The Effect of Onboarding on Job Performance Through the Mediating Role of Employee Creativity

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Abstract. The onboarding process has been found to provide long-term benefits to employee productivity. The method has gradually shifted to online, offline, or blended learning. In supporting the adaptation process, companies need human resources who can make changes for new employees who still need much adjustment to their new environment and work. This study analyzed the effect of onboarding on job performance through the mediating role of employee creativity. Data from 204 employees were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method. The results showed that effective onboarding could increase work employee creativity and give impact on job performance.

Keywords: Affective Commitment · Employee Creativity · Job Performance · Onboarding · Work Engagement

1 Introduction

The rapidly growing organizational environment has demanded an equally fast adjustment. According to [1], a company's success in today's era depends on its ability to change its business model, and its operations can be in line with changes. In supporting the adaptation process, companies need human resources who can make changes, especially for new employees who still need much adjustment to their new environment and work. Companies can optimize it with the onboarding process, which integrates new employees into the organization and makes them productive as quickly as possible [2].

Various studies have stated that the onboarding process relates to employee creativity, organizational commitment, satisfaction, engagement, and turnover intention [3–6]. The study indicated that an effective onboarding process could undoubtedly benefit the company. This research investigated employees' creativity due to the company's onboarding process. The onboarding process will allow new employees to clarify roles, workgroup integration, knowledge, and tasks [7]. If onboarding is carried out effectively, it can affect employee creativity [8]. Individuals who can adapt and maintain good relations with colleagues and managers can more easily increase their creativity.

The variable influenced by onboarding, namely employee creativity, can affect job performance. [9] stated that employees who showed creativity tended to have higher

performance levels in the relationship between employee creativity and job performance. Therefore, this research tried to dig deeper to analyze the effect of onboarding on job performance through the mediating role of employee creativity.

With the development of the business world in responding to changes to remain relevant, concepts related to onboarding have also shifted. In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all communication between workers in the company was virtual [10]. Several companies have started to adapt by implementing online onboarding, although few were still implementing offline onboarding or blended learning by implementing appropriate health protocols. After the COVID-19 pandemic, companies can consider the onboarding method used by looking at its effectiveness. Several studies have stated that choosing the suitable onboarding method in an organization can help companies increase self-confidence, and employee productivity, reduce stress, create a commitment, and provide comfort for employees [11, 12]. Therefore, onboarding research is essential because it benefits companies in determining the most effective onboarding methods.

1.1 Onboarding

According to [3], onboarding is a process that helps new employees to adjust to the social and performance aspects of their new job more quickly and smoothly. The onboarding process that can run well can provide several benefits for the company. Onboarding can contribute to a faster adjustment process for the company. For example, its culture and goals reduce employee insecurities and anxiety from not meeting company expectations for their performance, strengthen employee acclimatization to the work environment, and overall acquire attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge that are desirable or necessary [13]. In addition, onboarding can increase employee creativity, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction [3]. Companies can implement successful onboarding to achieve the right balance, improve performance, and increase employee job satisfaction [14]. However, on the one hand, the onboarding process that is not managed correctly can harm the company. The stress level of employees in the company can even increase if they get too much information in a short time during the onboarding process [15, 16].

1.2 Job Performance

Job performance is the aggregate value to the organization of a series of employee behaviors by contributing directly or indirectly to achieving organizational goals [17]. According to [18], job performance is the total value expected for organizational behavior performed by an individual during a specific period.

According to [19], it is stated that employee adjustment matches performance. Employees who excel in roles and company expectations will likely do business well and accomplish more significant goals. Several other studies have also mentioned that company orientation or onboarding can effectively improve performance [20].

H1: Onboarding will positively affect job performance.

1.3 Employee Creativity

Employee creativity is an essential human element consisting of original and valued ideas. Creativity shows the valuable conceptions, practices, and procedures created by employees in an organization [21]. According to [8], employees who get onboarding effectively can affect their creativity. Employees are given a suitable, appropriate onboarding method that can reduce stress for new employees in the company [11, 12]. According to [22], employees with less pressure in the company can create higher creativity.

H2: Onboarding will positively affect employee creativity.

Employee creativity is one of the variables influencing employees' job performance in the company. Employees who already understand their role tend to more easily complete work on time and experience less pressure, thus showing high creativity [22]. According to [9], employees who show creativity tend to have higher performance levels. Employees who implement new initiatives and ideas can establish good customer relationships, increase customer loyalty, and improve the company image [23, 24].

H3: Employee creativity will positively affect job performance.

H4: Onboarding will positively relate to job performance mediated by employee creativity.

2 Methods

2.1 Sample

This study used quantitative research. One type of quantitative research is single cross-sectional, where data collection is carried out once in a certain period of the targeted population [25]. Data collection was carried out in this study using a non-probability sampling procedure with a judgment sampling method, using specific criteria so that information can be obtained as needed. Data was collected using a questionnaire distributed online to respondents who were actively working in a company/institution currently in the DKI Jakarta area for a maximum of fifteen months and have participated in online, offline, or blended learning onboarding.

2.2 Measures

All indicators were measured using a point Likert scale with a scale of (1) strongly disagree, and a scale of (6) strongly agree. The measuring instrument used to measure onboarding refers to the items proposed by [26], the job performance scales were adapted by [27], and the employee creativity variable refers to [32] as well as indicators in [28] research.

3   Results

Based on the respondent's profile characteristics, 204 respondents participated in this study. The number of male and female respondents was almost the same, namely 46.08% and 53.92%, respectively. Most respondents came from 24 to 27 years, as much as 43.63%. The companies with the highest number of respondents were employees who worked in finance and banking, with 21.1% of the 204 respondents participating in this study. The onboarding methods used in the respondent's companies were online (33.3%), offline (40.2%), and blended learning (26.5%). From the number of respondents collected, most employees had experience working on contract (38.73%) and full-time (39.71%). Respondents who had worked also showed that 48.04% had the same experience with the current field of work.

Structural Equation Modeling (LISREL 8.80) was used to test the model's fit and the hypothesis. Significantly high factor loading indicates convergent validity with an estimate of 0.50. The output showed satisfactory results except for three indicators, namely items JP5 and JP6 from Job Performance and AC2 from affective commitment; thus, they were excluded from further analysis. Construct (CR) of 0.70 or above and extracted mean-variance (AVE) of more than 0.50 indicates good results. In this study, all variables met the criteria except the performance showed an AVE value < 0.5. However, [29] explained that the AVE value that showed a result < 0.50 was acceptable because it was considered not to have a fatal impact, and the value was acceptable if the CR value met the standard. Therefore, the results were acceptable.

Several approximation measures were used to describe the predictive power of the model. Each absolute and incremental index that shows a good fit has provided sufficient information to evaluate a model. Absolute match size of $\chi 2 = 164.64$ (p-value $= 0.00$); $df = 74$; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) $= 0.076$; and Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) $= 0.90$; and the measure of incremental fit shows the Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) at 0.95; 0.97; and 0.97 respectively, which indicates that the model is fit.

Table 1. Coefficients of direct effect, indirect effect, and total effect

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Onboarding → Job Performance	0.25	–	0.17
	(t = 1.87)		
Onboarding → Employee Creativity	0.77	–	0.77
	(t = 8.39)		
Employee Creativity → Job Performance	0.46	–	0.46
	(t = 3.33)		
Onboarding → Employee Creativity → Job Performance	0.25	0.36	0.61
	(t = 1.87)	(t = 3.06)	

The structural model results in Table 1 show that onboarding positively affects employee creativity ($\beta = 0.77$; $t = 8.39$). In addition, the employee creativity variable also has a positive effect on job performance problem-solving process. Employees who exhibit creativity tend to be able to achieve higher levels of performance based on a comprehensive evaluation conducted on them.

In this study, it is known that onboarding significantly indirectly affected job performance through employee creativity, as evidence that there was an effect of employee creativity on job performance. However, the direct effect of onboarding on job performance proved insignificant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the mediating effect of employee creativity on the effect of onboarding on job performance was a partial mediation. Based on this analysis, hypothesis H4 was accepted. Employees were given a suitable, appropriate onboarding method that could reduce stress for new employees in the company [30]. According to [31], employees with less pressure in the company can create higher creativity.

Based on the results of the different tests through the characteristics of respondents who have had experience, it was found that there was no significant difference between respondents who had and had never had previous experience, except for the employee creativity variable, which had a significant difference to the respondent's experience. This finding concludes that employees' creativity level will increase if the employee already has experience working on a contract basis. In addition, the results of different tests based on previous experience in the same field showed significant results only on the employee creativity variable, with the highest score on employees who had experience in the same field. These results indicate that employees who already have experience in the same field before will be able to increase their creativity.

Studying onboarding is now exciting, considering that companies have different methods of conducting the process. Choosing an effective onboarding method can help employees in the workplace to adapt better. The onboarding process that can run well can provide several benefits for the company. Onboarding can contribute to a faster adjustment process for the company [3]. This study has confirmed the positive impact of onboarding on job performance by mediating employee creativity. Organizations should pay great attention to onboarding by selecting appropriate onboarding methods to support organizational performance and sustainability.

4 Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that the three hypotheses were accepted. Employee creativity was found to mediate onboarding on job performance partially. Creativity is also essential in responding to changes in the business environment, which is dynamic and requires adjustment. The demand for creative employees in the world of work is increasing and is valuable for the organization. Companies can improve the creative process of new employees through onboarding by providing various case studies they must complete, thus making new employees accustomed to thinking more creatively about any given problem. In addition, creativity is also grown from adequate resources and the environment. Therefore, the company must also be able to provide sufficient resources and support from a supportive environment.

An interesting finding from this study is that employees who have worked and had experience in the same field had higher creativity than those with no experience. Companies can consider this in recruiting employees positioned in areas requiring high creativity. In addition, it is most important to note that the success of the job introduction process for new employees cannot be separated from the support of good reception from various parties, both from the company, leaders, and colleagues. With the support from these parties, it will be easier for new employees to adjust to work and the company as a whole.

This study has several limitations, which can be recommendations for further research. This research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, which may have influenced respondents' perceptions of certain variables. Future research may consider involving different respondents, such as supervisors or managers. Respondents cover various occupations, where a particular sector may represent different perceptions. In addition, further research may also consider analyzing different variables, such as turnover, employee satisfaction, and generational differences issues.

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