

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**ADULT USER PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICES
PROVIDED BY THE BESSIE HEAD LIBRARY IN
PIETERMARITZBURG, MSUNDUZI, KWAZULU-NATAL**

SHANITHA BHIM

2010

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PROVIDED BY THE BESSIE HEAD LIBRARY IN
PIETERMARITZBURG, MSUNDUZI, KWAZULU-NATAL**

By

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PGDIS, B.Bibl. Hons. (UKZNP)

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for the degree of

MASTER OF INFORMATION STUDIES (MIS)

**In the School of Sociology and Social Studies of the University of KwaZulu-
Natal,**

Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

2010

Declaration

I, Mrs Shanitha Bhim declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My husband, Trevor, and my daughter, Thacia for their unconditional love, support and continuous encouragement and understanding.

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I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the following people for their assistance and contribution to this study:

- My supervisors, Mr. Athol Leach and Mrs. Fiona Bell, for their professional and expert guidance throughout the course of this study.
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- Above all, I thank Almighty God for granting me the strength, wisdom and patience to undertake and complete this study.

Abstract

This study examined the quality of service provided by the Bessie Head Library from the perspective of the adult users of the library. The study assessed the adult users' perceptions of the quality of service and determined the level of user satisfaction at the Bessie Head Library. The purpose of the study was to identify gaps in the library services and to measure the users' perceptions of the quality of the collections, staff services and library facilities.

The study population consisted of 200 registered adult library users. Of the 200 adults under study, 197 responded to the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 98.5% chosen by means of a convenience sample.

The LibQUAL+™ survey instrument that was used in this study was modified and adapted for use in a public library, as the majority of research using the LibQUAL instrument was undertaken in academic libraries. The instrument consisted of both open-ended and closed questions. The three dimensions of service quality, that is, access to information, staff services and library facilities, formed the core of the instrument. An interview schedule was used to elicit background information from the Library Manager and Principal Librarian, on issues of library services, collection development policy, funding and general library issues. The results from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS to determine the frequency of responses. These were presented in the form of tables and graphs. The interview results were analyzed qualitatively, using thematic content analysis.

The results from this study indicate that there is a gap between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality at the Bessie Head Library. The extent of the gap varies depending on the individual services. The users' expectations were not in keeping with the actual experiences at the library, especially with regard to access to information, as users experienced problems with Internet access and the reference collection. The level of satisfaction varied among the different user categories and the findings revealed that the majority of adult users rated the overall quality of services as good and that the library is, to a large extent, excelling in service provision. Based on the findings, recommendations were made to address problems presented in this study.

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List of abbreviations

ARL – Association of Research Libraries

BSC – Balanced Scorecard

EFQM – European Foundation for Quality Management

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

IFLA – International Federation of Library Associations

ISO – International Organization for Standardization

IT – Information Technology

LibQUAL+™ – Library Quality

LIS – Library and Information Services

LISM – Library and Information Sector Improvement Model

OPAC – Online Public Access Catalogue

PacLISA – Public and Community Libraries Inventory of South Africa

SACLIS – South African Community Library and Information Services

SERVQUAL – Service Quality

TQM – Total Quality Management

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Chapter 1 Introduction

In this, the introductory chapter, various components of the study will be introduced. This will include the research problem, the purpose and objectives of the study, including the rationale, research questions, theoretical framework, scope and limitations and definitions of key terms. In order to elicit some background information, this chapter will also highlight the importance of service quality regarding users' expectations and perceptions.

1.1 Background of the study

Providing a service that is acceptable and meets the needs and expectations of its users is critical for libraries. The assessment of the quality of library service in relation to users' expectations in order to determine whether their expectations are being met or not is equally important. This study will attempt to assess adult users' perceptions of services provided at the Bessie Head Library. Adult users in this context will refer to those who are over the age of 18 years and in possession of adult library membership cards.

Since its inception, the library has not evaluated the quality of the services it offers to its users from the perspective of the user. Quantitative indicators such as collection size, number of staff employed, number of people entering the library, but not necessarily users, resources loaned and membership statistics have been and are used as a means of measuring performance and service. This does not however reflect the concerns or perceptions of the user. It is with this element that the study is concerned.

Kachoka (2010) states that a quality service is one which meets the expectations and requirements of the customers. Quinn (1997) cited by Kachoka (2010) contends that measuring service quality is important in libraries as policy makers are questioning the role of libraries. Libraries are now more than ever having to justify their value in these times of budgetary pressure, dwindling public funds and competition from other public institutions.

Quality is a basic philosophy and requirement of the library profession and all libraries are striving to deliver the highest quality of service (Sahu 2007). To ensure that a multi-dimensional assessment of quality is achieved, libraries have and are turning their assessment focus outward to their users. Creaser (2006) states that in a service environment, how users perceive and value what is available is central to effective service design and delivery.

Nitecki (1997) states that the primary focus of a library is “service”. The tendency to measure the quality of a library in quantifiable terms regarding its collection and use, does not adequately address the community’s demands for information. Librarians must therefore acquire new and innovative ways to measure quality in libraries. Traditional measures of library evaluation such as the number of books on the shelves in relation to the number of people served are no longer sufficient. Majid, Anwar and Eisenschitz (2001) contend that this has to be changed since the success or effectiveness of a library can also be measured through user satisfaction. Niyonsenga and Bizimana (1996) in Naidu (2009) state that the library user is the object of study and it is his or her opinions that provide the measure of user satisfaction which is indirectly measured using a certain number of indicators that determine the level of library performance. It is evident that libraries are still far from being user driven operations, instead they are largely internally focused. This means that factors such as collection size, circulation statistics and the number of users entering the library are still being taken into account. Systematic efforts are thus needed to help libraries to “listen to their users” (Naidu 2009).

In order to listen to their users, libraries should assess users’ opinions on the services they deliver. This is usually done by surveys handed out or mailed to a random sample of users or by a web-based survey on the library’s website (Poll and te Boekhorst 2007). User surveys can ask for different levels of experience with library services, for example:

- The particular experience and satisfaction with the last library visit or the last use of a library service
- The long-time experience and satisfaction with all or individual library services
- The experience and satisfaction compared with the expected quality level (Poll and te Boekhorst 2007).

According to Quinn (1997), providing quality service means being able to view services from the users’ perspective and then being able to meet the users’ expectations for service as such users define value. Whittaker (1993) in Naidu (2009) states that “undoubtedly any library that aims at reaching the highest level of service, that is, to provide for the needs of users as individuals is attempting to be user-centred.

1.2 The research problem

The mission of the Bessie Head Library is to improve the quality of life of the people of the Msunduzi Municipal region by being responsive to their information needs and to provide resources that enhance and contribute towards their educational, cultural and recreational needs (Phoenix 2007).

The library is expected to implement this mission statement by providing a service that demonstrates how well it is operating and the extent to which users are benefitting from the service. Quinn (1997) states that the means by which the library can provide evidence of its contribution is by delivering excellent user services. The Bessie Head Library needs to gauge if it is offering a quality service from the users' perspective. The current method of assessment based on the quantifiable aspects should not be seen as the only way to measure service quality. A user-based survey will provide the library with an understanding of users' perceptions of library services provided and also assess the quality of services.

Numerous studies on user perceptions of library service in academic and research libraries have been undertaken internationally and to a lesser extent in South Africa (See Kyriellidou 2001, Simba 2006, Naidu 2009, Kachoka 2010). There is no indication that such studies have been conducted on public libraries in South Africa. It could be assumed that other measurement approaches of assessing public library services have been adopted.

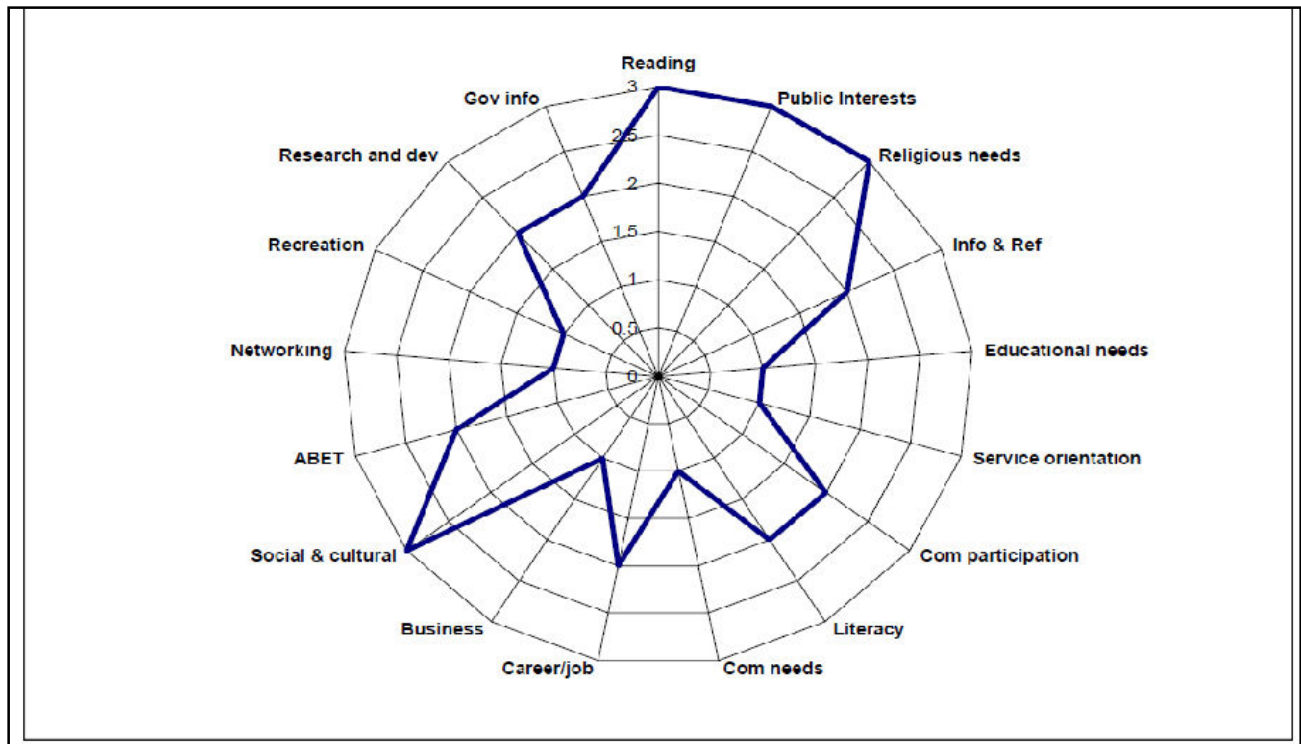
Since South Africa's transition to democracy in the 1990s useful and reliable statistical data on South African public and community libraries has not been readily available (Lor, van Helden and Bothma 2005). The authors claimed that earlier reports by Lor (1998) and Leach (1998) had not provided comprehensive statistics. It is essential to keep and regularly update contextualized data in order to be able to successfully provide library services to the community and to effectively manage these services. However, during 2000 to 2004 a project was undertaken to create a comprehensive and informative inventory of South African public and community libraries, the Public and Community Libraries Inventory of South Africa (PaCLISA) (Lor, van Helden and Bothma 2005). Although this inventory was intended to provide an accurate and reliable picture of the shape and size of the library environment, this project was not evaluative from the library user's point of view.

According to the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Public Library Manifesto, the public library, being the local gateway to information, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of individuals and groups. The IFLA/UNESCO guidelines are relevant for a fully resourced library (KPMG Status Quo Report 2007).

More recently, a survey undertaken by KPMG on the roles of public libraries in South Africa for the Department of Arts and Culture and compiled in the Status Quo Report (2007) found that many public libraries in South Africa are only providing the basic library services of lending and receiving books and other reading material while other services remain under-utilised (KPMG Status Quo Report 2007).

Figure 1 below taken from the KPMG Status Quo Report (2007) illustrates the roles that libraries are currently performing in South Africa. The vertical axis ranks the roles from 1 to 3 (1=does not fulfil its role, 2=somewhat fulfils its role, 3=fulfils its role). The graph is interpreted by connecting the shape in the middle of the figure for each role with the number on the vertical axis.

Figure 1 Roles of Public Libraries in South Africa



Source: KPMG Status Quo Report (2007)

From Figure 1 it is evident that the primary needs for reading material, public interests, religious, social and cultural information are being met as expected by the community.

However, the ability of libraries to meet the developmental needs of education support, career and job guidance, business opportunities and networking still leaves a lot to be desired. It must be noted that whilst the KPMG survey looks at public libraries in South Africa, there is a need to focus on the local level and address such issues in specific libraries in order to evaluate library services from the perspective of the user and also the librarian.

The KPMG Norms and Standards report (2007), states that apart from stipulating which services should be provided, there should also be general performance measurement standards for libraries and librarians. As a way of measuring these, the report states that user satisfaction surveys should be undertaken periodically to assess certain functions, staff, systems and products. The “Batho Pele” (People First) principles, which are drawn from the

Constitution along with other evaluation mechanisms, can also be applied to measuring achievements against established norms and standards. Other measures that could be used to assess service delivery are circulation figures, opening hours, speed of service delivery, modes of access to the service (e.g. telephonic or online connections), access for the physically handicapped, and the distance to the service point (KPMG 2007).

It is against the background of the importance of library performance generally and evaluating service quality from the perspective of the adult library user and the absence of such research that the proposed study needs to be seen. This study seeks to investigate the perceptions of adult library users concerning library services provided by the Bessie Head Library. It must however be noted that this study will focus only on registered adult library users (see below). The non-registered adults who frequent the library are also considered to be an important user group but will not be dealt with in this study.

1.3 Rationale of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the adult users' perceptions of services provided by the Bessie Head Library. As user based surveys have not been undertaken at the library before, it is anticipated that this study will provide a framework for future surveys of adult user perceptions of library services at the Bessie Head Library. This study should reveal the performance level of the library in terms of service provision to adult users and identify perceived strengths and weaknesses in its services.

Between 2004 and 2007 the Bessie Head Library was awarded a total grant of \$4.4 million by the Carnegie Corporation of New York for upgrading the library (Phoenix 2007). This grant allowed for the total refurbishment of the library and the provision of modern equipment. Given this massive injection of funds it is perhaps timely to determine user perceptions of library service delivery. This study of the perceptions of adult users will determine the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst the adult users. The results of this study may then be used as a means to address problems identified and develop policies and guidelines that will effectively assist the management and staff in improving the quality of services to users.

1.4 The objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are what the researcher aims to accomplish. Based on the above stated purpose of the study, the specific objectives were:

- To determine library users' expectations of the quality of service.
- To determine library users' perceptions of the quality of library service.
- To determine whether there is a gap between the expectations and perceptions of library users.
- To establish the level of satisfaction of library users.

1.5 The key research questions to be asked

Given the above problem, purpose and objectives, the proposed study attempted to answer the following questions:

- What are the patterns and frequency of adult usage?
- What are the adult users' expectations of the Bessie Head Library service?
- What are the perceptions of adult users about the quality of services provided by the Bessie Head Library?
- What are the gaps between adult user expectations and adult user perceptions?
- Are the adult users satisfied with the service they receive at the Bessie Head Library?

Based on the above questions and the findings of the study, recommendations will be made in this regard.

1.6 Theoretical framework

According to Quinn (1997) the SERVQUAL model on which the LibQUAL model is based is a comprehensive measure because it measures both customer expectations and perceptions and has been extensively tested across a wide variety of service settings. The SERVQUAL model was developed in 1988 by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry as an instrument for assessing customer perceptions of service quality in service and retailing organizations (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1988). Quinn (1997) goes on to state that in a library context, the model could be adapted to reference, access services and collection development. SERVQUAL is commonly used in the world of business when companies are losing market shares to competitors. In the library environment such issues may or may not apply. The proposed study will be constructed on the modified SERVQUAL model and the theory behind it. This is because LibQUAL+TM, the modified SERVQUAL model, provides a more

reliable survey instrument in terms of measuring the gap between user expectations and perceptions (Marnane 2004).

Numerous and extensive studies on service quality using the LibQUAL+™ approach have been conducted in academic libraries internationally, for example, the University of Washington Library (Kyrillidou and Hipps 2001). The SERVQUAL instrument was used to conduct a study at Sungai Petani Public Library in Malaysia (Zakaria *et al* 2009). No such studies using the LibQUAL or SERVQUAL instruments have as yet been undertaken in public libraries in South Africa. The reasons for this are not clear. Studies using LibQUAL+™ have however been undertaken in academic libraries in South Africa. This will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

LibQUAL+™ is based on the Gap theory which constitutes the gaps or differences between the service that a customer expects to receive and what the customer actually receives. The gaps summarized by Nitecki (1996) are as follows:

Gap 1: The discrepancy between customer's expectations and management's perceptions of these expectations.

Gap 2: The discrepancy between management's perceptions of customer's expectations and service quality specifications.

Gap 3: The discrepancy between service quality specifications and actual service delivery.

Gap 4: The discrepancy between actual service delivery and what is communicated to customers about it.

Gap 5: The discrepancy between customers expected services and the perceived service delivered.

As stated earlier, LibQUAL+™ is an extension of the SERVQUAL tool, and, as its name implies, LibQUAL+™ attempts to go beyond typical quantitative evaluations of library accomplishments to collect useful data about library services (Nicula and Laseter 2003). The LibQUAL+™ instrument has undergone several revisions in terms of dimensions and core items during its developmental period. In 2004 the instrument was modified and had 22 core items spanning across three dimensions: effect of service, information control and library as a place; 11 additional items covering information literacy outcomes, general satisfaction with library service, and library usage trends; general demographic items and a comments box for

open user comments (Crawford 2006). Currently LibQUAL+™ uses the 2004 version which was adapted and used for this study.

LibQUAL+™ enables service providers to understand how users think about and evaluate libraries. It uses the framework of users' perceptions and expectations to improve libraries and is a protocol that is scalable and useful for local planning and decision making (Kyriallidou and Higgs 2001). The LibQUAL+™ model can be used to measure users attitudes towards the quality of service that a library renders and can be regarded as a comprehensive measure because it measures both users expectations and perceptions and it has been tested extensively across a wide variety of service settings.

In order to understand and assess the perceptions of adult library users on services provided by the Bessie Head Library, this study used the LibQUAL+™ instrument based on the Gap theory with Gap 5 being the focus of the study. It must be noted that the instrument will be adapted for use in a public library setting because as mentioned the majority of research using the SERVQUAL and LibQUAL+™ models were undertaken in academic and research libraries.

1.7 Definitions of relevant terms used in this study

The following definitions show the meanings that they are intended to convey when used for the purpose of this study.

1.7.1 Perception

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Wehmeier 2000) 'perception' is defined as noticing things, especially with the senses; the ability to understand the true nature of something; an idea, a belief or an image you have as a result of how someone sees or understands something. For the purpose of this study 'perceptions' will be used with regard to the views of adult library users at the Bessie Head Library on services provided.

1.7.2 Public Library

A public library is an organization established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government. The public library provides access to knowledge, information, lifelong learning and works of imagination through a range of

resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment (Koontz and Gubbin 2010).

1.7.3 Library users

One who uses the public library serving the geographic community of which he or she is a member (Evans 1969). When applied to the study's subjects, 'library users' mean adult users who have membership of the Bessie Head Public Library.

1.7.4 Customer

According to Quinn (1997) "recipients of service quality are commonly referred to as customers, but the use of the word 'customer' has been criticized for implying that the user is a passive consumer of information, rather than being actively engaged in the learning process". In the context of this study the term user and customer are used interchangeably and refer to the adult library members of the Bessie Head Library.

1.7.5 Service quality

The concept of service quality in the context of a library can be defined as the "difference between users' expectations and perceptions of service performance and the reality of service" (Sahu 2007). Sahu (2007) further explains that service quality means being able to view services from the customers' point of view and then meeting the customers' expectation for service.

1.8 Limitations and delimitations

Out of the five gaps identified by Nitecki (1996) this study, as noted, will only focus on Gap 5 which refers to the discrepancy between users' expectations of service quality and their perceptions of the actual service delivered which is the basis of a user-centred definition of service quality and a conceptual basis for the SERVQUAL model.

The study assessed only a sample of registered adult users. Non-members frequenting the library were excluded. The ideal would be to sample all library users but time limitations and the requirements for this study limited it to a selected sample of respondents.

1.9 Chapter outline

The outline of the remainder of the study will adhere to the structure described below:

Chapter 2 will provide a background to the Bessie Head Library and a review of the relevant literature. The role of public libraries in a democratic South Africa, the concept of social exclusion and social capital for the South African public library situation and the SERVQUAL and LibQUAL+TM instruments which have been used in service quality assessments in libraries will be discussed.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology adopted in this study. This includes sampling, the size and characteristics of the population, data collection methods and the data analysis procedures that will be followed.

Chapter 4 provides the presentation of the results and the analysis of the data. Information collected from the respondents at the Bessie Head Library for this study is reported.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the research results in relation to the research questions and the literature reviewed.

Chapter 6, in this, the final chapter, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research are made.

1.10 Summary of the chapter

In this introductory chapter, the various components of the study were introduced. The research problem, rationale, research questions, theoretical framework, definitions and the structure of the study was discussed. It is against this background that an understanding of the present research will be attained. This chapter also highlighted the importance of service quality regarding users' expectations and perceptions.

Chapter 2 Overview of the Bessie Head Library and Literature review

In this chapter important aspects of the environment in which the study was situated are examined in order to provide the context of the study. This chapter provides a brief history and description of the Bessie Head Library and a review of relevant literature on the role of public libraries in a democratic South Africa and the concepts of social exclusion and social capital.

South Africa's transition from apartheid rule to a democracy has brought with it its own set of challenges including that of access to information. Within the South African context, public libraries can be seen as an essential institution in the growth and sustainability of democracy through equitable access to information and overcoming the barriers of social exclusion and social capital (Raju and Raju 2010). In addition to this, related studies on service quality assessment in the library context will be identified and discussed.

The review of relevant literature is fundamental as it identifies issues related to the research topic. This will support the present study and add useful insight and background knowledge to such research. Kaniki (2006) states that the review of relevant literature is an essential component of the research design process as it serves as the starting point for the design of the data gathering instruments used in a study. In keeping with this, the researcher has given attention to studies conducted by other researchers that will support the present study.

2.1 Overview of the Bessie Head Library

Pietermaritzburg's first public library was started in 1845, mainly through the efforts of David Dale Buchanan, editor of the local newspaper, the Natal Witness. This library was initially known as the "Reading Room". The Natal Society Library in Pietermaritzburg, was founded in 1851 by a group of prominent residents hoping to promote the Colony of Natal. The aim of the Natal Society was to promote the development of the physical, commercial, agricultural and other resources of Natal and Eastern Africa, including the general and natural history of the Colony. From 1851 to 1967 the Natal Society Library operated as a subscription library. In 1916 the Natal Society Library was granted Legal Deposit status. In 1967 the Pietermaritzburg Municipality signed an agreement with the Natal Society in terms of which the Municipality would provide an annual grant to the Natal Society to operate a

free public library for Pietermaritzburg. This led to the Natal Society Library moving to new premises in Church Street and opening its doors to all race groups in 1975, being one of the first public libraries in South Africa to do so (Buckley 1988).

In anticipation of becoming a municipal library, the Natal Society Library was affiliated to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Public Library and Information Service (KZNPPLIS). On 1 April 2004, the Msunduzi Municipality took over the library from the Natal Society and the former Natal Society Library became the Msunduzi Municipal Library Services. In July 2007, the library was named the Bessie Head Library. The library is presently managed by John Morrison (Anderson and Phoenix 2007).

2.1.1 Mission statement of the Bessie Head Library

As noted under 1.2, the mission of the library is to

improve the quality of life of the people of the Msunduzi Municipal region by anticipating their informational needs and by providing an appropriately substantial and supportive contribution towards their educational, cultural and recreational needs (Library information 2007).

2.1.2 Annual reports

According to the library manager (Morrison 2010), annual reports are no longer compiled. The library instead compiles quarterly reports which are submitted to the Regional Community Services Portfolio Committee of the Msunduzi Municipality. This report is largely statistical and consists of membership statistics (the number of people registering as library members), user statistics (the number of books and audiovisual materials that are issued, returned and used in the library), acquisitions statistics and cataloguing statistics.

2.1.3 Library staff

The library staff consists of 88 members of both professional and non-professionals. The library management consists of a Library Manager, Chief Administrative Officer and four Principal Librarians. There are nine Senior Librarians and 10 librarians. The Senior Librarians manage the user services and cataloguing departments. The library staff further consists of 18 senior library assistants and 37 library assistants. Other staff includes two data capturers, two receptionists and four computer technicians.

2.1.4 Legal deposit status

The Bessie Head Library is one of five legal deposit libraries in South Africa (the only one in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal) which have been accorded legal deposit status in terms of the Legal Deposit Act, No. 54 of 1997. Having had this status since 1916, the library has amassed a huge collection of South African books, pamphlets, periodicals and newspapers which it is obliged to preserve and make available to present and future generations. This collection is a major resource for academics, legislators, students and government departments.

2.1.5 Services and departments in the library

This section will look at the various departments and services offered by each department at the Bessie Head Library.

2.1.5.1 Information and technical services

Library collections housed under the umbrella of information and technical services include the legal deposit collection, the adult reference library, periodicals and the cataloguing department.

2.1.5.2 Periodicals department

The periodicals collection is housed on both the 4th floor and two floors below ground level. There are approximately five thousand titles. All serial publications submitted under the Legal Deposit Act, together with a small range of publications purchased on subscription are received, recorded, catalogued and stored. These items are not for loan, but may be used by the public in the library. The periodicals department was expanded and refurbished in 2008. Staff in the periodicals department consists of one senior librarian, one librarian and four library assistants.

2.1.5.3 Adult reference library

The adult reference library is situated on the 1st floor of the library and contains an extensive collection of reference materials in various formats – quick reference, encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, academic books, tertiary textbooks, government publications, maps and pamphlets. The reference collection is greatly enriched by the material received under the Legal Deposit Act. Staffing consists of one senior librarian, one librarian, two senior library assistants and three library assistants.

2.1.5.4 Interlibrary-loans

This service is available to library members and staff and is managed by the adult reference department. Interlibrary-loans are done when the library does not have a particular item. The item is requested from another library by the interlibrary-loans librarian. Any item borrowed from libraries outside of KwaZulu-Natal are subjected to a fee requirement but items available within the Province are free. Fiction and legal deposit material are restricted from interlibrary-loans. The librarian from the adult reference library oversees the interlibrary-loans service.

2.1.5.5 Internet Cafe

The Carnegie Internet Cafe at the Bessie Head Library was established in 2006. This service was made possible due to the Bessie Head Library being a recipient, as mentioned, of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The Internet Cafe is housed on the 1st floor of the library and accommodates 140 users. Whilst the Internet services are free of charge, photocopying, printing and scanning facilities all have a service cost. In addition to this, anyone wishing to use the Internet facilities must have membership to the library. Group bookings for schools and organizations can be also be arranged and basic computer training and assistance is provided by Internet staff. The Internet Cafe is managed by four computer technicians.

2.1.6 Adult lending services

The adult lending services include the adult lending library, the music/audio-visual library, the registration department and mobile services.

2.1.6.1 Adult lending library

The adult lending library, situated on the ground floor, has a large and comprehensive collection of fiction and non-fiction, and a selection of the more popular magazines. Registered adult library members may borrow up to 10 library items (books, magazines and audio-visual) material free of charge. Pensioners and staff are allowed to borrow up to 14 library items. The adult lending library also offers a book reserve service which allows library users to place on reserve any popular non-fiction title. Library users are notified telephonically when the book is available. Loan periods are two weeks but telephonic renewals are permitted. Staff in the adult lending department consist of one senior librarian, one librarian, one senior library assistant and six library assistants.

2.1.6.2 Large print collection

This forms part of the adult lending collection and is located in a separate area on the ground floor. This collection consists both of fiction and non-fiction books and is for people who find reading ordinary print difficult, for example the aged and people with deteriorating or slightly impaired vision. As this section cannot accommodate all the large print books, the remainder is housed on the third floor in the mobile services department.

2.1.6.3 Registration department

The registration counter is situated in the adult lending library and deals with the registration of the public as members of the library. They also renew expired membership and receive payment for lost books. To register as a library member, applicants must complete the official registration application and provide their identity document and proof of residential address. Membership is free to all living within the borough of the Pietermaritzburg-Msunduzi Municipality. The registration department is managed by one senior library assistant and one library assistant.

2.1.6.4 Music and audio-visual library

The music and audio-visual library houses collections of music CDs, audio-books, DVDs and music scores for recreational, educational and cultural purposes. All items except DVDs may be borrowed for a loan period of two weeks and may be renewed twice. DVDs are lent for two nights and may not be renewed. Music reference books are also available. Members of the public, including school learners are permitted to make bookings to view subject videos and DVDs in the “sitting room” corner of the music/audio-visual library. Staff consist of one senior library assistant and one library assistant.

2.1.6.5 American Corner

The American Corner is a miniature public library within the Bessie Head library situated on the ground floor. The Corner was established in terms of a partnership agreement between the Msunduzi Municipality, the Bessie Head Library and the Public Affairs section of the United States Embassy. The American Corner in the library was the first to be established in KwaZulu-Natal and the second in South Africa. The collection consists of fiction, non-fiction and reference books, periodicals, DVDs and CD ROMS on America and/or by American authors. Four computers are available with free Internet access for online research on and about America. The American Corner and the American Consulate in Durban run

programmes, workshops and film shows with many speakers brought out from the United States for this purpose. The education office from the Consulate in Durban visits the library regularly to meet with anyone wishing to study in the United States. The Corner is presently managed by one library assistant.

2.1.6.6 Mobile services department

The mobile services department is situated on the third floor and includes the following:

2.1.6.6.1 Housebound service

This service makes provision for the aged and frail who are still avid readers but unable to visit the library. The housebound service makes fortnightly visits to old-age homes and retirement complexes and also to individuals in their own homes. This is a well received service.

2.1.6.6.2 Travelling library

The travelling library is a mobile bus service that visits eight different suburban venues (e.g. shopping malls) in Pietermaritzburg. This service provides convenience for those that do not want to come into the centre of town for their reading material.

2.1.7 Children's services

Children's services include the children's lending and children's reference departments.

2.1.7.1 Children's lending library

The children's lending library is situated on the ground floor of the new wing which was built and furnished as part of a joint venture between the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Public Library and Information Service, the Msunduzi Municipality and the Carnegie Corporation of New York who awarded the grant funding to the Bessie Head Library. The new wing was opened in July 2006.

The children's lending library provides a wide and comprehensive range of picture books, fiction and non-fiction for children from infancy to young adulthood. They also offer weekly story-telling sessions, provide facilities for children to do their homework and run holiday programmes during July and December. The staff consists of one senior librarian, two senior library assistants and three library assistants.

2.1.7.2 Children's reference

The children's reference library occupies the first floor of the new wing and provides excellent resources to assist children with their school assignments. In addition to books and suitable reference material, the collection includes files of newspaper and magazine clippings on a variety of topics, study guides and past examination papers for grade twelve. Books and other resources from this library are not allowed out on loan. The staff in this department consists of one senior librarian, two librarians, one senior library assistant and five library assistants.

2.1.8 Branch services

There are eight branch libraries of varying sizes in different locations around the Msunduzi region. The northern region includes the Northdale library (the largest branch), the Eastwood, Woodlands and Sobantu libraries. The southern region includes the Ashburton, Georgetown, Alexandra and Ashdown libraries. All eight branch libraries offer adults' and children's lending and reference services.

2.1.9 Municipal governance

Due to the Msunduzi Municipality being placed under administration during March 2010, the administrator and his team have been faced with several serious and daunting challenges in their efforts to rebuild this battered Municipality (Shamase 2010). The ineffective functioning of the Human Resources department has contributed to the current paralysed organizational state. There is a strong possibility that there will be significant changes in the organizational structures which could affect the number of staff in all departments of the Municipality. The current situation indicates that the number of staff at the Bessie Head Library could decrease and this will invariably have a serious impact on service delivery.

2.2 Literature review

This section provides a review of the relevant literature on the concepts of social exclusion and social capital and the role of public libraries in a democratic South Africa.

2.2.1 Social exclusion

In response to the various challenges facing public libraries, new concepts have been explored in order to provide justification for the relevance of public libraries in South Africa. One such concept is social exclusion which, according to Stilwell (2006) is associated with the notion that everybody has the right to be completely included in society. Stilwell (2006) states that public libraries can play a vital role in decreasing social exclusion by fostering social inclusion and assisting in bridging the information gap between those who can and those who are unable to access information resources.

2.2.2 What is social exclusion?

In general there is a consensus that social exclusion is a concept that can be defined and deployed in two ways:

It can be defined narrowly, in which case it is used as a synonym for income poverty and refers to either those people who are not attached to the paid labour market (exclusion from paid workers) or to those people in low-earning employment (Peace 1999). The broader definition of social exclusion refers to much more than poverty, income, inequality, deprivation or lack of employment. It involves a lack of resources and/or denial of social rights. The processes of exclusion often resulted in multiple deprivations (Peace 1999).

Durrani (1999) argues that the definition cannot be static as “the process of social exclusion is dynamic, changing over time and space and affecting different groups in different ways”. Castells, in Stilwell (2006) states that social exclusion is a process, not a condition. Thus its boundaries shift and who is included and excluded may vary over time, depending on education, social prejudices, business practices, and public policies (Stilwell 2006).

Muddiman (1999) examines how disadvantaged groups, communities and individuals use and perceive the public library. His paper reviews research on the use of, and attitudes towards, public libraries by working class and disadvantaged people and on perceptions of the value and impact of the public library in poor and excluded communities. Muddiman (1999) further

argues that there are limits to libraries' perceived social roles and it is an aspirant minority of working class people who particularly use and value library services.

2.2.3 Public libraries addressing social exclusion

According to Muddiman (1999), public library services in the United Kingdom are often justified through an appeal to the idea that they cater equally for all classes and sectors of society. Muddiman (1999) further states that the public library is valued by all sections of society and argues that public libraries, unlike other major cultural institutions, have been user-friendly from the start.

Stilwell (2006) states that libraries promote social exclusion by helping bridge the gap between those who can afford access to information and those who cannot. All libraries and information workers and not only public libraries are urged to tackle social exclusion by actively adopting policies that place an ongoing commitment to social inclusivity within their working culture (Stilwell 2006). In making the case for libraries as one of the best placed organizations within the cultural sector to bring about the necessary change to address social exclusion at community level, is mainstreaming social inclusion as a policy within all library and information services.

Stilwell (2006) states that libraries need to examine the extent to which their services include all parts of society and South African libraries face great challenges in terms of realigning themselves in the new democracy. Fourie (2007) argues that libraries should not just be superficially "open to all". They should really address all primary needs that can be linked to information needs and access to information. In trying to understand the full scope of the urgency to ensure social inclusion, Fourie (2007) further states that there is a need to consider the effect social exclusion may have on the quality of life of people, the decisions they may take and the opportunities they are missing if excluded from library services as ultimately without access to information and without skills in accessing and using information, difficulties will arise in gaining an education, finding jobs and using government and health services.

The need to determine what distinguishes those people who are "included" in library services and what prevents others from using such services (e.g. a lack of experience in using a

library, illiteracy, lack of resources in their mother tongue) should be regarded as a priority. In identifying such characteristics, collecting empirical evidence on the information needs and behaviour of a specific target group can be targeted for inclusion (Fourie 2007).

2.3 Public libraries and social capital

As open places, public libraries have potential for accommodating diversity in users, for contributing to promoting trusting relationships between diverse people and as a result of this learning process create trust towards people in general. Diversity in race and ethnicity, economic inequality, corruption, and non-universal welfare services are among the variables creating greatest distrust between people and decrease the amount of social capital in society. Trust in their fellow citizens is not what most people experience in their daily lives and public libraries can play a role in promoting social capital by being one of the more open places and as such a meeting place for diverse traditions (Varheim 2008).

2.3.1 What is social capital?

According to Putnam (2000) social capital can be thought of as the links, shared values, and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together.

The notion that public libraries have a social impact is not new. Historically, the purpose of public libraries was to safeguard democracy and divert behaviour from socially destructive activities and expose the larger population to literature and acceptable recreation. The objectives of the public library are directly dependent upon the objectives of society itself (Hillenbrand 2005).

Matarasso (1998) in Hillenbrand (2005) advocated a 'developmental role' for libraries with the aim of renewing its social mission. He urged librarians to claim a central position in developing public policy through active involvement in both community and personal development. This meant providing services and forming partnerships not only in the traditional areas of literacy, education and lifelong learning but also in the areas of information technology, employment, families, poverty, health and promoting partnerships, democracy and local culture. According to Matarasso (1998) there is a growing

understanding of the broader value of library services in alleviating social problems and, more positively, in laying the foundations of successful and sustainable communities.

Kranich (2001) argues that public librarians can partner with civic organizations to develop community programmes and reach out to local community foundations that raise and convert financial capital to social capital through grants that bring people together. Kranich (2001) goes on to state that librarians have the place and the resources to enable communities to connect, they can provide unique community information services and foster greater reciprocity among diverse cultural groups and encourage greater tolerance through knowledge and understanding. She concludes by saying that the challenge for librarians is to gain the skills necessary to be effective, active facilitators and collaborators and to prove just how libraries can make a difference by contributing to the social capital required to engage people in the life of their communities.

Hart (2007) argues that the construct of social capital offers South African public librarianship a fresh vision that is urgently needed if it is to fulfil its potential role in social inclusion. Given the deteriorating position of public libraries in South Africa and the uncertainty over their governance and funding, international trends identifying the economic and social value of libraries must resonate with South African public librarianship.

A significant positive concept emanating from Africa is the principle of *ubuntu*, a philosophy focusing on people's allegiances and relations with one another; knowing that he or she belongs to a greater social whole and subscribing to the belief that selfish behaviour damages this harmonious whole (Raju 2010). The principle of *ubuntu* correlates with the concept of social capital and Raju (2010) states that there is a need to stimulate this social and human capital onto a path of growth and development and access to information and knowledge can provide the necessary stimulant.

2.4 Public libraries in a democratic South Africa

South Africa came out of apartheid rule in 1994. This transition has brought with it its own set of challenges, including that of access to information, an essential pillar in upholding a democracy (Raju and Raju 2010). Democracies need libraries as they are, as indicated by Schuman (1998) in Raju and Raju (2010), "the building blocks of democracy, valued for their

comprehensiveness, currency, openness and multiplicity of viewpoints [with] expert staff’ who inculcate the philosophy that all knowledge is valuable to the seeker, that is, the public because an informed public constitutes the very foundation of a democracy.

Raju and Raju (2010) go on to state that the real concern in South Africa at present is the gulf between the “haves”, of any colour, and the “have-nots” and the capacity of the public library to bridge that gap via its contribution to the reduction of illiteracy, poverty and unemployment. The authors conclude that it is beyond debate that public libraries play a critical role in the propagation of democracy but the public library should be more than an institution propagating democracy – it has to be an institution of democracy itself providing information to all, in the format that is most relevant and in a language that is most preferred. This would link to the concept of social exclusion in recognizing that everyone has the right to information and that it is not an exclusive resource.

Davis (2005) argues for a rethink of the role of public libraries and librarians within local government and of the place of public libraries within a socio-economic context. Davis (2004) further contends that the services of the public library should contribute towards the quality of life.

IFLA/UNESCO (2001) guidelines state that the primary purposes of the public library are to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure. They have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinions.

Evans, Amodeo and Carter (1999) state that libraries have four distinctive roles in society which can be traced back in library history. These are:

- Libraries are responsible for acquiring a variety of information resources in various formats to suit the information needs of society
- Libraries are responsible for the storage and preservation of their collected information in a central location that is easily accessible
- Libraries must ensure that their collection is properly organized so that access and retrieval is not time consuming

- Libraries must provide assistance and guidance in locating the information needs of society's individuals, thereby providing educational benefits to users accessing library collections.

All public libraries face challenges at one time or another. In the case of public libraries in South Africa, a unique challenge has had to be dealt with: overcoming the inequalities in service and collections after the end of apartheid (Illsey 2006). According to Leach (1998) various changes, including inadequate funding, staff shortages and poor service delivery have imposed several constraints on South African public libraries. In a later article, Leach (2006) investigated the concept of alternative funding and indicated that "the decline of public funding is a major concern for public libraries and that no matter where public libraries are in the world, funding is and will be the challenge of the future".

According to the KPMG Status Quo report (2007) a public library is the local gateway to knowledge, providing individuals and social groups with a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development. These roles are further expanded to include:

- **Information**, "the public library is the local centre of information, making all forms of knowledge and information readily available to its users".
- **Personal development**, "providing opportunities for personal creative development".
- **Cultural development**, "providing focus for cultural and artistic development in the community and helping to shape and support the cultural identity of the community".
- **The social role** of "providing public space where the public can meet, not only for reading, but also for other social functions".
- **Being an agency for change**, "the public library, in fulfilling its role, acts as an agency for social and personal development which results in positive social and economic benefits not only for individuals but to the community and country at large, thus contributing to the creation and maintenance of a well informed and democratic society and empowering people in the enrichment and development of their lives and that of the community they live in".

The recent South African Community Library and Information Services (SACLIS) Bill and Schedule 5 of the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 also makes provision for the promotion of library and information services. The objectives of the Bill place emphasis on

the provision for national policy, principles, guidelines and minimum norms and standards for community libraries and for the provision of library and information services. Another objective is promoting effective co-ordination of strategic planning and budgeting processes for libraries by provinces and municipalities. The Bill also states that in respect of library evaluation and performance management mechanisms, library services and materials will be evaluated in compliance with national norms and standards (SACLIS Bill 2010).

The National Knowledge Commission (2008), a high level advisory board in India, states that the ability of a nation to use and create knowledge capital determines its capacity to empower and enable its citizens by increasing human capabilities and confirms the fact that libraries play a crucial role in providing widespread and inclusive access to information and knowledge. The Commission stated that a library has to play two distinct roles: it has to serve as a local centre of information and knowledge, and be a local gateway to national and global knowledge. In order for this to be achieved, existing libraries must modernize their collection, services and facilities, become more pro-active and collaborate with other libraries and information agencies in order to develop a community-based information system.

Raseroka (1997) pointed out that librarians can make an important contribution towards an ethical and democratic information society by empowering citizens to take up and use the resources as this empowerment is critical to the growth and development of the individual and the country as a whole. The public library, as an institution and a building can provide spaces for people to share experiences which engender trust of the library itself, the staff and the broader society and play a vital role in addressing the concepts of social exclusion and social capital.

2.5 Service quality assessments in public libraries

This section discusses the concept of service quality and user satisfaction in public libraries and provides some insight concerning the LibQUAL+™ instrument as it is the instrument that was used to assess service quality in the library.

2.5.1 Service quality

The concept of quality is often viewed in relation to different criteria and can be perceived from several perspectives. Sahu (2007) defines a quality service as one that fully meets the

expectations and requirements of the users and if a library provides appropriate information to the right user at the right time in the required form, then it could be aiming at maintaining quality. As quality is the basic requirement of any library service and all libraries ought to be striving to deliver the highest quality of service, every attempt should be made to assist library users with their information needs accurately and exhaustively.

ISO is the International Organization for Standardization and was established to assist both product and service oriented organizations in achieving standards of quality that are recognized and respected throughout the world (ISO 2005). In the ISO 9000 standard (2005) quality is described as “the consistent conformance of a product or service to a given set of standards or expectations”. In most definitions quality is defined in relation to the customer or user and the key issue is that quality becomes a meaningful concept only when it is indissolubly linked to the aim of total customer or user satisfaction (Poll and te Boekhorst 2007).

Quality in library and information services (LIS) can have many aspects. Peter Brophy (2004) in (Poll and te Boekhorst 2007) starting from the general management literature, has adapted a set of quality attributes to libraries. The following table illustrates the quality criteria with examples of their applicability to library services.

Table 1 The quality of libraries

Criteria of library quality		Example
Performance	A service meets its most basic purpose	Making key information resources available on demand
Features	Secondary characteristics which add to the service but are beyond the essential core	Alerting services
Reliability	Consistency of the service's performance in use	No broken Web links
Conformance	The service meets the agreed standard	Dublin Core
Durability	Sustainability of the service over a period of time	Document delivery within two days
Currency	Up-to-dateness of information	
Serviceability	Level of help to users	Complaint service
Aesthetics	Visual attractiveness	Physical library, Website
Usability/Accessibility	Ease of access and use	Opening hours
Assurance/ Competence/Credibility	Good experience with staff's knowledgability	Correct reference answers
Courtesy/Responsiveness/ Empathy	Accessibility, flexibility and friendliness of staff	Reference service
Communication	Clear explanation of services and options in jargon free language	Website, signposting in the library
Speed	Quick delivery of services	Interlibrary lending
Variety of services offered	May clash with quality if resources are not sufficient for maintaining quality in all services	Comprehensive collection, reference service in walk-in, mail and chat form
Perceived quality	The user's view of the service	User satisfaction

Source: Poll and te Boekhorst (2007)

The criteria listed in Table 1 are indeed vital criteria of library quality. Users' see library quality according to their experience with the services they use. They will not care for the efficiency of background processes, but for the effective delivery of services (Poll and te Boekhorst 2007).

According to Charafaray (2006) service quality is considered an important strategy for marketers who want to differentiate their service offerings, establish customer value and satisfy customer needs. Similarly, service quality in public libraries addressing user expectations and perceptions can be measured. Research undertaken by Parasuraman (2004) confirms that service quality can be assessed in libraries using the SERVQUAL instrument.

According to Herson and Altman (1998) “every organization’s service has a quality dimension, ranging from wonderful to awful and service and quality cannot be disconnected. Quality is the manner in which the service is delivered, or, in some instances, not delivered”. The most common definition is the notion that views quality as “the customer’s perception of service excellence”. In other words, quality is defined by the customer’s impression of the service provided (Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml 1988).

Nicholas (in Majid, Anwar and Eisenschitz 2001) argues that traditional methods such as size, relevance and currency of collections (Nitecki and Herson 2000) for evaluating the value of library service are no longer valid and that service quality has shifted its emphasis for achieving excellence from product excellence towards the development of relationships with customers. In other words the focus has moved from measuring outputs (circulation) to that of measuring outcomes (quality and satisfaction).

As indicated in Table 1 above, researchers have drawn on marketing and other literature to focus attention on expectations and an alternative view of quality, a view representing the user’s or customer’s perspective on services used. Those researchers who have examined quality from that perspective, will agree with their peers in marketing that “only customers judge quality; all other judgements are essentially irrelevant” (Nitecki and Herson 2000).

Service quality perceptions stem from how well a provider performs in relation to the customer’s expectations about how the provider should perform. As a result, the research tends to define service quality in terms of meeting or exceeding customer expectations, or, more precisely, as the difference or gap between customer perceptions and expectations. (Nitecki and Herson 2000 in Naidu 2009).

To further explain the concept of quality, Naidu (2009) mentions an interesting survey by Osman, Goon and Aris (1998) on a librarian’s perspective on quality. The survey was done

on 10 university libraries, 13 state public libraries and six selected special libraries in Malaysia. From the librarian's point of view, *quality* was summarized to mean access to well-developed collections, prompt, efficient and courteous service, fulfilling users' information needs and a conducive environment and facilities with characteristics of accessibility, courtesy, effectiveness, efficiency and promptness/timeliness. The definition and characteristics above represent quality as perceived by librarians and indicate that emphasis was placed on service quality (Naidu 2009).

It is evident from the reviewed literature that a good quality information service as opposed to library service is about assisting users in their quest to define and satisfy their information needs, build their confidence in the use of information retrieval systems and inevitably make the whole experience of visiting the library and interacting with library staff a pleasurable experience (Naidu 2009).

2.5.2 Why measure service quality in libraries?

Libraries have a long tradition and history, and their existence has been justified on the basis of organizing, providing access and preserving important historical and cultural information (Naidu 2009). Historically, libraries have evolved with different aspects of their operation being critical at different points in time. In recent years and with the development of networking technologies, the familiar and traditional roles of libraries have been called into question and greater calls for accountability have emerged. Questions raised by Kyriallidou (2005) are: how is it known that the library is serving the needs of its users? That it is a highly valued resource? And that it is making a meaningful contribution towards improving the quality of service it offers.

The increased competition for attention and channelling of information access is a global phenomenon and Kyriallidou (2005) concludes by stating that libraries need to be on the alert to serve the ever-changing needs of their users and strive to achieve greater levels of service excellence, relevance and impact because it is the support of the users and their perspectives of how valuable libraries are in their lives that will generate the positive attitudes that are needed for continued and increased government funding and external grants (Kyriallidou 2005).

There are many reasons why libraries are paying attention to service quality. Quinn (1997) mentions that measuring service quality is important in libraries as policy makers are questioning the role of libraries and libraries are now having to justify their value in times of dwindling public funds, budgetary pressure and competition with other public institutions. Kyrillidou (2005) contends that the need for library assessment is a universal concept and the call for accountability extends beyond national borders as libraries, through both their public and academic roles are being asked to prove their value more than ever.

Nitecki and Herson (2000) state that customers who share information about their expectations offer an opportunity for that library or service provider to establish a closer personal contact with them and this relationship can result in libraries providing and customers receiving better service.

According to Quinn (1997) libraries can assess customers' needs and expectations through user surveys in the form of questionnaires to probe customer attitudes. Nitecki (1997) further suggests performing a needs analysis as a way of determining user expectations which can assist librarians in assessing their situation by means of conducting an information audit or creating a customer service plan that will outline the goals and standards of customer service.

As mentioned earlier, the traditional measures of library evaluation such as the number of books on the shelves in relation to the number of people served are no longer an indicator of service quality. The focus of library evaluation is now on service provision and working towards building an ongoing relationship namely between users and library services.

In today's global information marketplace libraries must be both competitive and serve as wise stewards of society's considerable investment in them and this includes effective service delivery (Cook and Heath 2003). As the Bessie Head Library is situated in a central area of the central business district, users from various suburbs within the Pietermaritzburg – Msunduzi region and some from beyond the borough who despite having to pay annual membership fees utilize the library. Recent renovations and additions to the library have also encouraged more users. As mentioned in Chapter 1 the library has only used daily book counts and the number of people signing up as library members as a statistical measure of evaluating performance and service.

There are no measures in place to assess service quality from the users' perspective. It is hoped that this study will address this need and assist the library manager and staff to identify areas of failure and improve service delivery. There is a vast amount of literature available that provides reasons for service quality assessment. If libraries want to become providers of service excellence, such assessments are critical. In order for the Bessie Head Library to grow and develop to its full potential, it needs to provide excellent service and resources for its current and prospective users and this assessment should not be a once off activity. Naidu (2009) states that a library which offers a world class service is excelling in satisfying the operational and strategic goals of the institution.

2.5.3 User satisfaction

Attention to users and the services they want and receive are of utmost importance. The library needs to ensure that its services both meet user needs and user expectations to the highest degree. This means that it is imperative for librarians to know what their users want and concentrate upon providing it, both in terms of service quality and user satisfaction (Cullen 2001).

Heron and Altman (1998) state that satisfaction levels from a number of transactions or encounters that an individual experiences with a particular organization fuse to form an impression of service quality for that person and the collective experiences of many persons create an organization's reputation for service quality. This indicates that there is a strong correlation between the concept of service quality and satisfaction.

Schorer (2003) in Naidu (2009) states that a system of services with standards, boundaries, and inherent flexibility will help libraries emerge more customer service-effective than ever. The adoption of service standards will prevent staff from over-delivering to one customer at the expense of others, or experiencing a case of burn out from the pressure of working with no boundaries. On the other hand, customers will acquire a realistic expectation of service delivery and be assured of receiving a consistent level of service at all times.

D'Elia and Walsh (1983) in their paper reported that the results of a survey of 623 patrons of a public library in Minnesota was achieved by using the library user and library performance as the two constructs for measurement. In the first instance, the library user was the object of

study and his or her opinions provided the measure of user satisfaction. In the second instance, user satisfaction was indirectly measured using a certain number of indicators that determine the level of library performance.

The results of the above study revealed that the user's overall satisfaction with the library appeared to be "satisfied with the library" and that the degree of user satisfaction was assumed to be proportional to the level of library performance. D'Elia and Walsh (1983) argue that user satisfaction is considered to be an important construct in the development of models of user behaviour. They further state that the construct, user satisfaction, has three uses. First, it is used to describe a library's level of performance. Second, it is used to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of specific services within a library and thirdly, it is assumed to be a behavioural response to current use which, in turn, affects the future behaviour of the user towards the library. This clearly illustrates that there is a distinct relationship between the quality of service offered and the level of satisfaction reached by library users.

2.5.4 Measuring service quality in libraries

Libraries have been recognized for succeeding in measuring themselves in terms of input (number of transactions), and more recently in terms of output (circulation) measures (De Jager 2002).

Libraries are both a creation and a servant of society. A library operates routinely with a well known set of customers. A library also operates on trust. When a customer walks into a library, he or she trusts that they will be assisted with their relevant information needs. The library in turn, trusts that the customer will return the items within the specified borrowing period. The specific structure of a library with its strict requirements as to efficiency, demands a focus on the quality of value-adding processes. If a library is to be managed according to quality criteria, quality needs to be defined and made measurable. The indicators found must be captured in a measuring system for areas such as cost and performance, customer satisfaction and staff satisfaction that facilitates quality controlling and provides staff with controlling parameters for everyday work (Kumbar 2004).

2.5.4.1 Service quality assessment models

In order to assess service quality, libraries have used various service quality assessment models. These include: the Balanced Scorecard Model (BSC), European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM Model), Library and Information Sector Improvement Model (LISM Model), SERVPERF Model, LibQUAL+™ instrument, SERVQUAL and Total Quality Management Model (TQM) (Kachoka 2010; Naidu 2009). This study will focus on the SERVQUAL and LibQUAL+™ models which will be discussed below.

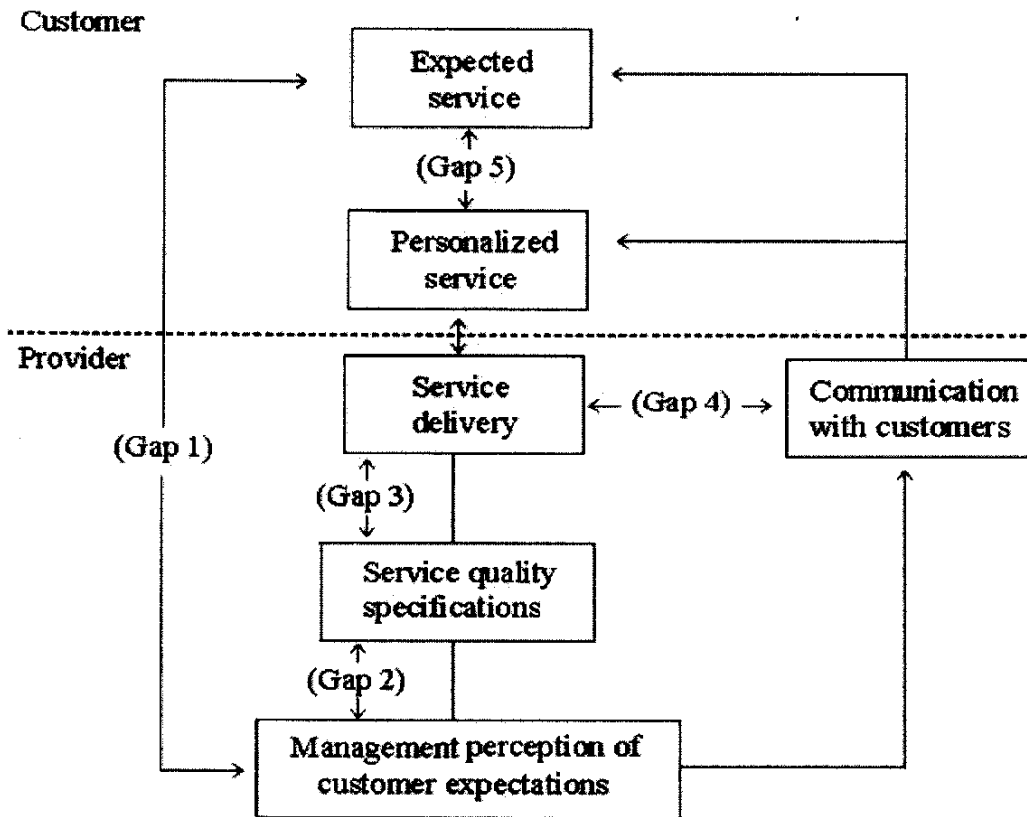
2.5.4.2 SERVQUAL

The concept of service quality originated from the marketing discipline in the early 1980's. Researchers, librarians and academics recognized the importance of user needs and user perceptions of service quality and devised methods to implement assessments of service quality (Naidu 2009). One of the most popular and frequently used approaches to discuss and measure service quality is the SERVQUAL instrument.

The SERVQUAL instrument has been introduced explicitly to the library world through several empirical studies undertaken in public, special and academic libraries as well as descriptive articles and conference presentations. The instrument was developed by Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml in 1988 as a means for assessing customer perceptions of service quality in retail, industrial and commercial environments (Cook *et al.* 2003; Nitecki and Franklin 1999; Nitecki 1996).

According to Nitecki (1996) the instrument identifies service quality from the customer's perspective and is based on the Gap model (see 1.6 above). As mentioned earlier, Gap five is the main focus in library research as it is the most user-focused, customer-oriented definition of service quality and the current study focused on this gap.

Figure 2 Gap model



Source: Inverhills College Website (2008)

According to Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) consumers evaluate service quality by using 10 dimensions. These are reliability, responsiveness, communication, tangibles, credibility, competence, security, courtesy, access and understanding customers. Through numerous qualitative studies, these determinants were refined and resulted in a set of five key dimensions which have been consistently rated by customers to be most important for service quality regardless of the service industry (Nitecki and Hemon 2000).

The five dimensions in no order of relevance are defined as follows:

Tangibles

This refers to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials

Responsiveness

This is a willingness to assist customers and provide prompt service

Reliability

Reliability is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately

Empathy

Customers are provided with caring, individual attention

Assurance

Refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence to customers.

For nearly two decades, Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry have exercised a significant influence in service marketing research and their customer based approach for conceptualizing and measuring service quality offers an alternative for defining the quality of library services (Heath and Cook 2003). Service quality contributes to value experienced by customers and value becomes an outcome of service excellence. The SERVQUAL instrument provides an outcome measure for managers to gauge their service activities. Naidu (2009) states that it should not be a measure of comparison among libraries as there are no normative data nor is the instrument designed for ranking different service settings. Its usefulness to improve service management in libraries is only beginning to be discovered.

As mentioned earlier, the SERVQUAL instrument integrates all key dimensions to measure user expectations and perceptions of services delivered. The evaluation of service quality is achieved by measuring the gaps between expectation and perception scores. The comparison between expectations and perceptions determines the level of service delivery. The service will be considered good if perceptions meet or exceed the expectations and problematic if perceptions fall below expectations.

The SERVQUAL model was originally designed for the commercial and industrial sectors and adapted for the library environment. Quinn (1997) mentions that this adaptation of the

questionnaire contained certain shortcomings and the SERVQUAL model could be adapted to include services such as access, reference and collection development within the library.

Other authors (Nagata, Satoh and Kyatomaki 2004 and Newman 2001) also contend that the questions in the SERVQUAL model required rephrasing in order to make them more manageable and valuable. For example, some questionnaire items focused mainly on service encounters while the outcomes (contents) obtained through the service are hardly taken into consideration. Various criticisms of the validity and feasibility of SERVQUAL have been accompanied by proposals for alternative service quality measures (Newman 2001). In order to address the various shortcomings, the LibQUAL+™ model was born.

2.5.4.3 LibQUAL+™ instrument

The LibQUAL+™ survey instrument evolved from a conceptual model based on the SERVQUAL instrument. The adaptation of the SERVQUAL instrument to LibQUAL+™, a web-based instrument grounded in actual users' perspectives extracted from qualitative data only came about in the year 2000 (Lincoln 2000).

As mentioned earlier, the LibQUAL+™ instrument underwent several revisions in terms of dimension and core items during its developmental period. In 2004, the instrument was developed, tested and refined by Texas A&M University in partnership with the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and had 22 core items spanning three dimensions (ARL 2004). The three dimensions are:

Affect of service – focuses on how well users are served and treated by library staff.

Information control – focuses on the ability to access information regardless of the location of the user or the resource in question.

Library as a place – focuses on the physical environment and how well the library meets the individual needs of users.

The LibQUAL+™ instrument can assist libraries in assessing and improving services, changing organizational culture and marketing strategies. Since its inception, more than 400 institutions have participated in the LibQUAL+™ survey. These included universities and colleges, law libraries, health sciences libraries and a few public libraries. The LibQUAL+™

survey is designed to measure library users' perceptions of the quality of collections, personal service and facilities (LibQUAL+™ 2008).

Following years of revision involving data collection from more than 200, 000 library users, LibQUAL+™ has evolved into a protocol consisting of “22 items and a box” whereby the 22 items measure user perceptions of effect of service, library as a place, and information control. The box secures open-ended comments from users regarding their concerns and suggestions. These comments are an integral part of LibQUAL+™ (Naidu 2009).

ARL (2008) mentions that the goals of LibQUAL+™ are to:

- Foster a culture of excellence in providing library services
- Assist libraries in having a better understanding of user perceptions of library service quality
- Collect and interpret library user feedback systematically over time
- Provide libraries with comparable assessment information from peer institutions
- Identify best practices in library services
- Enhance library staff members' analytical skills for interpreting and acting on data.

2.5.4.4 Evaluation of LibQUAL+™

As mentioned, LibQUAL+™ is a survey instruments used to measure library service delivery performance but some researchers have raised concerns regarding these survey instruments. Walters (2003) raised two questionable assumptions that are not clear in the LibQUAL+™ instrument. Firstly, whether library users have the necessary expertise to make accurate assessments of quality, and secondly, whether perceptions serve as valid indicators of objective conditions.

Quinn (1997) also identified certain limitations and possibilities in the models and made various suggestions for overcoming the limitations. Quinn (1997) states that libraries need to monitor customer expectations continuously in an effort to reduce any gap that may exist between expectations and perceptions. The gaps between customer expectations and perceptions may stem from librarians inaccurately perceiving the expectations of library users, from library service standards not reflecting expectations, from the library over promising its services, or from the actual services falling short of customer expectations

(Naidu 2009). Naidu (2009) further states that even with adequate customer feedback, it can sometimes be difficult to interpret data because customers' expectations and perceptions are inherently subjective and can be contradictory and naive.

Bearing the above concerns in mind, this would imply that the adult users of the Bessie Head Library are not in a position to make valid assessments of quality. The researcher argues that the library users will be able to recognize excellent service from poor service whether they have been exposed to a single level or both levels of service as perceptions will be created from the services most used.

As can be seen from the above, there are limitations to using the LibQUAL+™ survey instrument to measure library services. In spite of their various limitations it must be noted that for the purpose of this study, LibQUAL+™, the modified SERVQUAL model has provided a more reliable survey in terms of measuring the gap between user expectations and perceptions and it is more flexible and allows for local understanding of user needs.

2.6 Research on LibQUAL and SERVQUAL in libraries

Library and Information Science literature on SERVQUAL has covered a spectrum from the purely expository to reports of applications in specific libraries and empirical analyses of the viability of the instrument in the library context (D'Elia and Walsh 1983). The application of SERVQUAL in libraries is an international phenomenon with articles published in the United States, Sweden, Great Britain, Australia, the Netherlands, Germany and to some extent in South Africa.

The first mention of a SERVQUAL protocol in libraries was reported by Humphries and Naisawald (1991) who adopted the model's dimensions as service quality criteria for evaluation of online search services in a health sciences library in the United States. Millson-Martula and Menon (1995) discussed the Gap Model of service quality in an academic library context whereas White and Abels (1995) described SERVQUAL and its derivative SERVPERF and assessed their applicability in special libraries.

Hebert (1994) wrote the first dissertation that applied SERVQUAL in a public library environment. Using the modified SERVQUAL instrument adapted for the public library

setting, Hebert (1994) administered the instrument to interlibrary loan users of large, urban public libraries in 28 Canadian cities. He attempted to measure expectations and perceptions of service quality and to ascertain whether there was a correlation between those measures and traditional measures for inter-library loans such as fill rate and turnaround time. The results of the survey indicated that respondents' expectations were higher than perceptions of the service quality rendered. The SERVQUAL instrument was found to be highly reliable in the Canadian public library context.

Zakaria *et al.* (2009) used the SERVQUAL tool to conduct a service quality survey in Sungai Petani Public Library in Malaysia. The objective of their study was to identify the relationship between the dimensions (tangibles, reliability and responsiveness) and service quality in the Petani Public Library and investigate which service quality dimension mostly influenced the provision of service quality. The results of the study found that the tangible dimension had a significant relationship with service quality.

The literature has shown that much of the related research has used the SERVQUAL instrument for the various surveys. As mentioned, the LibQUAL+TM instrument has been used for studies undertaken in academic and research institutions and no literature has revealed any such studies being undertaken in public libraries. The present study will however use the LibQUAL+TM instrument in a public library setting.

The LibQUAL+TM survey instrument has been used for surveys undertaken in academic and research institutions in South Africa and overseas. Simba's (2006) study on user perceptions of the quality of service at Iringa University College library in Tanzania showed a relatively large gap between expectations and perceptions of service quality at the college library.

Rhodes University Library was one of the first South African Universities to implement LibQUAL+TM. According to Moon (2007) the use of the survey at Rhodes University was most valuable as it fulfilled an important function in evaluating the impact of implemented strategies and innovations. Moon (2007) stated that the survey was an ideal opportunity for librarians to listen to what their customers had to say and respond to their comments. Similar studies were also undertaken by Kachoka (2010) at Chancellor College Library, University of Malawi and Naidu (2009) at Mangosuthu University of Technology Library, Umlazi, Durban.

The literature has shown that there are various ways of assessing service quality in libraries and although the LibQUAL+™ instrument has been used more significantly in an academic context, there is no doubt that this assessment model can be used as a valid tool to encourage librarians to realize that communication with their users about library services is critical in order to better inform them and manage their expectations.

Waller and Higgs (2002) state that developing a culture of assessment within libraries is a crucial step towards establishing the importance of assessment tools and projects such as LibQUAL+™ and changing paradigms of assessment measures. Naidu (2009) states that the fundamental step is that action must be taken within libraries to promote such change and instruments such as SERVQUAL LibQUAL+™ can prove to be effective assessment tools if the library community makes a committed effort to actively enhance service quality.

The LibQUAL+™ survey instrument has provided a wonderful opportunity for library management and staff to listen to what their customers have to say, and respond to their comments, while at the same time informing them about library services. LibQUAL+™ and SERVQUAL have shown that user focus and user involvement have created an interactive, dynamic environment that has facilitated overall quality improvement in both academic and public libraries.

2.7 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter a brief history and description of the Bessie Head Library was provided. The role of public libraries in a democratic South Africa, the concept of social exclusion and social capital was also discussed. The concept of service quality assessment in libraries, the use of SERVQUAL and LibQUAL+™ survey instruments and a discussion on research related to the present study was undertaken.

Chapter 3 Research methodology

This chapter discusses the research method and procedures used in the study. The design, data collection instruments and procedures, validity and reliability, sampling techniques and methods of data analysis are also discussed.

3.1 Research design

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) state that a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) further state that the designs are plans that guide the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.

According to Kothari (2004) quantitative and qualitative methods are the two basic paradigms of research. Both these approaches are essential to the research process but Bouma (2000) points out that they require some common and some different skills. The use of the preferred method depends on the research topic and the appropriateness of the questions asked. Each approach has its own rules of practice (Naidu 2009).

This study adopted a largely quantitative approach as the purpose was to assess and describe adult users' perceptions of the quality of service provided by the Bessie Head Library. In doing so, a cross-sectional, descriptive survey design was used. According to Bertram (2004) a survey design is economical in that it allows the gathering of data on a once-off basis and also allows for data gathering in a short space of time which is an important consideration for this study.

According to Powell (1997) the most straightforward type of survey research is descriptive and it is designed to ensure that the sample is reasonably representative of the population to which the researcher wishes to generalize and the relevant characteristics of the population have been accurately measured.

Some of the reasons for the choice of the survey design were as follows:

Firstly, many studies have illustrated that research design is popularly used for studies on users' perceptions. Kachoka (2010), Naidu (2009), Simba (2006), Cook and Heath (2001) and Hiller (2001) all used a survey design.

Secondly, survey research methods can save time and money without sacrificing efficiency, accuracy and information adequacy in the research process (Naidu 2009). This was an important consideration for this study as there were financial constraints and a time limitation. The speed of gathering information and the fact that it allowed for collecting data within a relatively short period of time was advantageous.

3.2 Population and sample

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000), the population of a study refers to the entire set of objects or people which is the focus of the research and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics. The population for this study consisted of registered adult library users only.

Powell (1997) states that sampling is often one of the most crucial steps in survey research and he defines a sample as a selection of units from the total population to be studied. As at 31 March 2010, the database of registered adult library users (users who have completed and signed a membership form in which they agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the library and in return have access to the various services provided) amounted to 26, 966. As it would be impossible to study all registered adult library users, a sample was deemed necessary.

A convenience sampling technique was employed to draw the sample from the adult library users. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) convenience sampling or as it is sometimes called, accidental or opportunity sampling involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained. The researcher simply chooses the sample from those whom he or she has easy access.

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique whereby the sample is derived from the researcher targeting a particular group, in the full knowledge that it does not represent the wider population (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000).

Although the sample chosen was not necessarily representative of the total number of registered adult users (e.g., there is the probability that there will be registered adult members who were not using the library during the period of the study), the researcher is of the opinion that this study will offer some indication of the perceptions of adult users of the Bessie Head Library and also provide a baseline for future studies.

3.2.1 Sample size

Drawing on specifics such as membership, gender, age and race a sample of 200 registered adult library users was selected. The choice of selecting a sample of 200 respondents was that it was within the scope of the study and less expensive. The Principal Librarian of the Adult Library Department and the Library Manager were also included in the study.

3.3 Data collection instruments and procedures

This section will describe the instruments used to collect the data, forms of questions asked, pre-testing of the questionnaire, reliability and validity of the instrument, administering the questionnaire and response rates.

3.3.1 The instruments

Powell (1997) states that three frequently used data collection techniques are the questionnaire, the interview and observation. Powell (1997) further states that these are data collection techniques or instruments and not research methodologies and that they can be used with more than one methodology. The instruments used in this study for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data were the self-administered questionnaire and the interview schedule. Neuman (2006) states that use of a questionnaire is by far the cheapest and can be conducted by a single researcher – an important consideration in this study. Babbie and Mouton (2001) also mention that a further advantage of the self-administered questionnaire is that it lacks interview bias.

3.3.1.1 The questionnaire

For the purpose of this study a five page questionnaire consisting of eight sections was constructed. The LibQUAL+™ based survey questions (Kachoka 2010, Naidu 2009, Simba 2006, Hernon and Altman 1998) were adapted for the context for the Bessie Head Library.

Question one of the questionnaire comprised demographic data on the participants. The purpose of this was to gather data that would assist in determining the various response rates and allow for the generation of reports for specific subgroups in order to compare the responses from the different groups. Question two consisted of 26 statements and respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 – 5 (that is strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) their expectations of service quality at the Bessie Head Library. Question three was an open question where respondents were asked to add comments on existing services or services that they expected. Question four posed similar questions to those in section two except that respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of library services currently provided by the Bessie Head Library. Section five had an open question similar to question three. Questions six and seven had statements on user satisfaction and respondents had to indicate whether they were very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the services in the library. The questionnaire ended with question eight, an open question.

3.3.2 Forms of questions

The compilation of questions is a crucial aspect of developing any assessment instrument (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999). This study used both open and closed questions.

3.3.2.1. Open questions

Open questions give the respondents the opportunity of writing any answer in the open space (De Vos 1998). Open questions are advantageous in that they allow respondents to answer in their own choice of words and they sometimes provide beneficial and surprising suggestions (see respondents' comments in Chapter 4). Open questions are also disadvantageous because they require more thought and time by respondents. This was evident in the present study as many respondents chose not to answer the open-ended questions. The questionnaire consisted of nine open questions in total.

3.3.2.2 Closed questions

Closed questions offer the respondents the opportunity of selecting (according to instructions) one or more response choices from the number provided in the questionnaire. Closed questions are advantageous when a substantial amount of information about a subject exists and the response options are relatively well known. The degree, frequency and comprehensiveness of a phenomenon can be ascertained quite meaningfully by means of closed questions (De Vos 1998). Other advantages of closed questions are that the results of the investigation can be quickly available, respondents have a better understanding of the questions and questions can be answered within the same framework, and responses can consequently be compared better with one another (De Vos 1998).

3.3.3 Pre-testing the questionnaire

The necessity to pre-test, to assess whether the “line of questioning (in a data-gathering instrument) is appropriate and whether the document is understandable and simple to use” has been stressed by Newell (1993). Newell (1993) goes on to state that the sample to be pre-tested must be as similar as possible to the intended population and also recommended that the members of the population that are pre-tested should be encouraged to make suggestions that may improve the instrument. The questionnaire was administered to a random sample of 10 adults using the Bessie Head Library. In order to ensure clarity, the questionnaire was also reviewed by selected lecturers in the Information Studies Programme. The respondents found the questionnaire easy to understand and experienced no difficulty in completing it in the time limit. This exercise was thus successful and no corrections or changes were made to the instrument.

3.3.4 Administration and distribution of the questionnaire

The researcher gained permission from the library manager before the distribution of the questionnaires. Systematic administration of the questionnaire is vital to ensure that the process is a smooth transition for data collection (Naidu 2009). For the purpose of this study, the researcher chose to use personal hand delivery to ensure that the target sample definitely received and returned the questionnaire. It was considered vital to identify the respondents and keep track of the questionnaire distribution.

The sample of 200 respondents was relatively large and assistance from library colleagues was required. The questionnaires and covering letters were photocopied and stapled. Staff from the Adult, Music and Reference Departments assisted in distributing the questionnaires to registered adult library users. This was done at various intervals during the day in order to gain as wide a spread of members as possible. Thus, for example, in the mornings the pensioners and unemployed were targeted, at lunch times, workers who were visiting the library during their lunch hour and in the afternoons, library users who visited the library with their children and others that were finishing work.

3.3.5 Response rates

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) a questionnaire return rate of 50% is adequate for data analysis and reporting. A return rate of 60% is good and 70% is regarded as very good. Babbie and Mouton (2001) further explain that the overall response rate is a guide to the representativeness of the sample respondents. Of the 200 questionnaires distributed, a total of 197 (98.5%) was returned. This was an excellent response rate and more than sufficient for data analysis and reporting.

3.3.6 The interview

Neuman (2006) defines an interview as a short-term, secondary social interaction between two people with the explicit purpose of one person obtaining specific information from the other. The objective of the interview was to gain more information about the services and collections of the Bessie Head Library from an administrative point of view. The study used a structured interview schedule to collect information from the Library Manager and Principal Librarian (see Appendices 5 and 6).

3.3.7 Reliability and validity of the instrument

An assessment of the collected data hinges upon determining the reliability and validity of the survey instruments. According to Yin (1994) reliability is achieved when the findings of a case study are the same if the investigation were to be repeated and validity establishes the quality of the research design in answering the research question. Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that no matter how carefully a questionnaire may be designed, there is always the possibility of error and the surest protection against such errors is to pre-test the questionnaire in full and/or in part.

To ensure reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pre-test as noted above, was carried out on adult users to ensure that the instrument was free of ambiguities and that the conclusions drawn were reliable. In an attempt to achieve validity, the questionnaire was designed to ensure that it provided adequate coverage of the research questions guiding the study. The questionnaire used in this study had already been employed and acknowledged in academic and research library settings and their reliability and validity was well established. The researcher was unable to identify similar studies in a public library setting in South Africa and ascertained that if such studies had been undertaken, their results have yet to be published.

3.4 Data analysis

The information collected during the survey is referred to as raw data. Nichols (as cited in Naidu 2009) mentions the following four stages in processing and analyzing raw data:

- Checking through the questionnaires and correcting errors
- Coding
- Preparing data tables
- Making sense of the data. This includes preparing summaries, measures, and using them to test ideas about the target population.

Data analysis consists of both qualitative analysis which includes processes such as thematic and content analysis, and quantitative or statistical analysis (Mouton 1996). This study employed a largely quantitative approach. Data obtained from the closed questions in the questionnaire was checked for completeness, consistency and reliability. This process is known as data cleaning. According to Powell (1997) data cleaning involves everything from simply reading results, looking for surprising responses and unexpected patterns to verifying or checking the coding of the data. Data was cleaned and the statistical analysis using the software program SPSS was used to analyze and interpret the findings of the study.

The open questions or qualitative data were analyzed and interpreted using content analysis. The first step in content analysis involved the construction of categories which for the purpose of this study included staff services, access to information, library facilities and library as a place. The analysis involved quantifying and identifying the presence of a concept. Thus, after identifying the categories, data was coded (see Chapter 4). The coded

data offered some evidence about the main categories and trends relating to the study. The open questions afforded respondents the opportunity to express their views regarding library services.

3.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented the research methods and procedures that were used in the study. The research design, population, sampling techniques, instrumentation, data collection and methods of data analysis were also described and discussed.

Chapter 4 Research results

This chapter discusses the results of the survey of the sample population of adult library users at the Bessie Head Library. The results of the interviews with the Library Manager and Principal Librarian are also discussed. The validation for each section of the questionnaire is submitted and the results are discussed. The report indicates N for the number of respondents who should have responded to a particular question. Of the 200 questionnaires, this study yielded a return rate of 197 or 98.5% for the adult library users.

4.1 Questionnaire results

This section discusses the results that were obtained from the questionnaires which were administered to the adult library users.

4.1.1 Demographic data

Background information relating to the respondents was asked. The demographic information was essential for correlation of the response sets between the different categories of library users. Questions 1.1 through to 1.6 were asked to determine gender, age, race group, frequency of library use, frequency of resources used and frequency of access to electronic resources. The data is shown in Tables 2 to 6.

Table 2 (Question 1.1)

Gender

N = 197

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	75	38
Female	122	62
Total	197	100

Table 2 illustrates that there were more female respondents 122 (62%) than male respondents.

Table 3 (Question 1.2)

Description of respondents by age group

N = 197

Age	Frequency	Percent
20 – 29	55	27.9
30 – 39	47	23.9
40 – 49	49	24.9
50 – 59	24	12.2
60 – 69	12	6.1
Over 69	10	5.1
Total	197	100

Table 3 illustrates that the largest number 55 (27.9%) of the respondents were within the 20-29 age group. The above table indicates that a fairly even distribution of respondents belonged to the first three age categories and 10 (5.1%) respondents were from the over 69 age group. There were no respondents under the age of 20.

Table 4 (Question 1.3)

Race groups

N = 197

Race	Frequency	Percent
African	66	33.5
Indian	62	31.5
Coloured	22	11.2
White	47	23.9
Total	197	100

The largest number of the respondents, 66 (33.5%) were African, and the Coloureds (11.2%) were the least. An attempt was made to target an even distribution of the population but respondents visiting the library during the specific survey periods were predominantly African.

4.1.2 Library usage patterns

This section determined how often respondents visited the library, how often resources were used in the library and the frequency of accessing electronic resources.

4.1.2.1 Frequency of use of resources in the library

The usage patterns of the library and its resources are illustrated in Tables 5, 6 and 7 below.

Table 5 (Question 1.4)
Frequency of library visits
N = 197

Frequency of library visits	Frequency	Percent
Every day	41	20.8
At least once a week	69	35
Once every two weeks	59	29.9
Once a month	25	12.7
Once every six months	3	1.5
Total	197	100

Table 5 indicates that 69 (35%) of the respondents visited the library once a week with 59 (29.9%) coming in every two weeks. Twenty five (12.7%) visited the library once a month. A total of 41 (20.8 %) respondents visited the library everyday while a small number, three (1.5%) indicated that they only visited the library once every six months.

Table 6 (Question 1.5)

Frequency of using resources in the library

N = 197

Frequency of using resources in the library	Frequency	Percent
Everyday	38	19.3
At least once a week	61	31
Once every two weeks	41	20.8
Once a month	29	14.7
Once every six months	18	9.1
This is my first time	2	1
Never	8	4.1
Total	197	100

Table 6 shows that the largest number of respondents 61 (31%) used resources like books, encyclopedias and newspapers within the library once a week. Forty one respondents (20.8%) used the resources every two weeks and 38 respondents (19.3%) came into the library everyday to use the resources. It was interesting to note that there were eight (4.1%) respondents who never used resources in the library.

Table 7 (Question 1.6)

Frequency of accessing electronic resources in the library

N = 197

Frequency of accessing electronic resources in the library	Frequency	Percent
Everyday	21	10.7
At least once a week	34	17.3
Once every two weeks	10	5.1
Once a month	17	8.6
Once every six months	6	3
This is my first time	3	1.5
Never	106	53.8
Total	197	100

Table 7 illustrates a small majority (53.8%) of respondents who do not make use of electronic resources in the library. Twenty one (10.7%) of respondents came into the library daily to access electronic resources while 34 (17.3%) utilized the resources once a week.

4.1.3 Users' expectations and perceptions of service quality

Questions two and four encompassed the vital questions of this study, which was directly related to the research objectives. These questions were asked in order to determine the adult users' expectations and perceptions of the quality of service at the Bessie Head Library and in so doing would assist in answering the research questions and identify the gap between expectations and perceptions, which was the focal point of this study.

4.1.3.1 Users' expectations of service quality

Question two consisted of 26 statements regarding users' expectations of service quality. The respondents were asked to rate the statements on a scale (1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree) by indicating the number that best described their expectations of service quality that is provided by the library. The statements were divided into four categories and the respondents' expectations in relation to the various categories are reflected in the tables below.

4.1.3.1.1 Library staff

The respondents' expectations of service quality in relation to the first category, staff service, are illustrated in Table 8 below.

Table 8 (Question 2.1)

Users' expectations of staff service

N = 197

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Responses	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Staff who instill confidence in users	74	37.6	62	31.5	27	13.7	25	12.7	3	1.5	6	3
Staff who are consistently courteous	62	31.5	69	35	33	16.8	25	12.7	3	1.5	5	2.5
Staff who respond to users questions	61	31	66	33.5	42	21.3	16	8.1	6	3	6	3
Staff who understand the needs of users	69	35	76	38.6	27	13.7	13	6.6	1	0.5	11	5.6
Staff who are willing to assist users	52	26.4	82	41.6	40	20.3	10	5.1	2	1	11	5.6
Staff who are knowledgeable to answer user queries	43	21.8	64	32.5	55	27.9	10	5.1	2	1	23	11.3
Readers advisor to assist with reading requests	49	24.9	60	30.5	57	28.9	15	7.6	1	0.5	15	7.6

A large number of the respondents strongly agreed that they expect staff to instil confidence, understand the needs of users and be consistently courteous. The highest number of respondents, 82 (41.6%) agreed that they expect staff to be willing to assist users. The combined number for the 'disagree and strongly disagree' responses regarding user

expectations of staff services amounted to 132. Table 8 also indicates a high number of neutral responses to expectations of staff services.

4.1.3.1.2 Access to information

The respondents' expectations of service quality in relation to the second category, access to information is reflected in Table 9 below.

Table 9 (Question 2.2)

Users' expectations of access to information

N = 197

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Responses	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
A comprehensive print collection	68	34.5	70	35.5	36	18.3	6	3	1	0.5	16	8.1
An adequate audio-visual collection	74	37.6	69	35	30	15.2	15	7.6	3	1.5	9	4.6
Access to OPAC	65	33	57	28.9	42	21.3	9	4.6	5	2.5	19	9.2
An efficient inter-library loan service	88	44.7	74	37.6	22	11.2	7	3.6	1	0.5	5	2.5
An efficient reserve service	93	47.2	81	41.1	11	5.6	7	3.6	-	-	5	2.5
A comprehensive reference collection	89	45.2	76	38.6	15	7.6	8	4.1	4	2	5	2.5
Well placed signage	66	33.5	69	35	36	18.3	15	7.6	2	1	9	4.6
Efficient Internet access	67	34	63	32	39	19.8	7	3.6	5	2.5	16	8.1

Table 9 indicated that a large number of respondents, 93 (47.2%), strongly agreed that they expect an efficient reserve service. A further 89 (45.2%) indicated that they expected a comprehensive reference collection. It is interesting to note that 65 (33%) strongly agreed and 57 (28.9%) agreed that they expected access to an Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC).

4.1.3.1.3 Library facilities

The statements included in this category are tabled below. The respondents' expectations in relation to library facilities are illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10 (Question 2.3)

Users' expectations of facilities and library as a place

N= 197

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Responses	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
A library that is conveniently located	64	32.5	65	33	30	15.2	11	5.6	7	3.6	20	10.2
A library that is visually appealing	76	38.6	70	35.5	21	10.7	16	8.1	7	3.6	7	3.6
A library that has adequate light	81	41.1	69	35	22	11.2	14	7.1	6	3	5	2.5
Convenient hours of service	84	42.6	66	33.5	26	13.2	11	5.6	4	2	6	3
Prompt re-shelving of books	82	41.6	71	36	18	9.1	13	6.6	8	4.1	5	2.5
Adequate photo – copying facilities	118	59.9	51	25.9	16	8.1	4	2	4	2	4	2
Adequate number of computer workstations	116	58.9	46	23.4	19	9.6	5	2.5	3	1.5	8	4.1
Quiet and comfortable reading areas	137	69.5	40	20.3	12	6.1	5	2.5	2	1	1	0.5

The general consensus from the table above indicates that respondents had high expectations of the library facilities and the library as a place. A high percentage of respondents strongly agreed that they expected quiet and comfortable reading areas, adequate photocopying facilities and adequate computer workstations. Eight four (42.6%) of the respondents strongly

agreed that they expected convenient hours of service. Only a small number of respondents disagreed with the statements listed above.

4.1.3.1.4 General expectations regarding library services

The statements included in this category are tabled below and the respondents’ expectations of service quality in this category are reflected in Table 11 below.

Table 11 (Question 2.4)
General expectations of the library
N=197

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
The library provides me with all my reading requirements	117	59.4	50	25.4	15	7.6	11	5.6	4	2
The library satisfies my information needs	111	55.8	53	26.9	18	9.1	14	7.1	1	0.5
I am satisfied with the way I am treated at the library	110	55.3	53	26.9	17	8.6	12	6.1	5	2.5

It is evident from the table that the majority of respondents strongly agreed with the statements above. Respondents expected the library to provide them with all their reading requirements and at the same time being satisfied with the manner in which they are treated when visiting the library.

4.1.3.2 Users’ perceptions of service quality

Question 4 had 24 statements on service quality. The statements in Question 2 referred to user expectations and the statements in Question 4 referred to user perceptions. As with question 2, respondents were asked to rate the statements (on a scale of 1 = strongly agree ; 2 = agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = disagree; and 5 = strongly disagree) by indicating the number that

best described their perceptions of service quality provided by the Bessie Head Library. The statements are divided into four categories which together with the respondents' perceptions are illustrated below.

4.1.3.2.1 Library staff

The respondents' perceptions of service quality in relation to the first category, staff service, are illustrated in Table 12 below.

Table 12 (Question 4.1)

Users' perceptions of staff service

N= 197

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Responses	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Staff who instill confidence in users	67	33.5	58	29	37	18.5	23	11.5	3	1.5	9	6
Staff who are consistently courteous	73	36.5	66	33	33	16.5	18	9	3	1.5	4	3.5
Staff who respond to users questions	73	36.5	73	36.5	27	13.5	18	9	3	1.5	3	1.5
Staff who understand the needs of users	71	35.5	63	31.5	34	17	21	10.5	2	1	6	4.5
Staff who are willing to assist users	74	37	62	31	27	13.5	25	12.5	3	1.5	6	4.5
Staff who are knowledgeable to answer user queries	62	31	69	34.5	33	16.5	25	12.5	3	1.5	5	4
Readers advisor to assist with reading requests	61	30.5	66	33	42	21	16	8	6	3	6	4.5

Generally many respondents (on average approximately a third of the sample) strongly agreed with the above statements relating to staff services. A fair proportion of respondents

were neutral to perceptions of library staff. Twenty five (12.5%) respondents disagreed and three (1.5%) strongly disagreed thus a total of 28 respondents (which is quite high) indicated that they disagreed with the statements that staff were willing to assist users and were knowledgeable to answer user queries.

Table 13 (Question 4.3)

Users' perceptions of access to information

N= 197

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Responses	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
A comprehensive print collection	69	34.5	76	38	28	14	13	6.5	1	0.5	10	5
An adequate audio-visual collection	52	26	82	41	40	20	10	5	2	1	11	7
An efficient inter-library loan service	43	21.5	64	32	55	27.5	10	5	2	1	23	13
An efficient reserve service	49	24.5	60	30	57	28.5	15	7.5	1	0.5	15	7.5
A comprehensive reference collection	68	34	70	35	36	18	6	3	1	0.5	16	9.5
Well placed signage	74	37	69	34.5	31	15.5	12	6	3	1.5	8	5.5
Efficient internet access	88	44	74	37	22	11	7	3.5	1	0.5	5	4

A large number, 88 (44%) strongly agreed that the library had efficient internet access and 69 (34.5%) indicated that the library had a comprehensive print collection. A total of 70 (35%) responses agreed that the library contained a comprehensive reference collection.

Table 14 (Question 4.5)
Users' perceptions of facilities and library as a place

N= 197

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Response	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
A library that is conveniently located	93	46.5	81	40.5	11	5.5	7	3.5	-	-	5	4
A library that is visually appealing	89	44.5	76	38	15	7.5	8	4	4	2	5	4
A library that has adequate light	66	33	69	34.5	36	18	15	7.5	2	1	9	6
Convenient hours of service	67	33.5	63	31.5	39	19.5	7	3.5	5	2.5	16	9.5
Prompt re-shelving of books	64	32	65	32.5	30	15	11	5.5	7	3.5	20	11.5
Adequate photo – copying facilities	76	38	70	35	21	10.5	16	8	7	3.5	7	5
Adequate number of computer workstations	81	40.5	69	34.5	22	11	14	7	6	3	5	4
Quiet and comfortable reading areas	84	42	66	33	26	13	11	5.5	4	2	6	4.5

In general the respondents had high perceptions of the library facilities and the library as a place. The highest number of respondents, 93 (46.5%) strongly agreed that the library is conveniently located and 89 (44.5 %) stated that the library was visually appealing. A small percentage of respondents disagreed with the statements.

Table 15 (Question 4.7)

General perceptions of the library

N= 197

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Response	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
The library provides me with all my reading requirements	82	41	71	35.5	18	9	13	6.5	8	4	5	4
The library satisfies my information needs	79	39.5	88	44	18	9	4	2	7	3.5	-	-
I am satisfied with the way I am treated at the library	56	28	66	33	19	14.5	26	13	13	6.5	6	4.5

Respondents indicated that the library provides them with their reading materials, does satisfy their information needs and that they are satisfied with the manner in which they are treated at the library. Table 15 also illustrates that nearly 20% of respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with the treatment received at the library.

4.1.4 Respondents' comments regarding the Bessie Head Library services

Respondents offered comments and suggestions to the open questions with regard to questions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8. Of the 197 questionnaires received, 129 respondents chose not to offer any comments or suggestions and 68 respondents commented. The following tables illustrate respondents' comments and suggestions according to the broad categories of the library services investigated. In instances where more than one comment was made, these were grouped into the relevant categories and calculated in that category.

Table 16**Respondents' comments on staff services**

N= 93

Description: staff services	No.of respondents	%
Staff need to be more courteous, welcoming and approachable when asked for assistance	30	31
There should be a dress code as most staff are inappropriately dressed	11	12
Staff should have a love for reading and show enthusiasm in their jobs	10	11
Improve services in the library	10	11
More accuracy is required at the issue counter and users should not be made to wait while staff are on the telephone or chatting to one another	9	10
Staff training is essential for efficient service delivery	8	9
Many staff have limited knowledge of the books in the library	8	9
There is no visible readers adviser - most times warrant self-service	4	4
All staff should wear badges so that they are easily identifiable to patrons	3	3
TOTAL	93	100

In this category of comments, it is evident that staff need to adopt a more friendly, efficient and approachable manner towards their jobs and users. Another area of concern was inappropriately dressed staff.

Table 17

Respondents' comments on access to information

N= 57

Description: access to information	No.of respondents	%
Internet access is slow, often hampered by broken computers, time restrictions, few working computers and access restrictions such as blocked websites	12	21
Long periods of time before users are contacted for publications that were reserved	11	19
No author or title booklists	8	14
No Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	7	12
Reference books should be lent to branch libraries via inter-library loans for those who cannot always access Bessie Head	5	9
Printing facilities in the internet café are not always available as there is constantly no cartridges for the printer	5	9
No visible readers adviser to offer assistance	5	9
Improve process of registration, don't send members of the public away	4	7
TOTAL	57	100

The highest number of comments focused on the need for the internet facilities to be addressed. Other areas of concern were the reserve system, no access to an OPAC and the absence of a readers' adviser.

Table 18

Respondents' comments on library collection

N= 31

Description: library collection	No.of respondents	%
More recent fiction publications in the adult section	11	35
The need for more current non-fiction publications	8	26
Loan periods for DVDs should be extended to one week	5	16
Audio- visual collection needs to be updated – more African music and classical jazz	3	10
Large print collection has decreased	3	10
Books are not properly shelved, difficulty in locating certain titles	1	3
TOTAL	31	100

The need for an updated and more comprehensive fiction and non-fiction collection was the area that most respondents commented on.

Table 19

Respondents' comments on library as a place

N= 82

Description: library as a place	No. of respondents	%
The library is too noisy in the afternoons	23	28
Staff are too noisy, they carry on with their own conversations instead of assisting users	18	22
Entrance to the library is surrounded by litter and filth	13	15
Extend opening and closing times	11	13
Reference area should be extended, too small, students have to queue for seating	8	10
More space should be provided for those wishing to sit and read in the library	6	7
The library should be neat and tidy at all times	3	4
TOTAL	82	100

Respondents' commented on the noise in the library and about staff conducting personal conversations instead of assisting them. An area of concern was the litter around the library.

Table 20**Respondents' comments on library facilities****N= 85**

Description: library facilities	No. of respondents	%
Toilet facilities are in a poor condition – most of the time out of order	25	29
More visible signage e.g. to the auditoriums and newspapers in the lower ground floor	16	19
No study areas in the library	16	19
Parking facilities are always a problem, bays set aside for library users are used by the general public	14	17
Need for faxing and scanning facilities	7	8
Long photocopying queues especially on Saturdays	7	8
TOTAL	85	100

The major concern of most respondents was the lack of proper ablution facilities and the inadequate parking facilities at the library. Respondents also commented on the library not having any study areas.

Table 21**Respondents' general comments****N= 15**

Description: library services	No. of respondents	%
Staff must keep up the excellent service	9	60
All daily newspapers and periodicals are available	3	20
Staff in audio visual department are always friendly and polite	3	20
TOTAL	15	100

Respondents' offered positive comments in relation to the excellent staff services, the availability of current newspapers and periodicals and the friendly and polite staff in the audio-visual section.

4.1.5 Level of user satisfaction

This section of the questionnaire consisted of four closed questions which addressed the adult users' levels of satisfaction with staff services, access to information, library facilities and the overall quality of library services. The following figures illustrate the levels of user satisfaction with library services.

Figure 3 (Question 6.1)

User satisfaction with staff services

N= 197

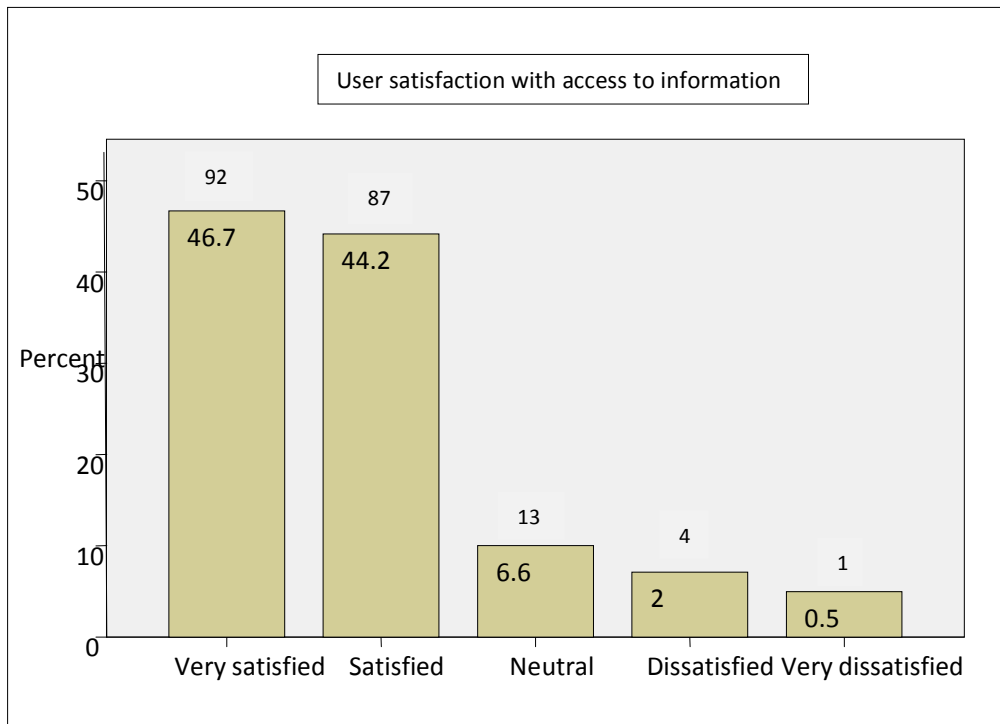


The vast majority of the respondents (85.8%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with staff services. Only two (1%) of the respondents were very dissatisfied with the level of staff services in the library.

Figure 4 (Question 6.3)

User satisfaction with access to information

N= 197

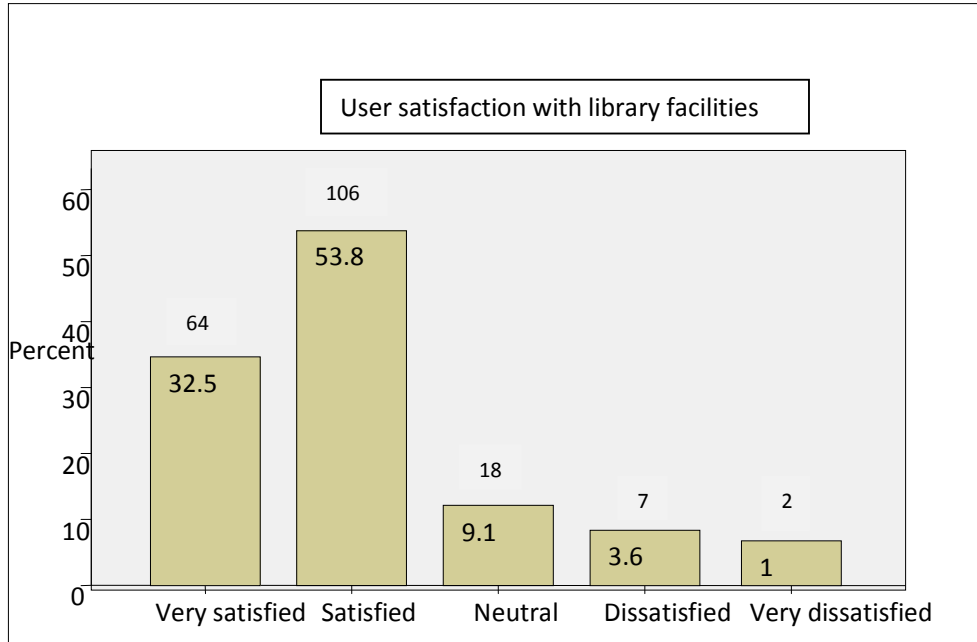


A very small percentage, 0.5 % (1) indicated that they were very dissatisfied with access to information while the vast majority (90.9%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with access to information.

Figure 5 (Question 6.5)

User satisfaction with library facilities

N= 197



The majority of respondents 53.8 % (106) were satisfied with library facilities. The overall response indicated that respondents were satisfied with library facilities and a very small percentage was dissatisfied with the facilities in the library.

Figure 6 (Question 7)

Satisfaction with overall quality of library services

N= 197

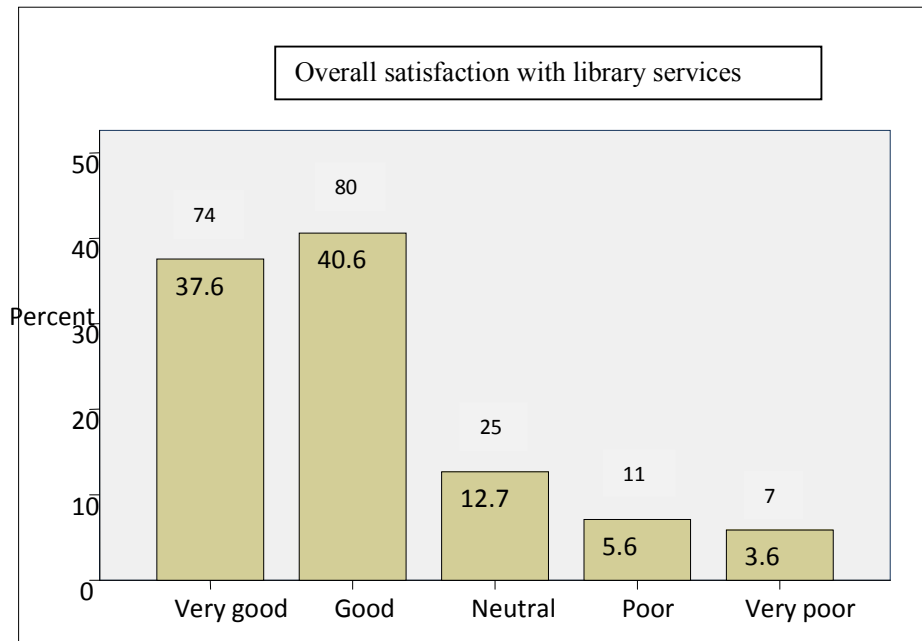


Figure 4 illustrates a small difference between very good and good with regard to the overall quality of library services. A total of 80 (37.6%) respondents rated the overall quality of library services as very good and 104 (40.6%) gave a rating of good. Only a small number of respondents, seven (3.6%) indicated that the overall service was very poor and 25 (12.7%) of the respondents were neutral.

4.2 The gap between users' expectations and perceptions

The aim of the study was to establish the gap between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality at the Bessie Head Library and thereafter identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing library services. According to Ladhari and Morales (2008) in (Naidu 2009) for each item, a so-called "gap score" is calculated as the difference between the raw "expectations score" and the raw "perceptions score".

In this section users' expectations and perceptions of service quality are numerically reported. The positive and negative responses, namely, strongly agree and agree, and strongly disagree and disagree, were combined to form one positive (agree) and one negative (disagree) response. In order to determine the difference in total between the expectations and

perceptions categories, the “agree” total of perceptions was subtracted from the “agree” total of expectations. This allowed for easier tabulation, clarity and comparison.

Table 22
Gap between users’ expectations and perceptions for staff services
N = 197

Services	Expectations			Perceptions			Difference		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Staff who instill	136	27	28	125	37	26	11	-10	2
Staff who are consistently courteous	131	33	28	139	33	21	-8	0	7
Staff who respond to users’ question	127	42	22	146	27	21	-19	15	1
Staff who understand the needs of users	145	27	14	134	34	23	11	-7	-9
Staff who are willing to assist users	134	40	17	136	27	28	-2	13	-11
Staff who are knowledgeable to answer user-related queries	107	55	12	131	33	28	-24	22	-16
Readers advisor to assist with reading requests	109	57	16	127	42	22	-18	15	6
Totals	889	281	137	938	203	169	-49	48	-20

The results for the gap between user expectations and perceptions for staff services indicated that overall respondents’ perceptions were higher than their expectations. Services that reflected a gap difference between “agree” for expectations and perceptions are:

- Staff who instill confidence in users, 11 (4.2%)
- Staff who are knowledgeable to answer user-related queries, 11 (3.9%)

All other responses elicited a negative result in the difference between expectations and perceptions of staff services.

Table 23

The gap between users' expectations and perceptions for access to information

N = 197

Services	Expectations			Perceptions			Difference		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
A comprehensive print collection	138	36	7	145	28	14	-7	8	-7
An adequate audio-visual collection	143	30	18	134	40	12	9	-10	6
An efficient inter-library loan service	162	22	8	107	55	12	55	-33	-4
An efficient reserve service	174	11	7	109	57	16	65	-46	-9
A comprehensive reference collection	165	15	12	138	36	7	27	-21	5
Well placed signage for easy access to reading material	135	36	17	143	31	15	-8	5	2
Efficient Internet access	130	39	12	162	22	8	-32	17	4
TOTALS	1047	189	81	938	269	84	109	-80	-3

The results for access to information indicated that overall respondents' expectations were higher than their perceptions. For the response category 'agree' as reflected in the above table, respondents' expectations exceeded their perceptions.

Services that have a relatively large gap difference between agree for expectations and perceptions for access to information were:

- An efficient reserve service, 65 (22.9%).

- An efficient inter-library loan service, 55 (20.4%).
- A comprehensive reference service, 27 (8.9%).

Table 24

The gap between users' expectations and perceptions for library facilities and library as a place

N= 197

Facilities	Expectations			Perceptions			Difference		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Library facilities									
Library that is conveniently located	129	30	12	174	11	7	-45	19	5
Library that is visually appealing	146	21	23	165	15	12	-19	6	11
Library that has adequate light	150	22	20	135	36	17	15	-14	3
Convenient hours of services	150	26	15	130	39	12	20	-13	3
Prompt re-shelving of books	153	18	21	129	30	18	24	-12	3
Adequate photocopying facilities	169	16	8	146	21	23	23	-5	-15
Adequate number of computer workstations	162	19	8	150	22	20	12	-3	-12
TOTALS	1059	152	107	1029	174	109	30	-22	-2

Respondents' expectations exceeded their perceptions with regard to library facilities and library as a place.

Services that have a relatively large gap difference between agree for expectations and perceptions for library facilities and library as a place were:

- Prompt re-shelving of books, 24 (7.7%).
- Adequate photocopying facilities, 23 (9.2%).
- Convenient hours of service, 20 (7.1%).

Table 25
The gap between general comments of user expectations and perceptions

Statements	Expectations			Perceptions			Difference		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Provides me with all my reading requirements	167	15	15	153	18	21	14	-3	-6
Satisfies my information needs	163	18	15	162	18	11	1	0	4
I am satisfied with the way I am treated at the library	162	17	17	122	29	39	40	-12	-22
TOTALS	492	50	47	437	65	71	55	-15	-24

The above table indicates that user expectations were higher than their perceptions for the general comments category. The gap difference for the agree response for the general comments of user expectations and perceptions were as follows:

- Satisfaction with treatment received at the library, 40 (14%).
- All reading requirements met, 14 (4.4%).

It was observed that the user perceptions for staff services were higher than their expectations whilst the user expectations were higher than their perceptions for access to information, library facilities and general comments. This indicates that the respondents' expectations of

the service with regard to the latter mentioned were met and their expectations of staff services were not met. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

4.3 Interview results

The Library Manager and the Principal librarian of the Adult library services were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. The areas covered in the interview schedule included library services, the collection development policy, funding and general questions. Where responses were common, it was not specified who had answered the question.

4.3.1 Library services

This section consisted of seven questions. Questions relating to changes in library services over the past five years, the impact of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) on the library, library services that were most and least used and measures which were employed to evaluate library services were put forward to the interviewees.

4.3.1.1 Library service over the past five years

The responses received for this question were as follows:

- The library now falls under the Msunduzi Municipality.
- There has been a demographic change in users – less Whites, Indians and Coloureds use the library.
- Carnegie funding allowed for the upgrading and refurbishment of public areas such as the Adult Lending Department, the Reference Department, the addition of a new Children’s wing and the extension of the Legal Deposit and Periodicals storage facilities.
- The addition of an Internet Cafe.
- Two well equipped auditoriums.

4.3.1.2 Impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The response to this question was that the Internet facilities have greatly enhanced reference works and information searches and have also allowed for the streamlining of online circulation and cataloguing. Both the Library Manager and Principal Librarian agreed that

ICT has made a positive impact on the library in that the library was now seen as an entry point for greater access to information.

4.3.1.3 Most used library services

According to the interviewees, the study established that the most used library services were the following:

- Children's Reference Library – this was used largely by Black Secondary School learners from previously disadvantaged communities.
- Adult Reference Library – used mainly by Black tertiary level students.
- Internet Cafe – used by all categories of users.

Other services that were well used were the Periodicals Department, the Adult and Children's Lending Services and the Music Library.

4.3.1.4 Least used services

The Principal Librarian indicated that all services were well used and busy while the Library manager argued that to some extent the use of the Large Print books had decreased as this was used mainly by elderly white readers who are now less frequent users of the library.

4.3.1.5 Evaluation measures

The study found that the Bessie Head Library evaluated services by way of user statistics, observation and regular staff and management meetings to report any user related queries. The Library manager indicated that no survey such as the present one or any similar survey had been undertaken before.

4.3.2 Collection development policy

Questions 2.1 and 2.2 sought to obtain information about the collection development policy of the Bessie Head Library. Question 2.1 established that the library does have a collection development policy. In response to question 2.2 the Principal Librarian explained that a new collection development policy was written and officially ratified by the Executive Committee of the Msunduzi Municipality 2007/2008. A library collection development policy committee was formed in order to write up this policy and to monitor its implementation and usefulness and review it every three years.

4.3.3 How does the library meet the reading needs of Adult users?

The responses received from the Library Manager and the Principal Librarian indicated that by adhering to the collection development policy, there is ongoing purchasing of popular books and relevant media subject to availability of funds. User input regarding reading requests was also encouraged.

4.3.4 How has the use of electronic resources affected the use of the library?

The answer to this question indicated that the use of electronic resources had not affected the library as users still mainly required books or written information related to their study curricula.

4.4 Funding

Question 3.1 wanted to establish if there had been any significant changes in funding over the last five years. The response to this was that funding had been steadily decreasing from the library's parent body which is the Msunduzi Municipality. Other changes included the library receiving the Carnegie Grant and the conditional grant from the Department of Arts and Culture. The Library Manager also indicated that funding from the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Library Services has also decreased.

The responses to question 3.2 was that the library was getting very limited support from local government and although the Provincial Library Services were very supportive, there has been a degree of reluctance from them to commit to building new libraries in the Msunduzi Municipal region due to past and present difficulties associated with this Municipality.

Question 3.3 enquired whether the library generated any of its own income. The responses indicated that money was generated from fines collected for overdue and lost books, hiring out of the two auditoriums in the library and photocopying.

In response to question 3.4, the interview established that the introduction of ICT played a role in the library obtaining overseas funding for the establishment of the Internet Cafe. Question 3.5 indicated that the library received donor support from the Carnegie Corporation in the United States, the Mellon Foundation and the conditional grant from the Department of Arts and Culture.

4.5 General questions

The last section of the interview schedule addressed the greatest achievement of the library in the last five years, the greatest weakness of the library in the last five years, the library's greatest need at present and improvements in management. Both the Library Manager and Principal Librarian were delighted to state that the library's greatest achievement was receiving two grants from the Carnegie Corporation (each of three year duration) which with the funding support from the Provincial Library Services resulted in the building and equipping of a new Children's wing plus other refurbishments and upgrading, including the Internet Cafe and generous funding for collection development.

When asked about the greatest weaknesses of the library, the responses were as follows:

- Lack of support from the Msunduzi Municipality.
- Severe reduction of parking space near the library for users.
- New staff recruited by Municipal officials (not library management) who show little commitment to library work and good service to the public.

Responses to question 4.3 indicated that improved Municipal support, funding and a good management structure would be the library's greatest need at present. The library manager and Principal Librarian were finally asked if there was a need to improve management of the library and if so to explain. In response to this question both respondents agreed that there was a need to improve the management of the library and the following suggestions were made:

- A more positive, visionary and inspirational approach supported by factual, logical, balanced and well reasoned information.
- Improved communication at all levels plus a firm and committed stance.
- To be adaptable to the changing demographic, political and social environment through better training of staff.
- To operate effectively according to ethical and professional principles and have a genuine interest and commitment to providing library and information services that will improve the lives of the people in the Msunduzi region.

4.6 Summary of the interview results

The results of the interview indicated that budget constraints were a major factor for the library. However, the awarding of the grants has provided the library with a substantial financial boost given the lack of support from local government. In addition to this, the results revealed that library management had to make a concerted effort to improve its services in order to meet users needs. The decline in the use of the large print collection is an area which should be addressed. Staff training also appeared to be one of the library management priorities.

4.7 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, the results and validation for each section of the questionnaire had been presented. The research results were clearly tabulated and further explanations were provided below each table or graph. The research results pertaining to the following areas were presented:

- Library usage patterns.
- Users' expectations and perceptions of service quality.
- Users' comments regarding services provided by the Bessie Head Library.
- Levels of user satisfaction.
- The Gap difference between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality.

The results of the interviews with the Library Manager and the Principal Librarian were also presented. The interpretation and discussion of these results will be done in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 Discussion of the results

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in light of the research problem and objectives which are listed in Chapter 1. The purpose of this study was to determine adult user perceptions of library services provided by the Bessie Head Library and their level of satisfaction regarding service delivery, thereby identifying the strengths and weaknesses of various areas of service quality in relation to the services provided. The objectives of the study were:

- To determine users' expectations of the quality of service.
- To determine users' perceptions of the quality of library service.
- To determine whether there is a gap between the expectations and perceptions of library users.
- To establish the level of satisfaction of library users.
- To make recommendations based on the findings of the study.

This chapter discusses the information collated from the self-administered questionnaire that was presented in the previous chapter and information obtained through the interview with the Library Manager and Principal Librarian. The different library services which encompassed the majority of services were grouped into four categories. These categories referred to staff services, access to information, library as a place and library facilities. In each category, the services are discussed in the light of the first four objectives of the study.

The gap between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality is discussed. The gap is considered significant if the difference is greater than 25%, and insignificant if it is less than 25% (Simba 2006). The significance of these services in a public library, in meeting users' expectations and levels of satisfaction is also discussed. Finally the significance of the instrument used in this study is commented on.

For each category, the objectives of the study will provide the basis for the discussion and each of these will be discussed in turn. However, to begin with the background information concerning the sample will be discussed.

The LibQUAL+™ survey instrument that was used in this study was adapted from other studies that used such an instrument but in an academic library setting. According to the

researchers' knowledge no such studies have been undertaken in public libraries in South Africa and it must be noted that this will to some extent impact on the discussion of the results.

5.1 Demographic data of respondents

This section discusses the profile of the respondents with regard to their demographic attributes, namely, gender, age and race group.

5.1.1 Population demographics

The majority of the respondents, 122 (62%) were female and 75 (38%) were male. An attempt was made to try and obtain a fairly even distribution of the gender but this was not possible as there were more female respondents in the library during the specific survey period. The largest number 55 (27.9%) of the respondents were within the 20-29 age group and only 10 (5.1%) of the respondents belonged to the over 69 age category. The race group that comprised the largest number of respondents were Black, 66 (33.5%). This was followed by 62 (31.5%) Indians and 47 (23.9%) Whites. To what extent the above reflect the actual proportion of members with regard to race, gender and age is not known as these figures are not available. Based on her experience, the researcher is of the opinion that the sample did represent the membership demographic to a reasonable extent and thus was adequate for the purposes of this study.

5.2 Library usage patterns

This section discusses the findings related to the frequency of library visits, and the usage frequency of library resources.

5.2.1 Frequency of library visits

The results of the study indicated that the library was visited frequently with the majority 69 (35%) of the respondents visiting the library at least once a week and 59 (29.9%) coming in every two weeks. Forty one (20.8%) of the respondents came into the library everyday and only three (1.5%) of the respondents indicated that they visited the library once every six weeks. Respondents who came into the library every two weeks probably did so as this was the time period for items loaned and the majority who came in everyday also used other resources in the library. An overall indication would be that the vast majority of respondents (85.7%) visited the library at least once every two weeks.

5.2.2 Frequency of using resources in the library

In general, most respondents were aware of the various resources in the library and there were variations in terms of how often such resources were used. The largest number, 61 (31%), indicated that they used resources like books, encyclopedias and newspapers within the library at least once a week. It was interesting to note that eight (4.1%) of the respondents never used resources in the library and 38 (19.3%) went into the library everyday to utilize the resources. The results are an indication that many of the users are dependent on resources in the library and the provision of material for users is the library's most significant role.

5.2.3 Frequency of accessing electronic resources in the library

A significant number of Bessie Head Library users, 106 (53.8%) indicated that they never used electronic resources in the library. This is largely due to most library users indicating that they used the library primarily for the loan of books and audio-visual materials and others indicated that they had Internet access in their homes or workplace. The remaining number of respondents (46.2%) that accessed electronic resources in the library indicates the importance of the library providing such resources particularly Internet access as it is not readily available to a large majority of people. By providing access to electronic resources, the public library can play a vital role in bridging the information gap caused by the digital divide.

5.3 Staff services

A public library needs staff who are passionate about customer care, who are committed to their professions and dedicated to providing a service that will meet the needs of users who frequent the library. A high standard of customer care should be an integral part of all policies and procedures of a library. Library staff can play a vital role in providing numerous services to their users by addressing their diverse needs, characteristics and interests. It is therefore critical that staff are committed to providing excellent frontline customer care to their users. For discussion purposes, the responses for strongly agree and agree, and disagree and strongly disagree from the closed questions in all categories will be combined and discussed as a single percentage.

5.3.1 Discussion of results from the closed questions on staff services

The closed questions focused on the attention staff gave to users, staff's knowledge to answer user related queries, and willingness of staff to assist users. The results from the survey

indicated that respondents had high expectations concerning certain staff services. The highest number of respondents, 145 (73.6%) agreed that they expected staff to understand the needs of users, 134 (68%) agreed that they expected staff to be willing to assist users, 136 (69.1%) indicated that they expected staff to instil confidence in users. Conversely, respondents' perceptions as they interacted with the services showed a somewhat higher percentage on some services and lower on others. For example, 146 (73%) perceived that staff do respond to users questions, 139 (69.5%) staff are consistently courteous and 127 (63.5%) perceived that the readers advisor assisted with reading requests.

5.3.2 Gap difference on staff services

This study has rather interestingly shown that the adult users of the Bessie Head Library had higher perceptions relating to staff services provided by the library than their expectations of those services. The study found that there is a gap (not relatively large) regarding staff services. The comparison between expectations and perceptions indicated a gap with regard to staff who respond to users questions (146 for perceptions and 127 for expectations), staff who are knowledgeable to answer user-related queries (131 for perceptions and 107 for expectations) and staff who are consistently courteous (139 for perceptions and 131 for expectations). In view of this, it would seem that users' are getting the desired staff service and that library staff were delivering services in a satisfactory manner.

It must be noted that this result was achieved from a sample population and users' responses may in effect have been influenced by the service that they most frequently use and not their perceptions of other staff services in other departments. However, the results of the open questions (which are discussed below) do suggest that there is room for improvement with regard to services provided by the library particularly as they relate to the staff themselves.

5.3.3 Discussion of results of the open questions on staff services

A total of 93 comments were received for staff services (see Table 16). In general respondents commented about service received at the issue and returns desk and the need for professional assistance. Crowley and Gilreath (2002) state that the attitude of library staff in terms of friendliness, helpfulness and willingness to assist were critical in satisfying users' needs.

The statistics revealed that 30 comments related to courteousness, and professionalism. These comments illustrated that staff need to develop their approach in line with good customer care. As one respondent stated, “I am made to wait for assistance while they carry on with their private conversation”. In addition to this another user said “I was in a long queue on a Saturday morning and we were made to wait while a staff member engaged in a private telephone call on her cell phone”. Comments from 10 respondents revealed that staff should show enthusiasm in their jobs and also have a love for reading. This was an interesting comment as one respondent indicated that one cannot work in a place like a library if one does not have an interest in reading as this immediately decreases ones passion for the job.

The results from users at the Bessie Head Library indicate that there are no visible readers’ advisers and at most times users engage in self-service at the library. It was suggested that staff should wear name badges for easier identification by users. The need for more accuracy at the issue counter and the need to address the dress code of staff and staff training were also raised.

The comments relating to staff services clearly indicate the manner in which staff treat users. Their behaviour in communicating and regular staff training in customer care should always be based on the assumption that it must be primarily for the benefit of users rather than the convenience of the staff and the organization (Gill 2009).

5.4 Library collection and access to information

Libraries are made up of collections of information and cultural materials in a variety of formats including access to resources from other libraries (Gill 2009). A large collection does not necessarily equate with a good collection. The key criterion must be the relevance and currency of materials provided. New material can be lost if introduced into old and outdated stock and organizing access to materials both in the library and beyond is a vital part of collection development (Gill 2009). Therefore a balanced library collection plays a significant role in terms of service quality in a public library.

Nitecki and Hemon (2000) looked at the elusive concept – quality, in terms of collection’s size, titles held and breadth of subject coverage, while Majid, Anwar and Eisenschitz (2001) (in Naidu 2009) indicated that factors such as size, relevance and currency of collections can also be used for measuring the effectiveness of a library. Thus the concepts of quality and

effectiveness are interrelated and quality therefore plays a significant role in determining whether an effective service is provided or not. The respondents in this study showed concern about the lack of adequate resources in the library.

5.4.1 Discussion of results of the closed questions on access to information

The closed questions in this category referred to the size and adequacy of the print and audio-visual collections, efficiency of inter-library loans and reserve services and easily accessible electronic resources. Many respondents, 174 (88.3%), expected an efficient reserve service and a further 165 (83.8%) indicated that they expected a comprehensive reference collection. The audio-visual collection was another area where 143 (72.6%) respondents expected improvement in the collection. Access to an OPAC was also expected by 122 (61.9%) of respondents. In the context of this category of the study, the expectations were higher than the perceptions. The results indicated that the adult library users at the Bessie Head Library had high expectations of the library collection.

5.4.2 Discussion of results of the open questions on access to information

A total of 57 responses for comments on access to information and 31 responses for comments on library collections were received. In terms of the access to information, 11 respondents commented on the long time periods before being contacted for books reserved, eight respondents' commented on the fact that there were no booklists, and five respondents' commented on the restrictions relating to inter-library loans. The comments depicted the need for the library to address its reserve and inter-library loan system.

One of the main reasons for the delay in contacting users for reserve requests could be attributed to limited numbers of requested material and also that items on loan are not often returned in the stipulated time. Another reason is that many of the popular books are more often than not borrowed and not returned at all. This results in the library losing popular reading material.

With reference to access to information, the comments showed that users found the Internet access to be too slow, and access restrictions in terms of time allowed and in the form of blocked websites. Printing facilities in the Internet Cafe were always hindered by the lack of cartridges and the library lacking an OPAC was among the comments relating to access to information.

Users' comments regarding the library collection showed that 17 respondents indicated that there was a need for more current titles in the Fiction and Non-Fiction book categories; three mentioned an upgraded audio-visual collection that would include more African music and of concern by a further three respondents was the decrease in the Large Print collection.

A crucial objective of the library is to provide a balanced and comprehensive collection to meet the needs of the diverse users. In addition to this, information resources must be organized in a manner that ensures easy access. Library users expect staff to be knowledgeable and to provide assistance in locating relevant material and information in an efficient manner. This would ultimately lead to user satisfaction with services provided.

The Bessie Head Library is expected to ensure that such services are provided but recent budget constraints have resulted in the library not being able to provide the ideal Internet service. Some justification for the comments relating to Internet facilities are directly related to the drastic slash in library budgets. Used ink cartridges are often not replaced immediately and the large numbers of computers not working are due to the regulations placed upon the library by the Municipality. All computers in need of attention are sent to the IT section of the Municipality who attend to the repairs. This often results in a delay in the return which inhibits access. Restrictions placed on access to websites are as per the regulations of the Municipality and as library staff are concerned with the quality of content on some websites, a system of control was put in place.

The Bessie Head Library not having an OPAC was met with concern from seven library users. The comments illustrated frustration in that users who were familiar with an OPAC were unable to search for their specific requests. While user requests could be attended to by staff at the issue counter or the readers' adviser, this is not an ideal solution and concern about the lack of an OPAC is a justifiable one.

The various comments related to access to information illustrated that users were to a large extent dissatisfied with the reference collection, Internet facilities and the book reserve system. As a public service open to all, the public library has a key role in collecting, organizing and disseminating information, as well as providing access to a wide range of information sources (IFLA/UNESCO 2001). The Bessie Head Library should aim to address

these issues and wherever possible, co-operate with other resource centres and also their users to meet the information needs of their users.

5.4.3 Gap difference on access to information

The gap difference between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality in this category showed a significant gap for efficient reserve services, 65 (22.9%) and 55 (20.4%) for inter-library loan services. The gap difference for a comprehensive reference collection was 27 (8.9%). This gap has indicated that the library had not adequately met the needs of the users in terms of providing efficient access to information. The service that illustrated a small gap was the audio-visual collection, nine (3.2%) which indicated that respondents' were less dissatisfied with this collection. The results for efficient Internet access resulted in a negative gap, (-32) which illustrates that respondents were not altogether content with Internet access.

5.5 Library as a place

Although they remain as one on the questionnaire, the researcher decided to split 'library as a place' and 'library facilities' in order to provide a more detailed discussion of users' concerns relating to these aspects.

Library buildings play an important part in public library provision. They should be designed to reflect the functions of the library service, be accessible to all in the community and be sufficiently flexible to accommodate new and changing services (IFLA/UNESCO 2001). It was anticipated that concerns regarding 'library as a place' would surface in terms of responses and comments.

5.5.1 Discussion of the results of the closed questions on library as a place

The statements in the category of library as a place referred to the library environment, location, appearance and convenient hours of service. The views expressed by the respondents in relation to library as a place revealed that 150 (76.1%) responses expected convenient hours of service and expected adequate lighting in the library. An interesting result was received for the convenient location of the library. Users' perceptions were higher, 174 (87%) than their expectations, 129 (65.5%). It would seem that the location of the library did not in any way deter users.

5.5.2 Discussion of the results of the open questions on library as a place

A total of 82 responses were received for this category. Important comments that were raised referred to the high noise levels in the library in the afternoons. Twenty three respondents mentioned that the large numbers of school students were often responsible for the noise. Respondents also commented on staff who were very noisy especially at the issue and returns counter. In addition to this the litter surrounding the entrance to the library was a cause for concern. It is crucial for library management to address these concerns as this could impact on users' perceptions of 'library as a place' which could affect their use of the library.

Other points that were commented on were the hours of service. Respondents expressed a need for an extension of the opening and closing times of the library. In terms of seating space, respondents felt that the reference area should be extended as students are often required to queue for available seats. More seating was also required for those wishing to sit and read in the library.

5.5.3 Gap difference on library as a place

The respondents' expectations exceeded their perceptions in this service category. A moderate gap existed for convenient hours of service, 20 (7.1%) and adequate lighting, 15 (5.3%). Respondents' perceptions were higher than their expectations for the convenient location of the library and the visual appeal of the library.

The gap difference for library as a place illustrates that the users' are to a large extent satisfied with services in this particular category.

5.6 Library facilities

Library facilities play a critical role in satisfying users needs. Library users' do not expect to obtain relevant information resources, they also would expect good facilities. The absence of such facilities would be an indication of a facility that is not adequately equipped to assist users with their relevant needs.

5.6.1 Discussion of the results of closed questions on library facilities

Library facilities referred to the adequate number of computer workstations, adequate photocopying facilities and prompt re-shelving of books. The provision of sufficient and reliable equipment should facilitate easy and efficient access to information. The facilities

mentioned were expected to be available and in good working order in so as to accommodate users at the Bessie Head Library. The results of the survey are discussed below.

A total of 153 (15.7%) respondents expected prompt re-shelving of books, 169 (14.2%) indicated that they expected adequate photocopying facilities and 162 (7.4%) expected adequate computer workstations. Respondents' expectations exceeded their perceptions with regard to library facilities.

5.6.2 Discussion of the results of open questions on library facilities

This category received a total of 85 comments. Respondents provided some very relevant comments in this category.

The comments by respondents, 25 (29.4%), showed an urgent need for proper ablution facilities. The Bessie Head Library does not have adequate male and female toilets that are in working order. This is largely due to vandalism of toilet equipment and a lack of financial resources to have them repaired timeously. More visible signage and the lack of study areas was another area of concern. A further 16 (18.8%) respondents' indicated that directions to the auditoriums and newspaper reading areas are poorly sign-posted and this often gives rise to people wandering about looking rather 'lost'. A total of 16 (18.8%) respondents complained that the library is not equipped with study areas. All students accessing the reference section may only do so for the purpose of utilizing the resources. Students are often directed to other institutions for studying purposes.

Fourteen (16.5%) respondents also felt very strongly about the lack of parking facilities at the library. A system was introduced whereby all registered library users were issued with a parking disc which they would display on their vehicles when visiting the library. The problem with this is that more often than not, parking that has been designated for library users are used by non-library users. The critical shortage of parking facilities has been described by some respondents as a major drawback of using the Bessie Head Library.

The need for more photocopying facilities especially on Saturdays and faxing and scanning facilities were commented upon. The long photocopying queues on Saturday mornings during the school term hinders tertiary and other users from access to this facility. Respondents also

commented on the need for the library to have faxing and scanning facilities as this would to a large extent, be convenient for students sending out job applications.

As mentioned earlier, the Internet facilities are often plagued with service problems and this impacts on the number of available working computers. Respondents commented on the Internet Cafe being equipped with a large number of computers but access is restricted to approximately half of the total number of computers in the facility due to the remainder being non-functional.

5.6.3 Gap difference on library facilities

The facilities in this category showed a distinct gap for prompt re-shelving of books, 24 (8.5%), adequate photocopying facilities, 23 (7.3%) and adequate number of computer workstations, 12 (3.8%). The gaps indicate that the library has not adequately met the needs of all the users in terms of providing sufficient and maintained library facilities.

5.7 General expectations and perceptions of the library

The public library plays a vital role in fulfilling its obligation to providing a service that is met with ultimate user satisfaction. To be successful in fulfilling its goals the public library must be fully accessible to all its potential users. Any limitation of access will reduce the ability of the public library to fully achieve its primary role of meeting the library and information needs of the community it serves (IFLA/UNESCO 2001).

5.7.1 Discussion of closed questions on general expectations and perceptions

This category of statements related to the quality of service provision in terms of the library meeting the users reading requirements, satisfying the users' information needs and satisfaction with treatment received at the library. The results revealed that the respondents had high expectations of the services, for example 167 (85%) agreed that they expected the library to provide them with all their reading requirements and 162 (82%) expected to be satisfied with the way they were treated at the library. The perceptions of the services in this category varied to a small extent and were lower than the users' expectations. Respondents' did not respond to the open-ended questions in this category.

5.7.2 Gap difference on general expectations and perceptions

The only significant gap in this category was users' satisfaction with the treatment received at the library, 40 (21.7%). The other gaps were relatively small. This would indicate a degree of satisfaction with reading and information needs.

5.8 General comments on library services

A total of 15 general comments on library services were received. These comments were of a positive nature and respondents' commented on excellent service delivery, the provision and availability of current newspapers and periodicals and the polite and friendly staff in the audio-visual department.

5.9 User satisfaction with library services

This section addresses the users' level of satisfaction with staff services, access to information, library facilities and the overall quality of library services.

D'Elia and Walsh (1983) state that user satisfaction has been used primarily to describe a library's level of performance and to diagnose the performances of services within a library. In addition, user satisfaction data collected for specific services within a library have been used to identify those services for which there is a high degree of user satisfaction and those services for which there is a low degree of user satisfaction. In this manner user satisfaction has been used to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of a library's performance. The results for user satisfaction are discussed below.

5.9.1 User satisfaction with the level of staff services

The majority of the respondents (85.8%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with the level of staff service provided by the library. Fifteen (7.6%) of respondents indicated a neutral response and a minority of 13 (6.6%) expressed their dissatisfaction with the level of staff services. As some of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the level of staff services, this indicates that there is room for improvement in this regard. Although no reasons for users' dissatisfaction were indicated, the comments from other responses regarding staff services described and discussed above support the view that this particular aspect could be improved.

5.9.2 User satisfaction with access to information provided by the library

The response to user satisfaction with access to information illustrated that the majority of respondents, 179 (90.9%) expressed their satisfaction with access to information. A total of 13 (6.6%) respondents offered a neutral response and five (2.5%) expressed dissatisfaction with access to information. Again, no reasons for dissatisfaction were provided but responses described and discussed in question 5.4.2 above do offer some indication of comments in this category.

5.9.3 User satisfaction with library facilities

The majority of respondents, 170 (86.3%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with library facilities. There were 18 (9.1%) neutral responses and a total of nine (4.6%) who expressed dissatisfaction with library facilities. The results clearly indicated that library facilities were to a large extent met with positive approval from library users.

5.10 Overall quality of services provided by the library

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents, 184 (78.2%) rated the overall quality of library services as good or very good. A small minority, 18 (9.2%) indicated that the overall quality of library services was poor. While this is a small minority it does suggest that the library cannot be complacent with regard to the quality of services provided and that there is always room for improvement. However, the results have shown that the library is to a large extent excelling in the provision of services rendered and that users are, in the main, satisfied with the services provided.

5.11 An assessment of the LibQUAL+™ instrument

Survey methodology was used in this study. The questionnaire, adapted from LibQUAL+™ was used to collect data from the respondents. The results from the study have illustrated that not all respondents answered the open questions. However, those who did answer provided some very interesting and valid comments for library improvement. All respondents answered the closed questions. Questions which respondents found to be not applicable to them were not answered.

The questionnaire was successful in obtaining users' expectations and perceptions and identifying the levels of user satisfaction regarding service quality at the Bessie Head Library. The appropriate design of the research instrument allowed for determining the gap between

users' expectations of service quality and their perceptions of the actual services delivered to them by the Bessie Head library. This provided a means to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the library with the intention of keeping in mind that an excellent service must be provided in order to exceed and not just meet the expectations of library users.

Roszkowski *et al.* (2005) in Kachoka (2010) make an important point with regard to the gap model (and by extension the LibQUAL instrument) which needs to be borne in mind in terms of the results and the discussion of the results of this study. The authors argue that it is practically impossible to fully satisfy customers' needs based on the gap model and people tend to report being satisfied despite their expectations not being fully met.

5.12 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter the respondents' demographic information, library usage patterns, users' expectations and perceptions of library service quality and user comments in relation to the various service categories were discussed. The chapter also discussed the respondents' levels of satisfaction with staff services, access to information and library facilities and the overall quality of service. Finally, the assessment of the LibQUAL+™ instrument was discussed.

Chapter 6 Summary, findings, conclusions and recommendations

The main objective of this study was to determine whether there is a gap between adult users' expectations and perceptions of service quality and to establish the level of user satisfaction offered to them by the Bessie Head Library. In order to accomplish this purpose, the specific objectives of the study were:

- To determine users' expectations of the quality of service.
- To determine users' perceptions of the quality of library service.
- To determine whether there is a gap between the expectations and perceptions of library users.
- To establish the level of satisfaction of library users.

This study was undertaken in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current library services and thus make recommendations to the library management based on the findings of the study.

This chapter presents a summary of the thesis and conclusions are made. The recommendations based on the findings are also presented and suggestions of areas for further research are also presented.

6.1 Summary of thesis

The thesis began with an introductory chapter which outlined the research problem, the purpose and objectives of the study, the rationale scope and limitations. The definition of key terms used and a brief outline of the structure of the study was also provided.

Chapter 2 provided a background to the Bessie Head Library and a review of the relevant literature. The role of public libraries in a democratic South Africa, the concept of social exclusion and social capital for the South African public library situation was discussed. The SERVQUAL and LibQUAL+TM instruments which have been used in service quality assessments in libraries were also discussed.

Chapter 3 described the research methodology adopted in this study. This included sampling, the size and characteristics of the population, data collection methods and the data analysis procedures that were followed.

Chapter 4 provided the presentation of the results and the analysis of the data. Information collected from the respondents was reported in the form of tables and graphs.

Chapter 5 provided a discussion of the research results in relation to usage patterns, users' expectations and users' perceptions of library service quality. The significance of the LibQUAL instrument was also discussed.

6.2 Overview of findings

The results of the survey support the usefulness of the LibQUAL+™ instrument used in this study and its relevance in the context of public library services. The results indicate that there is a gap between user expectations and perceptions of service quality rendered to adult users of the Bessie Head Library. The gap however is a small one.

It is evident that the Bessie Head Library is providing a quality service to a certain extent. The caution stems from the fact that while the majority response indicated satisfaction with library services, there was a small minority that expressed dissatisfaction with services that would warrant the need for improvement.

The adult users of the Bessie Head Library had varied levels of expectations and perceptions for services in each category, for example, staff services indicated higher perceptions than expectations and access to information and library facilities indicated higher expectations than perceptions. This illustrates that their actual experiences of some services offered by the library were to users' satisfaction whilst others were not up to standard.

With regard to staff services, the study has shown that the adult library users had higher perceptions than expectations (see Table 22). The study found that respondents appeared to be getting the desired staff services. However, comments from the open-ended questions revealed some dissatisfaction with staff services in terms of service provision and indicate that there is room for improvement in this regard.

The study has shown that certain services in the category 'access to information' were not operating as they were supposed to and this in turn had a negative impact on users' rating of their perceptions. These services include efficient reserve services, efficient inter-library loan services and a comprehensive reference collection. The gap difference between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality in the category of access to information as illustrated in Table 23 indicated that the library had not adequately met the needs of all users.

Responses to the open-ended questions on access to information indicated that there was a need for the book and audio-visual collections to be upgraded. The study also found that users were dissatisfied with the slow Internet access, inadequate printing facilities and access restrictions on Internet facilities.

The category library facilities and library as a place illustrated that users do not only expect relevant information resources, they also expect adequate facilities. The study has shown that respondents' expectations exceeded their perceptions in this service category (see Table 24). Areas of concern with regard to library facilities showed an urgent need for adequate ablution facilities, the provision of demarcated parking facilities for library users, adequate photocopying facilities and the need for reliable Internet facilities. Respondents also expected the hours of service to be addressed.

With regard to the overall quality of services provided by the Bessie Head Library, the findings of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents rated the services as good or very good. Whilst a small minority rated the services as poor, this does not imply that the library be complacent with the quality of services provided and should endeavour to improve on existing services.

The findings of the study revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the library in terms of service delivery to users and suggested areas that need improvement and even the addition of new services.

6.3 Conclusions

The following conclusions are arrived at. They are presented in terms of the objectives of the study.

6.3.1 Users' expectations

The first objective of the study was to determine users' expectations of service quality. The study revealed that the users had high expectations concerning access to information. They expected a comprehensive print collection, an adequate audio-visual collection and access to an OPAC. They also expected a comprehensive reference collection and efficiency in the area of inter-library loans.

Users further expected adequate library facilities such as lighting, convenient hours of service, photocopying facilities, computer workstations and quiet and comfortable reading areas. In essence, the users expected more from the services and facilities than what was being provided by the library.

6.3.2 Users' perceptions

The second objective of the study was to determine users' perceptions of the quality of library service. The study showed that the users' perceptions for some services were higher than their expectations. Services with fairly high users' perceptions included: staff who are consistently courteous, staff who respond to users' questions, efficient Internet access, a library that is conveniently located and a library that is visually appealing. Services with low perceptions included: staff who instil confidence in users, an efficient inter-library loan service, an efficient reserve service and a comprehensive reference collection. The responses of users' actual experiences indicated a level of dissatisfaction with access to information, with the main concern being the reference collection and inter-library loan service. Thus the library was not performing well in those service areas which relate to adequacy of the collection and resources and access to information.

6.3.3 Gap between users' expectations and perceptions

The third objective of the study was to establish whether there is a gap between the users' expectations and their perceptions of the services offered at the Bessie Head Library. The results of this study indicates that there are gaps between users' expectations and perceptions in some key areas of service, notably: quality of collections and access to these, the provision of study areas, Internet services and equipment that meets the needs of users and willingness of staff to assist users. This would indicate that to an extent, the users' expectations exceeded their perceptions as their actual experiences of service quality were deemed less than satisfactory in certain service categories.

Cullen (2001) states that the professional argument has always been that users do not know what is good library service and therefore cannot judge. The LibQUAL+™ service quality model argues that this view should be re-examined and that libraries should start changing their priorities and align them more closely with those of users. The researcher supports this view as the users' perceptions of library services are formed while interacting with the

existing services and their overall opinions about the library facilities and services depends primarily on their own experiences in the library.

6.3.4 Level of satisfaction

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the level of satisfaction of users of the Bessie Head Library. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the users rated the overall quality of service as good or very good. A small minority of users expressed dissatisfaction with the service quality provided by the library. Although no reasons for their dissatisfaction were indicated, it could be assumed that failure of the library to not fully meet users' service quality expectations may be attributed to a number of reasons. Included among these are financial constraints, inadequate staff training programmes, lack of adequate resources (due to financial constraints) and library space problems to mention a few.

6.4 Recommendations

The final objective of this study was to make recommendations to the Bessie Head Library based on the findings and conclusions of the study. In view of this, the following recommendations are proposed to the library and the library management.

6.4.1 Library collection

In this study users have expressed their need for a more comprehensive collection of reference and audio-visual material and more current titles in the book collection. Users indicated that the reference collection was not adequate for them to access information and that the audio-visual collection was rather limited.

- A recommendation for this area is to review the collection development policy with the relevant stakeholders and address the critical needs of the users. Priorities need to be revisited and perhaps an information needs assessment should be conducted to establish gaps in the collections.

6.4.2 Staff services

Professional front-line customer care is a vital aspect for providing an acceptable level of service. Staff training and development is critical to empower staff to perform better and assist users to the best of their ability and hence exceed service quality expectations.

- It is strongly recommended that library staff attend communication skills workshops, customer care workshops and people skills workshops. The manner in which a user is treated on entering the library is the first impression created and this would invariably impact on the perceptions that are formed from the very first visit to the library.

6.4.3 Access to information

Access to information is critical to users and the library resources must be accessible to users for their convenience. Access to the various resources in the library can be considered a vital aspect of evaluating users' satisfaction with a library's services. It is important for libraries to address the needs of their users and ensure that their resources are easily available and accessible.

The results of the study indicated that Internet facilities need to be reviewed, the lack of an OPAC and the hours of service were also matters of concern. In this regard, the following recommendations are offered:

- It is recommended that the library review the hours of service especially on Saturdays as the long queues of users waiting to get access to reference resources in the library are often turned away as the library closes by lunch time.
- A further recommendation would be to employ students in order to extend the hours of service.

Users' not having access to an OPAC is a matter of serious concern as this inhibits efficient access to materials.

- It is recommended that library management must assess the current information system and investigate a way for users themselves to be more in control of meeting their information needs through being able to identify and access relevant resources via an OPAC.

Having a modern Internet facility to which users have free access is a major accolade for the Bessie Head Library. However, users have expressed their dissatisfaction regarding slow Internet access and access restrictions. In order for the Internet facility to meet the expectations of users:

- It is recommended that library management will have to review its policy in this regard.

6.4.4 Library facilities

Library facilities play a critical role in satisfying users' needs. A library that is not adequately equipped with the necessary facilities will not be fulfilling its obligation in providing a quality service and meeting the information needs of the community it serves.

The results of the survey revealed the importance of library facilities and the environment which had the greatest impact on the users. The lack of proper ablution facilities, the lack of parking facilities and study areas is a critical concern. In terms of library facilities, the following recommendations are offered:

The library does not have any study areas. Only those users utilizing resources in the reference library may use the facilities.

- Given the desperate need for “a place to study” it is imperative for library management to address this matter as this could impact on these students utilizing other resources in the library.
- It is recommended that library management address the issue of ablution facilities being constantly out of order. A public library needs to have such facilities in working order and perhaps a regular maintenance plan could be implemented so that facilities are not out of order for long periods of time.

Another area of concern is the lack of adequate parking facilities for library users. This is often a drawback for users.

- It is therefore recommended that in order for such users to continue using the library, the issue of providing parking is an important one in overall service delivery.
- A further recommendation in this regard would be for the library manager to approach the Municipality and discuss a viable solution to accommodate library users.

Finally, the study has shown that it is vital for libraries to assess and improve their services. These assessments will enable staff and management to solicit, track and understand users' expectations and needs and to act upon users' feedback in order to improve the quality of library service. This is an important consideration for the Bessie Head Library as it was indicated that no user surveys had been undertaken to evaluate library services.

- It is therefore recommended that the library management should employ regular assessments of the library in order to listen to the voices of users and library staff.

This will assist the library to understand the expectations of users and put in place a viable mechanism to implement plans for the improvement of service quality and also sustain and monitor such improvements over appropriate time frames.

This study has indicated that the library is providing an acceptable level of service but this should not allow for complacency as there is always room for improvement. The recommendations mentioned above are made in light of the availability of sufficient funding and in compliance with regulations from the relevant authorities.

6.5 Suggestions for further research

The study has illustrated that there are various important areas that would warrant further investigation. The following suggestions have been made for further research:

- The role of library staff in improving library services to satisfy the information needs of the broad spectrum of users that utilize the facilities and resources.
- More studies on public libraries in South Africa using the LibQUAL+™ research instrument.
- The role of the public library in providing Internet access.
- A comparative study with Branch libraries in the region would also be equally important.

6.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided a summary of the thesis and conclusions of the major research findings were also discussed. Recommendations based on the findings were presented in order to assist in the improvement of the quality of services provided by the Bessie Head Library. Finally, suggestions for areas for further research were presented.

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Appendix 1

CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT LIBRARY USER

Dear Library user

My name is Shanitha Bhim. I am a Masters student attending the University of Kwazulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. At present, I am carrying out an investigation regarding adult user perceptions of services provided by the Bessie Head Public Library and would appreciate your participation. Should you choose to participate, I ask that you complete a short questionnaire which should take approximately ten minutes of your time.

The findings of this investigation will be beneficial in addressing and understanding the various user perceptions of adult members using the Bessie Head Public Library. Your participation is thus important.

Please note, however, that your participation is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw from this study at any time, you may do so without any consequences being inflicted on you. Your responses will also be held completely confidential. Your answers will also only be used for this specific study. After a period of five years the questionnaires used for this study will be discarded, until that time they will be secured in a lock-up cabinet.

For further information you are welcome to contact myself or my supervisors on the following contact details:

Shanitha Bhim or
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School of Sociology & Social
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leach@ukzn.ac.za or bellf@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you kindly for your time and anticipated participation.

I.....(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the above-mentioned research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE.....

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

ADULT USER PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE BESSIE HEAD LIBRARY IN PIETERMARITZBURG, MSUNDUZI, KWAZULU-NATAL

NOTE: The aim of this study is to identify users' expectations of service quality and their perceptions of service delivery with reference to the Bessie Head Library. **Expectations** will refer to what you personally want in terms of services provided by the library and **Perceptions** will refer to your actual experiences of the services the library currently provides.

1. Questions about yourself. Please put a cross [X] next to your choice

1.1 Please indicate your gender

Male

Female

1.2 Please indicate your age

20 – 29

50 – 59

30 – 39

60 – 69

40 – 49

Over 69

1.3 Please indicate your race group

African

White

Indian

Other (please specify)

Coloured

1.4 How often do you visit the Bessie Head Library?

Everyday Once a month

At least once a week Once every six months

Once every two weeks This is my first time

1.5 How often do you use resources (e.g. books, encyclopedias, newspapers etc.) within the library?

Everyday Once a month

At least once a week Once every six months

Once every two weeks This is my first time

1.6 How often do you access electronic resources (e.g. internet) in the library?

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Everyday | <input type="checkbox"/> | Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| At least once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> | Once every six months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Once every two weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> | This is my first time | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Never | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Please place a cross [x] in the table below the number that best describes your “EXPECTATIONS” (Expectations refer to what you personally want or expect of the services provided by the library).

1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree

2.1 Staff service

	I expect the library to provide	1	2	3	4	5
2.1.1	Staff who instill confidence in users					
2.1.2	Staff who are consistently courteous					
2.1.3	Staff who respond to users' questions					
2.1.4	Staff who understand the needs of users					
2.1.5	Staff who are willing to assist users					
2.1.6	Staff who are knowledgeable to answer user-related queries					
2.1.7	Readers advisor to assist with reading requests					

2.2 Access to information

	I expect the library to provide	1	2	3	4	5
2.2.1	A comprehensive print collection					
2.2.2	An adequate audio-visual collection					
2.2.3	Access to the Online Public Access catalogue					
2.2.4	An efficient inter-library loan service					
2.2.5	An efficient reserve service					
2.2.6	A comprehensive reference collection					
2.2.7	Well placed signage for easy access to reading material					
2.2.8	Efficient internet access					

2.3 Library facilities

	I expect	1	2	3	4	5
2.3.1	A library that is conveniently located					
2.3.2	A library that is visually appealing					
2.3.3	A library that has adequate light					
2.3.4	Convenient hours of service					
2.3.5	Prompt re-shelving of books					
2.3.6	Adequate photocopying facilities					
2.3.7	An adequate number of computer workstations					
2.3.8	Quiet and comfortable reading areas					

2.4 General

	The library	1	2	3	4	5
2.4.1	Provides me with all my reading requirements					
2.4.2	Satisfies my information needs					
2.4.3	I am satisfied with the way i am treated at the library					

3 If you would like to add any further comments about services you expect from the Bessie Head Library, please do so in the space provided.

4 Please place a cross [x] in the table below the number that best describes your “PERCEPTIONS” (Perceptions refer to your actual experiences of the services the library currently provides)

1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree

4.1 Staff service

	The library currently provides	1	2	3	4	5
4.1.1	Staff who instil confidence in users					
4.1.2	Staff who are consistently courteous					
4.1.3	Staff who respond to users' questions					
4.1.4	Staff who understand the needs of users					
4.1.5	Staff who are willing to assist users					
4.1.6	Staff who are knowledgeable to answer user-related queries					
4.1.7	Readers advisor to assist with reading requests					

4.2 If you would like to add any comments on staff services mentioned above, please do so in the space provided below

4.3 Access to information

	The library currently provides	1	2	3	4	5
4.3.1	A comprehensive print collection					
4.3.2	Adequate audio-visual collection					
4.3.3	An efficient inter-library loan service					
4.3.4	An efficient reserve service					
4.3.5	Comprehensive reference collection					
4.3.6	Well placed signage for easy access to reading material					
4.3.7	Efficient internet access					

4.4 If you would like to add any comments regarding access to information, you may do so in the space provided below

4.5 Library facilities

	The library currently provides ...	1	2	3	4	5
4.5.1	Library that has visually appealing facilities					
4.5.2	Library that has adequate light					
4.5.3	Convenient hours of service					
4.5.4	Prompt re-shelving of books					
4.5.5	Adequate photocopying facilities					
4.5.6	An adequate number of computer workstations					
4.5.7	Quiet and comfortable reading areas					

4.6 If you would like to add any comments regarding library facilities, you may do so in the space provided

4.7 General

	The library...	1	2	3	4	5
4.7.1	Provides me with all my reading requirements					
4.7.2	Satisfies my information needs					
4.7.3	I am satisfied with the way I am treated at the library.					

5 If you would like to add any further comments about your actual experiences with the services the Bessie Head Library currently provides, please do so in the space provided.

6 User satisfaction

Please mark with a cross [x] in one box only

6.1 In general, how satisfied are you with the level of service provided by the library staff?

- Very satisfied Dissatisfied
- Satisfied Very dissatisfied
- Neutral

6.2 If dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please elaborate in the space provided

6.3 In general, how satisfied are you with access to information provided by the library?

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> | Very dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

6.4 If dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please elaborate in the space provided

6.5 In general, how satisfied are you with library facilities that were mentioned earlier?

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> | Very dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

6.6 if dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please elaborate in the space provided

7 How would you rate the overall quality of services provided by the library?

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> | Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Good | <input type="checkbox"/> | Very poor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

8 If you have any further comments and /or suggestions regarding any aspect of the Bessie Head Library, please do so in the space provided.

Thank you for your participation. Please return the completed questionnaire to me.

Appendix 5

Interview schedule for Principal Librarian

**ADULT USER PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE
BESSIE HEAD LIBRARY IN PIETERMARITZBURG, MSUNDUZI, KWAZULU-
NATAL**

Date:

Post:

Years of service in the library.....

1. Library services

1.1 Has there been any significant changes in library services over the past five years?

1.2 If so, please explain

1.3 How has Information Technology (IT) affected the library?

1.4 Which services are most used and which category of users are using them?

1.5 Which services are least used ? Why?

1.6 What measures have been employed to evaluate the services?

1.7 Have you ever used user surveys to evaluate library services?

2. Collection development policy

2.1. Does the library have a collection development policy?

2.2 If yes to 2.1, has it changed in the last five years? Please explain why and in what way?

2.3 How does the library meet the reading needs of adult users?

2.4 How has the introduction of electronic resources affected use of the library?

3. Funding

3.1 Have there been any significant changes in funding over the past five years? If yes, please explain

3.2 Are library authorities /government becoming less supportive?

3.3 Does the library generate any income? If yes, please explain

3.4 Has the introduction of IT affected the funding of the library?

3.5 Does the library receive any donor support? If yes, please explain

4. General

4.1 What has been the greatest achievement of the library in the last five years?

4.2 What has been the greatest weakness/es of the library in the last five years? (No more than 3)

4.3 What is the library's greatest need at present?

4.4 Do you think there is a need to improve the management of the library? If yes, please explain

Thank you for your participation

Appendix 6

Interview schedule for Library Manager

**ADULT USER PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE
BESSIE HEAD LIBRARY IN PIETERMARITZBURG, MSUNDUZI, KWAZULU-
NATAL**

Date:

Post:

Years of service in the library.....

1. Library services

1.1 Has there been any significant changes in library services over the past five years?

1.2 If so, please explain

1.3 How has Information Technology (IT) affected the library?

1.4 Which services are most used and which category of users are using them?

1.5 Which services are least used ? Why?

1.6 What measures have been employed to evaluate the services?

1.7 Have you ever used user surveys to evaluate library services?

2. Collection development policy

2.1. Does the library have a collection development policy?

2.2 If yes to 2.1, has it changed in the last five years? Please explain why and in what way?

2.3 How does the library meet the reading needs of adult users?

2.4 How has the introduction of electronic resources affected use of the library?

3. Funding

3.1 Have there been any significant changes in funding over the past five years? If yes, please explain

3.2 Are library authorities /government becoming less supportive?

3.3 Does the library generate any income? If yes, please explain

3.4 Has the introduction of IT affected the funding of the library?

3.5 Does the library receive any donor support? If yes, please explain

4. General

4.1 What has been the greatest achievement of the library in the last five years?

4.2 What has been the greatest weakness/es of the library in the last five years? (No more than 3)

4.3 What is the library's greatest need at present?

4.4 Do you think there is a need to improve the management of the library? If yes, please explain

Thank you for your participation