BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERISITY

The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration - FSEGA

PH.D THESIS

A theoretical and empirical analysis of the factors influencing employee onboarding success

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Summary of Ph.D. Thesis: "A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of the Factors Influencing Employee Onboarding Success"

Abstract

This thesis investigates the factors influencing the success of employee onboarding through both theoretical and empirical analyses. It underscores the importance of onboarding as a strategic process integrating new employees into organizational culture, enhancing their understanding of roles, and preparing them for effective participation within the organization. The study delves into various definitions, models, and frameworks of onboarding, highlighting its evolution from a purely administrative function to a critical element of human resource management.

Utilizing the CIMO (Context-Intervention-Mechanism-Outcome) methodology, a comprehensive literature review is conducted, followed by empirical analysis using Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA). The research focuses on individual characteristics and organizational context, analyzing data collected from employees in Romania and Israel. The findings reveal that successful onboarding is influenced by structured orientation programs, continuous support, and alignment with organizational culture. The study also emphasizes the challenges of remote onboarding and the role of technology in facilitating effective onboarding processes.

The thesis concludes with practical implications for developing robust onboarding programs, suggesting that organizations should invest in personalized onboarding strategies, continuous evaluation, and improvement mechanisms. Future research directions are proposed, including exploring the impact of automation on onboarding efficiency, hybrid onboarding models that combine in-person and virtual elements, and cross-cultural studies to understand the onboarding process in different organizational contexts.

This research contributes to understanding onboarding as a multifaceted process crucial for employee retention, engagement, and overall organizational success. By addressing the complexities and challenges of onboarding, this thesis provides valuable insights for both academic researchers and human resource practitioners aiming to optimize the onboarding experience and foster long-term employee integration and productivity.

Introduction

The thesis addresses the often neglected and undervalued process of employee onboarding, which is crucial for reducing high turnover rates, increasing employee satisfaction, and improving performance. The rise of remote work has exposed the inadequacies of traditional onboarding programs, necessitating a reevaluation to better meet the needs of new hires and align with organizational strategic goals. The research questions explored include:

1. What is onboarding?
2. What are the forms of onboarding existing in practice?
3. What are the theoretical constructs describing the phenomenon?

4. What elements are crucial for the success of onboarding processes within remote or on-site work settings?
5. Which organizational culture characteristics are most influential in shaping the success of employee onboarding?

Methodology

The research employs a dual analytical approach combining a systematic literature review (CIMO methodology) and empirical analysis (Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis - fsQCA). The literature review synthesizes current theories and perspectives on onboarding, while the empirical study focuses on individual characteristics and organizational contexts. Data was collected from employees in Romania and Israel using the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), with insights drawn from 205 respondents who had changed employers within the last five years.

Findings

The study identifies several factors influencing successful onboarding, including structured orientation programs, continuous support, and alignment with organizational culture. Challenges to effective onboarding highlighted in the thesis include:

1. Inadequate implementation of the welcoming and integration process.
2. Poor communication leading to misinformation.
3. Insufficient resources impeding performance.
4. Cultural misalignment causing disconnection.
5. Limited engagement fostering alienation.
6. Unrealistic expectations leading to dissatisfaction.
7. Inadequate evaluation preventing optimization.

The research emphasizes the difficulties of remote onboarding and the significant role of technology in facilitating effective onboarding processes. Onboarding is portrayed as a multifaceted process essential for employee retention, engagement, and overall organizational success.

Implications

The practical implications for developing robust onboarding programs are extensive. The thesis suggests that organizations should:

1. **Invest in personalized onboarding strategies**: Tailor the onboarding experience to meet individual needs.
2. **Ensure continuous evaluation and improvement mechanisms**: Regularly assess and refine onboarding programs based on feedback and performance metrics.
3. **Assign mentors or buddies to new employees**: Provide guidance and support through experienced colleagues.

4. **Ensure supervisors provide ongoing constructive feedback**: Maintain open lines of communication for personal and professional discussions.
5. **Focus on core onboarding elements**: Maintain robust orientation, training, and support systems regardless of whether onboarding is conducted online or on-site.
6. **Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of onboarding programs**: Use feedback and data analysis to continuously improve the process.

Future Research Directions

The thesis proposes several avenues for future research to further optimize employee onboarding processes:

1. **Exploring the impact of automation on onboarding efficiency**: Investigate how automated tools and processes can streamline onboarding.
2. **Investigating hybrid onboarding models**: Examine the effectiveness of combining in-person and virtual onboarding elements.
3. **Conducting cross-cultural studies**: Understand how onboarding processes differ in various organizational and cultural contexts.
4. **Longitudinal analyses**: Study onboarding processes over time to identify long-term effects and opportunities for improvement.

Conclusion

This research significantly contributes to understanding onboarding as a critical process in human resource management. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors that influence the success of onboarding programs and offers practical recommendations to enhance the onboarding experience. By addressing the complexities and challenges identified, the findings aim to foster long-term employee integration and productivity.

The thesis underscores the evolution of onboarding from a purely administrative function to a strategic process integral to organizational success. Through both theoretical and empirical analyses, it highlights the importance of structured onboarding programs, continuous support, and cultural alignment in achieving successful employee integration. The practical implications and future research directions provided serve as valuable guides for human resource practitioners and academic researchers seeking to optimize onboarding processes and enhance overall organizational effectiveness.

Summary

This thesis thoroughly investigates the factors influencing employee onboarding success through a combination of theoretical constructs and empirical data. By defining onboarding, exploring its various forms, and identifying key theoretical frameworks, the research offers a comprehensive understanding of the process. Empirical data from Romania and Israel pinpoint the critical elements of successful onboarding, such as high orientation, continuous support, and tailored training programs, particularly in remote and hybrid work settings.

The study emphasizes the significance of organizational culture, highlighting that a supportive, innovative, and market-oriented culture fosters effective onboarding experiences. The findings suggest that successful onboarding relies heavily on structured orientation programs, continuous support, and training, while the absence of these elements leads to unsuccessful outcomes. The research also underscores the minimal impact of the recruiting process mode (online or on-site), suggesting that the core elements of onboarding are more influential in determining success.

Overall, this thesis provides valuable insights into the onboarding process, emphasizing the importance of personalized strategies, continuous evaluation, and a supportive organizational culture. The practical recommendations and future research directions aim to enhance employee integration, satisfaction, and productivity, offering significant contributions to both academic research and human resource management practices.

Keywords:

- Employee Onboarding
- Organizational Culture
- Orientation Programs
- Hybrid Onboarding Models
- Employee Retention
- New Hire Integration

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