

Research Article

Digital Onboarding for New Lecturers

Rudy Ujang^{1,*}, Izzat Al-Hadi Razali², Azra Tilai³, Ahmad Noor Syahir Sazali⁴, Leviana Andrew⁵, and Margaret Lucy Gregory⁶

- ¹ Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Sarawak Kampus Samarahan; rudyujang@uitm.edu.my;  ORCID ID (<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8808-0782>)
- ² Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Sarawak Kampus Samarahan; izzatalhadi@uitm.edu.my;  ORCID ID (<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8294-0181>)
- ³ Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Sarawak Kampus Samarahan; azratilai@uitm.edu.my;  ORCID ID (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9050-1612>)
- ⁴ Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Sarawak Kampus Samarahan; ahmadnoor@uitm.edu.my;  ORCID ID (<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-5478-2586>)
- ⁵ Sustainable Cooperative Business Group (SCBG), Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Sarawak Kampus Samarahan; leviana141@uitm.edu.my;  ORCID ID (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9001-7401>)
- ⁶ Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Sarawak Kampus Samarahan; margaret@uitm.edu.my
- * Correspondence: rudyujang@uitm.edu.my; +60168821745.

Abstract: In sizable entities, efficiently onboarding new hires is essential for smooth integration. Yet, with growing departments and intricate workflows, most new hires, especially lecturers, feel lost amidst numerous responsibilities. A concerning 90% of them report inadequate guidance from superiors, leading to challenges like locating key information, comprehending internal systems, and identifying performance metrics. This results in frustration, inefficiency, and task delays. To address this, we introduce the "Digital Onboarding for New Lecturers," a central hub or a website for all induction-related data. This website eliminates the need to juggle multiple sources or depend excessively on superiors, easing the transition for new lecturers. Designed with a user-centric approach, it offers clear navigation categories, along with interactive tutorials for understanding organizational systems. Differing from organization website, our solution is customized to our organization's distinct challenges. Its prolonged guidance, spanning the three-year probationary phase, focuses on long-term integration hurdles instead of only the initial onboarding weeks. Successful deployment promises amplified lecturer productivity and morale while decreasing turnover, translating to significant cost savings in recruitment and training. Moreover, the adaptability of our model presents a lucrative opportunity to offer it to other extensive organizations grappling with similar challenges, generating an additional revenue channel. We also include the previews of the website and the lectures' evaluation on the quality of information and connectivity of the website. Overall, the website's evaluation has high mean scores for each of the criteria suggesting it can serve its purpose towards facilitating smooth onboarding experience for new lecturers. Some comments for improvements were also included which will be taken into serious consideration in improving the website. In essence, the "Digital Onboarding for New Lecturers" underscores our organization's dedication to equipping every member with the necessary resources and knowledge to thrive.

Keywords: digital onboarding; new lecturers; integration



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1. INTRODUCTION

In large organizations, the efficient onboarding of new employees is crucial for ensuring a seamless integration into the work environment. However, with the rapid expansion of departments and workflows, many new hires often find themselves adrift in the vast ocean of responsibilities and systems (Sibis and Kappers, 2022). In the higher learning institutions, the process of integrating new lecturers into the ecosystem is not merely about filling a vacancy. It's an intricate dance of aligning new energy, perspective, and potential with the organization's vision, mission, and values (Karambelkar & Battacharya, 2017). Efficient onboarding sets the stage for this alignment and ensures that an employee not only understands their role but is also equipped to contribute effectively from the outset.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

With the meteoric rise of globalization, technological advancement, and the diversification of job roles, the structures and functions of large organizations have expanded and evolved. Departments that once operated in isolation now interweave, and workflows that were once linear now loop and intersect in complex patterns. In such a multifaceted environment, a new lecturers can easily feel overwhelmed. The challenges are manifold as suggested by Badshah and Bulut (2020):

- i. **Role Complexity:** Unlike smaller entities where an employee might wear multiple hats, in larger organizations, roles can be highly specialized. Grasping the nuances and expectations can take time.
- ii. **Navigational Challenges:** From understanding whom to report to, to finding the right department for a particular query, the sheer size of large organizations can be daunting.
- iii. **System Overload:** Technology has streamlined many processes, but it has also introduced an array of tools and platforms that new lecturers must learn. From communication tools to data management systems, the learning curve can be steep.
- iv. **Cultural Assimilation:** Every large organization, with its history and evolution, has a unique culture. Understanding the spoken and unspoken rules, the ethos, and integrating oneself into this culture is a challenge in itself.

2.1 *The Consequences of Inefficient Onboarding*

When onboarding fails to address these challenges, Cesário and Chambel (2019) implied that the ramifications can be severe in terms of Reduced Productivity, increased turnover, and morale and engagement. Recent internal surveys have indicated that nearly 90% of new lecturers felt that they were not sufficiently guided by their superiors. These new members expressed difficulties in locating necessary information, understanding the organization's systems, and determining their key performance indicators. Such deficiencies in the onboarding process have led to increased frustration, reduced efficiency, and significant delays in task execution (Heimbürger, Buchweitz, Gouveia, & Korn, 2020). Therefore, the Digital Onboarding for New Lecturers is introduced to overcome those problems and assist new lecturers to adapt better and faster to the new ecosystem.

2.2 Objectives

The Digital Onboarding for New Lecturers aims to:

- i. Serve as a centralized repository for all induction-related information, eliminating the need for new lecturers to navigate multiple platforms or rely solely on superiors.
- ii. Facilitate a smoother transition for new hires by providing step-by-step guides on system usage.
- iii. Outline clear performance indicators to ensure that new lecturers understand their role's expectations.
- iv. Monitor and guide employees throughout their probationary period of three years, ensuring a successful assimilation into the company culture.

Understanding the complexities faced by new hires is the first step. Organizations must invest in structured onboarding programs that address not just the job role but the holistic experience of joining a vast entity (Ziden & Joo, 2020). This includes mentorship programs, interactive training modules, clear communication channels, and regular check-ins (Yadav, Meena, Dalal, & Saindane, 2020). In an age where talent is a prime differentiator, ensuring that every new lecturer feels valued, understood, and equipped is not just good HR practice – it's a business imperative.

3. METHODOLOGIES

The Digital Onboarding for New Lecturers features a user-friendly interface with categorized information sections for easy navigation, incorporate tutorials and walkthroughs for various organizational systems, and notify employees of key milestones in their probationary period. The website is being developed using Google Sites platform. The website can be accessed at <https://sites.google.com/uitm.edu.my/onboardingnewlecturersuitmcs/laman-utama>. The features of the website are as follows:

3.1 Website Features



Figure 1. Website Homepage



Figure 2. Report Duty



Figure 3. Systems Available in UiTM Networks



Figure 4. Responsibilities as Academic Advisor



Figure 5. Preparation in the Beginning of Semester



Figure 6. To-Do-List in the Middle of Semester



Figure 7. To-Do-List towards the End of Semester



Figure 8. Other Menus

3.2 Web Evaluation

In this section, we asked 19 lecturers to evaluate the developed website using the Website Evaluation Questionnaire (WEQ) adapted from Elling, Lentz and de Jong (2007) who referred part of the Website User Satisfaction Questionnaire (WUS) developed by Mulle, Moenaert and Despontin (2004) as they focused more on quality of information. The WEQ was distributed through Google Form, and it took about 1 week to gather the lecturers' responses. Below are the data analysis for the Digital Onboarding for New Lecturers Website.

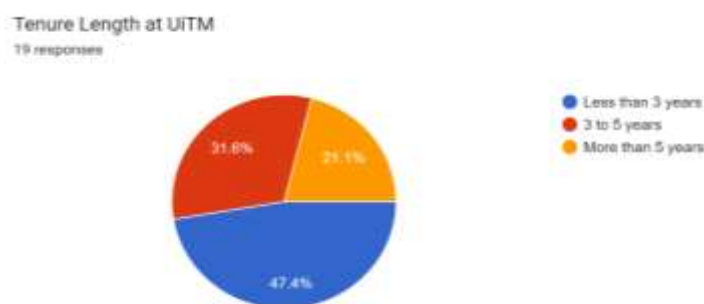


Figure 9. Demographic Respondents

Figure 9 depicts the distribution of tenure lengths among lecturers at UiTM Sarawak Branch. Among the 19 respondents, nine (47.4%) have a tenure of fewer than three years, indicating that they are relatively new hires awaiting confirmation of their appointments. Six respondents (31.6%) possess a tenure ranging from three to five years. The remaining four respondents (21.1%) have a tenure exceeding five years, showcasing a more extended association with UiTM.

Table 1 presents the findings from the Web Evaluation Questionnaire, which consisted of 26 items categorized into two dimensions: "Quality of Information" and "Connection." The "Quality of Information" dimension gauges users' attitudes toward the outcomes of the process, while the "Connection" dimension assesses users' attitudes toward the interaction process (Elling et al., 2007). Under the "Quality of Information" dimension, the criteria include Relevance, Comprehensibility, Comprehensiveness, and User Friendliness. The "Connection" dimension encompasses the criteria of Structure, Hyperlinks, and Layout. Table 1 displays the mean scores for each criterion examined in the survey. The mean score for "Relevance" is 4.37, indicating that, on average, respondents found the information highly relevant. "Comprehensibility" achieved a mean score of 4.43, suggesting that, on average, respondents found the information quite understandable. "Comprehensiveness" measures the extent to which the website covers a broad range of topics and provides in-depth information. The mean score for comprehensiveness is 4.02, implying that the website may be perceived as somewhat lacking in this aspect. "User Friendliness" assesses how user-friendly and accessible the website is. With a mean score of 4.49, the website is, on average, considered highly user-friendly. "Structure" evaluates the overall structure and organization of the website, achieving a mean score of 4.32, indicating that the website's structure is well-regarded, on average. "Hyperlinks" measures the quality and relevance of hyperlinks on the website. The mean score for hyperlinks is 4.37, suggesting that, on average, they are considered of good quality. "Layout" assesses the visual layout, interface, and design of the website. The mean score of 4.09 implies that, on average, the website's layout might be seen as favorable and visually pleasing. In summary, Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of mean scores for each evaluated criterion within the "Quality of Information" and "Connection" dimensions. These mean scores offer quantitative insights into respondents' perceptions of the website's quality and effectiveness across various aspects.

Table 1. Mean Score for Web Evaluation

Web Evaluation	Mean Score
<i>Quality of Information</i>	
Relevance	4.37
Comprehensibility	4.43
Comprehensiveness	4.02
User Friendliness	4.49
<i>Connection</i>	
Structure	4.32
Hyperlinks	4.37
Layout	4.09

We also asked the respondents what they would like us to add on the website for improvement. Respondents #3, #15, and #16 recommend adding procedures for "Permohonan aktiviti pelajar menggunakan borang TAPA & TAHEP." Respondents #5 and #10 suggest adding more information about "career promotion opportunities" and "KPIs" (key performance indicators). Respondent #6 recommends including more information about "procedures for applying for training and research grants." Respondents #9 and #18 suggest adding "images and interactivities" to enhance the content or presentation. Finally, respondent #19 recommends providing "more details on using the SIMS as academic advisors." These suggestions helped the team to identify areas for improvement or enhancement on the website being evaluated.

Table 2. Comments from Respondents

Respondents	Comments
#3, #15 & #16	Add the procedures for <i>Permohonan Aktiviti Pelajar Menggunakan Borang TAPA & TAHEP</i>
#5 & #10	Add more info about promotion opportunities & KPIs
#6	Add more info about procedures for applying for training and research grants
#9 & #18	Add more images and interactivities
#19	More details on using the SIMS as Academic Advisors

4. VALUE PROPOSITION & COMMERCIALIZATION VALUE

Traditional onboarding often focuses on the initial entry phase—covering the first few days or weeks. However, real integration takes time. By extending its guidance over a span of three years, the platform acknowledges and addresses the long game.

4.1 Value Proposition

- i. **Stages of Growth:** An employee's journey isn't static. From the initial phase of acclimatization to later stages where they might take on more responsibilities or navigate inter-departmental projects, their needs evolve. Extended guidance ensures that the platform remains relevant and supportive through these varied phases.
- ii. **Building Depth Over Time:** While the initial weeks might focus on basics, as time progresses, the platform can introduce more in-depth knowledge, specialized training, or advanced tools. This phased approach ensures that information is not overwhelming and is relevant to the employee's current stage.
- iii. **Continuous Feedback Loop:** With a three-year engagement period, the platform can incorporate regular feedback mechanisms. This allows for real-time adjustments, ensuring that the onboarding process remains dynamic and responsive to the actual needs and challenges faced by employees.
- iv. **Reducing Turnover:** Extended support can be pivotal in retaining talent. Employees who feel supported, understood, and equipped are less likely to seek opportunities

elsewhere. By providing consistent guidance and resources, the platform fortifies employee loyalty and commitment.

4.2 Commercialization Value

A successful implementation can not only boost the productivity and morale of new lecturers but also reduce turnover rates, leading to considerable savings in recruitment and training costs. Additionally, the model can be customized and sold to other large organizations facing similar induction challenges, providing a new revenue stream for the company. Below are the commercialization potentials for Digital Onboarding for New Lecturers:

- i. Customizable Offering: If the onboarding model proves successful, it can be tailored to fit other large organizations or institutions. The core structure remains, but specific modules or components can be modified to suit different organizational needs.
- ii. New Revenue Stream: Selling a proven, effective onboarding model opens an entirely new business avenue. With many organizations facing induction challenges, there's a market demand for comprehensive solutions.
- iii. Positioning as Thought Leaders: Successfully commercializing an onboarding model can position the company as a thought leader in the HR and organizational development space. This can lead to other opportunities, such as consultations, workshops, and speaking engagements.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Digital Onboarding for New Lecturers isn't merely an onboarding tool—it's a commitment. It signifies the organization's dedication to its workforces, ensuring that from day one, every employee feels valued, understood, and empowered. It's a long-term investment in talent, reflecting the understanding that true integration is a journey, not just a starting point. It stands as a testament to the organization's commitment to ensuring that every member, new or old, has the tools and knowledge they need to excel.

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