

A study of onboarding processes as experienced by new employees
in selected academic libraries in Tshwane

by

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ABSTRACT

This research project focussed on the onboarding experiences of newly appointed staff at academic libraries of the following institutions: University of Pretoria, Tshwane University of Technology (Pretoria West Campus), and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University.

The main aim of the study was to investigate the experiences of librarians with regard to the onboarding programmes that they have attended at their respective institutions. The key finding of the research was that newly appointed librarians had different experiences. In spite of the differences there was significant evidence that new librarians can benefit from proper introduction and orientation in their new jobs. The need for onboarding arises from a variety of circumstances ranging from inadequate graduate training to rapidly advancing technology.

The study also recognised the current trend of new generation librarians' short stay in the job and eventually leaving the profession. Factors contributing to librarians' perception of onboarding programmes were also studied. It was found that much of the common factors that shape onboarding practices arise from the planning and implementation of the programme. A similar approach is used by the selected libraries

The study used the survey method. An online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were data gathering tools. The study adopted the qualitative research method with close ended questions, ranking scales as well as open ended questions. An online questionnaire was distributed to the 30 potential participants. Twenty-three (23) responses were received, which means a response rate of 76% was obtained.

An important finding in this regard was that the onboarding programme was not evaluated by parties involved in the instruction and feedback on the success of the programme was not received by participants. In addition participants were not assessed prior to the programme so that their input could be used to inform the relevance of the contents of the programme. Based on the findings the researcher made some recommendations to enhance the planning of the programme in future. The study concludes with directions for future research to contribute to the implementation of onboarding as part of the practice of employee development.

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Declaration

Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work, that all sources have been accurately reported and acknowledged, and that this document has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university to obtain an academic qualification.

Signature: *[Handwritten Signature]* Date: *28.01.2016*

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Chapter 1: Background to the study

1.1 Introduction and background

“Research suggests that new employees are usually afforded 3 months to prove themselves in a new job.” (Bauer, 2010:3). Naturally, it is nerve-wrecking and overwhelming to be in a new job situation. Getting settled as quickly as possible in the new job is vital for the newcomer to start focusing on the job ahead. These pressures of time coupled with anxiety to make a mark in the workplace may contribute to a delayed process of settling in for the new employee. But with the assistance of the employer the unfamiliar and overwhelming environment can be well-managed.

The environment in the information workplace, especially in academic libraries is just as overwhelming and stressful to new librarians. The technologically advanced environment, emphasis on information technology use in networked global communities, diverse user needs and the overwhelming demands of the research intensive nature of academic libraries are among the pressures and dis-ease that new librarians must overcome. Since the arrival of the internet the focus of the library and information science (LIS) profession has moved from simple provision of access to and delivery of information to more of "disintermediation of information processing" (Rangavhan and Agrawal, 2006:409). The services have changed to become more ICT based and users' needs are more diverse.

Academic LIS training programmes have meanwhile remained unchanged or are not developing at the same rate and level as the job market demands. This results in many of the new LIS professionals entering the job market lacking some of the skill sets and mostly the confidence to perform at the required level. As a result a perception is created that the conventional training curriculum in LIS is not adequate to prepare the young professional for the job ahead (Lee, 2009:31).

The gap that exists can be bridged with a shared responsibility between the academic library as the hiring institution, and the new librarian him/herself, to contribute, in varying degrees, towards the the career of academic librarian (De Vinney and Tegler. 1983:223). Rangavhan and Agrawal (2006:409) advocate for the review of the divide between LIS training and the job requirements in order to prepare students fully before entering the job market. However, it is still the responsibility of new-hires to help facilitate their own onboarding as soon as they get employed.

1.2 Clarification of key terms used in this study

Onboarding shall be used to refer to any activity conducted by the institution that is aimed at introducing and welcoming the new employee to his or her new workplace. The terminology that is usually used for onboarding include induction, orientation, and organizational socialization. The term “onboarding” will be used in this report for the sake of consistency.

New-hire shall refer to new academic librarians that have been with the institution for 2 years or less.

Buddy shall refer to a colleague with whom the new-hire feels comfortable to provide assistance with some of the assignments on the onboarding programme, as well as generally make the new-hire feel at home

1.3 Significance of the study

According to Bauer (2010) too often onboarding processes are taken lightly and without taking into consideration the perception of those taking part; or examining the outcome of the process. This makes the programme a rushed process to a point of being irrelevant and missing the purpose. This study is therefore relevant to bring out the overlooked aspects that are significant to a successful onboarding programme. The study will be beneficial to the institution because it could provide answers to some uncertainties about how best to conduct the programme in order to increase job satisfaction and also decrease employee turnover. The study could also be beneficial to the profession as a whole in determining how to bridge the gap that exists between undergraduate programmes offered and the demands of the job market.

1.4 Problem statement

The realization that new LIS employees entering the job market may not be fully prepared to understand the technologically advanced library environment creates challenges of dealing with the demands of the global competitive nature of academic libraries. Challenges range from incorporating themselves in a new team, building relationships with colleagues and users, understanding the culture of the library or the university, learning how to get things done, and establishing what is really expected of them in terms of how their performance will contribute to the institution’s mission and vision (MAUT-LS Professional Issues Committee 2014: 1). Onboarding can be used to prepare them, have them settled in a team and integrated in the library system.

1.5 Research questions

The research questions for this study are the following:

1. Do the selected academic libraries have onboarding programmes?
2. How does onboarding assist new librarians in a new ICT work environment?

The following sub-questions will be used to answer the research question:

- SQ1: How is the process of onboarding perceived in academic libraries?
- SQ2: What are the different approaches to onboarding?
- SQ3: What are the likely success factors to encourage the use of the process?

1.6 Objectives and value of the study

The main aim of this research is to explore the activities involved in onboarding programmes as used in academic libraries to help new-hires to adjust to their new work environment and roles. The secondary aim of the study is to:

- Determine, establish and investigate the experiences of new librarians during the activities.
- Determine the perceptions of new librarians on the current onboarding programme offered.
- Recommend findings of the research as a framework to develop the existing programme to the researcher's employer.
- To suggest design guidelines for effective onboarding programme.

The study will be of value in presenting the perceptions and opinions of the new-hires about the onboarding process at their libraries. It is anticipated that the findings may be enlightening to both the employee and employer of the participating academic libraries.

1.7 Scope and limitations

1.7.1 Target group

The study focuses on librarians who have been employed for a period of two years and less at the University of Pretoria, Sefako Makgatho Health University, and Tshwane University of Technology (Pretoria West Campus) libraries. The reason for choosing librarians with 2 or less years of employment is to avoid potential bias from past experience. It is assumed that they have not attended onboarding at the same institution in the past. Past experiences of similar situations have a tendency to generate strong biases which influence current

perceptions. They influence how one thinks and behave toward a similar environments (Jun, 2015)

1.7.2 Geographic location

The study will be restricted to the mentioned university libraries at campuses within the Tshwane Metropolis.

1.7.3 Limitations

The following limitations applied to this study:

- The study will focus on early career academic librarians, called new-hires who have been employed for a period of two years and less at the selected academic libraries.
- The intention was to use four institutions but the fourth institution could not participate due to permission not granted in time.
- Although the study involves more than one institution, there is no intention for comparison. The study is therefore not a comparative one.

1.8 Overview of the literature

1.8.1 Onboarding

An effective way to deal with these new workplace challenges is to establish onboarding processes, for new-hires to be able to adjust quickly to the environment. Bauer (2010:1) defines onboarding, also known as organizational socialization as “the process of helping new-hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly”. Other terms that are used include orientation, induction, organizational socialization and assimilation process. Portilla and Young (2010:22) define induction as “the process of familiarizing new employees with whatever is necessary for them to feel at home and to understand and perform their duties efficiently”. These processes help the new-hire to feel welcome, ready for the job, and eager to join in and to contribute to the library’s mission.

Every organization uses its own processes to help new-hires to learn the conduct and behaviour, obtain knowledge, and acquire skills that are required to perform effectively. Also the extent to which organizations plan and implement the onboarding processes vary from one organization to the other. One employee may be given a well-structured and systematic plan while others are left to “swim or sink”. In both instances the expectation is for new-hires to facilitate their own process with the objective of adjusting to their job environment, knowing what is expected of them, establishing relationships and building confidence to perform better in their jobs. (Bauer, 2010:1).

Onboarding can be a formal or informal process depending on which suits the organization best. Similarly there is no universally agreed length for the onboarding process (Wallace, 2009:169). Bauer (2010:2) distinguishes between informal and formal onboarding processes as follows:

- “Informal onboarding refers to the process by which an employee learns about his or her new job without an explicit organizational plan”
- “Formal onboarding refers to a written set of coordinated policies and procedures that assist an employee in adjusting to his or her new job in terms of both tasks and socialization”.

Bauer (2010: 2) continues to explain the four stages that the onboarding process entails.

- “Compliance stage is where the new-hire is oriented on basic policy related rules and regulations of the organization.
- Clarification stage ensures that employees understand their roles and the contribution they make to the services and the organization.
- Culture stage acculturates employees to adapt and modify behaviours and approaches to match the norms of the organization.
- Connection refers to relationships and information networks that the new-hire must identify and establish as sources from where he or she can draw knowledge”.

These stages indicate the level at which organizations implement their onboarding process. There is a distinction between level 1 onboarding and level 2 onboarding. These are referred to as passive and high potential onboarding respectively (Bauer, 2010:3). In other words when an organization is concerned mostly with stage 1, highlighting what the new-hire has to comply with, it is said to be engaged in passive onboarding as well as informal onboarding. In this case the new-hire mostly signs documents to acknowledge or agree to the provided guidelines and regulations. On the other hand when implementing all 4 stages, an organization is engaged in a level of high potential onboarding. The complete process, through all four stages, constitutes formal onboarding. Both processes, the informal and the formal can be functional regardless of one being more systematic than the other; but the difference will be noticeable in the outcomes related to adjustment of the new-hire.

“Newcomer adjustment is associated with important employee and organizational outcomes such as satisfaction, commitment, turnover, and performance” (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011)

Onboarding has benefits to both the employee and organization. It builds confidence in the new-hire, helps the organization to manage well the talent of employees and also prevents likely staff turnovers caused by the frustrations of new-hires not understanding their roles. However, if the process is overlooked or poorly handled, onboarding often does not have the positive impact that it could, instead creating more challenges for the new-hire. It may result in a more overwhelming situation with piles of paperwork, busy coordinators or managers; and often missed details (Wallace 2009: 169).

In academic libraries sluggishness in the onboarding process cannot and should not be an option, given the demanding nature of the high ICT environment. It is in this context that this study will explore how onboarding is implemented in academic libraries and how it is perceived by the new-hires.

1.8.2 Importance of onboarding programme

Onboarding is important for a number of reasons as it launches the new-hire into another phase of employee cycle. According to Graybill *et al.*(2011:201) onboarding assists organizations to make sure that the new-hire can function as soon as possible as well as enhancing his or her transition into the organization. The sooner and smoother the transition the more engaged can the new-hire become.

It is an important process in that it determines the compatibility between an organization and the employee. It is the phase that defines the individual’s knowledge to function (Portilla and Young, 2001:23). Bugg (2015:1) stresses that the art of matching roles and responsibilities for new librarians has become a complicated exercise that is aggravated by the fact that priorities of academic libraries are shifting rapidly due to advanced information technology. This makes onboarding a priority for libraries to ensure that new-hires best fit the position as well as the organizational culture.

Academic libraries play a vital role in supporting universities in realizing their goal. Educators, researchers and scholars rely on their library’s services to be able to participate globally in the knowledge economy (Maesaroh and Genoni, 2009:525). The increasing use of information technology by the networked global communities that are formed through information exchange requires the best candidate to provide the service. Lately electronic access to resources has become a commodity academic libraries cannot fully function without. This suggests that academic libraries’ new-hires should be well prepared to become part of the resources to help universities achieve their goal. A challenge arises in the notion

that LIS graduates are not always fully prepared for their new job prospects and the responsibilities carried by the academic libraries may be overwhelming to a new librarian. The academic library environment has advanced beyond the training provided to students during their training course at LIS schools. According to Erlendsdóttir (1997) some of the developments especially in academic libraries include the:

- *growth in student numbers without a parallel rise in resources*
- *changes in teaching and learning methods*
- *increasing diverse student population*
- *continuous rapid change in information service*
- *need to manage resources on a value-for-money basis*
- *requirement for customer-centred, high quality services*
- *developments in information technology*

Source: (Erlendsdóttir:1997)

In academic libraries ICT applications have become crucial to the relevance of the job market due to the developments mentioned above. Recently a good number of more technology inclined posts in LIS are emerging (Baruah and Hangsing, 2013:56) and as a result of the inadequacies in LIS undergraduate programmes it is almost impossible to find new-hires who meet all the requirements for these posts. The skills and competencies required in the academic libraries to fill those posts include expertise in using sophisticated online search engines, ability to make online linkages to other sources of information, a critical evaluation of the quality of information sources, and the ability to understand the information needs of the public, and good interpersonal relations with individual clients (Putnam, 2005:86-7). Academic libraries would be expected to include in their programmes for new information specialists, for example, processes that facilitate scholarly communication to be able to help researchers, faculty plans to provide understanding of the vision of the faculty and the information literacy curriculum as a guide to provide literacy training (Graybill *et al*, 2013:210).

In addition to the required competencies some guidelines on procedures and training in soft skills are necessary to help the new-hire interact effectively and harmoniously with other people in the workplace. Such competencies may include instruction on how things are done, clear lines of reporting, interpersonal communication, what channels of communications are used, telephone etiquette and e-mail etiquette. When some basic skills are identified and dealt with, more job related instruction on research skills including analytical skills may be pursued. The instruction can be strengthened by sending the new-

hire to some high-level meetings, seminars and workshops where professional issues are discussed (Jones, 1988:221). This will help the new-hire to relate to the many aspects within the job context.

That is why it is necessary to implement effective onboarding as the beginning of a developmental process that should never end if LIS professionals should remain relevant and keep up with their work environment. Kloppenborg and Lodge (2010:169) affirm that “staff development within the academic library sector supports workplace learning through creating and promoting a continuous learning environment in which all staff develop their skills and their potential”.

According to Jones (1988:221) “Library professionals have given a lot of attention to the educational requirements for entry into the profession.” In recent times the emphasis is more on the importance and need for on-the-job training for new-hires who have just graduated so that they can be provided with careful and supportive introduction to the institutional policies, procedures, resources, relationships and attitudes which form the character of their specific positions.” (Jones 1988:221). Organizations no longer apply a one-size-fits-all approach to their operations. As such, the standard LIS qualification may turn out to be substandard in relation to the requirements for an academic library job. Therefore consideration should be given to training new-hires in areas of knowledge which cannot be taught in undergraduate programmes. Jones (1988:222) identifies four critical areas of onboarding that should be specifically addressed by academic libraries. They are:

- *The purpose and objectives of the library from point of views of the stakeholders*
- *The place and status of the library in the university setting*
- *The perceived attitudes of the university administration and non-library staff towards the library*
- *The perceived attitudes of the library administration towards its staff and vice versa.*

Source: (Jones 1998:222)

When these areas are addressed sufficiently, the new-hire will have been provided with a valuable understanding of the environment within which he or she will be working.

1.8.3 Structure and components of effective onboarding programme

- Structure

The structure of onboarding programmes differs from one organization to the other. However, in spite of the differences effective onboarding programmes have common structural features. They are comprehensive, structured and vigorously monitored (Mabaso 2012:7), with the ultimate emphasis on connecting and developing different components as a guide to the new-hire to how the functions of each component fit into the others. In academic libraries, the line manager and the IT librarian should be spearheading the process. While the manager's role is to connect people and information resources, the IT specialist should facilitate guidance regarding the use of available technology to make the connection happen.

- Appropriate onboarding programmes

As much as librarians would know the kind of development that a new-hire needs, they should be able to develop an appropriate onboarding programme. A simple logic should be that "the dynamics of the users and the environment should inform planning of the services for the new librarian (Mack, 1974:6 in Jones, 1988:222). An example of such a service is training on professional customer service. "Customer service training includes the components that help employees to understand more about service encounters including how to positively meet customers' expectations and to deal effectively with customers even in stressful interactions" (Arthur, 1994:219). It is one of the pillars of public service. Graybill et al. (2013:210) found that academic libraries have added to their onboarding programmes activities that are unique to a specific library's environment.

- Anxiety reduction sessions

It is natural to experience some level of anxiety especially when faced with learning new things. Gomersal and Myers (1966:63) studied the effect of anxiety on learning time and attitudes among new-hires. In this study they established that new-hires learn and settle better when they have had anxiety reduction sessions first in their orientation programme. These sessions help them to think more about success and less of hurdles ahead. Reduced anxiety improves learning and a significant drop in training time, absenteeism and sluggishness. Portilla and Young (2001: 28-29) suggest an orientation schedule, and identify the order of how items should follow. First in the list are items that are less stressful and new-hires can look forward to engaging in, thus reducing their anxiety levels. They include information about hours of work, absence reporting, vacation and compensation procedures, setting up accounts to e-mails and internet; and interesting facts about the institution.

Facing the next day of introduction to the foundations and basic tools to the job content becomes easier and less stressful. This can be done on an individual instruction basis with the supervisor or anyone delegated to the task. The schedule culminates at identification of

the level of competencies of the new-hire. The process assures new librarians feel that there is a plan for their training and of the immediate support of the institution (Portilla & Young, 2001:31).

In academic libraries no one person should do all of the orientation and training. Sharing responsibility for the orientation will allow staff members to share their expertise and will give the new-hire the opportunity to spend time and get acquainted with each staff member along the process. (Portilla and Young, 2001:26). Onboarding is not a one day event but a process that involves a number of people and different activities. The process may start off by a Human Resources department representative introducing and taking employees around campus, and has nothing to do with any learning objective or success strategy (Knight, 2013:153). This is not critical for the success of the new-hire in performing his or her duties. The activities or the plans of the onboarding process need to be aligned to the strategic plan of the library. Objectives of the service should be communicated to the new-hire. Much as it is the responsibility of the new-hire to facilitate his or her own onboarding, the role of the manager or supervisor cannot be neglected. Supervisors are expected to be the providers of the necessary tools to expedite the process. It is therefore important that the manager or supervisor come to grips with the service's objectives as he or she prepares to train the new-hire (Jones, 1988:233).

Knight (2013:152) says "If an academic library is going to invest into its new-hires, and compensate job performance, it is only prudent that the institution develop them to succeed". Onboarding should therefore be a comfortable springboard to perpetual training of the employee. This would be in line with the strategy to retain knowledge and effective succession planning.

Every organization has its own version of onboarding programme. In all cases the aim is to make the new-hire feel welcomed, less nervous and prepared with relevant programme for his or her job.

1.8.4 Goals of onboarding programme

The key goal of conducting onboarding programme is to introduce new-hires successfully to their new work environment and make their stay longer in the organization. It is noted that recruiting is an expensive and time consuming process, and academic libraries cannot afford to lose employees with the educational preparation, experience, technical skills and competencies needed to serve the user community in addition to developing new programs and services (Hall-Ellis, 2014:139). It is therefore imperative that the existing knowledge should be retained and managed effectively within the service.

Research has also indicated that investment for a comprehensive and successful onboarding programme can reduce employee turnover while improving new-hires' time-to-productivity ratio significantly (iCIMS Hire Expectations: 2014). It is also reported that as many as 50% to 60% of new-hires leave their jobs within the first 7 months of hiring, and given the increasing cost of hiring new employees, the high cost of turnover, and the need to retain knowledgeable workers, the importance of new-hire onboarding (NHO) becomes more evident (Jones, 1986).

In these days and age of "generation Y" employees, there is a decreasing sense of loyalty among young professionals. This makes the programme an increasingly important process of recruitment and employment (Yamamura, Birk & Cossitt, 2010:59) A well-designed onboarding programme has the potential to incorporate current and progressive practices and adapt them to the local academic library and its internal culture.

At the end of the programme when the employee has an established network of colleagues, onboarding will have served as a strategy to facilitate an increase on the number of professional contacts and the quality of connectedness for the individual to the benefit of the organization.

1.8.5 Characteristics of successful onboarding programme

According to iCIMS (2014) the characteristics of model onboarding processes for academic libraries include:

- *A positive focus on the importance of the new-hire;*
- *Clear, ongoing, concise and consistent channels of communication;*
- *Learning at every organizational level;*
- *Aligning new-hires to key strategies that support the mission and goals;*
- *Setting milestones to determine new-hire success and measure time-to-productivity;*
- *Present information in reasonable amounts; and*
- *Reinforce the employer's brand*

Implementation of these characteristics starts with ensuring that the new-hire has a clear understanding of the library's mission and goals, programs and services, clients, available resources and the culture of the library organization or specific service unit in which he or she works. As a new-hire, an understanding of his or her role, expectations and specific tasks, increases the potential to add more value to the library and to stay longer in the job. Also, efforts need to be made by the new-hire to acquire the organizational culture that is unique to the organization and clients (Hall-Ellis, 2014:140). An information specialist or reference librarian, for instance, should be oriented to understand and proactively

communicate the information needs of researchers or undergraduate students. In this manner new professional and personal relationships can evolve into an extended network community within the library and the university community to the benefit of the library team.

1.8.6 Challenges experienced during onboarding

One of the biggest obstacles that new-hires face during the onboarding experience is simply information overload. There is so much to learn and experience that it can be very overwhelming to assimilate all of the new information. In order to make the process as easy as possible, onboarding should be scheduled well and tailored to suit the learning speed of the individual. These could include interactive activities such as hands-on activities and question and answer sessions with trainers or instructors.

1.8.7 Recent trend

In some universities, the approach of automated onboarding is increasing whereby portals are used for logistics and procedures such as supply orders and IT requests. This assists in creating a self-service centralised point for a variety of IT related functions. The same portal can be created for onboarding process of new-hires. The portal in itself serves as introduction to using the organization's ICT and will allow new-hires to learn at their pace while there will be little chance of missing information, that could happen when using paper manuals. It can also provide new-hires with a single self-service source of information and a better overall experience during the critical first days (Snell 2006:33). Most importantly, the cohesion of activities will be maintained by both the manager and the new-hire. Procedures such as coordinating workstation set up can be incorporated in the portal. This can save waiting time for the new-hire to have access to the internet, e-mail and telephone and launch their contribution instantly. Snell (2006:35) concurs that a well-structured and automated onboarding programme hastens time to productivity and reduces employee turnover due to increased employee satisfaction. ICIMS (2015) reports that organizations that use automated onboarding have seen improvement in time-to-productivity ratios.

1.9 Research Methodology

1.9.1 Research approach

The approach to the research is informed by the nature of the data to be gathered. An approach can either be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative approach is identified by more stated data, while quantitative is more numerical (Leedy, 2005:139). This research is conducted using the qualitative approach that uses narrative or descriptive data rather than numbers. The aim is to explore the concept of onboarding and to uncover the thoughts and experiences of the participants and also their views on the concept and implementation of

onboarding (Davies, 2007:196). It will provide a description of the views and attitudes of those participating or who have completed the programme, and their thoughts on how it could be improved. Qualitative methods are most often used in a developmental evaluation to aid a project's planning stage and when assessing participants' needs.

1.9.2 Research design

Mouton (2006:55) refers to a research design as a plan or blueprint of the intention to conduct the research. A research design focuses on the end product and includes the following elements:

- What approach of study is being planned?
- What kind of results are aimed at?
- How will the research question be answered?
- What kind of evidence is required to address the research question adequately?

Research design involves procedures and methods of how the research question will be answered (Busha and Harter, 1980:20). The design provides answers to questions about the following: concepts or subjects being investigated, how the population is created, data collection methods, and methods of analysing the data collected. The method that will be used is a phenomenological survey. The survey method is used to collect contemporary data and to enable the study of cases that are geographically dispersed (Powell, 1997:53).

- The use of the phenomenological survey method

According to Powell and Connaway (2004:83) survey is a method commonly used to determine the present status of a given phenomenon. In this research the status of onboarding programmes will be investigated and determined by responses from new-hires at selected academic libraries.

The aim is to understand a particular phenomenon or concept directly from the participants' view point as they live and perceive it (Leedy & Ormrod,2005:144). The aim is also to obtain information about developments about a concept being studied, its status, and characteristics (Busha and Harter, 1980:54). The findings will be used to facilitate discussions and decisions about considering or not considering using formal onboarding for new-hires in local academic libraries.

The survey has been used in librarianship for a long time as an investigative technique (Busha and Harter, 1980:165). Bello (2013) has also used surveys to conduct similar studies in academic libraries in Nigeria.

1.9.3 Research method

The research method starts by identifying the subjects to be used, that is the population. The population in this study will be new-hires in the libraries of universities identified. The method starts by identifying the sources from where data will be collected. The sources may be a group of objects or people gathered from a specific environment. Collectively they are called a population.

- Target population

Population can be loosely defined as any set of persons or objects that possesses at least one common characteristic (Busha & Harter, 1980:20). Pickard (2013:325) defines population as “the entire community under investigation.” Powell, (1997: 61) defines a population as “the aggregation of units to which one wishes to generalize the results of the study”. In this study the entire set of individuals will be used as the population about which conclusion will be made. The population is constituted by 30 new-hires from selected libraries. The new-hires in this study are client service librarians, technical librarians, systems librarian as well as research librarians. The researcher uses this population to draw conclusion about aspect under study by conferring from the answers provided by target population.

- Selection of participants

For the purpose of this study there is no justification to select a sample because of the small size of the population. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:144) recommend the use of 5-25 participants in a phenomenological study. Therefore the entire target population were subjected to the survey.

- Data collection instrument

Data collection includes activities to gather valuable information from reliable resources that form part of the sample in an attempt to answer the research question. According to Powell and Connaway (2004:83) survey is a method commonly used to determine the present status of a given phenomenon. In this study the techniques to be used for data collection will be questionnaires and interviews. Welman and Kruger (2002) agree that the questionnaire is the most common method of data collection used in survey research. The most vital thing in surveys is that the questioning must be consistent (Pickard, 2013: 117).

Interviews can either structured, semi-structured or unstructured this study uses semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are used in small sample research. The advantage with semi-structured interviews is that questioning is flexible unlike that of questionnaire where the majority of questions are checklists and rating scales. The interviewer is able to elaborate on the question and elicit from the respondent a more clarified response.

1.10 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are regarded as the primary data collection techniques to answer the research questions through a carefully constructed set of questions (Busha and Harter, 1980:61). Careful construction includes stating the questions clearly in relation to the research question; asking for information that can be readily provided by the participants and be as economic as possible to use short and succinct questions. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and used internet electronic tool Google forms to distribute it to respondents.

Powell (1993:102) emphasizes it is vital that respondents are informed about and understand the purpose and importance of the study. Respondents were provided with a clear motive for the questionnaire as well as assurance of anonymity of their identity and confidentiality of their responses. Ethics committees of the selected institutions approved the researcher's request to carry out the study involving their employees as respondents. The study is conducted independently from researcher's employer and opinions expressed will be those of the researcher. Permission was obtained from the head of the libraries to distribute the questionnaires.

1.11 Semi-structured interviews

A semi-structured interview can be described as a data collection method of research which is open and allows new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a follow-up or result of what the interviewee says to answer question asked. According to Cohen & Crabtree (2006) semi-structured interviews are beneficial to researchers because they can provide reliable and comparable qualitative data, and also allow respondents the freedom to express their opinion on their own terms. In this study the researcher looks to find personal opinions that will reveal the reality of the respondent's experience and opinion regarding onboarding programmes at their places of employment.

1.12 Data collection and analysis

This study used qualitative data analysis in order to gain objective views and insights of respondents into their perceptions regarding the components of the onboarding programme they participated in. During analysis of the data no categorisation according to institutions was done. Therefore the data was analysed strictly to measure individual respondents' experience and perception of the onboarding programme they have attended. The results of the questionnaire was drawn from the electronic tool, Google forms for compilation. After compilation, an Excel spread-sheet was compiled as a record of the responses of the participant. Data was analysed and reported using descriptive statistics to present and summarise findings of the study.

The researcher also made use of a phenomenological approach in order to understand the lived experiences of the new-hires. During this study semi-structured interviews were scheduled and conducted with individual participants. An interview guide, consisting of seven open-ended questions, was used. The interview questions (page 82) were compiled in advance by the researcher. Thereafter the researcher's notes, interviewer records and transcriptions of the recording that were used during discussions were analysed according to categories constructed from the research questions to classify and interpret data.

Through analysis of the responses of the participants during interviews the researcher was able to establish the different themes and common perceptions of the new-hires about the onboarding programme.

1.13 Division of chapters

Chapter 1 provides the background to the research as well as the methods used to gather data. Topics covered include the introduction, the problem to be investigated and the purpose of the research as well as the methodologies followed to answer the research question. It also describes the locations in which the research was conducted, as well as the respondents that were interviewed.

Chapter 2 provides the review of the literature that was consulted to obtain the historical historical and theoretical background of the concept that is being studied. The literature provided background for developing the questionnaire.

Chapter 3 covers the research methodology used. It includes procedures followed, the setting of the research, the participants, the instruments used to collect and analyse data.

Chapter 4 focuses on presentation of the data collected, the analysis and interpretation. It will discuss the findings, which is what the researcher found about the participants and other factors that had an influence on the outcome.

Chapter 5 provides discussions, and implications and value of the findings, as well as the recommendations.

1.14 Conclusion

This chapter provided a background of the research problem and states the aims of the study. The qualitative paradigm that has been followed in this research is necessary to provide a clear understanding of the concept, approaches to onboarding and the challenges and opportunities presented by the preferred approach of onboarding programmes. In this chapter the method of research, demarcation of investigation and clarification of concepts were discussed. The components of onboarding were identified as well as other important

aspect that can help new-hires to adjust more easily to the job with less stress than is often associated with any new environment. It is therefore a challenge faced by most academic libraries to make sure that proper onboarding processes are in place.

In the next chapter, the literature review is presented from which the questionnaire was developed for the collection of data from participants.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

A literature review is undertaken to enable the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the subject of his or her research. It also provides an insight into the theory and methods of practice, procedures and interpretations by different researchers or practitioners of the subject that is under study elsewhere (Mathew, 2011:216).

The literature that is available regarding the implementation of onboarding or orientation processes in academic libraries focuses on this process as a means to provide professional development and continuing education that build on the teaching that has been provided in graduate programmes. This suggests that the onboarding process is not an isolated once-off feature for new-hires but a continuous development programme that may be extended also to established and experienced employees on a continuous basis (Hulick, 2014). The continual development of employees in academic libraries is necessitated largely by the constant development of ICT as well as clients who are advanced in using technology in their lives to process information in. In this context, it is preferable to use Snell's definition of onboarding that refers to the process of combining the people, processes and technology needed to optimise the effect that a new-hire has on business outcomes. (Snell, 2006:33). This definition emphasizes the importance of technology during onboarding of new-hires for them to be able to cope with the needs of proficient clients. Technology onboarding is significant as academic libraries seek to grow their support to the universities in order to compete globally for a place in academic research and innovation.

While the literature suggest that onboarding programs are common in workplaces, including academic libraries, the focus tends to be on client services rather than on orientating employees on elements of technology.

This research seeks to look into the onboarding processes of new-hires to socialise them in ICT advanced academic libraries to help them respond relevantly to users and processes that require extensive use of technology.

In this chapter of the study the researcher presents a survey of the literature, available both locally and internationally, that focuses on the overview of onboarding programmes, needs and objectives as well as requirements to helps new-hires adapt and succeed in their jobs in academic libraries.

2.2. Overview of onboarding in academic libraries

Onboarding practices in many academic libraries consisted mainly of PowerPoint presentations that would be followed by area tours. Most presentations would cover aspects such as an overview of the university and the library, customer services, showcase of the technology that is available in the library, the collections, and employee HR related information. The MAUT-LS Professional Issues Committee (2014) reports that this kind of programme, as practiced at McGill Library in Canada, had to be discontinued as it was unstructured and inefficient. A lack of practical element may have been the cause of the inefficiency.

Lately, with many academic libraries introducing what is termed 'learning centres or learning commons' these centres are regarded as the first step of introducing the new-hires to the services and facilities of the library. Learning commons is a facility where group work is encouraged; where computer facilities to log on to federated searching are expected; where the advanced IT equipment is tested and where library staff are specialists as the middleman between the technology and the critical understanding of the content (Keating & Gabb 2005; Kloppenborg & Lodge, 2010:170)

As suggested in the literature, the researcher also found that learning commons are often used as the users' first station of enquiry and also to expose new-hires to the kind of services that users require, and show them how to deal with the query, techniques and tools to answer the query or refer them to the relevant service facility.

For library management to be able to design relevant onboarding programmes, required skills and competencies should be identified. If it said that the library schools do not prepare graduates enough it means there are certain competencies that are lacking, and the employers should be able to identify them.

2.2.1. Characteristics of onboarding programme

According to iCIMS (2014) a basic characteristics of model onboarding processes for academic libraries include a positive focus on the importance of the new-hire. Employers seek employees that they will invest in. Strategic onboarding process ensures that there is a need for a new-hire and a specific position. The appointment of such a person should be such that it serves as an investment to the organization. It is therefore vital to craft a state-of-the-art onboarding program that provides new-hires with an exceptional experience during the first year of employment with the library organization (Hall-Ellis 2014: 139). Employees who have ambition and the potential to grow are the ones benefiting from onboarding process that they are taken through. Onboarding programme supplements the responsibility

of the new-hire for his or her development. New-hire onboarding must have the following characteristics:

- Clear, ongoing, concise and consistent channels of communication. For effective and speedy integration and socialization the new-hire should network with others who have knowledge to provide the right information, and with whom he or she can build relationships and quickly be assimilated into the team.
- Aligned strategies that support the mission and goals. New-hires need to understand how their work contributes to the entire library and the organization at large. To ensure this understanding and achievement new-hires need to be given the support, tools and resources to do the work. Interdepartmental communication tools needs to be at hand. Resources such as faculty plans, service level agreements as well as any memorandum of understanding must be provided to the employee to support and guide his or her role and responsibilities. When the new-hire is aware of defined roles, specific tasks as well as expectations, he or she will make a good contribution to the library and add value to the institution. This also provides chances for a lengthy employment stay (Hall-Ellis 2014:139).
- Set milestones to determine new-hire success and measure time-to-productivity. The new-hire must be provided with a regular script of what he or she is expected to do and the timeframe he or she has to complete assignments. In addition, capabilities and strengths of the new-hire should be identified as well as providing the tools that he or she needs to succeed. This effort can increase the level of contribution and productivity and contributions much to the satisfaction of the employee (Hall-Ellis 2014:139)
- Ability to present information in reasonable amounts. New-hires must be given time to digest; to understand before they can be in a position to implement what they have learned. They need to understand also how to use the knowledge they have just acquired. When understanding has been achieved the employee should be encouraged to demonstrate an urge for creative thinking and undertakings. A new-hire that has been successfully on-boarded will show loyalty to the organization much to the benefit of the library and institution (Hall-Ellis 2014:140).

Describing and communicating what the library and organization want to achieve, provides direction and a sense of purpose to the new hire as well as the organization.

2.2.2. Phases of onboarding

In the phases of onboarding the new-hire is brought up to speed to learn about the organization's and the library's culture as well as that of the service unit within which he or

she will be working on a daily basis. Kreitner and Kinicki (2013) point out that onboarding is a process that involves a person learning values, norms and behaviours of an organization. This is the major aspect of onboarding process. It determines whether or not the new-hire is a good fit as well as his or her alliance to the organization. In turn it also determines the likelihood of length of stay in the organization. The phases occur prior to actual involvement of the new hire. During this time the new-hire has the opportunity to interact with representatives of the organization where he or she develops expectations about the organization and may even be informed about the onboarding that he or she will participate in. These phases prepare the new hire for the onboarding programme that is to follow.

Three phases of organizational onboarding are:

- Anticipatory phase that occurs before the new-hire joins the organization. In this phase the potential new-hire learns about the organization as he or she prepares for the interview to be recruited. Online information is the best tool from which to get information about the organization. Learning can also take place through current employees.
- Encounter phase occurs when the employment has been offered and real onboarding begins and the new-hire learns what the position offered is all about.
- Change and acquisition phase occurs when the new-hire is on board and has a clear understanding of what is expected of him or her in his or her role. With a proper onboarding programme, the new-hire is able to apply what he or she has learnt and make a contribution to the organization. This is not the end though as continuous development should still be implemented especially in an environment of ever-evolving technology and as responsibilities becomes higher. Professional development can continue in the form of mentoring or coaching to ensure that the employee keeps improving and working effectively even after the probation period and well into fixed term employment.

Source (Lockwood & Tai:2015)

2.3. Objectives of onboarding in academic libraries

In the age of technology information professionals are expected to work with more proficient users of technology, apply ICT to library processes and exchange information with users as well as render efficient service using the same technology. It is accepted that academic libraries have to become more technologically advanced in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands of higher education and research environment (Stoffle, Renaud & Veldof 1996:220). As a result of technology academic librarians have to shift their focus away from the conventional methods of library processes and service delivery to more

application of ICT. However, where a lack of skills is evident in newly hired information professional or one who is new to technology, relevant orientation and development strategies must become necessary.

Client service is important, which is the reason why it is necessary for librarians to adapt their work around the users and how they do their work. The importance of technology is often regarded as a means to an end such that employees become oblivious of its importance in knowledge creation or as a resource from which competitive edge among peer libraries is obtained.

The objective of academic libraries and academic departments is to manage research output efficiently. It is for this reason that libraries have to embrace and emphasize the use of new technology to reposition themselves. Onboarding in this regard provides an opportunity to for new-hires to be proficient in the use of technology to be able to achieve research objectives.

In order to implement an onboarding process, the library administrator needs to identify the objectives and provide a framework for the process to realize maximum benefits (Hall-Ellis 2014). The following are the objectives of onboarding.

- To provide employees with the basic tools they will need to complete their jobs. If the new-hire takes too much time to understand the job, the organization will not have the desired outcome for the newly established need. Onboarding programmes can provide speedy and clear understanding.
- To bring people up to speed quickly with ICT. As more and more library users start to acquire technologies such as mobile applications, it is important that librarians stay up-to-date and offer programmes and resources that these knowledgeable users can use.
- To drive new-hire and library productivity. Individual employees are asked to make the library succeed; and therefore motivation is important. Onboarding is the opportunity for motivating library employees to be more enthusiastic and committed.
- Onboarding accelerates delivery of results. An effective onboarding programme can contribute towards enabling the new-hire to reach desired performance standards quicker and saves the organization cost of employment.
- Significantly improves talent retention. An effective onboarding programme can make a positive contribution towards limiting employee turnover to a minimum during the initial phase of the new-hire's employment; and to establish quickly a favourable attitude to the organization so that he or she is more likely to stay longer.

- To create a feeling of belonging and loyalty in the new-hire. Normally every new-hire feels uncertain and lost in the first few days. Onboarding can calm the new-hire's fears and provide some assurances.

Identifying and setting objectives in advance to focus on realizing goals can help develop a successful program while also helping the new-hire to know what is expected of him or her.

2.4. Motivation for using onboarding programme in academic libraries

Onboarding is a tool through which new-hires are expected to be motivated to convert from anxiety and shyness to wanting to contribute meaningfully to new environment and adjust to its dynamics. This section discusses the different factors that necessitate onboarding of new-hires in academic libraries.

2.4.1. Escalating use of ICT in academic libraries

The generation of today, the so called Generation Y are more proficient in the use of modern technology than the older generation. On the contrary LIS undergraduate programmes are still on old school curricula. Most of the technical knowledge the new generation has is self-taught (Foster, 2000:166). When they come to the workplace as new-hires they need to understand how to use their new found knowledge in relation to aspects of their jobs and culture of the work environment. Academic libraries are responsible for exchange of information resources not only to the local university community but globally. Functions and processes range from collection building to information resource sharing and curation. User interaction forms a large part of the library service as well. All these job categories can be carried out more efficiently through the use of ICT. To avoid being lost in figuring out how the organization works, these young employees can be brought up to speed by onboarding programmes especially technology-based programmes.

2.4.2. Acquired knowledge in relation to library ICT

Shongwe and Ocholla (2103:37) found that library schools are not consistently offering the same curriculum and training towards qualifying LIS professionals. Until recently, the curriculum for LIS training focused in traditional librarianship (Shongwe, Ocholla 2013:37).

De Vinney and Tegler (1983:224) recognize the gap that exists between LIS education and the work environment. It is up to the hiring library to ensure that the gap that exists is as small as possible and does not impede on the new-hire's new career. Onboarding may not necessarily fill the gap, but can present an opportunity for the new-hire to anticipate learning to work with ICT in the library.

Bitter-Rijkema (2013) discusses the initiative that was taken by the Open University in the Netherlands to train students to become more innovative. The curriculum is based on training students to operate within the library in the digital era. This is done because it has been accepted that the whole paradigm shift of the LIS profession indeed calls for new teaching and learning approaches. According to De Vinney and Tegler (1983:226), Shongwe and Ocholla (2013:38), & Bitter-Rijkema (2011) the initial education in LIS schools is no longer enough for the demands of professional practice.

Research has been conducted to determine what exactly is it that needs to be introduced or the approach to be used in teaching that will qualify a professional to be an academic librarian in the digital age. Initial LIS education is general in nature and does not qualify students for any specialist field or type of library sector. Only work-based professional learning has that capacity. Through onboarding the values, nature of work and training are imparted to the new-hire.

Zhou (1996:259) conducted research in American academic libraries to identify library positions that require computer-related qualifications. It is a way to establish what computer skills or knowledge should be imparted to LIS students in their initial training for them to be able to fit into the work environment as academic librarians. It was found that many academic libraries are focusing on computer related positions. Basic computer knowledge will put any LIS professional in a modest position as an academic librarian but a specialised qualification or knowledge as a systems librarian will put them in an even better position to function efficiently in a high-tech environment. Rodwell (2001:48) also acknowledges that in recent years subject knowledge has been overshadowed by requirements for advanced technological skills in the recruitment of librarians.

In their research Maesaroh and Genoni (2009:524) assess the level of education and skills required of academic librarians. It is mentioned that LIS education in Indonesia started in 1952 with a “Course for library technicians” module. The question may be asked what did library technicians do in that era. The question could be asked whether they could have been working on computer hardware and whether the course would be for librarians if it was unrelated to information processes. It can be deduced that it had to do with activities in early library automation which is far removed from current information technology. Nevertheless, until recently the education and skills levels of Indonesian academic librarians were still low, even with the focus on library technical skills in the LIS programmes. This is due to a lack of facilities such as internet for students to be trained on. This brings to the fore another side of the gap that exists between LIS education and the work environment.

2.4.3. ICT functions in academic libraries

Nowadays ICT is applied to many functions of the library and information services including: organising, processing, storing, retrieving and exchanging information; accessing online resources in the facilitation of distance learning; digital reference services and collection building as well as administration and public relations management. The reality is that library schools do not always provide ICT skills training to prepare young professionals for working in a library environment with advanced technology (JISC Briefing paper, 2001).

Academic libraries support institutions of higher learning which are charged with the responsibility to create a better future for citizens in the demanding knowledge-based economy of the 21st century. It thus qualifies to say that information technology can be seen as a metric of support to the development of society. Its application impacts on scholarly communication activities. Managers need to know tools and training instruction that need to change for academic librarians to cope with the demands of technology. The conventional activities of supporting teaching, learning and research may not change but the tools are changing. It can be suggested that instead of concentrating on how librarians' work is done, librarians must organise their work around library users and how they do their work (Stoffle, Renaud & Veldof, 1996:214; Erlendsdóttir 1997).

2.4.4. Distance learning support

Technology has become a necessity for e-learning. Support of distance learning cannot be effective without technology infrastructure. Student services programmes should be designed to help new-hires reconfigure their support services for distance learners while also improving their services to on-campus students (Floyd & Casey-Powell, 2004:55). Lack of IT competency can be a barrier to e-learning, and on the part of academic librarians a barrier to support the university's teaching models. Nowadays distance learning support is facilitated through e- and m-learning in academic institutions. IT-based onboarding programme becomes necessary to enable new-hires to deliver such a service. The American Society for Training and Development defines e-learning as "learning that is delivered, enabled, mediated by electronic technology for the explicit purpose of learning". While academics are doing their part in reaching distance students, most of the time the students are on their own figuring out how to negotiate the influx of information at their disposal. It is in cases like these that academic librarians must be able to play a role in information literacy. Foo *et al* (2006) stress the importance of information literacy as a competency that academic librarians should have if they were to play a role of supporting teaching and learning at the university. The internet is a good as well as unreliable source of information, especially for novice users. Therefore it becomes the responsibility of librarians to help and guide students

to make good use of the huge amount of information that they obtain from the internet (Hardesty 2000).

2.4.5. Information resources management

With more print resources made available on the internet, and physical space required for innovation capacity, more academic libraries are choosing the route to build e-collections (Lewis 2007:48). Included in the collection are e-books, e-journals, e-thesis and dissertations, databases, websites as well as digital archives. Networks are essential so that access can be facilitated widely. In addition networks are also important to exchange and share resources with other external institutions. Cholin (2005) asserts that any academic library without these technologies and expertise to use them are said to be holding back on the potential of their institution to contribute to the knowledge economy. Recognising the difficulty that new-hires have in learning information resource management, Oud (2008) suggests that checklists be used as a strategy of onboarding because checklist can make explicit what needs to be done, and know when it has been done. It is therefore important that onboarding programmes outline collection development policy to guide the new-hire to determine users' informational requirements and subject to be covered by the information sources.

2.4.6. Digital reference service

The primary aim with digital reference is reference assistance, readers' advice, user training in the use of resources, including database searching (JISC, 2000). Much research agree that ICT has changed and introduced sophisticated ways of information access for the end-user. An understanding of the client needs is therefore important (Rodwell 2001). Digital reference services using e-mail, the web, social media and video conferencing have been tested and used in a number of academic libraries. Improved ways of communication together with knowledge of the needs of the users of the services can facilitate better rendering of a digital service. Knowledge of one's users allows librarian to anticipate their needs, and also utilization of technology that is convenient for the user. It is required therefore of the information professional to be able to identify and use the technology available. Because ICT has impacted on academics' style of teaching, research, networking, collaboration, publishing and their professional development, a lot of time is spent on providing assistance to academics in the use of digital reference services. Jawjoski (1994), on reporting on the findings of research on faculty needs and desires, states that members of academia are indeed welcoming and show preference to advanced technology services and resources from their institutional libraries. Information professionals are expected to function at a more advanced level of technology if they are to satisfy the needs of the academics and students (Jankowska, 2004:52)

While there are opportunities in using these services for conventional activities as well as scholarly communication, there are also challenges for LIS professionals who are yet to learn about concepts such as information policies, issues of copyright as well as information economy as they explore new technology. Information economy refers to the cost effectiveness of information solution that may be considered for implementation in a library. This being the case it is important that librarians should be able to adapt and act quickly to the use of these technologies. For new LIS professionals the challenge may be huge. Quick adaptation requires that academic libraries also think of structuring a relevant onboarding program relating to the use of technology for these new-hires. It is thus imperative that new-hires must immediately assess themselves and initiate a process of self-development. Academic libraries must also reconsider some of their programs for new-hires.

2.4.7. Administration and information organization

Academic libraries are becoming more involved with information organization and as such information administration was identified as one of the important functional area in academic libraries. An element of information infrastructure exists in relationship with very important components of information organization in the digital information age, namely: computer software, hardware, human competency and data or information management (Foo 2006) Most research in ICT show that the integration of ICT with library processes and functions helps to reduce the administrative procedures and enhance the overall administration and management of the library and information services as well as resources. Krishnaveni & Meenakumari (2010) identify and weigh the several practical areas to which ICT is implemented; and the amount of use of ICT to information administration. These included making use of e-mails to send multiple notifications to users, students and staff records management, gathering statistics and general daily administration work. The ease with which tasks are completed elevates the importance of ICT competency. It is therefore imperative that academic libraries should see the integration of library services and computers services as an opportunity to provide new and improved products and services.

The services mentioned above are key to efficient information service. It is thus necessary for academic libraries to formalize onboarding programmes and customize them to scenarios that the new-hire will encounter in the workplace.

2.5. Requirements of a successful onboarding programme

Onboarding is only successful when every department or service unit in the library is actively involved. The goal of this inter-departmental partnership is to establish a long-term relationship with the employee that begins as soon as the employee comes on-board. The question is “What do employers in academic libraries want in their new-hires”? This question

should help identify onboarding processes that will shape new-hires into what the organization seek in them. Melling (1996) agrees that employee development entails orientation programmes based on the identification of the skills needed to carry out required duties and to place the individual's role within the organizational context. Successful onboarding programme also requires some potential and willingness on the part of a new-hire to make learning a priority. The new-hire must be enthusiastic, well receptive, computer literate, innovative, hardworking person with desire to serve and have potential for growth (Melling 1996, Kloppenborg & Lodge 2009:172). As alluded earlier that LIS education does not prepare young professionals fully for the job ahead, informal learning should be a priority to new-hires (Preschel, 1988:360).

It is an advantage for information professionals to have basic competencies that will put them in good stead of performing tasks such as organizing and searching databases, quick retrieval, understand the information world, and be able to receive and acquire knowledge that may not have been taught in graduate programmes (Baruah & Hangsing, 2012:54).

Relevance of content of the programme is also important. Oud (2008:258) conducted a survey in Canadian academic libraries, focusing on the pre-existing knowledge of librarians and compared it to what is expected in terms of job skills. The identified gap between the two measures was recommended to be used to determine the contents of the orientation programme. A better measure may be to look at what type of content needs to be learned and how often it needs to be applied or implemented to have the desired impact (Kapp 2014)

Employee capability regarding technology has always been, and will remain a library's important investment. Being able to appreciate the fact that employees and the ICT knowledge they possess are vital in academic libraries is an important step in creating relevant opportunities for staff to reach their full potential. Identification of skills and competencies is crucial to well-designed orientation plans and training. It is through a repeated identification of what is required of library staff and for the organization to grow that informs the orientation planning process (Kloppenborg & Lodge 2009).

2.6 Role-players in onboarding programme

Onboarding is only successful when everyone in the department is actively involved. Implementing onboarding includes involving managers, colleagues, and HR experts in the programme. The goal of participation by all the relevant is to establish a long-term

relationship with the employee that begins as soon as the employee comes on board. Various activities can be shared by all parties thus enhancing the experience of the new-hire's onboarding (Chapman, In MAUT-LS 24014:3). New-hires need to be taught the basics about being a productive and effective employee as well as being provided a daily script of what the expectations from them within a timeframe. Nothing should be left to chance unexplained. They also need to feel comfortable to be able to embrace the role and importance of the individual role player and contributor.

In the researcher's experience libraries managers have their role as teachers taking part in discussions around teaming, service unit goals, and performance objectives and work environment that help to make the service unit a success. They have the responsibility to highlight and emphasize specific roles and responsibilities in the unit where the new-hire is to work after the general organization's work processes and resources have been explained. Managers also give new-hires the full picture of the team and how his or her individual role is in the team. Other onboarding activities can be informal and be carried out by team members or other colleagues within the service (Hendricks 2012). New-hires can also be assigned buddies to teach them the ropes. Buddies are normally colleagues with whom the new-hire can be comfortable and develop peer-to-peer relationships. The less formal relation is important to reduce tension that may otherwise be felt when the new-hire has to approach the manager for assistance or guidance (Level & Mach, 2004:304).

Buddies are important because they can provide answers to questions that the new hire feels uncomfortable to ask the manager (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011)

Another important role player to the new-hire is management. It is important also for the management to greet and meet with the new-hire informally so the new-hire can feel welcomed and supported.

An effect to including every staff member in onboarding programme of the new hire is that staff members as well as the new hire feel appreciated and valued as part of the organization (MAUT-LS,2014).

2.7 Recommended practice of onboarding

In order to sufficiently benefit the institution and the new-hire, the onboarding programme should be planned and scheduled well in advance. McGill library recommends practical steps that have been used successfully. They recommend that a timetable should be

prepared, with details of all the programme activities. A set period of time from a minimum of two weeks is ideal for the new-hire. The programme should include names of members of staff who will be responsible for each activity. This planning stage should involve and be circulated to everyone responsible for a part in the onboarding process, including the new-hire. If logistics allow the programme should be sent to the new-hire in advance, with opportunity for the new-hire to be prepared and look forward to taking part. Lockwood & Tai (2015) also recommends that new-hires be given an opportunity to look at the programme in the anticipatory phase, and identify elements that he or she might need to discuss beforehand.

It is also considered best practice to allocate a buddy to every new-hire. If possible this should not be a person who the new-hire will be working with directly, but who can carry out some of the assignments on the onboarding programme, as well as generally make the new-hire feel at home MAUT-LT (2014). For lengthened onboarding programmes that incorporate continuous staff development the institution should consider assigning a mentor beyond basic orientation to journey further with the new-hire (Graybill 2012).

2.8 Mentoring

In order to anchor learning acquired during onboarding formal mentoring programs are widely used as part of continued development programmes (Oud 2008). Transfer of skill and knowledge can be strengthened by using mentoring programs on the job. Formal mentoring programme also ensures that some of the missed opportunities to learn other aspects of the profession will be incorporated in the process. "Mentoring can be an intellectual supplement and a performance builder"(Shea 1994:24). It is therefore imperative that leaders, supervisors and managers contribute to this effort by exhibiting commitment to teaching and supporting behaviours, conducts and attitudes desired of their team (Metz 2001:2). Through mentoring practical knowledge will be imparted while competencies are nurtured and skills retained. Mentoring extends from orientating to forming good relationship between mentor and mentee. Through the relationships formed, the mentor is available at all times to provide the mentee with guidance and support by engaging in the following:

- 1 *Shifting context by helping the mentee to envisage a positive future or outcome.* This will help the new-hire to identify and clarify some uncertainties of what is expected of him or her.
- 2 *Listening. The mentor will be open to listen and provide assurance to the concerns that the new-hire might have.*

- 3 *Providing feedback. Through regularly scheduled meetings the new hire will be able to let the mentor in on progress made in settling in.*
- 4 *Productive confrontation and constructive criticism without being judgemental.*
- 5 *Providing appropriate information and professional guidance.*
- 6 *Delegating authority and giving permission to create learning opportunities.*
- 7 *Encouraging exploration of options*

Source: (Shea 2003:55-58)

Mentoring can benefit the institution and employee in situations like succession planning, keeping down staff resignations, and of importance it will help new-hires to easily learn the culture of the institution. Shea (2003:7) regards the overall objective of mentoring in Information organizations as improving the quality of employee worklife, train in specialised ICT skills and adapt its operations in ways that take advantage of rapidly developing workforce diversity.

Through mentoring, new hires can settle in easily and quicker. Thus mentoring can be considered as a process that can significantly increase the effects of onboarding.

2.9 Challenges in the implementation of onboarding programmes

Over the years, recruitment, education, and retention of librarians have been challenging. “Ensuring education of new librarians and re-educating existing librarians with skills and knowledge to support new roles in a digital information age, especially roles involving teaching and library promotion, is a challenge for the profession” (Hisle 2002).

Academic libraries have had to go an extra mile to put together development programmes such as onboarding in order to recruit and retain professionals. Although a good design can provide a springboard to a successful onboarding programme, in many instances recruitment and retention require more than good programme design.

Bugg (2015:2) reckons that with the increase of baby boomers and job hoppers in the profession, job satisfaction as well as support for development of staff is becoming crucial to recruiting and retaining good talent. There needs to be some shift of focus from recruiting and retaining only to including adoption and development of talent. Talent acquisition and development are more important than just recruiting especially if libraries need to remain relevant in a competitive information economy. Attracting best talent provides a strong

strategy for effective onboarding that could result in rapid integration and productivity (Bugg 2015:7).

2.9.1 Implementation of onboarding programmes

While academic libraries are considered by many to be providing good practice and training of professionals, there are underlying broader challenges that impede progress regarding implementation of many strategies such as onboarding. Hisle (2002) mentions the following as broader challenges:

- Recruitment, education, and retention of librarians.
- Role of library in academic enterprise.
- Impact of information technology on library services.
- Creation, control, and preservation of digital resources.
- Chaos in scholarly communication.
- Support of new user of the library.

2.9.2 Communication

Communication is an important to impart information and knowledge as well as provide a good experience for the new-hire. Through good communication a conducive environment could be created where opportunities can be found to build integrated onboarding programme that includes commitment from role players, leadership and supervision throughout the organization. Turman (2013) reckons that when bringing a new-hire to the team, it is important to review the job description ahead of time to be able to clarify specific duties and responsibilities for the new-hire, and openly discuss upon hire as clearly and succinctly as possible. To assist the new-hire assimilate information ample, consistent and regular time to meet with the new-hire should be scheduled, and make an effort to discuss expectations for everything bit by bit to avoid overload and provide new-hire time to process the information Turman 2013:6).

Baker (2015) identifies a big challenge of communicating the organizational culture to the new employee. She also found out that managers are often really good at communicating the simpler topics such as policies, procedures, tasks, projects but not the harder topics such as culture, vision, mission and values. It is therefore important for managers to be trained in communicating information about these topics as well as portray conduct in line with the values.

2.9.3 Information overload

It is no doubt the process of onboarding involves a lot of information intake and processing for mutual understanding between the new-hire and his or her supervisor. It is also a reality that cramming loads of information into a few weeks is not practical (Turman 2013:6). Sometimes in an effort to explain expectations and role to the new-hire there is a risk of over-communicating which leads to information overload.

2.9.4 Team dynamics

Challenges may be experienced with the rest of the team embracing the joining of a new-hire. It is inevitable that when a new person comes on board, the dynamic of the team changes. This can be particularly true if the new-hire is in a leadership role, or if there is an existing team member interviewed for the position, and was unsuccessful (Baker, 2015). A hostile environment is bad for integrating new-hires. Team managers should ensure that they find ways to create the enthusiasm and excitement that new-hires are bringing to the team. Sharing information with the team before the arrival of the new-hire may create anticipation from the team, and may encourage them to get involved to prepare for his or her arrival. There is no reason why new-hires cannot be celebrated the same as old retirees.

2.9.5 Follow-up and evaluation

Dessler (2004:245) states that many organizations tend to make the mistake of believing that once a new-hire has attended the onboarding programme, nothing more is needed from the supervisor or manager. In this manner onboarding is reduced to a simple transactional activity. The sad situation is that after a few days' programme the new-hire continues like the other employees without the strict supervision and regular meetings. It is as if the programme comes to an abrupt end. Onboarding doesn't have to end after the new-hire's first days. As the employee obtains a permanent contract in the organization, the programme should continue to be more than one stop in the new-hire process. For organizations that conduct group orientation sessions about the organization, it is useful to evaluate the information that has been shared to determine whether or not the programme has served its purpose. Depending on the feedback the follow-up process can be prepared. As far as individual onboarding is concerned strategies for further development should be considered as well as identifying opportunities for such development. Determining the success of the individual's learning is difficult. It makes it even difficult to standardise tests to measure learning or prove effectiveness of the partnership with role players.

2.9.6 Further employee development

Without careful planning, analysis, and design, cultural barriers will threaten the development of new talent. Development can take place by converting the programme into a process that will help the new-hire move forward within the organization. Once the formal orientation programme concludes, it is important for new-hires to build personal relationships with other colleagues. Further employee training is not only linked to improved business results but is also a powerful factor in shaping employee attitudes. It creates a motivation for increased discretionary behaviour and a satisfaction with career development that ultimately leads to increased job satisfaction (Latif 2012). Therefore, it is important to provide employees with the tools to do their jobs in a continually changing world to help them to accept and feel comfortable in the new job (Mackenzie, 2007: 3). As such academic libraries must emphasize “continuous learning and make the necessary corresponding investment of resources” (Erlendsdóttir 1997)

2.10 Benefits of onboarding

According to Bauer (2012:11) employees who are on-boarded effectively through an interactive process of integration into an organization will perform better in any organization. Effective onboarding process integration helps with employee retention as well as job attitudes and innovative performance.

Dessler (2005:139), Kleynhans, et al. (2006:106) and Snell(2006:13) agree that the following are the main benefits of a successful onboarding programme:

- Reduced reality shock and cognitive dissonance which occurs when there is a difference between what the new-hire expects and what he or she actually find to be the reality of the environment.
- Improved employee commitment and retention. Onboarding increases job satisfaction and reduces turnover and absenteeism. When employees are content with their personal objectives, satisfaction tends to improve, and there is less absenteeism or dismissals.
- Reduced time to employee competence and contribution. The faster the new-hire understands his or her role clearly, the quicker will his or her competence level rises and he or she can start to make valuable contribution to the organization.
- Improved productivity and performance. Successful onboarding leads to positive work values and reduces the time it takes the new-hire to reach peak performance.

Promotion of a sense of belonging in the organization allows the new-hire to become productive much more quickly.

- Stronger bonds among colleagues. Onboarding improves relations between managers and subordinates. Improved relationships are the results of new-hires settling-in to the new environment as quickly as possible.
- Enhanced job satisfaction and loyalty. Loyal employees also promote the brand of the organization.

Providing a well-developed onboarding programme not only benefits the organization's hiring process but is essential to calm the new-hires fears and anxiety and enhances their performance. The programme also communicate clearly the role of the new-hire as well as key information about the whole organization. Onboarding programmes are not the same in all academic libraries or any other organization, but have similar goals and objectives that they want to achieve. Although there are differences, academic libraries can learn from one another.

2.11 Conclusion

Early career academic librarians bring with them unique attributes to the workplace. Today, expertise of library information science (LIS) skills must be complemented by computing skills for working in an information technology (IT) intensive library environment. A review of LIS professional training to include modules in ICT seems to be the answer to onboarding of LIS graduates to ICT in academic libraries (Foo, et al. 2002).

Being embraced, celebrated and supported as a new-hire at the workplace has the potential to accelerate achievement of efficiency and productivity in the new librarian. Academic librarians need to update and/or acquire the skills and knowledge to ensure proficiency in an environment that is constantly faced with new technological advancements and new ways of doing reference work. They also need to play active roles in searching for innovative solutions to the issues involved in everyday job and adapting to new environments. Academic libraries' involvement with university LIS faculties or schools provides a major opportunity for librarians to be part of the teaching and learning as well as active research groups.

Extending the onboarding process to mentoring, attending seminars, and providing development opportunities is essential for academic librarians to be productive, satisfied and remain a loyal asset to the institution.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the research design applied to explore and study the process of onboarding as experienced by newly appointed librarians in academic libraries in different institutions. The purpose of this study is to explore the practice of onboarding as used in academic libraries to help new-hires to adjust to their new work environment and roles. In addition the study will report on the format and focus of the programmes. It will also address the new-hires' perceptions of the onboarding programmes and the benefits derived from the relationship between onboarding programmes and employee satisfaction. In order to determine this, this research used a qualitative survey method for data gathering. The activities involved in the onboarding programmes were determined as experienced by a group of new-hires. A population of newly appointed librarians at selected academic libraries were used. The data gathering method employed was through a questionnaire; followed up by interviews

3.2 Research design

Mouton (2006:55) refers to a research design as a plan or blueprint of the intention to conduct the research. A research design focuses on the end product and includes the following elements:

- What approach of study is being planned?
- What kind of results are aimed at?
- How will the research question be answered?
- What kind of evidence is required to address the research question adequately?

The kind of data required to answer the research question, in this study, necessitates a qualitative approach. This is due to the fact that the researcher's objective is to reach a deeper understanding of how the participants of this study experienced and perceived the onboarding process and their first few months of employment at the institutions. This qualitative approach used descriptive survey research design. Pickard (2013:112) states that descriptive surveys are a good approach to describe a situation as well as to look for trends and patterns among the participants. Data gathered from the study is used to understand the practice of onboarding programmes and how they are perceived by those who take part. The researcher will also be learning from the participants' information to come to an informed

deduction. The responses from the questions were analysed to draw conclusions about the value and success of the programme.

3.2.1 Qualitative research

Hsieh and Shannon(2005:1278) describe qualitative research as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of data through a systematic classification process of coding and identifying patterns. It is a method that attempts to identify consistencies and meaning from the result of the study. In this study this method is chosen to help provide descriptions of a specific setting or procedure and also to validate existing theories about the practice as well as experiences of onboarding in academic libraries.

Zhang and Wildemuth (2009:11) confirm that the qualitative method aims at identifying important categories within content and provides a rich description of the realities created by those categories as they happen and are experienced in a particular setting or procedure. In qualitative research the researcher explores data without bias or imposing any theories or expectations. This is the preferred method of eliciting honest and free responses from participants. Welman and Kruger (2005:207) add to this by saying that qualitative research is based on meaning expressed through words and other symbols or metaphors.

3.2.2 Research participants

Research participants for this study were new librarians who have or are still taking part in the onboarding programme. The new librarians' category included all those who have two years or less of employment at their respective institutions. Employees in both client and technical service units were considered. These include reference librarians, information specialists, cataloguing librarians, systems librarian as well as research librarians.

To avoid bias in the selection of participants, all participants are employees who have participated in the onboarding programme. These are eligible to participate in the study. In addition the participants who met the following criteria were chosen

- The participant must be in full or part time permanent employment at the library.
- The participant must have 2 or less years of service at the particular library.

3.3 Research instrument

Research instruments are tools designed to gather data on a topic of interest from research participants. Questionnaire and interviews were used to collect data from participants. Data collected by the researcher directly from the participant it is called primary data.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Primary data for this study was collected in a survey using questionnaire followed with semi-structured interviews. A dictionary definition of questionnaire is a set of printed or written questions with a choice of answers, devised for the purposes of a survey or statistical study. Questionnaires are popular for use in surveys but can also be used in field research as well as in other means of observations. The researcher used an online questionnaire to obtain data. An online questionnaire as defined by Coomber (1997) in Pickard (2013) as “one which is located on web page which respondents can fill-in online at a terminal in a form of a database or statistical package”. Responses were also provided to the researcher using the same online tool.

Welman and Kruger (2002) agree that the questionnaire is the most common method of data collection used in survey research. The motivation to use the questionnaire stems from the observation that people tend to be truthful in their response to the questionnaires, particularly when responding to controversial issues when they know that their identity will not be revealed.

A copy of the questionnaire is included in the addenda (page 74-77)

The researcher designed a questionnaire and used an internet electronic tool as an instrument distribute it and gather data. The questionnaire was uploaded onto an electronic survey program called Google Forms. The aim of the questions in the questionnaire is to elicit the participants' perceptions of the components and activities of the onboarding programme. The responses are expected to provide information on how the new-hires experienced the programme, concerns, lesson learnt as well as information on whether or not the programme helped them to settle in quickly and perform the job better.

The questionnaire used questions with a 4- and 5-point Likert scale to gather information from the research participants. The questionnaire focused on the onboarding programme's activities as indicated by the participants. A list of activities was provided in the questionnaire from which they had to indicate the activities in which they participated.

The experience of the participants and the perceived outcomes were analysed against the objectives and benefits of the programme as determined in the literature. The questionnaire consists of:

- Biographical data
- Questions on participation in the onboarding programme and the programme activities

- Establishment of perceived usefulness by the participants
- Perceived success towards attainment of objectives and benefits
- A final open-ended question that allowed participants to share specific information regarding the onboarding programme.

3.3.2 Advantages and disadvantages of using questionnaire

Online questionnaire has an advantage over other techniques or instruments. It allows the researcher to reach respondents remotely. The responses too can be received within a very short time once sent. In addition online questionnaire cost less to distribute. The researcher chose this technique to the advantage of saving time and cost.

According to Harvey (2012) the following are the disadvantages of questionnaires:

- *Is argued to be inadequate to understand some forms of information - i.e. changes of emotions, behaviour, feelings etc.*
- *It is asking only a limited amount of information without explanation*
- *Lacks validity*
- *There is no way to tell how truthful a respondent is being*
- *There is no way of telling how much thought a respondent has put in*
- *The respondent may be forgetful or not thinking within the full context of the situation*
- *People may read differently into each question and therefore reply based on their own interpretation of the question - i.e. what is 'good' to someone may be 'poor' to someone else, therefore there is a level of subjectivity that is not acknowledged*
- *There is a level of researcher imposition, meaning that when developing the questionnaire, the researcher is making their own decisions and assumptions as to what is and is not important...therefore they may be missing something that is of importance*

To avoid multiple submission by the same respondent, the Google tool can be set to prevent such incidents which is the option that the researcher used.

A pilot study was undertaken to check on the accessibility of the online questionnaire as well as to identify ambiguity of the questions. Some respondents were not comfortable providing biographical data. The researcher had to indicate specifically on the questions that they were "optional" so that they could choose not to provide data.

Realizing that the fourth identified institution will not be participating, and thus reducing number of responses of the already small population the researcher saw it fit to include

interviews for data collection to supplement the questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews were used as a result to increase participation and have an increased number of responses.

3.3.3 Semi-structured interviews

Welman and Kruger (2005:198) advocate for unstructured interviews in qualitative research as an instrument that has the potential to provide a greater wealth of information than other methods of data-collecting. Silverman (1993) In (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005) states that using interviews the researcher is able to ask questions related to the following:

- Facts such as biographical information
- Participants' beliefs and perspectives
- Feelings
- Motives
- Past and present behaviours
- What participants think should be done in certain situations
- Conscious reasons for a particular feeling or action

Source: Leedy, P; Ormrod, J.E. 2005.

It was foreseen that the population would be a small one to provide enough data using only questionnaire. It was for this reason that the researcher decided to follow up the questionnaire with semi-structured interviews. The decision was further affirmed by Leedy and Ormrod (2001:146) when stating that semi-structured interviews provides flexibility that allows the researcher to manipulate the questions as a follow up to the responses provided in other format. Questions that were used in the semi-structured interviews were developed from the responses from the questionnaire.

The interview questions that assists the researcher to probe, and the respondents to further elaborate on their responses. The questions were intended to expatiate more on the open ended question of the questionnaire as well as to establish respondents' level of satisfaction about the programme. The following indicators were used:

- Indication on whether or not the onboarding in the institution was given sufficient time.
- the level of knowledge that was acquired

- how the participants view their roles within the organisation
- the impact of onboarding in terms of relationships with other people within the workplace
- whether or not onboarding is valued by the new-hires.

3.3.4 Justification for using semi-structured interviews

Not all the participants returned questionnaires, making the small sample even smaller. This was not anticipated by the researcher. It was only discovered when the researcher realised that the fourth institution that would have provided more respondents would not be participating in the study. The researcher had to use the same procedure used to distribute the questionnaire to ask for volunteers for the follow-up interview. This cleared up ambiguous answers as respondents were able to elaborate more on their perceptions. This is in line with the views of Leedy & Ormrod (2005) that together with the questionnaire, the semi structured interview is usually used in a small sample survey to validate and obtain clarified descriptions of the responses from the questionnaire. In the semi-structured interviews the researcher is able to use standard questions but still probe further the respondent's reasoning (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:184).

For the interview participants selected were those that have completed the onboarding programme. Since they have experience of all the components of the programme, they were in a good position to relate their feelings and experiences and could point out the good aspects and the flaws of the programme.

Although the interviewer still has to develop structured questions, he or she uses them just as an interview guide, but can also follow trajectories if necessary, in the discussion and may stray from the guide (Cohen & Crabtree 2006: online). In this study the researcher developed structured questions as a guide during the interview but added a few comfort questions as was necessary to get rid of the occasional aloofness of the interviewee. As Cohen and Crabtree (2006) indicate, this did not compromise the formality of the interview.

3.3.5 Advantages and disadvantages of semi-structured interviews

Cohen and Crabtree (2006) identified the following as advantages and disadvantages for semi-structured interviews:

Advantages

- *Many researchers like to use semi-structured interviews because questions can be prepared ahead of time. This allows the interviewer to be prepared and appear competent during the interview*
- *Semi-structured interviews also allow informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms*
- *Semi-structure interviews can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data*
- *Semi-structured interview encourages two-way communication. Those being interviewed can ask questions of the interviewer. In this way it can also function as an extension tool*
- *Confirms what is already known but also provides the opportunity for learning. Often the information obtained from semi-structured interviews will provide not just answers, but the reasons for the answers*
- *When individuals are interviewed they may more easily discuss sensitive issues*
- *Help field staff become acquainted with community members. Outsiders may be better at interviewing because they are perceived as more objective*
- *Using both individual and group interviews can optimise the strengths of both (COHEN 2006)*

Disadvantages

- *Interviewing skills are required*
- *Need to meet sufficient people in order to make general comparisons*
- *Preparation must be carefully planned so as not to make the questions prescriptive or leading*
- *Skills to analyse the data can be a problem – risk of construing too much*
- *Time consuming and resource intensive*
- *Confidentiality of respondents must be maintained.*

The researcher requested volunteers from the participants of the questionnaire survey using the same channel used in questionnaire distribution to invite participants. The participants were those that could be reached easily by the researcher. No criterion was used to select participants. The advantage was that the researcher could relate to participants positively

and that created a quick rapport during the interview. The interview was partially informal and that released some anxiety from the participant. Interviews were conducted in a less threatening environment, in their offices during breaks so that their work and the researcher's were not interrupted. The researcher was satisfied that participants were able to answer questions providing more details that could not be captured through questionnaire.

3.4 Validity and reliability

3.4.1 Validity

According to Leedy (1993:79) validity is a measure or instrument that is said to be valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure. A question can only be valid if it demonstrates the capability to enquire what the researcher aims to find out. According to Welman and Kruger (2005:142) validity is the extent to which research findings accurately represent what is really happening in the situation.

In order to ensure validity the survey focused on the nature of the onboarding programme in the academic libraries as experienced by the participants and did not seek to compare the institutions. It was thus not a comparative analysis. As such there was no attempt to conduct a comparative study and the findings from the different institutions were not compared.

3.5 Data collection procedures

3.5.1 Pilot study

The questionnaire was circulated to a few experienced colleagues with knowledge of onboarding to establish if there were any ambiguities. The researcher tried as much as possible to use clear language that would be understood by the respondents regardless of their position and professional rank. Arising from the pilot study conducted, questions deemed ambiguous were noted and edited for greater clarity and elimination of ambiguity.

The questionnaire together with the required research proposal and supporting documentation was sent to the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria. Upon approval of the application, a letter seeking permission (page 79) to conduct the research was sent to the Directors of the prospective libraries, for their approval.

The Ethical Clearance letter from the Research Ethics Committee (page 78) formed part of the application submitted to the participants' library directors. A request was also made for HR departments of those libraries for assistance in identifying participants.

After identification of the participants meeting the criteria as set out (qualified librarians and new-hires), the questionnaire accompanied by a cover letter seeking the consent of the respondents was distributed to the identified participants. The letter included assurance that

the responses would remain anonymous and no individual results would be released. There was no risk involved for any participant who volunteered to respond to the electronic questionnaire. The respondents were given three weeks to return their responses. A week prior to due date, reminders were sent out. The responses were returned on the online tool and no respondent's identity would be revealed. The data from the survey was retrieved from Google Forms.

The interview was not piloted as the researcher is allowed to probe further depending on the participant's responses. The idea was to elicit further information and elaborate on details.

With interviews, additional data was obtained through interaction with the participants, observation of attitudes; perceptions and probing of opinions were recorded so as to enable an attempt to answer the research problem. While the research question is answered mainly through the questionnaire the interviews were meant to elaborate and get more in-depth information. A mobile device was used to capture data and to record discussions.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations refer to the principled way of conducting research with the sole purpose of recording what has been told or observed in a truthful manner. Mouton (2006:238) states that "the ethics of science concerns what is wrong and what is right in the conduct of research" and that in the search for information, the researcher's conduct must conform to generally accepted norms and values. The norms and values are embedded in the practice of the following:

3.6.1 Informed consent

Obtaining informed consent represents the participant's conscious understanding and permission that comes with his or her agreement to take part. The informed consent letter explained the procedures of data gathering and the responsibilities and options available to the respondents. The purpose of the study was explained. The letter of Informed consent is in the addenda (page 81)

3.6.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

According to Strydom (2007:61), confidentiality refers to the handling of data in a confidential manner while anonymity ensures the privacy of the subjects.

To ensure the anonymity of the participants, the name of the respondents were not revealed even when the questionnaire was sent via online tool. The responses also were not received on the researcher's e-mail and thus identity of the respondents remained unknown even to the researcher. A covering letter to the questionnaire was attached in this regard and can be found in the addenda (page 74). The cover letter also ensured confidentiality and anonymity

3.7 Data analysis

De Vos (2007:333) describes data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. This study uses qualitative data analysis to capture perceptions of respondents in their specific onboarding programme. Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1278) define qualitative data analysis as an approach of empirical controlled interpretation of data “through a systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or determining emerging patterns”

This study used qualitative data analysis in order to gain insight into the perception of the respondents regarding the onboarding programme they attended. Qualitative content analysis is also used to explore the meanings underlying information from respondents (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009:1). This assisted the researcher to understand realities of the concept under study from the perspective of the respondents. The results were drawn from the electronic tool for compilation by the researcher. After compilation, an Excel spreadsheet was produced as a record of the responses for the participant. Data was analysed and reported using descriptive statistics to describe and summarise findings of the study.

3.8 Limitations

The following limitations applied to this study:

The study focused on librarians who have been employed for a period of two years and less at the time of the study at the University of Pretoria, Sefako Makgatho Health University, and Tshwane University of Technology (Pretoria West Campus).

- The study was limited to the mentioned university libraries at campuses within the Tshwane Metropolis.
- Although the study involved three academic libraries, there was no intention for comparison of the academic libraries or the responses from participants at different libraries. The study was therefore not a comparative one.

3.9 Conclusion

The envisaged outcome of the study was realised as the researcher was able to capture information from the perspective of each participant involved. Choosing a descriptive survey has assisted in describing the situation within the academic libraries regarding the practice of onboarding. Piloting the questionnaire eliminated ambiguities. Questionnaires assist to maintain consistency and the researcher does not have to be concerned about the influence emotions can bring in the responses. Thus individual perceptions and beliefs can be expressed truthfully.

Chapter 4 Data analysis

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4 the results of the data analysis are presented and discussed. Data analysis involves making sense out of information gathered from questionnaire to understand the data, represent the data and interpret the data.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of those librarians who participated in an onboarding programme. This was done by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. First section consisted of the biographical information of the respondents and the second section consisted of questions relating to the onboarding activities of newly appointed librarians at selected academic libraries. The third section related to the respondents' perceptions of the programme. The examination of the responses assisted the researcher to analyze the implementation of the programme at selected institutions, determine the perceptions about the effectiveness, and provide guidelines into the onboarding programme.

This chapter also provides an analysis of the descriptive statistics derived from the participants' responses to the survey. It also includes the results of the questionnaire questions regarding the onboarding experience of the participants and perceived benefits of the programme as well as presenting the participants' perceptions on whether or not the programme achieved its goals.

4.2 Research approach

4.2.1 Questionnaire analysis

The research methodology and design for this study was by means of a qualitative method to gain insight into the perceptions of newly appointed academic librarians regarding the onboarding programmes they attended at their academic libraries. Online questionnaires were distributed to the 30 target respondents. Twenty-three (23) responses were received, which means a response rate of 76% was obtained. The responses were received through the same online tool and as such anonymity of respondents was still maintained. The preliminary analysis in the study was through the use of an Excel spread-sheet that was created automatically by Google Forms tool for all the variables of the questionnaire and for statistical data presentation.

4.2.2 Interview analysis

The raw data collected through the semi-structured interviews was recorded by the researcher through notes and voice recordings. Only summaries of the responses were presented. The data collected provided an insight into the perceptions of the respondents on onboarding programmes. It also supported the researcher's notion relating to the need for onboarding and experiences by newly appointed academic librarians.

The comments were grouped together and "placed" into themes, which captured the different views. The following themes were identified as being important for the analysis for this study:

- Importance of onboarding. This theme involves analysis of experience of the participants of the programme and captures the respondents' views on the importance of onboarding.
- Contents of onboarding programme. This theme looks at participants' perceptions of relevance of onboarding programme.
- Usefulness. This theme analyses the perceived usefulness of the programme and the experience of the respondents.
- Results of the programme. This theme deals with the perception about the success or failure of the onboarding programme.

Through categorising the comments and voiced perceptions of the respondents into themes the researcher was able to make deductions and conclusions.

4.3 Descriptive analysis and statistics

This section describes the results of the responses. Frequency of responses was used to identify themes. The open-ended question responses of the questionnaire were analysed in terms of themes identified.

A total of 23 participants of the selected institutions completed the researcher's survey for this study. Two of the respondents were removed from the analysis as they did not consent to participate even though their response were recorded as being returned. Therefore, a total of 21 responses were used in the analysis.

The data for the questionnaire responses is represented in the following tables and figures:

- **Total survey**

The following table represents the original number of questionnaires that were sent and the responses received

Total sent	Returned	Used
30	23	21

Table 1

- **Consent to participate**

The following table represent the responses to consent to participate in the survey

N=23		
response	Number	%
Yes	21	91.3%
No	2	8.7%

Table 2

- **Profile of respondents**

This section of the analysis provides information on the current position, and qualifications of the respondents. Responses to these questions were optional. This information allowed the researcher to determine the level of education of respondents at the time of being hired. Four respondents did not respond to the question about their job titles. Thus n=17

Job title of participants	Number of responses	Percentages
Reference Librarian	2	11%
Information librarian	6	35%
Research Librarian	0	0%
Cataloguer	1	7%
Other job title	8	47

Table 3

The table below represents the qualifications of the respondents. This question had an option not to give a response. Although there were some who did not respond, the number of responses shows some discrepancy. Some of the respondents indicated to have more than one qualification. The question presented some ambiguity as it did not ask for highest qualification, in which case the respondents would have indicated one.

Qualification of respondents	Number of respondents	Percentage
B.Bibl	6	31.5
B.IS	4	21
PG Dip LIS	3	16
ND LIS	2	10.5
B.Tech LIS	1	5
Other	3	16
Total	19	100%

Table 4

- **Implementation of the onboarding programme**

Implementation of onboarding programme	Number of responses	Percentages
In phases	21	100%
Uninterrupted	0	0%

Table 5

All 21 respondents were requested to indicate how frequent did the programme continue. 100% of the respondents indicated that the programme was delivered in phases.

- **Duration of the onboarding programme**

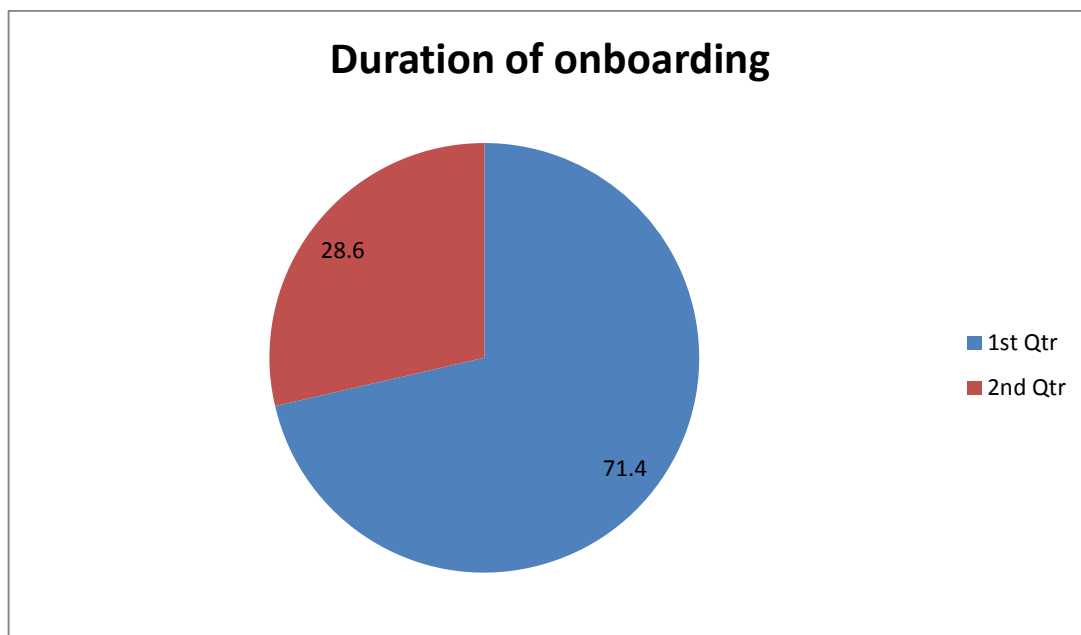


Figure 1

Figure 1 represents responses to the duration of the onboarding programme. 271.4% of respondents indicated that their onboarding programme was conducted for longer than two months, and 28.6% had it for shorter period than two months. This suggests that the programme was not a once-off event.

- **Activities of onboarding programmes**

Onboarding programmes are not all the same for all libraries, and so are the activities of instruction during the programme. The components that are mentioned in the survey are the most common. The activities were chosen based on the literature. These activities are mentioned in most of the literature. Table 6 represents the frequency of the activities as they take place in different academic libraries. Respondents were asked to indicate the activities in which they participated at their different libraries.

- **Usefulness of the onboarding activities**

Respondents were required to rate the usefulness of the onboarding activities that they have indicated that they participated in. based on the selection of activities on a 4 point Likert scale, ranging from 'not at all useful to extremely useful. The following scales were used: 1=Not at all useful; 2=Somewhat useful; 3=Useful; 4=Extremely useful. The table 6 below represent the responses to the two items (item 7 and 8) on the questionnaire.

Total number of participants (N=21) **Table 6**

Activities of onboarding	Number of responses	Percentage	perceived usefulness rating			
			1 Not at all useful	2 Somewhat useful	3 Useful	4 Extremely useful
Receiving Guidance to register employee details on the IT system	14	66.6	2	7	3	2
Being taken on a library tour	21	100	0	4	11	6
Being shown how to use IT for everyday work	10	47.6	2	2	2	4

Watching library video	12	57.1	2	1	4	2
Being introduced to library and expectations explained	21	100	0	1	14	6
Guidance on University's IT	21	100	1	6	8	8
Participated in manager facilitated IT training	14	66.6	2	10	0	2
Interpersonal interactions with colleagues	21	100	0	3	8	10
Social occasion with line manager and executives	16	76.1	4	4	8	2
Being introduced to other university support services	16	76.1	4	6	4	2
Self-guided e-learning of online information resources	14	66.6	2	2	4	6
One-on-one session with line manager	20	96.2	3	6	9	2
Other	2	9.5	0	0	0	2

It should be noted that there will be variation in the number of participants. This is due to the fact that not all the respondents participated in all the activities. Some of the activities were not rated at all even though the respondents indicated that they have participated in them. This presents a limitation to obtaining the true reflections of respondents' perceptions.

Table 6 show activities that were indicated as useful and helpful to the new-hire are those that have an element of personal guidance derived from interaction with colleagues. Snell (2006) holds that in a true onboarding process, co-workers and supervisors are the most important components in the new-hire's life. The responses from the new-hires in the study confirm the importance of such interactions with managers and colleagues.

- **Benefits of the onboarding programme**

Regarding the benefits from the programme, the respondents were required to rate each component on a 5 point Likert scale on whether or not they agree it was beneficial. The

following table represents the responses of how beneficial the programme was to them. The responses are based on item 9 on the questionnaire. Five intended benefits were rated.

Benefit	Number Of responses	%	Perceived benefit rating				
			1.Strongly disagree	2.Disagree	3.Neutral	4.Agree	5.Strongly Agree
I understand what is required of me in my job	21	100	0	0	12	8	1
I understand policies on the use of university computing facilities	21	100	1	0	14	5	1
I was able to identify my IT training needs	21	91	0	8	8	2	3
I feel at home within my library environment	21	100	0	1	8	9	3
I received it support to assist me for initial setup and access to IT services	21	100	0	4	7	8	2

Table 7

The component that received a rating of 5, which indicates “Strongly Agree” was that the programme made them “feel at home” within their library environment. This augurs well with the argument by Wallace (2009: 168) when she says that not only is orientation about the organization, but “it is also about the new employees.”

Table 7 that represents the responses to item 9 on the questionnaire also assisted to determine the outcomes of the onboarding programme activities listed in table 6. The question was to determine whether or not the onboarding activities they participated in have helped their understanding of their roles and expectations. Understanding the role of librarians within an academic environment includes the use of available technology to facilitate efficient processes as well as fulfilling clients’ needs. This also includes making sure that new-hires understand the norms and culture of the institution so that they become aware of where and how their contribution fits towards attainment of organizational goals.

Respondents regard the knowledge of technology, norms and culture as important to potentially increase their roles and contributions to the organization. These are the library-specific content that must be included in the onboarding programme of every new-hire irrespective of their position on the organogram.

Although the IT support that was provided for or during the training was helpful to a number of respondents, there was still a perception that it was not enough to assist in understanding the IT policies on the use of university computing; and telecommunication facilities nor identifying their IT training needs. 66% of respondents indicated to have a neutral perception when asked to rate how the onboarding programme assisted them to understand about the IT policies of the institution while the minority of respondents (14%) indicated that they learnt in some measure and were able to identifying their IT needs to match up with the IT culture of the organization.

For some the inability to identify their IT needs was blamed on the fact that the onboarding programme did not include knowledge testing to see how they measured up to the standards of their new workplace. This can be attributed to the short duration of the programme as well as unstructured implementation.

- **The aim of the onboarding programmes and participants' experience**

The final open-ended question (item 10 on the questionnaire) enabled respondents to share specific views regarding their onboarding programmes. The question required the respondents to comment on the experience they had from the onboarding programme. Participants were asked to share their thoughts regarding how the onboarding programme had addressed its aim and objective. The question was meant to determine if the onboarding programme was effective in lessening fears and anxiety of respondents as well as helping them to settle in a job or performance.

The responses related to item 10 of the questionnaire. The respondents specifically commented about the programme helping them to lessen their fears and anxiety, but also provided a general perception about the programme as a whole. The majority of respondents agreed that more than anything else, the programme helped reduce the fear and anxiety irrespective of the length of the programme or the structure and components. To be made feel welcome by that minimal positive interaction with colleagues releases all the fear that would have otherwise lasted longer had people interaction not been experienced by respondents.

From these responses it is clear how necessary it has become for organizations to start taking seriously the onboarding programme rather than use it as a once-off activity. This is crucial in a high technology environment where new-hires need to have confidence to find their feet in using these technologies.

Some of the comments follow below.

“The programme in way addressed the purpose”

“It discarded some of my anxieties”

“The programme in a way addressed the purpose”

“Programmes they help with this fear or anxiety of course...”

“The programme was very useful and afforded me confidence”

60% of the respondents reported that they had a good experience That also made them feel at home. This experience could be mainly attributed to the presence of colleagues around them to assist them whenever they needed assistance. The following comments indicate the respondents experience of the programme:

“...help with this fear or anxiety of course”

“...i did not have much fear “

“...easy to get used to others “

“...most of the orientation I was given by my colleague”

“...I am free to ask any of my colleagues about my job functions “

“... Afforded me confidence and focus while carrying out my duties”.

“...It discarded most of my anxieties about being a "newbie",

20% had a different experience in that even though colleagues were supportive, they still preferred some kind of a buddy instead of different colleagues at different times. Twenty percent 20% had a negative feeling about the programme. This included feeling of uncertainty about themselves after almost a year on the job.

4.4 Summary of interview data

Feedback from interviews

The following table captures the responses from the seven interviewees selected for interview as a follow-up to the survey questionnaire. The aim of the follow-up interview was to find answers in more elaborate details by means of probing but without asking leading

questions. Although differently structured, the questions still carried the same meaning and addressed the same themes as the questionnaire.

Table 8 Summary of responses

Question	Summary of Responses
<p>1. Please would you briefly tell me about your experience of your onboarding programme?</p>	<p><i>Interviewee 1: "A mind numbing experience" because of its focus on dry policies and videos, sign-ups and filling out forms".</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 2: " Not so exciting but informative</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 3: We were in a group of newbies and was great to see that I was not the only one new</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 4: I felt like a school kid all over again....I was shown very basic stuff, social places, ATMs, health centre and all that.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 5: I was full of anticipation after first day hurdle.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 6: Nerve-wrecking, anxious to impress.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 7: Too much information was provided, and I was able to understand a lot of things, from how-to's to stuff not to do.</i></p>
<p>2. What were your major expectations from the onboarding programme?</p>	<p><i>Interviewee 1: A lot more interaction than listening.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 2: Some real stuff about my everyday work, not some university procedures and policies</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 3: Spending some time learning one aspect of the job before being taken to another</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 4: To be guided into my role, not that it did not happen, but it was for a short time</i></p>

	<p><i>Interviewee 5: A very formal kind of a programme with some evaluation at the end or at least after every learning area.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 6: That I would come out of it fully equipped to tackle my duties</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 7: It was supposed to calm my fears and help me get used to the environment and colleagues.</i></p>
<p>3. How would you say the programme addressed your expectations?</p>	<p><i>Interviewee 1: I could say partly, at least I know things that I did not know before</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 2: I was not entirely confident about my daily job shortly after the programme, but with time I did.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 3: Being with another new colleague helped me a lot to share my opinions with him</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 4: At least I felt at home with that one colleague who was guiding me that I could time-to-time ask for his assistance even after the programme.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 5: After several months I am still a bit unsure of myself.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 6: More than that it really opened my eyes to also take responsibility in my learning irrespective of how long the programme takes</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 7: When I thought my fears were dealt with I became under pressure to apply all the information received correctly</i></p>
<p>4. How did the programme assist you in understanding the way business is done at your institution?</p>	<p><i>Interviewee 1: The programme provided a social platform where I was able to mingle with colleagues and observe things.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 2: I would ask questions during meetings with my manager</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 3: Me and my fellow newbie discuss issues with the manager in our weekly meetings....We would compare the current situation with where we are coming</i></p>

	<p><i>from, that built a better understanding</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 4: My guide colleague became my buddy and was helpful because he had long been with the university.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 5: I relied a lot on my clients and making them happy in any way was enough for me</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 6: I started visiting other divisions within the library just to shadow someone briefly.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 7: From scheduled meetings with my manager I would ask about something that I have observed.</i></p>
<p>5. What were the most useful activities that helped you settle in?</p>	<p><i>Interviewee 1: Instruction on the use of technology, especially coming from a non-academic library</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 2: Meetings with manager, she is a good leader I think</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 3: Library tour meeting other colleagues</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 4: Socializing with an experienced colleague</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 5: Interaction with colleagues</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 6: Manager-led IT instruction</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 7: Social occasion</i></p>
<p>6. What do you think your role should be in making beneficial use of the programme?</p>	<p><i>Interviewee 1: If I had a chance I guess I should have asked them more questions about what I like to hear</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 2: After being overloaded with information it was up to me to decide what to do with it</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 3: I learn better when I discuss in a group, I did my best to talk to close colleagues</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 4: It would have been easier to have a permanent or rather a longterm buddy to bounce off any concerns and</i></p>

	<p><i>unclear instruction.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 5: it is difficult to say if you did not know beforehand the contents of the programme</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 6: I did not think that far, I just went with flow</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 7: Keep asking questions</i></p>
<p>7. Which aspects would you have liked to form part of your onboarding programme?</p>	<p><i>Interviewee 1: It is better to say what I did not like...filling out many many forms</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 2: Instead of being instructed general, a more specific job-related skills training and evaluation.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 3: Some outdoor team-building activity would have been nice just to break the ice</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 4: Strictly job-related technology training, more especially because I come from government library</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 5: A session on how to deal with academics.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 6: There is lot of academic databases that I would wish to have had more database training sessions.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 7: I can't really what, but what I know is that I just want to feel confident and be the best and not disappoint</i></p>
<p>8. Would you say that you indeed needed onboarding when you started? Would you recommend the onboarding programme for all new-hires and why?</p>	<p><i>Interviewee 1: I did, but with relevant contents.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 2: Everyone does need one, but I can recommend better implementation.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 3: Yes certainly</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 4: Everything is about technology and because it is changing rapidly, every new employee should attend</i></p>

	<p><i>onboarding to keep up.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 5: Yes, especially as you get to deal with different clients you need to know what their needs are and at what level.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 6: I did not need much from work point of view but from the view of the institution's culture, and yes it is recommended for new employees.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 7: As long as it well-planned I can recommend it.</i></p>
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4.5 Themes

- **Importance of onboarding.**

When asked about the expectation, the question conveys a message that the programme must be important and a worthwhile excursion. The second question aimed at establishing whether or not it was important to attend onboarding programme. In this study 100% of interviewees realised the importance of the onboarding programme, and although three expressed some reservation they felt it is a worthwhile programme.

- **Contents of the onboarding programme.**

While it is noted that no onboarding programmes are the same, very seldom the value of pre-hire assessment are conducted so that development needs of the new-hire are used to inform the contents of the onboarding programme. The responses support this notion, and it is evident in their admission that they did not know what their roles would be during the programme. They indicated that had they known more about their future role prior to their hire, they would have better anticipated the contents of the programme and prepared to play a role during the programme.

- **Approach to onboarding programmes**

From the responses of the interview 5 out of 7 respondents reported different approaches approach to onboarding in their institutions. More than half reported that their institutions do

not have a formalised process of implementation or monitoring or evaluating the programme's activities. Two respondents were satisfied with the programme at their institutions. Wallace (2009: 168) emphasizes that minimizing or neglecting onboarding leaves the new-hires confused with a sense that the programme is not important and neither are they.

- **Structure of the onboarding programme**

All seven (7) respondents showed some dissatisfaction in the planning of the programme. Much as they would recommend that all new employees be taken through the programme, the recommendation was that the programme should be formalised, and the roles of the new employees be thoroughly explained.

- **Aim of the onboarding programme.**

The aim of the onboarding programme is to reduce fear in the new-hires, to help them familiarise themselves with their jobs and to facilitate productivity. A well-organised onboarding programme is supposed to evoke positive emotions that may lead to heightened levels of satisfaction among new-hires.

. One respondent out of 7 indicated that a year after he or she was employed, he/she was still not sure of himself or herself. According to him or her the programme yielded negative results. This candidate thus ended with a negative perception of the onboarding programme.

4.6 Limitations of data

The respondents' profiling did not reveal much to assist the researcher make any conclusion about the respondents' perception of the programme. This is because prior knowledge was not considered to influence the outcome of the programme. Although it was of little significance, this information would have allowed the researcher to determine the level of education of respondents at the time of being hired.

A variation in the number of participants should be noted in different activities that have been listed in the questionnaire. This is due to the fact that not all the respondents participated in all the activities. Some of the activities were not rated at all even though the respondents indicated that they have participated in them. This presents a limitation to obtaining the true reflections of respondents' perceptions.

4.7 Conclusion

The findings by the researcher in this study are consistent with the literature and have provided description on the practices and models of onboarding programmes at different institutions. From these findings it can be concluded that the use of onboarding programmes cannot and should not be carried out as a once-off feature but must be taken seriously if organizations are to benefit from the new employees and vice versa.. This chapter has confirmed that newly appointed librarians find their first few months at a new environment challenging, regardless of their qualifications. These findings affirm that new librarians need guidance and support with regard to issues such as technology management, job content and expectations. If these concerns are not addressed in time, it may lead to feelings of failure and job dissatisfaction on the part of the new librarian and can lead them to start looking for positions elsewhere. Therefore a well-planned programme can minimize feelings of anxiety and can lead to fulfilled employee tenure.

5. Chapter 5 Conclusion and recommendation

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter an overview of the study is provided. The chapter also focused on providing conclusions as originated from the study and offers recommendations on additional approaches to onboarding programmes in academic libraries. The researcher the research methods, the participants in the study and the procedures used for data collection as well as data analysis. The data collection instrument was an online questionnaire; which was supplemented with semi-structured interviews. Both the questionnaire and the interview were administered to determine the perceptions of the new-hires about their experience of the onboarding programme.

Letters of permission to conduct interviews were obtained from the management of the institutions involved (page 80). The period for set for the questionnaire had to be extended to accommodate responses from participants whose institution gave late permission. The questionnaire was sent to 30 librarians from the selected institution using the online tool. A response rate of 76% was obtained. The responses were returned using the same online tool. Data from the responses from the questionnaire were presented in graphs and an analysis and discussion conducted according to identified themes.

The researcher provided an overview, based on a study of the literature, of the problem of new librarians entering the job market not fully prepared to understand and to function optimally in the technologically advanced library environment. This research also highlights the problem of new-hires in libraries finding themselves in a “swim or sink” situation in the new jobs. Challenges range from incorporating themselves in a new team, building relationships with colleagues and users, understanding the culture of the library or the university, learning how to get things done, and establishing what is really expected of them in terms of how their performance will contribute to the institution’s mission and vision (MAUT-LS Professional Issues Committee 2014: 1). This also makes it difficult to stay on one job, or even worse in the profession. It is for this and other reasons that onboarding can be used to prepare them, have them settled as part of a team and integrated in the library system to enable them to make a positive contribution to their organizations. The promise of a new employee talent to attain his or her peak productivity at an institution is determined by onboarding that he or she receives (Snell 2006:32). Thus onboarding programmes that are beneficial and effective requires effort in planning and relevant content.

5.2. Recommendations

The onboarding programmes for librarians at universities require a focus on content and structure, informed by the environment within which the employee will be working rather than content that is universal. Irrelevant content in onboarding programmes tend to create an impression that employees are not taken seriously in the organization. This is confirmed by Wallace 2009) that onboarding is about the new employee.

A well-planned and effective onboarding programme extends beyond helping new-hires calm their fears in the early days of their employment to focus on the new-hire's productive contribution to the organization. It is thus important for academic libraries and universities to create the right experience to increase productivity and retain librarians (Snell 2006:32).

For any new-hire, a new job signals a new learning curve that represents the length of time that the employee will require to achieve at least basic competencies let alone full productivity. It is thus important to recognise and appreciate the required time by individual librarians to reach their maximum potential and afford them the time appropriately. High quality onboarding programmes should also exceed a one-size-fits-all and short-term approach and provide support throughout the year or until the employee is making noticeable progress. Based on this study academic libraries that provide a generalised and once-off onboarding programme risk losing employees or retain unsatisfied employees due to lack of development.

In a high-tech environment there is a need for constantly keeping up with modern technology. Contents or activities of the onboarding programme that are ongoing could be beneficial to the employee as well as the organization. Onboarding programme cannot be a one-size-fits-all programme. However the literature on onboarding programmes indicates that there are common issues in all the forms the programmes take. They are: goals, content, timing and duration, support, and feedback.

The findings from the study about these common issues are discussed below.

Goals

The study confirms that there are common elements in the pursuit of goals in the onboarding programmes of all three universities. There is, however one deviation from the norm, and it is that there was no reported no formal evaluation. It is thus recommended that the libraries must consider evaluation of the programme to determine if the objective has been met; and also assure the participant of the programme that it was not another "transcation" that is not important.

Content

The contents of the programmes were established from the responses to the questionnaire to be similar in the onboarding programme of the selected institutions. Too much information in the programmes is a common feature at all the institutions. Respondents' perception was that content was not job-specific and implementation of the onboarding programmes was not formal. There was a general perception that "irrelevant content" coupled with insufficient ? time for onboarding programmes is not addressing issues of anxiety especially for employees who are more eager to impress their new employer. It is thus recommended that:

- Employers could be more efficient by providing useful information before appointment and prevent info overload during programme. This can be implemented by providing new-hires access to an up-to-date institution's website for more general information. This can also be implemented as soon as the new-hire accepts the job offer.
- New-hires be provided an opportunity beforehand to indicate the skills they bring into their new jobs, and also what they expect and their perceived or known training needs to be able to integrate as soon as possible

Timing and duration

According to Wallace (2009:169), orientation as a process with no universally accepted length of time. But she also warns that lengthened onboarding can make the new-hire feel like a permanent "newbie" with limited space to explore and grow. On the contrary, some library managers may see extended onboarding as support in the form of mentoring. It is advisable if both the new-hire and the manager clarify the process and duration.

Support

Supportive compassion, assistance and guidance from senior management of the library is vital for the successful onboarding of new-hires. An important finding of the study was that fewer than half of the respondents identified "social occasion with executive" as one of the activities that formed part of the onboarding process. Others were not given the chance to interact with senior management. This kind of interaction provides an opportunity for both management and employees to engage informally in a way that concerns can be discovered and plans to mitigate initiated. Management should therefore make time for informal meetings with staff and listen carefully especially to what is said as well as notice what is not spoken. New-hires also need to be acknowledged as well as guided in the right direction whenever there is a noticeable deviation in performance.

Feedback

A significant finding was that the onboarding programmes are not evaluated by both the new-hire and the managers regularly and therefore not updated or improved accordingly. Evaluation is an important component of any kind of instruction to assess how well the instruction has been carried out. Evaluation may include the employee's self-assessment, content relevance, content presentation, as well as the presenter. All these can help with the review of the whole onboarding programme to identify what worked and what did not work so that adjustments can be made.

5.3. Conclusion

Implementing a well-planned and well-managed onboarding programme not only benefits the new-hire but also provides a good investment for the institution. With the cost of recruitment escalating, onboarding can save the institutions hiring costs by retaining staff. With the view to creating a good brand for the institution, the onboarding process can communicate the goodwill of the institution towards employees. At the same time the perception and the perspective of the new-hire can facilitate relevant adaptation or the development of a different design to the programme that will address the employee's needs resulting in the enhancement of the institution's brand. Still, whichever design the programme assumes, all libraries should strive to include the common aspects discussed in the above section. If shared, each library's practice and experiences of the new-hire can be used to inform the planning and implementation of one another's onboarding programmes.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

There is a great need for onboarding programmes to be regarded as the first step, and not the only step to professional development of the new-hire. Effort and time should be dedicated to this important step. By so doing future research could focus on the following:

- A study to extend onboarding to continuous mentoring to facilitate successful succession planning in libraries. This need not be for academic libraries only but extended to other types of libraries. The researcher believes that it will also be the right direction to retain LIS professionals within the profession.

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7. ADDENDA

The survey

A study of onboarding processes as experienced by new employees in academic libraries in Tshwane

Dear Participant

Invitation to PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY

My name is Suzy Nyakale and am a student in Master of Information Technology in the Department of Information Science at the University of Pretoria. As part of the requirement for a Masters degree, I am conducting a study on The use of onboarding processes in the information environment with particular reference to academic libraries . Onboarding is also known as induction, orientation or socialization.

* Required

1. Do you consent to participate in the study ?*

- Yes
- No

2. What is your job title? (OPTIONAL)

You may choose not to answer

- Reference Librarian
- Information Librarian
- Research Librarian
- Cataloguer
- Other:

3. Which LIS qualification do you have? (OPTIONAL)

You may choose not to answer

- B.Bibl
- B.IS
- PG Dip Lis
- ND LIS
- Other:

4. Are you participating/ Have you participated in an onboarding programme at your present library?

If you have selected "no" then press "enter" to submit the form

- Yes
- No

5. How was the programme implemented?

- In phases
- Uninterrupted for a week or more

6. What was the duration of the programme?

- One to two months
- Longer than two months

7. Please tick all applicable activities involved in the programme

- Guidance to register your employee details on the IT system
- Being taken on a library tour
- Being shown how to use IT for everyday work
- Watching library video
- Being introduced to library structure and expectations explained
- Guidance on University's Information Technology e.g. telephone & internet policy
- Participated in manager-facilitated IT training sessions
- Interpersonal interaction session with colleagues
- Social occasion with line manager and library executive
- Being introduced to other university support services
- Self-guided e-learning of online information resources
- One-on-one session with line manager
- Other:

8. Please rate how useful activities have been to you as a new-hire

Example: Choose all applicable. 1 Not at all useful 2 Somewhat useful 3 useful 4 Extremely useful

8.1. Receiving guidance on registering my employee details on the IT system

1 2 3 4

-

8.2. Being taken on a library tour

1 2 3 4

8.3. Being shown how to use IT for everyday work

1 2 3 4

8.4. Watching library video

1 2 3 4

8.5. Being introduced to library structure and expectations explained

1 2 3 4

8.6. Guidance on University's Information Technology e.g. telephone & internet policy

1 2 3 4

8.7. Participated in manager-facilitated IT training sessions

1 2 3 4

8.8. Self-guided e-learning

1 2 3 4

8.9. Interpersonal interaction session with colleagues

1 2 3 4

8.10. Social occasion line manager and library executive

1 2 3 4

8.11. Being introduced to other university support services

1 2 3 4

8.12. One-on-one session with line manager

1 2 3 4

8.13a. Other (please specify)

Please continue to 8.13b to rate your specified activity.

8.12b. Other (please rate)

Please rate your specified activity in 8.13a here

1 2 3 4

9. Please rate how you benefited from the programme

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

9.1. I understand what is required of me in my job

1 2 3 4 5

9.2. I understand policies on the use of University Computing and communication facilities

1 2 3 4 5

9.3. I was able to identify my IT training needs

1 2 3 4 5

9.4. I feel "at home" within the library environment

1 2 3 4 5

9.5. I received IT support to assist me for initial setup and access to IT services

1 2 3 4 5

10. The aim of Onboarding programme is to lessen the fear or anxiety experienced by new employees regarding settling into a job or performance.

Please share your thoughts on whether or not the programme has addressed this purpose for you. Provide reasons where necessary

Ethical Clearance



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

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E-mail : Marlene.holmner@up.ac.za
Office : IT 8-13 School of Information Technology

2015-07-27

~~ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR MAKWENA NEG SUZAN NYAKALE~~

Dissertation Title: An investigation into the use of on-boarding processes in the information environment with particular reference to academic libraries

To whom it may concern:

This is to confirm that the Research Committee of the Department of Information Science approved the application by Makwena Nyakale for ethical clearance. Ms Nyakale complied with the standard requirements for ethical clearance as set out by the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT), as follows:

- She signed and submitted all the application forms required for ethical clearance;
- She submitted her data collection instruments for vetting by both the Research and Ethics Committees; and
- She implemented all corrections recommended by the above-mentioned committees.

The Research Committee of the Department of Information Science therefore requests permission for Ms Nyakale to collect the data she needs in order to complete and submit her mini-dissertation for examination. The Committee further appreciates any effort by appropriate authorities to expedite this process, and expresses its gratitude in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Dr Marlene Holmner

Dr Marlene Holmner
Academic Coordinator through EBIT
Department of Information Science
E-mail: marlene.holmner@up.ac.za

Letter requesting permission to conduct research

University of Pretoria
Merensky II Library
Lynwood road
Pretoria
0001

Prof GA Ogunbanjo
Chairperson: SMUREC
Sefako Makgatho Health University
P O Box 163
MEDUNSA
0204
04 September 2015

Dear Prof Ogunbanjo

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Suzy Nyakale and I am a registered Master's student in the Department of Information Science at the University of Pretoria. My supervisors are Ms Joan De Beer and Mr Meinhard Peters. The research I wish to conduct involves exploration of induction practices for newly-hired librarians in academic libraries.

The topic of my research is: **An investigation into the use of on-boarding processes in the information environment with particular reference to academic libraries.**

The objectives of the study are:

- (a) To explore the activities used in academic to help new academic librarians (new hires) to adjust to their new work environment and roles; as well as
- (b) To uncover their experiences during the activities.

I am hereby seeking your consent to

- approach a number of SMU's librarians employed for two years or less to participate in this project
- approach library HR division to assist in identifying potential participants.

To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached to this letter:

- (a) A copy of an ethical clearance certificate issued by the University
- (b) A copy of the research instruments which I intend using in my research

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

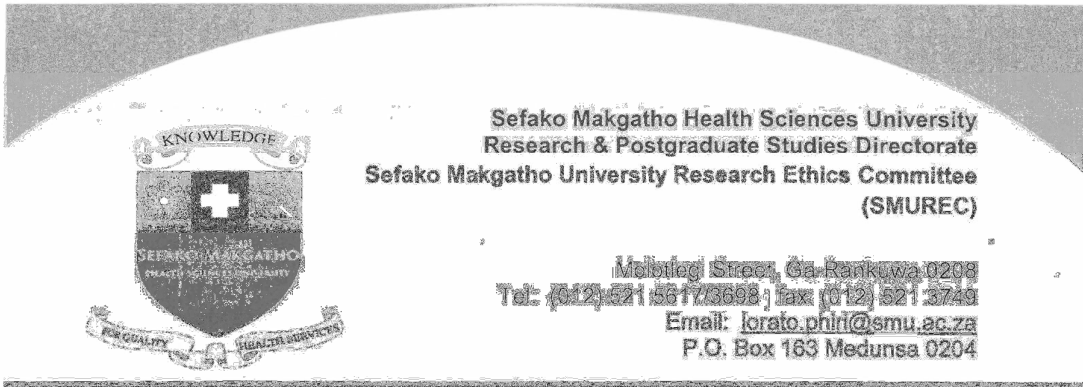
Suzy.nyakale@up.ac.za or 012 420 3877
Joanfdebeer@gmail.com or meinhard.peters@gmail.com

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a copy of the research report.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Suzy Nyakale

Permission Letter



Ms S Nyakale
University of Pretoria
Merensky II Library
Lynwood road
0007

Dear Ms Nyakale

RE: MS S NYAKALE- REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

SMUREC NOTED a letter dated 04 September 2015 requesting permission to conduct research study at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University

Study Title: An investigation into the use of on-boarding processes in the information environment with particular reference to academic libraries.

Researcher: Ms MNS Nyakale
University: University of Pretoria
Faculty of Engineering,
Soft Robotics and Information Technology
School of Information Technology
Supervisor: Ms. J F de Beer and M. M. P. P. P.
Approval date: 27 July 2015

SMUREC APPROVED and GRANTED the researcher permission to conduct the above mentioned study at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University

Yours Sincerely,


PROF GA OGUNBANJO
CHAIRPERSON SMUREC



SEFAKO MAKGATHO
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY
SMU Research Ethics Committee
Chairperson

Date: 10/09/2015

10 September 2015

Informed Consent

Informed consent form (Form for research subject's permission)

(Must be signed by each research subject, and must be kept on record by the researcher)

- 1 Title of research project:
- 2 I LINDY NTOBO hereby voluntarily grant my permission for participation in the project as explained to me by MAKWENA NEO SUZAN, NYAKALE
- 3 The nature, objective, possible safety and health implications have been explained to me and I understand them.
- 4 I understand my right to choose whether to participate in the project and that the information furnished will be handled confidentially. I am aware that the results of the investigation may be used for the purposes of publication.
- 6 Upon signature of this form, you will be provided with a copy.

Signed: Dobo Date: 17/07/15

Witness: ms. raolane Date: 17/07/15

Researcher: [Signature] Date: 17/07/15

Interview questions

1. Please would you briefly tell me about your experience of your onboarding programme?
2. What were your major expectations from the onboarding programme?
3. How would you say the programme addressed your expectations?
4. How did the programme assist you in understanding the way business is done at your institution
5. What were the most useful activities that helped you settle in?
6. What do you think your role should be in making beneficial use of the programme?
7. Which aspects would you have liked to form part of your onboarding programme?
8. Would you say that you indeed needed onboarding when you started? Would you recommend the onboarding programme for all new-hires and why?