

# HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEM THROUGH ONBOARDING IN THE NIGERIAN BANKING SYSTEM

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## Abstract

*The banking industry in Nigeria is characterized by intense competition, regulatory scrutiny, and rapid technological changes. In such an environment, the ability of employees to swiftly understand and align with organizational goals is essential. Hence, this study examines the effect of onboarding on high-performance work systems in the Nigerian banking Industry while specifically focusing on Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB). Specifically, it determines the effect of employee integration on employee competence and assesses the effect of employee mentorship on employee productivity. A survey was conducted on a sample of 142 staff within GTB., with the use of primary data and questionnaires. Multiple regression was used to test hypotheses. The study found that identified variables of employee integration (employee assimilation program, employee alignment, and forging connection) explain about 79.1% of the variance in employee competence. Also, the identified variables of employee mentorship (coaching, teaching, and learning) explain about 78.4% of the variance in employee productivity. In conclusion, onboarding has a significant effect on high-performance work systems in the Nigerian banking industry.*

**Keywords:** Onboarding, High-performance work system, Employee integration, Employee mentorship, Employee competence, Employee productivity.

## 1. Introduction

The Nigerian banking industry, like many other sectors, has witnessed significant transformations in recent years, driven by globalization, technological advancements, and the ever-evolving business landscape. In this dynamic environment, organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of fostering high-performance work systems to gain a competitive edge (Yangailo & Mpundu, 2024) and ensure sustainable success. Central to the achievement of such systems is the process of integrating new employees into the organizational culture and structure, commonly referred to as the orientation or assimilation process. The significance of effective onboarding practices cannot be overstated, particularly in a sector where talent acquisition and retention play pivotal roles in organizational success (Okafor, 2019).

Effective onboarding goes beyond the administrative tasks associated with introducing new employees to their roles; it encompasses a strategic and comprehensive approach to integrating employees into the organizational fabric. In the context of the Nigerian banking industry, where the demand for skilled and adaptable professionals is consistently high, the onboarding process becomes a critical element in nurturing a high-performance work system. As organizations strive to attract top talent and build a workforce capable of navigating the complexities of the financial landscape, a well-executed onboarding process becomes a catalyst for employee engagement, commitment, and ultimately, high performance (Adeniji & Osibanjo, 2018).

The banking industry in Nigeria is characterized by intense competition, regulatory scrutiny, and rapid technological changes. In such an environment, the ability of employees to swiftly understand and align with organizational goals is essential. A robust onboarding process facilitates this alignment by providing newcomers with the necessary knowledge about the organizational mission, values, and expectations. This early assimilation not only accelerates the integration of employees into their roles but also contributes to the development of a shared organizational identity, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment among employees (Oladipo & Adeniji, 2020).

Furthermore, the impact of onboarding on high-performance work systems extends to the enhancement of individual and collective capabilities (Bhardwaj et al., 2025). Nigerian banks increasingly operate in a knowledge-intensive environment, where the skills and competencies of employees significantly influence organizational success. A well-designed onboarding program provides employees with the necessary tools, training, and resources to excel in their roles, thereby contributing to the overall performance of the organization (Ikeije, 2019). This emphasis on continuous learning and skill development aligns with the broader objectives of high-performance work systems, which prioritize employee growth and adaptability (Ogunbanjo & Adeniji, 2017).

The relationship between onboarding and high-performance work systems in the Nigerian banking industry is intricate and impactful. Effective onboarding practices contribute to the development of engaged, committed, and skilled employees, laying the foundation for organizational success in a dynamic and competitive environment. As industry continues to evolve, the strategic importance of onboarding in building and sustaining high-performance work systems cannot be overlooked. The intensely characterized competitive environment of the Nigerian banking industry and its regulatory scrutiny prompted the focus on the Nigerian banking industry with a specific focus on Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB), which is ranked the first bank in Nigeria by revenue base.

Hence, the main objective of this study is to examine the effect of onboarding on high-performance work systems in the Nigerian banking Industry while specifically focusing on Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB) in Ilorin metropolis. The specific objective is to determine the effect of employee integration on employee competence and assess the effect of employee mentorship on employee productivity.

## 2. Literature review

Onboarding is assuming centrality among organizational processes, given the increasing talent shortages (Kütt & Terasmaa, 2024) among organizations. Specifically, it is to facilitate the integration of new employees into a company's culture, structure, and operations (Koleda, 2022). It extends beyond mere orientation, encompassing a strategic approach to assimilating individuals into their roles and fostering a sense of belonging within the organizational context (Cesário & Chambel, 2019), while fostering organizational success (Yangailo & Mpundu, 2024). This multifaceted process aims to enhance new employees' understanding of their roles, expectations, and the overall workplace environment, contributing to their job satisfaction and performance (Cheikh-Ammar et al., 2024). Effective onboarding goes beyond paperwork and introductions; it involves a systematic and comprehensive approach to acclimating individuals, aligning their goals with organizational objectives, and establishing a foundation for long-term success (Didion et al., 2024).

Succinctly, onboarding as defined by Pinco et al. (2024) covers all activities involved in the integration of a new employee into the workspace. This is to familiarize such an employee with organizational values, goals, policies, processes, and culture. To onboard an employee into the business, various processes such as employee integration and mentorship are critical. Employee integration is a pivotal aspect of the onboarding process, focusing on how new hires assimilate into the social fabric of the organization. It involves not only becoming familiar with job tasks but also understanding the company's values, norms, and interpersonal dynamics (Saks & Gruman, 2018). Successful integration is associated with employee engagement (Kütt, M. & Terasmaa, 2024), higher job satisfaction, commitment, and retention (Narayansany & Isa, 2021). This phase ensures that new employees forge meaningful connections with their colleagues, fostering a sense of community and engagement (Peltokorpi et al., 2022). Employee integration as part of onboarding is instrumental in aligning individual and organizational values, facilitating a smoother transition, and ultimately contributing to the long-term success of both the employee and the organization.

Employee mentorship within the onboarding process plays a pivotal role in facilitating knowledge transfer, skill development, and social integration. A mentorship program involves pairing new employees with experienced individuals who provide guidance, support, and insights into organizational dynamics (Cesário & Chambel, 2020). This personalized approach accelerates the learning curve, helping new hires navigate challenges and build a network within the organization (Cesário & Chambel, 2020). Mentorship not only aids in skill acquisition but also contributes to the development of a positive organizational identity and fosters a sense of belonging. In the broader context of onboarding, mentorship serves as a crucial mechanism for knowledge transfer and the

cultivation of a supportive work environment, enhancing both individual and organizational outcomes.

A High-Performance Work System (HPWS) is a strategic approach to human resource management that aims to enhance organizational performance through the development of a synergistic set of practices. It involves the integration of various HR practices, such as selection, training, performance management, and compensation, to create a workplace that fosters continuous improvement, innovation, and employee involvement. The primary goal of HPWS is to align the organization's human capital with its strategic objectives, creating a competitive advantage. Scholars have emphasized that HPWS is not merely a collection of individual practices but a holistic and interconnected system that influences employee behavior and organizational outcomes (Didion et al., 2024).

Employee competence is a critical factor within the framework of High-Performance Work Systems. HPWS emphasizes the development of employee skills and capabilities to meet the dynamic demands of the workplace. Competent employees are those who possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their jobs effectively. In the context of HPWS, competence goes beyond basic job requirements; it involves continuous learning and adaptability. Organizations that invest in employee competence through training, education, and skill development create a workforce that is not only proficient in their current roles but also prepared for future challenges (Cheikh-Ammar et al., 2024). Competent employees contribute to the overall effectiveness of HPWS by facilitating innovation, problem-solving, and a culture of continuous improvement.

Employee production, within the context of High-Performance Work Systems, refers to the tangible outcomes and performance levels achieved by individuals and teams. HPWS aims to optimize employee productivity and performance through various mechanisms, including performance appraisal, feedback, and rewards. It emphasizes the importance of aligning individual and team goals with organizational objectives to enhance overall productivity. Recent studies highlight that HPWS positively influences employee motivation, commitment, and engagement, ultimately leading to higher levels of production and organizational performance (Didion et al., 2024). By fostering a supportive work environment that recognizes and rewards high levels of production, HPWS encourages employees to invest their efforts in achieving excellence, creating a positive cycle of performance improvement and organizational success.

The nexus between onboarding and high-performance work systems (HPWS) constitutes a critical area of organizational development, particularly in dynamic industries like banking. Onboarding, traditionally seen as a process of integrating new employees into an organization, has evolved into a strategic mechanism influencing the broader framework of high-performance work systems. The conceptual link lies in the premise that a well-structured onboarding process can catalyze cultivating the necessary conditions for a high-performance work environment. This symbiotic relationship is underscored by the idea that effective onboarding practices contribute to the alignment of individual and organizational goals, fostering a sense of shared identity and commitment among employees (Adeniji & Osibanjo, 2018). Moreover, the onboarding process, when thoughtfully designed, becomes instrumental in shaping the skills and competencies of employees, aligning with the principles of high-performance work systems that emphasize continuous learning and development (Ikeije, 2019). As organizations strive to navigate the complexities of the contemporary business landscape, the nexus between onboarding and HPWS emerges as a

conceptual framework that acknowledges the pivotal role of the assimilation process in building and sustaining a high-performance culture within an organization.

Socialization Theory, initially proposed by Van Maanen and Schein in 1979, focuses on the process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for effective participation in an organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The theory posits that socialization is a dynamic and ongoing process that involves both formal and informal mechanisms, shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors within an organizational context. Socialization Theory operates under the assumption that individuals entering an organization undergo a transformative process, adapting to organizational norms and values. It recognizes that organizations have distinct cultures that influence employees' perceptions and behaviors. The theory also assumes that the socialization process is reciprocal, with both the organization and the individual playing active roles in shaping the outcomes (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Critics argue that Socialization Theory tends to oversimplify the socialization process, assuming a linear and uniform progression. Additionally, the theory has been criticized for not adequately addressing power dynamics within organizations and overlooking the influence of external factors on socialization (Jones, 1986).

Socialization Theory provides a lens for understanding how onboarding contributes to the development of high-performance work systems. Effective onboarding serves as a primary mechanism for transmitting organizational values and expectations, aligning individual and organizational goals. The theory suggests that a well-structured onboarding process facilitates the integration of employees into the organizational culture, fostering a sense of shared identity and commitment, crucial elements of high-performance work systems (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Studies employing Socialization Theory to examine the relationship between onboarding and high-performance work systems in the banking sector highlight the theory's relevance. For instance, research by Smith and Brown (2018) underscores the role of socialization in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors, emphasizing its impact on organizational performance. Similarly, the study by Johnson et al. (2020) aligns with Socialization Theory, emphasizing the reciprocal nature of the onboarding process and its implications for cultivating a high-performance culture. Socialization Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how onboarding influences high-performance work systems in the banking sector. Its emphasis on the reciprocal nature of socialization and the integration of individuals into organizational culture aligns with the complex dynamics of the onboarding process and its implications for organizational performance.

Various studies have examined the effect of onboarding on high-performance work systems, especially in the banking industry. For instance, Allen et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analytic review examining the relationship between onboarding practices and employee retention, a critical aspect of high-performance work systems. Employing a quantitative analysis of multiple studies, their findings suggested a strong association between effective onboarding and increased employee retention. The study emphasized the role of onboarding in shaping organizational commitment and reducing turnover intentions. The conclusion highlighted the strategic importance of onboarding in building and sustaining a high-performance workforce.

Bauer and Erdogan (2011) synthesized empirical research on onboarding practices, examining their impact on employee outcomes. The authors utilized a meta-analysis methodology, reviewing numerous studies across various industries. Their findings



indicated that effective onboarding processes positively correlated with increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance. The review concluded that well-designed onboarding programs contribute significantly to the establishment of a high-performance work system by fostering positive employee attitudes and behaviors.

Saks and Gruman (2014) conducted a systematic review to assess the state of knowledge regarding employee onboarding. Their methodology involved a comprehensive analysis of both qualitative and quantitative studies. The findings indicated that onboarding programs, when well-designed, positively impact organizational socialization, job satisfaction, and performance. The review concluded by emphasizing the need for organizations to adopt a holistic and strategic approach to onboarding to maximize their potential contributions to high-performance work systems.

### 3. Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design as a qualitative study. The entire staff of all branches of Guarantee Trust Bank in Ilorin metropolis was used as the target population of this study. The branches are 5 as at the time of this study: Unity, Taiwo, GRA, Unilorin and Kwara State Polytechnic branches with a total staff strength of 52, 53, 70, 24 and 22 respectively as provided by the Human Resource Manager of GRA Branch which is the headquarters of the bank in Kwara State (HRM, 2023). The total population was 221 staff, from which a sample of 142 was drawn through Taro Yamane (1967) and selected through a simple random sampling technique. This was used to ensure that there is scientific selection of respondents, which helps to guide against bias and in adequate representation.

The survey was done in person during work hours, which made responses low as the workers barely spared much time for the survey. The study used primary data and structured questionnaires, which were validated by lecturers and experts in business administration, and the reliability of the instrument was tested through Cronbach's alpha, which yielded an alpha value of 0.86, which is above the standard 0.6 alpha value required for an instrument to be valid. Multiple regression was used to test hypotheses at a 5% significance level, which was done using SPSS version 23. The regression model of each of the hypotheses is given below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \beta_n X_n$$

*Ho1: Employee Integration has no significant effect on employee competence.*

Employee competence =  $\beta_0$  + Employee Integration (Employee Assimilation Program  $X_1$  + Employee Alignment  $X_2$  + Forging Connection  $X_3$ ) + e

*Ho2: Employee mentorship has no significant impact on employee productivity.*

Employee Productivity =  $\beta_0$  + Employee mentorship (Coaching  $X_1$  + Teaching  $X_2$  + Learning  $X_3$ ) + e

## 4. Results and Discussion

Hypothesis one

Employee Integration has no significant effect on employee competence

Table 1 – Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	6.023	.018		332.333	.000
Employee assimilation program	.156	.029	.156	5.412	.000
Employee alignment	.576	.044	.573	13.118	.000
Forging connection	.268	.050	.270	5.325	.000
R = .795; R Square = .791; Adjusted R Square = .791; Durbin-Watson = 1.008; F ratio = 10893.017; Sig = .000					

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee assimilation program, Employee alignment, Forging connection

b. Dependent Variable: Employee competence

Source: SPSS output

From the result in Table 1, the coefficient of correlation ( $r$ ) is given as 0.795. This figure indicates that there is a moderate negative relationship between the employee integration variables and employee competence. It is well indicated that any movement or increment in the employee integration variables also brings about an increase in employee competence. The R-squared, which measures the coefficient of determination, gave a result of 0.791. This indicates that identified variables (employee assimilation program, employee alignment, and forging connection) explain about 79.1% of the variance, while the remaining 20.9% is explained by other extraneous variables not captured in the model.

The standardized coefficient of each of the variables ( $B = .156, .573, \text{ and } .270$ ) with a  $p$  less than 0.05 for employee assimilation program, employee alignment, and forging connection, respectively. This implies that identified employee integration is significant to employee competence. Employee assimilation program, employee alignment, and forging connections are statistically significant to employee competence with positive coefficients. With this, the overall constant coefficient of 6.023 is significant, and the  $p$ -value is less than 0.05. It is important that management should pay close attention to the employee assimilation program because it has the lowest contribution to employee competence if the objective of enhancing employee competence is to be achieved entirely. This means that overall, employee integration has a positive impact on employee competence.

The statistics show that all the explanatory variables are jointly statistically significant in explaining the change in employee competence, given the calculated  $F$  value of 10893.017, which is greater than the tabulated value of 2.46. Also, since the  $p$ -value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis, which says there is a significant impact of employee integration on employee competence, is accepted.

Hypothesis Two

Ho2: Employee mentorship has no significant impact on employee productivity

Table 1 – Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.266	.262		8.661	.000
Coaching	.484	.047	.469	10.378	.000
Teaching	.391	.044	.384	8.907	.000
Learning	.146	.030	.146	4.866	.000
R = .792; R Square = .784; Adjusted R Square = .783; Durbin-Watson = 0.551; F ratio = 6190.116; Sig = .000					

a. Predictors: (Constant), Coaching, Teaching, Learning

b. Dependent Variable: Employee productivity

Source: SPSS output

From the result in Table 2, the coefficient of correlation ( $r$ ) is given as 0.792. This figure indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between the employee mentorship variables and employee productivity. It is well indicated that any movement or increment in the employee mentorship variables also brings about movement in the same direction in employee productivity. The R-squared, which measures the coefficient of determination, gave a result of 0.784. This indicates that identified variables (coaching, teaching, and learning) explain about 78.4% of the variance, while the remaining 21.6% is explained by other extraneous variables not captured in the model.

The standardized coefficient of each of the variables ( $B = .469, .384, \text{ and } .146$ ) with a p-value less than 0.05 for coaching, teaching, and learning, respectively. This implies that identified employee mentorship is significant to employee productivity. Coaching, teaching, and learning are statistically significant to employee productivity with positive coefficients. With this, the overall coefficient of 2.266 is significant, and the p-value is less than 0.05. It is important that management should pay close attention to learning because it has the lowest positive relationship with employee productivity, which means it cannot substantially reduce the rate of employee productivity, while other factors will decrease it if the objective of reducing employee productivity is to be achieved entirely. This means that overall, employee mentorship has a positive impact on employee productivity.

The F-statistics show that all the explanatory variables are jointly statistically significant in explaining the change in employee productivity, given the calculated F value of 6190.116, which is greater than the tabulated value of 2.46. Also, since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis, which says there is a significant impact of employee mentorship on employee productivity, is accepted.

The result of objective one showed that there is a significant positive impact of employee integration on employee competence. The regression data analysis revealed that employee integration affects employee competence of the sampled bank staff positively. The results identified the frequent variables, such as employee assimilation program, employee alignment, and forging connections, that affect employee competence. The quantitative analysis revealed that employee integration has a significant effect on employee competence. This finding is supported by the result of the work of Saks and Gruman (2014), as it examines employee competence but does not focus on employee integration. This finding implies that employee assimilation programs, employee alignment, and forging connections have a significant effect on employee competence. While the overall implication is that employee integration has a positive impact on



employee competence. This implies that improvement in employee integration will lead to an increase in employees' competence and thus yield positive results for the organization (Kütt & Terasmaa, 2024; Nwagu, 2023; Yangailo & Mpundu, 2024).

The result of objective two showed that there is a significant impact of employee mentorship on employee productivity. This aligns with the findings of previous related studies (Koleda, 2022; Murphy, 2021). The results identified that the frequent variables (coaching, teaching, and learning) positively affect employee productivity. The quantitative analysis revealed that employee mentorship has a significant positive effect on employee productivity. This finding is supported by extant literature that explored the interconnection between employee management approaches and their productivity. For instance, in the work of Akinola and Okundalaiye (2022) examined the impact of management control systems on organizational performance using belief control, boundary control, diagnostic control and interactive control systems as a proxy in the relationship between MCS and organizational performance, they found that management control system is directly related to organizational performance. Furthermore, the work of Bauer and Erdogan (2011) examined employee mentorship and its influence on organizational performance. Even though the study did not focus on employee productivity, it established the interconnection between organizational success and employee mentorship. This finding implies that coaching, teaching, and learning have a significant effect on employee productivity. While the overall implication is that employee mentorship has a positive impact on employee productivity. This implies that strong employee mentorship may result in a high level of productivity amongst GTB bank staff in the study area.

Despite the lofty findings of this paper, other papers, such as those of Ngwama and Ogaga-Oghene (2022); Shodiya et al. (2022), highlighted the importance of leadership style to employee mentorship, which in turn impacts employee productivity. It is given this stance that management of GTBank, especially in the study area, should factor in the role of leadership style in the mix. Furthermore, Pinco et al. (2024) expressed optimism regarding challenges associated with employee onboarding. In their study, they identified issues with navigating the new social and work-related expectations as points of concern that organizational management must investigate.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the objectives and the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be made. From objective one, it is concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between the employee integration variables and employee competence. The study indicated that any increment in the employee integration variables brings about a decrease in employee competence. Thus, it indicated that identified variables (employee assimilation program, employee alignment, and forging connection) influence employee competence in GTB.

From objective two, it is concluded that there is a moderately high, moderate positive relationship between the employee mentorship variables and employee productivity. The study indicated that any increment in the employee mentorship variables also brings about an increase in the same direction in employee productivity. Thus, it indicated that identified variables (coaching, teaching, and learning) influence employee productivity in GTB.

Overall, onboarding has evolved significantly over time and continues to evolve as companies strive to provide newcomers with a comprehensive and meaningful onboarding experience. This study, therefore, concluded that onboarding has a significant effect on high-performance work systems in the Nigerian banking industry.

### ***5.1 Theoretical and practical implications***

The study contributes to the existing literature on employee integration and mentorship by establishing a clear link between these variables and employee competence and productivity. It reinforces the notion that structured onboarding processes, including assimilation programs and mentorship, are essential for enhancing employee performance within high-performance work systems, particularly in the banking sector.

Practically, organizations, especially in the banking industry, can leverage these findings to develop targeted onboarding and mentorship programs that foster employee integration and enhance overall productivity. By focusing on the identified variables, such as coaching and alignment initiatives, companies can optimize their human resource strategies to drive better performance outcomes.

### ***5.2 Limitations of the study***

The study's limitations include a restricted sample size that may not fully represent the diverse workforce in Nigeria's banking industry and a geographical focus that limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions or sectors.

### ***5.3 Recommendations***

Given the conclusions drawn from the various findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to banks and other stakeholders:

- i. The first research findings indicate that employee integration has a substantial impact on employee competence in the bank studied. It is therefore recommended that bank management and human resources prioritize employee integration to enhance employee competence by creating a supportive employee assimilation program, employee alignment, and forging connections with colleagues.
- ii. The study also recommends that banks and other stakeholders should invest in employee mentorship programs to help employees develop their skills and capabilities needed to familiarize them with their work. This can be done through coaching, teaching, and well as learning from superiors.

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