



# University of Fort Hare

*Together in Excellence*

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## DECLARATION

I, Sheron Mabusa-Ndlovu, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that it has not been submitted and will not be submitted to any other university for the awarding of a similar degree or any other degree.

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Signature

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Date

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My heartfelt thanks, first of all, go to God Almighty, as this has not been an easy road, but through Him I overcame. He is Jehovah Ebenezer, who has taken me this far.

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I would also like to acknowledge my husband, Amukela, and my son, Nqaba Olothando, for being my pillars of strength while I conducted my research.

God bless you all.

## **DEDICATION**

To my son, Nqaba Olothando, may you take the pace for your studies from this one which I have set for you. To my husband, Amukela, this is for us as a family, as my success is your success.

## ABSTRACT

This study took the form of an evaluative study of the effectiveness of public libraries as a means of providing information to school children, and was conducted at the Queenstown Public Library in the province of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. The research endeavoured to evaluate the effectiveness of public libraries in the role which they play to provide information to school children, despite the widespread belief that the role of libraries is now being replaced by Information and Communication Technologies, or ICTs. This study is also significant for the factors which contribute towards school children being prevented from receiving the full range of benefits which libraries have to offer and the recommendations which it makes to improve the effectiveness of the role played by libraries in this respect. The study could also be of benefit to the staff of libraries, as it could serve to inform them with respect to what needs to be done in order to improve the ways in which libraries make information available to school children. In this respect the research could also provide valuable insights into the strategies which need to be developed and adopted in order to make public libraries more effective providers of various types and forms of information to school children. It is to be hoped that the study will also make a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge concerning public libraries as a means of providing information to school children. It is the fervent wish of this researcher to make a credible and articulate case for the great value which public libraries have for school children, despite the fact that general perceptions no longer accord libraries the value which they were once commonly held to possess. The objectives of the study were:

- To determine the needs of school children with respect to information.
- To determine the extent to which public libraries in the province of the Eastern Cape in South Africa are effective providers of information to school children.

- To establish the uses to which school children put the information which they seek.
- To evaluate the relevance of the information which is available in public libraries to school children and to suggest how public libraries in the Eastern Cape may become more effective providers of relevant information to school children.

The research method employed to collect data for this study took the form of a survey. Questionnaires were distributed and interviews and observations were also used to collect data. The principal findings generated the overall conclusion that although public libraries play an important role in providing information to school children, a number of challenges and problems need to be overcome to enable them to become highly effective providers of information to this very important sector of the population. The recommendations which are given on the basis of the conclusions of the study are that libraries need to improve their existing ICT equipment and also to purchase new ICT equipment for school children to use and to appoint librarians who are wholly dedicated to attending to the needs of school children. In addition, it is recommended that the municipalities and the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation should hold frequent meetings in order to attend to existing shortcomings on the part of the libraries within a short space of time, as they are the main units or departments responsible for the public libraries. It is also recommended that reading clubs for school children should be formed to enable them to improve their reading skills and their comprehension of written material. Apart from providing children with an opportunity to improve their reading capabilities, an initiative of this sort would also enable them to develop the ability to make effective use of the library, which would stimulate their interest in a range of subjects, make them more receptive to what they are taught at school and prepare them well for tertiary education.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AAP	Association of American Publishers
ALA	American Library Association
ALSC	Association for Library Services to Children
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CST	Consumer Satisfaction Theory
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
DOE	Department Of Education
DSRAC	Department of Sports Recreation, Arts and Culture
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IFA	Information for All
IFLA	International Federation of Library Association
IT	Information Technology
KPA	Key Performance Areas
KPMG	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
LIASA	Library and Information Association South Africa
NCLIS	National Commission on Libraries and Information Charter
NCLIS	National Council of Library and Information Science
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NLSA	National Library of South Africa
PAIA	Public Access Information Act
PIRLS	Progress in Reading Literacy Study

RLRDP	Rural Libraries Resource Development Programme
SPSS	Statistical Packages for Social Science
SQ	Service Quality
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
ZIMLA	Zimbabwe Library Association

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

This is an evaluative study of the effectiveness of public libraries as a means of providing information to school children, conducted at the Queenstown Public Library in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The advent of information and communication technologies has raised numerous questions regarding the relevance of the traditional libraries and their effectiveness in providing information to users. According to a study conducted by Hart (2004) in the Western Cape Province, school children still make great use of public libraries in South Africa. The major finding of this study was that children rely on public libraries to research and gather information for their school projects, and there are very few other sources which they may consult in the absence of the information which they seek in public libraries.

A public library is an organisation which is established, supported and funded by a community, either through local, regional or national government, or through some other form of community organisation, to provide access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services, on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials are provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospitals or prison (UNESCO) United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1994).

Libraries fall into various different categories, namely, academic and research libraries, school libraries, special libraries, private and individual libraries and public libraries. According to Newman (2011), a public library is created with the intention of providing free public access to reading material, with the altruistic goal of educational enlightenment and improving the welfare

of the people. The Colorado law library (2003) in the United States of America defines a “Public library” as an administrative entity which is:

(I) Operated and maintained for the free use of members of the public residing within its legal service area;

(II) Operated and maintained in whole, or in part, with money derived from local taxation; and

(III) Open to the public for a certain minimum number of hours per week.

In an environment in which there is a scarcity of sources of information in the form of books and other printed materials, a public library is one of the few institutions which facilitates reasonable access to information within the context of restricted availability. Libraries have the potential to obtain access to materials containing information from other libraries, through inter-library loans and from the rest of the world, through consortiums and collaborations. In addition, in an environment in which finances are limited, it is incumbent upon libraries to be ingenious in their endeavour to bring as much information to the communities which make use of them as possible. Libraries have trained personnel to retrieve information and to package it to make it easily accessible for users. Libraries also have the infrastructure needed to acquire process and facilitate access to information (Raju, 2010). Public libraries are places where young people are able to find out about opportunities, careers and even risks, and the information literacy which is developed as a specialised type of learning to obtain information is a vital skill in the global knowledge economy (Fitch and Warner, 1998).

Public libraries have an educational role to play, as they provide access to information and knowledge. According to Usherwood and Toyne (2000), public libraries also play the role of inculcating a life-long habit of learning in the citizens of developing countries. The lifelong learning habit may be defined as the ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge, either for personal or for professional reasons (Commission of the European Communities, 2006).

It has been proclaimed that traditional libraries are being phased out by the digital revolution (Akeroyd, 1991; Potella 2001). Yet, the power of libraries is still alive, and it has become even more potent in the information age. This priceless power efficiently facilitates the mobilisation of the accumulated sum of the production of the human intellect for the purpose of human progress. In this power reside the springs of literacy and knowledge, the seeds of democracy and the fuel of productivity, making the library an irreplaceable catalyst for human progress.

McClure *et al.* (2001) maintain that the role of public libraries in education and research cannot be over-emphasised, as libraries contribute significantly to the education process. They go on to explain that members of communities introduce their children to the library to enable them to develop the habit of reading and even to use the library for the purpose of developing their professional networks.

According to Neuman (2000), public libraries are well-positioned to expose children to great quantities of printed material and create meaningful opportunities for developing language during the crucial pre-school and elementary school years.

School children who use the library always differ significantly from those who do not, as their reading ability and powers of comprehension will inevitably be far greater as a result of their exposure to the library. The American Library Association or ALA (2000) explains that public libraries are helping to close the “book gap” by providing children of all backgrounds access to high-quality reading materials and rich language experiences. Librarians work to ensure that as many children as possible, regardless of their socio-economic status, “achieve their full potential as readers.”

Libraries make an important contribution to improving reading literacy; when children learn to love reading, they automatically begin to develop the degree of literacy needed for academic work

later in life. The South African education curriculum depends upon the resources of public libraries to enable school children to complete projects and portfolios. Koneru (2008:2) explains that the role of public libraries is one of “information gateways for uninterrupted and equitable access to information and knowledge resources just-in-time, fostering the ‘Right to Information’; ‘Information for All (IFA)’; ‘Information for Development’, which are vital for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in an accelerated pace”. Olden (2005) quotes Julius Nyerere, the President of Tanzania from 1961 to 1984, as maintaining that the development of a country is based on a sound educational system and that public libraries play a pivotal role in such an educational system. Nyerere was extremely perturbed by the shortcomings of public libraries in his country as a means of reaching out to the poor and illiterate (Olden, 2005).

In order for South Africa’s public library systems to thrive, interventions from relevant stakeholders, particularly the government and its agencies, are needed. The library and information science sector constitutes a significant agency for making a contribution to the promotion of democracy in South Africa. Du Preez (1998:12) points out that “public libraries have a crucial role to play in the development of a healthy democratic society, in which the quality of life of all individuals is enhanced to the highest possible level. To achieve this, there has to be rendering of appropriate and quality public library services, providing library material for meaningful lifelong learning, cultural development, literacy promotion and recreation” (Du Preez, 1998).

Learners rely on public libraries to obtain information. It needs to be pointed out that, owing to poor living conditions, including an insufficient supply of electricity and insufficient space at home, the public library often becomes the only space in which economically disadvantaged learners are able to do their schoolwork. For these learners, public libraries have, up till now, played a composite role of school, home and provider of relevant information for research

projects. The strain on the resources of public libraries is exacerbated by the perennial problem of communication between schools and public libraries. Schools do not inform the local library of school projects in good time and learners are usually not familiar with how to make effective use of the library. This perceived lack of concern on the part of schools and educators makes the working conditions of librarians extremely stressful (Sturges and Neil, 1998). Educators appear not to recognise the stresses which they place on the resources of libraries or the feelings of stress and irritation experienced by librarians as a result of their lack of foresight. Public libraries do not receive sufficient assistance from the government to support a dramatically increased use of the libraries. This assessment is supported by the Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeleror KPMG report for the Department of Arts and Culture (2007), which maintained that the library services were in need of funding as a result of having been neglected. Hart (2004) suggests that libraries need to embrace their role in the educational process to the extent that there is a shift from how the school curriculum affects libraries to how libraries affect the school curriculum. An added benefit to the increased time that learners spend in the library is the use which they make of reading materials in their indigenous languages. A possible domino effect resulting from this could be an increased demand for reading materials in indigenous languages, which would have positive consequences for all of the relevant parties.

Despite the continued services to children provided by the libraries, many children continue to have very little access to them. Kupetz, (1993) explains that pre-reading activities are not accessible to children whose parents cannot bring them to libraries in the first place. As the majority of children below the age of five years live in households in which both parents work, access to the public library is limited for most children, because there is no-one to take them there. Whenever it has been possible, public libraries have designed outreach programmes, in order to reach pre-schoolers who might not otherwise have the opportunity to go to a library.

## **1.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The first public library in South Africa came into existence in 1818 and was the brainchild of Lord Charles Somerset, an early governor of the Cape Colony. Proceeds from the wine trade were used to fund the establishing of a public library. The public library was to lay a foundation and provide knowledge to the youth and it has been considered as “the first blessings of life” .The public library was later called the South African Library (Coates, 2012). The second public library was established in 1887 in Pretoria, which would later become the National Library of South Africa (Sebe, 2009).

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE QUEENSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The Queenstown public Library was established in 1928 after the death of William Bisset-Berry, who had allocated some funds, in his will, to build a public library in Queenstown. This bequest resulted in the foundation of the Queenstown Public Library, which is located in the Chris Hani District of Queenstown in the province of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. The Queenstown Public Library was chosen for this case study owing to its central location and the fact that it is the largest public library in Queenstown, in terms of the number of people whom it serves and the size of the building itself. It serves nearby areas such as Lady Frere, Ndlovukazi, Lesington and other local rural areas. A number of schools organise tours to the library to enable students to obtain career guidance. The library serves more than twenty different schools and the general public. Approximately one hundred and fifty school children, ranging from grades 1 to 12, make use of the services which the library offers, on a daily basis.

The library has a collection of sixty thousand books for adults and children. At present 7 professional librarians are employed, including a senior librarian, 4 permanent library assistants

and 2 contract library assistants. Each has a degree in library and information science. The Queenstown Public Library has 4 branches, namely, the Ezibeleni, Whittlesea, Ashley Wyngaard and Mlungisi public libraries. The library provides information in the form of hard copies and soft copies, which, in the latter case, are usually limited to downloaded information from the Internet. The problems and challenges faced by the library include a shortage of professionally trained staff and a lack of the on-the-job-training needed to bring librarians up- to -date with respect to current trends and practices in library services. Most of the books containing information found in the library are old and outdated. The books in the collection meet few of the basic needs of school children and most of the information which they require is usually downloaded from the Internet. This information is obtained from various different online sources, but the library does not have subscriptions to academic online databases.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Public libraries make a significant contribution to education in South Africa, as they provide school children and other users with the information which they seek. Although they play a vital role in providing educational information to school children, it would appear that those who are tasked with funding public libraries are not aware of the need to upgrade the collections of the libraries constantly, in order to keep pace with changes in school syllabuses and in the wider world. As public libraries have a responsibility to provide users with relevant and current forms of the information which they require, the researcher became interested in determining the extent to which school children are satisfied with the information which is made available to them at the Queenstown public library. To the researcher there appeared to be a possibility that the staff or personnel of the library may perceive that the services which the library renders to school children at present are sufficiently excellent for improvements and upgrades of any sort to be required. There are also challenges affecting the ability of public libraries to provide information

services effectively to school children. The school library system is not functioning in almost all previously disadvantaged schools. Therefore school children are dependent on public library. It was against this background that the researcher undertook to conduct this research, in order to evaluate whether the school children feel satisfied with the services which they receive from the library and also to discover the precise nature of the information which they require, should the need for the library to improve its services to school children become apparent, as a result of conducting this study. In addition, should a need for improvement become apparent, the extent to which improvements need to be made would also need to be established.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- What are the information needs of school children with respect to information?
- How effectively are public libraries providing school children with the information which they require?
- What attracts school children to public libraries in their pursuit of information?
- How relevant is the information which is available at public libraries to the needs of school children?

#### **1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of public libraries as a means of providing information to school children. The objectives were:

- To determine the nature of the information required by school children.
- To determine the extent to which public libraries in South Africa are effectively providing information services to school children.
- To establish what attracts school children to public libraries in their pursuit of information.

- To examine the relevance of the information which is available in public libraries to address the needs of school children and to suggest how public libraries in South Africa may improve the services which they provide to these children.

## **1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

With the advent of the digital revolution, it became tempting to conclude that the role of public libraries could either be ignored or else relegated to secondary importance and significance, yet they still have a vital role to play, and this fact provides this study with its significance. The study seeks to evaluate the potential importance of the effectiveness of public libraries as the providers of information to school children. It is the purpose of the researcher to illustrate, comprehensively, the importance of public libraries for school children, despite the common perception that the importance and significance of the role played by libraries may have diminished. Among the many perennially relevant roles which the public library plays are the providing of information to school children, providing recreation in the form of holiday programmes for school children and developing the literacy of children through programmes such as the formation of reading clubs and holding spelling bee competitions. Although the study is also significant for the light which it will cast on the need to update and upgrade the information which is available from public libraries, this specific issue could serve as a point of departure for future studies. This study should also help the staff of public libraries to become aware of the concerns and needs of school children with respect to public libraries. From the broadest perspective, academics, school children, parents and the staff of public libraries all stand to benefit from this study, as it should provide a sufficiently comprehensive overview of the present state of public libraries, to enable appropriate strategies to be devised to upgrade and safeguard this invaluable public resource. However, the principal significance of the study should be the contribution which it has to make to the existing body of knowledge concerning public libraries as key providers of information to school children.

## **1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

This dissertation is comprised of 5 chapters, namely:

**Chapter 1:** This chapter provides the background to the study and the institution at which the study was conducted, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the aim and objectives of the study and its significance.

**Chapter 2:** The literature review and theoretical framework. This chapter entails an extensive discussion of the literature relevant to the research topic, reviews the literature concerning previous studies and research conducted by other researchers in the same area of research and presents the theoretical framework, in terms of which the effectiveness of public libraries with respect to the topic of this research may be evaluated.

**Chapter 3:** Research Methodology

This chapter explains the research methods which were employed, the research design, in this case, a case study, the reliability and the validity of the research instruments, the methods which were used to collect data and the ethical considerations which were respected during the conducting of this study.

**Chapter 4:** Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data. The data consists of the responses which were obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews and will be presented in the form of tables and charts. The findings will also be discussed.

**Chapter 5:** Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions which were drawn from the findings of the study, makes recommendations on the basis of the conclusions, summarises the findings, conclusions and recommendations and suggests possible future studies in this area of research.

## **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 1 introduced the topic of research, which concerns the effectiveness of public libraries as a means of providing information to school children, which was investigated by employing a case study which focused on the Queenstown Public Library. A brief history of public libraries in South Africa and Queenstown Public Library was presented and the role of public libraries, in general, was discussed. The research problem was stated, followed by the research questions which the researcher has posed in order to conduct this study. The aim and the objectives of the study were articulated and they are summarised as follows:

The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of public libraries as a means of providing information to school children.

The objectives of the study are to determine the nature of the information required by school children, to determine the extent to which public libraries in South Africa are an effective means of providing information and related services to school children, to establish what attracts school children to public libraries in their pursuit of information, to examine the relevance of the information available in public libraries to the needs of school children and to suggest how public libraries in South Africa may improve their ability to provide school children with the information which they require. The significance of the study was explained in this chapter, as was the role of the public library as a key provider of information to school children, which is one of the chief reasons for public libraries continuing to constitute a vital public asset. The following chapter will be devoted to a review of the literature which is relevant to the research topic and an examination of the theoretical framework which underpins the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reviews the literature related to the topic of the effectiveness of public libraries as a means of providing information to school children. The main purpose of reviewing literature is to enable researchers to gain an understanding of the research which has been conducted within a specific domain and to identify gaps in the existing literature which the proposed study intends to fill. According to Reid et al. (2013), a literature review is a select analysis of existing research which is relevant to a researcher's research topic, which provides the context of and the justification for conducting the new study. Hofstee (2006:91) defines a literature review as being "comprehensive and critical and it contextualises all to the current research study, which provides the reader with a theory base and a survey of published works that pertains to one's investigation and an analysis of that work." It is a factual and critical overview of the research which has preceded a proposed study. In this case, the literature review is based on the sub- themes of the objectives of the study, namely, the role of public libraries, the challenges faced by public libraries, the effectiveness of public libraries, the role which public libraries play in the lives of school children, the services which public libraries render to school children, public libraries and lifelong learning, public libraries in Africa, public libraries in South Africa, South African schools, the competencies of librarians, access to information, information infrastructure and the Service Quality theoretical framework.

## **2.1 THE ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

A public library is an organisation which is established, supported and funded by a community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organisation, to provide access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination, through a range of resources and services on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials are provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospitals or prison (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 1994).

Libraries have been viewed as knowledge centres, as they provide learning spaces. They are also information centres and they are central hubs for people of different classes, races, ethnic groups and genders in a society (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2003).

Kabamba (2008) explains that the particular services offered by many public libraries in African countries limit the ability of those libraries to realise the promises of their manifesto. Kabamba goes on to maintain that the libraries focus on providing a place for children to learn and grow, and that they do not provide sufficient services for adults. From the researcher's point of view, this assessment suggests that public libraries, to a certain extent, are more concerned with the well-being and mental development of children than they are with the needs of adults. Aboyade (1984) provides a comprehensive definition of the role played by public libraries in communities in the following statement, which incorporates much of the essence of the UNESCO manifesto of 1994: "The public library is established to provide materials, which communicate experience and ideas from one person to another and make them easily and freely available to all people. The public

library is a local centre of information that makes all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. It is established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organizations. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of imagination through a range of resources and services. It is equally available to all members of the community, regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, employment status and educational attainment.

People in all walks of life make use of the resources, facilities and services provided by public libraries. Users of public libraries include pupils, students, teachers, scholars, scientists, business executives, government officials and even young people who have dropped out of school. Large numbers of people turn to public libraries to satisfy their desire for knowledge or to obtain materials for various leisure-time activities. In order to provide the types of information sought by their users, libraries may acquire, organise and make available resources of relevant information, backed by appropriate facilities and delivered through the best means known to them, which could be manual or through Information and Communication Technologies or ICTs (Iwhiwhu and Okorududu 2012:2). It needs to be stressed, at this juncture, that for any public library to perform adequately and to meet the needs of modern users of libraries, information and communication technologies need to be incorporated into its functioning. In a study conducted by Ojo and Akande (2005), it was found that university students use internet sources and e-mail communication more than any other sources of information. Other electronic information resources of which significant use is made by students included CD-ROMs and e- Journals. Omekwu (2001) maintains that the success of online searching depends on the ability of the user or the information scientist to perform searches in the best possible way. A lack of computer and IT skills, the unnecessary expenditure of time, limited access to computer terminals and excessive amounts of information

requiring to be retrieved through the use of electronic resources were identified as factors hindering the ability of public libraries in providing information services effectively to school children (Ojo & Akande, 2005).

From the researcher's own observations it would appear that most public libraries in the region, including the Queenstown Public Library, are not making sufficient use of information and communication technologies and, as a result, school children do not usually have access to the vast amount of information which is available online.

## **2.2 CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE ABILITY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION SERVICES EFFECTIVELY TO SCHOOL CHILDREN**

The problems and challenges faced by public libraries severely hinder their ability to serve school children and other users adequately. As has already been noted, Hart (2004) has pointed out that the strain on public libraries is being exacerbated by the perennial problem concerning the lack of communication between schools and public libraries, as schools do not inform the local libraries of school projects in good time and learners are not familiar with how to make effective use of the library. The inevitable result is that excessive strain is placed on the resources of these libraries and their staff members are also subjected to severe stress, which is in turn further exacerbated by a lack of any additional assistance from the government to support the dramatically increased usage of the library's resources.

Hart's assessment has a great deal of validity, as there are often squabbles between the various municipalities and the government over the ownership of some of the public libraries and, as a result, the public libraries concerned are confronted with the predicament in which they do not receive any material from their municipalities or from the national government. Educators tend not

to appreciate the need to provide their public libraries with information concerning the topics covered in their syllabuses, in advance. As they do not liaise with their local libraries, learners tend to come to the library to try to research topics of which their understanding is generally poor, leaving it for the librarians to help them to interpret their assignments (Hart and Nassimbeni, 2013). It is the considered opinion of the researcher that the role of libraries is to have a repository of information which is readily available for school children to use and that the tendency of educators to arrive at the library and to request information concerning particular specialised topics, without any prior warning, places librarians under unnecessary pressure. Educators appear to be oblivious of the effects of the severe budgetary constraints which are imposed on public libraries and tend to believe that libraries are able to expand their collections at will, in order to meet the needs of everyone.

The newsletter of the National Library of South Africa or NLSA (2014) explains that although libraries are institutions which aim to provide access to information by offering services, resources and information to users, in order to transform the role of libraries to meet the requirements of the whole population of South Africa, this endeavour is being hindered by a lack of funds, inadequate services and facilities and staff who are poorly trained in management and the use of technologies. According to the information supplied by the Eastern Cape Province to the NLSA newsletter of 2014, 10 container and modular libraries had been rolled out in the province that year. This is a problematic approach to the need to provide more libraries, because these are not permanent structures and they are vulnerable to severe weather conditions, resulting in their becoming either dilapidated or destroyed, within a relatively short period. Although these structures may help to provide a short-term solution, in the long run they will inevitably prove to be costly. In some cases, community halls have been converted into libraries, indicating the great shortages of infrastructure for libraries in South Africa.

Another serious problem which has been encountered concerns the fact that the information which is at present being made available is not valued by people in some communities, as public libraries are frequently burned down. Between 2009 and 2014, at least fifteen libraries were destroyed in incidents of civil unrest. An anonymous young protester who destroyed the Sakhile community library in 2009 was heard saying “We don’t need education, we don’t need anything. We just need to show them how angry we are. If we do not like what we hear from them, then they will really see what we can do. Then we will really burn”.

Onsolen (2013) explained that it had cost R2,5 million to re-establish a particular library which had been destroyed and that the Gugulethu library in Khutsong had suffered damage amounting to an estimated R8 million in 2005. He also explained that not every book can be replaced when it is destroyed and that a replacement library cannot even be guaranteed. It hardly needs to be added that instances of vandalism of this sort severely undermine attempts to provide effective information services. Apart from the burning of public libraries, the threats posed by other types of vandalism and break-ins are always present. As has been suggested, the performance of libraries has been hindered by a lack of infrastructure. The fact that public libraries are not built in accordance with the needs of school children, with respect to information, is particularly evident when it is noted that their ground plans do not show computer cubicles, which would indicate that the libraries have no intention of obtaining the computers which are needed to enable school children to research information for their school projects and other academic pursuits. This contention is supported by Hart (2011) when she explains that not all of the 9 provinces of South Africa support schools with libraries and that the existing services have inadequate resources, which include computers, as they are classified as information infrastructure. Conversely, Hart

(2011) believes that South Africa has a fairly well-established infrastructure with respect to libraries, in comparison with that of other developing countries.

A lack of adequate finance also threatens the library services. Danuta (1996) maintains that finance is a vital resource for the effective functioning of organisations, as without adequate finance nothing meaningful may be achieved. It needs to be borne in mind from the outset that computerising library operations is an extremely costly and time-consuming process, which requires enormous financial investment to fund and keep them running Ikem and Ajala (2000) have pointed out that the problem of funding is the most significant factor constraining the introduction of ICT in libraries and that the problem concerns more than the mere acquisition of hardware and software, as costly updating, upgrading and maintenance are crucial for sustaining it.

A crucial point, not covered by Ikem and Ajala (2000), is the fact that the finances allocated for the running of the public libraries are not given directly to the libraries and neither are they at their disposal. As a result, some of the finances allocated to public libraries are used by municipalities for purposes which are not related to the public libraries, thereby exacerbating the financial problems experienced by the libraries. The public libraries are run either by the local government or by a government department, such as the Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture. The libraries are not run as individual organisations and some of the people who are tasked with making financial decisions with respect to the libraries do not have in-depth knowledge of how the libraries operate and often make ill-informed decisions as a result.

There is a pressing need for the personnel structure of libraries to include IT technicians. Many public libraries which have computers are plagued by not having IT technicians to repair and

service them, and as a result, those computers which would have been used to help school children to search for information are scrapped, years before they would normally become obsolete. According to Chapter 5 of the sixth draft of *The Library and Information Science Transformation Charter*, a vision document published by the National Council of Library and Information Services or NCLIS at the Department of Arts & Culture (2009), fewer than 10% of the schools in South Africa have functioning libraries. The few schools which do have them are the historically advantaged schools in the more affluent suburbs of the cities, which are able to supplement their government budgets by levying additional fees from their largely middle-class parent bodies to pay for luxuries such as computers.

Of additional concern is the fact that there is no national school library policy. The Department of Basic Education has recently issued a new document titled *School Library Guidelines* (2012). The precise import of the guidelines is not clear, but the department has been reported to be wary of committing to any formal policy without the funding required to implement it. The lack of a unit in the national education department to take on a leadership role and the weak capacity on the part of the of the provincial education departments, with respect to the support given to school libraries, also serve to undermine the effectiveness of the information services provided by public libraries to school children. Anderson (2005) explains that “Schedule 5 of the 1996 constitution demarcated ‘libraries other than national libraries’ as areas of exclusive provincial competence, but no funding for this function was granted to the provinces and as a result, when the Local Government Municipal Structures Act, No. 77 was passed in 1998, it excluded libraries from the responsibilities of municipalities. Usually, when a function of government is shifted from one sphere to another, as happened here, the money for the function is expected to move from the first sphere, in this case the municipal government, to the new sphere, in this case the provincial government. However, there is, understandably, no mechanism for shifting revenue from a

municipality to a province. The constitution does allow provinces to assign functions to municipalities, but the provinces must then ensure that the necessary budget is available for this.”

The lack of a clearly articulated, laid down policy with respect to public and school libraries undoubtedly serves to hinder the providing of information to school children. It is difficult to implement any strategy for which there is no documented policy, as the policy provides the relevant guidelines required to implement it effectively. The dearth of school libraries confers on public libraries the dubious status of constituting the only source of information available to most of South Africa’s school children. According to the South African Yearbook (2011/2012), 7,23% of schools in South Africa have functioning libraries, leaving a huge percentage without this very necessary educational facility and indicating a drop compared with the 10% of schools recorded as having functioning libraries in 2009.

According to Reagon (2005), South African public libraries face many additional challenges, such as the difficulties associated with acquiring reading materials in local languages and the poor reading culture within the country. In addition, the libraries serve a diverse group of users and are required to provide services to communities which have access to either very little or no infrastructure and basic services and facilities. Reagon identifies another challenge arising from the fact that librarians are not skilled in fundraising and stresses that they need to become skilled at raising and lobbying for funds for rural and other under-resourced communities. Although this is a valid point, as fundraising does not constitute a component of the training which librarians receive, this researcher believes that fundraising does not fall within the ambit of the role played by librarians and that, consequently, they should not be obliged to disrupt their work in the libraries by being required to engage in fundraising activities. It is the moral responsibility of the relevant government and municipal departments to ensure that school children and adult citizens

have free access to information, which entails providing adequate funding to the libraries in order to preclude the possibility of librarians being asked to act as fundraisers.

### **2.3 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES AS MEANS OF PROVIDING INFORMATION TO SCHOOL CHILDREN**

A public library exists for the benefit of those who make use of it. In this context, the satisfaction of the users refers to the extent to which they feel satisfied with the services which a public library provides, in terms of the information which they desire and the facilities and services which they expect to be provided by the public library. In recent times evaluating the satisfaction of users of public libraries, with respect to the available resources of information and the facilities and services which are provided, has become an important concern for library and information science practitioners and an integral component of the duties which they perform. This stems from the ultimate aim of all libraries, as service-oriented organisations, to satisfy the needs of their clients (Ogunsola, 2004). It needs to be emphasised that the effectiveness of public libraries can be measured in terms of identifiable key performance areas. If a member of the personnel of a library has performed his or her duty according to the Key Performance Area or KPA criteria, effectiveness has been achieved, although Ogunsola (2004) seems not to have acknowledged this point. .

The International Federation of Library Association or IFLA (2001) set the minimum standards for information resources, facilities and services to be provided by public libraries. The information resources include fiction books, non-fiction books, textbooks, newspapers and magazines, pictures and posters, records and tapes, audio and video material, toys, CD-ROM and Braille materials. Facilities to be provided include reading tables which are adequate for the purposes of users of library, chairs, bookshelves, library space, fans, lighting, ventilation,

flooring, a restaurant, a clearly marked exit point, notice boards and bulletin boards, photocopiers, parking space for vehicles, computers, carrels, periodical racks, circulation desks and other facilities which enable users to read in comfort (IFLA, 2001). The satisfaction of users with the information resources, facilities and services provided by libraries, whether public or academic, has become a focal concern for present day librarianship and information science (Saliu, 2002). The services include community information services, recreational activities, reference services, storytelling, reading competitions, career information, customer care, adult literacy education, mobile library services, services to prisoners, online internet searching, among others (IFLA, 2001). Awana (2007) explains that the friendly disposition of staff and their willingness to assist users to obtain the materials which they require from within the library, or through inter-library loans, encourages users to patronise the library and, most importantly, increases the satisfaction of users with the services which the library provides.

## **2.4 THE ROLE WHICH PUBLIC LIBRARIES PLAY IN THE LIVES OF SCHOOL**

### **CHILDREN**

Public libraries have vital roles to play in the dissemination of information at the most fundamental levels of society. The importance of a public library in society today is being underscored by a number of convergent trends, of which one of the most significant may be the dramatic increase in school enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Consequently, public libraries need to become proactive, vibrant and abreast of the latest developments in the dissemination of information in order to maintain relevance and to keep up with the needs and expectations of users, making it a vital concern for a public library to be able to provide the correct materials, in terms of the specific information which its users require (Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu, 2012).

In a study conducted by Anunobi (2003), it was found that librarians in libraries have yet to play a significant role in assisting students. The study found that the presence of school librarians, who ostensibly teach students how to make good use of the library in secondary schools, has not produced any significant results, which is reflected in the inability of students to use catalogues and indexes in order to obtain access to materials from the library.

Unomah (1986) maintains that the attitudes exhibited by some members of the staffs of libraries are characterised by hostility, rudeness and a lazy approach to requests or enquiries, which often discourage potential users of the library. In a survey of the use made by students of academic libraries in Nigeria, Unomah (1986) found that more often than not, the attitudes of some of the junior staff towards users tended to discourage students from making use of the services offered by the library. The negative attitudes of some librarians in public libraries towards the use of information technology in library operations is not encouraging at present, highlighting an urgent need for library staff to receive training in order to be able to use the technology effectively.

Ifidon and Okoli (2002) maintain that the general demeanour of library staff is a significant factor which inhibits the effective rendering of the services offered by libraries. They go on to explain that as most of the staff had undergone the traditional form of training, some of them simply refused to adjust to contemporary realities and requirements in their desire for the status quo to remain unchanged, which inevitably has negative consequences for the ability of an institution to fulfil its mandate. From the available literature, it would appear that school libraries do very little to assist school children, obliging them to resort to using the public library. Most schools do not have school libraries, and in the rare cases in which a school does have one, the library simply performs the role of distributing textbooks to students and additional services with respect to information needed by the learners are hardly ever provided.

According to Hart and Nassimbeni (2013), public libraries play a crucial role in early childhood development and the public library contributes to readiness for school of the young children whom it serves. They also maintain that although the public library deliberately steps in to serve the needs of school learners in the area who do not have access to school libraries, the efforts of the public library to present more formal school programmes are consistently hindered as a result of a lack of appreciation on the part of teachers in the surrounding schools. From the researcher's own perspective, it could be argued that although school teachers may wish to help librarians by providing information, they may be being hindered from doing so by the fact that the Constitution of 1996 places libraries under the Department of Arts and Culture, whereas schools fall under the Department of Education. It seems likely that the various departmental regulations and procedures may preclude teachers from working directly with libraries, owing to the different operating procedures of the 2 departments.

## **2.5 SERVICES PROVIDED BY PUBLIC LIBRARIES TO SCHOOL CHILDREN**

Whole decades of the service provided by public libraries to children remain undocumented, except through scattered journalistic accounts in the popular library press throughout the whole world. While the early years have been fairly well documented, much less is known about the period of diffusion, in which services to children became institutionalised in public libraries of all sizes throughout the USA (Braverman (1979)).

There is one exemplary historical study of the services provided to young adults. Braverman (1979) researched the early years of young adult library services in 3 urban settings, namely, Cleveland, New York, and Baltimore in the USA. In South Africa public libraries date back to 1818, when the first public library, which is now known as the National Library of South Africa, was established in Cape Town. According to the Library and Information Science or LIS

Transformation Charter of 2009, of the twenty-five thousand one hundred and forty-five schools in South Africa, only one thousand eight hundred and seventeen had school libraries, which amounts to only slightly more than 7%. According to the newsletter of the National Library of South Africa or NLSA of 2014, library and information services, including public libraries, are aligned to the national imperative of redress and equity, entrenching a culture of reading and developing a national literature in South Africa's indigenous languages. In the view of the researcher, the school children who make use of the public libraries cannot be excluded from this imperative.

Hart (2004) explains that public libraries assume valuable roles in supporting underrepresented populations, socio-economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities. Public libraries offer instruction, access to resources of information and technology and programme to help underrepresented populations to succeed. The importance of providing programmes to support learning is underscored by the fact that initiatives of this sort stem directly from the needs and desires which are expressed and verbalised by the populations concerned. Public libraries even serve children with special needs. "Public libraries have been highly regarded institutions since their designation as a location that all community members can use to their advantage, regardless of economic or social status or demographic background. Public libraries serve as common meeting spaces for interest groups, students, and businesses, play an integral role in the assimilation of immigrants into communities, and act as hubs for job seekers. Public libraries clearly play an integral role in communities, both academically and socially, by supporting all learners, regardless of age, level, or demographic. Increased political and fiscal support can enable such public libraries to not only sustain such programs and opportunities, but also to expand and reach even further into communities. Public libraries serve the needs of all students, especially as a valuable resource of support along their school pathways. One goal of public libraries is to raise

achievement rates for all students. This can be seen through programs that develop information'' (New York Comprehensive Centre Educational Technology Team, 2013:3).

Nkosi (2000) maintains that school children cry to be accommodated in overcrowded libraries, which provides clear evidence of the fact that public libraries provide space to school children. Apart from providing students with space in which they are able to study, write assignments and so on, libraries can also be places of safety for school children. According to a study conducted by Stillwell and Bell (2003), children older than the age of thirteen years cited information for their school projects as the most frequent priority. School children come to libraries mainly to search for information for their school projects. The public library has a definite role to play in the education of the youth. It seeks to promote a reading culture through the formation of reading clubs and friends of the library groups, encouraging school children to read in the public library in the company of their friends and peers, thereby providing opportunities for further education and consolidating what they have learned at school. In May of 2012 the South African Arts and Culture Deputy Minister, Joe Phaahla, in his statement concerning the educational role of Library and Information Science, emphasised that libraries have a role to play in the educating of the youth, to equip them to cope with the challenges of the present and the future.

Reagon (2005) maintains that librarians need to ensure that they contribute to the formulation of educational and ICT policy and the development of programmes within the country in order to ensure that libraries fulfill their key roles within these areas. This assessment points clearly to the role which libraries have to play in introducing school children to Information Communication Technology. In some instances, librarians go as far as teaching school children the basics of using computers to enable them to find the information which they need. By enabling school children to develop these skills librarians are, in effect, also playing an educational role.

## **2.6 PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

Raju (2010) defines lifelong learning as all purposeful learning activity undertaken on an on-going basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence. He explains that it encompasses various forms of education and training and that it may be formal, non-formal or informal. As an example, it could encompass learning acquired through the traditional educational system from the primary to the tertiary level, free adult education, informal searching and training, individual learning, learning in a group setting or within the frameworks of social movements.

“In a society of lifelong learning, public libraries will be nodes connecting the local learning setting, whether it is of a formal or informal kind. With the global resources of information and knowledge, public libraries play a role of fundamental importance in the development of future systems of lifelong learning. The development of the information and communication technology has already laid the basis for the creation of information networks, giving users even of small local public libraries access to the world wide sources of information. Public libraries also offer guidance and training in how to search and use this information and rate the quality of information sources. Thus, public libraries can be said to qualify as important prerequisites for an informed democratic knowledge society”

International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) (2004).

“Public libraries and professional librarians have to change and adapt to new demands, professional tasks and working conditions. Libraries should always be directed towards the empowerment of the users. A climate should be created in which even the shyest person feels able to ask for help without being judged inadequate. Libraries have developed in concert with their local and national history. Political, economic and social circumstances create, shape and develop libraries. Among libraries we can find diversity and difference. The most modern and well-equipped library is not necessarily the most developed in the art of stimulating popular

participation and democracy” (IFLA, 2012). Hart (2011) maintains that a community library in a school could make the school a focal point for lifelong learning, intergenerational interaction and family learning.

## **2.7 PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN AFRICA**

According to Webb (2010), most libraries in Africa are often situated in areas which make it difficult for the poor to make use of them. She conducted a study in the Katutura suburb of Windhoek in Namibia. This site was chosen because Namibia is a newly-independent nation, which has made public libraries available to all of its citizens within the last twenty-five years, which means that the role of the public library is being developed within the new society. Katutura was a former black township of Windhoek and it is still a poor neighbourhood. By conducting the study in an economically lower class neighbourhood, it was possible to investigate whether the library could help to equalise society. Interviews conducted with people in the library and people in the neighbourhood around the library revealed that the library was intended for students and learners, which emphasised its educational role and the perception that making use of the library is a key to success in life. People using the library were assumed either to desire success or to be successful at school or university.

Thorhauge (2003) explains that the friendliness and helpfulness of library staff is one of the 6 criteria proposed for the evaluation of libraries. However, studies conducted in Nigeria by Lyiade and Oladipupo, (2004) and Onohwakpor, (2009) have revealed that public libraries in Nigeria are in desperate need of improvement, as their services suffer from one form of neglect or another, owing to a lack of funds, inadequate infrastructure and unqualified manpower. As education has been undergoing radical changes, the literature of librarianship, both in South Africa and internationally, shows that it also has been re-examining its mission in the light of changed political and economic contexts (Durrance, 1991). An example can be provided by the recurring

call for more relevant public library models for developing societies. In his survey of the position of public libraries in Africa, Issak (2000) maintains that the use of public libraries use has declined in post-colonial African countries.

Sturges and Neil (1998) suggest that the demographics of African countries might encourage public libraries to prioritise the needs of the youth with respect to information. This might imply a shift towards libraries playing a more active role in formal education, rather than the traditionally indirect supportive role of the Western model. African countries do not have well-developed school library systems, as less than 10% of South African schools have functioning libraries, according to the Department of Education (1999). Against the backdrop of widespread educational reform, Hart (2004) maintains that public libraries may have to accept the reality of the non-existence of school libraries and extend their role into the domain of education, in order to help school children who are at present being disadvantaged as a result of a lack of school libraries.

Webb (2010) explains that the identity issues surrounding the use of libraries reflect the role of the library for individuals, which is mostly one of providing educational support. Students and learners, both those enrolled in university programmes and those at secondary schools, need a place in which to study, resources to help them with their studies and the motivation which comes from seeing other people working hard. Younger learners often use the library as a place in which to do their homework and to engage in informal learning. For the younger generation, the library is perceived as a key element of their educational success and their educational success is, in turn, perceived as a key element to their potential success in life. Most of the secondary school students and university students who work in public libraries appear to be working hard and to place value on the library as a place which helps them by providing the information which they need in order to attain their long-term goals.

According to Issak (2000), there is a great demand for library services in Botswana, but, although the government of Botswana is committed to supporting library services, it is unable to meet the demand entirely. The reading culture is increasing in step with the improvement in literacy levels. Although library services are steadily increasing, there are some constraints being imposed on improving these services. The most notable problems are related to the shortage of qualified staff, insufficient physical space, as is the case with the village reading room scheme, inappropriate opening hours and limited facilities for using modern technology. According to Hikwa (1997), the providing of library services in Zimbabwe is hampered by a lack of human, material and financial resources. On the basis of the experience of the Rural Libraries Resource Development Programme or RLRDP, and on the number of applications for support from the RLRDP, the RLRDP report suggested that there is a need to define strategies within the organisations which function at the most fundamental levels of society in order to be able to work better with the communities in the domain of disseminating information. Careful studies of financing and priorities for the introduction of new services are recommended, taking into account all of the available literature which was collected for the purpose of compiling this report.

In his annotated report, Issak (2000) came to the conclusion that “the main findings point to the fact that public library models were imported into Africa, without any consideration of the real situation of the continent and the information needs of the African people. Public libraries in Africa have therefore failed to fulfil their role within society, because they were built for a small percentage of users, the ones with access to formal education systems.” Issak (2000) explains that the providing of library services now takes the political, social and economic realities of the African countries into consideration, and that the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the services which are provided to the public and a more realistic approach towards the type of users

of libraries in Africa are required before a public library sector can be effective in many African countries.

## **2.8 PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The South African Year Book (2011/2012) provided the statistics that there were three hundred and sixty-six community libraries within the 6 metropolitan areas, one thousand three hundred and eighty-six community libraries affiliated to the 9 provincial library services and that 7, 23% of all schools in South Africa had functioning school libraries. These statistics provide a very clear and definite explanation for the great pressure which is being imposed on public libraries. Nkosi (2000) explains that community librarians have been reporting huge increases in the numbers of school learners from under-resourced schools who come to their libraries.

According to Statistics South Africa (2009), less than 10% of schools have functioning libraries and millions of South Africans do not have access to public libraries. It can also be seen that there has been a decline in the number of functioning school libraries in South Africa between 2009 and 2011/2012, as in 2009 the figure was less than 10% and in 2011/2012 it was 7,23%. As has already been noted, the resources of the public libraries are placed under a great deal of strain, as the libraries are required to serve steadily increasing numbers of school children who do not have access to school libraries, leaving them with the public library as their only option for obtaining the information which they need. Children younger than the age of eighteen years make up approximately forty percent of South Africa's population. Individual and focus group interviews conducted by KwaZulu-Natal's Ethekewini Public Library in 1997 for the development of public and community libraries in South Africa, revealed that information for school projects is the first priority with respect to information needed by school children.

According to the KPMG survey (2007), it was evident that public libraries cater mainly for children, as eighty percent of the activities of the library are geared towards children. Accordingly, the study concluded that public libraries, in effect, performed the role of school libraries (Department of Arts and Culture, 2007).

A research project conducted by Maepa and Mhinga (2003) at a community library in the province of Limpopo revealed that the members of the library staff were struggling to meet the needs of school learners. They analysed the barriers preventing the effective use of the library for teachers and learners at twenty-eight schools in the region, of which only one had a functioning library. The barriers included a lack of insight among principals and educators into the educational role of a library. One finding of the study was that learners tend to go to the library with ill-defined and inappropriate project topics, leaving librarians to cope with these taxing topics, usually with no prior consultation with the teachers concerned. According to the Library and Information Science Transformation Charter (2009), “South African public libraries have been constrained from going beyond traditional services, which revolve around the lending of library material, and children’s services. The developmental role of the public library is not as well advanced as the traditional role, with a notable exception. The increasing provision of materials, facilities and services to school learners in response to the demands of outcomes-based education has been an important contribution to educational goals. These learners use the public library for an estimated 50% of the opening hours of the library, a statistic which highlights the very serious lack of school libraries”. This assessment emphasises the extremely important and positive role which public libraries play in the lives of school children in South Africa.

In the KPMG (2007) report commissioned by the Department of Arts and Culture concerning the status of libraries in South Africa, the findings revealed that the library services were being

neglected and that, as a result, the DAC had introduced the Community Library Conditional Grant for the purpose of transforming the infrastructure of public libraries. The main reason for providing the funding was to improve the providing of public library services. Although this initiative has improved the internet services in some libraries, other public libraries, such as the Queenstown Public Library, are still waiting for the programme to be rolled out in their libraries. More than two hundred and twenty-nine libraries had been upgraded, facilities for the visually impaired had been rolled out in community libraries by 2013 and thirty-four new libraries had been built by 2013 (National Library of South Africa, 2012). According to Xaba (2012), a grant of R1, 8 billion was allocated to cater for the needs of the public libraries in 2012.

However, despite the generous grant which is allocated to public libraries, a number of difficulties are still encountered by public libraries in South Africa, not the least of which is the lack of respect afforded to the library profession by the population at large, which is particularly evident from the continuous burning down of libraries in service delivery protests. There are also staff shortages, as most of the library employees who are paid from the conditional grant are on 3-year contracts. In addition to these problems are those presented by the insecure status of public libraries in many communities (Hart and Nassimbeni, 2013).

### **2.8.1 SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

The South African government spends 6% of its Gross Domestic Product or GDP on education, but development in this sector is crippled by the extent of existing backlogs. In 2013 the Minister of Basic Education explained that it will take thirty years to build the school infrastructure which is needed in the form of classrooms, brick buildings and toilets, at a cost of 6 billion Rand (Motshekga 2012). Between 2002 and 2008 school attendance grew to ninety-nine percent for children younger than thirteen years of age and to ninety-three percent for those aged between

fourteen and seventeen years (Statistics South Africa,2009). At present only fifty-two of every one hundred children who begin Grade 1 will reach Grade 12. Educationist Graeme Bloch (2009) describes the underachievement of South African schools as a “national disaster.” The annual assessment scores for 2011 reveal that at Grade 3 the national average for literacy was thirty-five percent and twenty-eight percent for numeracy. At Grade 6 it was twenty-eight percent for languages and thirty-eight percent for mathematics (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

As has been noted, the lack of school libraries has placed enormous pressure on public libraries. Public librarians at national conferences have responded to the situation by calling for funds from provincial education departments, in order to alleviate the pressures caused by dramatically increased numbers of school learners (Leach, 1998). The head of South Africa’s National Library contended, in 1998, that budget cut-backs were crippling libraries. There is consensus that reading ability is crucial to academic success; moreover, the links between literacy levels and socio-economic class are clear (Hernandez, 2011). South African children came last in the Progress in Reading Literacy Study or PIRLS in 2006, which tested the reading skills of primary school learners in forty countries (Mullis *et al.*, 2007). The PIRLS survey may suggest that the lack of access to libraries in South Africa may partly explain the poor performance of South African learners. Eighty-nine percent of those tested, who achieved high scores, attended schools which had libraries and sixty-nine percent had access to classroom reading collections.

Libraries, by their very nature, are educational institutions, obliging them to cope with the educational policies of South Africa’s new democracy. However, the funding allocated by the government for public libraries has not increased in proportion with their increased educational responsibilities (Raju, 2010). In the absence of school libraries, the relatively well-established network of public libraries, in almost all municipalities, offers a key means of providing the

information needed by school children and young adults. Widespread concern about the deteriorating position of public libraries from the late 1990s resulted in a nationwide audit by the Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts & Culture in 2007. The audit found that fewer than 10% of South Africans were registered members of public libraries. Libraries were also unevenly distributed and school learners comprised seventy percent of their users. It was also found that seventy-four percent of the public libraries in South Africa lacked access to the Internet. The lack of access to services resulted in two injections of funds from the government, between 2008 and 2011, in the form of conditional grants. New libraries are being built in all of the provinces of South Africa, scores of posts for librarians are being created, although they are mostly temporary contracts, and the number of libraries being connected to the Internet is growing. The document of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science or NCLIS titled the *LIS Transformation Charter* (2009) recognises that the demographics of South Africa make it imperative to prioritise the needs of children and the youth, which has positive implications for the delivery of effective services in public libraries.

A study conducted by Stillwell and Bell (2003) where they looked at the information needs of the learners established that the primary need of young South Africans in public libraries concerns curricular materials, and they concluded that the public libraries exist, to a very large extent, to perform this vital educational service in the almost complete absence of school libraries. Karlsson (1996) of the Natal Educational Policy also explained that the low pass rates among learners place enormous strain on the resources of public libraries, as they are now being obliged to serve dramatically increasing numbers of school children who have either limited resources, or none at all.

## **2.9 COMPETENCIES OF LIBRARIANS SERVING SCHOOL CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

Since 2002 the Library and Information Association of South Africa or (LIASA) has given a number of workshops and training courses in order to equip librarians with an understanding of the role which they need to play to assist school children with their learning and to provide librarians with guidance with respect to curriculum design, teaching and assessment methods. The Council of Higher Education or CHE (2001) has identified the competencies required of South African graduates in the Twenty-First Century as computer literacy, skills in the reconfiguration of knowledge, information skills, problem-solving, teamwork, networking, mediation skills, and social sensitivity. These skills, which are transferable, are of relevance to both the academic sphere and to the world of work (CHE, 2004:114). Implicit in this understanding of the transferable competencies required of graduates is the recognition that the sequence of competencies closely resembles what librarians have come to understand as information literacy. There has been many curriculum establishments and CAPS and the role of the school library in terms of the curriculum statement is of great importance as it would be easy for the school library to keep pace with the curriculum as compared to the public library which does not fall under the Department of Education in terms of administration.

The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) (2009), a division of the American Library Association or ALA, recommends certain core competencies for all children's librarians and other library staff whose primary duties include delivering library service and advocating the use of library services. The policy of this organisation is that a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from an ALA-accredited graduate school is the appropriate basic professional degree for librarians serving children in public libraries, but the ALSC expects the same standards to be applied to paraprofessional staff. Through endeavours such as specialised coursework in undergraduate and graduate studies, on-the-job training and continuing to pursue

educational qualifications, librarians serving children are tasked with achieving and maintaining the specific skills, orientations and understandings which are required to ensure that children receive the highest quality of library service, as it is defined in the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights and by the Association of American Publishers or AAP. These competencies are listed as: knowledge of specific client groups, administrative and management skills, communication skills, knowledge of materials, services provided to users and reference services, programming skills, advocacy, public relations, networking skills, professionalism and professional development and competency in the use of modern technology. More research needs to be conducted into how libraries function and the professional profiles which librarians need to develop in order to enable them to meet the new needs of people who make use of public libraries and to cater effectively for the needs of specific groups of users.

## **2.10 ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

According to the online U.S National Library of Medicine, it “is the individual’s right to obtain and use information collected or generated by others.” In her paper devoted to access to information Oltmann (2009) explains that having and providing access to information is an important concern for librarianship, particularly in public libraries. From the researcher’s own perspective, this should be as applicable in the case of the Queenstown Public Library as it would be in the case of any other public library. The public library plays the role of providing information to the public and that information must be made accessible to all. In this sense, public libraries are able to make a valuable contribution to closing the information gap, as they provide information to all of the users whom they serve, irrespective of race, social class, socio-economic status, gender and so on. Equity with respect to the availability of information is as relevant a concern as it would be in any other domain in a democratic society. According to Lievrouw and Farb (2003), information equity is “the fair or reasonable distribution of information amongst

individuals, groups, regions, categories of other social units, such that those people have the opportunity to whatever is important or meaningful to them in their lives”.

Brammage (1997) explains that although the electronic media, such as the Internet, constitute one of the tools which can provide access to information without obliging the user to buy the actual material, the availability of the Internet does not always guarantee access to information free of charge, as the Internet needs to be installed at a cost, especially in cases in which subscriptions need to be paid before access to information is granted. A former American Library Association president believes that equality of access to information is one of the 8 principles of librarianship and that libraries strive to provide equity, in terms of access to information as a component of a broader endeavour to ensure social justice. As a result of research conducted by Koehler in 2003 with the participation of librarians from all over the world, it was concluded that equal access to information is an essential attribute of libraries.

Mathiesen and Fallis (2008) maintain that as obtaining access to information involves complex procedures and processes, librarians need to act as intermediaries between the person who wishes to obtain access to specific information and the information, which is probably to be found in well equipped public libraries, an assertion with which Smolla (1993) agrees by maintaining that librarians need to provide information and make it accessible to all who use the library. According to the Transformation Charter (2009), the principal finding with respect to access to information was that many people do not have access to the library services, and the following findings pertaining to access to information in South Africa were presented:

a) There is unequal spatial access to library services with respect to urban and rural areas, suburbs, townships and informal settlements and also in the various different provinces and local governments. This applies not only to community and school libraries, but also to certain university libraries.

b) The shortage, and in many cases the complete lack of suitable materials printed in the languages of potential library users, also limits their access to information and the services provided by the library.

c) The unavailability of the staff needed to serve people in their own languages and using other modes of communication further limits access to information for many.

d) Many libraries are housed in old buildings and in buildings which have not been architecturally designed as libraries. The creation of the physical infrastructure required to provide access to the facilities offered by public libraries presents a host of problems.

According to the South African Constitution of 1996, every South African citizen has a right to access information. The procedures on how one can access information are explained in detail in the Public Access Information Act (PAIA), (2000). The PAIA gives all South Africans the right to have access to information held by the state, the Government institutions and private bodies. Public libraries are of no exception in providing access to information to the public according to PAIA. Section 32 provides for the right to access to information, also known as the right to know. Section 32 not only provides for access to information held by the state, but also from a third party if it is required to exercise or protect any right. The right to know was enshrined in the South African Bill of Rights in reaction to the restrictive information policies by the Apartheid regime.

From the foregoing section it may be concluded that equitable access to information for all is a fundamental human right in all democratic societies and that the vital intermediary in this process is the librarian. It hardly needs to be added that access to the Internet and the presence of an abundant supply of contemporary books, containing information which is relevant to the needs of users of libraries, would provide access to information with a considerable boost. Limitations imposed by infrastructure, limited staff to facilitate the providing of access to information, unequal distributions of libraries in towns and rural areas with many more libraries being found in

towns than in rural areas, have all contributed towards hindering the realisation of the ideal of providing equal access to information for all .

## **2.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A theoretical framework defines the variables which are relevant to the evaluation of a research project and specifies the relationship between them. Apart from identifying the domain of a research problem, a theoretical framework specifies the objectives of the evaluation and the approach to be used to conduct the study, in this case, systems analysis, (Labaree, 2013). In order to conduct this study, the researcher adopted the Service Quality or SERVQUAL theory as its theoretical basis. The SERVQUAL theory is founded on the belief that the customer's assessment of the quality of any particular service is the principal concern. SERVQUAL was developed in 1985 by Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry as a means of measuring the quality of the services provided in the service sectors, according to a single scale.

According to Lewis and Mitchell (1990), Service Quality may be defined as the extent to which a service meets a customer's needs or expectations. If expectations exceed the performance of the service provider, the quality will be perceived to be less than satisfactory, resulting in customers feeling dissatisfied. Shahin (2006) maintains that Service Quality needs to be measured, in order to allow for comparisons to be made before and after changes have been effected, in order to determine the nature of quality-related problems and to enable clear standards for the evaluation of service delivery to be established.

In 1988 Parasuraman *et al.* revised the ten components of Service Quality, which were reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding or knowing the customer and tangibles and in their place presented 5 new dimensions, namely,

reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness, which are presented in Table I below. Reliability, tangibles and responsiveness remained distinct, but the remaining 7 components were merged into 2 aggregate dimensions: assurance and empathy. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) developed a twenty-two-item instrument with which to measure the expectations and perceptions or E and P of users of libraries in terms of the 5 RATER dimensions. 4 or 5 numbered items are used to measure each dimension. The basic principle behind the measurements is that customers are able to evaluate the quality of the service provided by comparing their perceptions with their expectations. By the early 1990s, Parasuraman *et al.* had refined the model to the useful acronym RATER: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness. The instrument is administered twice: first to measure expectations and then to measure perception.

**Table 1: SERVQUAL dimensions**

<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>ITEMS IN SCALE</b>
RELIABILITY	The ability to deliver the promised service dependably and accurately.	4
ASSURANCE	The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.	5
TANGIBLES	The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials.	4
EMPATHY	The providing of caring, individualised attention to customers.	5
RESPONSIVENESS	The willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service.	4

*Source: Francis Buttle (1996).*

SERVQUAL has been widely applied and is highly valued. Accordingly, any criticisms levelled against SERVQUAL need to be placed and viewed within this broader context of strong endorsement. According to Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), the effectiveness of SERVQUAL has undoubtedly been profoundly felt by the business and academic communities. SERVQUAL has also made a significant contribution to being able to measure the services provided by libraries. Herbert (1994) used SERVQUAL to investigate the quality of interlibrary loan services in large libraries in Canada. She made a comparison between the assessments of the quality of their interlibrary loan services, made by libraries and those of customers, responding in terms of their perceptions and expectations. The study showed conclusively that there was a mismatch between the assessment on the part of libraries of the performance of their interlibrary loan services, on the basis of fill rates and turnaround times, on one hand and evaluations made by customers with respect to the quality of the services, on the other.

Some discrepancies were also found with respect to the dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The tangibles dimension, which concerns the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communications material, surpassed the minimum acceptable service level of customers, who viewed it as the second least important dimension for measuring quality. Ramseook *et al.* (2010) used the Service Quality theoretical framework in a study conducted in the Mauritian public service to investigate how closely the expectations of customers with respect to the quality of services and the perceptions of front line employees of expectations matched. By making use of the SERVQUAL method, the study found that there were not significant discrepancies between the perceptions and expectations of a public organisation among the employees and the customers. This study enabled the public service in Mauritius to identify areas in which improvements in terms of service delivery could be made as a result of employing the SERVQUAL theory. As public libraries, with their mandate to serve communities, constitute a

component of the public service, the study conducted in Mauritius was particularly relevant to this research.

Nyeck *et al.* (2002:101) maintain that the SERVQUAL measuring tool “remains the most complete attempt to conceptualise and measure service quality”. The main benefit of the SERVQUAL measuring tool is the ability which it provides to researchers to investigate numerous service industries, such as healthcare, banking, financial services and education (Nyeck *et al.*, 2002). As the library service plays a complementary role to that of the education department, the use of SERVQUAL to conduct this study would appear to be particularly appropriate. The fact that SERVQUAL has critics does not render the measuring tool an ineffective one. It seems quite likely and plausible that much of the criticism levelled at SERVQUAL may result from how some researchers use the tool. Nyeck *et al.* (2002:106) reviewed forty articles which made use of SERVQUAL and discovered that few researchers concern themselves with the validation of the measuring tool, in order to determine the causes of those instances in which unreliable results have been obtained.

According to Bassam (2011), the value of the practice of measuring and managing the quality of services, from the point of view of consumers, is still debatable, despite the fact that SERVQUAL has been extensively used by academics and other practitioners. Among the chief critics of the SERVQUAL theory is Ladhari (2008), who maintains that the question of the validity of SERVQUAL as a generic instrument for measuring quality across different service sectors has been raised and he suggests that measures of the quality of services which are specific to particular industries might be more appropriate than a single scale. Buttle (1996) also criticises SERVQUAL by maintaining that it emphasises the process of service delivery rather than the quality of the service itself, and he stresses that it is not possible to capture the changeability of each service quality dimension by employing only 4 or 5 items. Van Dyke *et al* (1999) maintain that

SERVQUAL has a number of empirical problems, including low reliability and unstable dimensionality. Ladhari (2008) also points to the limitations of the dimensions by maintaining that evaluating and assessing the quality of a particular service quality differs from one customer group to another and from one set of circumstances to another.

Although SERVQUAL is most popular among academics, it has serious limitations, in that it is applicable to contexts close to its original settings, as Robinson (1999) has pointed out. Bassam (2011) explains that there has been some doubt concerning its future as a tool for measuring the quality of services. The service quality model measures the gaps between the expectations and the experience of customers. It highlights the main requirements for delivering high quality service and it identifies 5 gaps which result in unsuccessful service delivery, namely:

1. A gap between the expectations of consumers and the perceptions of management:—the perceptions of managers may, at times, be very different from those of users of a library, in the case of this study, the school children. The management may believe that the information which they are making available to school children is adequate for their purposes, while in many instances this may not be the case.
2. A gap between the perceptions of management and the specifications for delivering high quality services: a lack of set performance standards as a result of insufficient planning and at times, even lack of commitment from the management, results in a gap of this sort. To give an example from the public libraries, librarians are required to schedule their activities for the year and to send their schedules to a manager in the district office. One such activity is the World Book Day, to which people from the community are invited. It has happened that a day before the event was due to take place, the manager called the librarian, telling him or her to cancel the event because a tender committee responsible for allocating funds for the event did not convene to award the tender. This incident provides an excellent example of a lack of standards being applied by the manager, a lack

of commitment and an equal lack of planning. In this case the librarian would have set a standard for delivering high quality service to the community, only to have the endeavour thwarted as a result of insufficient planning and a lack of commitment on the part of the manager.

3. A gap between the specifications for delivering high quality services and service delivery: a gap of this sort results from staff who lack the capacity to perform their duties adequately as a result of a lack of training and education. In the library sector problems of this sort occur when people who have not been trained to become professional librarians are hired to perform the duties of a librarian. Similar problems occur when a person who has either no qualifications in librarianship or else a lower diploma is hired, without any previous experience, to be in charge of people who are qualified librarians and who possess either Honours or Master's Degrees. Situations of this sort almost inevitably result in lowered standards in terms of the quality of services and service delivery.

4. A gap between service delivery and external communication: problems of this sort result when the expectations of school children, for example, are not met, when what has been promised to the users is not delivered. For example, if the library advertises that it opens at 8 a.m. and for some or other reason it opens at 10 a.m. instead, without notifying the school children or other users, the users are being let down and subjected to poor service as a result of this type of problem.

5. A gap between expected service and experienced service: problems of this sort can occur as a result of misinterpreting the nature of the service which is provided. In the case of a public library, if a librarian persists in checking on school children while they are doing their homework or working on their school projects, they may gain the impression that the librarian may be avoiding his or her own work. This study may be conceptualised as an investigation of the gap which may be said to exist between what customers expect from a particular class of service providers, measured by means of the dimensions provided by SERVQUAL and their evaluations of the

performance of the service providers. In this case the customers comprise a research sample which was drawn from a research population of all of the users of the Queenstown Public Library who are school children. SERVQUAL is presented as a multidimensional construct.

The researcher chose this theoretical framework because recognising and closing gaps enables high quality services to be provided to the patrons of the library, helping them to achieve their goals whilst maximising the services provided to them through achieving customer satisfaction. It also helps the managers of libraries to identify areas of weakness in order to make improvements to the service delivery of the libraries and to improve the services provided to users.

Another conceptual model which may be used to investigate the satisfaction of users with information resources, facilities and services was developed according to the Consumer Satisfaction Theory or CST, which was propounded by Cadotte, Woodruff & Jenkins (1987). According to this theory, customers have some pre-purchase standards in their minds which guide the selection of their purchases before they actually make them. After purchasing a product or a service, customers evaluate its performance against these pre-purchase standards. When its performance exceeds their expectations with respect to these pre-purchase standards, satisfaction occurs. Conversely, when performance falls short of the expectations created by these pre-purchase standards, dissatisfaction will inevitably result. Consequently, the extent to which a customer experiences satisfaction or dissatisfaction is directly related to their perceptions of the performance of the product or service which they have purchased, with respect to the pre-purchase standards which resulted in the purchase being made. In this study, the services provided by the library will be investigated as a consumable product and users of the library, who are school children in this case, are regarded as the customers who purchase products from the library.

Making use of the services associated with searching for and retrieving information may be conceptualised as providing purchasing experiences to users of the library. As is the case with many consumables, information as a product may be defined by 2 components: the information system or services of which the customer makes use in order to obtain access to and to retrieve the information product, in terms of facilities and services, and the information product itself, in terms of resources.

The expectations of users of the public library with respect to the information which they require represents their pre-purchase standards, while the actual information products obtained from the public library represent the consumption of the product or service. When the quantity and quality of the resources of information to be obtained from a public library are lower than the expectations of users with respect to the information which they require, the users will be dissatisfied, and conversely, when they exceed or are equal to the expectations of users, they will experience satisfaction.

Optimal use may be made of the information resources provided by libraries when facilities such as reading tables, chairs, book shelves, ICTs and others are available. The availability of these facilities improves the ability of public libraries to render their services to users, raising the levels of satisfaction felt by users and increasing the effectiveness of the services provided by the library.

## **2.12 STRENGTHS OF SERVQUAL**

The principal strength of SERVQUAL is that it can be used in any sector, making it an appropriate theoretical framework for this study. According to Al Bassam and Al Shawi (2010), SERVQUAL is a tried and tested instrument which can be used for benchmarking. In addition to these strengths, the SERVQUAL framework enables the perceptions and expectations to be tracked, making it

relatively easy for a public library to improve its performance in accordance with the perceptions and expectations of its customers. A constant monitoring of customers' perceptions and expectations should serve to promote the development of mutually beneficial relationships between public libraries and their patrons.

## **2.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 2 was devoted to a literature review and the topics which were covered and included a general introduction, the roles of public libraries, the challenges facing libraries as effective providers of information services, the importance of public libraries for school children, the roles played by public libraries in the lives of school children, public libraries and lifelong learning, public libraries in South Africa, public libraries in Africa, South African schools, the competencies of librarians serving school children, access to information and the theoretical framework provided by the SERVQUAL theory.

From the literature it is clear that the role of public libraries as providers of information services to school children has been severely compromised, largely as a result of a lack of resources and inadequate funding. These problems and challenges could appear to threaten to make the role of public libraries irrelevant. The incompetence of some librarians serving school children at present was highlighted, as was the need to remedy these problems for school children to be served effectively and adequately with information.

The literature review pointed to the fact that many school children had limited access to public libraries. To make the best use of the public libraries, an effective system needs to be developed, with competent staff to ensure access to services for school children. Although public libraries have responded to the needs of school children with varying degrees of success in the face of

severe financial constraints for many decades, the question which still needs to be answered is whether or not public libraries can become sufficiently effective to satisfy the needs and requirements of school children with respect to the information which they require for their academic advancement.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study adopted a case study research design and both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in order to confirm the validity of the findings. The study was conducted at the Queenstown Public Library and the research population comprised the school children who make use of the Queenstown Public Library, the librarians and the library assistants. The methods which were used to collect data were surveys, questionnaires, interviews and observations. The methods which were used to analyse the data will also be discussed in this chapter, as will be the reliability and the validity of the findings and the ethical considerations which were respected during the conducting of this study.

#### **3.2 THE STUDY AREA**

The study was conducted at the Queenstown Public Library, which was established in 1928. It is located in the Chris Hani District of Queenstown in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The researcher chose the Queenstown Public Library for the case study because it is centrally located and it is also the largest public library in Queenstown in terms of the people whom it serves and the space which the library building occupies. The library serves more than twenty different schools and the general public. The school children who use the library range from Grades 1 to 12 and their ages range from 6 to twenty years. According to the Queenstown Public Library statistical report of 2014, approximately one hundred and fifty school children make use of the library services daily. The library has a collection of sixty thousand books, which cater for the needs of both adults and children.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Kumar (2005), a research design is a plan, a structure and a strategy of investigation, which is conceived in order to obtain answers to the research questions or problems. It provides the glue which holds a research project together. Babbie (2001) defines a research design as a plan or a blueprint of how research is intended to be conducted. This research made use of a case study research design to collect data. Bhattaderjee (2012:93) defines a case study as a method of intensely studying a phenomenon over time, within its natural setting or at one or a few sites. Multiple methods may be used to collect data, such as interviews, observations, pre-recorded documents, and secondary data may also be employed. A case study can include quantitative evidence in its data, rely on multiple sources of evidence and benefit from the prior development of theoretical propositions. It can also be exploratory, constructive or confirmatory. An advantage of a case study is that it presents opportunities for gaining insights which may not be available to all researchers. Much of what is generally known comes from case studies and a great deal can always be learned from a single case.

Making use of a case study provides an excellent means of testing theoretical assumptions. The researcher also chose to employ a case study owing to its ability to generate new information which holds across many cases and which is capable of stimulating new theoretical thinking.

A case study was also particularly suitable in the case of this study, as it provides practical knowledge, it has a degree of openness, which makes it less restrictive than other methods and it is versatile. Of particular relevance to this study is the fact that a case study allows the questions of “why?” and “how?” to be answered within the context of a full understanding of the nature and complexity of the phenomenon being investigated (Yin, 1994). A significant disadvantage of a case study is that what applies to one individual case may not necessarily always apply to another,

and what may be learned from one individual case may not always be true for a larger population. Case studies also present very little basis for scientific generalisation, as they make use of a small number of subjects and some are conducted using only one subject, eliciting the commonly raised question of how any possible generalisation can be made from a single case (Yin 1984). Another disadvantage advanced by Yin (1984) is that case studies are long, difficult to conduct and tend to produce a great deal of documentation, resulting in Yin (1993) characterising them as having a microscopic area of focus, owing to the limited amount of sampling which is employed in the conducting of case studies.

Zainal (2007) explains that case studies have often been criticised as lacking rigour and for the tendency of researchers to have biased interpretations of the data. In addition, the reliability of the findings may also be questioned when a small research sample is employed. However, it needs to be added that researchers continue to use case studies in order to investigate phenomena in real life situations.

### **3.4 RESEARCH POPULATION**

According to Lapan et'al. (2011) a population in a research study refers to the people who constitute the focus of the research question and its analysis. A research population can also be described as the group of individuals to which the conclusions of a research study can legitimately be applied. For this study the population comprised all of the school children who make use of the Queenstown Public Library and all of the people who are employed as librarians and library assistants at the library. According to the membership statistics reports of the Queenstown Public Library and the information provided by 7 librarians, the estimated population of school children who make use of the library is seven hundred. Only high school children between Grade 8 and Grade 11 who visit the library were chosen to make up the research population, as the researcher believed that they would have a better understanding of the questions and be more prepared to

respond to them than younger children. Grade 12 students were excluded because it was felt that they usually have a great deal of work to do during their matriculation year.

A target population comprises the whole group of individuals to which a researcher is interested in applying conclusions. As the entire target population is rarely readily accessible, only the portion of it which is available may be studied. The target population for a survey is the entire set of units for which the data which emerge from the survey are to be used to make inferences. Consequently, the target population defines those units for which the findings of a survey are meant to generalise (Lavrakas, 2008). The target population in this research consisted of the school children who make use of public libraries in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

### **3.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE SIZE**

Sampling is the process of selecting units such as people or organisations from a population of interest, in a manner which enables the results to be fairly generalised back to the population from which they were chosen, as a result of studying the sample. (Trochim, 2006).

#### **3.5.1 SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Simple random sampling was employed by the researcher to select the sample of school children, as random sampling gives every person in the population an equal probability of being chosen, making a sample selected in this manner most likely to reflect the characteristics which are of interest to the researcher of the entire population targeted by the study. Marlow (2005) defines simple random sampling as a sampling method in which each individual case in the population theoretically has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. One of the chief advantages of simple random sampling is the ease with which a sample can be assembled, while its main weakness tends to lie in the fact that obtaining a complete list of all the units of a target population from which a sample is to be obtained through simple random sampling can, in many instances, be almost impossible. This limitation introduces an element of doubt concerning how representative of the target population a random sample may be, which in turn raises concerns about possible

bias. Purposive sampling was used to select librarians who were directly involved in serving school children, as they were more knowledgeable concerning the nature of the information required by school children and the problems which are to be encountered while attempting to attend adequately to their needs. Purposive sampling also enabled the librarians to be deliberately selected by discounting their age, culture and background.

### **3.5.2 SAMPLE SIZE**

A sample comprising a total of fifty-three respondents was used, as the researcher believed that it was sufficiently large to constitute a fair representation of the total population being studied. The annual statistics of the Lukhanji libraries for 2013/2014 places the total membership of the Queenstown Public Library at twenty-three thousand. It needs to be noted that when the children join the library, their grades are not recorded, obliging the researcher to arrive at a sample size which could accurately represent the school children who make use of the library. Twenty-eight of the school children who had responded to the questionnaires, of which fifty-five had been distributed, were selected for the sample, and this figure was augmented with an additional eighteen who were interviewed by the researcher. To these forty-six participants the 7 purposively selected librarians were added, making for an overall sample size of fifty-three participants. Grinell and Williams (1990) maintain that in most cases a 10% sample should be sufficient to control sampling errors and they also believe that a sample comprising 30 units is sufficiently large to enable basic statistical procedures to be performed.

### **3.6 RESEARCH METHODS**

Different types of research methods would be discussed including their advantages and disadvantages.

### 3.6.1 SURVEYS

Surveys constitute an appropriate mode of enquiry for making inferences about a large group of people from data drawn from a relatively small number of individuals from that group (Marshall and Rossam, 1999). Fowler (2008) maintains that “survey research provides a quantitative, numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. It includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection with the intent of generalising from a sample to a population.” For these reasons a survey was deemed to be appropriate for this type of study, as the objectives of this research seemed to accord well with the research methods employed by conducting a survey. The aim of the survey was to explain some of the features of the population being investigated in both qualitative and quantitative terms, in the light of the fact that the analysis of surveys makes use of analytical methods which may rely on either descriptive data or inferential statistics.

The survey made use of face-to-face interviews, as they have the advantage of not allowing questions to be left unanswered, as is the case with incomplete questionnaires. Another advantage provided by face-to-face interviews is that respondents have an opportunity to request clarification in the case of questions which they do not understand.

The survey is a particularly appropriate research method for investigating the kind of problem upon which this research project focuses, and the specific advantages of surveys, in this context, are that they are:

- Accurate in terms of measurements which are quantified.
- User-friendly in terms of avoiding ethical difficulties while conducting the research.
- Convenient in that they are easy to administer.
- Particularly useful for describing the characteristics of a larger population, as a carefully selected probability sample, in combination with a standardised questionnaire, offers the possibility of making refined descriptive assertions concerning any population.

The potential disadvantages of surveys are reflected in the following concerns:

- It cannot always be guaranteed that a sample is entirely representative of the population as a whole. The questions in standardised questionnaires often do not correspond with the perceptions of the people to whom they are directed. One of the main difficulties encountered in the process of designing questionnaires concerns the formulating of questions which are appropriate to the majority of the respondents in any given study.
- Surveys are subject to artificiality, as people may give answers which are conservatively biased when they do not, in fact, hold conservative views.
- Surveys cannot measure social action, as they rely mainly on information which is provided by respondents. In addition, surveys cannot always develop an overall feel for the ways in which respondents may be thinking and acting to the extent that an astute observer is able to do.
- Surveys are also costly and time-consuming; a great deal of time is used in structuring the questions, distributing them and having respondents complete them (Babbie and Mouton, 2011).

### **3.6.2 APPROACH TO AND METHODS OF COLLECTING DATA**

Although the study made use of both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data, greater emphasis was placed on qualitative research. Qualitative research was favoured, owing to the fact that the research was conducted in a setting which was familiar to the participants and in which they were able to feel comfortable, and the researcher attempted to view the world from the perspective of the actors themselves, in the manner suggested by Babbie (2001). In the case of this study, the actors were the school children, the librarians and the library assistants who participated. Patton (2001) enlarges upon the approach detailed by Babbie (2001) by explaining that qualitative research makes use of a naturalistic approach and seeks to understand specific

phenomena within the context of specific settings, such as real world settings and that it is incumbent upon researchers conducting this type of research not to manipulate the phenomenon of interest.

Qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, focuses on lengthy descriptions, which relate each action as it occurs, as opposed to the closed-ended techniques employed in quantitative research. Other advantages of qualitative research are that it is able to make use of multiple sources of data and that the people, animals or objects which are being studied are encountered directly.

In qualitative research, when researchers write up their work, they pay close attention to the reactions of the participants to the researcher and to the tone of voice which they use. Qualitative research makes a great deal of use of narratives. Unlike qualitative research, quantitative research disassociates itself from the research process (Winter, 2000), and depends, instead, on the construction of instruments in order to gather data (Patton, 2001). It is possible for a researcher conducting quantitative research not to be present during the process of collecting data, which can be an advantage in some instances.

Qualitative research places particular emphasis on the researcher as the key research instrument, as he or she is responsible for collecting data and information, without necessarily relying on questionnaires which have been created by other researchers. In addition, multiple sources of data, such as observations, interviews and documents are also used in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014), which accords well with the methods used to conduct this research.

A strength of qualitative research methodologies is that they allow researchers to examine the views of both homogeneous and diverse groups of people, which enables researchers to make detailed analyses of their perspectives (Dudwick et al., 2006). Apart from the strengths of qualitative research is the fact that this mode of enquiry is broad and open-ended, allowing participants in studies to raise those issues which matter most to them (Yauch and Steudel, 2003).

However, an open-ended approach is not always guaranteed in qualitative research, as a researcher who is ostensibly conducting qualitative research may choose to make use of questionnaires which feature closed-ended questions, thereby precluding participants from having an opportunity to raise issues of this sort.

As the Assessment Capacities Project, (2012) has pointed out, qualitative research methodology has its own inherent weakness, in that the data which are obtained are not objectively verifiable and labour-intensive processes are required to analyse data of this type, such as categorisation, coding and so on, quite apart from the fact that the gathering of the primary data can be equally labour-intensive and time-consuming. Yauch and Steudel (2003) regard the open-ended nature of qualitative research as a weakness, as they maintain that it cedes control over the data which are collected to the participants.

The advantage of quantitative research methodology is that numerical data obtained through this approach facilitates the making of comparisons between organisations and groups and in the case of this study it allowed the extent of agreement or disagreement between users of the library to be determined (Yauch and Steudel, 2003). Its major weakness is that quantitative research requires a large sample size and considerable resources are needed to conduct a thorough quantitative evaluation (Dudwick et al., 2006). Consequently, this research has made use of both quantitative and qualitative research in order to enable each approach to compensate for the weaknesses of the other.

Yin (2009) maintains that multiple sources of data ensure the validity of research by incorporating several different sources of evidence. In this study the researcher collected data using questionnaires, interviews and secondary data, in the form of data collected by someone other than the researcher.

### **3.6.3 QUESTIONNAIRES**

According to (Kumar, 2011), a questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. The advantages of a questionnaire are that they are less expensive to administer than most other research methods and they offer a high level of anonymity, which increases the chances of obtaining truthful and accurate answers. Accordingly, the researcher elected to adopt the questionnaire as one of her instruments for collecting data. Questionnaires were distributed to the school children to complete. Informed consent was sought as dealing with minors requires need permission from parents.

The questionnaire was structured in 2 parts and divided into 5 sections, from Section A to E. Section A was to be completed by the librarians and sections B to E by the school children. All of the questions were related to the objectives of the research. The sections were as follows:

SECTION A: Background information.

SECTION B: The effectiveness of Queenstown Public Library as a means of providing school children with information.

SECTION C: What attracts school children to public libraries in their pursuit of information?

SECTION D: The relevance of the information which is available at public libraries.

SECTION E: The nature of the information required by school children.

A total of thirty-one questions were compiled. There were eleven questions in section A, 4 in section B, 5 in section C, 5 in section D and 6 in section E. The questionnaire featured both open-ended and closed-ended questions. A total of 10 questions were open-ended. The purpose of the closed-ended questions was to limit the answers in order to save time, whereas that of the open ended questions was to allow the respondents to give their responses in full, without any limitations or constraints regarding the time taken to respond.

The questionnaires were distributed personally to the librarians by the researcher, who was also available to assist them with the completing of the questionnaires. This part of the study took 2

days to complete, as not everyone completed the questionnaires on the day on which they were distributed. It took 3 days to collect the completed questionnaires from the school children, as they did not all come to the library at the same time. Although fifty questionnaires were handed out to the school children, only thirty-five completed questionnaires were collected, which amounts to a response rate of seventy percent, which is normally regarded as very good in research of this type.

Twenty-one of the thirty questions put to the school children were closed-ended. According to Babbie (2001) closed-ended questions are very popular in questionnaires, as they provide a high degree of uniformity in the responses and they are easily processed. One of the chief advantages of using a questionnaire as an instrument for collecting data is that it has the potential to enable information to be collected from a large portion of a group and return rates can be dramatically improved if the questionnaire is delivered and responded to in class time. In addition, Milne (2009) explains that although information may be gathered quickly by using a questionnaire, there can also be disadvantages, as people can even take a long time to complete questionnaires, as the researcher noticed during the course of conducting this study. Closed-ended questions prevented respondents from giving answers which were irrelevant to the researcher's purposes.

A disadvantage of closed-ended questions is that researchers can sometimes structure questions in such a way that they become too complex for the respondents to understand, at times side lining important concerns of the questionnaire, while open-ended questionnaires, on the other hand, have the potential to generate a great deal of data, which can take a great deal of time to analyse and process. Milne (2009) suggests that students may not be willing to respond to the questions if there is no tangible benefit to be derived from doing so and that they may even think that they would be penalised if they reveal certain information, pointing to a potential disadvantage of questionnaires.

### **3.6.4 INTERVIEWS**

The researcher made use of interviews in order to gather in-depth information and to obtain answers to complex questions. Interviews provide a researcher with the freedom to decide upon the way in which he or she presents the questions and their content. According to Burns (1997:329), “an interview is a verbal interchange, often face-to-face, though the telephone can be used, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person”.

In order to obtain information about the effectiveness of the public library in its role of providing information to school children, the researcher interviewed school children in different age groups, in grades ranging from Grade 8 to Grade 11. These were face-to-face interviews. A total of eighteen school children were interviewed and 2 who were approached declined because they felt too shy, while a further 3 declined because their parents were waiting for them outside of the library and they were in a hurry. The researcher used a written interview guide. A maximum of twenty minutes was spent interviewing each child. The respondents, who were all children who used the library after school hours, were randomly selected at the library and interviewed over a period of 2 weeks. Informed consent was sought as dealing with minors requires need permission from parents.

One of the problems encountered by the researcher was that most of the school children seemed to be shy while responding to questions. Although the library opens on Saturdays, it is hardly ever frequented by school children on this day of the week, obliging the researcher to conduct this research on weekdays only. Another problem was the shortage of time in which to conduct the interviews with the school children. As the children were at school during the mornings, the afternoons provided the only time which was available to interview them, between 2.30 p.m. and 5 p.m. after school hours on school days.

### **3.6.5 OBSERVATION**

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), observation entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours and objects in the social setting chosen to conduct a study and the observation record is referred to as the field notes. In this research, the researcher observed the behaviour and the interaction of the staff of the library and the school children. The observations were conducted at the Queenstown Public Library and they were obstructive in nature, as the respondents did not consciously contribute to them or the interpretations which they generated on the part of the researcher. Observation was used to determine how the librarians conducted themselves and how they interacted with the school children. The researcher also used observation to gain an understanding of how the school children conducted themselves when they were engaged in searching for information at the library. The researcher devoted approximately twenty minutes per day to making observations during the time in which she was in the library conducting the research.

### **3.7 ANALYSIS OF DATA ANALYSIS**

The analysis of data involves both the examining, sorting, categorising, evaluating, comparing, synthesising and contemplating of the coded data and the reviewing of the raw data which have been recorded Ngulube (2010). In this research the data which had been collected were summarised and similar responses were grouped together. Data were also analysed in terms of how frequently they appeared in a particular group of responses. The measurable data were recorded in order to quantify them by making use of a simple percentage analysis.

The data collected from the questionnaires were pre-coded and typed into a computer. In some instances, the responses could be easily counted and then tabulated using a computer. These procedures were followed in order to generate graphs, tables and charts from the computer and to

break the data down into meaningful units. Use was made of Microsoft Excel spreadsheets in order to analyse the data which had been gathered. Data were also analysed through content analysis, which involved returning to the original transcripts a great many times, in order to ensure that all of the information which needed to be categorised had been categorised. The data were also exported to Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel spread sheets.

In the case of some of the data, such as the challenges which were identified and the suggestions which were offered, similar responses were grouped together and then tabled together, in order to avoid duplications in the presentation of the data or in the tabling of the major findings.

### **3.8 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

Making use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches very often serves to ensure the reliability and the validity of a research study. Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population being studied. If the results of a study can be reproduced by making use of a similar methodology, then the research instrument may be considered to be reliable. Joppe (2000) describes validity as that which determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure and how truthful the results of the research are. Researchers generally determine validity by asking a series of questions and often looking for the answers in the research of others.

In the case of this study, the researcher used triangulation in order to achieve reliability and validity. The data which were gathered from conducting surveys were corroborated through direct observation. In addition, field notes, accurate transcripts of the interviews and studying related texts all contribute towards ensuring the reliability and the validity of the findings of a research study, as does analysing the same data by means of several different methods.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As a number of ethical dilemmas almost invariably arise in the conducting of any type of research, it becomes the responsibility of the researcher to deal with them in a manner which is entirely justifiable (Flick, 2009). Ethical considerations may be considered as principles which need to be taken into account when conducting social research or a realm of considerations relevant to determining what is good or bad, right or wrong (Hammersely and Traianou, 2012). In order to comply with the ethical standards of professional research, the researcher applied for and obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the University of Fort Hare.

Ethics may be defined as a set of widely accepted moral principles which offer rules for, and behavioural expectations of, the most correct conduct towards subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students, (De Vos et al., 2011). The ethical considerations are respected by researchers are based on co-operation, mutual trust, acceptance and generally accepted conventions and expectations between all parties involved in a research project Sarantakos, ( 2000).

In order to adhere to the ethical standards of research, the researcher had to hand out a written letter which explained the exact nature of the research to the head of the institution. After obtaining permission to conduct the study at the library, the researcher began to compile the questionnaire, which was to be completed by the various participants. The questionnaire contained a clause which explained that all the information which was provided would be treated as being strictly confidential and also explained the nature of the research to enable the participants to become completely aware of what agreeing to participate in the study would entail. The contact details of the researcher's supervisor were also provided on the questionnaire to confirm that the research project was a genuine one.

In as much as it is difficult to predict and determine emotional harm Cresswell (2003), the

researcher ensured that the respondents could not be harmed emotionally by making sure that the questionnaire contained no personal or sensitive questions and not asking questions of this sort during the interviews. The researcher also ensured that the respondents were not subjected to any emotional harm, in the form of anxiety, by conducting the research in an environment in which the participants felt completely safe.

Correct adherence to the laid down ethical considerations for conducting professional research ensures that the participants are guaranteed confidentiality, and they are able to be assured that the information about themselves, which they have provided, will be used in ways which make it impossible for other people to identify them or even for other institutions to use it against their interests. The ways in which the data are analysed preclude any possible breach of the anonymity of the participants or of the confidentiality of the information which they have provided. In addition, cultural competency was also exercised during the conducting of the study and permission to conduct it was obtained from the research institute by the researcher.

Informed consent was obtained from the participants by including a letter on the first page of each questionnaire, giving the title of the research and an explanation of its objectives, in order to enable the participants to be able to respond to the questions and to decide whether they wished to take part in the study or not. Royse (2004) explains that obtaining informed consent implies that adequate information concerning the goal of the investigation and the expected duration of the involvement of the participants are comprehensively explained to them. Patton (2002) also suggests that before an interview or a discussion it should be communicated to the participants that the information to be provided is important and that the reasons for its importance should be properly explained.

All of the works which were consulted in order to write this dissertation and which have been quoted in it have been acknowledged, in order to avoid any possible charges of plagiarism. Rigid adherence to the research policy of the University of Fort Hare ensured that all relevant professional standards were maintained during the conducting of the study and the writing of this dissertation. The privacy of the high school children who participated in the study was respected by the researcher, and her adherence to this ethical standard was reflected in the way in which she interacted with them, the tasks which they were asked to perform and in the nature of the information which was gathered.

Participation was completely voluntary, and no-one was forced to respond to the questionnaires or to allow himself or herself to be interviewed (Rubin and Babbie 2005). No pressure was exerted on either the school children or the employees of the library to complete the questionnaires or to take part in the interviews. In as much as they were urged to complete all of the questions in the questionnaires, no school child or employee of the library was chastised for not completing any of the questions in the questionnaires or being unwilling to answer a question which was asked during an interview.

### **3.10 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE RESEARCHER WHILE COLLECTING THE DATA**

While collecting the data the researcher encountered difficulties in the case of some of the staff members who had been asked to complete the questionnaires. These staff members expressed anxiety about the possibility of the information which they provided being used to expose weaknesses and shortcomings in the performance of their duties, which resulted in some of them making persistent enquiries regarding the confidentiality of the information and whether there was any danger of their being exposed by the researcher. In order to gain their trust, the researcher

needed to show them the clause which appeared in the questionnaires, in which it was guaranteed that all of the information which was provided during the conducting of the research would be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

As the information was collected from the school children during an off-peak time of the term when most of them were busy writing examinations, the numbers of children visiting the library were smaller than they usually are, the process of collecting the data from them became protracted, resulting in constraints with respect to the time which was available to collect this data. Collecting the data was also costly, as the researcher needed to travel a distance of more than one hundred and eighty kilometres in order to do so, but the process of gathering the data was nevertheless successful.

### **3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter detailed the research methodology which was used to conduct this study, which incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods, with an emphasis on qualitative research. A case study was used as the research design and the strengths and weaknesses of the case study were explained. The research population, the target population and the sampling procedures were all discussed. The range of methods used to collect the data in the field during the conducting of the research was explained, as were the advantages and disadvantages of each. The data was collected by means of questionnaires, interviews and direct observation. The methods which were used to analyse the data were also covered, followed by a discussion of the measures which were taken in order to ensure the reliability and the validity of the findings. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the ethical considerations which were respected during the conducting of the study and a brief summary of the difficulties which the researcher encountered while collecting the data. The next chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the data, which will be presented in the form of charts, tables, graphs and a discussion of the findings.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the data and a presentation and discussion of the findings which emerged from the data. In order to present the data in a coherent form, it needs to be checked, edited and coded (Sarantakos, 2005). Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to analyse the data in order to convert it into a form which allowed it to be interpreted easily. Rubin and Babbie (2005) explain that the analysis of quantitative data entails converting it into numerical form and subjecting it to statistical analysis. This study made use of Excel spreadsheets to analyse, interpret and present the data.

The quantitative data was obtained from the completed questionnaires which had been handed back by the respondents. The questionnaires were created in accordance with the objectives of the research and were divided into 5 sections, namely, A, B, C, D and E with part A needing to be completed by the employees of the library and parts B to E by the school children between Grades 8 and 11 who made use of the Queenstown Public Library.

The researcher was well aware of her ethical obligation to protect the participants, by all possible means, from any harm which could conceivably result from the research and every reasonable measure was taken to ensure that the respondents remained anonymous and that the information which they provided was treated as being strictly confidential (Creswell, 2003). An analysis of the data which were obtained from the librarians and the school children was performed, which will be presented in the following subsections.

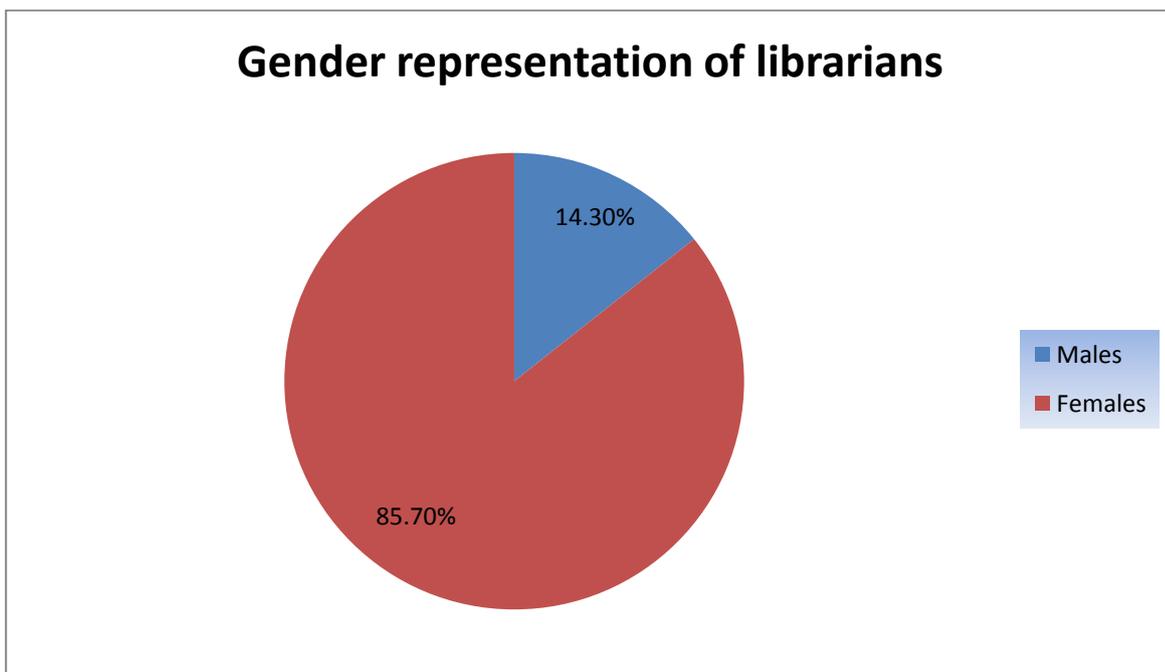
## **4.2 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS: LIBRARIANS**

The Queenstown Public Library employs a total of fifteen librarians, including those who work for the branch libraries. The main library in Queenstown is staffed by 7 of these librarians, namely, a chief librarian, a senior librarian and 5 assistant librarians. Their qualifications range from a diploma in librarianship to a postgraduate qualification in librarianship. All of them had worked in the library for a minimum of 2 years and they are rotated through all of the sections of the library, as no-one has been appointed specifically to work in any of the units of the library. According to the Association for Library Service to Children or ALSC (2009), the world's largest organisation dedicated to supporting and enhancing of library services to school children, the basic qualification of a librarian serving children must be a Master's degree in the discipline of Library and Information Science from an accredited school. Although this minimum requirement is not enforced at the Queenstown Public library, according to The Council for Higher Education (2001), the librarians at the library are competent to serve children, as the minimum competencies required are computer literacy, skills in reconfiguring knowledge, information skills, problem-solving skills, teamwork skills, networking skills, mediation skills and social sensitivity skills. The response rate of the librarians with respect to the questionnaire was one hundred percent, and the reason for this excellent rate could stem from the fact that they were always available at work and that responding to the questionnaire could have offered the path of least resistance. According to Babbie (2005), the response rate is computed by taking the number of people participating in a survey and dividing it by the number of units selected in the sample, in the form of a percentage. This is also called a return rate or a completion rate.

### **4.2.1 GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS**

From the data it emerged that 6 of the 7 professional librarians were females, while the remaining librarian was male, which is represented in Figure 1 below. The present preponderance of females

in the profession could be the result of librarianship being stereotyped as a female profession, but, as general perceptions change, increasing numbers of males appear to be being attracted to the profession. Falaye (2004) explains that in the United Kingdom and in the United States librarianship is generally regarded as a women's profession, whereas in Nigeria it tends to be regarded as one befitting a man.



**Figure 4.1: Gender representations of the librarians**

#### **4.2.2 AGES OF THE RESPONDENTS: LIBRARIANS**

The ages of the respondents ranged from between twenty-six years to more than fifty-one years, with none of the respondents being sixty years old or older. Table 4.2 below represents the age brackets of the professional librarians who responded to the questionnaire.

**N= the number of respondents**

**TABLE 4.2: Age brackets of the professional respondents (N7)**

<b>Age bracket of respondents</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
26-30 Years	01	14.3
31-35 Years	03	42.8
41-50 Years	01	14.3
51 years and above – up to 60	02	28.6

The ages between thirty-one and thirty-five years constituted the largest age bracket in the sample. This finding reflects that most of the librarians working in the library are relatively young and still have many years to work in their professional careers. The fact that they are still in their productive years and far from retirement would indicate that they have the potential to make a significant contribution to the changes which need to be effected in order to enable the library to serve the needs of its users in the Twenty-First Century.

#### **4.2.3 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AT THE QUEENSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The findings show that of the 7 respondents, 1 person had worked for the library for a period of between 1 and 2 years, 2 for a period of between 2 and 4 years and 4 for a period of 5 years or more.

**TABLE 4.3: Length of service of respondents**

<b>Length of service of respondents</b>	<b>Number of respondent</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Less than a year	0	00
1 year – 2years	1	14.3
2 years – 4 years	2	28.6
5 years and above	4	57.1

It was found that more than half of the members of the staff of the Queenstown Public Library have worked there for more than 5 years, making it easy for them to respond to the questions, as they had worked in the library for long enough to enable them to provide informative responses. Their knowledge and experience of the institution enabled them to provide information which was relevant to the objectives of the study.

#### **4.2.4 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

**TABLE 4.4: Educational qualifications of respondents (N=7)**

<b>Level of qualification</b>	<b>Number of respondent</b>	<b>Percentage of respondent</b>
Matriculation	0	0
Certificate	0	0
Diploma	1	14.3
Bachelor's degree	4	57.1
Post Graduate Qualification: Honours degree	2	28.6

From Table 4.4 above, it is evident that most of the staff members at the Queenstown Public Library hold university qualifications in librarianship, as only 1 holds a qualification lower than a Bachelors' degree. Those who hold Bachelor's degrees in Library and Information Science are deemed to be sufficiently competent to serve school children as the Council for Higher Education (2001) requires a librarian to have graduate competencies, although it does not stipulate the Master's degree from an ALA-accredited library school required by the Association for Library Services to Children (2009) for a librarian serving school children.

#### **4.2.5 BRANCHES OF THE QUEENSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY**

When they were asked about the number of branches which the Queenstown Public Library comprises, 4 of the respondents replied that there are 5 branches, while 2 replied there are 4 and 1 explained that there are 5 libraries which fall under the jurisdiction of the Lukhanji Municipality. The 2 respondents who maintained that there are 4 branches obviously interpreted the question as referring to sub-branches only, and not to the main Queenstown Public Library itself. Although the researcher concentrated on the main branch, it needs to be acknowledged that, with 4 outlying branches, the Queenstown Public Library extends its services to a great number of users in relatively remote locations, which provides eloquent testimony to the effectiveness of its services, particularly with respect to serving previously disadvantaged sectors of the population.

##### **4.2.5.1 MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS OF THE QUEENSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Since its inception, membership of the library has ranged from between twenty-three thousand to approximately twenty-seven thousand. According to the headcount statistics derived from the detector machines, an average of five thousand four hundred and ninety-four people use the library each month, from which it may be extrapolated that an average of one thousand three hundred and seventy-three people per week use the library and approximately two hundred use it each day.

## REPRESENTATION OF USER GROUPS OF THE LIBRARY

**TABLE 4.5: REPRESENTATION OF USER GROUPS OF THE LIBRARY**

User Group	Response
School Children	Yes
Teachers	Yes
Doctors, Engineers, Nurses	Yes
Farmers	Yes
Business people	Yes
Researchers	Yes
Any other (Please specify)	Pre-scholars and pensioners

The group of users at the Queenstown Public Library comprises school children, teachers, professionals, farmers, the business community, researchers, pre-schoolers and pensioners, apart from the staff of the library. Although school children make a great deal of use of the library, it needs to be emphasised that they are not the only group of users of the library and that the collection of the library is not geared solely towards acquiring resources of information which satisfy their requirements, and that efforts are made to balance their needs with those of the other groups of users of the library.

### **4.2.5.2 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE QUEENSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY WHILE ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH THE INFORMATION WHICH THEY REQUIRE**

While some of the challenges which the library encounters in its endeavour to provide school children with the information which they require were identified by direct observation, others

emerged from the responses to the questionnaires and those provided during the interviews. These challenges, problems, obstacles and difficulties are summarised below.

- Difficulties encountered while endeavouring to ensure that users obtain the exact information which they request.
- Limited reading spaces, especially during examination times, when the library tends to become overloaded and overcrowded.
- The information available from the library is old and often fails to meet the requirements of present day school curricula.
- Insufficient materials containing information which is of contemporary relevance are supplied by the provincial government.
- There is no formal relationship between schools and the Department of Arts and Culture regarding the curricula of the schools.
- There are no textbooks which meet the requirements of the CAPS Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements.
- There are too few computers.
- There is a general shortage of textbooks.
- The knowledge of the members of the staff of the library concerning the use of computers is generally limited.
- There is no dedicated librarian for the children's section.

#### **4.2.5.3 SUGGESTIONS WHICH WERE MADE TO ASSIST CHILDREN TO OBTAIN THE INFORMATION WHICH THEY REQUIRE**

The following suggestions were made by the school children and the librarians in the research sample with respect to the problems and challenges which they identified:

- Computers need to be acquired in order to meet the needs of the school children with respect to information and enable them to use modern technology.
- The library needs to be extended and expanded in order to ease the overloading of facilities and overcrowding which is experienced at present.
- The resources of the library need to be improved and upgraded through the acquisition of new materials and facilities.
- Computers need to be connected to printers to enable even those school children who do not possess memory sticks to print directly from the computers without having first to save the information in a memory stick before printing from one of the computers which is connected to a printer.
- Communication facilities need to be provided in order to facilitate communication.
- More materials which are relevant to the needs of school children need to be provided by the provincial library services.
- The children's library needs to be updated and a librarian dedicated to meeting the needs of children to be appointed.
- Librarians need to be trained and retrained in the use of information technologies in order to meet the needs of users for information in the Twenty-First Century.

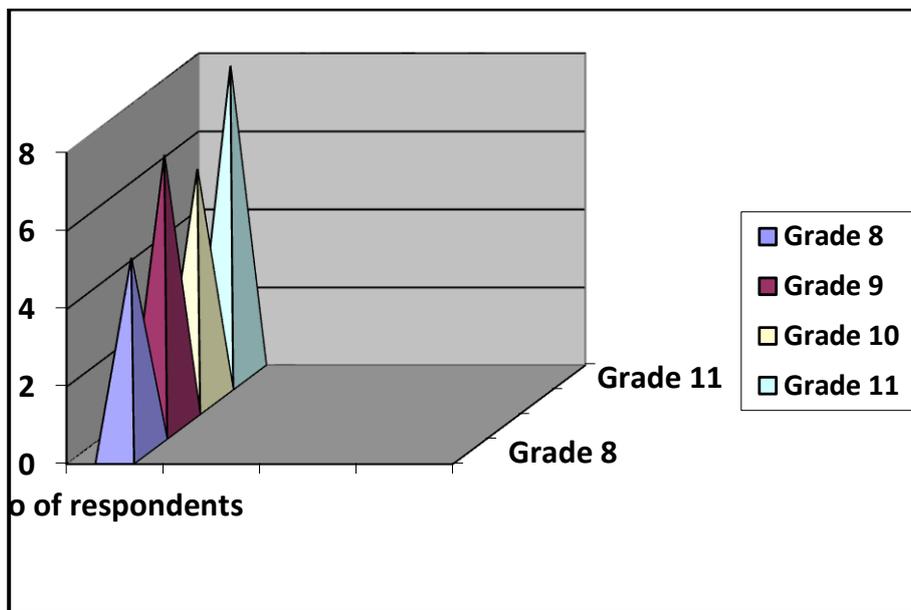
- Unlimited use of the Internet needs to be made available, with the proviso that websites whose content is deemed to be harmful need to be blocked.
- Whenever there are changes to the school curricula, the government needs to supply libraries with appropriate textbooks.
- The library needs to be able to present educational film shows.
- Study groups need to be formed for each grade to enable school children to assist one another.
- Staff members need to have a friendly and helpful demeanour when they interact with users of the library, as some of the school children emphasised the need for the staff of the library to be friendly and approachable.

### **4.3 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE QUEENSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY AS A MEANS OF PROVIDING INFORMATION TO SCHOOL CHILDREN BETWEEN GRADES 8 AND 11**

#### **4.3.1 GRADES OF RESPONDENTS**

As has been noted, the school children in the research sample were in grades ranging from Grade 8 to Grade 11. Each grade was represented by 7 respondents, in order to have a fair representation of the school children when soliciting their perceptions of using the library, the materials which they use in the library and how they are served by the staff of the library. However, it needs to be noted that not all of the children responded to each and every question in the questionnaire and interviews, as they did not always have any definite views with respect to the subject of each question which they were asked. From Figure 4.2 below, it is clear that 4 children from Grade 8, 6

from Grade 9, 5 from Grade 8 and 8 from Grade 11 responded to the question of how effective they perceived the library to be in providing them with the information which they need. The highest number of responses to this question came from the learners in Grade 11, while the lowest came from those in Grade 8.

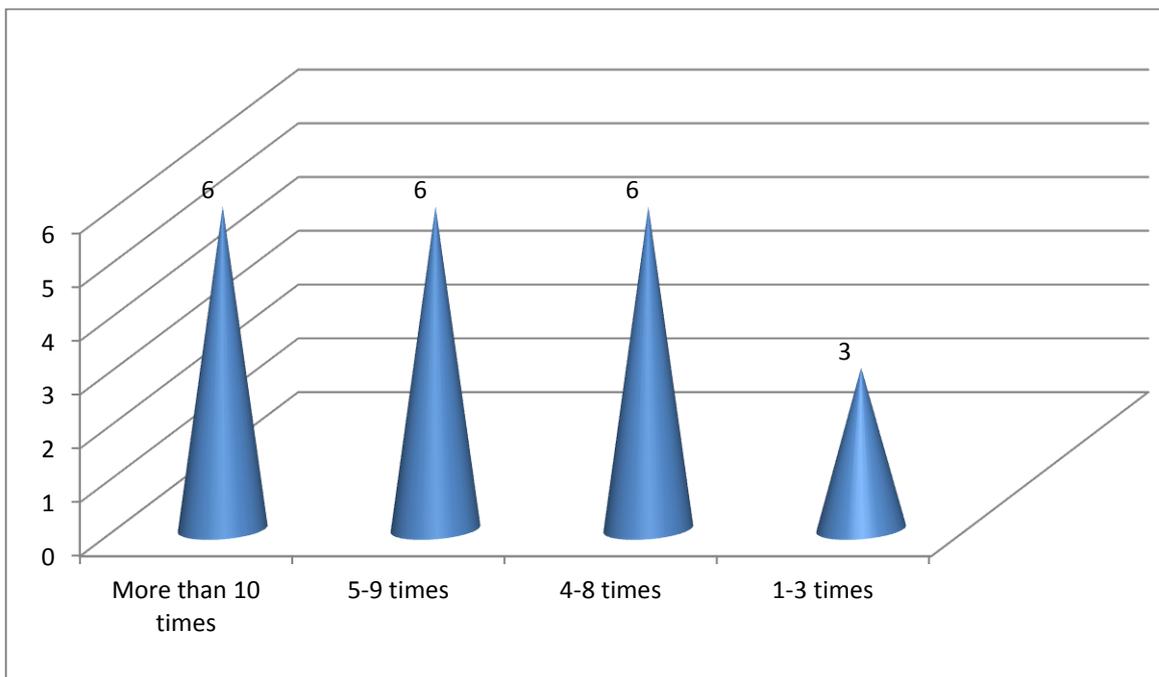


**FIGURE 4.2: RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS WITH RESPECT TO THEIR GRADES**  
(N=23)

#### 4.3.2 FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO THE LIBRARY

The school children were asked in the questionnaire how frequently they visit the library, in order to determine whether they in fact make regular use of the Queenstown Public Library, and, if they are in the habit of visiting the library, how frequently they do so. From Figure 4.3 above, it is evident that most of the children visit the library with varying degrees of frequency, as the graph depicts monthly visits. Of the twenty-one children who responded, 6 or twenty-nine percent said that they visit the library more than 10 times per month, a further 6 or twenty-nine percent indicated that they visit it between 5 and 9 times per month, yet another 6 or twenty-nine percent

said that they visit it between 4 and 8 times per month and 3 or fourteen percent reported that they visit it between once and 3 times per month. From these responses, it is abundantly clear that school children make frequent use of the Queenstown Public Library, obliging the researcher to conclude that the library plays a central role in their education and represents an invaluable asset for the mental and intellectual development of the young people of South Africa. Sixty-seven percent of the school children who were interviewed indicated that they visit the library daily on school days. These respondents were mostly in Grade 11. A further eleven percent of the school children interviewed indicated that they visit the library once or twice per week, while twenty-two percent reported that they visit the library at least 3 times per week. However, it needs to be noted that these frequency patterns are not likely to be repeated during the school holidays and that they should only be considered to be representative of the behaviour of the school children in the area during term time.



**FIGURE 4.3: FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO THE LIBRARY (N=21)**

### 4.3.3 USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THE LIBRARY

**TABLE 4.6: Usefulness of information obtained in the library (N=28)**

Level of usefulness	Number of responses	Percentage of the responses
Not useful	0	0
A little useful	5	18
Very useful	10	36
Extremely useful	13	46
No opinion	0	0

When they were asked how useful they found the information which they are able to find at the library, thirteen of forty-six percent of the children in the sample replied that they regarded the library as extremely important. The researcher interpreted this to mean that the library plays a crucial role in their day-to-day lives, particularly with respect to assisting them with their school projects, their homework and so on. A further 10 children or thirty-six percent indicated that they found the library very useful and a small minority 5 or eighteen percent thought that the library was useful to only a limited degree. None of the children rated the library as being not useful at all. These responses can be summarised as a finding that a large majority of eighty-two percent of the school children maintain that the library is particularly useful in their day-to-day lives, while a much smaller percentage of eighteen percent perceive it to be useful, but to a lesser extent.

### 4.3.4 HELPFULNESS OF THE LIBRARY STAFF

#### LEVELS OF HELP PROVIDED BY THE LIBRARY STAFF

The school children were asked how helpful they found the staff of the library in order to determine the degree to which the librarians are contributing to the effectiveness of the library, in

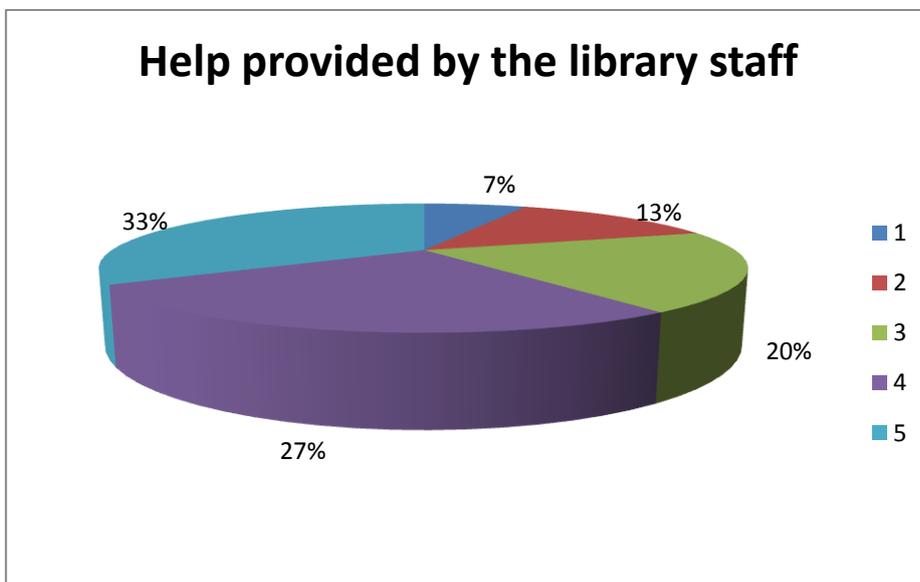
either a negative or a positive sense. The levels of helpfulness of the library staff were scaled from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least helpful and 5 being extremely helpful. Thirty-three percent of the school children felt that the librarians were extremely helpful, twenty-seven percent felt that they were helpful, twenty percent felt that the help of the librarians was moderate, while thirteen percent thought that the librarians were less helpful and 7% maintained that the staff of the library was not helpful at all. The lower ratings could have been influenced by the fact that the resources of the library are not able to meet the needs of the numbers of school children who use it. In their research conducted in the Limpopo Province of South Africa, Maepa and Mhinga (2003) discovered that only 1 of twenty-eight schools had a library, which made the children from the other schools completely dependent on the local public library, resulting in the staff of the public library struggling to serve the great numbers of learners adequately with information, which was further exacerbated by the limited resources of the library. The findings of this study in this respect could also be influenced by the perception of the school children that when they are unable to obtain information, the members of staff are to blame, and, conversely, when they are able to obtain it, this has been the result of members of staff being prepared to provide it, irrespective of whether or not the library actually has access to the information in question.

In some instances, perceptions of this sort may serve to undermine the motivation of the staff members to try to help the school children, which could, in turn, result in the potential ability of staff members to help the children with the services which the library is in fact able to provide being diminished.

When the same question was put to the school children who were interviewed, eighty-three percent reported that they received help in the public library, although the degree tended to vary from interviewee to interviewee. Seventeen percent felt that they did not receive help of any sort

in the library. Although a significant percentage of the sample of school children who were interviewed perceived that they did not receive any form of assistance in the library, an overwhelming ninety-four percent confirmed that they felt that they could still recommend that other school children should make use of the public library.

During the interviews the researcher was also interested in discovering the criteria which the school children used, either to measure the assistance which they received or to establish that they did in fact receive help in the library. More than fifty percent of the school children gave a range of varying responses, with some citing the fact that they had been able to photocopy materials, while others mentioned that they had been able to obtain information for their assignments or research projects, to submit their homework on time after obtaining information from the library or to obtain a pass mark in their school research projects as a result of assistance received at the library. By contrast, one of the students responded by saying that she would not recommend the library to anyone because “the books in here are old and the library is old fashioned”.



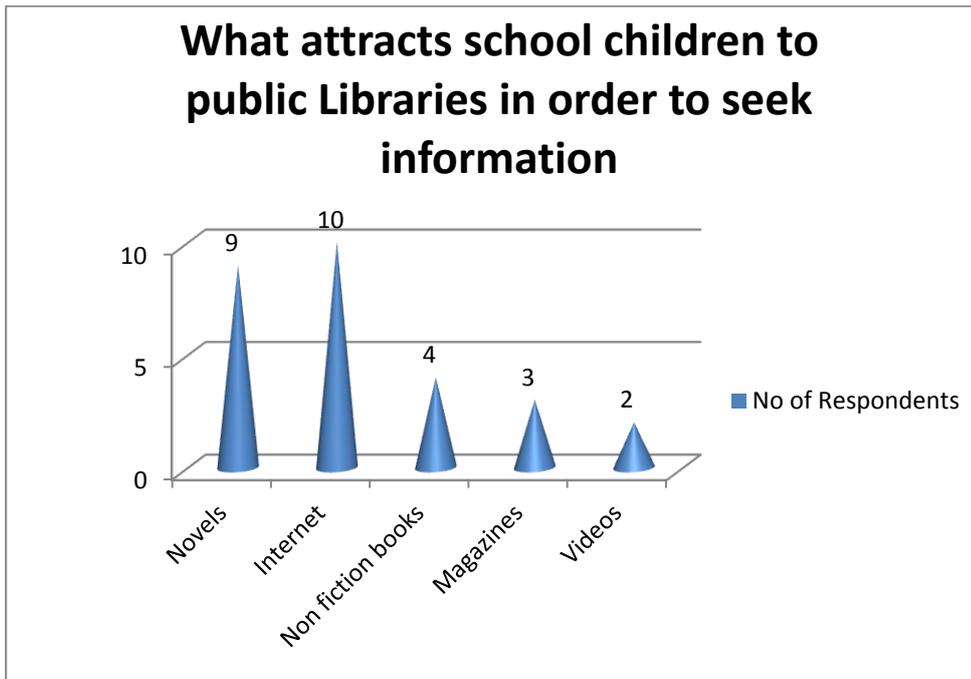
**FIGURE 4.4: HELP PROVIDED BY THE LIBRARY STAFF**

#### **4.4 WHAT ATTRACTS SCHOOL CHILDREN TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN ORDER TO SEEK INFORMATION?**

The researcher asked this question in order to determine the categories of resources which most attracted school children to make use of the public library, in order to enable her to make recommendations concerning future acquisitions to make the library even more relevant than it is at present to the lives and interests of school children. From Figure 4.5 above it is evident that most of the school children are attracted to the library in order to gain access to the Internet. 10 of the twenty-eight respondents or nearly thirty-six percent, said that they were attracted by the Internet, followed by a group of 9 respondents, who said that they were attracted by the novels. A smaller group of 4, which amounted to slightly more than fourteen percent, were attracted by the non-fiction books, which included materials for assignments and school projects. Magazines and videos attracted 3 and 2 respondents respectively.

School children favour the Internet because it offers a vast array of information, which is easily accessible and easy to compare. Sources of information, such as magazines and videos, can also be found online, which would also account for the perception among school children and most people in the world that anything and everything can be found on the Internet. The fact that the Internet is also almost universally perceived to be a triumph of modern technology, which has revolutionised the availability and accessibility of information, would have had no small amount of influence on the perceptions of the school children either.

#### 4.4.1 WHAT ATTRACTS SCHOOL CHILDREN TO THE LIBRARY



**FIGURE 4.5: WHAT ATTRACTS SCHOOL CHILDREN TO THE LIBRARY (N=28)**

#### 4.4.2 LENGTH OF TIME OF USING THE LIBRARY IN MONTHS OR YEARS SINCE THE FIRST VISIT

**TABLE 4.7: LENGTH OF TIME OF USING THE LIBRARY (N=25)**

Timeframe in months or years	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
1-11 Months	2	8
1-2 years	5	20
2years- 3years	7	28
3years +	11	44
Total	25	100

Of the twenty five children who responded to the question, 2 or 8% said they had used the library for less than a year, 5 or twenty percent had used the library for more than 1 year but less than 2 years and 7 or twenty-eight percent had used the library for more than 2 years but less than 3 years. A majority of eleven or forty-four percent of the respondents had been using the library for more than 3 years, indicating quite clearly that most of the children at the high school make use of the library and that those who had been using the library for less than a year would be those in the lower grades. These children would be new to high school and may not have been using the library while they were in primary school, in all probability owing to the distance between the primary school and the library. More than half of the respondents were long-time users of the public library.

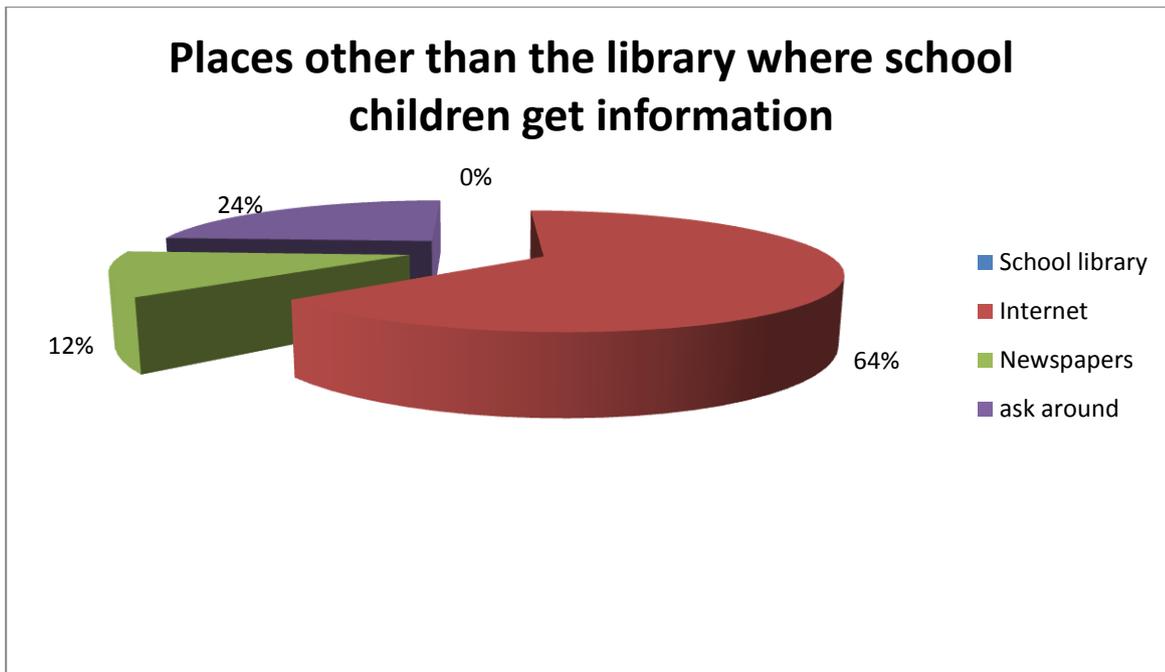
#### **4.4.3 PLACES OTHER THAN THE LIBRARY FROM WHICH SCHOOL CHILDREN OBTAIN INFORMATION**

The children were asked about other sources of information which they may have, apart from the library, in order to determine whether school children do have other options for obtaining information apart from the Queenstown Public Library. Sixteen or sixty-four percent of the children indicated that they used the Internet to search for information if they did not use the library or if they were unable to obtain the information which they needed from the library, while 6 or twenty-four percent replied that they asked their parents, teachers, friends and others for information. The fact that a significant portion of the sample felt the need to seek information actively from people close to them points to a strong possibility that they are not able to obtain all of the information which they require from the public library and to an equally strong possibility that they cannot afford to go to internet cafés to search for information. It became quite apparent to the researcher that access to Internet is usually not free of charge and that school children are able to make very limited use of it. Newspapers were a source of information for 3 or twelve

percent of the children, and in these cases the newspaper almost certainly became a useful source of readily available information, as it would have been bought and brought home by their parents.

10 or fifty-five percent of the school children who were interviewed indicated that there were no other places from which they could obtain information and that the library was their only source. Some of the children went on to say that their own schools did not have school libraries, leaving the Queenstown Public Library as their only option. 5 or twenty-eight percent responded by saying that although their parents brought home information for them, it was sometimes not possible to read it, as they had homework which needed to be handed in during the lessons of the following day. These children explained that owing to these circumstances the library, in effect, became their only possible source of information. Only 1 of the children explained that as she has a library and a computer with a printer at home, she did not frequent the library, as she had 2 readily available sources of information at home. 2 or eleven percent of the children explained that they had brothers and sisters in higher grades, whom they considered as sources of information, apart from the library.

Of the eighteen children interviewed, 8 or a little over forty-four percent indicated that even if they did not come to the library to search for information related to their school projects or their homework, they would still come to the library to borrow novels, as they are registered members of the library. Ten or fifty-six percent maintained that they would not come to the library if it were not for their homework and school projects.



**FIGURE 4.6: OTHER PLACES FROM WHICH E SCHOOL CHILDREN OBTAIN INFORMATION**

#### **4.4.4 CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNERS WHILE SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION**

**Table 4.8: Challenges faced in the process of searching for information (N=27)**

<b>Challenge faced</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Lack of resources	15	55
Time constraints	5	19
Lack of good services	6	22
None	1	4

The greatest problems encountered by the school children when searching for information stem from a general lack of resources, which include computers, Internet services to chairs, tables and books. It was pointed out that they were not merely referring to books in this instance, but rather to books which support the current CAPS syllabus. From the responses it could be determined that

a majority of fifteen or fifty-five percent of the children in the sample felt that resources constituted the greatest challenge faced by the library, followed by 6 or twenty-two percent, who felt that it was a lack of good service. It was clear from these particular responses that the lack of good service was with specific reference to the staff members, even if it is influenced to a very great extent by the lack of resources identified by the largest group of respondents: when there are insufficient resources, good service is unlikely.

5 or nineteen percent of the children felt that time constraints also presented challenges, as the library closes at 5 p.m. As most of the schools close at 3 p.m., school children are left with just 2 hours, in which to travel to the library from their schools and to search for information which in many instances may not be readily available. The Queenstown Public Library is open between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. during weekends and there are few librarians at the library, as they rotate their working schedules on weekends. The school children felt that if all of the problems which they identified could be remedied, the effectiveness of the services provided by the library would be greatly increased.

#### **4.4.5 SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE OF SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION**

The following suggestions were made by the school children for improving the experience of searching for information at the library:

- More tables need to be supplied.
- Computers need to be repaired.
- A variety of books need to be supplied.
- Library supervisors need to supervise the staff members while they are performing their duties.

- The government needs to buy books which are relevant to their school syllabuses.
- Additional personnel need to be appointed by the library in order to help to ease the pressure experienced while serving large numbers of school children.
- There needs to be free access to the Internet, as use of it is restricted at present.
- Sources of information need to be upgraded.
- The staff members at the Queenstown Public Library need to be proactive in the providing of information.

#### **4.5 RELEVANCE OF THE INFORMATION WHICH IS AVAILABLE AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

##### **4.5.1 RELEVANCE OF THE INFORMATION TO BE FOUND AT THE LIBRARY**

**TABLE 4.9: Relevance of the information to be found at the library (N=25)**

<b>Level of relevance</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Not relevant	0	0
Not sure	3	12
Highly relevant	3	12
Very relevant	8	32
Less relevant	11	44

When asked in the questionnaire about the relevance of the information which is to be found at the library, eleven or forty-four percent of the children thought that it is not very relevant, a further 8

or thirty-two percent believed that it is very relevant, 3 or twelve percent were not sure of its level of relevance and another 3 or twelve percent felt that it is highly relevant.

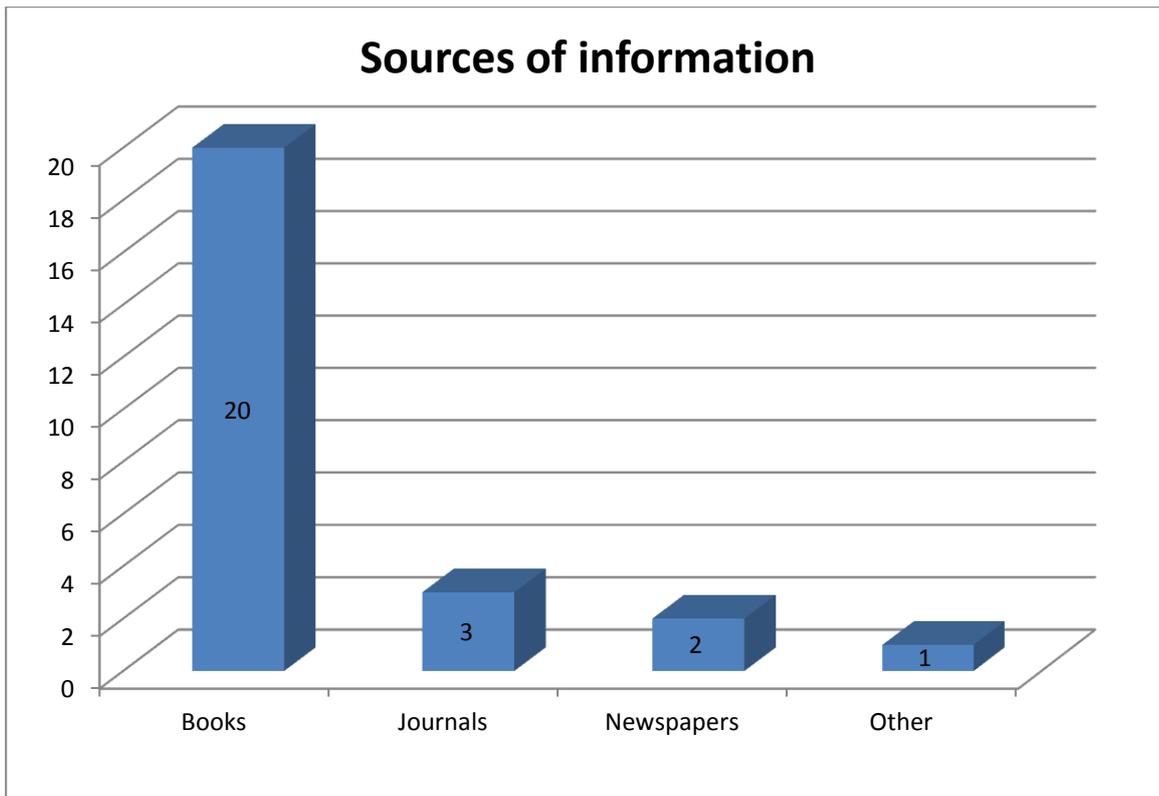
These findings could be interpreted to imply that although school children are able to obtain basic information for their studies, obtaining access to the specialised information required for the school projects which are set for them in accordance with the CAPS syllabus remains difficult and unsatisfactory. From these responses it may be concluded that although the library undoubtedly has a collection which is able to support the requirements of school children, it cannot offer sufficient information to meet the needs of their syllabuses completely.

From the interview sessions, sixteen or eighty-nine percent of the children regarded the library as relevant, as they mentioned that it had contributed towards their good performance at school. Some of these respondents, who are registered members of the library, explained that as a result of taking books from the library, their ability to cope with their school work had improved considerably, as reading novels from the library had enabled them to develop their reading skills. This same group of children found the library to be relevant to their needs because they were able to photocopy information which they had found in the library at a much more reasonable rate than that charged by commercial concerns, where photocopying is undertaken in order to make a profit. Some of these children indicated that they had made good progress at school and that they were excelling in their studies. One respondent rather defiantly claimed that she could still do well at school, even if she did not go to the library, and another respondent explained that her older sisters and brothers helped her with school work, leading her to believe they played a leading role in enabling her to excel, which tended to diminish the relevance of the library for her.

#### **4.5.2 SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO BE FOUND IN THE LIBRARY**

The children were asked about the sources of information which are to be found in the library, in order to identify any possible gaps in their knowledge of where information may be found. For twenty or seventy-seven percent of the respondents these sources included books, for 3 or twelve percent they included journals, for two or 8% they included newspapers and for 1 or 3% of the sample, they included other sources. Books were generally considered to be the greatest source of information at the Queenstown Public Library, a perception which may have arisen owing to the fact that the library has been in existence for 8 decades and a great many books have been accumulated over this considerable length of time, resulting in the perception that books constitute the library's main source of information, particularly in the absence of any significant acquisition of online resources. Journals, including magazines, were cited by a small group of 3 or twelve percent of the children. The newspapers which they identified as sources of information were the Daily Dispatch and The Rep, a local newspaper which is delivered every Friday. These are the 2 main newspapers in the library.

Newspaper cuttings are compiled by the librarians when they notice any form of relevance in an article to school projects. Other sources of information include pamphlets, as opposed to journals, which are usually distributed free of charge by people who are marketing specific products or else attempting to create certain types of awareness.



**FIGURE 4.7: SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO BE FOUND IN THE LIBRARY (N=26)**

**4.5.3 TIMES AT WHICH ACCESS TO THE INTERNET IS PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE AND THE TIME IN TERMS OF HOURS AND MINUTES WHICH IS PERMITTED**

**TABLE 4.10: ACCESS TO THE INTERNET (N=28)**

Free Access to the Internet	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	8	29
No	20	71

The respondents were asked about the access which they are permitted to the Internet, in order to determine if there is free access to the Internet access at the library and, if so, to what extent. 8 or twenty-nine percent of the children indicated that free Internet is to found in the library, while a

far larger group of twenty or seventy-one percent maintained that it is not. This mixed perception could have resulted from the library offering the Internet for a lower price than that charged by internet cafés, still levying a charge for the service, even if it is a low one. . As data bundles are expensive and insufficient finances are allocated to libraries, the library would almost certainly be obliged to pass the costs incurred by being able to offer access to the Internet on to its clients.

#### 4.5.3.1 DURATION OF USING THE INTERNET

**TABLE 4.11: DURATION OF USING THE INTERNET (N=24)**

<b>Duration (Time)</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
30 Minutes	15	63
1 hour	2	8
2 hours	1	4
Other	6	25

The respondents were asked about the duration of the periods for which they use the Internet at the library, in order to determine how much Internet time is being given to school children to do their school work. Fifteen or sixty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they use the Internet in the library for periods of thirty minutes, a further 6 or twenty-five percent explained that they make use of the other option permitted by the library, which allows unlimited use of the Internet to those users who are able to afford to do so. 2 or 8% of the children indicated that they use the Internet at the library for periods of 1 hour and 1 child, 4% of the sample, said that he uses the Internet for 2 hours at a time, daily. From these findings it is clear that most school children mostly use the Internet for 30 minutes at a time, which is a relatively short period.

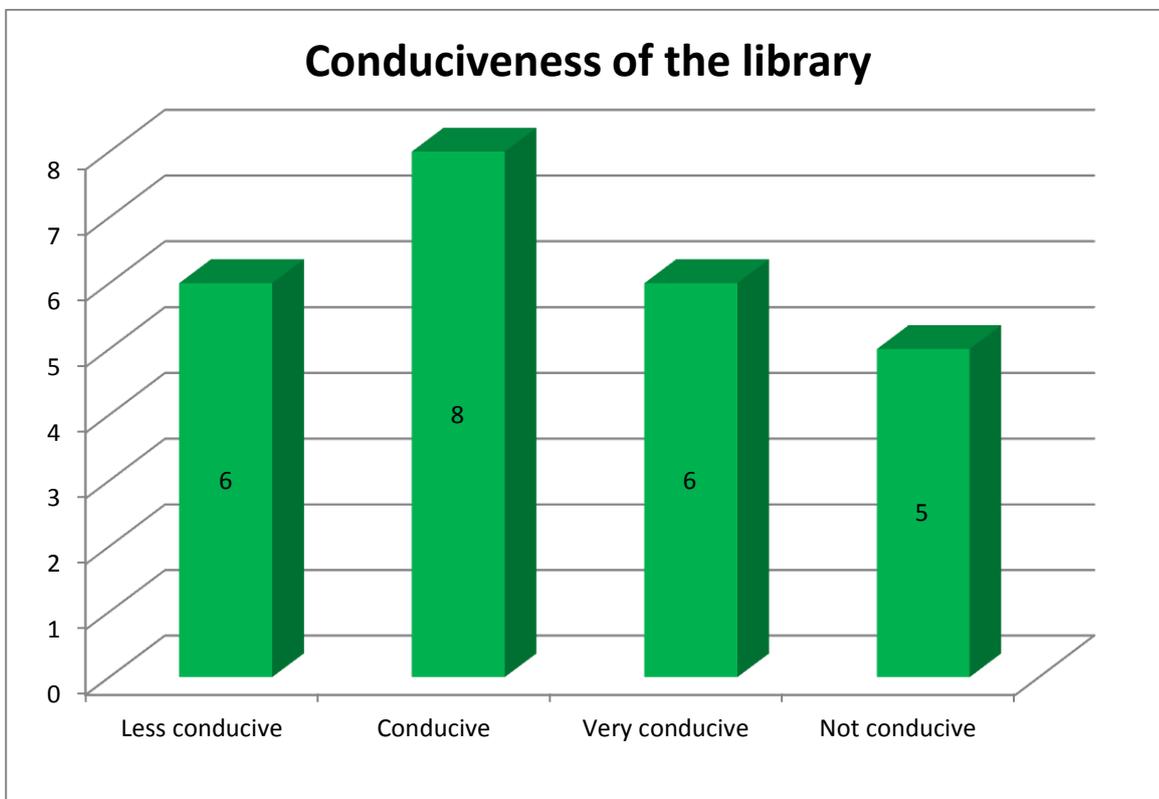
Although it is possible that the library may have stipulated a period of thirty minutes at a time in order to accommodate all of those needing to make use of the Internet, it is a very short time in which to conduct an adequate amount of research. As the library has very few computers, there will always be a shortage of available computers for school children to use to research and download the information which they need. From the findings it is evident that school children are sometimes turned away without being able to make use of the Internet, as some of the children reported occurrences of problems of this sort.

#### **4.5.3.2 HOW CONDUCTIVE IS THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE LIBRARY ENVIRONMENT TO STUDYING?**

The respondents were asked how conducive they found the environment of the library to studying, in order to determine whether or not the environment constitutes a factor contributing to the overall effectiveness of the library as a provider of information to school children. A group of 6 or twenty-four percent of the respondents indicated that they felt that the library provides a very conducive environment, while a further 8 or thirty-two percent found it to be conducive. Another group of 6 or twenty-four percent found it to be less conducive, while 5 or twenty percent felt it is not conducive at all. It seems possible, if not highly likely, that the negative responses to this question could have been occasioned by instances in which children had belongings stolen as a result of ineffective security measures, after having been obliged to leave their bags in the cloak room. In these cases, anxiety about the safety of their belongings would have inclined the children to regard the environment of the library as being less than conducive to studying or doing homework in a relaxed atmosphere. Another sense in which the library may have been perceived to offer an environment which is less than conducive stems from the dual role of school library played by the public library, in which the overcrowded conditions offer little space for children to do their homework or write their assignments. As was noted by Nkosi (2000) earlier,

disadvantaged school children, subjected to overcrowded conditions, cry out for space in the public libraries.

Another factor contributing to the environment of the library being perceived as not being conducive concerned the availability of furniture, as during examination times there tends to be little or no space to allow children to sit down, and as a result, some children are obliged to sit on the floor to write their assignments. Some of the children also said that the staff of the library could be intimidating at times when they attended to their enquiries or when they provided them with information, which would also contribute towards the environment of the library being perceived as being less than conducive.



**FIGURE 4.8: CONDUCTIVENESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE LIBRARY (N=25)**

## **4.6 INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

### **4.6.1 THE KIND OF INFORMATION REQUESTED FROM THE LIBRARY**

#### **INFORMATION FOR PROJECTS**

- Mathematics, history, geography, information pertaining to human anatomy, life orientation, scientific information, school research, information about the heroes of the liberation struggle, information required by the CAPS syllabus, information pertaining to Information Technology, information pertaining to health, Xhosa poems and drama.
- Spiritual and motivational books.
- Sporting information.
- Cultural information.

According to the responses, the information sources to be found in the library consist of books, including monographs, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, yearbooks and even charts. The respondents were completely unanimous concerning the importance which they believed computers to have for the effective functioning of the library. The school children who were interviewed provided a range of different explanations for why they felt that the computers and the Internet are vital components of the library as an effective provider of information. Some offered that answers to their homework and information for projects are readily available from computers, while others cited the speed with which computers are able to provide information and the vast range of articles and sources of information which are available. They also mentioned the great versatility of computers, as they also offer activities such as games and social networks, the easy retrieval of information and the equally easy storage of it in external devices such as memory sticks and memory cards.

## 4.7 FINDING INFORMATION IN THE LIBRARY

### DO USERS ALWAYS FIND INFORMATION IN THE LIBRARY?

**TABLE 4.12: OBTAINING ACCESS TO INFORMATION (N=22)**

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
yes	12	55
no	10	45

The respondents were asked how easy it is to find information in the library. While twelve or fifty-five percent of the children indicated that they always found information in the library, 10 or forty-five percent of the sample which responded to the questionnaire, almost half, answered that they did not always find the information which they needed in the library. This finding clearly demonstrated the need for a great deal of improvement with respect to the library's book collection, to enable children to find the information for which they are searching.

### 4.7.1 EXTENT OF SATISFACTION WITH THE INFORMATION FOUND IN THE LIBRARY

**TABLE 4.13: Extent of satisfaction with the information found (N=20)**

Extent	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Not at all	5	25
Moderately	9	45
Great extent	6	30

As is shown in Table 4.13 above, with respect to the question which was included in the questionnaire in order to determine the levels of satisfaction felt by the users of the library concerning the information which is to be found in it, 5 or twenty-five percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the information which they found in the library. A further 9 or forty-five percent indicated that they felt moderately satisfied, while 6 or thirty percent felt satisfied to a great extent with the information which they are able to obtain.

#### **4.7.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE IN TERMS OF THE KIND OF INFORMATION TO BE MADE AVAILABLE IN THE LIBRARY**

All of the participants were asked about the types of information which they felt should be included in the library's book collection or other sources of information. The suggestions of the respondents to the questionnaires and of those who took part in the interviews were remarkably similar and concerned additions to the collection with respect to mathematical information and current information, the need to update and revamp the library in terms of both the types of information which are available and the ways in which access to the information is to be gained, the need for the library to keep pace with current global trends, the need for global information to be made available in the library, the need for more books devoted to the sciences, the need for online information, the need for periodicals to be provided, along with journals, and the need for free and unlimited access to the Internet.

#### **4.7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE LEVELS OF SATISFACTION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH RESPECT TO THE INFORMATION WHICH THEY REQUIRE**

The suggestions made by the school children focused on their perceived needs in terms of being able to store information in computers and also online, for the staff of the library always to be willing and ready to search for information, for librarians to appear less intimidating to the users

of the library by adopting a more friendly attitude towards the school children, for the library to close on time and not before the stipulated closing time, for computers to be procured in order to make information easily accessible online, for the library also to make calculators available, for the library to remain open for longer than it does at present and for dedicated staff who are motivated to help people to be employed by the library.

#### **4.7.4 SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING PROBLEMS WHICH THE RESPONDENTS FELT HAD NOT BEEN COVERED IN THE QUESTIONS POSED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE OR IN THE INTERVIEWS**

Some of the respondents felt that the questions had been limited and that they had not covered the following topics:

- Security concerns arising as a result of school bags being stolen.
- The behaviour by the staff of the library.
- The treatment to which users of the library are subjected by the members of the staff.

#### **4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter was devoted to an analysis of the data and a presentation and the discussion of the findings of the study. Only high school children were surveyed. The data were presented in the form of tables, charts and graphs. The data had been obtained from the responses to the questionnaires, the answers provided by the school children who were interviewed, from the researchers' own observations and also from interviewing some of the members of staff during the process of handing out questionnaires. The information obtained from all of these sources was then coded, analysed, synthesised and presented through the use of SPSS, spreadsheets, graphs and tables. The challenges encountered by the library and the suggestions which were offered in

order to overcome them were also presented in this chapter. The next chapter will present a summary of the findings, the conclusions which were drawn from them, the limitations of the study and the recommendations which are offered on the basis of the findings.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This research took the form of an evaluative study of the effectiveness of public libraries as a means of providing information to school children. The Queenstown Public Library was used as a case study for this research. This chapter will present a summary of the findings, the conclusions which were drawn from them, the recommendations which are offered on the basis of the conclusions, suggestions for further studies and a final conclusion.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

It became immediately apparent to the researcher that the staff members at the Queenstown Public Library are qualified library professionals who have a considerable amount of knowledge with respect to their professional duties. However, it became equally apparent that the needs of school children are not being met to a very large extent, owing to problems associated with a lack of funding and the times during which the library is open.

It is also evident that the library is not able to provide information to school children very effectively. The school children in the research sample identified a number of problems which need to be remedied and overcome before they could honestly say that the library is providing information to them effectively. Although school children are attracted to the library mainly by the Internet, there are many limitations which mitigate against school children being able to make effective use of the Internet at the Queenstown Public Library at present. These limitations arise from a drastic shortage of computers in comparison with the numbers of school children who need to make use of them in order to obtain the information which they require. It was learned from the

findings that most school children are able to be allocated only thirty minutes in which to make use of the Internet in the library, for which they are required to pay.

The school children also felt that the information at the library is outdated and in great need of being updated and upgraded, particularly with respect to making available information which is relevant to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements or CAPS curriculum which is currently being used in schools. They also felt that the library needs to make online journals and global information available in the form of hard copies, in order for the information which is to be found in the library to be relevant to the needs of school children, particularly with respect to their school projects.

#### **5.2.1 HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN PROVIDING SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH THE INFORMATION WHICH THEY REQUIRE?**

The study found that eighty-two percent of the school children in the research sample felt that the library was useful to them. However, it needs to be added that among the group of respondents which made up eighty-two percent of the sample, the perceived degree of usefulness varied from being useful to a limited degree to extremely useful. None of the children was of the opinion that the library is not useful. From this finding it may be concluded that the library is an effective source of information, despite the fact that a number of identified problems, factors and challenges prevent it from being described as a very effective one at present.

#### **5.2.2 WHAT ATTRACTS SCHOOL CHILDREN TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THEIR SEARCH FOR INFORMATION?**

It could be established from the responses that the Internet services which are to be found in a public library constitute the focal attraction for school children, although the availability of both

novels and non-fiction books also attracts them, as does the availability of a certain amount of information which meets the requirements of their school curricula and enables them to do their homework.

### **5.2.3 HOW RELEVANT IS THE INFORMATION WHICH IS AVAILABLE AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES TO THE NEEDS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN?**

According to the finding presented in Chapter 4 with respect to the perceptions of the school children of how relevant they felt that the information which is available at the library is to their needs, a large group which constituted forty-four percent of the overall research sample, indicated that they did not find the information in the library relevant. From this finding it may be concluded that in the eyes of many of the children the public library's collection is out of date and probably does not accord with the requirements of the CAPS syllabus, which determines the nature of the information which is needed by the school children. This state of affairs could cause school children a considerable degree of anxiety, as most of them rely heavily on the library for the information which they need and for them the library constitutes the only readily available source of information which is available at little or no cost.

### **5.2.4 WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE INFORMATION WHICH IS REQUIRED BY SCHOOL CHILDREN?**

School children mainly need information which enables them to complete their research projects and also information which pertains to their current school syllabuses, with respect to subjects such as mathematics, history, geography, human anatomy and biology, life orientation, the natural sciences, school research, heroes of the liberation struggle, , health and hygiene and Xhosa poems and drama. The children also pointed out that they felt in need of information other than

academic information alone, such as information pertaining to spiritual and motivational concerns, various sporting activities and, most specifically, cultural information, as they felt that it was essential for them to know more about their culture.

As no mention was made of a lack of works of fiction in the library, it may reasonably be concluded that school children are satisfied with the novels and other material pertaining to fiction which are to be found in the library.

### **5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

It should be noted that the researcher does not live in the town in which the research was conducted, as she is based in East London. Conducting the study in Queenstown inevitably resulted in significant financial costs being incurred and severe time constraints affecting the entire study, as the researcher needed to be in the library to distribute questionnaires, to wait for them to be completed and to collect them at times when there were school children in the library. These circumstances meant that all of the research needed to be conducted in the afternoon on weekdays.

The researcher extracted a research sample from an overall population of more than five hundred school children between Grades 1 and 12. This population was narrowed down to include only children between Grades 8 and 11 and then, still further, to a smaller number of school children between these grades who made use of the public library, without necessarily being registered members. A research sample of fifty-eight school children was assembled to represent all of the school children between Grades 8 and 11 who use the library.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

- The Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture or DSRAC, which is the government department which manages public libraries, and the Lukhanji Municipality should hold meetings in order to discuss the way forward with respect to purchasing material for the library collection which is relevant to the needs of school children to enable the collection to become balanced and relevant to the curricula of school children.
- As school children are attracted by the Internet services and the computers in the library, it is recommended that more computers and ICT equipment should be purchased and that the computers should be programmed to enable them to offer the subjects which are studied by school children. An initiative of this sort would enable school children to perceive the library as a modern institution which is very relevant to their needs and its importance would be abundantly evident to them.
- It is recommended that a librarian dedicated to serving school children should be appointed in order to maintain the ability of the library to serve the needs of school children with respect to educational information, adequately. Should any difficulties arise in finding a suitable new staff member, an existing staff member could be allocated the responsibility of serving school children. This would also allow school children to understand that their concerns are being treated as being very important, in view of the fact that they would now have a specialised librarian to deal with their needs and concerns.
- It is also recommended that there be a minimum of 2 capacity building programmes per annum for the members of the library's staff. It is of great importance to channel some of the funds in the library budget to the training and development of human resources. This practice would enable staff members to attend refresher courses and equip them with knowledge concerning current trends in libraries throughout the world. This would also help to motivate school children in their working environment and enable librarians to serve the school children with skills which are continuously being upgraded. Appraisals of

performance could also serve to motivate professional librarians serving in the Queenstown Public Library.

- It is recommended that reading clubs or groups should be formed, in order to improve the reading and comprehension skills of school children. Although initiatives of this sort may have been introduced, in the absence of a reading culture, it remains difficult for school children to make full use of the library collection, which underlines the pressing need to encourage a reading culture, by all means possible.
- The researcher also recommends that the membership cards of the library should have a section in which the grades of the school children joining the library are recorded. The statistics of school children who are active members of the library need to be compiled in order to allow the library to become aware of the specific resources which need to be injected into the information services which are dedicated to the needs of school children. For example, if there are fifty school children in a particular grade who use the library, having 5 copies of a particular textbook which they need to consult would mean that the library is under-resourced with respect to this particular title. Being able to consult the statistics of school children would help to make informed decisions concerning information services which are related to the needs of school children.

The researcher ultimately recommends that the Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture or DSRAC, which is the custodian of all the public libraries in the province, in conjunction with the local municipalities, should collaborate actively to develop solutions for funding public libraries adequately. A strategy of this sort would enable public libraries to be adequately supplied with the resources and the trained personnel who are equipped with upgraded knowledge concerning new trends in libraries to provide effective services, with respect to information, to school children and make a concrete contribution to redressing the educational imbalances and injustices of the past.

## **5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

The researcher recommends that the following studies could be conducted in order to extend the scope of this one:

- A study of the contribution made by resources on the effectiveness and efficiency of the service delivery of public libraries.
- An evaluation of developing the collections of libraries as a means of improving productivity in public libraries.
- A study which focuses on the challenges faced by public librarians dedicated to serving school children.

## **5.6 FINAL CONCLUSION**

The main purpose of conducting this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of public libraries as a means of providing information to school children, by making use of a case study of the Queenstown Public Library. The study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of public libraries as a means of providing information to school children, and its objectives, apart from establishing the effectiveness of the library in this sense, were to establish what attracts school children to the library in their search for information, to discover how relevant the information to be found in libraries is to the needs of school children and to establish how public libraries in South Africa may better satisfy these needs. In order to obtain answers to these questions, fifty-eight school children between Grades 8 and 11 were sampled. The study found that although public libraries do provide effective services to school children, as they are the most readily available and affordable institutions to which children turn in search of information, a number of problems, challenges, obstacles and difficulties prevent them from being as effective as they need to be in this respect, particularly in their endeavour to assist previously disadvantaged school children to overcome the lingering effects of generations of inferior education.

## **5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the conclusion to the study by presenting a summary of the findings, the conclusions which were drawn from them and the recommendations which were offered on the basis of the conclusions. The main finding was that public libraries do provide effective services to school children, although their effectiveness is being hindered to a certain extent by problems and challenges which were identified during the course of conducting this study.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

##### Research Topic

An evaluation of the effectiveness of public libraries in providing information to school children: a case study of Queenstown Public Library, Queenstown, Eastern Cape.

Dear Participant

My name is Sheron Mabusa Ndlovu, a postgraduate student in the Department of Library and Information Science at University of Fort Hare. I am conducting research on the above stated topic. The research results could assist in improving ways in which public libraries provide information to school children. I am asking you to spare at most 20 minutes of your time to respond to the questions in this questionnaire.

Please do not write your name and surname as the information provided in this study will remain confidential. Should you have any further questions concerning the questionnaire, please contact me on; 078 902 8897, Email; [sheron.mabusa@gmail.com](mailto:sheron.mabusa@gmail.com) or my supervisor on; 040 602 2437 or Email; [eondari@ufh.ac.za](mailto:eondari@ufh.ac.za)

Please hand in your completed questionnaire at the library circulation desk.

Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully,

Sheron Mabusa- Ndlovu.

(Researcher)

**Section A to be answered by Librarians and Sections B- E to be answered by school children who use the public library**

**SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

A1. Please indicate whether you are a student or a library professional:

Library professional	
A student	

Please indicate your gender

Male	
Female	

Please indicate your age bracket (for library staff only):

20-25	
26-30	
31-35	
36-40	
41-50	
51 and above	

A2. For how long have you worked at Queenstown public library?

Less than a year	
1 year -2 years	
2 years-4 years	
5 years and above	

A3. What is your highest level of formal education and training?

Matric	
Certificate	
Diploma	
Bachelor's degree	
Post Graduate qualification	

A4. How many branches of the Main Queenstown public library are there?

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A5. How many users are registered members of Queenstown Public library?

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A6. Please indicate below the user groups of the public library (select as many as may apply)

School children	
Teachers	
Professionals in town	
Farmers	
Business community	
Researchers	
Any other (please specify)	

A7. Does the library specifically acquire information sources geared towards satisfying information needs for school children?

yes	
no	

A8. Please state the challenges the public library faces in satisfying information needs of school children from the surrounding schools:

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A9. In your opinion, what do you suggest should be done so that the public library may better satisfy information needs school children? (Please give as many suggestions as you may think of)

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**SECTION B: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF QUEENSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY IN PROVIDING SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH INFORMATION**

B1. What grade are you in?

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B2. How frequently do you visit the public library in a month? (Please indicate your answer by ticking the appropriate box)

More than 10 times	
5-9 times	
4-8 times	
1-3 times	
never	

B3. How useful do you find the information that you access at the public library?

Not useful	
A little useful	
Very useful	
Extremely useful	
No opinion	

B4. Do you find the library staff helpful in assisting you to obtain the information you seek in the public library? Rate them on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least helpful and 5 being the most helpful.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

**SECTION C: WHAT ATTRACTS SCHOOL CHILDREN TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THEIR PURSUIT FOR INFORMATION?**

C1. What attracts you to the public library? Rank your attractions from number 1-5 according to what you consider important, with one being the most important attraction and five the least important attraction

Novels(Fiction) books	
The Internet	
Non-Fiction books	

Magazines	
Videos	

C2. For how long have you visited the public library since you started using it ?

1month- 11months	
1 year -2years	
2years-3years	
3years and more	

C3. Besides the public library, where else do you get the information for your assignments?

School library	
Internet cafes	
Newspapers and magazines	
Ask around from people	

C4. What challenges do you usually face when searching for information in the public library?

Lack of resources in the library	
Time constraints	
Lack of good service by the library staff	
None	

C5. What do you think must be done in the public library to improve the way you access information? (Please give as many suggestions as you may think of)

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**SECTION D: RELEVANCE OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

D1. How relevant is the information that you find in the public library?

Relevance	Tick
Not relevant	
Not sure	
Very highly relevant	
Very relevant	
Less relevant	

D2. Which information sources do you have access to at the public library?

Source	Tick
Books	
Newspapers	
Journals	
other	

D3. Do you have free access to the internet at the public library?

	Tick
Yes	
No	

D4. If so, for how long per visit?

Duration	Tick
30 minutes	
1 hour	
2 hours	
Other (please specify)	

D5. Do you find the library environment conducive?

A little conducive	
Conducive	
Very conducive	
Not conducive	

## SECTION E: INFORMATION NEEDS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

E1. What kind of information do you usually look for in the public library?

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E2 (a). Do you usually get the information that you need?

Response	Tick
Yes	
No	

E2 (b). If your answer to E2 (a) is “yes” Please indicate the extent to which the information satisfies your needs.

Extent	Tick
Not at all	
Moderately	
To a great extent	

E4. What kind of information would you like the public library to provide in future?

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E5. What do you suggest the public library should do to better satisfy for your information needs?

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E6. Please suggest any other relevant item which has not been adequately covered in this study:

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**Thank you for your time and patience.**

## APPENDIX 2: AUTHORITY LETTER FROM LUKHANJI MUNICIPALITY



# LUKHANJI

MUNICIPALITY - UMASIPALA - MUNISIPALITIE

DIRECTORATE: COMMUNITY SERVICES  
Private Bag X7111, 8 Owen Street, Queenstown  
Tel: 045 807 2603  
Tel: 045 807 2601  
Fax: 045 807 2618

Our Ref: C3/5 (Libraries)

08 December 2014

**The Head of Department**  
**Library & Information Science**  
Prof. EM Ondari-Okemwa  
University of Fort Hare  
ALICE

Dear Sir

### COLLECTION OF INFORMATION FOR MASTERS DEGREE STUDY – SHERON NDLOVU

Your letter dated 20 November 2014 has reference.

It gives us great pleasure to offer Ms Ndlovu our support in collecting information for the case study on Queenstown Library for her Master's Degree.

We hereby give her the relevant consent to undertake the research regarding the library and the library patrons.

Yours faithfully



G. J. DEEL  
DIRECTOR: COMMUNITY SERVICES

## **APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **SECTION A**

#### **Background Information**

- a) What grade are you in?
- b) How many times do you come to the library per week?
- c) How old are you?

### **SECTION B**

#### **Effectiveness of Queenstown Public Library**

- a) Since you use the Queenstown library, are you able to find help for what you are usually looking for?
- b) If you usually find help, would you also tell other school children to come to the library?

### **SECTION C**

#### **Attraction**

- a) I believe that there are other places where you can find information for your homework, why then do you always come to the library?
- b) If you did not come to do search for information to give answers to your homework, would you still come to the library?
- c) If so, why?

### **SECTION D**

#### **Relevance**

- a) Do you think the library contributes to your school work? Explain your answer.

## **SECTION E**

### **Information needs**

- a) In which source of information do you usually find information in the library? For example books, internet or magazines
- b) Do you think the computers and the internet are important in the library? explain

### **SUGGESTIONS**

- a) Do you have any challenges in the library?
- b) What are your suggestions?

## APPENDIX 4: OBSERVATION GUIDE

Observation Guide	
1. Services offered by the library	
a) Use of computers in the library	
2. Information needs	
a) What kind of information school children search for in the library?	
3. Librarians and school children	
a) How librarians relate to school children	
4. Infrastructure	
a) Is the space and resources adequate to serve school children?	

## APPENDIX 5: ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER



University of Fort Hare  
*Together in Excellence*

### ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number: OND071SNDL01

Project title: **An evaluation of the effectiveness of public libraries in providing information to school children: A case study of Queenstown Public Library, Queenstown, Eastern Cape.**

Nature of Project: Masters

Principal Researcher: Sheron Ndlovu

Supervisor: Prof EM Ondari-Okemwa

Co-supervisor:

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

**Special conditions:** Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

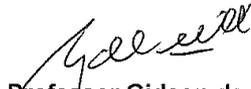
Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
  - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
  - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
  - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
  - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

  
**Professor Gideon de Wet**  
**Dean of Research**

27 November 2015