Factors that influence attitudes to and perceptions of public libraries in Namibia: user experiences and non-user attitudes

Belinda Lizazi-Mbanga[1] and Patrick Mapulanga[2]
blizazi@yahoo.com ORCID: 0000-0001-8348-8977
pmapulanga@kuhes.ac.mw ORCID: 0000-0002-0305-3736

This study assessed user experiences of a public library in Namibia and non-user attitudes to it. A convenience sample of 586 was employed. Participants in the study were 207 (35.3%) registered library members and 379 (64.7%) non-users. Needs assessment questionnaires, suggestion box forms, interviews and observations were the tools used for the collection of data. The results indicated that the public library is well known to the local community and is mostly accessed by learners from local schools, teachers, and distance-learners from various tertiary educational institutions. Users from different occupations also accessed the library. The library was used for study purposes, research, access to computers and reprographic services. The results also revealed that, although services, resources and usage were found to be satisfactory, some users were not satisfied with the services because of inadequate space, irrelevant resources, attitudes of staff members, untidiness, location, poor internet connectivity, poor ventilation, and noise. The findings of this study can inform policymakers on how information access and services need to be improved.

1 Introduction

The effectiveness of public library services can be measured through statistics collected on information services provided (Koontz, Jue and Lance 2005: 29), however their value depends on how well they perform their role and meet the needs of their communities (Aabo 2005: 208). The central concern of library services is still users and their information needs. The provision of technologies such as computers and the internet in public libraries has had a positive impact on their communities (Aabo 2005: 208); these days, communities rely on public libraries as their means of accessing free computers and internet services. Public libraries have therefore incorporated Information and Communications Technology (ICT) into their services in order to meet the changing needs of users. Some public libraries have websites through which they offer online services where users access community information, electronic journals and digital collections, among other information services (Velasquez & Evans 2018). However, public libraries differ worldwide. Public libraries in Africa are in various stages of development due to social, political, and economic factors – some public libraries are technologically and physically advanced in terms of physical structure, equipment, technology and human resources, while others are not. Whatever their stage of development, the role of public libraries in Africa is to empower local communities by providing them with access to information (Mandl, Lukileni & Niskala 2013: 11). Despite the increase in the use of ICTs, users still believe that library resources are more trustworthy than information on the World Wide Web (Sadeh 2007: 208) and many people visit public libraries to study, to gather information on health-related matters and for social gatherings (Hemmeter 2006: 599).

2 Study context

The Namibian town in which this investigation was carried out consisted, at the time of the study, of 24,451 inhabitants (National Planning Commission 2012). The population was predominantly young, with 61.3% of the population being between the ages of 15 and 59 years. Library user statistics show that in 2015 alone, there were 9,452 visits to the library which translated into 38.7% of the local people in the area visiting the public library compared to 61.3% who did not visit in the same period. Only 444 registered members (1.8% of recorded members) used the library in 2015. In Namibia, most public libraries were established after the country gained independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990 (Ignatow et al. 2012: 72, Namhila & Niskala 2012: 2) before which public libraries were only accessible to the White population. Now,

---

1.   Belinda Lizazi-Mbanga is Senior Librarian in the Library, Archives and Information Services, Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture, Otjozondjupa Regional Council, Namibia
2.   Patrick Mapulanga is Senior Assistant Librarian at the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Lilongwe, Malawi

public libraries serve the whole population as centres for community learning, cultural knowledge dissemination, information discovery and recreational reading, thereby also enabling people to develop a reading habit (Ignatow et al. 2012: 72). Namibian public libraries offer a variety of free activities such as story hours for children, computer literacy classes, mobile library services and access to the internet (Mandl, Lukileni & Niskala 2013). Statistics reveal that about 93,000 people have accessed ICTs through forty-four libraries in Namibia since 2012 (Kauaria 2013: 32). This study specifically addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of users to the overall usage of the public library?
2. What are the perceptions of users about the services offered by the public library?
3. What are the perceptions of the users about the library resources?
4. Where do users/non-users find information to fulfil their information needs?
5. What should be done to improve the usage of the public library?

3 Theoretical Framework
The study is guided by Kelman's social influence theory which recognises that changes in an individual's thoughts, attitudes, feelings and behaviour can come about because of interaction with other individuals (Kelman 1958: 51). It recognises that knowledge and self-identity are constructed through social interaction among individuals and that human beings create or construct self-knowledge by inquiring, exploring and assessing what they already know (Maree 2016: 361). According to Li (2011: 563), individual attitudes, beliefs, thoughts and feelings are influenced by the three processes of social influence theory: compliance, internalisation and identification. Each of the three processes represents a different way of accepting influence, such as the relative importance of anticipated effect (compliance), the relative power of the influencing agent (identification), and the prepotency of the induced response (internalisation) (Kelman 1958: 51). Perceptions and attitudes towards the use and non-use of public libraries were described based on these three processes of social influence. Each process is distinctive and oriented to a social system (Estrada et al. 2011: 208). The three processes can be distinguished from one another in terms of the nature of the anticipated effect, the source of influence of the agent's power and the way the induced response becomes prepotent (Kelman 1958: 53). Given the proper set of antecedents, influence would take place in the form of compliance, identification or internalisation.

3.1 Compliance
According to Bagozzi and Kyu-Hyun (2002: 227), compliance is an important form of interpersonal influence and it occurs when individuals accept influence and adopt a behaviour for reward. Public libraries are used for various reasons, such as educational, cultural, leisure and personal gain (Aabo 2005, Webb 2010, Iwhiwhu & Okorodudu 2012). However, people perceive public library services, resources and space differently and these perceptions may shape the interpersonal influence on an individual. A good library service is rated according to the satisfaction of users' needs, as users prefer an information service that is accurate, reliable, authentic and easy to understand (Namagand & Sekikome 2013: 405).

3.2 Internalisation
According to Kelman (1958: 54), internalisation occurs when an individual accepts influence after becoming aware that the result of a changed behaviour is rewarding. Satisfaction is the result of the new behaviour. According to Estrada et al. (2011: 207), social influence occurs when a person's behaviour changes due to other people, groups or influencing agents. Kelman (1958) posited that social influence brings changes in attitude and actions and those changes occur at different levels. Differences in levels of change are attributed to the differences in the processes through which individuals accept influence. Since attitude cannot be measured directly because it is a hypothetical construct, methods of measuring attitude assume that they can be measured by people's beliefs or opinions (Gross 2004: 351).

3.3 Identification
The model suggests that individuals adopt a new behaviour to create a beneficial relationship with another. The model influences an individual to support a positive self-defining relationship with others (Bagozzi & Kyu-Hyun 2002: 229). Behaviour is changed by anything that succeeds in influencing it. Public libraries are regarded as important institutions for bridging the information gap between the rich and the poor (Glorieux, Kuppens & Vandebroeck, 2007: 189). Regardless of the purpose of public libraries, users are becoming more diverse, which has resulted in a decrease in library usage for some libraries. The increased use of the internet has been blamed (Koontz, Dean & Lance, 2005: 31).

4 Literature review
The literature review is premised on thematic areas gleaned from various sources on the subject.

4.1 Users' experiences of public library services

User experience is something that is important in all public institutions. Mairaj and Naseer (2013: 319) described user experience as a measure of end-user interaction with the library product and services. Much research has been conducted on user experiences of public libraries. Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) (TNS RMS East Africa 2014) surveyed six public libraries in East African countries and found that 74% of users considered libraries a good place to study. According to Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012: 2), public library services are measured through how experienced users perceive them. A public library exists to satisfy users whose satisfaction depends on how they judge the services of the library. Public libraries have been considered tools for excellence in educating the public and bringing printed cultural resources to the community (Glorieux et al. 2007: 191). Webb (2010: 76) discovered that public libraries were mostly used by people who lived within the surrounding community. Users were mostly youths who used the library to read newspapers, find jobs, study, make copies, play and use computers. Hemmeter (2006: 598) mentioned that computer access and internet connectivity were services that attracted users to public libraries.

Despite the services offered by the public library, Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012: 3) observed that several factors, such as lack of infrastructure and bad networks, pose challenges for public library users. Most public libraries in Africa are too small to accommodate both collections and users. Users sometimes have a negative impression of the public library by having experienced, for example, difficulties with the library space, noise and untidiness (Coker 1993). Glorieux et al. (2007: 191) saw that social differences influence library usage. Nzivo (2012) noted many factors linked to the perception of library effectiveness and user satisfaction, such as the adequacy of collections, services and facilities, the effectiveness of library promotion, the involvement of users in the selection of library material, the convenience of the library location, the participation of users in educational programmes, the availability of assistance for using library resources, the facility, and the subject background of library professionals.

4.2 Non-users' attitudes to the services of the public library

There has been limited research on the information-seeking behaviour of non-users of public library services. However, user experience of the services of the public library may contribute to the non-usage of the public library. Petr and Aparac-Jelusic (2002: 25) noted that some of the public have a negative perception of public libraries. In South Africa, non-use is related to the historical impact of apartheid. Africans lacked experience of libraries and the services they offered (Ocholla 2009: 22). Some people's perception of the public library is that of a warehouse of books (Phillips 2012: 1). The economic status of people varies. According to Hemmeter (2006: 597), economically stable people are less likely to visit the library. Research has revealed that the widespread availability of ICT and the use of the World Wide Web have contributed to the non-use of public libraries (Connaway Radford & Dickey 2008, Sin & Kim 2008, Toner 2008) because information is now widely available on the internet.

Different studies have outlined that lack of awareness of library services, lack of availability of library services, and irrelevance of resources contribute to non-use of public libraries (Sin & Kim 2008, Toner 2008, Mcharazo & Mshana 2013). Many public libraries do not market their services; hence, they are unknown to the community. Staff competence, ambience and quality of services are the other factors influencing the public perception of the public library. More reasons that contribute to the non-use of libraries are inconvenient opening hours and distance from home or work (Sin & Kim 2008, Evjen & Audunson 2009, Mutshewa et al. 2010). Hemmeter (2006: 596) argued that the closer the library is to where people are, the more likely they are to use it. The library collection and facilities also contribute towards non-use, as some public libraries are stocked with outdated books and old, uncomfortable furniture.

4.3 Public perception of the public library

The issue of attitudes and perceptions of the public and how they contribute to the use and non-use of public libraries have rarely been examined. Perception is closely related to attitude, as perception is "a process by which organisms interpret and organise sensations to produce a meaningful experience of the world" (Gross 2004: 209). The perception of the public towards public libraries has evolved. The public library is no longer seen as just a place for old books, but rather as a space with electronic equipment and resources that reflect users' needs (Coker, 1993: 4). According to Lilley and Usherwood (2000: 15), regular users of library services have the most realistic expectations and perceptions of the library as they already have some experience of it. A lack of understanding of what customers expect leads to service performance that falls short of their expectations (Lilley & Usherwood 2000: 16). Suitable library services, information technology and opening hours lead to a good public perception of the library.

4.4 How to improve the usage of public libraries

Public libraries are widely known for providing vital information to the public through their resources and services. Over the years, the expectations and behaviours of library users have changed, contributing to the use or non-use of public libraries.

The information environment has changed, and information is now available through the internet. This requires librarians to change their services to those that satisfy the information needs of users better. If the resources provided by public libraries are inappropriate, inadequate and out-of-date, they result in non-use (de Jager 2002: 331). The satisfaction of library users will result from libraries providing a conducive environment, with quality furniture, suitable seating arrangements and high-quality information products (Iwhiwhu & Okorodudu 2012: 1). De Jager (2002: 330) noted that public libraries are failing because of several factors, ranging from severe deterioration of resources due to lack of funds, lack of definition of the role of libraries, an excess of centralisation in the management of libraries, and lack of human resources to run the libraries. The attitudes of library staff are integral to the service experience of library users; as such, librarians need to be reminded how important they are in providing service to users (Lilley & Usherwood 2000: 17). Vrana and Barbaric (2007: 435) alluded to the fact that public libraries need to change their marketing strategies about the services available to the community. Priority should be given to electronic media as the primary source of information.

5 Methodology

For this study, an exploratory case study design was employed. Following Maree's (2016) approaches to case study data collection methods, data were collected through needs assessment questionnaires, suggestion box forms, interviews and an observation checklist. The research collected both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data were analysed by "creating codes and themes qualitatively, then counting the number of times they occur in the text data" (Creswell 2009: 218). Microsoft Excel was used to analyse quantitative data. The study sampled from two populations: registered library users (444) and those who were not registered (non-users; 24,007). Sample sizes can be seen in Table 1. During data collection, the needs assessment questionnaire was distributed to people who visited the library booth at the mall; 300 were returned. To improve on the needs assessment results, a suggestion box was introduced in the library for collecting data from library users. Interviews were conducted with 12 users and non-users of the library services and observations were conducted in the library over two weeks (ten working days). In total there were 312 respondents to the study.

Table 1 Sample size for the study

Attributes	Number	Sample size	Percentage of the sample size
Registered library users	444	207	35.3%
Non-users	24,007	379	64.7%
Total	**24, 451**	**586**	**100%**

6 Findings

The purpose of the discussion that follows is to interpret and describe the significance of the findings in relation to what was previously identified about the problem under investigation, as well as to illuminate a new understanding of the problem.

6.1 Research question one: What are the attitudes of users to the overall usage of the public library?

Respondents were asked if they were aware of the existence of the public library in the local town. Figure 1 shows that 261 (87%) of questionnaire respondents knew that the public library existed in the local town. Of the 261 respondents, 252 (84%) confirmed using the resources of the library, though the suggestion forms showed that thirteen (54%) were not registered members of the library. Library statistics for January to November 2017 showed that, out of the town's population of 24,451, only 563 were registered members of the library, which is still more than the 444 registered members in 2015. Participants were asked to give reasons why they visited the library. Figure 2 shows the purposes for which users visited the library. The results show that different users visited the library for various reasons, ranging from studying, conducting research, using computers and doing internet searches, typing their curriculum vitae (CV), reading newspapers, printing their documents, and other activities.

Respondents were given options to indicate the resources and facilities they used at the public library. Figure 3 shows the most-used facilities and services. The respondents were asked how often they visited the library. Figure 4 shows the frequency of library usage and that, out of 125 (42%) participants who visited the library several times a week, 103 (34%) visited the library twice a week, twenty-five (8%) visited the library daily, forty (13%) visited the library twice a week, and seven (2%) never visited the library. However, others specified that they only used the library when a need arose, when they had assignments, or during examination time.
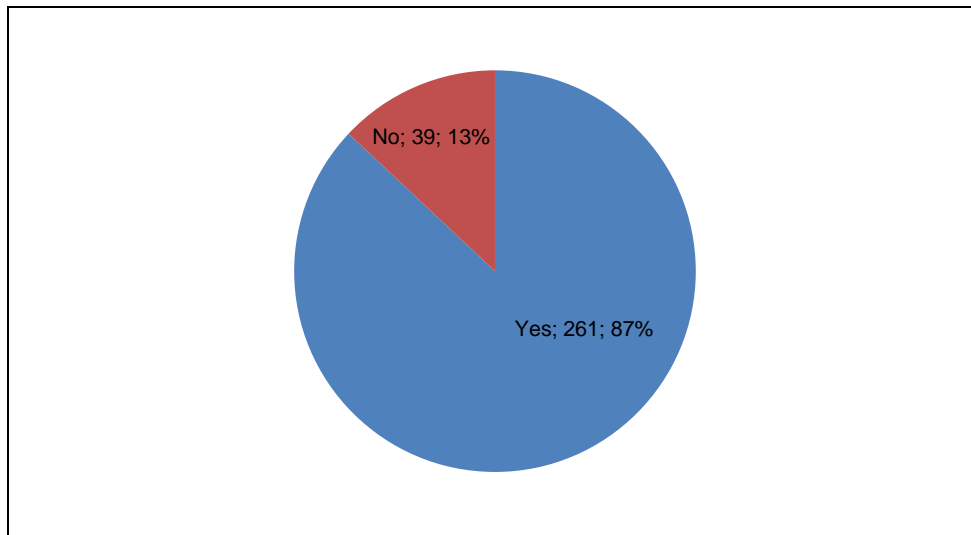
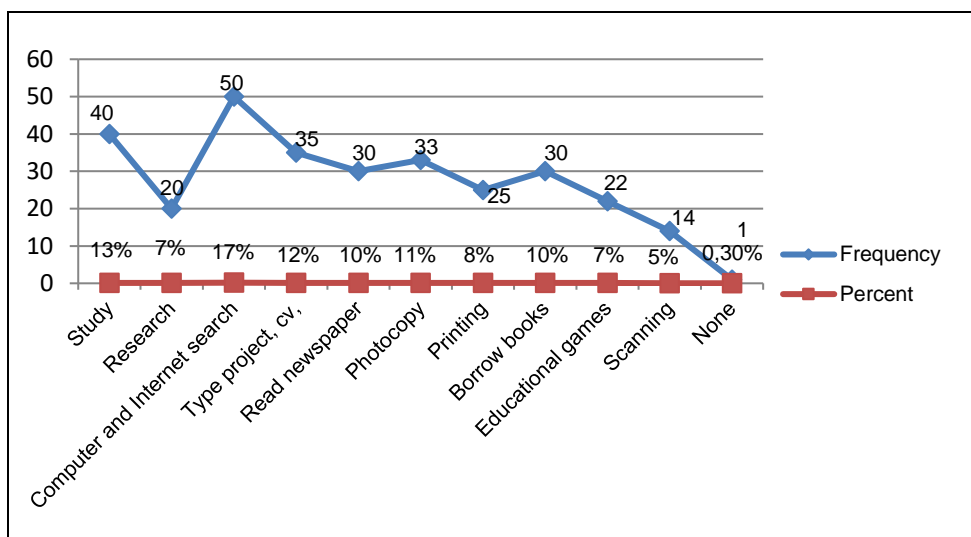**Figure 1 Awareness of the existence of the local public library (n=300)**

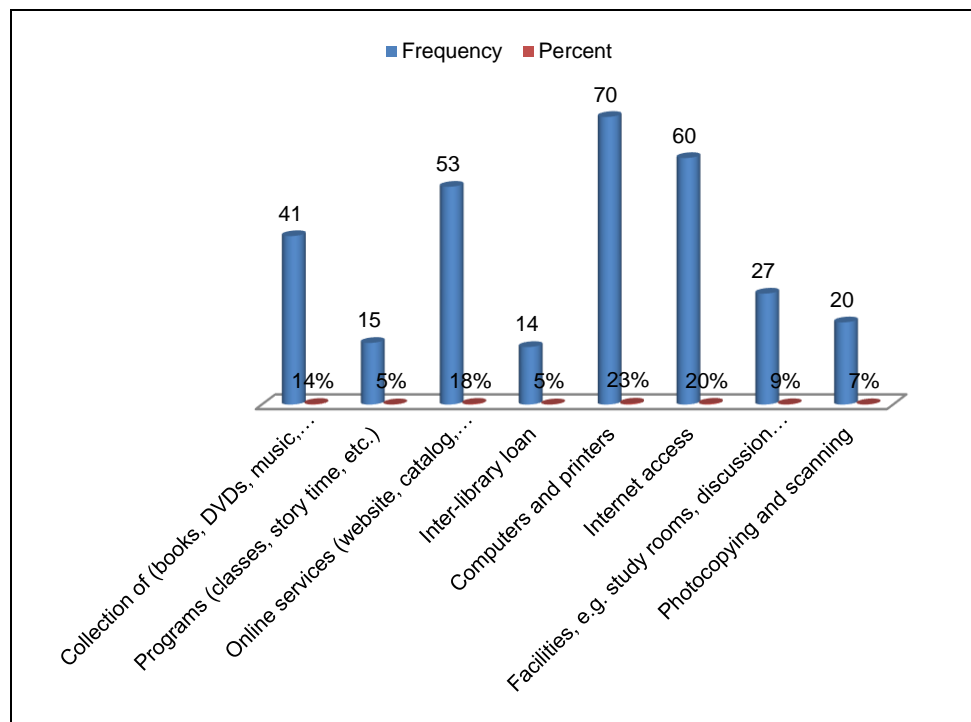**Figure 2: Purpose of library visit (n=300)**

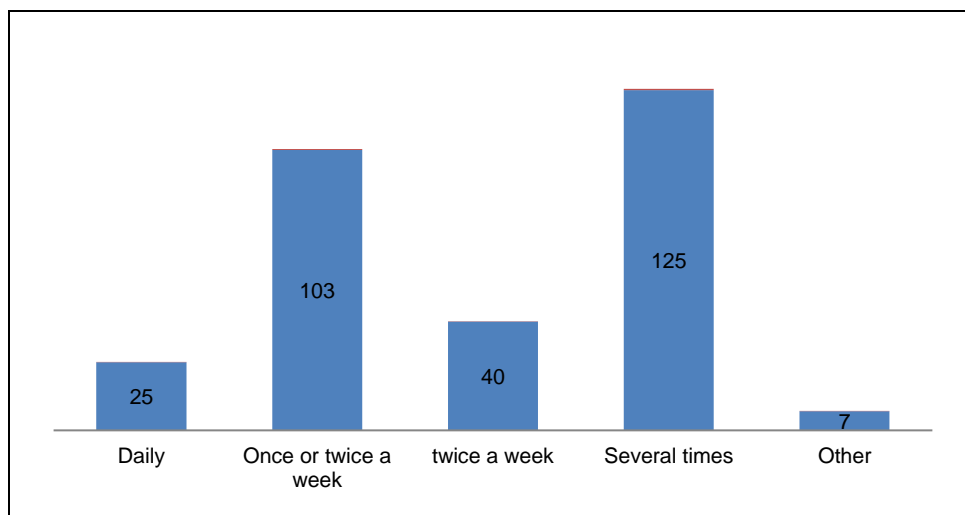**Figure 3: Frequency of resources, services and facilities used (n=300)**

Figure 4: Frequency of library usage (n=300)

6.2 Research question two: What are the perceptions of users about the services offered by the public library?

Respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the public library services in their town. Figure 5 shows that 189 (63%) of the questionnaire respondents were satisfied while 111 (37%) were unsatisfied. Satisfied respondents mentioned the services they enjoyed most, such as internet access, computers, printing documents, and online services. Unsatisfied respondents explained that the library had no books for them to use for their assignments.
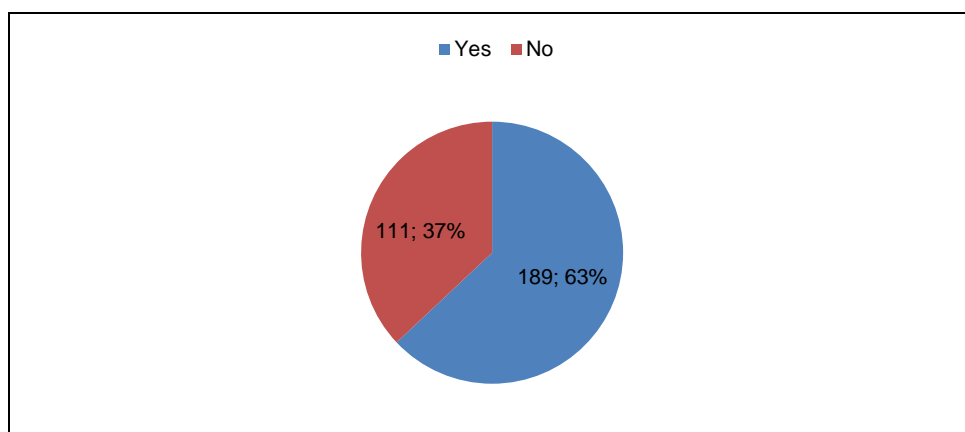

Figure 5: Satisfaction of library services (n=300)

On the twenty-four forms deposited in the suggestion box, seventeen respondents (70%) confirmed that they were satisfied with the library services . A total of seven (29%) were unsatisfied and corroborated their responses in the needs assessment questionnaire. Their dissatisfaction centred around the issue of inadequate library space. Respondents to the interview were also concerned about poor internet connectivity and the bad attitude of some of the staff members. One of the interviewees said:

> *I am not satisfied with the services of this library, the staff need customer care training, because when you enter the library they pretend as if they do not see you. They are always on the computer watching movies or on Facebook. They will take their time to help you at the circulation desk. They do not even greet you. I think the government must reshuffle these people.*

Respondents were asked if they were aware of the activities offered by the library. Out of 300 questionnaire respondents, 114 (38%) showed that they were aware of library activities. Surprisingly, 165 (55%) respondents said that they were not aware of any library activities. Librarians stated that the library had various activities, such as, the annual readathon, storytelling and basic computer training. Respondents were asked to suggest activities that they would like to see at the library. Their responses included: art classes, reading competitions, spelling competitions, quizzes, puzzles, playing Xbox games, music classes and computer training. In total, 189 (63%) of the questionnaire respondents were satisfied with the library services. Observations, which supplemented the other data collection methods, showed that the

library staff were not professional in dealing with their users. They were not friendly and were not interested in users and their needs.

6.3 Research question three: What are the perceptions of users about library resources?

The purpose of determining the usage of the library was to find out the overall usage of the public library and the type of resources users used at the library. Figure 6 shows that, in the 300 questionnaire responses, 252 (84%) respondents confirmed using resources of the library. However, respondents rated DVD borrowing services highly, while some rated reference services received from the librarian highly. Internet access and study rooms/reading areas were rated as very important. Community meeting rooms and interlibrary loans were considered moderately important. Online services, websites, catalogues and research databases were rated as very important. Photocopiers, newspapers and magazines were rated as important. Table 2 shows the level of satisfaction concerning resources. Firstly, library resources were not current and were difficult to find, and the resource borrowing policy and procedures were not clearly stated. Secondly, library users found information independently. The library had facilities for new resource recommendations but had no system by which to book a study room.
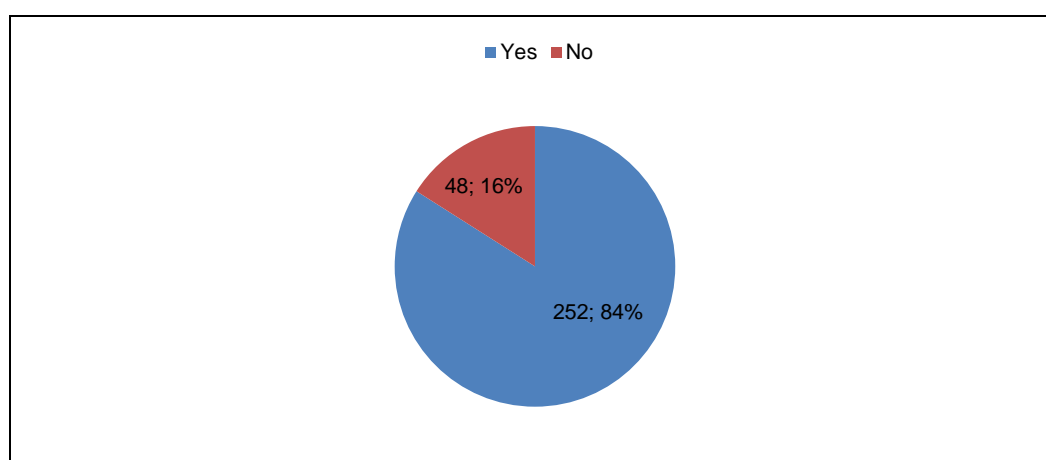

Figure 6: Usage of the resources at the local public library (n=300)

Table 2 Level of satisfaction concerning the resources

Attribute	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Resources are current and relevant	4 (40%)		6 (60%)
Resources are easy to find	3 (30%)	1(10%)	6 (60%)
Resource borrowing policies and procedures are clearly stated	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)
Library users find the resources on their own with minimal assistance		10 (100%)	
Resources are readily available when users need them	7 (70%)		3 (30%)
Library has facility for new resource recommendation	7 (70%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)
Library has documentation for how to book a study room	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	8 (80%)

Respondents were asked if they could find what they were looking for in the Library. Figure 7 shows that, out of 300 questionnaire respondents, 210 (70%) said 'Yes', while ninety (30%) said 'No'. As to whom they asked for help, most respondents asked the librarian or the library assistant. Respondents, who stated 'No', stated that they found what they were looking for by asking for help from a friend. Some preferred to look for information without asking anyone for help.

6.4 Research question four: Where do users/non-users find information to fulfil their information needs?

Out of 300 questionnaire respondents, 239 (80%) had access to computers while sixty-one (20%) had none. Out of 239 who have access to computers, 144 (60%) indicated that they access the computers from their homes, 64 (27%) from the library, and 31 (13%) from the schools. Respondents were further asked if they had access to the internet. Only seven (2.3%) did not indicate their status while 263 (90%) respondents confirmed having access to the internet, 105 (36%) confirmed having internet access at their homes, seventy-nine (27%) at the public library, fifty-five (19%) on their smartphones, forty-four (15%) at their workplace, and nine (3%) at their school.
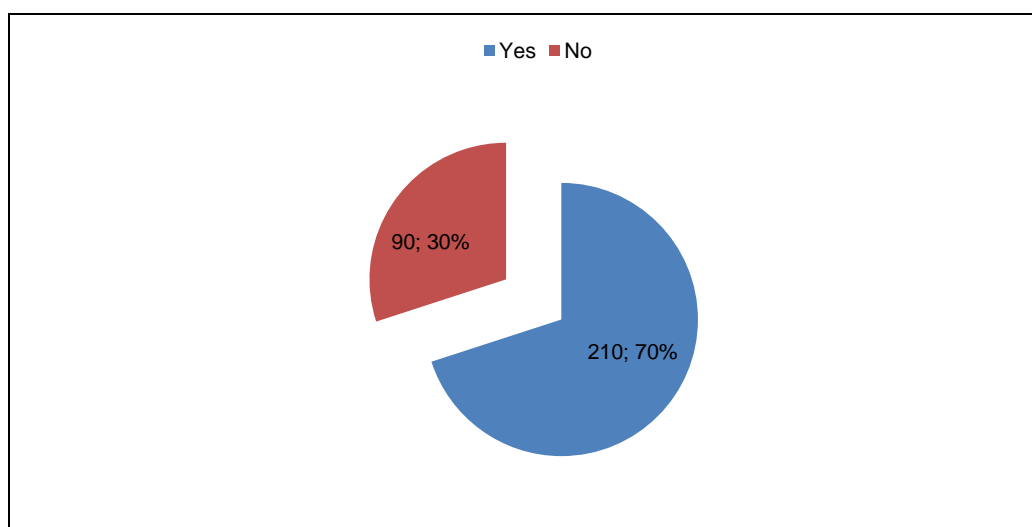
Figure 7: Locating library resources (n=300)

Interview respondents indicated a range of places and ways that they access information if they do not use the public library. Their responses included: using personal computers and smartphones; using Wi-Fi at home, at parents' offices, school libraries and internet cafés; information was also obtained from television, radio, newspapers, and internet resources like Google. Observations showed that computers and electronic equipment were accessible in the library and that printing and photocopying services were sufficient. The results showed that the library's collection met users' needs and users were eager for access to books, DVDs and newspapers. The results showed that the library had inadequate study rooms (even though they were used frequently), insufficient library space and that opening hours were inconvenient.

6.5 Research question five: What should be done to improve the usage of the public library?
Respondents were asked to state their opinions about how they wanted the library to improve its services in the future. Through the suggestion box, respondents said that the library should give more information to users regarding the library services available and how to use them. They also said that the government should employ qualified librarians who can help learners with homework and other school projects. Another suggestion was that the library furniture should always be dusted to ensure that it is clean. One respondent suggested that the library circulation/reception desk should be renovated and kept neat. It was also suggested that there should be lockable cupboards where users can store their handbags for safety reasons. Furthermore, the library should not close during lunchtime; instead, staff members should work shifts to accommodate those who want to use the library during lunchtime. It was also suggested that the time limit for using the internet should be increased. Lastly, it was suggested that librarians should change their attitude towards the users and should be more willing to help where necessary.

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked if having the public library in the community helped them. Two hundred and seventy-one (90%) respondents were positive about having the public library in the local town. In an interview, one respondent explained how the library helps her.

> I appreciate having the library in this town. I got my job because of the library. One day when I visited the library, I was reading the newspaper and I saw the job advert. I typed my CV at the library. I made copies of my documents at the library. I applied and using the library internet to send my application, and my application was successful.

This use of the library was confirmed by one assistant librarian who said that, though the library did not subscribe to any newspapers, they buy newspapers occasionally. Many users only visit the library to read newspapers, especially the Friday newspaper, and they make copies of job advertisements if there are any. Some users only visit to type their CV and to check for advertisement on the notice board and on the internet.

6.6 How the library meets the recreational needs of the users
Respondents were further asked if the public library met their recreational needs. One hundred and ninety-five (65%) respondents to the questionnaire said that the library met their recreational needs, while 105 (35%) respondents said the library did not.

7 Discussion

The findings revealed that the public library is a public institution that is commonly known to and accessed by diverse types of people of different occupations. The services of the public library can only be utilised if the community is aware of its existence and location. The level of awareness of the existence of the public library was pleasing. This finding is related to the EIFL study (TNS RMS East Africa 2014) in selected African countries which discovered that awareness of the existence of public libraries in those countries was high even among non-users. Different users visited the library for different purposes, such as to study, do research, use computers and the internet, type documents, read newspapers, and use reprographic services. The current findings were similar to the study conducted in Namibia by Webb (2010: 76) who found that public library users visited the library for similar reasons. The current results acknowledge that computers and printers are the most utilised services at the public library. The results relate to the study by Hemmeter (2006: 598) who revealed that computer access is one of the services that attracts users to public libraries and that access to the internet increases library use for those without the internet at home.

To provide effective information services, it is important to measure users' perceptions of library services and to determine whether the library is meeting the information needs of the user (Khan 2015: 2). Respondents considered the important services of the public library as: computers and printing, internet facilities, online services, reference services, and photocopying. Services such as classes, story times, book borrowing, community meeting rooms and interlibrary loans were rated moderately important. A study conducted in Pakistan by Mairaj and Naseer (2013: 319) indicated that library users were satisfied with the services of the library. However, Mairaj and Naseer (2013: 319) observed that limited research was conducted on the perception and satisfaction of library services by LIS practitioners, hence it is vital to evaluate the services of the library periodically.

The activities of the public library are not well known by the community – most of the respondents confirmed not knowing about them. In a study by Levine (2006: 45) in the United States of America (USA), it was observed that small public libraries were innovative and incorporated gaming programmes into their activities, and this drew the attention of new patrons and boosted programme attendance.

Library user respondents stated that they were satisfied with the library services. Similarly, the results of a study in Pakistan by Mairaj and Naseer (2013: 324) revealed that users were satisfied with the cooperation and behaviour of library staff and found librarians friendly and helpful. A similar study by Ardèvol et al. (2018: 665) in Barcelona, Spain, revealed that users were highly satisfied with the services of the public library. In contrast, observation results from the current study showed that library staff were unfriendly, uninterested in users and their needs, and ignorant about their duties and roles.

Library resources are the reason users visit the library. The findings in the current study revealed that usage of library resources was high. Similar to this study, Aabo (2005: 208) in Oslo, Norway, found that technologies such as computers and the internet in public libraries have a positive impact on usage. These services support the community with provision of access to a range of activities such as formal studies, job-seeking and building a social network. In this study, satisfaction with library resources was high and respondents were also satisfied with the location of resources. Respondents retrieved resources of their choice at the library by asking for help from the librarian, assistant librarian, front-desk officer or departmental secretary. Respondents confirmed that the library met their recreational needs and that having a library in the town improved their quality of living, similar to a study conducted in Namibia on library use in the community libraries serving the urban poor (Webb 2010: 75) . Respondents were requested to state if they had computers and where they accessed the computer, and if they had internet access and where they accessed the internet. Many respondents had access to computers from their homes and the library. Related findings by Sin and Kim (2008: 208) in the USA, Toner (2008) in the United Kingdom, and Connaway, Radford and Dickey (2008) in the USA indicated that the widespread availability of information technology and the use of the web contributes to the non-use of public libraries. So much information is now made available on the internet and people prefer their own technological equipment (Sin & Kim 2008: 208).

Libraries are set up to meet the information needs of people; hence, the opinions of users should always be taken into account when improving library services (Mairaj & Naseer 2013: 324). Improving library services should be the main goal of any library. To improve the usage of the library, the unsatisfied respondents in the current study requested that the library obtain a variety of higher education books to help distance learners to access resources to use for their research and projects. Respondents suggested that the library conduct surveys to discover for which courses library users are registered so that it can acquire relevant resources. It was suggested that librarians consult with schools to determine the subjects with which learners struggle, so that they can acquire proper materials and training. Respondents expressed a strong need for the library to expand and provide enough study rooms to accommodate learners during examination time.

Though some respondents confirmed that they used the library resources, some users only visited the library when there was a need, during examination time or when an assignment or a project was due. Respondents provided factors that contributed to them not using the library more often as: distance, location, time, busy schedules, inconvenient opening and closing times, irrelevant resources, insufficient resources, poor internet connectivity, bad attitudes of staff members,

overcrowding, tidiness, poor ventilation, and noise. Some reasons for the non-use of public libraries include, according to Motshewa et al. (2010: 6), distance and lack of time and, according to Mairaj and Naseer (2013: 323), noise, insufficient resources, an unpleasant library environment, and a lack of key and current materials. Glorieux et al. (2007: 197) found that convenient opening hours and access to computers attracted more users.

Non-users said that the library had insufficient resources, a bad staff attitude and limited study space. Odu (2017: 35), in a study in Nigeria, revealed that among the challenges experienced by users were the bad attitude of staff, their lack of hospitality, their rudeness, and their lazy approach to inquiries. Surprisingly, some respondents who were not members confirmed using the library resources. Many non-user respondents were not aware of any library activities; nevertheless, some showed an interest in attending them. Some of the activities that they would like to see at the library were art classes, reading and spelling competitions, quizzes, puzzles, shared reading, and book clubs. In a study in Spain, Ardèvol et al. (2018: 660) revealed that common services in public libraries were those for children, such as storytelling.

The current study shows that the public library still has more to offer. Concerning the library meeting the recreational needs of the users, respondents were not satisfied. Respondents mentioned some activities, resources and facilities that they would like to see at the library. Some of the activities included: reading classes where users can read aloud, movies, music and dancing classes and career guidance. Some additional facilities included having a sports field at the library, a playground for children and chairs outside where users could relax. Additional resources they wanted the library to introduce were an Xbox for games, more educational games and a DStv subscription. In a study by Levine (2006: 47) in the USA, it was discovered that small public libraries implemented gaming services and programs and that Xbox 360 boosted the use of the small public library. Gaming is a form of recreation that libraries should use to their advantage to entice users to visit (Levine 2006: 47).

8 Recommendations

Respondents wanted the library to expand the computer laboratories, to increase the number of computers, to improve the speed of the internet, and to introduce the internet in the children's section. It was also strongly recommended that the library upgrade to a computerised library system. Furthermore, a need for air conditioning and good ventilation was recommended. In addition to these suggestions, respondents wanted the library to open on weekends and in the afternoon to accommodate those who were working. They wanted the librarian to implement library rules to ensure that the library users were always quiet, except in designated rooms. Some respondents wanted another branch of the library closer to more remote locations. Some respondents wanted the library to involve parents in storytelling in the children's section. They wanted the library to supply more furniture and they saw a need for the library to subscribe to magazines and newspapers to accommodate those who visit the library for leisure. A positive attitude of staff members and appointing qualified librarians was needed to ensure a hospitable atmosphere in the library.

9 Conclusion

The study revealed that the public library is a public institution accessed by a range of people with varied occupations who use the library for various purposes. Most respondents were aware of the existence of the public library in the town and admitted using the resources of the library, though they thought resources were insufficient and that some were irrelevant. Some other negative comments included that there were insufficient staff and unqualified staff and that some staff members had bad attitudes; the opening and closing times were inconvenient; there was inadequate space, poor ventilation, bad internet connectivity, and untidiness; and the location of the library was unsuitable for some users. A lack of marketing resources was the reason for non-use of the public library services. It was discovered that, though the majority used library resources, only a few visited the library daily. It was discovered that most respondents had access to computers from their homes, workplaces and schools. There is a need for the authorities to expand the building or open another branch in the nearby location to cater for those who do not use the library because it is too far away.

References

Aabo, S. 2005. The role and value of public libraries in the age of digital technologies. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 37(4): 205–211.

Ardèvol, M.F., Ferrer, N.F., Arroyo, J.N. and Fenoll, C. 2018. The public library as seen by the non-users. *El Profesional de la Información,* 27(3): 659–670.

Bagozzi, R.P. and Kyu-Hyun, L. 2002. Multiple routes for social influence: the role of compliance, internalisation, and social identity. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 65(3): 226–247.

Connaway, L.S., Radford, M.L. and Dickey, T.J. 2008. On the trail of the elusive non-user: what research in virtual reference environments reveals. *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 34(2): 25–28.

Coker, S. 1993. Library versus users: how and how not to deter library users. *Library Management*, 14(2): 24–31.

Creswell, J.W. 2009. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.

De Jager, K. 2002. Public libraries in Africa: a report and annotated bibliography. *Journal of Documentation,* 58(3): 330–332.

Estrada, M., Woodcock, A., Hernandez, P.R. and Schultz, P.W. 2011. Toward a model of social influence that explains minority student integration into the scientific. *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 103(1): 206–222.

Evjen, S. and Audunson, R. 2009. The complex library: do the public's attitudes represent a barrier to institutional change in public libraries? *New Library World,* 110(3/4): 161–174. DOI:10.1108/03074800910941356.

Glorieux, I., Kuppens, T. and Vandebroeck, D. 2007. Mind the gap: societal limits to public library effectiveness. *Library and Information Science Research,* 29(2): 188–208.

Gross, R. 2004. *Psychology: the science of mind and behaviour.* 4th ed. Tonbridge, Kent: Greengate Publishing.

Hemmeter, J.A. 2006. Household use of public libraries and large bookstores. *Library and Information Science Research,* 28(4): 595–616.

Ignatow, G., Webb, S.M., Poulin, M., Parajuli, R., Fleming, B.S., Batra, S. and Neupane, D. 2012. Public libraries and democratization in three developing countries: exploring the role of social capital. *Libri: International Journal of Libraries & Information Services*, 62 (1): 67–80.

Iwhiwhu, B.E. and Okorodudu, P.O. 2012. Public library information resources, facilities, and services: user satisfaction with the Edo State Central Library, Benin City, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice,* 5(1): 1–16.

Kauaria, V.V. 2013. Libraries supporting national development in Namibia. *Proceedings of the Namibia Library Symposium.* 7-9 October 2013. Windhoek: Namibia. 31–33.

Kelman, H.C. 1958. Compliance, identification, and internalisation of three processes of attitude change. *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 2(1): 51–60.

Khan, S.A. 2015. User's perception of services quality of the central public library Bahawalpur. *Library Philosophy and Practice.* 1276. [Online]. http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1276 (10 May 2020).

Koontz, C.M., Jue, D.K. and Lance, K.C. 2005. Neighbourhood-based in libraries: a nationwide study of majority-minority and majority-white low-income markets using personal digital data collection. *Library Information Science Research*, 27(1): 28–50.

Levine, J. 2006. Public libraries. *Library Technology Reports,* 42(5): 45–55.

Li, D.C. 2011. Online social network acceptance: a social perspective. *Internet Research,* 21(5): 562–580.

Lilley, E. and Usherwood, B. 2000. Wanting it all: the relationship between expectations and the public's perceptions of public library services. *Library Management*, 21(1): 13–24.

Mairaj, M.I. and Naseer, M.M. 2013. Library services and user satisfaction in developing countries: a case study. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, 30(4): 318–326.

Mandl, H., Lukileni, N.H. and Niskala, R. 2013. Strong libraries, strong societies: the role of libraries in socio-economic development. *Proceedings of the Namibia Library Symposium.* 7-9 October. Windhoek, Namibia. 31–33.

Maree, K. 2016. *First steps in research*. 2nd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publisher.

Mcharazo, A. and Mshana, J. 2013. Creating awareness on the importance of libraries: a case study of Tanzania library service board. *Proceedings of the Namibia Library Symposium.* 7-9 October. Windhoek, Namibia. 123–132.

Mutshewa, A., Grand, B., Totolo, A., Zulu, S., Sebina, P. and Jorosi, B. 2010. Information behaviours of non-users of libraries in Botswana. *African Journal of Library, Archives, and Information Science*, 20(1): 1–10.

Namagand, A. and Sekikome, P. 2013. User's perceptions of Makerere University Library services. *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries,* 2(4): 403–410.

Namhila, E.N. and Niskala, R. 2013. Libraries supporting national development goals in Namibia. *IFLA Journal*, 39(1): 58–69.

Namibia National Planning Commission. 2012. *Otjozondjupa 2011 Census Regional Profile*. Windhoek: National Planning Commission.

Nzivo, C.N. 2012. User perception of library services and information resources in Kenyan Public Libraries. *Library Review*, 61(2): 110–127.

Ocholla, D.N. 2009. Are African libraries active participants in today's knowledge and information society. *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science*, 75(1): 20–27.

Odu, J.O. 2017. User apathy towards library resources and service: a case study of the University of Calabar library, Calabar, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 16(1): 37–45.

Petr, K. and Aparac-Jelusic, T. 2002. Public perception of the role and tasks of library and information science professionals in Croatia: an overview of recent activities. *New Library World*, 103(10): 364–375.

Phillips, A. 2012. *Framing the public library: the public perception of the public library in the media*. Doctoral thesis. Dominican University.

Sadeh, T. 2007. Time for a change: new approaches for a new generation of library users. *New Library World*, 108 (7/8): 307–316.

Sin, S. and Kim, K. 2008. Use and non-use of public libraries in the information age: a logistic regression analysis of household characteristics and library services variables. *Library and Information Science Research*, 30(3): 207–215.

TNS RMS East Africa. 2014. *Perceptions of public libraries in Africa*. Vilnius: Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL). [Online]. https://www.eifl.net/system/files/resources/201408/perceptions_of_public_libraries_in_africa_-_full_report_hi.pdf (20 September 2018).

Toner, L. 2008. Non-use of library services by students in a UK academic library. *Evidence-Based Library and Information Practice,* 3(2): 18–29.

Velasquez, D.L. and Evans, N. 2018. Public library websites as electronic branches: a multi-country quantitative evaluation. *Information Research: An International Electronic Journal* 23(1). [Online]. http://InformationR.net/ir/23-1/paper786.html (16 July 2020).

Vrana, R. and Barbaric, A. 2007. Improving the visibility of public libraries in the local community: a study of five public libraries in Zagreb, Croatia. *New Library World*, 108(9/10): 435–444.

Webb, S.M. 2010. Library use in community libraries services serving the urban poor: a case study of two libraries. *Proceedings of the 19th Standing Conference of Eastern, Central, Southern Africa.* 6-9 December 2010. Gaborone, University of Botswana, Botswana Library Association, 75–83.