for orientations increase as more financial resources become available. Some organizations may begin to offer multiple sessions on different days or provide virtual on-boarding options in addition to onsite sessions. As options increase, issues of participant motivation arise. If participants are given the option to choose a method of delivery, it is in the best interest of new hires if orientation administrators honor the requested delivery model to prevent adverse effects on participant motivation. If participants receive their primary delivery choice, their motivation increases. If training is mandated at certain times, it becomes more important for the orientation facilitator to keep the participants motivated and engaged (Baldwin, Magjuka, & Loher, 1991).

**Onsite Orientations.** Onsite orientations allow new hires to network with one another and meet the individuals presenting information to them. Having the orientations near the new employees' workplace makes it easier for their coworkers and supervisors to attend, if encouraged to do so. New employees benefit from meeting their peers and supervisors and building relationships with employees from other departments. Structuring the orientation so that new hires are meeting the right people, specifically those with knowledge about how the organization works and how to navigate procedures in various departments is important, but may be inadvertently omitted if the onsite



orientation is primarily focused on relaying didactic information (Rollag et al., 2005; Wesson & Gogus, 2005).

**Online Orientations.** Online orientations can be a useful tool as they provide employees with constantly updated sources for organizational and department information, which left online and available for future reference. Orientation developers may wish to consider their learning objectives and then assess whether onsite or online delivery would best achieve the desired outcomes. Online delivery may be better suited to specific types of organizational information, tutorials for completing forms or documentation of mandatory training for example, but ineffective for behavioral instruction. Organizations that rely exclusively on self-paced online tutorials for orientation purposes would seem to be purposefully removing opportunities for personal contact (Rollag et al., 2005; Wesson & Gogus, 2005).

**Information Overload.** Many organizations provide new hires with an abundance of information within their first few days of employment and believe this strategy is an efficient means of on-boarding new employees. Although providing information is important and some might call it a “necessary evil,” relying solely on this type of orientation neglects the relational aspects of work (Rollag et al., 2005) and omits the opportunity to practice using the information (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Rollag, 2007). Orientation sessions that include an abundance of information deemed necessary

for new hires to successfully navigate their first few weeks may benefit from including only that which is absolutely necessary and practicing its use.

**Organizational Socialization.** Some organizations may find it difficult to include peers and supervisors in orientation sessions due to busy schedules and conflicting perceptions of the importance of the orientation process. Convincing peers and supervisors that their involvement influences a new hire's initial organizational attitude is important. It may be prudent for organizations to include training efforts that address how departments will be welcoming a new employee to the team or require departments to conduct their own welcome sessions based upon a template provided by administrators (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Another option for organizational socialization is the development of a mentor program that structures what new hires will learn from their peers and supervisor within the first few weeks (Collis & Winnips, 2002).

**Peer Involvement.** Involving the new hire's peers in the orientation process helps ensure an immediate network of individuals with useful organizational information. Selecting the peers involved in on-boarding is an important process that may have negative outcomes if the wrong people are selected (Rollag et al., 2005). Yet another challenging task for orientation administrators is finding peers who can tactfully discuss the organization's negative aspects while presenting its benefits.

***Supervisor Involvement.*** Some supervisors believe that simply hiring the right person for the job is the extent of their involvement in the individual's orientation. The attitude exists that if the new employee is qualified for the position, then that person will be able to seek out the information needed to be productive (Rollag et al., 2005). Organizations may wish to spend some time informing supervisors of how their presence at the session and continued availability can positively impact new hire attitudes (Caruth et al., 2010; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

Many of the issues facing new employee orientations have transpired because of the advancement of technology, geographic displacement of employees, and the need for leaner organizations in which fewer employees are tasked with more work and have limited amounts of time for participating in the on-boarding process. The delivery options available to organizations continues to grow and become more advanced, onsite orientations remain the quickest and easiest model for newly developed orientations while online orientations continue to add an extra dimension, but can become impersonal if used exclusively. Overloading new employees with too much information is a risk all organizations face as they try to shorten the learning curve. Finally, the organizational socialization process will continue to be confounded by the importance placed on the orientation process and by tight schedules.

## **Summary**

New employee orientations may be one of the most widespread organizational development initiatives in today's organizations. They are designed to ease the transition

of new employees into the workplace, yet their development may be secondary to other human resource initiatives. The effectiveness of orientations can be limited by a lack of consistency and understanding in their development, administration, and evaluation. Companies that develop, administer, and evaluate orientations are more likely to realize the organizational outcomes of effective on-boarding including increased commitment, satisfaction, and performance along with decreased stress and intention to leave. By contrast, companies that deem orientations unimportant may suffer from diminished organizational outcomes.

Orientations typically fall into one of three types or a combination thereof: (a) Pre-boarding sessions occur before the first day of employment and require new hires to complete forms and reading on their own time, (b) Ad-hoc orientations are informal, typically self-directed with the aid of a checklist or manual, and occur during at work during a person's downtime, and (c) Standardized orientations are formal programs that present information in a structured setting either virtual or in-person. As organizations become more complex and geographically dispersed, they may find that a combination of orientation types is more cost effective. Additionally, the use of technology can change the on-boarding process, for example individuals could view structured presentations via the Internet as a part of their pre-boarding or ad-hoc orientation.

Using technology to enhance versus replace the orientation process is a new challenge. Technological options including web-conferencing, online training, instant messaging, and social networking can be used to bridge the geographic barriers between offices. Given that one limitation of online orientations is that they limit interpersonal

opportunities, the use of instant messaging, web-conferencing, and social media seem beneficial because these technologies allow individuals to interact in a personable way while online. To reduce financial barriers, smaller organizations could use free services such as Facebook and Twitter to connect employees with information and each other.

Orientation administrators may view on-boarding as a one-time event that is separate from other organizational development initiatives, but administrators may benefit from adopting the attitude that on-boarding is a constant and continual process. When one considers the changing nature of business and technology, viewing any organizational change as an on-boarding opportunity may prove beneficial. Organizations can take the opportunity to orient existing employees to management's new expectations that result from the upcoming change. Providing existing employees with well-structured and well-developed information on the new state of the organization can provided them with a clearer sense of purpose and understanding.

Generally, the stated purposes of orientations are to provide newly hired individuals with information about the organization and ease their stress during the transition to their new position. Rarely do on-boarding developers consider that the orientation serves to correct misinformation given to the newly hired employee during the recruiting process and recalibrate any unrealistic expectations. In line with viewing on-boarding as a continual process, administrators may wish to better understand their organization's recruiting process and encourage the accurate portrayal of the company when managers first meet with potential employees during interviews.

When creating orientation programming, developers face many challenges including gaining managerial support, determining the content and delivery methodology, and developing a way to show that the program is having the desired impact. When attempting to gain managerial support, developers may benefit from having evidence of how effective orientations can enhance an organization's performance. Developers may also benefit from considering the use of technological applications to enhance the usability of the on-boarding session to all employees versus limiting the usability only to those who are in the room during the lecture. Additionally, assessing what new employees are learning during the on-boarding process can aid in showing the programs usefulness. Too often, orientation administrators focus exclusively on collecting reaction data, which is simply an indication of how well the participants liked their on-boarding experience versus assessing what participants learned during the session.

Organizations that dedicate themselves to creating an effective on-boarding process may benefit from increased commitment, performance, satisfaction, and decreased employee stress and intention to leave. Including the necessary components needed to achieve each of the desired organizational outcomes can be a time consuming and costly endeavor. Organizations may face challenges among current employees who may be jealous of the welcome and support new employees will receive or managers who resist adhering to the structure required under the new on-boarding program. Companies may need to reallocate valuable resources to creating and evaluating their new employee orientation program or be creative in the use of the available time, money, and talent.

The advent of new technologies, ways of working, and the need for leaner organizations challenge the effectiveness and even the existence of traditional classroom orientations. A company can use its intranet site, e-learning software, or social media sites to provide employees with unlimited access to orientation materials, yet this dehumanization of the on-boarding process removes the possibility of learning the social nature of the workplace. Even with all of the technological options available, relying solely on virtual orientations may inadvertently encourage information overload and the use of social media as a substitute for human contact is questionable. Additionally, virtual orientations make evaluation of the on-boarding tenuous as it may become difficult to distinguish what a new hire is learning from the online information versus what they have learned from coworkers.

Conversely, virtual orientations could be a valuable resource in the modern lean workplace where employee time is even more valuable than in the past. Online on-boarding allows employees to learn about the organization when it best fits their schedule and that of their department. They reduce the time commitment required to receive the orientation in person, but might require a new employee's manager or peers to burden some responsibility for ensuring the employee understands the content. Orientation administrators would not only be tasked with developing and evaluating an effective online orientation, but also ensuring that managers and peers understand and are complying with the on-boarding process.

When one considers the research on the benefit of including a new employee's peers and supervisor in the orientation process, it is clear that they play a key role in the

socialization of new employees. Orientation administrators may face resistance from these individuals when encouraging them to participate in on-boarding due to a lack of understanding or unwillingness to change their behaviors regarding new hires.

Administrators may benefit from finding a way to allow existing employees to benefit from the orientation process by providing them with recognition for participation or allowing them to participate in the development and design process to reduce their resistance.

Implementing an on-boarding process is not without challenges. The literature reviewed provides insight into the purpose of the new hire orientations, their development, and organizational outcomes, yet the complexity of the modern organization and the availability of technological options can discourage orientation developers. Orientation administrators may also have to contend with geographical barriers, organizational resistance, and time consuming work when developing an on-boarding process. Additionally, the uniqueness of each organization and its employees adds to that complexity.

### **New Employee Orientation at a Midwestern Graduate School**

New Employee On-Boarding (NEO) is orientation process at the Chicago Campus of the Midwestern graduate school, which typically takes place on a new hire's first day and is guaranteed to occur within the first two weeks of employment. The purpose of the NEO is to provide new hires with information about the school and certain departmental functions, processes, and procedures. The NEO is coordinated and facilitated by members



of the Human Resources Department, with representatives from other departments presenting as needed (Allee, Craig, & Lemus, 2009)

**History.** Prior to the development and implementation of the NEO, new employees at the Midwestern graduate school received minimal guidance after they were hired. It was common for new hires to start working without a formal greeting or meeting with HR to complete paperwork and discuss benefits. The treatment of new employees varied greatly by department. Some departments would host a welcome breakfast or similar event to introduce the community to the new employee; other departments would forgo a welcome event. It was common for members of the HR staff to learn of new hires days or weeks after they had started working, which has legal implications and caused many administrative mishaps with the employees' benefits and pay. Many employees began to reference their dissatisfaction with their new hire experience when speaking with HR, which prompted the department to conduct a focus group to gather more information.

**Development.** The structure for the all-day orientation began to emerge as feedback was collected in April 2008 during a SME focus group, which consisted of managers and recently hired employees. During the focus group participants were asked about their new hire experiences and what other organizations for which they have worked had done to orient new employees. Participants cited differences in treatment during their first few weeks ranging from "warm welcomes" that included breakfast and

department gatherings to brief discussions with their supervisor and being shown their workstation. The responses indicated that new employees at the school would benefit from a more thorough orientation, with presentations on organizational and departmental policies and procedures, and consistent treatment of all new hires (Allee et al., 2009).

After collecting data from the SME group, members of the HR staff determined which departments would be appropriate to provide the information identified as useful. Departments included Human Resources, Facilities, Information Technology, Enrollment Services, and Accounting. HR staff members also chose to include information on the school's history, mission that would be presented by a representative from the executive leadership, and academic programming presented by a member of the academic leadership. The Marketing Department was asked to relay emergency communication information, discuss media relations, and coach new hires on basic email etiquette.

Each department was given a few weeks to draft a presentation that was delivered to and reviewed by a new SME panel in May 2008, which consisted of HR staff members and a mixture of recently hired and incumbent employees. The SME group evaluated the content and delivery of the department information and provided feedback on the presentations. Department representatives incorporated the feedback provided and finalized their presentations for delivery to new employees. This process resulted in the Midwestern graduate school's first coherent acclimation and orientation process for all new employees.

**Inception to March 2009.** At inception, the NEO schedule varied significantly due to presenter availability. Each module was at least 25 minutes in length. The first iteration of the NEO began at 8:30 am with a welcome breakfast at which all current employees were invited to meet the new hires. Presentations began immediately following the breakfast at 9:00 with an overview of the school, its history, mission, and annual goals. After the organizational overview, the academic overview typically began at 9:30 and covered academic affairs, programs, and services, followed by a ten-minute break, and then various department level presentations covering facilities and mailroom services, human resource policies and procedures, and benefits.

At approximately noon, the new employees would have lunch with their managers or selected department representatives until about 1:00 pm. After lunch new hires listened to two more department level presentations, typically Enrollment Services and Accounting, but this again varied based upon the presenters' schedules, and then new employees received a tour of the campus. The tour lasted about 90 minutes and ended with new hires visiting the mailroom, receiving their ID badges, and taking a short break. The final portion of the NEO began at 4:00 pm and included information from the final two departments, typically IT and Marketing. The entire orientation typically lasted from 8:30 am until 5:00 pm (Allee et al., 2009).

**Content.** The content of each presentation contained select department information geared toward new employees. It was presented in an overview format, giving specific contact information for follow-up questions. In the morning portion, new

employees typically learned about the history, mission, values, and culture of the Midwestern graduate school, the programs and services of Academic Affairs, building policies, and business card procurement procedures. They learned about the employee intranet, HR policies and procedures, the performance appraisal process, and benefit options (Allee et al., 2009). The morning schedule varied as needed to accommodate conflicts in presenter schedules.

In the afternoon, a representative from Enrollment Services presented information on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which pertains to the use and confidentiality of student information, the Accounting Department talked about payroll, petty cash, purchase orders, and budgeting tools. A member of the IT team discussed services, policies, and a technology “how-to,” and lastly, a member of the Marketing Department presented on core messaging, email and font usage, faculty profiles, and emergency closing information (Allee et al., 2009). The afternoon schedule varied as needed to accommodate conflicts in presenter schedules.

Each module was at least 25 minutes in length with the human resources, benefits, and enrollment services presentation lasting about 45 minutes each. Each presenter included time for questions in their presentation and was required to bring their own handouts and supplementary information to distribute to the new hires.

***Evaluation.*** Paper-based session evaluations were collected at the end of the NEO and consisted of a total of 23 questions, 18 quantitative questions, and five qualitative prompts. The questions were designed to collect reaction data, as defined by Kirkpatrick.

The questions are detailed in Appendix A. Ratings for the first 18 questions, two per presentation are based on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 being "Poor" and 5 being "Excellent." Participants could also respond to five open-ended questions assessing the overall perceptions of the day at the end of the survey. The evaluation was anonymous and all responses were kept confidential (Allee et al., 2009).

*Evaluation Results.* An initial evaluation of the reaction data occurred in March 2009 with the results for the New Employee On-Boarding session being positive at the aggregate level. Overall, the satisfaction rating for the NEO program was 4.4 with individual module ratings being between 4.2 and 5.0. Participants were most satisfied with the Marketing and Academic Affairs modules, which received average scores of 4.56 and 4.62 respectively, and least satisfied with the IT and Accounting modules, which received ratings of 4.25 and 4.40 respectively (Allee et al., 2009).

Responses to the five open-ended questions revealed that participants wanted more information on benefits, accounting, and information technology topics. Participants were dissatisfied with the perceived length of the orientation, room temperature, and computer and projector malfunctions. Another issue of concern was the order of the presentations. Due to presenter availability for certain NEO sessions, the school Overview and Academic Affairs presentations occurred later in the day as opposed to the beginning of the day, which participants preferred (Allee et al., 2009).

Participants most enjoyed the opportunity to network with fellow new employees and members of the community as well as the perceived thoroughness of the orientation.

Participants appreciated the passion of the presenters and found the tour of the campus facilities beneficial. The majority, 84% of participants, provided additional comments and praised the NEO as worthwhile and thorough. Using the feedback provided by participants on their evaluation forms, the human resources department implemented a process for continuous improvement.

***Continuous Improvement.*** To ensure the information presented during New Employee On-Boarding remained current and relevant and the satisfaction with the session remained high, the overall NEO administration and quality were to be reviewed every six months. Small modifications were implemented as needed. Typically, major changes to the content occurred after the data collected from participant evaluation forms was compiled and reviewed, usually twice per year.

Upon completion of the March 2009 review, the NEO was shortened, department presentations were reviewed for accuracy and required information. Internal human resources procedures were changed to provide new employees with additional information prior to their orientation session, essentially creating a voluntary pre-orientation.

Based upon feedback collected in March 2009, 37% of participants were dissatisfied with the length of the NEO or the facilities. As a result, the NEO was shortened by 1.5 hours. Orientation administrators began using a “preferred schedule” with an HR representative presenting additional modules when needed to maintain the order of presentations. The schedule was tightened to decrease lag time between

presenters and unscheduled breaks. The orientation was then scheduled to be in the same room for every session to reduce the frequency of complaints about technical issues and confusion over location (Allee, 2009).

The typical workday at the Midwestern graduate school begins at 9:00 am, which meant a majority of current employees were not on campus and able to attend the 8:30 am welcome breakfast. To improve attendance at the welcome event, the welcome breakfast was discontinued and replaced with a welcome luncheon that occurred during the noon lunch hour. The HR Department continued to provide breakfast for the new employees participating in the NEO, but the community event was replaced with a pizza and salad luncheon (Allee, 2009).

Each department that presented information during the orientation was prompted to review and edit their presentation periodically to ensure participants were receiving the most current information from each department. A member of the Human Resources staff attended all orientations to monitor the presentations, remove redundant material, and make suggestions to department presenters on how they could improve the content or delivery of their module (Allee et al., 2009).

The Human Resources Department created an offer packet that was sent to new hires via postal mail. The packet included voluntary pre-orientation material such as the school's benefit summary, academic prospecti, and annual report that new hires could review before their first day. Additionally, a staff member in the Human Resources Department created a three-ring binder, given to each new hire on the individual's first day, that included copies of all presentations and benefit information, including forms, in

a more structured way. The benefits presentation was modified to include an additional 15 minutes to allow for questions (Allee et al., 2009).

The two lowest scoring modules, Accounting and Information Technology, were reviewed with department presenters and modified to include more information on certain systems and procedures that had been omitted from earlier NEO sessions. Modifications primarily consisted of reorganizing information and providing pictorial representations of commonly used computer processes, applications, and systems (Allee et al., 2009). The modules were revised primarily by a member of the Human Resources staff and presented to the department representatives as a more organized option.

The final major modification was the creation of an introductory presentation. The new presentation covered what participants could expect from the orientation session, structured the tax form and ID collection process, and incorporated an interactive game that encouraged participants to record specific information throughout the day. The presentation occurred at the beginning of the orientation session, and prompted new employees to introduce themselves, eat the breakfast provided, organize their materials for the day, and ask any initial questions (Allee et al., 2009).

With these modifications, orientation administrators hoped to improve reaction scores in the areas rated lowest and improve the participants' perceptions of the length of the session. By supplying new hires with additional organizational and benefit information prior to their first day, it became possible for them to come to the orientation with more informed questions or better equipped to make decisions and submit benefit



paperwork early. The success of these changes was assessed in November 2009 upon review of evaluations collected during the intervening months.

**March 2009 to November 2009.** Between March 2009 and November 2009, the NEO followed the “preferred schedule” whenever possible and modules were rarely rescheduled due to presenters being unavailable at the designated time. Following the preferred schedule, the day began with the introductory presentation, which was a new addition based upon the feedback compiled in March 2009. During this module, the presenter outlined the day, explained the required personnel forms, collected and copied identification materials, and prompted each participant to provide a brief introduction.

An overview of the institution and its history and an overview of academic programs and offerings followed the introductory module. After these overviews, participants took a short break. The break was followed by department-level presentations that covered facilities and mailroom services, human resource policies and procedures, and benefits. Once the final morning presentation was completed, the participants were treated to a private lunch, which allowed them to eat and relax without interruption. The private lunch was followed by a 30-minute opportunity to meet coworkers and their supervisor (Allee, 2009).

After lunch, two more department-level presentations were given, typically Enrollment Services and Accounting, followed by a tour of the campus. Upon completion of the tour, which was shortened to 1 hour, new hires received their ID badges and took a short break. After the final break, new hires received information from the final two

departments, typically IT and Marketing. The entire orientation typically lasted from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm. Participants were invited to use the time from 4:00 pm until 5:00 pm to complete unfinished paperwork, begin working on benefit forms, and ask the HR Representative questions either publically or in private. At the beginning of each semester, presenters were informed of the time, dates, and location they would be presenting their department's module. This process standardized the orientation schedule, while remaining flexible enough to accommodate conflicts if they arose (Allee, 2009).

**Content.** The content of each presentation was geared to new employees and presented in an overview format, giving specific contact information for follow-up questions. Time for questions at the end of each presentation was removed as participants typically had none, asked their questions during the presentation, or waited until the end of the day to ask for additional information. Aside from the changes listed in the following paragraph, the content of the presentations remained consistent with that from the inception of the NEO through March 2009, albeit updated with current and new information as needed.

The Enrollment Services presentation was shortened and included only FERPA information, which pertains to the use and confidentiality of student information, FERPA contact information, and an informal quiz assessed what participants had learned. The Accounting Department presented on payroll, petty cash, and purchase orders. The module included step-by-step screen shots for the payroll and purchase order systems and briefly mentioned tools available for director-level employees. A member of the IT team

discussed services, policies, and a technology “how-to,” which included screen shots for accessing email via the web and other frequently used systems (Allee, 2009). Although these changes seem minor, they had the desired effect on evaluation responses.

***Evaluation.*** A 27-question paper-based session evaluation assessed participant reactions to the orientation. The evaluations, collected at the end of the NEO, consist of 20 quantitative questions and seven qualitative prompts. The questions are detailed in Appendix B. Ratings for the first 20 questions, two per presentation, are based on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "Poor" and 5 being "Excellent." Participants could also respond to 7 open-ended questions that assess overall perceptions of the day. Participants had the option of including their name and the date of the orientation allowing the opportunity for the facilitator to follow-up on questions or concerns if needed. Even with this option, all responses to the survey were confidential (Allee, 2009)

***Evaluation Results.*** In November 2009, the overall results for the New Employee On-Boarding session were again positive. The average rating for the overall session was 4.7, up from 4.4 in March 2009. The satisfaction rating for individual modules was between 4.5 and 5.0, an increase from 4.2 to 5.0 during the March 2009 review. Participants were most satisfied with the Overview, Human Resources, and Benefits presentations and remained least satisfied with the Accounting and Information Technology modules (Allee, 2009).

Responses to the open-ended questions revealed that the modifications to the Accounting, Benefits, and IT presentations prompted by the feedback compiled in March 2009 improved their overall average scores. Participants continued to enjoy the opportunity to network with other new employees and members of the community and the thoroughness of the orientation. Participants also appreciated the different presenters and the tour of the campus (Allee, 2009).

The NEO was shortened by 1.5 hours in March 2009 and held in the same room each semester. These changes reduced the frequency of complaints about the length and technical issues. In March 2009, 37% of participants were dissatisfied with the length of the NEO or the facilities. Only 10% expressed this opinion in November 2009. The development of a “preferred schedule” decreased the dissatisfaction with the order of presentations, lag time between presenters, and unscheduled breaks (Allee, 2009).

New areas for improvement emerged from the November 2009 evaluation analysis. Participants were dissatisfied with the amount of paper used in the NEO to create the various binders as well as the amount of paperwork they must complete either on their first day or within 30 days. Participants also felt that the FERPA, Accounting, and Benefits presentations could be more informative. The HR department may choose to address these areas in its internal continuous improvement process.

### **Case Study Summary**

Prior to June 2008, employees at the Chicago Campus of the Midwestern graduate school received no structured orientation after being hired. Individuals may have received

a brief benefits review, but were provided with no other information about the organization or its policies. Beginning in June 2008, the Human Resources Department implemented New Employee On-boarding, a day-long orientation session for all newly hired staff and faculty. Based upon a review of participant feedback, the NEO system underwent revision in March 2009 to include a more participative and interactive format, decrease lag between presentations, and reduce technical issues. A second review took place in November 2009, at which time additional suggestions for improvement were proposed including ways to reduce paperwork and make orientation content continuously available to all staff and faculty members. At this time it is unclear whether the changes mentioned above were included in the orientation, if other changes were made, or if the orientation session continues to exist.

### **Hypotheses**

Based upon a review of the new hire orientation, organizational socialization, and training evaluation literature, there are four components that help create a successful orientation process: (a) relationship-building activities, (b) experiential learning opportunities, (c) peer and supervisor involvement, and (d) evaluating the orientations effectiveness. Including these components typically results in lower stress levels among new hires and decreased intention to leave. Additionally, these orientation practices may result in increased commitment, productivity, and satisfaction levels among new hires. The data collected in this study will explore the evolution of the orientation program at the Midwestern graduate school from no orientation, to a lecture-based orientation, to an

interactive orientation to determine if the program is influencing the organizational outcomes indicated in the research. Data will also capture current orientation practices at several institutions and resultant organizational attitudes.

The first area of study will assess employees at the school who received no orientation support after being hired. These individuals received minimal attention when starting their employment with the school and research indicates that their organizational attitudes will differ from those held by employees who received an orientation.

*Hypothesis 1. Employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received no orientation will report a higher level of stress and will be more likely to leave the organization. They will also report lower levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance on the self-report measure developed for this study when compared with employees who received an orientation.*

The second area of the study will assess employees at the Midwestern graduate school who were hired between July 2008 and March 2009. These individuals received the first iteration of the NEO program, which was lecture-based and included a structured welcome, guided campus tour, and peer and supervisor networking. Research indicates that these employees will report organizational attitudes different from those in Hypothesis 1.

*Hypothesis 2. Employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received a predominately lecture-based orientation will report a lower level of stress and will be less likely to leave the organization when compared with employees who received no orientation. They will also report higher levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance on the self-report measure developed for this study when compared with employees who received no orientation.*

The third area of the study will assess employees at the Midwestern graduate school who were hired between March 2009 and November 2009. These individuals received the second iteration of the NEO program, which was more interactive and included a structured welcome, guided campus tour, and peer and supervisor networking. The second iteration of the NEO also included a revised and shortened schedule, more benefit information, step-by-step instructional information, and additional minor changes. Research indicates that these employees will report organizational attitudes different from those in hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2.

*Hypothesis 3. Employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received a more interactive orientation will report a lower level of stress and will be less likely to leave the organization when compared with employees who received a predominately lecture-based orientation or no orientation. They will also report higher levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance on the self-report*

*measure developed for this study when compared with employees who received a different type of orientation.*

Individuals employed by other organizations will likely report a multitude of orientation experiences and organizational outcomes. Those who have had an orientation with any of the components will likely have an organizational outcome that further supports the research mentioned previously. Information collected from these companies will be compared at the aggregate level to each group studied at the Midwestern graduate school.

*Hypothesis 4. When compared to the aggregate data collected from other organizations using the self-report measure, outcomes from employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received no orientation are expected to be similar to those gathered at organizations without an orientation. Specifically, employees at the school are expected to have similar levels of stress and intention to leave when compared with other organizations. Employees at the school are also expected to have similar levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance when compared to other organizations without an orientation.*

*Hypothesis 5. When compared to the aggregate data collected from other organizations using the self-report measure, outcomes from employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received primarily a lecture-based orientation*



*are expected to be similar to those gathered at organizations with comparable orientation practices. Specifically, employees at the school are expected to have similar levels of stress and intention to leave when compared with other organizations. Employees at the school are also expected to have similar levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance when compared to organizations with a comparable orientation.*

*Hypothesis 6. When compared to the aggregate data collected from other organizations using the self-report measure, outcomes from employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received a more interactive orientation are expected to be similar to those gathered at organizations with comparable orientation practices. Specifically, employees at the school are expected to have similar levels of stress and intention to leave when compared with other organizations. Employees at the school are also expected to have similar levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance when compared to organizations with a comparable orientation.*

Finally, individuals who have had an orientation with all four components will likely have an organizational outcome that further supports the research mentioned previously. The employees at an organization, which included relationship-building activities, experiential, learning opportunities, peer and supervisor interaction, and training evaluations in their new hire orientations, are likely to report higher levels of

performance, satisfaction, and commitment along with lower levels of stress and intention to leave. Information collected from these companies will be compared at the aggregate level of organizational outcomes at the Midwestern graduate school.

*Hypothesis 7. When compared to the aggregate data collected from other organizations using the self-report measure, aggregate level employee outcomes at the Midwestern graduate school are expected to be less than those gathered at organizations that incorporate relationship-building activities, experiential learning opportunities, peer and supervisor participation, and learning evaluations. Specifically, employees at the school are expected to have higher levels of stress and intention to leave when compared with other organizations. Employees at the school are expected to have lower levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance when compared to organizations that incorporate relationship-building activities, experiential learning opportunities, peer and supervisor participation, and learning evaluations.*

The data collected in this study will capture current orientation practices at several institutions including the Midwestern graduate school and resultant organizational attitudes of employees. The data may benefit orientation administrators, helping them understand which components are most impactful on organizational outcomes. Given the time and financial resources required to help a new hire be productive, orientation

administrators will be able to focus their efforts on certain components to receive the benefit of organizational outcomes more quickly.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This research explored the New Employee On-Boarding program at the Chicago campus of the Midwestern graduate school and compared the organizational outcomes of participants to aggregate data collected from employees at other organizations. As stated in the Literature Review, there are four main components that help create a successful orientation process: (a) relationship-building activities, (b) experiential learning opportunities, (c) peer and supervisor participation, and (d) evaluating the orientation effectiveness. Including these components in an orientation typically results in lower stress levels among new hires and decreased intention to leave. Additionally, these practices may result in increased productivity, satisfaction, and commitment levels among employees.

To gather data regarding hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, an electronic self-report survey was distributed to all employees at the Chicago Campus of the Midwestern graduate school, including full-time staff and faculty. All data collected from the voluntary survey was kept confidential. To gather data regarding hypotheses 4, 5, 6, and 7, the same survey was distributed to students and alumni of the school and to members of the researchers business and social network. As with the graduate school sample, participation was voluntary and all data collected was kept confidential.

This study was designed to limit the psychological stress and potential outside influences on participants by standardizing the communication participants receive. All participants were informed of the research being conducted, their part in the study, and their options for participation. Individuals who agreed to the informed consent statement

could elect to enter a raffle for one of five \$50 gift cards as incentive for their participation. Individuals who agreed to the informed consent statement could also elect to receive a copy of the results.

## **Participants**

The participant population in this study consisted of approximately 3,500 individuals. The individuals associated the Chicago Campus of the Midwestern graduate school, which included the current student population, staff and faculty, and alumni from the Business Psychology Department, were given the opportunity to participate via an electronic survey invitation. The researcher used social and business networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to recruit additional participants not affiliated with the school. The recruitment email and all social networking messages prompted participants to forward the survey invitation to their friends and colleagues, thus widening the subject pool.

The population included individuals with varying levels of work experience. This unstructured sampling method increased the likelihood of sampling error due to its opt-in nature. However, the purpose of this study was to compare orientation practices and organizational attitudes at the Midwestern graduate school with those of other organizations, as such a nonrandom sample was sufficient (Neuman, 2006). For significant survey results, approximately 150 responses were required and no more than 400 were expected. The researcher received a total of 264 responses to the survey.

To recruit participants, the researcher worked with the Institutional Research

Board to gain access to all employees and students. The researcher collaborated with the Business Psychology Department to contact alumni and invite them to participate in the research. Individuals invited to participate in the study received an email (Appendix E) in which the researcher presented the research being conducted, informed participants of their part in the study, and detailed the instructions for participation. If an individual elected to participate in the study, he or she clicked a link within the email invitation that directed the participant to the informed consent statement (Appendix C). Participants who acknowledged their consent were given access to the survey, the results of which were accessible only to the researcher and designees.

## **Design**

For the purposes of this research project, the researcher collected data via a single self-report survey administered over a three-week period. Had the researcher required additional time for data collection, the administration period could have been extended up to three additional weeks for a total of six weeks to gather data. Participants responded to the survey at their convenience. Responses to the survey provided the researcher with all the data required to complete the study.

Data collected from participants who indicated they worked for the Midwestern graduate school were divided into three groups based upon their orientation experiences, those who received no orientation, those who received a didactic orientation, and those who received an interactive orientation. The data were quantitatively examined using statistical analyses including comparison of means and the use of multiple analysis of

variance (MANOVA) to determine if any change between the groups was significant. Using this data, the researcher assessed the likelihood that the improvements in the orientation process significantly influenced reported organizational outcomes. A statistically significant increase in the score for each organizational attitude may indicate the orientation had the desired effect.

Data collected from participants who indicated they work for other organizations were divided into four groups, those who received no orientation, those who received a didactic orientation, those who received an interactive orientation, and those who received an orientation that included the four commonalities. The data were quantitatively examined using statistical analyses including comparison of means and the use of MANOVA to determine if differences between group scores from other organizations and group scores from the Midwestern graduate school were significant. Using this data, the researcher assessed the likelihood that the orientation process at the school produces organizational outcomes that were significantly different from other organizations. A statistically significant difference in the score for each organizational attitude may indicate the school provided its employees with an orientation that is more effective or less effective than other organizations.

The data collected during this research relies heavily upon participants accurately remembering their orientation experience and honestly reporting their organizational attitudes via the self-report measure. Participants responded to the survey at a time and in a place convenient for them and there are many factors that may have influence the accuracy of the self-report data including participant motivation, fatigue, and social

acceptance biases. Even with these opportunities for error or bias, the data collected will be sufficient to explore the hypotheses stated previously.

## **Measure**

Participants in this study responded to one survey. The survey collected information on the participants' orientation experience and their current organizational attitudes. The survey contained 51 questions, taking approximately 15 minutes to complete, and was administered electronically. The assessment and each of its components are described in more detail below.

**NEO Experience Survey.** The researcher developed the New Employee Orientation Experience Survey (NEOES) in 2011 (Appendix D). The survey determined the content of the participants' orientation or lack thereof and their existing levels of stress, satisfaction, commitment, performance, and intention to leave. Of the 51 questions, two were short answer, one was "Yes" or "No," six were multiple choice, and 42 were based on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 5 being "Strongly Agree."

The first question was short answer and had two parts. The first part asked participants to list their current employer or, if not working, the location of their most recent full-time position. Using responses from this question, participants were separated into two groups, those who worked for the Midwestern graduate school and those who worked for another company. The second part asked participants to indicate the month



and day they began working with the company indicated in question one.

Question 2 was “Yes” or “No” and asked participants whether they received an orientation. Individuals who replied “Yes” were directed to Question 3 and continued the survey uninterrupted. Individuals who responded “No” automatically bypassed Questions 3 – 9, which were designed to collect data on a participants experience during their new employee orientation. Those who answered “No” resumed the survey at Question 10.

Question 3 was a multiple choice question and asked participants to identify the type of orientation they received. The question posed several scenarios ranging from receiving information in advance of beginning work to receiving information only in a classroom setting. Participants had the option of indicating that they received multiple types of orientation delivery or that the way in which they received information was different from the types listed.

Question 4 was a multiple-choice question and asked participants how the information delivered to them during the orientation was presented. The question posed several options for information presentation from a strictly written format, to one-on-one conversations, small group discussions, classroom presentations, or online delivery. Participants had the option of indicating that the orientation included more than one type of information presentation or that the way in which they received information was different from the modalities listed.

Questions 5 to 9 asked participants to indicate whether their orientation contained any of the orientation components. Participants respond to these questions by selecting the statement that best describes their orientation experience. Question 5 asked whether

participant learning was assessed as a part of the orientation process, Question 6 asked about the extent to which the orientation was didactic versus experiential, Question 7 asked whether the new hire's supervisor participated in the orientation, Question 8 asked whether peers within the new hire's department participated in the orientation, and Question 9 asked if the orientation contained a relationship building component with coworkers from other departments.

Questions 10 to 51 were based on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 5 being "Strongly Agree" and assessed the self-report organizational attitudes of stress, retention, commitment, performance, and satisfaction. In the original research, the retention, commitment, performance, and job satisfaction questions were administered on a 7-point Likert scale (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979; Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1983; Posdakoff & MacKenzie, 1994) with varying descriptors assigned with each rating. These questions were revised to fit the 5-point scale described above.

***Stress.*** Questions 9 to 14 assessed the extent to which the employee experiences stress. Of the six stress related questions, three were reverse scored. The questions on the topic of stress were adapted from research conducted by Seegers and Elderren (1996) and fall within the dimensions of *lack of knowledge*, *social support*, and *physiological complaints*.

***Commitment.*** Questions 15 to 38 assessed the employee's level of organizational

commitment and their primary commitment type, either *affective commitment*, *continuance commitment*, or *normative commitment*. The organizational commitment questions were based upon the research of Allen and Meyer (1990). Of the 24 commitment related questions, nine were reverse-scored.

**Performance.** Questions 39 to 44 assessed the employee's self-perceived level of performance. The questions on the participant's level of self-reported performance were adapted from research conducted by Posdakoff and MacKenzie (1994). Of the six self-perceived performance level related questions, three were reverse-scored.

**Satisfaction.** Questions 45 to 47 assessed the employee's level of satisfaction. Of the three employee job satisfaction related questions, one was reverse scored. The job satisfaction questions were based upon those developed by Cammann et al. (1983) and used in research conducted by Rich (2001).

**Retention.** Questions 48 to 50 assessed the employee's intention to leave the organization. Of the three retention related questions, two were reverse scored. The intention to leave questions were based upon those developed by Cammann et al (1979) and used in research conducted by Valentine, Godkin, Fleishman, and Kidwell (2011).

The researcher developed the New Employee Orientation Experience Survey described above in 2011 for use in this research. The NEOES was used to gather information about participants' new employee orientation experiences and their current

organizational attitudes. Using the information collected, the researcher compared orientation practices at the Midwestern graduate school with those of other organizations to explore the relationship between orientation practices and the self-report organizational outcomes of stress, retention, performance, satisfaction, and commitment.

### **Procedure**

After Institutional Review Board approval, IRB or its designee emailed the initial participant recruitment email (Appendix E) to faculty, staff, and students at the Midwestern graduate school and alumni from the Business Psychology Department to recruit participants. Individuals recruited through business and social networking received a recruitment email or social media message sent by the researcher. The recruitment invitation prompted participants to forward the survey to their friends and colleagues. After receiving the invitation, those who elected to participate in the study clicked on the link and were then directed to the online survey.

When arriving at the survey, individuals provided consent by agreeing to an informed consent statement. After providing informed consent, individuals were required to meet two qualifications by confirming they were 18 years of age or older and had held a full-time job. All participants who qualified for the study could elect to enter a drawing for one of five \$50 gift cards as inducement for participation and they could elect to receive a copy of the research results. After providing informed consent, confirming qualifications, and indicating their desire to enter the raffle or receive a copy of the research results, participants began answering survey questions. The entire survey

process took approximately 15 minutes.

During a two-week period in the Spring 2012 semester, the researcher, along with IRB or its designee, emailed participants identified in this research a minimum of four times to encourage participation. The first email (Appendix E) was sent two weeks before the survey completion deadline, the second email (Appendix F) was sent seven days prior to the end of the survey, the third email (Appendix G) was sent three days before the survey closes, and the final email (Appendix H) was sent the day the survey is due.

After the data were collected, it was entered into SPSS for analysis. SPSS is a statistical analysis software package frequently used to analyze data from social research. For Hypothesis 1, data collected from individuals who participated in no orientation at the Midwestern graduate school were compared to individuals who participated in a lecture-based orientation using MANOVA to determine if there was a significant difference in self-reported organizational outcomes. Similarly for Hypothesis 2, data collected from individuals who participated in a lecture-based orientation at the school were compared to individuals who participated in a more interactive version of the orientation using MANOVA to determine if there was a significant difference in self-reported organizational outcomes. Finally for Hypothesis 3, data collected from individuals who participated in the interactive orientation at the school were compared to aggregate data from individuals who participated in any other type of orientation using MANOVA to determine if there was a significant increase in self-reported organizational outcomes. This process assessed changes in the self-reported organizational attitudes of employees at the school after each type of the NEO.

After the internal analysis of self-reported organizational outcomes at the Midwestern graduate school, data from other organizations were incorporated into the study. For Hypothesis 4, aggregate self-reported employee outcome data from participants who received no orientation were compared to the data collected from employees at the school who received no orientation using MANOVA to determine if there was a significant difference between self-reported organizational outcomes. For Hypothesis 5, aggregate self-reported employee outcome data from orientation participants who received an orientation similar to that of the school employees who received a lecture-based orientation were compared using MANOVA to determine if there was a significant difference between self-reported organizational outcomes. For Hypothesis 6, aggregate self-reported employee outcome data from orientation participants who received an orientation similar to that of the school employees who received an interactive orientation were compared using MANOVA to determine if there was a significant difference between self-reported organizational outcomes. Finally, for Hypothesis 7, aggregate self-reported organizational outcome data collected from other companies that incorporate all of the four components of effective orientations were compared to aggregate self-reported organizational outcome data from the school using MANOVA to determine if there was a significant difference between outcomes.

The first 150 participants to elect entry into the raffle had a one in 30 chance of receiving inducement for responding to the survey. The process to award five \$50 gift cards occurred after receiving 30, 60, 90, 120, and 150 survey responses from participants who elected entry into the raffle over the course of the two-week survey

administration period. The first winner was chosen after 30 survey responses are received, the second winner was chosen after 60 survey responses are received, the third winner was chosen after 90 survey responses are received, the fourth winner was chosen after 120 survey responses are received, and the final winner was chosen after 150 survey responses are received.

To award gift cards, each of the first 150 participants who elected entry into the raffle were required to enter their email address and were assigned a number within a specific range, either 1-30, 31-60, 61-90, 91-120, or 121-150, depending on when they submitted their survey. Using a random number generator, the researcher selected a participant within each range to receive a \$50 gift card. The researcher then sent recipients a congratulatory email (Appendix I) and informed them that they were chosen to receive inducement and requested their address for delivery of the gift card via postal mail.

Although not needed, a catered lunch option was approved by IRB to encourage participation from staff and faculty at the Chicago Campus of a catered lunch will be provided to encourage participation had additional responses been required. The lunch would have occurred near the end of the two-week administration period and included food and beverages for no more than 40 individuals and one additional \$50 gift card to award as inducement. Attendees would have had option of completing the NEOES during the catered lunch using laptop computers provided by the researcher. Participating in the catered lunch and completing the survey are would have been voluntary and mutually

exclusive. Employees who attend the lunch would have been placed into a separate raffle for a \$50 gift card to be awarded at the end of the luncheon.

The procedure for data collection in this research began with IRB approval and an invitation to the identified population to participate in the study and complete the survey. Individuals who choose to take the survey had the option to enter a raffle for one of five \$50 gift cards and agreed to an informed consent statement before answering questions for data collection. Should it be needed, the survey administration period may be extended by 4 weeks, for a total of six weeks, and the researcher has the option to host a catered lunch to encourage participation among staff and faculty at a catered lunch will be provided to encourage participation. Data will be collected electronically and analyzed in the manner described. Any deviation from this procedure will be approved prior to implementation.

## **Summary**

The research compared orientation practices at the Chicago Campus of a catered lunch will be provided to encourage participation with those of other organizations to determine how practices might influence organizational outcomes. Organizations that provide new hires with an orientation that includes relationship-building activities, experiential learning opportunities, peer and supervisor participation, and learning evaluations typically benefit from employees with lower stress levels, higher retention and higher levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance. This research explored whether orientations provided to new hires at the school positively or negatively



influenced employee self-report outcomes by increasing stress levels or intention to leave or decreasing commitment, satisfaction, or performance levels when compared with organizations that incorporate the same components in similar ways.

Participants in the study completed a 51-question survey to identify their orientation experiences and provide self-report organizational attitudes. This survey provided the data for research. These data were analyzed using SPSS to determine if there were significant differences in attitudes when comparing types of orientations provided at the school, comparing similar experiences at the school and other organizations, and comparing self-report organizational outcomes data from orientations that included effective orientation components to aggregate data from the school.

The researcher designed the study to limit the psychological stress and potential outside influences on participants by standardizing the information participants receive. All participants were informed of the research being conducted, their part in the study, their options for participation, and whom to contact with questions and concerns. Participants had the option to enter a raffle to win one of five \$50 gift cards as incentive for their participation in this research.

## Chapter 4: Results

A total of 264 individuals responded to the New Employee Orientation Experience Survey during a three-week administration period that began January 23, 2012, and ended February 13, 2012. Within the sample, 46 respondents worked for the Midwestern graduate school or its parent organization. Of these 46 individuals, 11 reported receiving no orientation, 32 reported receiving a lecture-based orientation, and three reported receiving an interactive component in their orientation. Individuals who worked for the school were hired for their full-time positions between 2002 and 2012. The majority, 29 individuals, were hired between 2008 and 2010.

The remaining 218 individuals, worked for other organizations. Of these individuals, 39 reported receiving no orientation, 152 reported receiving a lecture-based orientation, and 27 reported receiving an interactive orientation. Individuals who worked for other organizations were hired for their full-time positions between 1978 and 2012. More individuals, 51 specifically, were hired by their respective organizations in 2011 than in any other year.

With the data collected on the self-report measure, MANOVA analyses were conducted using SPSS. After analyzing each hypothesis, the data supported the assertion that the type of orientation individuals receive, either none, lecture-based, or interactive, can have an effect on their self-reported organizational outcomes. Specifically, this data supports existing research that states orientation programming can positively affect employee scores on workplace stress and intent to leave.

Hypothesis 1, which stated that employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received no orientation ( $n = 11$ ) would report a higher level of stress and intent to leave when compared with employees who received a lecture-based orientation or an interactive orientation ( $n = 35$ ), was supported. Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was significant ( $F = 2.295, p < .05$ ). For the second part of Hypothesis 1, which stated that employees who received no orientation would report lower levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance when compared to employees who received an orientation, results were not significant. Table 1 provides a summary of the non-significant results for Hypothesis 1.

Table 1: *Hypothesis 1 Non-Significant Results*

Organizational Outcome	No Orientation		Orientation		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Affective Commitment	23.18	6.063	23.74	5.674	.079	.780
Continuance Commitment	26.36	4.802	27.29	5.205	.272	.605
Normative Commitment	19.36	5.316	22.57	5.198	3.155	.083
Performance	24.18	4.094	24.31	3.692	.010	.920
Satisfaction	10.09	2.119	11.26	2.501	1.944	.170

Results showed significant effects for a more positive score on workplace stress ( $F = 4.818, p < .05$ ) for employees at the school who received an orientation ( $M = 21.60, SD = 3.859$ ) when compared to those who received no orientation ( $M = 18.55, SD = 4.547$ ), with, according to Cohen's rule of thumb, a medium to large effect size ( $\eta_p^2 =$

.099). Results also showed a significant positive change in intent to leave ( $F = 7.212, p < .05$ ) for employees at the school who received an orientation ( $M = 9.94, SD = 2.990$ ) when compared to those who received no orientation ( $M = 7.27, SD = 2.453$ ) with a large effect size ( $\eta_p^2 = .141$ ).

In sum, for Hypothesis 1, individuals employed at the Midwestern graduate school who received an orientation reported significantly lower levels of workplace stress and lower levels of intent to leave when compared to those who received no orientation. Individuals who received an orientation reported levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance that were not significantly different from those of employees who received no orientation.

Hypothesis 2, which stated that employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received a lecture-based orientation ( $n = 32$ ) would report a lower levels of stress and intent to leave when compared with employees who received no orientation ( $n = 11$ ), was not supported with the data collected. Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was not significant ( $F = 2.126, p = .066$ ). No support was found for the second part of Hypothesis 2, which stated that employees at the school who received a lecture-based orientation would report higher levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance when compared with employees who received no orientation. Table 2 provides a summary of the non-significant results for Hypothesis 2.

Table 2: *Hypothesis 2 Non-Significant Results*

Organizational Outcome	Lecture Orientation		No Orientation		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Workplace Stress	21.72	3.945	18.55	4.547	4.904	.032
Affective Commitment	23.78	5.890	23.18	6.063	.084	.774
Continuance Commitment	27.13	5.253	26.36	4.802	.179	.674
Normative Commitment	22.34	5.313	19.36	5.316	2.575	.116
Performance	24.56	3.715	24.18	4.094	.082	.776
Satisfaction	11.22	2.537	10.09	2.119	1.747	.194
Intent to Leave	9.88	3.098	7.27	2.453	6.354	.016

Although results were significant for a decrease in workplace stress for employees at the school who received a lecture-based orientation when compared to those who received no orientation, these results were not considered due to the overall model being not significant. Results were also significant for a decrease in intent to leave for employees at the school who received a lecture-based orientation when compared to those who received no orientation, but these results were also not considered due to the overall model being not significant. These results are reported in Table 2.

In sum, for Hypothesis 2, individuals employed at the Midwestern graduate school who received a lecture-based orientation reported levels of workplace stress,

commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave that were not significantly different from the levels reported by those who received no orientation. Although it appears that employees who received a lecture-based orientation reported levels of workplace stress and intent to leave that were significantly more positive, these results were not considered due to the overall model being not significant.

Hypothesis 3, which stated that employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received an interactive orientation ( $n = 3$ ) would report lower levels of stress and level of intent to leave when compared to employees who received a lecture-based orientation ( $n = 32$ ) or no orientation ( $n = 11$ ), was not supported. Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was not significant ( $F = .540, p = .799$ ). No support was found for the second part of Hypothesis 3, which stated that employees at the school who received an interactive orientation would report higher levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance when compared to employees who received a lecture-based or no orientation. Table 3a provides a summary of the non-significant results for Hypothesis 3.

Table 3a: *Hypothesis 3 Non-Significant Results*

Organizational Outcome	Interactive Orientation		Lecture & No Orientation		F	<i>p</i>
	M	SD	M	SD		
Workplace Stress	20.33	3.055	20.91	4.286	.051	.822
Affective Commitment	23.33	3.055	23.63	5.868	.007	.932
Continuance Commitment	29.00	5.292	26.93	5.096	.461	.501
Normative Commitment	25.00	3.464	21.58	5.413	1.150	.289
Performance	21.67	2.517	24.47	3.769	1.586	.215
Satisfaction	11.67	2.517	10.93	2.463	.250	.619
Intent to Leave	10.67	1.528	9.21	3.136	.627	.433

Although there was no statistical support for Hypothesis 3, further analysis was conducted comparing employees at the school who received an interactive orientation ( $n = 3$ ) to those who received a lecture-based orientation ( $n = 32$ ). Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was not significant ( $F = 1.305, p = .198$ ). Under the model, results were not significant for a decrease in workplace stress, commitment, performance, and satisfaction for employees at the school who received an interactive orientation when compared to those who received a lecture-based orientation. Results were significant for a decrease in intent to leave for employees at the school who received an interactive orientation when compared to those who received a lecture-based orientation, but these

results were not considered due to the overall model being not significant. Table 3b provides a summary of the non-significant results for this comparison.

Table 3b: *Hypothesis 3 Non-Significant Results*

Organizational Outcome	Interactive Orientation		Lecture-Based Orientation		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Workplace Stress	20.33	3.055	21.72	3.945	2.532	.091
Affective Commitment	23.33	3.055	23.78	5.890	.047	.954
Continuance Commitment	29.00	5.292	27.13	5.253	.316	.731
Normative Commitment	25.00	3.464	22.34	5.313	1.919	.159
Performance	21.67	2.517	24.56	3.715	.818	.448
Satisfaction	11.67	2.517	11.22	2.537	.998	.377
Intent to Leave	10.67	1.528	9.88	3.098	3.643	.035

In sum, for Hypothesis 3, individuals employed at the Midwestern graduate school who received interactive orientation reported levels of workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave that were not significantly different from the levels reported by those who received either a lecture-based orientation or no orientation. Although it appears that those who received an interactive orientation reported levels of intent to leave that were significantly more positive when compared to those who received a lecture-based orientation, these results were not considered due to the overall model for that analysis being not significant.



Hypothesis 4, which stated that organizational outcomes from employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received no orientation ( $n = 11$ ) are expected to be similar to aggregate data gathered from employees at other organizations who received no orientation ( $n = 39$ ), was supported. Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was not significant ( $F = 1.051, p = .411$ ). Results were not significant for workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave, meaning employees at the school who received no orientation reported similar levels of organizational outcomes when compared to employees at other organizations who received no orientation. Table 4a provides a summary of the non-significant results for Hypothesis 4.

Table 4a: *Hypothesis 4 Non-Significant Results*

Organizational Outcome	Other Organizations		Midwestern School		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Workplace Stress	19.44	3.99	18.55	4.547	.401	.530
Affective Commitment	23.92	7.617	23.18	6.063	.088	.768
Continuance Commitment	26.23	6.145	26.36	4.802	.004	.948
Normative Commitment	22.74	6.656	19.36	5.316	2.393	.128
Performance	22.85	4.458	24.18	4.094	.796	.377
Satisfaction	10.46	3.677	10.09	2.119	.101	.752
Intent to Leave	9.00	3.770	7.27	2.453	2.047	.159

Even though the results from Hypothesis 4 were supported, further analysis was conducted. Data from individuals who received no orientation at other organizations ( $n =$

39) and at the Midwestern graduate school ( $n = 11$ ) were compared to that from individuals who received an orientation at other organizations ( $n = 180$ ) and at the school ( $n = 35$ ). Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was significant ( $F = 3.387, p < .05$ ). There was no main effect for organization, yet there was a main effect for whether an employee received an orientation.

This analysis, which mirrors the comparison in Hypothesis 1, produced significant results for the organizational outcomes of workplace stress and intent to leave. Similar to Hypothesis 1, results were not significant for an increase in commitment, performance, or satisfaction. Table 4b provides a summary of the non-significant results for the comparison between employees at the school and other organizations who received no orientation and those at the school and other organizations who received either a lecture-based or an interactive orientation.

Table 4b: *Hypothesis 4 Non-Significant Results*

Organizational Outcome	No Orientation				Orientation				F	p
	MGS		Non-MGS		MGS		Non-MGS			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Affective Commitment	23.18	6.063	24.05	7.676	23.74	5.674	25.82	6.270	.870	.352
Continuance Commitment	26.36	4.802	26.05	6.125	27.29	5.205	25.08	6.489	.000	.984
Normative Commitment	19.36	5.316	22.71	6.742	22.57	5.198	22.43	5.791	1.660	.199
Performance	24.18	4.094	22.82	4.513	24.31	3.692	25.16	3.800	2.657	.104
Satisfaction	10.09	2.119	10.50	3.718	11.26	2.501	11.49	3.033	3.319	.070

Results showed significant effects for more positive scores on workplace stress ( $F = 14.520, p < .05$ ) for employees who received an orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 22.31, SD = 4.135$ ) when compared to those who received no orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 19.18, SD = 4.116$ ), with a medium effect size ( $\eta_p^2 = .053$ ). Results also showed significant effects for an increased intent to remain with the organization ( $F = 7.800, p < .05$ ) for employees who received an orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 10.14, SD = 3.432$ ) when compared to those who received no orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 8.69, SD = 3.572$ ), with a small to medium effect size ( $\eta_p^2 = .029$ ).

In sum, for Hypothesis 4, individuals who received no orientation at the Midwestern graduate school reported organizational outcomes that were similar to those reported by individuals who received no orientation at other organizations. In further analysis, and similar to the results in Hypothesis 1, individuals who received an orientation reported significantly lower levels of workplace stress and significantly lower levels of intent to leave regardless of where they worked when compared to employees who received no orientation. Individuals who received an orientation reported levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance that were not significantly different from those of employees who received no orientation regardless of where they worked.

Hypothesis 5, which stated that organizational outcomes from employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received a lecture-based orientation ( $n = 32$ ) would be similar to employees at other organizations who received a lecture-based orientation ( $n$

= 152), was supported. Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was not significant ( $F = 1.151, p = .333$ ). Results were not significant for workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, or intent to leave, meaning employees at the school who received a lecture-based orientation reported similar organizational outcome levels to employees at other organizations who received a lecture-based orientation. Table 5a provides a summary of these non-significant results for Hypothesis 5.

Table 5a: *Hypothesis 5 Non-Significant Results*

Organizational Outcome	Other Organizations		Midwestern School		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Workplace Stress	22.47	4.188	21.72	3.945	.876	.351
Affective Commitment	25.89	6.433	23.78	5.890	2.934	.088
Continuance Commitment	24.84	6.641	27.13	5.253	3.336	.069
Normative Commitment	22.16	5.733	22.34	5.313	.026	.871
Performance	25.20	3.907	24.56	3.715	.724	.396
Satisfaction	11.59	3.050	11.22	2.537	.403	.526
Intent to Leave	10.39	3.575	9.88	3.098	.583	.446

Further analysis was conducted for Hypothesis 5, which mirrors the analysis conducted in Hypothesis 2. Individuals who received a lecture-based orientation at other organizations ( $n = 152$ ) and at the Midwestern graduate school ( $n = 32$ ) were compared to individuals who received no orientation at other organizations ( $n = 39$ ) and at the school ( $n = 11$ ). Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was significant ( $F = 3.359, p < .05$ ).

There was no main effect for workplace, yet there was a main effect for who received a lecture-based orientation when compared to those who receive no orientation. This comparison produced significant results for the organizational outcomes of workplace stress and intent to leave. Similar to the results in the additional analysis for Hypothesis 4, these results were not significant for commitment, performance, or satisfaction. Table 5b provides a summary of the non-significant results for this analysis.

Table 5b: *Hypothesis 5 Non-Significant Results*

Organizational Outcome	Lecture-Based Orientation				No Orientation				F	p
	School		Other		School		Other			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Affective Commitment	23.78	5.890	25.89	6.433	23.18	6.063	23.92	7.617	.995	.320
Continuance Commitment	27.13	5.253	24.84	6.641	26.36	4.802	26.23	6.145	.064	.801
Normative Commitment	22.34	5.313	22.16	5.733	19.36	5.316	22.74	6.656	1.101	.295
Performance	24.56	3.715	25.20	3.907	24.18	4.094	22.85	4.458	3.057	.082
Satisfaction	11.22	2.537	11.59	3.050	10.09	2.119	10.46	3.677	3.493	.063

Results showed significant effects for a positive influence on workplace stress ( $F = 14.570, p < .05$ ) for employees who received a lecture-based orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 22.34, SD = 4.146$ ) when compared to those who received no orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 19.24, SD = 4.094$ ), with a medium effect size ( $\eta_p^2 = .060$ ). Results also showed a significant increase in intent to

remain with the organization ( $F = 8.416, p < .05$ ) for employees who received a lecture-based orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 10.30, SD = 3.495$ ) when compared to those who received no orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 8.62, SD = 3.574$ ), with a small to medium effect size ( $\eta_p^2 = .035$ ). The small effect size within this analysis may indicate that the small sample in Hypothesis 2 is a reason for its lack of significance.

In sum, for Hypothesis 5, individuals who received a lecture-based orientation at the Midwestern graduate school reported organizational outcomes that were similar to those reported by individuals who received a lecture-based orientation at other organizations. In further analysis, individuals who received a lecture-based orientation reported significantly lower levels of workplace stress and lower levels of intent to leave when compared to individuals who received no orientation regardless of where they worked. Individuals who received a lecture-based orientation reported levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance that were not significantly different from those of employees who received no orientation regardless of where they worked.

Hypothesis 6, which stated that outcomes from employees at the Midwestern graduate school who received an interactive orientation ( $n = 3$ ) would be similar to those from employees at other organizations who received an interactive orientation ( $n = 27$ ), was supported. Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was not significant ( $F = 1.359, p = .271$ ). Results were not significant for workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, or intent to leave, meaning employees at the school who received an interactive orientation reported similar organizational outcome levels to employees at

other organizations who received an interactive orientation. Table 6a provides a summary of these non-significant results for Hypothesis 6.

Table 6a: *Hypothesis 6 Non-Significant Results*

Organizational Outcome	Other Organizations		Midwestern School		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Workplace Stress	22.30	4.313	20.33	3.055	.580	.453
Affective Commitment	25.63	5.336	23.33	3.055	.525	.475
Continuance Commitment	26.15	5.461	29.00	5.292	.740	.397
Normative Commitment	23.89	6.104	25.00	3.464	.094	.761
Performance	24.96	3.264	21.67	2.517	2.836	.103
Satisfaction	11.07	2.973	11.67	2.517	.109	.743
Intent to Leave	9.22	2.953	10.67	1.528	.682	.416

Further analysis for Hypothesis 6, which mirrored that of Hypothesis 3, was conducted. The analysis, in which employees who received an interactive orientation at other organizations ( $n = 27$ ) and at the Midwestern graduate school ( $n = 3$ ) were compared to employees who received a lecture-based orientation ( $n = 152$ ) at other organizations and at the school ( $n = 32$ ), was significant. Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was significant ( $F = 1.975, p < .05$ ). There is no main effect for workplace. Yet, there is a main effect for employees who received an interactive orientation when compared to those who received a lecture-based orientation. The results of this comparison were supported for the organizational outcomes of workplace stress and

intent to leave. Table 6b provides a summary for the reported levels of commitment, performance, and satisfaction, which were not significant in the comparison between employees at the school and other organizations who received an interactive orientation and those at the school and other organizations who received a lecture-based orientation.

Table 6b: *Hypothesis 6 Non-Significant Results*

Organizational Outcome	Interactive Orientation				Lecture-Based Orientation				F	p
	School		Other		School		Other			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Affective Commitment	23.33	3.055	25.63	5.336	23.78	5.890	25.89	6.433	.519	.596
Continuance Commitment	29.00	5.292	26.15	5.461	27.13	5.253	24.84	6.641	.329	.720
Normative Commitment	25.00	3.464	23.89	6.104	22.34	5.313	22.16	5.733	1.455	.235
Performance	21.67	2.517	24.96	3.264	24.56	3.715	25.20	3.907	2.087	.126
Satisfaction	11.67	2.517	11.07	2.973	11.22	2.537	11.59	3.050	1.793	.168

Results showed a significant, yet slightly lower, influence on workplace stress ( $F = 7.249, p < .05$ ) for employees who received an interactive orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 22.10, SD = 4.205$ ) when compared to those who received a lecture-based orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 22.34, SD = 4.146$ ), with a medium effect size ( $\eta_p^2 = .053$ ). Results also showed a significant, yet slightly lower, influence on intent to remain with the organization ( $F = 4.401, p < .05$ ) for employees who received an interactive orientation at the school and other organizations



( $M = 9.37$ ,  $SD = 2.859$ ) when compared to those who received a lecture-based orientation at the school and other organizations ( $M = 10.30$ ,  $SD = 3.495$ ), with a small to medium effect size ( $\eta_p^2 = .033$ ). The effect size within this analysis may indicate that the small sample in Hypothesis 3 is a reason for its lack of significance.

In sum, for Hypothesis 6, individuals who received an interactive orientation at the Midwestern graduate school reported organizational outcomes that were similar to those reported by individuals who received an interactive orientation at other organizations. In further analysis, individuals who received an interactive orientation reported significantly different levels of workplace stress and lower levels of intent to leave when compared to those who received a lecture-based orientation, regardless of where they worked. Individuals who received an interactive orientation reported levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance that were not significantly different from those of employees who received a lecture-based orientation regardless of where they worked. There were no additive effects when both lecture and interactive components were included within an orientation.

Hypothesis 7, which stated that employees at the Midwestern graduate school, regardless of orientation type ( $n = 46$ ), would report less favorable organizational outcomes when compared to employee at other organizations that received an interactive orientation ( $n = 27$ ), was not supported. Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was not significant ( $F = 1.227$ ,  $p = .301$ ). Under the model, results were not significant for workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, or intent to leave for employees at the school, regardless of orientation-type, when compared to employees at other

organizations who received an interactive orientation. Table 7 provides statistical summary of the non-significant results for Hypothesis 7.

Table 7: Hypothesis 7 Non-Significant Results

Organizational Outcome	School Employees		Other Interactive		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Workplace Stress	20.87	4.193	22.30	4.313	1.929	.169
Affective Commitment	23.61	5.706	25.63	5.336	2.237	.139
Continuance Commitment	27.07	5.075	26.15	5.461	.525	.471
Normative Commitment	21.80	5.348	23.89	6.104	2.327	.132
Performance	24.28	3.746	24.96	3.264	.616	.435
Satisfaction	10.98	2.445	11.07	2.973	.022	.882
Intent to Leave	9.22	2.953	9.30	3.069	.013	.911

In sum, for Hypothesis 7, the data does not support a difference between the organizational outcomes of employees at the Midwestern graduate school and employees at other organizations that received an interactive orientation. Overall, individuals employed at the school, regardless of what type of orientation they received, report levels of workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave that are not significantly different from those of employees at other organizations that receive an interactive orientation.

The data collected allowed for additional research beyond the hypotheses previously mentioned. The first analysis explored the interactions between the presence

of absence of orientation components and the influences self-report outcomes. The second and third analyses attempt to better understand the duration of the organizational outcomes by exploring whether the length of employment and the type of orientation received influenced self-report outcomes.

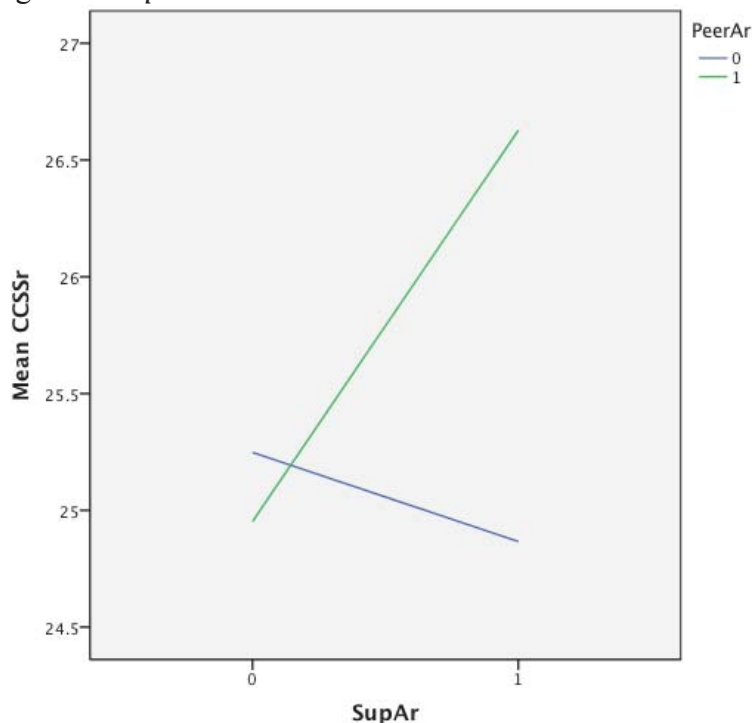
Using the information collected from participants, MANOVA analyses were conducted to determine if there were any interactions between orientation type, learning evaluation, supervisor involvement, peer involvement, and employee involvement that influence workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, or intent to leave. Of the interactions analyzed, those between supervisor involvement and peer involvement within an orientation proved significant for the organizational outcomes of continuance commitment and workplace stress.

Employees who received an orientation at the Midwestern graduate school and at other organizations that included supervisor involvement ( $n = 142$ ) and peer involvement ( $n = 151$ ) were compared to employees who received an orientation that lacked supervisor involvement ( $n = 73$ ) and peer involvement ( $n = 64$ ) scored significantly different on the organizational outcome of continuance commitment. Using Wilks' Lambda, the overall model was significant ( $F = 2.101, p < .05$ ) for the main effect of supervisor involvement, yet there is no between subject interaction effect.

Results showed a significant influence on continuance commitment ( $F = 3.882, p < .05$ ). Employees who received an orientation that lacked both supervisor involvement and peer involvement ( $M = 26.63, SD = 6.877$ ) reported higher levels of continuance commitment (i.e. remaining with the organization because the perceived cost of leaving is

too high) compared to those who received an orientation that included both peer involvement and supervisor involvement ( $M = 25.25$ ,  $SD = 6.140$ ). Individuals who received an orientation that included only supervisor involvement ( $M = 24.95$ ,  $SD = 5.696$ ) reported more favorable levels of continuance commitment when compared to those who received an orientation that included only peer involvement ( $M = 24.87$ ,  $SD = 6.852$ ). The effect size for this interaction is small ( $\eta_p^2 = .018$ ). Figure 1 provided a pictorial representation of this interaction.

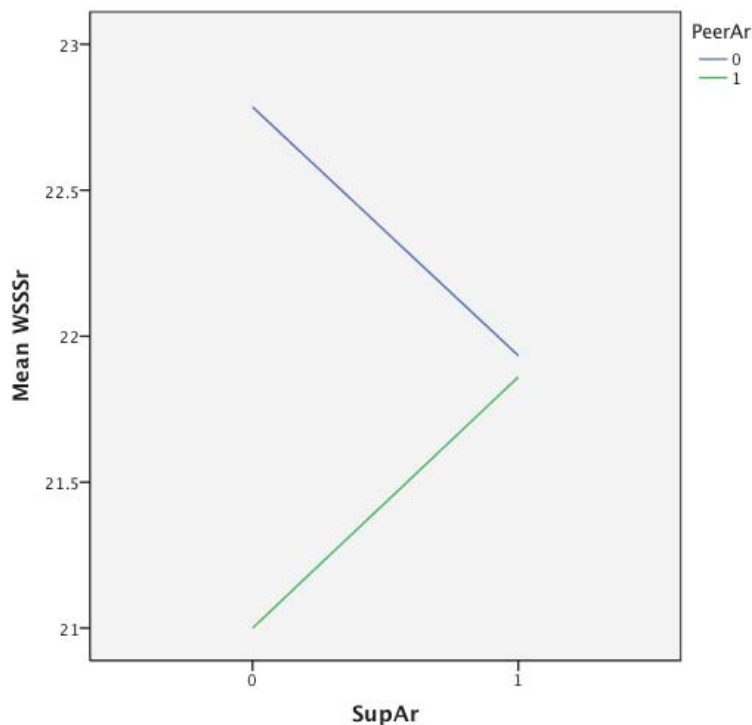
Figure 1: *Supervisor and Peer Interaction and Continuance Commitment*



Results showed a significant positive influence on workplace stress ( $F = 4.225$ ,  $p < .05$ ) for employees who received an orientation that included both supervisor

involvement and peer involvement ( $M = 22.79$ ,  $SD = 3.971$ ) when compared to those who received an orientation that included only peer involvement ( $M = 21.93$ ,  $SD = 4.110$ ). Individuals who received an orientation that lacked both supervisor involvement and peer involvement ( $M = 21.86$ ,  $SD = 3.877$ ) scored more favorably on workplace stress than those who received an orientation that included only supervisor involvement ( $M = 21.00$ ,  $SD = 5.339$ ). The effect size for this interaction was small ( $\eta_p^2 = .020$ ). Figure 2 provided a pictorial representation of this interaction.

Figure 2: *Supervisor and Peer Interaction and Workplace Stress*



The second and third analyses attempt to better understand the duration of the organizational outcomes by exploring whether the length of employment and the type of

orientation received influenced self-report outcomes. The purpose behind these two analyses is to attempt to detect the temporal duration of an outcomes influence. Neither of the analyses yielded significant results.

In the second research question for Hypothesis 7, respondents were divided into five groups: Those who started working prior to January 31, 2011 ( $n = 206$ ); February 1 to April 30, 2011 ( $n = 9$ ); May 1 to July 31, 2011 ( $n = 16$ ); August 1 to October 31, 2011 ( $n = 21$ ); and November 1, 2011, to February 13, 2012 ( $n = 12$ ). Data from the members of these groups were compared based upon the type of orientation received to assess whether orientation practices influenced self-report outcomes. The results for this analysis were not significant ( $F = 0.899$ ,  $p = 0.618$ ), meaning that participants within each group hold similar levels of workplace stress, commitment, satisfaction, performance, and intent to leave regardless of when they were hired.

The third research question for Hypothesis 7 divided respondents into two groups, those hired before January 31, 2011 ( $n = 206$ ), and those hired after February 1, 2011 ( $n = 58$ ). Data from the members of these two groups were compared based upon the type of orientation received to determine if orientation practices influenced self-report outcomes. The results for this analysis were not significant ( $F = 1.103$ ,  $p = 0.362$ ), meaning that individuals who had been employed about one-year held similar levels of workplace stress, commitment, satisfaction, performance, and intent to leave as those who had a longer tenure with their company.

Using the data collected on the NEOES self-report measure administered to employees at the Midwestern graduate school and employees at other organizations,

MANOVA analyses were conducted using SPSS. The purpose of the analyses were to determine if the type of orientation received (no orientation, lecture-based orientation, or interactive orientation) influenced employee self-report organizational outcomes (workplace stress, organizational commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave). Analyses were conducted for employees at the school that were independent of the analyses that were conducted for employees of other organizations. As an additional step, the two samples were combined to determine if orientation type influenced self-report outcomes.

At the Midwestern graduate school, employees who received an orientation reported significantly lower levels of workplace stress and lower levels of intent to leave when compared to employees who received no orientation. Employees who received a lecture-based orientation reported organizational outcome levels that were not significantly different from those reported by employees who received no orientation. Employees who received an interactive orientation reported organizational outcomes levels that were not significantly different from those reported by employees who received a lecture-based orientation. For Hypotheses 1 – 3, the data supports the assertion that, as a group, employees at the school who responded to the survey and received an orientation (either lecture-based or interactive) have significantly lower levels of workplace stress and are less likely to leave the organization compared to those who received no orientation.

When comparing the types of orientations received by employees at the Midwestern graduate school to similar types of orientations received by employees at

other organizations, the results support stating that there is no difference between the organizational attitudes of the two samples. Individuals at the school who received no orientation reported organizational outcomes that were not significantly different from individuals at other organizations who received no orientation. Individuals at the school who received a lecture-based orientation reported organizational outcomes that were not significantly different from individuals at other organizations who received lecture-based orientation. Individuals at the school who received an interactive orientation reported organizational outcomes that were not significantly different from individuals at other organizations who received an interactive orientation. Overall, the results from Hypotheses 4 - 6 support stating that the self-report organizational outcomes at the Midwestern graduate school are similar to those at other organizations.

Additional analyses for Hypotheses 4 – 6 showed that, across organizations, employees who received an orientation reported significantly lower levels of workplace stress and lower levels of intent to leave. Individuals who received an orientation reported significantly lower levels of workplace stress and lower levels of intent to leave regardless of where they worked when compared to employees who received no orientation. Employees who received a lecture-based orientation reported significantly lower levels of workplace stress and lower levels of intent to leave when compared to individuals who received no orientation. Individuals who received an interactive orientation reported significantly lower levels of workplace stress and lower levels of intent to leave when compared to those who received a lecture-based orientation. Across



organizations, individuals who received any type of an orientation reported lower levels of stress and lower levels of intent to leave.

When comparing all employees at the Midwestern graduate school who responded to the survey to employees at other organizations who received an interactive orientation, the results were not significant. Employees at the school report levels of workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave that are not significantly different from those reported by employees at other organizations that received an interactive orientation. Overall, the results for Hypothesis 7 show that, as a group, employees at the school have organizational outcomes levels that are similar to those of employees at other organizations that received an interactive orientation.

The final analysis uncovered that supervisor involvement and peer involvement in an orientation may influence continuance commitment and workplace stress. The absence of both supervisor and peers from an orientation produced higher continuance commitment scores, followed by the presence of supervisor and peers, supervisor only, and peer only. The presence of both peers and supervisors in an orientation resulted in a more positive workplace stress outcome score, followed by peers only, absence of peers and supervisor, and supervisor only. Overall, including both supervisors and peers in new employee orientation can have a positive influence on workplace stress and increase levels of continuance commitment.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

New employee orientation is one of the most common prevalent development activities (Holton, 1996; Wesson & Gogus, 2005), the purpose of which is to help new hires learn and understand the organization to successfully function in their new jobs (Caruth et al., 2010; Louis, 1980). The rationale for this study was to include the orientation commonalities uncovered during the literature review into a single study to assess their influence on self-report organizational outcomes. Results add to the existing body of new employee orientation literature by providing additional support for its continued use and its influence on certain self-report organizational outcomes, specifically workplace stress and intent to leave.

For the purposes of this research, information delivery within an orientation was divided into three groups: (a) no orientation – the individual received no structured organizational information within his/her first few days of employment, (b) lecture-based orientation – the individual primarily received structured organizational information in a lecture-based format either online or in-person, and (c) interactive orientation – the individual received structured organizational information in more engaged ways either online or in-person.

The literature states that the introduction of a structured orientation can increase self-report levels of performance, satisfaction and commitment, while reducing workplace stress and intent to leave (Jones, 1986). Results from the sample at the Midwestern graduate school in this study support stating that employees who receive an orientation, either lecture-based or interactive, report significantly more positive levels of

workplace stress and intent to leave when compared to employees who receive no orientation. Results do not support stating that an orientation can influence commitment or satisfaction levels.

Organizational outcome levels at the graduate school were found to be similar to those from the other organizations surveyed. Based upon the responses given, employees at the school possess levels of workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave that are not significantly different from those reported by employees at other organizations. Regardless of where they worked, individuals who fell into the categories of having received no orientation, a lecture-based orientation, or an interactive orientation reported organizational outcomes that were similar.

Previous research states that individuals who receive an interactive orientation are likely to possess lower levels of stress and intent to leave along with higher levels of performance, satisfaction, and commitment when compared to individuals who receive a lecture-based orientation or none at all (Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983). Results from this research support stating that interactive orientations can significantly improve employee self-report scores on workplace stress and intent to leave when compared to employees who receive a lecture-based orientation or no orientation. Results do not support stating that an orientation can influence performance, satisfaction or commitment levels.

Although the information delivery method can influence certain organizational outcomes, so to can the content of the orientation. In addition to an interactive learning component, previous research indicates that including supervisor and peer involvement,

relationship-building, and learning evaluations in an orientation can influence new hire levels of stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave. Although these orientation components can have a positive influence on how well a person functions within the new organization, the only significant interactions were found when supervisor and peers were included in an orientation.

The literature states that involving supervisors and peers in the orientation can have positive effects on employee satisfaction and commitment (Caruth et al., 2010; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). In research questions posed by this study, the inclusion of supervisor and peers is shown to positively influence self-report levels of continuance commitment and workplace stress. Continuance commitment, in which the individual is either financially or socially invested in the workplace or lacks suitable opportunities outside the organization, was influenced most by the absence of both supervisor and peers from the orientation. Although the presence of both supervisor and peers within an orientation led to the second highest levels of continuance commitment and the most positive levels of workplace stress. Results support the involvement of both supervisor and peers in new employee orientation.

Overall, the results from this study support the continued use of orientations to positively influence employee self-report outcomes on measures of workplace stress and intent to leave. Although the use of an interactive orientation may produce more positive results when compared to a lecture-based orientation, the use of any type of orientation is better than the omission of the employee development activity. Additionally, and when

possible, the inclusion of both supervisor and peers in the orientation session can yield high levels of continuance commitment and positive levels of workplace stress.

### **Outcome Results**

Results from Hypotheses 1 and the additional analyses for Hypotheses 4-6 support the influence of orientations on certain organizational outcomes. Participant responses from the Midwestern graduate school and other organizations on organizational outcome scales within the self-report survey were significant for workplace stress and intent to leave. Responses on the self-report measure of organizational outcomes from employees at the school and other organizations were not significant for commitment, performance, or satisfaction.

**Workplace Stress.** The organizational outcome of workplace stress was found to be significant in several analyses within this research. Results were not significant for workplace stress in the analyses for Hypotheses 2, 3, and 7. One reason for significance is likely due to the larger size of the samples analyzed when compared to the smaller size of the samples where workplace stress was not significant. Other reasons for a lack of significance will be discussed in the next section.

Results from Hypothesis 1 showed significantly lower levels of workplace stress among the individuals at the Midwestern graduate school who received an orientation when compared to those who received no orientation. Similar results, regardless of where a person worked, were found in the additional analysis for Hypothesis 4. The type of

orientation received, either lecture-based or interactive, were not considered in these analyses. These results support previous research that states providing new employees with some initial direction and information via an orientation has a positive influence on self-report organizational outcomes, specifically their levels of workplace stress.

Results from the additional analysis for Hypothesis 5 showed significantly lower levels of workplace stress among the individuals who received lecture-based orientations when compared to those who received no orientation. Similarly, results from the additional analysis for Hypothesis 6 showed significantly lower levels of workplace stress among the individual who received interactive orientations when compared to those who received a lecture-based orientation. For these two analyses, the samples from the school and other organizations were combined. These results support previous research, which states that providing new employees with an interactive orientation is more effective than a lecture-based orientation, which is better than no orientation.

**Organizational Commitment.** The outcome of organizational commitment was not significant in any of the hypotheses analyzed. Results were not significant for commitment in Hypotheses 1-3, where self-report outcomes from the Midwestern graduate school were analyzed, or in the additional analyses for Hypotheses 4-6, which looked at responses from the school and other organizations combined. Results were also not significant in Hypothesis 7, which compared the school to interactive orientations at other organizations. Reasons for this lack of significance are discussed in the next section. Results in the interaction analysis found support for continuance commitment

when supervisor and peer involvement was included in the orientation and these results are discussed in a later section.

**Performance.** The organizational outcome of performance was not significant in any of the hypotheses analyzed. Results were not significant for performance in Hypotheses 1-3, where self-report outcomes from the Midwestern graduate school were analyzed, or in the additional analyses for Hypotheses 4-6, which looked at responses from the school and other organizations combined. Results were also not significant in Hypothesis 7, which compared the school to interactive orientations at other organizations. Reasons for this lack of significance are discussed in the next section.

**Satisfaction.** The organizational outcome of satisfaction was not significant in any of the hypotheses analyzed. Results were not significant for satisfaction in Hypotheses 1-3, where self-report outcomes from the Midwestern graduate school were analyzed, or in the additional analyses for Hypotheses 4-6, which looked at responses from the school and other organizations combined. Results were also not significant for satisfaction in Hypothesis 7, which compared the school to interactive orientations at other organizations. Reasons for this lack of significance are discussed in the next section.

**Intent to Leave.** The organizational outcome of intent to leave was found to be significant in several analyses within this research. Results were not significant for intent

to leave in the analyses for Hypotheses 2, 3, and 7. One reason for a lack of significance is likely due to the small size of the samples analyzed when compared to the larger size of the samples where intent to leave was significant. Other reasons for a lack of significance will be discussed in the next section.

Results from Hypothesis 1 showed significantly lower levels of intent to leave among the individuals at the school who received an orientation when compared to those who received no orientation. Similar results, regardless of where a person worked, were found in the additional analysis for Hypothesis 4. For these two analyses, the type of orientation received, either lecture-based or interactive, were not considered. These results support previous research that states providing new employees with some initial direction and information via an orientation has an influence on self-report organizational outcomes, specifically their levels of intent to leave.

Results from the additional analysis for Hypothesis 5 showed significantly lower levels of intent to leave among the individuals who received lecture-based orientations when compared to those who received no orientation. Similarly, results from the additional analysis for Hypothesis 6 showed significantly lower levels of intent to leave among the individual who received interactive orientations when compared to those who received a lecture-based orientation. For these two analyses, the samples from the school and other organizations were combined. These results support previous research, which states that providing new employees with an interactive orientation is more effective than a lecture-based orientation, which is better than no orientation.



The hypotheses for this study assessed participant responses from the Midwestern graduate school and other organizations on the organizational outcomes of workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave. The results from Hypotheses 1 and the additional analyses for Hypotheses 4-6 supported previous research, which states that orientations can have an influence on employee self-report levels of workplace stress and intent to leave. The results from Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 7 and the additional analyses for Hypotheses 4-6 failed to support research that asserts orientations can have an influence on employee self-report levels of commitment, performance, and satisfaction. Possible reasons for this lack of statistical support are discussed in the next section.

### **Reasons for Lack of Statistical Support**

When comparing the means for the organizational attitudes in many of the analyses performed, the difference indicates a positive change. This change, however, frequently fails to reach significance. In addition to the limitations to this study discussed later, the orientation experiences of participants surveyed may have not include enough material relevant to commitment, performance, or satisfaction to influence those outcomes consistently. Although it appears that simply holding an orientation may be enough to influence new hire levels of workplace stress and intent to leave in a positive way, doing so may not be enough to have an effect on commitment, performance, and satisfaction. The literature reviewed indicates that orientation may need to include

specific material or interactions between new employees and current employees to influence levels of commitment, performance, and satisfaction.

In previous research, the way information is presented is shown to influence levels of performance, commitment, and satisfaction. Providing new employees with a more interactive and discussion-based orientation may help increase their self-report levels on certain organizational outcomes. For example, new hires at the Midwestern graduate school received information from an expert in each department who presented on certain topics. The seemingly formal presentation may have created distance between the expert and new hire. It may have been more beneficial if the information were relayed in a more casual discussion allowing the new hires to get to know each expert personally. A change in the delivery of structured information may have resulted in a positive influence on commitment, satisfaction, and performance.

Involving peers and supervisors in the orientation has been shown in other research to influence levels of commitment and satisfaction. It may be that, of the participants surveyed, too few of them received an orientation with structured peer and supervisor involvement. For example, new hires at the Midwestern graduate school who received an orientation might have met with their peers and supervisors, but this interaction was unstructured. The meeting was not used to relay specific information about their new position, department, or organization. It is possible that having a more structured interaction would translate into more positive levels of commitment and satisfaction.

Self-report performance levels of participants in this study may have been non-significant because of either a lack of supervisor structure or a lack of a formalized evaluation process. Ensuring that new hires have a structured discussion with their supervisor within the first week of employment to review the purpose of their position and performance expectations may have a beneficial influence on performance scores. Additionally, having a formalized learning evaluation can help ensure the new hires are learning the content of the orientation that can help them on the job. At the school, for example, it was unknown to orientation administrators whether supervisors were meeting with new hires to discuss expectations and making this discussion a requirement may help increase performance levels. Concerning learning evaluations, new hires at the school were not tested on the content of the evaluation in a formal way and doing so may have helped increase performance scores.

To successfully influence each organizational outcome, orientation administrators would need to include enough material relevant to workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave. Doing so may require additional time within and revision or reorganization of the orientation along with additional buy-in from existing employees, peers, and supervisors to make attending the orientation and providing a consistent experience for all new hires a priority. The absence of sufficient of relationship-building, peer and supervisor involvement, and learning evaluations may be a reason for a lack of statistical significance in the outcomes of commitment, performance, and satisfaction even when the analysis produces means that differ in a positive way.

## **Data Correlation**

When considering the data overall, providing an interactive orientation is preferable to a lecture-based orientation, but any orientation is better than no orientation. Within this research, the results support stating that providing new employees with an orientation can positively influence their levels of workplace stress and intent to leave. This statement is supported by the results from Hypothesis 1 and the additional analyses from Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6.

The additional analyses from Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 mirror the analyses performed in Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, but yielded significant results, which may be due to an increase in the sample size being studied. The sample contained individuals at multiple organizations who received an orientation, either lecture-based or interactive, and they reported lower levels of workplace stress and intent to leave. Because of the unstructured sampling methodology, these results are more generalizable than if the sample worked for a single organization. The relationship between providing an orientation and lower levels of workplace stress and intent to leave seems to be strong because this research found support across organizations.

The self-report outcomes influenced by orientation practices within this correlational data were those with long-term or unknown durations. Previous research (Caruth et al., 2010; Holton, 1996; Louis et al., 1983) supports stating that organizations that provide employees with beneficial information or the means to manage their stress during orientation may benefit from lower levels of workplace stress. These results

support stating that orientations could positively influence long-term levels of workplace stress. Additionally, previous research lacked evidence to support giving a timeframe for the duration of an orientation's influence on intent to leave. This research found that orientations could have a long-term influence on employee self-report levels of intent to leave.

This research provides the field with additional data to support the continued use of new employee orientations and evidence to support a strong relationship with workplace stress and intent to leave. High levels of these organizational outcomes are known to be detrimental to employee health, organizational performance, or both and some of their effects could be alleviated through the use of a new employee orientation program. This study found support for an orientation's positive influence on long-term levels of workplace stress and intent to leave. The generalizability of this research is supported by responses from participants at multiple organizations.

### **Research Questions**

In an effort to further understand what the data collected can say about orientations and self-report outcomes, an interaction analysis was conducted on each of the components: interactive learning, relationship-building, peer and supervisor involvement, and learning evaluations. A majority of these interactions lacked statistical support and are not reported in this research, yet within these interactions supervisor involvement and peer involvement are shown to have an influence on continuance commitment and workplace stress.

An interaction between supervisor and peer participation in an orientation was uncovered and their influence on participants' scores on continuance commitment was found to be significant. The highest average scores for continuance commitment were present when neither the supervisor nor the peer participated in the orientation followed by the presence of both supervisor involvement and peer involvement. The presence of a supervisor only produced the third highest scores, with the presence of peers only producing the lowest average scores. Although continuance commitment is a less desirable than affective commitment, this research lacked statistical support for orientation components that influence affective commitment.

Additionally, an interaction between supervisor involvement and peer involvement in an orientation was found and their influence on workplace stress was significant. The most positive scores for workplace stress were produced when both peer involvement and supervisor involvement were present in an orientation, followed by peer involvement only. The absence of both peer involvement and supervisor involvement produced the third most positive scores, with the presence of supervisor only producing the lowest average scores.

For these interactions, it seems that having both peer involvement and supervisor involvement are beneficial to self-report organizational outcomes. The inclusion of both supervisor and peers in the orientation may help provide participants with a realistic job preview, which may positively influence levels of workplace stress and continuance commitment. Involving both supervisor and peers in the orientation helps new hires develop relationships with these coworkers and having a positive relationship with

supervisors and peers can lead to lower workplace stress. Additionally, having high levels of continuance commitment, while less desirable than affective commitment, means that the individuals believe that social (e.g., their relationship with coworkers) or financial costs of leaving the organization are too high and thus they remain.

### **Limitations**

Within the parameters of this study there are several limitations to the usefulness and generalizability of the results. These limitations include use of an online survey administration protocol, using New Employee Orientation Experience Survey self-report measure, small sample size among certain groups studied, the time between when employees received orientation and when they responded to the survey, the employment status of participants, the workplace climate experienced by participants, and the number of questions used in the survey. Some of the limitations are minor compared to those that may have influenced how a participant responded to questions regarding organizational outcomes, but each one is explored further in this section.

Individuals were only able to participate in this research via an online survey. Although it was an option within the methodology, pen-and-paper surveys were not administered to individuals in this research as the required minimum number of participants was attained using the online survey protocol. Had the pen-and-paper option been used, it is likely that more individuals from the Midwestern graduate school would have participated in the study. Administration of the survey required individuals be

comfortable responding wherever they have internet access, either on a work computer, home computer, or mobile device.

The use of a self-report measure is another limitation to this study. Self-report measures rely upon participants understanding the questions in the same way and accurately remembering and reporting their experience. Due to the manner in which the NEOES was administered, it is unclear if all participants understood the questions in the same way. Although those surveyed had the option to contact the researcher with questions, none choose to do so. This non-objective measure was also susceptible to errors in how well participants remembered their orientation experience and social acceptance bias, which may have inadvertently affected their responses.

The size of the sample is the third limitation. The overall sample size of 264 responses is reasonable for this type of study, yet the groups analyzed within the sample, especially those from the Midwestern graduate school, were significantly smaller. With only three individuals from the school reporting that they received an interactive orientation, the analysis for this group is somewhat limited. Had more individuals who received an interactive orientation at the school taken the survey, it would have been easier to compare this group to larger ones and the results for the applicable hypotheses may have been different.

Another limitation is the time between when participants received their orientation and took the NEOES. As mentioned previously, the self-report measure relied heavily on participants accurately remembering and reporting their orientation experience and longer time gaps increase the likelihood of receiving inaccurate survey responses.



Within the sample there were participants who were hired as recently as two-weeks prior to taking the survey and participants who were hired more than thirty years prior to the survey. This disparity within the sample could have been eliminated had there been a limitation on how long ago the participant received his or her orientation.

A fifth limitation is the employment status of participants. To increase the potential sample size, the population surveyed included individuals who are not currently working. Employees who were laid-off or terminated from the company that provided their last new employee orientation may currently hold attitudes about their previous employer that are different from when they were actively employed. The reason for the termination of employment, either being laid-off, fired, or resigning, may also be a factor in how accurately participants recalled and reported organizational outcomes.

The next limitation is the workplace climate that has existed within the United States of America since late 2008. Individuals may currently work for companies that have downsized, and surviving the threat of being laid-off may have influenced their perceptions of the organization. Participants who work for organizations that have recently reorganized, eliminated positions, or both may currently hold different orientation outcomes, possibly lower levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance, than those held prior to the economic downturn.

The final limitation is the number of questions used in the survey. The number of questions for each self-report outcome varied, gathering more data for some attitudes and less for others. The measure for workplace stress (Seegers & Elderen, 1996) and the measure for performance (Posdakoff & Mackenzie, 1994) both contained six questions.

The measure for commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990) contained the most questions, eight each for affective, continuance, and normative subscales for a total of 24. The measures used for satisfaction (Cammann et al., 1983) and retention (Cammann et al., 1979) contained only three questions each. The validity of the data may have been influenced by this variance in the number of questions asked.

The limitations for this study include use of an online and self-report survey, small sample size, the time between receiving an orientation and responding to the survey, employment status, workplace climate, and the number of questions in the survey. Some of the limitations are minor when compared to others, but all of them affect either the accuracy or generalizability of the results. The low number of survey responses from the Midwestern graduate school is likely to be the main reason for a lack of significance in Hypotheses 2 and 3.

### **Next Steps for Testing**

Further research into the area of new employee orientations is warranted. As mentioned, orientations remain one of the most common employee development activities. Understanding how orientation programming can influence organizational outcomes can prove valuable information to organizations. Two of the options available for additional testing include a longitudinal study within a single organization and repeating the current analysis with a sample of recently hired employees.

A longitudinal study within a single organization would help establish what is required within each orientation component to influence each of the orientation

outcomes. A study like this could help identify the types of interactive learning, peer and supervisor involvement, relationship building, and learning evaluations needed within an orientation to have the desired effect on workplace stress, commitment, satisfaction, performance, and intent to leave. Additionally, a longitudinal study may be able to ascertain the duration of an orientation's effect on each of the components. A longitudinal study within a single organization that included all the identified orientation components and their expected organizational outcomes might add additional knowledge to the field of new employee orientations.

Repeating the current analysis with a sample of recently hired employees would also be beneficial. As one of the limitations of this study was the time between receiving the orientation and completing the survey, a new study that surveys only individuals actively employed and hired within a certain period of time would have more validity than the current study. The responses to the survey within this sample are likely to be more accurate than those in the current study because the orientation-survey gap and employment status were not limited.

Two options available for additional testing are a longitudinal study within a single organization and repeating the current analysis with a sample of recently hired employees. These two options are likely to yield more valid data when compared to the current study. Any further research into understanding how orientation programming can influence organizational outcomes would be beneficial to the field.

## Conclusion

Research identified orientation commonalities and the organizational outcomes associated with their use in new employee orientation. The literature reviewed supports the use of interactive learning experiences, peer and supervisor involvement, relationship building, and learning evaluations in orientations to decrease workplace stress and intent to leave, and increase commitment, performance, and satisfaction. This exploratory study assessed the orientation experiences of participants based upon the commonalities and compared their organizational outcomes.

The purpose of the study was to determine if orientation experience would influence organizational outcomes. The sample included those who were 18 years of age or older and who had held a full-time job, these individuals worked at the Midwestern graduate school or other organizations. Participants responded to the 51-question New Employee Orientation Experience Survey online during a three-week administration period from January 2012 to February 2012. The NEOES assessed the type of orientation participants experienced and assessed their current levels of workplace stress, commitment, performance, satisfaction, and intent to leave.

The results from this study support the use of orientations to influence certain organizational outcomes. Participants from the school who received an orientation reported lower levels of stress and intent to leave compared to those who received no orientation. When employees from the school were paired with participants from other organizations, those who received an orientation reported lower levels of workplace stress and intent to leave compared to those who received no orientation. Additionally,

the presence of supervisors and peers in an orientation had a positive influence on workplace stress and continuance commitment.

Through this exploratory study, the influence of orientations on the organizational outcomes of workplace stress, continuance commitment, and intent to leave were supported. Employees who received an orientation at the organizations sampled reported lower levels of workplace stress and intent to leave. They also reported that the presence of their supervisor and peers within the orientation led to higher levels of continuance commitment and lower levels of workplace stress. These results support that of previous research.

## REFERENCES

- Allee, C. (2009). Human resources orientation feedback report, November 2009. Retrieved from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Human Resources Department Archives.
- Allee, C., Craig, S., & Lemus, V. (2009). Human resources institutional effectiveness report, March 2009. Retrieved from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Human Resources Department Archives.
- Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 63*, 1-18.
- Baldwin, T. T., Magjuka, R. J., & Loher, B. T. (1991). The perils of participation: Effects of choice on training on Trainee motivation and learning. *Personnel Psychology, 44*, 51-65.
- Beasley, D. F. (1978). Putting the employee orientation program to work. *Medical Group Management, 25*, 27-44.
- Bell, B., & Kozlowski, S. (2008). Active learning: Effects of core training design elements on self-regulatory processes, learning, and adaptability. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*, 296-316.
- Boswell, W. R., Shipp, A. J., Payne, S. C., & Culbertson, S. S. (2009). Changes in newcomer job satisfaction over time: Examining the pattern of honeymoons and hangovers. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 94*, 844-858.
- Brown, K. G. (2005). An examination of the structure and nomological network of

- trainee reactions: A closer look at “smile sheets.” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90, 991-1001.
- Caruth, D. L., Caruth, G. D., & Pane Haden, S. S. (2010). Getting off to a good start. *Industrial Management*, 52, 12-15.
- Cammann, C., Fichman, M., Jenkins, D., & Klesh, J. (1979). *The Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- Cammann, C., Fichman, M., Jenkins, G.D., Jr., & Klesh, J. R. (1983). Assessing the attitudes and perceptions of organizational members. In S. E. Seashore, E. E. Lawler, III, P. H. Mirvis, & C. Cammann (Eds.), *Assessing organizational change: A guide to methods, measures, and practices*, 71-138. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Chatman, J. A. (1991). Matching people and organizations: Selection and socialization in public accounting firms. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36, 459-484.
- Cirilo, R., & Kleiner, B. H. (2003). How to orient employees into new positions successfully. *Management Research News*, 26, 16-26.
- Collis, B., & Winnips, K. (2002). Two scenarios for productive learning environments in the workplace. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 33, 133-148.
- Duguay, S. M., & Korbut, K. A. (2002). Designing a training programs which delivers results quickly. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 34, 223-228.
- Freudenberger, H. J. (1975). The staff burn-out syndrome in alternative institutions. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 12, 73-82.

- Glazer, S., & Kruse, B. (2008). The role of organizational commitment in occupational stress models. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 15, 329-344.
- Holton, E. F. (1996). New employee development: A review and reconceptualization. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 7, 233-252.
- Jones, G. R. (1986). Socialization tactics, self-efficacy, and newcomers' adjustments to organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 29, 262-279.
- Kacmar, K. M., Witt, L. A., Zivnuska, S., & Gully, S. M. (2003). The interactive effect of leader-member exchange and communication frequency on performance ratings. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 764-772.
- Kirkpatrick, D. L. (1996). Great ideas revisited. *Training and Development Journal*, January 1996, 54- 59.
- Kopelman R.E., Brief A.P., & Guzzo R.A. (1990). The role of climate and culture in productivity. In Schneider B. (Ed.). *Organizational Climate and Culture*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Klein, H. J., & Weaver, N. A. (2000). The effectiveness of an organizational-level training program in the socialization of new hires. *Personnel Psychology*, 53, 47-66.
- Louis, M. R. (1980). Surprise and sense making: What newcomers experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25, 226-251.
- Louis, M. R., Posner, B. Z., & Powell, G. N. (1983). The availability and helpfulness of socialization practices. *Personnel Psychology*, 36, 857-866.



- Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Ostroff, C., & Kozlowski, S. W. J. (1992). Organizational socialization as a learning process: The role of information acquisition. *Personnel Psychology, 45*, 849-874.
- Posdakoff, P., & MacKenzie, S. (1994). Organizational citizenship behaviors and sales unit effectiveness. *Journal of Marketing Research, 31*, 351-363.
- Rich, G. (2001). The sales manager as a role model: Effects on trust, job satisfaction, and performance of salespeople. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 25*, 319-328.
- Rollag, K. (2007). Defining the term “new” in new employee research. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 80*, 63-75.
- Rollag, K., Parise, S., & Cross, R. (2005). Getting new hires up to speed quickly. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 46*, 35-41.
- Seegers, G., & Elderen, T. (1996). Examining a model of stress reactions of bank directors. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 12*, 212-223.
- Taormina, R. J. (2004). Convergent validation of two measures of organizational socialization. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 15*, 76-94.
- Tricas Moreno, J. M., Bordas, C. S., Lopez, M. O. L., Peracho, C. V., Lopez, A. C. L., de Miguel, E. E., & Vazquez, L. B. (2010). Descriptive study of stress and satisfaction at work in the Saragossa university services and administration staff. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems, 4*.
- Valentine, S., Godkin, L., Fleischman, G., & Kidwell, R. (2011). Corporate ethical values, group creativity, job satisfaction and turnover intention: The impact of

- work context on work response. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 98, 353-372.
- Verlander, E. G., & Evans, M. R. (2007). Strategies for improving employee retention. *Clinical Leadership and Management Review*, 21, E4.
- Wanous, J. P., & Reichers, A. E. (2000). New employee orientation programs. *Human Resource Management Review*, 10, 435-451.
- Wesson, M. J., & Gogus, C. I. (2005). Shaking hands with a computer: An examination of two methods of organizational newcomer orientation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90, 1018-1026.
- Wolgin, F., & Fluke, C. (1987). Employee orientation. *Journal of Healthcare Material Management*, 5, 75-80.

## Appendix A

### NEO Evaluation Questions (Inception to March 2009)

Participants ranked the following 18 questions on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "Poor" and 5 being "Excellent."

1. I found the quality of the information relayed during the School Overview portion to be
2. I found the quality of the School Overview presentation to be
3. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Academic portion to be
4. I found the quality of the Academic presentation to be
5. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Facilities portion to be
6. I found the quality of the Facilities presentation to be
7. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Human Resources portion to be
8. I found the quality of the Human Resources presentation to be
9. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Enrollment Services portion to be
10. I found the quality of the Enrollment Services presentation to be
11. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Marketing/Communications portion to be
12. I found the quality of the Marketing/Communications presentation to be

13. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Finance portion to be
14. I found the quality of the Finance presentation to be
15. I found the quality of the information relayed during the IT portion to be
16. I found the quality of the IT presentation to be
17. I found the quality of the information relayed during today's orientation to be
18. I found the quality of today's orientation to be

At the end of the survey, participants may also respond to 5 open-ended questions.

19. What I like most about today's orientation was:
20. What I liked least about today's orientation was:
21. Considering the topics covered today, what are one or two areas where you would like more information:
22. Considering the topics covered today, what information was not covered that might ease your transition into The Chicago School? How so?
23. Additional Comments:

## Appendix B

### NEO Evaluation Questions (April 2009 - Present)

Participants ranked the following 18 questions on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "Poor" and 5 being "Excellent."

1. I found the quality of the information relayed during the School Overview portion to be
2. I found the quality of the School Overview presentation to be
3. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Academic portion to be
4. I found the quality of the Academic presentation to be
5. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Facilities portion to be
6. I found the quality of the Facilities presentation to be
7. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Human Resources portion to be
8. I found the quality of the Human Resources presentation to be
9. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Enrollment Services portion to be
10. I found the quality of the Enrollment Services presentation to be
11. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Marketing/Communications portion to be
12. I found the quality of the Marketing/Communications presentation to be

13. I found the quality of the information relayed during the Finance portion to be
14. I found the quality of the Finance presentation to be
15. I found the quality of the information relayed during the IT portion to be
16. I found the quality of the IT presentation to be
17. I found the quality of the information relayed during today's orientation to be
18. I found the quality of today's presenters to be
19. I found the pace of today's orientation to be
20. In comparison to other orientations, I would rate the NEO as

At the end of the survey, participants may also respond to 5 open-ended questions.

21. What I liked MOST about today's orientation was:
22. What I liked LEAST about today's orientation was:
23. The presentation that provided too little information was:
24. The presentation that provided too much information was:
25. The one thing I would have changed is:
26. What has been done at other orientations that would make the NEO better?:
27. Additional comments:

## Appendix C

### Informed Consent Statement

You are invited to participate in a research project titled “New Employee Orientation: A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes.”

This research is being conducted as part of the dissertation requirement in a doctoral program at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. This study is being conducted by Curt E. Allee, M.A. (573-489-0962) and Keith Carroll, Ph.D. (312-467-2533).

The purpose of this study is to compare orientation practices among different organizations to determine how they might influence organizational commitment, retention, employee stress, performance, and satisfaction.

You will be asked to answer questions to determine the content of my last employee orientation and the attitudes you have toward the organization. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

You can expect no direct benefits by participating in this study except the satisfaction of providing accurate and honest information that may be useful to others in the future. The results of this study may help organizations create more effective orientation process for new employees.

Any personally identifiable information obtained from me during this study will remain confidential, or will be disclosed only with your permission unless required by law. You are in agreement that any information not identifiable to you resulting from the study may be presented at meetings and published so that the information can be helpful to others. Your name will not be associated with any results; all results will be reported in a group format.

You may stop participating at any time without consequence or penalty. You may indicate that you do not want to participate by exiting the survey and leaving it incomplete.

By clicking “Begin the Survey” you are indicating that have read the consent statement and agree to participate in the research project described in it. You are also indicating that you are 18 years of age or older and have held a full-time employment position.

Begin the Survey

Decline Participation

## Appendix D

### New Employee Orientation Experience Survey

#### Opt-In

- Participants in this research have the option of entering a raffle to win one of five \$50 gift cards. Would you like to enter the raffle?

Yes/No

If you answered "Yes" to the questions above, please enter your email address below:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- Participants in this research have the option of receiving a copy of the results from this survey. Would you like to receive a copy of the survey results?

Yes/No

If you answered "Yes" to the questions above, please enter your email address below:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please think about the your most recent full-time employment position and respond to each of the following questions.

#### Organization, Orientation, & Tenure

1. What is the name of the organization where you worked during your most recent full-time employment position?

Fill in: Name of Company

In what Month/Year did you start the full-time position?

Fill in: MM/YY

2. Did the organization provide you with some type of new employee orientation?

Yes/No



Please think about the new employee orientation for your most recent full-time employment position and respond to each of the following question with the answer that best captures your experience.

### **Type of Orientation**

3. Which of the following statements best describes the type of new employee orientation the organization provided to you? Choose all that apply.

The organization provided me with:

- Information prior to my first day that I was required to review.
- An instructional manual or checklist, which I completed on my own at work, that guided me in learning about the organization.
- A structured orientation, either online or in a group setting, that seemed applicable to all new employees.
- An orientation in a way that was different from those listed above.

### **Information Presentation**

4. Which of the following statements best describes the way in which the information during your orientation was presented. Choose all that apply.

The organization presented information to me in

- A written format.
- One-on-one conversations.
- Small group discussions.
- A classroom format.
- An online format.
- Other, information was presented in a way that was different from those listed above.

### **Learning Assessment**

5. Which of the following statements best describes the way in which the information received during the orientation was evaluated. Choose all that apply.

- The orientation excluded any opportunity for evaluation.
- I evaluated the orientation by completing a survey with my opinions of the orientation experience.
- I evaluated myself on the information received by completing a quiz or game that addressed what I learned in the orientation.
- I was evaluated on the information received by completing a test or task that evaluated my knowledge of what I learned.
- Other, the evaluation method was different from those listed above.

### **Didactic Information**

6. Which of the following statements best describes the application of the information you learned during the orientation. Choose all that apply.
- I read the information provided.
  - I listened to the information provided.
  - I received pictorial examples of the information provided.
  - I observed someone demonstrate the information provided.
  - I practiced using the information provided.
  - Other, the information was applied in a way different from those listed above.

### **Supervisor Involvement**

7. Which of the following statements best describes the interaction you had with your supervisor during the orientation. Choose all that apply.

My supervisor and I:

- Were unable to interact during the orientation.
- Had a non-work conversation.
- Casually talked about the work I would do.
- Discussed the goals of my position.
- Outlined his/her expectations of my performance.
- Other, the interaction was different from those listed above.

### **Peer Involvement**

8. Which of the following statements best describes the interaction you had with peers within your department during the orientation. Choose all that apply.

My peers and I:

- Were unable to interact during the orientation.
- Had a non-work conversation.
- Casually talked about the work I would do.
- Discussed how our jobs related to one another.
- Other, the interaction was different from those listed above.

### **Relationship Building**

9. Which of the following statements best describes your interaction with existing employees from other departments during your new employee orientation? Choose all that apply.

- Existing employees and I were unable to interact during the orientation.
- Existing employees and I had a non-work conversation.
- Existing employees and I causally discussed the workplace.
- Existing employees and I discussed how our jobs related to one another.
- Other, the interaction was different from those listed above.

Please think about the organization at which you held your most recent full-time employment position and, using the scale below, record the extent to which you agree with each statement.

1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree

**Workplace Stress** (Adapted from Seegers & Elderen, 1996)

10. I received helpful information about the organization in the first week of employment.
11. I am aware of the resources the organization provides for people feeling stress.
12. I am confident in my ability to manage the stress of my job.
13. I received false information about the organization in the first week of employment. ®
14. It is difficult for me to find answers to my questions about the organization. \*
15. I have noticed the effects of work place stress on my health (e.g. moodiness, weight gain, high blood pressure, ulcers, stomach problems). \*

**Commitment** (Allen & Meyer, 1990)

*Affective*

16. I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with the organization.
17. I enjoy discussing the organization with people outside it.
18. I really feel as if the organization's problems are my own.
19. I think I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one. \*
20. I do not feel like 'part of the family' at the organization. \*
21. I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to the organization. \*
22. The organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

23. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to the organization. \*

*Continuance*

24. I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up. \*

25. It would be very hard for me to leave the organization right now, even if I wanted to.

26. Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave the organization now.

27. It would not be too costly for me to leave the organization now. \*

28. Right now, staying with the organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.

29. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving the organization.

30. One of the few serious consequences of leaving the organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.

31. One of the major reasons I continue to work for the organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here.

*Normative*

32. I think that people these days move from company to company too often.

33. I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization. \*

34. Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me. \*

35. One of the major reasons I continue to work for the organization is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain.

36. If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave the organization.

37. I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization.

38. Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers.

39. I do not think that wanting to be a ‘company man’ or ‘company woman’ is sensible anymore. \*

**Performance** (Posdakoff & Mackenzie, 1994)

40. My supervisor and I regularly talk about the work I do.

41. My supervisor and I rarely discuss the work I do. \*

42. I believe my supervisor would say that I am a valuable employee at the organization.

43. My supervisor does not fully understand my contributions to the organization. \*

44. I believe my supervisor would say I am performing at or above expectations.

45. I believe my supervisor would say that my performance is below expectations. \*

**Satisfaction** (Cammann et al., 1983)

46. All in all, I’m satisfied with my job.

47. In general, I like working for the organization.

48. In general, I don’t like my job. \*

**Retention** (Cammann et al., 1979)

49. I often think of leaving the organization. \*

50. It is very possible that I will look for a new job in the next year. \*

51. If I could choose again, I would still choose to work for the organization.

\* Indicates a reverse scored item

Appendix E  
Initial Participant Recruitment Email

Hello-

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled “New Employee Orientation: A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes” which will explore the relationship among orientation practices at various organizations to determine how practices might influence self-reported organizational outcomes.

To participate in this research study, please click the link below:

[New Employee Orientation Experience Survey](#)

Or copy the following web address and paste it into your browser:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dEN5clAycmQwMWw1TnNB S3FGTE5Jcmc6MQ>

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes. Participants are asked to complete the survey within the next two weeks. Those who submit an informed consent form may elect to participate in a raffle to receive one of five \$50 gift cards.

Please feel free to forward this email to your friends and colleagues.

The results of this study may help organizations create more effective orientation process for new employees. If you have questions about this research or about the survey, please contact me at [cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu](mailto:cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu).

Sincerely,  
Curt E. Allee, M.A.  
Doctoral Candidate, Business Psychology

Appendix F  
Second Participant Recruitment Email

Hello-

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled “New Employee Orientation: A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes” which will explore the relationship among orientation practices at various organizations to determine how practices might influence self-reported organizational outcomes.

To participate in this research study, please click the link below:

[New Employee Orientation Experience Survey](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dEN5clAycmQwMWw1TnNB S3FGTE5Jcmc6MQ)

Or copy the following web address and paste it into your browser:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dEN5clAycmQwMWw1TnNB S3FGTE5Jcmc6MQ>

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes. Participants are asked to complete the survey within the next seven days. Those who submit an informed consent form may elect to participate in a raffle to receive one of five \$50 gift cards.

Please feel free to forward this email to your friends and colleagues.

The results of this study may help organizations create more effective orientation process for new employees. If you have questions about this research or about the survey, please contact me at [cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu](mailto:cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu).

Sincerely,  
Curt E. Allee, M.A.  
Doctoral Candidate, Business Psychology

Appendix G  
Third Participant Recruitment Email

Hello-

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled “New Employee Orientation: A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes” which will explore the relationship among orientation practices at various organizations to determine how practices might influence self-reported organizational outcomes.

To participate in this research study, please click the link below:

[New Employee Orientation Experience Survey](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dEN5clAycmQwMWw1TnNB S3FGTE5Jcmc6MQ)

Or copy the following web address and paste it into your browser:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dEN5clAycmQwMWw1TnNB S3FGTE5Jcmc6MQ>

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes. Participants are asked to complete the survey within the next three days. Those who submit an informed consent form may elect to participate in a raffle to receive one of five \$50 gift cards.

Please feel free to forward this email to your friends and colleagues.

The results of this study may help organizations create more effective orientation process for new employees. If you have questions about this research or about the survey, please contact me at [cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu](mailto:cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu).

Sincerely,  
Curt E. Allee, M.A.  
Doctoral Candidate, Business Psychology



Appendix H  
Final Participant Recruitment Email

Hello-

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled “New Employee Orientation: A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes” which will explore the relationship among orientation practices at various organizations to determine how practices might influence self-reported organizational outcomes.

To participate in this research study, please click the link below:

[New Employee Orientation Experience Survey](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dEN5clAycmQwMWw1TnNB S3FGTE5Jcmc6MQ)

Or copy the following web address and paste it into your browser:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dEN5clAycmQwMWw1TnNB S3FGTE5Jcmc6MQ>

Today is the final day to participate in this research by completing the survey, which will take approximately 15 minutes. Those who submit an informed consent form may elect to participate in a raffle to receive one of five \$50 gift cards.

Please feel free to forward this email to your friends and colleagues.

The results of this study may help organizations create more effective orientation process for new employees. If you have questions about this research or about the survey, please contact me at [cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu](mailto:cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu).

Sincerely,  
Curt E. Allee, M.A.  
Doctoral Candidate, Business Psychology

Appendix I  
Congratulatory Email

Hello (Participant's Name)-

Congratulations! You have been selected to receive a \$50 gift card as a "Thank You" for participating in a research study entitled "New Employee Orientation: A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes."

To receive the \$50 gift card, please reply to this email with your mailing address.

Once I receive a reply from you, I will send the gift card to you via postal mail and it should arrive within 7 business days. Please contact me if there is a delay in receiving your gift card or if you have questions.

As a reminder, the responses you provided are confidential. When combined with the responses from other participants, the data collected for this study may help organizations create more effective orientation process for new employees.

I sincerely appreciate your assistance with my dissertation research.

Best,  
Curt E. Allee, M.A.  
Doctoral Candidate, Business Psychology  
[cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu](mailto:cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu)

Appendix J  
Luncheon Informed Consent Form

**Title:** New Employee Orientation: A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes.

**Investigators:** Curt E. Allee, M.A., and Keith Carroll, Ph.D.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to compare orientation practices among different organizations to determine how they might influence organizational commitment, retention, employee stress, performance, and satisfaction.

**Procedures:** I am asking you to answer questions to determine the content of your last employee orientation and the attitudes you have toward the organization. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

**Risks to Participation:** There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

**Benefits to Participants:** You can expect no direct benefits by participating in this study except the satisfaction of providing accurate and honest information that may be useful to others in the future. The results of this study may help organizations create more effective orientation process for new employees.

**Alternatives to Participation:** Your participation in this research is voluntary and you may stop participating at any time without consequence or penalty. You may indicate that you do not want to participate by leaving the survey incomplete.

**Confidentiality:** Any personally identifiable information obtained from you during this study will remain confidential, or will be disclosed only with your permission unless required by law. You are in agreement that any information not identifiable to you resulting from the study may be presented at meetings and published so that the information can be helpful to others. Your name will not be associated with any results; all results will be reported in a group format.

**Questions/Concerns:** Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Curt E. Allee, M.A. at [cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu](mailto:cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu) or 573-489-0962.

**Consent:** By signing this form, you are indicating that you agree to participate in the research project described above. You are indicating that you are 18 years of age or older and have held a full-time employment position. The researcher will provide you with copy of this signed form.

Participant's Name (Printed)	Date	Participant's Signature
Curt E. Allee, M.A.		
Researcher's Name (Printed)	Date	Researcher's Signature

Appendix K  
Luncheon Invitation Email

Hello-

You are invited to a pizza luncheon on (DAY) at (TIME) in (LOCATION).

The purpose of the luncheon is to offer you an additional opportunity to participate in a research study entitled “New Employee Orientation: A Survey of Participant Experiences and Self-Report Outcomes” which will explore the relationship among orientation practices at various organizations to determine how practices might influence self-reported organizational outcomes.

If you are unable to attend the luncheon, you may complete the survey by clicking the link below:

**[New Employee Orientation Experience Survey](#)**

Or by copying the following web address and pasting it into your browser:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dEN5clAycmQwMWw1TnNB S3FGTE5Jcmc6MQ>

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes. Those who submit an informed consent form may elect to participate in a raffle to receive one of five \$50 gift cards.

The results of this study may help organizations create more effective orientation process for new employees. If you have questions about this research or about the survey, please contact me at [cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu](mailto:cea1934@ego.thechicagoschool.edu).

Sincerely,  
Curt E. Allee, M.A.  
Doctoral Candidate, Business Psychology