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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

ADOLESCENTS AS PUBLIC LIBRARY USERS

ANITA JANIS SHAW

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SUPERVISOR: DR. MARY NASSIMBENI

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ABSTRACT

The primary objectives and scope of this research are to examine the library usage behaviour of adolescents, specifically those attending a high school in Grassy Park and those using Grassy Park Library. A central aspect of this research was to identify the types of library needs (curricular and non-curricular) that these two groups might have and how they went about to satisfy these needs. Their library usage patterns and reading behaviour were also investigated.

A literature survey was done to provide a theoretical framework for the study. The empirical component of the study was done by survey research. This was done by means of a cross-sectional study of two samples of adolescents, aged 13 to 16. The first sample consisted of pupils attending a high school in Grassy Park, while the second sample consisted of adolescents visiting Grassy Park Library. Two separate sets of questionnaires were distributed among the two sample groups. The majority of the questions in both questionnaires were structured, with multiple choice answers. There was also a number of open-ended questions.

The study revealed a number of interesting facts. There were major differences between the genders as far as library use, behaviour, reading patterns and interests were concerned. The public library was heavily used, mainly for curricular requirements. The school library was under-resourced, under-utilised and undervalued. The adolescents were generally satisfied with the public library, but dissatisfied with their school library. Lack of access and lack of relevant materials were the two main problems with the school library.

The adolescent mainly borrowed books and considered the public library's non-book materials, especially the audio-visuals, as outdated. There were many heavy readers, especially among the female adolescents, who saw reading and library visits as social events.

The adolescents expressed their recreational, informational and curricular needs. A difference between recreational and utilitarian reading along gender lines, could be observed. There was a great need for curricular related information, and the necessary skills to access available information.

A number of recommendations are made relating to government, the Education Department, school libraries, teachers, the public library sector and Grassy Park Library. If adopted, these measures could vastly improve the quality of public and school library services to adolescents.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED

ANC:	AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
BBC:	BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION
CAFDA:	CAPE FLATS DISTRESS ASSOCIATION
CD:	COMPACT DISKS
DET:	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
HOA:	HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
HOD:	HOUSE OF DELEGATES
HOR:	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NEPI:	NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY INVESTIGATION
NICRO:	NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CRIME REHABILITATION AND PREVENTION
NIE	NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION
OBE:	OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION
PA:WCLS:	PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION: WESTERN CAPE LIBRARY SERVICE
READ:	READ, EDUCATE AND DEVELOP
SAIRR:	SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS
SPADES:	SOUTH PENINSULA DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES
SPM:	SOUTH PENINSULA MUNICIPALITY
Std:	STANDARD
UK:	UNITED KINGDOM
UNESCO:	UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION
USA:	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
VAT:	VALUE ADDED TAX
WCED:	WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

YA: YOUNG ADULTS

Yrs: YEARS

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

Adolescents are an important group of public library users. However, they might often be neglected as a user group, as public libraries tend to emphasise the needs of the bigger user groups of children and adults. In addition, the curricular requirements of adolescent users, appear to overwhelm all the other needs of this group. As a result public librarians tend to concentrate mainly on the curricular requirement, to the detriment of the other less obvious needs and requirements of adolescents. Perold, et al., 1997: 119) states that there is a danger that the role of libraries as providers of information services is being overrun by the current trend of using libraries as study rooms.

Adolescence is a very short period in a person's life, yet it is a crucial period during which the individual's perception of libraries, reading and library media can be formed. It is during this period that reading habits are formed and reading behavioural patterns are established. Positive or negative library experiences can have long lasting influences on the library usage and reading habits of adolescents. Barnes (1968:26) found that adolescents tended to "drift" away from public libraries while Jones (1992:11) found that many individuals stopped reading for pleasure or assigned it to a lower priority during their adolescent years. He adds that if patrons are "lost" during their adolescent years, they often do not return to libraries or sustain literacy (Jones, 1992:9).

1.2 Research problem

The primary objective and scope of this research are to explore the library usage and reading habits of adolescents, with specific reference to those attending a high school in Grassy Park and those using Grassy Park Library. A central aspect of this research is to identify the types of library needs that these adolescents might have and how they satisfy these needs.

The researcher is the librarian-in-charge of the above-mentioned library and has held this position for the last ten years. Being in charge of the library, the researcher has gained valuable experience in the library usage and reading behaviour of the Grassy Park community. The researcher identified adolescents as a group of library users in need of investigation.

Adolescents belong to an important, but often neglected group of public library users. Very often local public libraries have programmes for children and adults to promote reading and the use of the public library, but very few programmes are directed specifically at adolescents. How adolescents experience libraries can determine whether or not they become lifelong readers and learners.

The main reason for undertaking this research thus derives from the necessity to give attention to the needs of adolescents. Adolescents form a substantial part of South Africa's population and as such their welfare is important to the country's future. The local newspapers reveal that to many of them gangsterism, violence, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, poverty and other social problems are realities. Schools, public libraries and other institutions could have an important role to play in equipping adolescents to deal with the many challenges which they might face.

Their school library also has a tremendous impact on the library experience of adolescents. Its existence or lack thereof, the quality and accessibility of its collection and its relevance to current curricula, school librarians and the teaching of Information Skills, are but a few of the factors that influence the use of school libraries. It is thus important to examine the role school libraries play in meeting the requirements of their adolescent users. In order to examine this role, this research includes an examination of the use of a local school library.

Jones (1992:13) provides an image of how some adolescents experience the public library. He says that adolescents often "have to come to the library to find information they aren't interested in to write a paper they don't want to write to hand in to a teacher they don't even like to get a grade in a class they can't stand so they can graduate from a school which they loathe so they can get away from parents who they also might just loathe at any given moment." These adolescents come to the library with a negative attitude. Some adolescents might also come to the library because they have nowhere else to go. Adolescents visiting the library out of boredom or obligation are not the best start to a successful relationship.

Jones (1992:13-14) goes on to say that when adolescents get to the library they often find "overworked staff without enough resources to do their jobs well, feeling burnt out from too many reference questions, and frustrated from too few reference sources. They find a librarian sitting at a desk waiting grimly for the next patron or problem." This is hardly a good basis for a successful relationship between the adolescent and the public library.

It is important that concerted efforts are made by public libraries to encourage public library membership and use among adolescents, and to retain existing members who might have used the public library since an early age, but lose interest during adolescence and "drift" away, as found by Barnes (1968:26) as early as in 1968. There

are so many benefits, not only academically, to be gained by adolescents who are active library users. For example, library users are exposed to a world of art, culture, knowledge and wisdom, that might be out of reach to non-users. And best of all, public libraries are there to be used by all, rich or poor, young and old.

An objective study of adolescents' multifaceted needs is necessary in order for public libraries to provide an effective service to them. It is important that such a study reveals what adolescents themselves see as their needs, rather than what librarians perceive these needs to be.

1.3 Research methodology

The methods used in this research are the following: firstly, a literature survey was done to provide a theoretical framework for the research. Chapter 2 reviews the literature of the study. It includes adolescent readers and non-readers, public library users, the library needs of adolescents, the role of school libraries, co-operation between school and public libraries and the role of the government.

Secondly, two sets of surveys were conducted in July 1998 for the empirical component of the research. The findings of these surveys are covered by Chapters 4 and 5. The methods and procedures followed are described in detail in Chapter 3.

1.4 Background

In order to understand the adolescents to be studied, it is important to know their background or social milieu. In order to do so, it is necessary to look at the area that

they live in, Grassy Park and the public library that they have access to, Grassy Park Library.

1.4.1 Grassy Park

Grassy Park is a predominantly "coloured" area, 24 kilometres south of Cape Town. It was created as a result of the Group Areas Act to house people evicted from the then newly declared "white" areas e.g. Constantia, Claremont and District Six. A number of people who left the rural areas in search of work, also settled in the area.

In earlier years, the community was predominantly Afrikaans speaking. However, especially during the 1980s there was a strong shift to English. This was mainly because English was seen as a "superior" language and the vehicle to upward social mobility. English was recognised as a world language and important for economic success. On the other hand, Afrikaans was seen as "inferior", and the language of the poor and rural people. To a lesser extent, due to the political consciousness of that time, some people rejected Afrikaans as the language of the "oppressor". Rousseau (23/11/1999, personal communication) observed that this mainly happened in the Southern suburbs of the Cape Peninsula, and especially in Grassy Park. He saw it primarily as a process which started in the 1950s as a form of protest against the National Party government, and which gained momentum over the past few years.

Many families in which the parents grew up with Afrikaans as their mother tongue, now mainly use English, and their children are educated in English. Stadler (23/11/1999, personal communication) observed that this happens because many parents feel that English instruction would better prepare their children for tertiary education and also improve their employment prospects, e.g. the world of commerce is much more accessible to fluent English speakers. He observed that over the past few

years, his high school in Grassy Park, enrolled fewer and fewer Afrikaans speaking learners to the extent that since 1994, his school had to recruit Afrikaans speaking learners from feeder primary schools outside of Grassy Park, e.g. Cafda. Whereas Afrikaans used to be the dominant medium of instruction at local schools in the past, English now fulfils that role. This factor has implications for the public library usage and reading habits of the community.

Currently, the area has a mixed working and middle class population. Housing, either owned or rented, ranges from big to small houses, flats, "separate entrances" (granny flats) in back yards and a small number of shacks. A wide range of income groups, as well as unemployed people, are represented in the community. However, since the scrapping of the Group Areas Act, there has been a steady wave among those who can afford it, to move to the previously "white" suburbs.

Grassy Park is not a homogeneous community. There are vast differences in background, income, education, religion, politics, language, culture and world view. These differences are reflected in the adolescent users of the library.

1.4.2 Grassy Park Library

Grassy Park Library was opened in 1972 by the then local authority, the Cape Divisional Council. The library was affiliated to the Cape Provincial Library Service, which mainly provided its materials. The Cape Divisional Council became the Cape Regional Council and later the Cape Metropolitan Council. After the General Elections of 1994, new local government structures were created, and the South Peninsula Municipality (SPM) was formed. With the formation of nine provinces in South Africa, the Provincial Administration: Western Cape Library Services (PA:WCLS) became the provincial authority. The library remained affiliated to the

provincial authority throughout the changes in both local and provincial administrations.

Currently, the library's funding comes from two main sources: SPM and PA:WCLS. The SPM is mainly responsible for the capital and operational costs of the library, which includes staffing. PA:WCLS is mainly responsible for the provision of library materials. PA:WCLS selection policy thus largely determines the nature of the library stock. The library also have access to a small budget from the SPM from which materials to supplement PA:WCLS stock, are bought. In addition, the Friends of Grassy Park Library engage in small scale fund-raising to buy library materials. The public and certain organisations also periodically donate books to the library.

Its central location and long opening hours¹ make the public library very accessible to its users. From the start, it has been well utilised by all sections of the community. The library is used for information, recreation and education by all sections of the community.

It soon became apparent that the library was too small for the needs of the community. Thus began the long process of campaigning for extensions. With the implementation of the new local government structures, the South Peninsula Municipality became the local authority in 1995 and approval for extensions was granted in 1996/97.

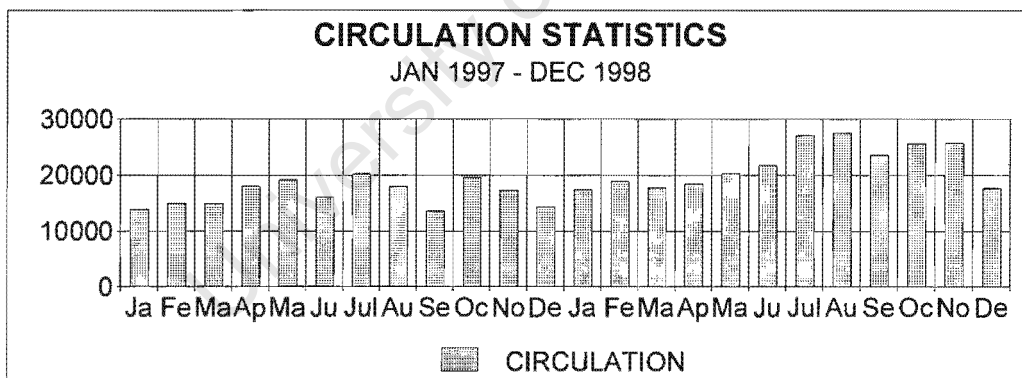
Extensions began October 1997 and were completed in November 1998. Among other improvements, a reference and study area, as well as a children's section, were added. The library was also computerised in September 1997. The library remained fully functional during the extension period, with the public making full use of the library.

¹Mon- Thurs: 11:00 - 20:00
Fri: 11:00 - 17:30
Sat: 09:00 - 13:00

Dust, noise, chaos and the other inconveniences that accompanied the building process did not appear to deter the users. While this study was being conducted in July 1998, the study and reference area was completed and in use, but the children's area was still under construction.

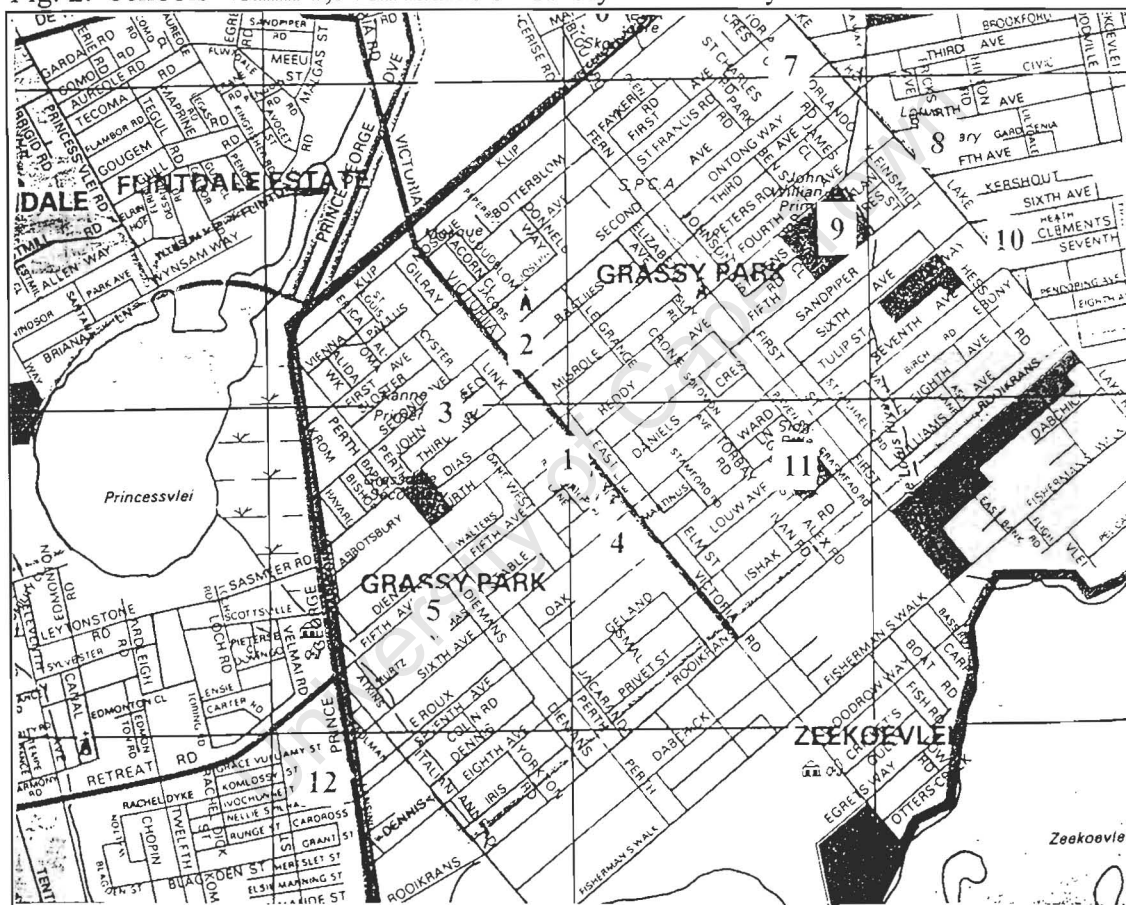
The excitement and publicity associated with computerisation and extensions led to an unprecedented increase in membership and usage. Membership grew from 10 000 in September 1997 to 16 500 in September 1999. Use by both members and non-members increased phenomenally, as more and more students used the library's new reference and study facilities. Other forms of library usage also increased. The increase in monthly circulation, which reflects only one form of library usage, i.e. borrowing of library materials, is illustrated in Figure 1. Statistics of other forms of library usage were not kept during the period of concern.

Fig. 1. Circulation statistics for Grassy Park Library: January 1997 to December 1998.



The library serves three high schools, one art school, six primary schools and several creches, nursery schools and after-care centres in the Grassy Park area (see fig. 2). Some of these institutions send classes to the library during school hours for class visits, storytelling or other programmes. Their learners, as well as learners who live in Grassy Park, but attend schools outside the area, and tertiary students, also make extensive use of the library on their own.

Fig. 2. Schools within 1,5 km radius of Grassy Park Library



KEY	
1. Grassy Park Library	7. English Church (E.C.) Primary
2. Fairmount Senior Secondary	8. Kannemeyer Primary
3. Fairview Primary	9. Sid G. Rule Primary
4. Lotus River Primary	10. Grassy Park Senior Secondary
5. Grassdale Senior Secondary	11. Battswood Arts Centre
6. St. Clements Primary	12. Cafda Primary

1.4.3 Grassy Park Library within the broader public library context

Due to inadequate, non-existent or under-utilised school library facilities, Grassy Park Library, in common with many other South African public libraries, is used daily by children and adolescents for curricular information needs. Concerns are raised by local librarians as to whether public libraries are concentrating on curricular requirements to such an extent that their other responsibilities to the general public, e.g. adults, children and adolescents, are being neglected. These responsibilities would include their mandate to provide services to meet both formal and informal educational, information and recreation needs. In fact, Kaniki (1995:36) argues that "similar to other countries, public libraries in South Africa have always argued that the main purpose of library and information services is to meet cultural, recreational, educational, and social responsibilities." However, the problem which faces Grassy Park Library and other public libraries is firstly, a lack of certainty as to what the specific educational responsibilities are for a given public library or library system, and secondly, what effort in terms of resources and actual services should be committed towards meeting these responsibilities (Kaniki, 1995:33)

Kaniki (1995:37) argues that the implications for meeting these responsibilities in South Africa are complex as the provision and development of amenities such as public library services have been varied, based on racial lines. He argues that while each public library system and individual public libraries refer to educational responsibilities as priority services, most patrons or potential patrons, have been dissatisfied with the way in which these responsibilities have been executed (Kaniki, 1995:37). According to Kaniki (1995:37), the recognition that mainstream public libraries could not effectively serve particularly the disadvantaged groups in South Africa, led to the development of the resource centre movement. The Natal Resource Centre Forum defined a Resource Centre as:

A space or building in which human and other resources in a variety of media (e.g.. books, journals, newspapers, film, slides, video and recorders, cameras, computers, photocopiers printers, fax machines, etc.) are arranged or made accessible in an appropriate manner for the purpose of empowering people through information dissemination, production , skills and resource sharing. [It} incorporates community involvement and participation at all levels. Learning and interaction occurs directly with the resources (Education Resource Information Services, 1992:2, quoted in Kaniki, 1995:38).

The resource centre movement is thus an attempt to address the information needs of communities deprived as a result of apartheid (Stilwell, 1992, cited in Kaniki (1995:38). Another attempt has been the emergence of community libraries. Zaaiman (1988:11) found in the 1980s that libraries in developing communities usually did not relate to what communities regarded as their most urgent needs. As a result sections of developing communities either established their own libraries or used libraries provided by organisations outside the traditional library profession (Zaaiman, 1988:11).

Vienings (1993:513) argues that in the 1990s many resource centres were facing a crisis for the following reasons:

- they were no longer able to secure adequate funding due to factors such as funding competition from elsewhere;
- unbanned political and community organisations could collect and disseminate their own information and no longer depended on resource centres to do this for them;
- and public libraries began to show a willingness to transform themselves into a more appropriate service.

In a country like South Africa, the developmental role of the public library is extremely important. Zaaiman (1988) sees public libraries as playing important roles in the development of urban and rural communities, in social, political, economic, health and welfare development, etc. Nassimbeni (1990:167) also discusses developmental aspects of public library services in black communities e.g. literacy programmes, life-skills programmes and adult education. These aspects are also applicable to adolescents and are very important in South Africa with its various social, economic, political and developmental concerns.

Shillinglaw (1986:40) argues that the Western model of public library service can be described as chiefly based on the home reading of books borrowed by predominantly middle-class educated public. He argues that this model was transplanted into white South African society. The libraries in "white" areas thus mainly served "the needs of a group characterised by high levels of access to information in various media, a well established reading culture, high standards of education and literacy, leisure and the material resources to enjoy it. The 'white' public library is therefore chiefly concerned with leisure and self-actualisation, rather than with more basic developmental concerns." Roth (1993:520) argues that public libraries in South Africa is perceived as part of the First World.

Shillinglaw (1986:40) says that the conditions in the black community "differ considerably in terms of lower levels of education and literacy, the absence of a reading culture, negative social values relating to reading as an activity, the type of information needed, and the type of library service that would be appropriate." It is thus important that every public library is appropriate to the needs of each specific community.

Grassy Park Library encompasses a whole range of levels between the two extremes of library models as described by Shillinglaw. Some sections of the community use the

library mainly for borrowing materials and leisure and self-actualisation, while others use it mainly for developmental purposes, e.g. formal and informal education. The library also continuously works towards providing a service appropriate to the needs of the community it serves. It is thus an interesting library in which to study any aspect of library use.

1.5 Outline of chapters

The dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter One provides a background to the study. The research problem is explored. The social milieu of the group to be studied, the adolescents of Grassy Park, is investigated. Grassy Park Library is also described.

Chapter Two provides the theoretical context for the research. It covers a review of the literature relating to adolescent readers, non-readers and public library users. The various library needs of adolescents are investigated. The role of school libraries and other stakeholders is also explored.

Chapter Three covers the research framework and methodology. The survey format, sampling, data collection, the questionnaires and the role of observation are discussed. The survey was conducted in two locations: at a local high school and at Grassy Park Library.

Chapter Four covers the findings of the high school sample. Various aspects were investigated, e.g. the sample demographics, where respondents' project information was found, their use of their school library and the public library and their level of satisfaction with these facilities.

Chapter Five covers the findings of the Grassy Park Library sample. Aspects investigated were the demographics of the group, their public library membership, their reasons for being in the library, their level of satisfaction with the library and what the library should do to meet their needs.

Chapter Six presents an in-depth discussion of the findings of the previous two chapters.

Chapter Seven covers the conclusions. Statements are made concerning the adolescent public library usage, the use of the school library and meeting the needs of adolescents. The limitations of the study are also discussed.

Chapter Eight makes a number of recommendations relating to various stakeholders. If adopted, these recommendations could improve the quality of public and school library services to adolescents.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL CONTEXT - A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Definition of adolescents

For the purpose of this study, adolescents are described as persons aged 13 to 16. The terms "teenagers", "young adults (YA)" and "youth" are used interchangeably. Fourie and Kruger (1995:229) say that adolescence is characterised by the integration of biological, psychological and social growth. It is a transition period during which the individual transcends childhood and is prepared for adult functioning. Adolescence is also culturally determined and defined. Eriksen (cited in Fourie and Kruger, 1995:229) emphasises the integration of past experience and the development of a sense of individuality and personal identity during adolescence.

Eriksen and Havighurst (cited in Fourie, 1998:17) have identified various psychosocial stages and developmental tasks that the adolescent has to accomplish to progress from childhood to adulthood. The most important are:

- the development of independence from the family;
- the development of a sense of one's own identity;
- the establishment of a masculine or feminine social role;
- the creation of educational and vocational plans.

Le Roux (1996:133) argues that although adolescents in South Africa may differ in culture, they all follow universal sequences of moral development. Hence teenagers of different cultures have the same notions of justice.

It is generally agreed that adolescence is a crucial stage during a person's development. During these years adolescents must make important choices regarding their futures,

their sexuality, their relationships and many other aspects of their lives. Adolescents have various pressures, influences, pitfalls and detours to contend with when making their choices in life. Libraries and books, along with other institutions, can play important roles in helping adolescents make choices.

2.2 Adolescent readers

Several authors have investigated the factors which promote the reading habit. Hatt (1986:23) identifies four attributes that distinguish the reader from the non-reader. These attributes are literacy, access to reading matter, certain minimum environmental conditions and time to read. He argues that these attributes are necessary, but not sufficient conditions to make a person a reader. Besides these attributes, the person must be motivated to read.

Hodges (quoted in Harmon and Bradburn, 1988:26) says that everyone reads for similar reasons: "information, vicarious experiences, to escape, to pass the time, etc." Gray and Rogers (cited in Staiger, 1979:19) compiled a list of reasons for reading which suggest that reading is based on real human needs. They propose that people read for the following reasons:

- As a ritual, or from force of habit.
- From a sense of duty.
- Merely to fill in or kill time.
- To know and understand current happenings.
- For immediate personal satisfaction or value.
- To meet practical demands of daily living.
- To further avocational interests.
- To carry on and promote professional or vocational interests.
- To meet personal-social demands.

- To meet socio-civic needs and demands (good citizenship).
- For self-development or improvement, including extension of cultural background.
- To satisfy strictly intellectual demands.
- To satisfy spiritual needs.

In researching young people's reading habits, Carter (1986: 3-4) found that they are most likely to be voluntary readers if they have many or all of the following attributes:

- Girls are more likely to be voluntary readers than boys.
- The younger the child, the greater the likelihood of being a voluntary reader.
- A regular voluntary reader is also likely to be active in other pursuits, i.e. participation in other interests.
- The propensity to read and the amount read are related to the interests and attitudes of the young person, rather than the time available.
- Voluntary readers are likely to present few problems of discipline, at home and at school.
- The amount of voluntary reading undertaken by a young person is positively associated with his/her ability.
- Youth attending single-sex and grammar schools were more likely to be voluntary readers.
- Voluntary readers are more likely to be members of a public library and one or both of their parents would be library members.
- Small families in which the head of the household has a non-manual occupation and in which one or both parents is a voluntary reader, the young person has had stories read to him/her and the family and/or child owns many books, are more likely to produce voluntary avid readers.

However important these above attributes are, Carter (1986:4) does note that there are many children who have few or none of these attributes and yet are avid readers and

vice versa. Carter does not explain the reason for this paradox, but suggest it as a possible area for further studies (Carter, 1986:17).

Palmer (1995:10-11) argues that all children read for information as their teachers demand that they complete projects or set exercises. She says that most educators want to instil the reading habit in learners at as early age as possible. Thereafter, it is considered as a good habit. Children are often told to read and thus might read out of a "sense of duty".

Attitude is also important. Coetzee (1983:67) argues that children growing up in homes where a positive attitude towards reading exists, are more likely to develop such an attitude and retain it, than those growing up in homes with negative attitudes towards reading. In a social environment where knowledge and an appreciation of literature is general, families with a positive attitude will be found more often. In this regard, Coetzee (1983:66) points out the ambivalent attitude of the community: reading is regarded as asocial, but at the same time, it is accepted as a "good thing". This context is very important in understanding adolescents' reading habits.

2.3 Adolescent non-readers

Maslow's hierarchy of needs indicates that basic physiological needs must first be met, before all other needs become important. In the less privileged sections of the community, children grow up with unemployment, violence, gangsterism, alcohol and drug abuse around them. Under these circumstances, meeting basic "survival" needs is more important than reading books. Zaaiman (1988:43), notes that many families who face these problems struggle daily with basic breadline issues at the lower levels of the Maslow hierarchy.

In some homes, little reading takes place. Children from these homes might experience numerous academic problems. Research has shown that children who have not been read to and have not had access to books and stories are at a disadvantage when they enter school (Olen, 1996:82). As a result, they experience tremendous problems when they have to engage in reading for their projects. Understanding fiction, non-fiction and reference works often presupposes certain background knowledge on the part of the reader. In discussing the reading response, Baker (1994:5) says that "the text comes with a repertoire which may include references to earlier work, to social and historical norms or to the whole culture from which the text has emerged. The reader brings a repertoire of knowledge and expectations based on previous reading and experiences." If there is no match or a very low match, the reader is unlikely to understand much of what he/she reads.

Similarly, Donald (1979:4) argues that children who speak a different language in their home environment are at a disadvantage in learning and enjoying reading. Afrikaans-speaking youth, for instance, might experience problems if most of the works that they require for their schoolwork are only available in English. They are then expected to translate work that might be difficult for them to understand in the first place. This problem is expressed by Baker (1994:6-7) who argues that "if culture and language construct thought, even apparently simple and straightforward text can disempower children who come from language and class backgrounds which do not match their reading matter". Olen (1996:83) states that English second language pupils may decode texts satisfactorily, but they experience problems with comprehension, especially when the questions on texts are not literal but inferential. The many black South African youths to whom English is a second or even third language, are thus at a disadvantage.

Heather (cited in Carter, 1986:4) found that non-readers were likely to attend schools where there were no class libraries, library lessons, qualified librarian, silent reading

periods, school bookshop or club. With the exception of schools in advantaged areas serving advantaged children, these circumstances generally apply to the schools in South Africa.

Reed (cited in Jones,1992:71) summarised ten reasons why some young adults are reluctant readers:

- They associated reading with school and/or failure.
- They are not interested in ideas.
- They are not capable of sitting still long enough.
- Because of their egocentric natures, they are not interested in many of the books that are required reading.
- Reading does not provide the level of entertainment they want.
- It is "counterproductive" to read.
- They grow up in nonreading environments.
- Reading is a solitary task and is therefore considered antisocial.
- Reading is considered an "adult thing" or "school thing" and is therefore rejected.
- Reading is seen as difficult.

Fourie (1998:20-21) gives the following reasons:

- Adolescents with reading problems dislike reading and avoid it when they can.
- Some adolescents have a negative attitude towards reading and may prefer to take part in social activities with their peers rather than indulge in solitary activities such as reading.
- A lack of interest. Reading content might be uninteresting and does not grab their attention because it may not have any meaning for them.
- A lack of time to read. Besides having a heavy workload at school, teenagers are often involved with socialising with peers, sporting activities and part-time employment, and may not have time to read.

- Economic environment. Poverty and poor nutrition and housing conditions lead to a lack of interest, concentration and apathy among disadvantaged youth. These factors may contribute to underachievement at school and a lack of motivation to read.
- Recreational reading does not flourish in some cultures where the oral tradition is still dominant and a reading culture has not yet developed.
- Complexity of reading matter in the second language. Many young South Africans have to master English as a second language to be able to read for recreational and informational purposes, owing to a lack of suitable materials in their mother tongue. An inability to understand texts and a lack of language skills lead to fatigue as readers try to gain meaning from reading materials. Hence a reluctance to read.
- Educational methods. In learning to read, many children perceive reading as a subject rather than a pleasurable activity, because reading is taught as decoding, a meaningless activity. In addition, books are often used as a means of instruction and fact finding for school tasks that children assume that this is the sole task of books. Literary analysis of prescribed literature also dampens the readers' reading enjoyment.

In explaining why male adolescents read less than female adolescents, Jones (1992:30) argues that reading is considered a "non-macho" activity by most male adolescents. He argues that most boys define themselves within a "macho" model and disdain reading. Adolescent males who read are considered as "nerds" and peer pressure discourage reading. Jones also argues that the sheer physical aspect of being an adolescent male also works against "passive" activities such as reading.

Donald (1979:1-2) categorised child non-readers into four groups with considerable overlapping occurring between the different groups. These categories can also be applied to adolescents. The largest group of non-readers identified by Donald

(1979:1), was children who have a disability in learning to read. They are not unable to read, but find the process extremely difficult and laborious. They only read when they are compelled to do so.

Donald's second group, i.e. the "socio-cultural" group, consisted of children who fell socially and culturally "outside the mainstream of world literature". The values, language, goals, rewards and contents in this literature are different from theirs and thus have little real meaning for them. A large number of South African adolescents have deprived backgrounds. The mainly Eurocentric literature found in libraries is far removed from their reality. These adolescent lives are very seldom depicted in the literature available to them, except as stereotypes. Only more middle-class sections of the community can readily relate to the literature available to them. However, with the influence of television, American culture seems to have become the dominant culture of urban adolescents.

Donald's third group of non-readers is the "motivational" group who are not interested in reading for different reasons, but mainly because "it does not turn them on". Donald (1979:4-5) mentions reasons why learners in the motivational group might not be motivated to read. Some of the reasons are:

- the lack of personal involvement (they feel no sense of achievement or fulfilment);
- the lack of parental support (where the parents do not encourage reading or do not read themselves);
- lack of interest at school (reading is not promoted for enjoyment).

The fourth group, the "material availability" group, did not read because the material for them to read is not readily accessible. This applies to a large section of the South African population.

2.4 Adolescent public library users

In the USA, considerable work has been done concerning adolescent library users. Jones (1992) reports on several studies that were conducted to investigate the state of library services to adolescents in the USA. Although Jones primarily investigated the situation in the USA, some of the issues discussed are applicable to South Africa.

Jones (1992:9-10) argues that libraries should support services to young adults (YA) for the following reasons:

- Today's adolescent patrons are tomorrow's voters and taxpayers.
- It will help encourage an individual's habit of using the library learnt in childhood and support it until adulthood.
- If patrons are "lost" during their YA years, they often do not return to libraries or sustain literacy.
- Libraries supplement other educational, recreational, social, and cultural institutions.
- Providing staff with specialised skills and knowledge enable them to meet this age group's special needs.
- Staff stress can be reduced by serving YAs rather than "tolerating them."
- It is more productive to act rather than react to situations involving teenagers.
- It helps students use the vast resources purchased by libraries for their homework assignments.
- Community partnerships and co-operative relationships are a vital part of serving this underserved age group.
- Providing materials and services fosters library use.
- Most library resources are not available to young persons elsewhere.
- Because youth needs us.

These issues are all important for the design and delivery of library services to adolescents in South Africa. There is, however, a major difference between the "vast resources" available in the USA and the minimal resources available in South Africa.

2.5 Library needs of adolescents

Harmon and Bradburn (1988:24-25) say that libraries and librarians have much to offer young people to help them fulfil their needs. They argue that librarians who serve the youth, whether in a public library or school library setting, have a responsibility to be advocates for all their patrons' needs. This responsibility is obvious because no one else in society is charged with meeting the broad information needs of adolescents. Significantly, it is argued that it is not enough to just assist adolescents or just to like them, one must believe in their right to arm themselves with any information which will enhance their growth.

Harmon and Bradburn (1988:21) identified three very important categories of young adult needs that libraries must attempt to meet:

- research needs (for both school and personal explorations);
- recreational materials (reading, listening and viewing collections);
- informational needs (family planning, personal care, etc.)

2.5.1 Research needs

Meeting curricular requirements are the most obvious research needs that adolescents have. According to Fourie (1995:130) the term "curricular requirements" denotes learners' need of information which arises from study tasks set by the teacher as part of

the subject curriculum. This includes any school-related independent reading and information-seeking assignment or project.

Although learners have always used public libraries for projects, their numbers increased significantly in 1995 when the continuous assessment system was introduced in schools. As a result of this system, the year mark counted 50% towards the final grade. Teachers often saw projects and assignments as the only form of continuous assessment and public libraries as the only sources of information, and this message was passed on to learners (Zinn, 9/2/99, personal communication).

The introduction of Curriculum 2005, or outcomes-based education (OBE), emphasises resource-based learning. In 1995, the then Minister of Education, Professor Bengu stated:

We are poised to introduce a new curriculum, next year, which will expose learners to a wide range of information and resources to meet the demands of the next century. If learners are to have an ability to collect, organise and analyse information it means that they would have to engage with resources so that they know how to access information and facts (Kruger, 1998:8-9).

However, it was not stated where and how learners would gain access to the wide range of information and resources that they were expected to be exposed to. In fact, the Draft White Paper on Education and Training, made no explicit mention of the role of school or public libraries in the new education system (Zinn, 1997:137).

Kruger (1998:9-10) states that there is a realisation that learning resources materials are essential for the success of Curriculum 2005, but considerations such as the size of the collection, its accommodation, management and the person who should take responsibility for it, have not received attention.

In 1997, Vis Naidoo, Acting Chief Director of the National Institute of Life Long Learning Development of the National Department of Education stated that information plays a significant role in the new outcomes-based education policy. He identified the school library as one of the central areas where learners would be able to access information. He also acknowledged the dual role public libraries play in being school libraries and public libraries, because of a shortage of school libraries (Naidoo, 1997:5).

As a result of the poor state of school libraries at especially "black" and "coloured" schools, public libraries in many areas are forced to assume the role of school libraries. Lor (1998:8) found that as school libraries deteriorated or closed down, more and more learners became dependent on public libraries for the supply of materials for assignments. Some schools might never have had school libraries to begin with. Public libraries across South Africa experience the effects of inadequate school libraries. Fourie (1996:206) found that over half (53,4%) of the secondary school learners who visited public libraries in the Pretoria-Verwoerdburg areas did so for curricular purposes. Lor (1998:8) reports that the Natal Society Library in Pietermaritzburg is visited by over 4 700 persons per day, the majority being secondary and tertiary students using the library for educational purposes. Ramesh Jayaram, Johannesburg's director of libraries and museums, said that the Johannesburg Library experienced a massive increase in usage to the extent that "we are being overrun we cannot cope with the demand" (quoted in Perold et al., 1997:119).

However, in spite of increased usage by school learners, public libraries began to experience major cutbacks. Cash-strapped provincial and local authorities reduced book budgets, opening hours and staffing (Lor 1998:9). In trying to meet curricular demands, public libraries increasingly concentrated their dwindling resources on providing textbooks, study guides, theme books, study space and staff to assist learners.

Zaaiman (1988:19), found that learners crowd public libraries in the afternoons and Saturdays for the following reasons:

- School libraries are often poorly stocked or non-existent, especially in developing communities. Pupils are set assignments for which there is not enough material in school libraries.
- School libraries are mostly closed in the afternoons and evening when pupils do their homework. Public libraries are open at those times.
- In developing communities homes are often overcrowded and poorly lit. Study areas in public libraries provide a modicum of privacy and comfort.
- The social aspect of studying with other pupils in a setting away from home and one associated with knowledge probably also plays a part.

Zaaiman (1988:19-20) found that public libraries encountered the following problems in assisting pupils:

- It is frequently difficult to establish co-operation with teachers at school so that the public library can be informed timeously of topics that pupils will be studying. Librarians are often unprepared for pupils' requests for material.
- Librarians are often asked by pupils to explain concepts. This applies particularly to pupils from developing sections of the community and places a heavy workload on the librarian.
- Libraries cannot provide enough study space for all pupils. Consequently they are overrun with pupils, especially in developing communities, but also in developed areas. This may inconvenience adult users.

In the UK, a similar situation was experienced with the implementation of the 1988 Education Act. Public libraries experienced large increases in the numbers of learners who were using the library on a regular basis specifically for curricular work. As in South Africa, libraries were not given additional resources to cope with the extra

demand. The opinion was expressed that libraries were never consulted about the implications of policy decisions and have responded reactively and by default, rather than through strategic choice (Borrowed time?, 1993:26-27).

However, the situation differs in the UK, where the majority of schools have access to well equipped school libraries. In 1995, a report by the Department of National Heritage, Investing in children, concluded that an integrated strategy for the delivery of library services to children was necessary to support the National Curriculum, and that there should be a requirement on schools to demonstrate how they will provide adequate learning resources to underpin National Curriculum teaching (Spreadbury and Spiller, 1999:3).

Spreadbury and Spiller (1999:1) investigated the use of four school libraries in the London area in order to see whether the new information needs generated by the National Curriculum were reflected in school library provision. They found that school library use connected with the curriculum predominated, with just over half (51%) of students surveyed, using the library "for schoolwork", 18% used it "for pleasure" and 31% "for both" (Spreadbury and Spiller, 1999:42). Spreadbury and Spiller (1999:43) argue that if the school library's key role is to support learning through the curriculum, links with the school's teaching staff are important. However, a quarter of the students said that teachers "always" or "most of the time" urged library use, and 43% said "sometimes", but 32% said "not often" or "never". When students did use the school library for curricular information, their success rate was high: 18% said they "always" found information, and 56% found it "most of the time" (Spreadbury and Spiller, 1999:43).

Many South African public libraries have experienced the problem of hundreds of learners who descend on the library at the same time wanting to use the same information. The only way in which many public libraries cope with the large

numbers is to hand learners encyclopaedias to copy the required information. This view is supported by Fourie (1995:132) who found that encyclopaedias were the most frequently used reference sources accounting for 83,3% of all responses for curricular information at public libraries in the Pretoria-Verwoerdburg areas.

Fourie (1995:135) also found that well over 59,1% of public librarians surveyed in the Pretoria-Verwoerdburg municipal areas reported that they were not always able to assist secondary-school learners in finding information. This roughly corresponded with learners' reports of their own successes in this regard. It was found that the provision of information to learners was mainly hampered by a high demand for information on the same topic concentrated on specific times and a lack of available materials.

The value of this practice is being questioned by researchers. Olen (1997:22) argues that projects have been criticised as learners can often complete them by copying information from one or two sources. As a result, learners do not develop information skills such as selecting, analysing and evaluating information.

This situation can be observed daily at public libraries. The learners' priority is to find as much information for their projects in as short time possible and to provide the information in a form acceptable to teachers. Teachers seldom provide guidance on the research process learners should follow when doing their projects (Zinn, 9/2/99, personal communication). Without guidance, the value of doing projects is doubtful, as the learners gain very little from the experience; since very often the librarian found the information and the student merely copied it.

Problematic projects can have several negative implications for adolescent public library use. Jones (1992:11) found that doing research for their school term papers was an unpleasant experience to many adolescents. He found that many individuals

stopped reading for pleasure or assigned it to a lower priority during their adolescent years. As early as in 1968, Barnes (1968:26) found that adolescents who were only exposed to public libraries for curricular requirements tended to associate public libraries with school. In discussing the teenage "drift" away from libraries, he observed that teenagers often regarded libraries as an integral part of education to be abandoned upon leaving school.

Roe (1972, quoted in Olen, 1997:22) argues that

...many projects carried out in school, though they may have minor beneficial aspects,...may...be harmful because of the values they teach children and the attitudes they engender, particular in attitudes towards libraries. For a child subjected to dreary and unimaginative projects, a library is unlikely to have pleasant associations.

In addition to the traditional library sources, there are alternative sources of information, which could be used for research. Newspapers and magazines are examples of alternative sources. Le Roux (1992:45-46) says that "the newspaper is an excellent source of information to bring reality into the classroom." In Argentina, a programme called "The Newspaper at School" was introduced because it was felt that newspapers could promote children's reading and their interest in current events. In the programme, teachers used newspapers to teach mathematics, language, social science and natural science, all based on reality. Le Roux (1992:46) states that Newspapers in Education (NIE) projects are taking place in many countries and 25 nations met at the first Newspapers in Education International Day in 1990 in New York City. In South Africa, the Sunday Times ReadWrite project is an example of a successful local NIE project and it is widely used by teachers and learners alike.

The use of electronic sources of information is also important for learners. The Internet, for example, has an important role to play in providing up-to-date information to learners. Karlsson et al., (1996:19) argue that Internet's interactive and multimedia

approach is becoming the norm among competitive nations. They argue that as more and more schools link up to the Internet and become part of the information superhighway, students would be able to access electronic information and participate in electronic networks which will enhance learning and teaching. To cope in today's competitive world, it is essential that the Internet becomes a feature in every school and public library, especially in communities where people have no access to computers at home.

2.5.2 Recreational needs

Recreational reading can be described as reading done out of own interests, in own time, without specific instructions from teachers, i.e. out of free choice. The terms "leisure time reading" and "reading for pleasure" are also widely used within this context. Spiegel (1981:3) defines recreational reading as "voluntary reading of self-selected materials, either for information or for pleasure."

The value and importance of recreational reading for children and adolescents are well documented. Norton (1987:35) says that:

...literature opens doors of discovery and adventure to children. It provides enjoyment, transmits our literary heritage, encourages understanding and valuing of our cultural heritage, provides vicarious experiences, transmits knowledge, nurtures and expands imagination, and stimulates four major types of development: language, cognitive, personality and social.

Dubow (1979:2-3) sees reading as a "pleasurable activity". This pleasure can occur at different levels:

- Intellectual pleasure: thought and logic are stimulated, new ideas are generated and argument and counter-argument are possible.
- Emotional pleasure: deep feelings of joy, sadness, hope, pity, etc. are stimulated.

- Sensuous pleasure: the visual senses are stimulated through imagery and description.

According to Lonsdale and Mackintosh (1973:24), stories:

- provide opportunities for fun, relaxation and recreation;
- help individuals define their roles in the home, school and community;
- help them to understand society and the people in it;
- help them to become acquainted with different cultures in the world;
- help them to understand their problems and the problems of others;
- develop pride in their cultural heritage;
- help them to develop their own set of values which are in harmony with society;
- build a sensitivity to beauty in them and help to develop a permanent interest in literature.

These aspects of recreational reading are important to local children and adolescents as many of them grow up in deprived circumstances and reading is an important way in which they can dream, fantasise, develop and learn. In fact, Russell (1979:4) argues that children can only learn a limited amount through experience. Their further development is dependent on media of which books have an important potential.

Olen (1997:16) argues that fiction is one of the most effective ways of improving the reading fluency of learners. Reading fluency is seen as essential to all school work (Great Britain. Department of Education and Science 1975; cited in Olen 1997:16). It is maintained that the skill of reading, if acquired and encouraged in the early years of a child's development and maintained through the teenage years into adulthood, lays the foundation for educational support, the ability to find information, and a lifetime of leisure enjoyment. Children who are encouraged to read have a considerable advantage in educational performance and later achievement (Great Britain. Department of National Heritage, 1995:11). A British National Curriculum document

states that children should be given opportunities for reading for fun, and this should be promoted right through to the final years of schooling (Allison, 1991:8).

Lance et al. (1993:42) found with remarkable consistency from grade to grade, that students who are better readers also prove to be better users of language and of library and media centres. Hugo (1996:90) argues that the ability to read well, to process and re-use information, is the basis of all successful learning. She says that children could only become successful readers if they are exposed to a wide variety of stimulating reading resources. Her study shows that where children used a language that is not their mother tongue, their competence in their second language (e.g. English) was closely related to the development of their reading. This also has a positive effect on their learning of other subjects. Recreational reading is thus an important way in which the youth of Grassy Park can develop their academic, social and imaginative skills. As this community changes from using primarily Afrikaans to English, much needed language skills can also be developed.

Some generalisations can be made about the types of books adolescents read. Fourie (1998:18) found that there are many similarities in the types of books chosen by boys and girls during their primary school years but, significant differences appear in the reading interests of boys and girls during middle and late childhood and continue throughout adolescence. It was found that all older children enjoy adventure stories, but boys generally preferred violent adventure. Boys were also more interested in factual, impersonal content than girls (Fourie,1998:18-19). Carlsen (1967:28) found that the selection of boys and girls are the most different when they reach middle adolescence (15-16 years old).

Cherland (1994) also found differences in the reading habits and interests of the two genders. She found that beliefs about reading and gender were transmitted from one generation to the next. She argues that parents' belief about the gendered nature of

reading helped to shape their children's lives. She interviewed fathers about their reading habits and found that they believed that men read for utilitarian purposes; i.e. books relating to their work and "how-to" books. Even those who read fiction, e.g. Stephen King novels, claimed that they did not read fiction and did not regard reading as an acceptable pastime (Cherland, 1994:84-5).

Cherland (1994:87) found that the tacit belief about reading that parents in the same community were transmitting to their children was that "the practice of reading fiction is a valuable, pleasurable part of a girl's childhood; the reading of fiction is a pastime that women friends share with each other; and finally, the reading of fiction is something a girl can be proud of - an appropriate time-filler for girls".

Sarland (1991:49) found that the kinds of books girls and boys liked, "confirmed the conventional wisdom which suggest that girls like animal stories and boys like adventure stories, that girls liked love stories and boys liked violence, that boys like heroes and girls like heroines". In cases where girls and boys read the same books, he found a difference in the response of the two genders, which suggests that girls prefer "feeling" and boys prefer "action" (Sarland, 1991:50).

Harmon and Bradburn (1988:23) argue that in meeting the reading needs of adolescents, librarians should attempt to supply the books that they like to read. Carter (1987, cited in Harmon and Bradburn, 1988:23) has pointed out that series books attract teens. Carter observed that adolescents do not stay at the series books stage forever, but move on to other interests. The important point is to recognise that a trait or feature in a particular book triggers a feeling or identification in the reader with the characters or emotions in books they liked. Harmon and Bradburn (1988:25) argue that these materials often portray a realistic segment of the lives of adolescents and helped them see ways of coping with the various situations depicted.

Similarly, Green and Kruger (1991:86-87) argue that realistic teenage fiction plays a role in the socialisation of girls. The genre helps teenage girls with their heterosexual relationships. They found that the task of learning heterosexual relationships was the most dominant theme in realistic teenage fiction for girls. This is one reason why this genre is so popular among teenage girls. On the other hand, Tucker (1981:185) found the escapist nature of teenage romances attracted female adolescent readers.

In the USA, Jones (1992:30) found that magazines, not books, were most read by adolescents, even among males. The preference for magazines increased as the adolescents grew older. Magazines were frequently read because they covered topical issues, they could be read quickly, they covered social aspects with articles and pictures and sometimes heated discussions, and it was "acceptable" for male adolescents to read magazines. Even reluctant readers were drawn to magazines with their attractive covers, relatively simple vocabulary, many pictures and short articles. Furthermore, the most current and readable information for adolescents was often available in magazines (Jones, 1992:56-7). Magazines are thus recognised as important means by which adolescents can be encouraged to read.

2.5.3 Informational needs

As the majority of South African adolescents come from homes where parents might be poorly educated, where very little reading takes place, and where there are no books and reading culture, libraries have an essential role to play in meeting the informational needs of adolescents.

As in the case of adults, adolescents' motivation to seek information is rooted in the basic human needs for survival, security and safety, a feeling of belonging, love, esteem and self-actualisation, as identified by Maslow (Fourie,1991:1).

Fourie and Kruger (1995:228) argue that the impulse to seek information could be within the individual himself, i.e. s/he could be intrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation could arise from the pleasure derived from finding out more about something which interests the individual personally. On the other hand, it could be extrinsic, i.e. the reward or satisfaction could be independent of the activity itself. It is argued that in reading and seeking information, the individual may have an expectation of a reward to be gained from others for the effort in finding out the information, e.g. good grades.

Fourie (1991:3) investigated the various information needs young people might have. She found that among other needs, the youth in disadvantaged communities might require information to solve family crises such as unemployment, financial and legal problems, housing, transport and health problems. Adolescents also needed information about future career, educational and employment opportunities, study loans and bursaries. They might also need information relating to personal crises, e.g. unwanted pregnancies and drug or alcohol abuse.

Fourie (1991:3-4) reports that young people should have reliable up-to-date information to make decisions about their personal needs. The librarian should be able to refer them to agencies in the community which can provide them with help and advice. The public library should also be able to provide the youth with access to community services resource files in the form of directories, files and information about educational opportunities in the form of university, college and technikon yearbooks, handbooks and brochures.

The informational role of libraries can also include providing programmes to suit the needs of adolescents. Le Roux (1996:133) argues that it seems possible to promote

positive moral development in discussion groups such as sex education, social studies and reading and career guidance.

Other reasons for having these programmes were suggested by Jones (1992:157-8). He argues that it is important for public libraries to have programmes for adolescents because:

- Group programmes support YAs in their quest for identity and help them feel that they belong.
- Programmes provide a structure in which YAs can socialise and work together.
- Informational programmes on topics like drug abuse or sex education fill a void in the community.
- Programmes give YAs a chance to participate in library decision making and assume responsibilities.

A word of caution concerning the quest for information comes from Sullivan, (quoted in Fitzgibbons, 1983:20):

The word information has become a loaded one for those concerned with library service to children...the provision of information services... have tended to make libraries seem...committed to the presentation of facts rather than the encouragement of pleasure or the development of culture...the more reasonable approach is to stress that for children, the provision of pleasure, encouragement of reading, enlargement of vocabulary, and development of a sense of fantasy or even a sense of humor are informational services which the public library can provide in a unique, non-threatening environment...personal development is the most significant kind of information process.

2.6 The role of school libraries

According to the American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology, the aim of the school media

programme is to ensure that pupils and staff are effective users of ideas and information. This aim may be achieved by a number of specific objectives (Olen and Kruger,1995:52-53):

- to provide intellectual access to information;
- to provide physical access to information;
- to provide learning experiences that encourage users to become discriminating consumers and skilled creators of information;
- to provide leadership, instruction and consulting assistance in the use of instructional and informational technology;
- to provide resources and activities that contribute to lifelong learning;
- to provide a facility that functions as the information centre of the school;
- to provide resources and learning activities that represent a diversity of experiences, opinions, social and cultural perspectives, supporting the concept that intellectual freedom and access to information are prerequisite to effective and responsible citizenship in a democracy.

These objectives form a useful guide according to which the success of a country's school library service can be measured. However, South Africa's school library service fall far short in this respect.

Overduin and De Wit (1986:813-814) claim that a balanced school library collection, consisting of books and audio-visual material, which complies with educationally sound qualitative and quantitative standards, is essential for school library services to be rendered. They argue that the collection should provide for all the curricular and extra-curricular media needs of the school. The collection should also be regularly weeded and supplemented to ensure that the material is relevant to the curriculum and the needs of the learners. However, in their research of school libraries in South Africa, they found that most collections at schools included a considerable number of outdated and inappropriate books (Overduin and De Wit, 1986:815).

Radebe's investigation (1997:218-220) revealed a bleak picture even at the schools with qualified teacher-librarians. She found that school libraries in her sample were marginalised. The marginalisation was manifested in various ways:

- The inferior status accorded to teacher-librarians and librarians in general, was responsible for much of the marginalisation. Libraries were viewed as peripheral to school functioning. She argues that some teacher-librarians were just as guilty for the state of affairs by failing to be pro-active.
- The under-utilisation of libraries and ignorance regarding their use. School libraries are currently one of the most abused resources. At some schools they were used as classrooms, staff rooms or meeting rooms for teachers.
- The principals' attitudes play an important role. A correlation existed between the active support by the school principal of individualised learning, and the successful development of the school library. In South Africa, principals in general, undervalued school libraries and did not support their establishment.
- Subject teachers' attitudes and perceptions. Ignorance of and the wrong perceptions about the role of the school library by subject librarians were found to be some of the major reasons for the under-utilisation of school libraries.

In South Africa, where the education system is currently being transformed, school libraries have an important role to play in this process. Bristow (1992:75-76), citing De Perez, states that research has shown that the establishment of school libraries is the most effective means to transform education. This is because school libraries:

- influence students, teachers, and the community in a deep and lasting manner;
- are valid for all levels of education;
- have functioned well in other countries with different education systems;
- distribute education materials more cheaply to a greater number and ensure maximum use;
- pool resources and make the best use of the most efficient teachers;

- stimulate regional production of written and audio-visual materials;
- encounter less initial resistance by teachers than change in curriculum and school reorganisation.

The important role of libraries in education was also acknowledged by the African National Congress in its statement that "without libraries and information services, student-centred and resource-based learning, which liberate students and teachers from authority-centred and textbook-based rote learning, are doomed to failure" (Radebe, 1997:210).

2.6.1 The relationship between school libraries, quality of education and academic achievement

The quality of education offered by many schools in disadvantaged areas is a cause of concern. High failure rates are often a symptom of poor quality education. This costs the country dearly. According to the previous Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso Bengu, South Africa's high failure rate, which led many learners to repeat grades, wasted one billion rand annually (SAIRR, 1998:116). The current Minister of Education, Kader Asmal said that the high matric failure cost South Africa an estimated R140 million in 1998 (Parliamentary bureau, 1999:2)

Well equipped and well utilised school libraries are important means by which the quality of education offered by schools can be improved. Totemeyer's research in Namibia indicated a positive correlation between pass rates and the existence of school libraries. She found that the average matric pass rate for schools with media centres was 90% while the average for schools without media centres was 21% (Totemeyer, 1995).

Lance, Welborn and Hamilton-Pennell's 1988-89 study investigated the impact of library media centres on academic achievement. The study was conducted at 221 Colorado schools. They found evidence of a positive impact of the library on academic achievement. Some of their most important findings are the following (Lance et al., 1993:92):

- The size of the media centre staff and collection is the best school predictor of academic achievement.
- The instructional role of the library media specialist shapes the collection and, in turn, academic achievement. Students whose library media specialists played such a role - either by identifying materials to be used with teacher-planned instructional units or by collaborating with teachers in planning instructional units - tend to achieve higher average test scores.
- The degree of collaboration between library media specialist and teachers is effected by the ratio of teachers to pupils.
- Library media expenditures affect library media centre staff and collection size and, in turn, academic achievement. Students at schools with better funded library media centres tend to achieve higher average test scores, irrespective of whether their school and communities are rich or poor and whether the adults in the community are well or poorly educated.
- Library media expenditures and staffing vary with total school expenditures and staffing.
- Among school and community predictors of academic achievement, the size of the library media staff and collection is second only to the absence of at-risk conditions, particularly poverty and low educational attainment among adults.

It is not enough to merely increase the numbers of school libraries. American educational research shows that the use of the school library needs to form an integral part of the curriculum to have a real impact on the quality of learning. Resource-based teaching is thus important (NEPI, 1992:59-60).

2.6.2 Policy

To understand the current situation as far as school library provision in South Africa is concerned, it is necessary to keep in mind the education policy of the apartheid era. Overduin and De Wit (1986:804) found that the education policy with regard to school libraries was "generally vague and not clearly defined in subject syllabuses". According to Radebe (1997:218-220), the lack of policy and widely accepted standards for the provision of school libraries has negatively affected their development throughout South Africa.

Widely differing per capita expenditure rates for the different racial groups meant that the previously "white" schools have far superior school libraries compared to "coloured" and "black" schools. Karlsson et al. (1996:7) argue that schools administered by the then House of Assembly (HOA) (i.e. white) and the House of Delegates (HOD) (i.e. Indian) education departments, consistently had libraries with good collections and equipment and were supported by subject advisors. Zinn (1997:3) argues that under the ex-House of Representatives (ex-HOR) (i.e. "coloured"), school library provision depended on the value and importance that individual principals placed on it and most libraries became locked store houses of books.

Zinn (1997:127) found that school libraries in the House of Representatives (HOR) schools only gained momentum with the appointment of teacher-librarians from 1986, while white schools had teacher-librarians in 1970 already. The Department of Education and Training (DET) (i.e. black) only officially acknowledged the role of school libraries in 1983. Karlsson et al. (1996:7) argue that this led to enormous

backlogs and generations of African learners who reached adulthood without ever using any libraries.

Zinn (1997:127) found that the disparity in the development of school libraries is evident in:

- books to pupil ratio;
- the provision of space for a library;
- the quality of book stock;
- media centre space for audio-visuals;
- computerisation.

In the mid 1980s, according to Overduin and De Witt (1986:815), the ratio of books per learners were as follows: at white schools (in the Cape): 10,3:1; at black schools 2,4:1 and at "coloured" schools it was 2,5:1.

These backlogs persist even in the post-Apartheid era, as traditionally "white" schools continue to afford resources which "black" schools cannot afford. As a result, school library facilities in disadvantaged areas are still non-existent or inadequate and unable to meet the curricular needs of learners. Lor (1998: 7) found that the situation in many schools in fact deteriorated as many teacher-librarians were retrenched or relocated to other duties. In some school libraries opening hours have been reduced, while others have been closed. According to Lor (1998: 7) of 5 400 schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal, only 900 have school libraries and only 2% of these schools have libraries which can be considered adequate. Collections in most school libraries were either in tatters or unusable.

The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) survey (1998:151), found that fewer than 50% of all primary schools have media centres (school libraries), although the availability varied from 2% of all primary schools in the Northern Province to 42%

in the Western Cape. Secondary schools usually had better access to media centres. However, only in the Free State, Gauteng, the Northern Cape and Western Cape did more than 50% of secondary schools have media centres. The situation is illustrated by Table 1.

Table 1. Proportion of schools with media centres: 1996

	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
Eastern Cape	4%	26%
Free State	4%	68%
Gauteng	34%	71%
KwaZulu-Natal	12%	30%
Mpumalanga	8%	40%
North West	6%	47%
Northern Cape	23%	74%
Northern Province	2%	10%
Western Cape	42%	86%

(Source: SAIRR, 1998:151)

The school register of needs survey noted that the provision of media was almost non-existent, even at schools which have media centres. Eighty-two percent of schools had no media equipment (video recorders, television sets and computers) and 73% had no media collections (computer programmes, journals, library books, records, transparencies and video tapes) (SAIRR, 1998:152).

While on the one hand, the school library service deteriorates, on the other hand, recent policy statements stress the importance of school libraries. Radebe (1997:221) notes that in 1994 the ANC proposed that by 1999 each school would have basic collections of library materials conforming to minimum standards of provision, and the service of a teacher-librarian with administrative support. These services would be consolidated into a centralised resource centre in every school by 2004. The ANC further declared, as a basic educational entitlement:

...access to a well equipped and functional library which is essential in the promotion of resource-based learning and critical

thinking...Because of schooling arrangements such as the structure of the time-table, the library should ideally be physically located at the school for maximum, convenient access that is non-disruptive to the educational programme (Radebe, 1997:221).

2.6.3 Funding

Funding can be seen as the most important factor in determining the success of school libraries. Without adequate funding it is virtually impossible to build and maintain school libraries of an acceptable standard. Lance et al. (1993:92) found that school library expenditures affect school library staff and collection size and in turn, academic achievement. They found that students who score higher on norm-referenced tests tend to come from schools which spend more on library media programmes.

In South Africa very low funding is generally provided for school libraries. Karlsson et al. (1996:7) found that aggregated expenditure on library materials as a percentage of the total education budget declined from 0,18% in 1987/8 to 0,09% in 1991/2.

Currently, the funding formula for school libraries no longer exists in the Western Cape. Instead, schools are given a budget for learning resource materials which they can spend on resources like textbooks, maps, posters and library books. The spending is at the discretion of each individual school. The funds are mostly spent on textbooks, and very little is spent on library books. The Western Cape Department of Education, however, did target a number of primary and high schools in certain disadvantaged areas for consignments of library materials (not Grassy Park). Each targeted school would get library materials worth R10 000 for high schools and R6 000 for primary schools (Zinn, 9/2/99, personal communication).

2.6.4 Outcomes-based education and Curriculum 2005

In March 1997, the Department of Education launched Curriculum 2005 or outcomes based education (OBE), to be implemented from 1998, starting with grade 1. In OBE statements are made about what knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners should acquire as a result of their learning. These statements are called outcomes. Twelve critical outcomes were identified. All learning, whether at school, university or work, should be organised to help learners achieve these outcomes. Learners should be able to achieve the following outcomes (Outcomes-based...,2000:1)

- Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking.
- Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation or community.
- Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively.
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information,
- Communicate effectively, using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation.
- Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.
- Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively.
- Participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities.
- Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts.
- Explore education and career opportunities.
- Develop entrepreneurial skills.

Curriculum 2005 is a form of OBE developed for South African schools. The main aspects of the curriculum are prescribed by the national Department of Education, and must be adhered to in all the provinces. Curriculum 2005 is organised along eight "learning areas" which have replaced the traditional school subjects. These learning areas are (Outcomes-based...,2000:1):

- arts and culture;
- communication, literacy and language learning;
- economic and management sciences;
- human and social sciences;
- life orientation;
- natural sciences;
- numeracy and maths; and
- technology.

Curriculum 2005 is based on the principle that learners would have access to a wide range of information. Instead of relying solely on their textbooks and teachers, learners would access information by using various resources and by this process gain knowledge. Teachers would largely guide this process. The introduction of Curriculum 2005 with its emphasis on resource-based and learner-centred learning highlights the importance of well equipped school libraries for learners. Lor (1998:8) sees the deterioration of school libraries and media centres as a great threat to the success of Curriculum 2005.

2.6.5 The teaching of library skills

Herring (1996:16) defines information skills as "the skills which pupils use to identify the purpose of, locate, process and communicate information, concepts and ideas and

then reflect on the effective application of these skills." The Library Association of Great Britain (1992:53) guidelines for school libraries state that:

At the heart of any pupil-centred learning activity is a sequence of tasks requiring pupils to locate, select, interrogate, interpret and communicate knowledge and understanding. The progressively complex and sophisticated skills needed by pupils to complete these tasks form the learning skills curriculum.

Information handling skills are essential in equipping learners to access information at all the stages of their lives. Beswick and Beswick (1981:55) state that:

Our students will need to be able to develop information-seeking skills, the skills of learning; the factual knowledge we teach them may be out of date within ten years or sooner, but the ability to learn, to plan an investigation, to assess critically the mass of information and persuasion around them, and to handle information systems, could last them for life.

The teaching of library skills is central to encouraging learners to effectively use libraries. Spreadbury and Spiller (1999:44) state that given the importance of information skills in the world which pupils will move in when they leave school, this particular function is fundamental to the overall aims of any school. Olen (1997:15) states that even in well-organised school libraries pupils may experience problems in locating materials if they are given no school library orientation or user guidance.

Loertscher, Ho and Bowie (cited in Olen, 1997:22) recommend that care should be taken with a curriculum of information skills so that learners do not perceive it as time-consuming and irrelevant, as this might have a negative impact. Zinn (1997: 190), for instance, found that 55% of her high school sample said that their library period was "boring".

Loertscher (cited in Le Roux, 1992: 47-8) also criticised the value of traditional methods of teaching library skills:

We have developed curricula of library skills that children neither enjoy nor need when taught in isolation from classroom curricular units; parading children through the library once or twice a week for forty minutes and teaching them a curriculum of our own design that has little relationship to classroom activities is of doubtful worth.

School-library initiated and library-based motivational programmes which incorporated "fun-type" activities were found to be more effective, rather than the teaching of traditional library skills (Loertscher, Ho and Bowie, cited in Olen, 1997:22).

Zinn (1997:62-3) stresses the need for information literacy. Information literacy would equip learners with the necessary skills to use information for decision making and problem solving. Zinn citing Kuhlthau (1987) argues that "it is about understanding, interpreting, evaluating, synthesising, using and communicating information. It incorporates literacy skills (for understanding, learning and communicating) and information skills (i.e. the tools for learning concepts and communicating ideas)." Mniki (1995:10) states that the learner becomes information literate as s/he masters the skills of information interpretation, retrieval, selection, reduction, application and management. These skills would enable learners to access information independently. Zinn (1997:154) argues that information skills should be an integral part of the entire curriculum, instead of a separate subject. It is important that students learn about information handling and processing in different fields.

Currently, most of the provincial education departments include information skills in the curriculum, but only as an optional subject (Olen, 1997:15). The Western Cape Education Department introduced information skills courses in schools which run parallel to the current book and media education courses. Zinn (1997:214) argues that

information skills can be taught even at schools with limited resources. It will be taught even in schools without school libraries as the intention is to teach learners the necessary skills to acquire information from any source, not just books, e.g. people and posters. She states that the principles embodied in the theory of the information search and use process could be developed in any problem-solving situation. With outcomes-based education, information skills would be integrated into the various subjects.

2.6.6 Factors that influence school library utilisation

Olen (1997:11-16) provides a list of factors that influence school library utilisation in South Africa:

- Socio-economic conditions or environment. Prevalent poor socio-economic conditions are not conducive to the establishment and maintenance of libraries and the development of the reading habit.
- School library facilities. In order to increase the use of school library facilities where these existed, they needed to be effectively designed and equipped, e.g. there should be facilities for learners to work on assignments in small groups, the interior should be attractive and rules should be kept to the minimum.
- Books in indigenous languages. Learners will not be motivated to use school libraries which do not have books in their mother tongue.
- Access to the school library. Many school libraries are under-utilised because they are closed after school hours, during weekends and school holidays. Some school libraries were kept locked for security reasons. Overduin and De Wit (1986:817) found that a considerable number of school libraries were only available to learners for limited periods during the school day, often due to Book Education lessons which were held in the library and where the school library was used as a classroom. At schools where a part-time teacher-librarian was in charge of the

library, the library was usually only available when the teacher-librarian was on duty.

- Organisation of school library. Resources at school libraries are often badly organised, especially where there is no full-time or properly qualified teacher-librarian to manage the school library. Even in well organised school libraries, learners may experience problems in locating materials if they are given no library orientation or user guidance.
- School library collection. A small collection may discourage use by learners. The relevance and up-to-dateness of the collection are even more important than its size. Inadequate, unattractive, outdated or irrelevant media stocked in the school library will discourage its use. The collection is likely to be more relevant if teachers are involved in its development. Even when the collection is small and the budget is limited, non-book media should also be included, e.g. periodicals and journals. Audio-visual media, computer and other electronic media can improve certain learning experiences, which may improve motivation and use of the school library.

Charter (1987, quoted in Harmon and Bradburn, 1988:24) in a study of access in secondary school libraries, found that "variables such as school rules, library media center rules, inadequate collections, personality of the library media specialist, teaching style, and teenage psychology all appear to impede student access to needed information. Some students may never again choose to enter a library."

The under-utilisation of school libraries appears to be a fairly wide-spread trend, not only in South Africa, but in other countries as well, as highlighted by the research done by Olen (1997: 10-38). Olen (1997:11) specifically mentions research done by Daniels, Marland, Garriock and Wells which indicated that school libraries could be under-valued and under used. On the other hand, Mniki (1995:52) found that under-utilisation was not a problem at the media centre at Vela Secondary School in

Transkei. In fact, there was strong evidence of overcrowding. The utilisation or under-utilisation of school libraries thus varies from school to school.

2.6.7 The role of teacher-librarians

Teacher-librarians form the link between school library resources and their users. The responsibilities of teacher-librarians or media teachers include teaching the subject information skills, providing reading guidance, managing and organising the school library or media centre, promoting services, liaising with teachers, parents, community members, the Education Departments' District and Head Office staff (Olen, 1996:82).

Olen (1997:19) argues that a teacher-librarian is essential to assist learners through the mediation of information sources. Teacher-librarians add value to library resources by making them more accessible to users. Without professional staff, even the best facilities, media and equipment, do not have the same impact. Didier (cited in Olen, 1997:19) found that learners' achievement in reading, study skills and use of newspapers, were significantly greater at schools with school library personnel, as compared to schools without. McCoy (cited in Olen, 1997:19) established that the higher the ratio of teachers to teacher-librarians, the higher dissatisfaction with the school library. At schools where the teacher-librarian was not appointed full time in the school library, there was an even greater non-user population, even when the number of teachers were less than in a school with one full-time teacher-librarian.

Professional and personal attributes of teacher-librarians also influenced the use of the school library by teachers. Poorly trained, poorly motivated teacher-librarians, as well as those who lacked communication skills, do not encourage use of the school library. The positive relationship between the teacher-librarians and teachers in the curriculum process, increases the use of the school library by teachers.

Spreadbury and Spiller (1999:44) recommend the following staffing measures to ensure effective use of school libraries:

- school libraries need to be properly staffed rather than minimally staffed;
- there must be adequate staff available during breaks when pupils most need them;
- programmes of regular instruction in library use should be carried out for pupils, and should be closely related to curriculum needs; and
- recruitment procedures for school library staff should place "approachability" high on the list of required qualities.

Overduin and De Wit (1986:809) argue that the implementation of an effective school library programme is only possible with sufficient and adequately trained teacher-librarians or media teachers, who are experienced in teaching and school library management and who are enthusiastic about their work. They argue that the shortage of full-time teacher-librarian posts presents a very real problem to school librarianship. They found in 1986 that in "coloured" schools "full-time" teacher-librarians were compelled to devote 25% of their time to subject teaching. With the current rationalisation process, many local schools no longer have teacher-librarians, which have even further negative implications for the use of library facilities where they existed.

2.6.8 The role of subject teachers

Subject teachers play a significant role with regard to the use of school libraries. Didier (cited in Olen, 1997:19) found that teachers' use of resources and the school library are directly related to teachers' attitude toward and competency in using information sources. He recommended that teachers should become aware of the information sources available to them and encourage their use by learners through the

inclusion of media in the classroom situation and in assignments. Teachers must be seen to be users of the school library and its collection.

Jones (1989:9) argues that unless teachers have the opportunity to develop their own understanding of the use of library resources as part of their teaching, they will not be able to integrate their use into the classroom. As a result their learners would be unlikely to make best use of resources available to them and to learn the necessary information skills.

2.7 Co-operation between public libraries and schools.

Co-operation includes any activity in which two or more libraries intend working together to facilitate their operations and share their resources. According to Fourie (1996:206) it could include participating in automated resource sharing programmes, establishing joint school/public libraries, locating community libraries in schools and providing study facilities to school-going youth in public libraries.

It is recognised world-wide that co-operation between public libraries and schools is essential in the quest to provide better library services to learners. It facilitates the optimal use of limited resources, a factor that is very important in the current economic climate. Tameen (1988:87-8) argues that co-operation between school and public libraries "guarantees better services to the community and enhances their contribution in the area of knowledge and information." He states that co-operation should be pursued to achieve a greater goal i.e. the mutual benefits which can be achieved by the parties involved.

According to Jones (1992:135-6), students have the following to gain through co-operation between school and public libraries:

- Reduced frustration in using libraries.
- Increased access to information.
- Ability to obtain materials easily.
- Library staff having a better understanding of their needs.
- Innovative programmes to meet their needs.
- Clearer assignments.
- Reduced time spent in library after school.
- Increased access to recreational reading.
- Increased access to information technology.
- Better instruction in use of school libraries.

Co-operation between schools and public libraries is thus essential towards providing a better service to adolescents. Fitzgibbons (1983:15) argues that a meaningful implementation of a service to the youth would demand much more co-operation between the school library personnel, teachers and public librarians. She states that what is needed is a philosophical statement of each library's work with students, which students, teachers and fellow librarians understand and support.

Fourie (1995:134-6) found that only limited co-operation existed between schools and public libraries in South Africa. She found that when co-operation occurred, it was mainly initiated by the public library. Advance notification of assignment topics occurred infrequently and informally. Local public libraries have plenty of experience in this regard. However, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) made some attempt to address the situation by supplying schools with forms which they are required to send to public libraries to inform them of projects. Unfortunately, it is still up to public libraries to insist that schools use the forms.

Fourie (1995:136) argues that without formal communication between schools and public libraries, the problems that hinder the provision of curricular information

cannot be overcome. User guidance and user education services for learners also could not be effectively planned and provided. Currently, the majority of learners arrive at the public library with no knowledge of where to find the information they need or whether there would be sufficient sources to meet their needs. Learners are largely dependent on the librarians' assistance and their own user skills in the identification and location of suitable sources.

Fourie (1995:134-6) found that librarians were unanimous that formal communication about forthcoming assignments would have several advantages:

- adequate time would be available to identify and locate relevant sources;
- materials could be held on reserve for potential users;
- a study collection of suitable material could be built up;
- advance preparation would relieve pressure on staff at peak times.

Concerning co-operation in collection building, Fourie (1996:212) suggests that as public libraries cannot attempt to meet a diversity of curricular information needs, collection development responsibilities should be divided between school libraries with subject-orientated collections and public libraries as the more comprehensive collection.

Martin (quoted in Fitzgibbons, 1983:15) says:

We may be able to do together what we are unable to do alone...both the school library and the public library are seeking to take the whole world as their province, while their resources do not permit them to cover even part of the range effectively.

Fourie (1996:209) argues that as many schools in developing communities do not have formal resource centres or school libraries, co-operation between these schools and local authorities could become obligatory. The form of co-operation would have to be

decided by each local authority and a network of personal contacts between schools and public libraries would have to be established. An example cited by Fourie (1996:209) is that of a liaison committee that was initiated by the council of Kempton Park and local schools.

The UNESCO Pretoria Office and the US Embassy in South Africa convened a workshop in November 1999 to explore the ways in which community and school libraries can work together in South Africa. The aim of the workshop was to establish national guidelines for co-operation between community and school libraries (UNESCO, 26/11/1999) A committee was established at the workshop to formulate the guidelines, which should be completed by June 2000 (Schioler, 28/1/2000, personal communication)

2.8 Combined school and public libraries

In areas where there are neither school nor public libraries, combined school and public libraries is an option that should be given serious consideration. Dube (1998:183) proposes the combination of school and community or public libraries on school premises as a feasible solution to the lack of services in disadvantaged areas in South Africa. She argues that combining public and school libraries to serve the whole community, including literacy classes and adult education programmes, is a way of addressing the backlog in public and school libraries in underdeveloped areas.

A local example of a joint school public library is Biblioneef's initiative in Botriver. Biblioneef, a children's book providing agency, provides books to institutions, e.g. schools in disadvantaged areas which lack library facilities. Biblioneef established a joint school public library on the premises of the primary school in Botriver, a small rural village in the Cape Province (Williams, 22/9/1999, personal communication).

This option has been implemented in various parts of the world, with varying degrees of success. It is especially viable in small, rural communities. In Australia several joint school community libraries were established in rural areas which were unable to afford the conditions set down for public libraries. In South Australia in 1991, there were 46 rural school community libraries and two in the metropolitan area, making up a third of the state's public library network (Pukk, 1991:251).

In Queensland "joint use libraries" are fairly common due to the widespread communities. The Queensland Department of Education issued a set of guidelines to be followed in establishing joint community/public libraries (Queensland, Department of Education, 1996). The guidelines offer several possible options for co-operation and between school and public library authorities. The options are illustrated by Table 2.

Table 2. Options for co-operation and partnerships between school and community libraries

Levels	School-based joint-use libraries	Public-library-based joint-use libraries
1	School resource centre offering some community service without any input from local government or state public library authority.	Public library offering some curriculum-orientated service without any input from local schools and/or the Department of Education.
2	School resource centre offering limited community service with marginal input from local government.	Public library offering limited curriculum-orientated service with marginal input from local schools and/or the Department of Education.
3	Joint library provided by educational authority with significant input from local government and/or state public library authority.	Joint library provided by the local government and/or public library authorities with significant input from local schools and/or the Department of Education.
4	Joint library on school premises provided on the basis of fully shared input by the educational and public library authorities.	Joint library on local government premises provided on the basis of fully shared input by educational and local government and/or public library authorities.
5	Joint library provided on third party premises (neither school nor local government) on the basis of fully shared input by educational and local government and/or public library authorities.	
6	Intergrated community library, that is, a library that is part of a complex of education, recreation, health, social welfare and cultural facilities available to the whole community.	

Source: Queensland, Department of Education (1996: 6)

The Queensland Department of Education listed several possible advantages and drawbacks to joint-use libraries. The following can be applied to the South African situation (Queensland, Department of Education, 1996: 7-8):

Possible Advantages:

1. Finance

- Cost efficient use of public money will result, such as:
 - staff cost may be shared between authorities;
 - resource acquisitions may be co-ordinated to provide savings by avoiding

unnecessary duplication, such as reference material and there may be savings in operational costs.

- Improved services and resource collections are possible because of combined budgets.
 - Sharing a building will save money.
2. Human resources
- Access to more professional staff is possible.
 - Members of the public may volunteer to assist with the school's education programme.
 - Members of the school staff may volunteer to assist with the public library's programme.
3. Management
- Collaboration will provide a greater pool of expertise to enable sound management.
 - Marketing and promotion can be combined, resulting in greater awareness throughout the community.
4. Physical facilities
- All members of the community will be able to fulfil their library and information needs at the same location.
 - Extended hours for all resources will be possible.
 - The joint facility provides a cultural focus point.
 - A better quality of facility is possible.
 - Vandalism could be reduced because of increased use by adults at night.
5. Library resources
- The school will have greater access to information on community services.
 - Greater flexibility in providing and obtaining resources and making innovations possible.
 - A better collection in terms of quantity and quality is possible.
 - Combined electronic information access will provide better access to information

- Some cost savings in acquisitions for school-age clients will result.
6. Users.
- Students will benefit from a larger pool of adult role models.
 - An increased awareness and understanding of current education practice by the local community could have positive outcomes.
 - Community use could encourage the development of positive attitudes in students towards school.
 - Students will be more likely to develop lifelong learning habits.
 - The mix of ages and purposes can produce a dynamic learning community.

Possible drawbacks:

1. Finance

- Improved services are likely to result in an increased demand for staff, resulting in increased staffing costs.
- Apportioning equitable financial contributions may be difficult.

2. Human resources

- The success of the joint-use library is dependent on the commitment and enthusiasm of the principal, the chief librarian, the chief executive officer and the teacher-librarian. This should be kept in mind when staff is appointed.
- Contractual responsibilities should be clear.
- Staffing standards must be specified in the agreement and honoured by both parties.
- Industrial issues resulting from different salaries, working condition and union representation may arise.
- A firm commitment by both parties to appropriate replacement staffing in the event of leave sickness and resignation is necessary.
- A community that is entitled to the services of a public librarian should not be disadvantaged by a joint agreement. Teacher-librarians appointed must be prepared to accommodate the needs of the public users.

3. Management

- Dual reporting requirements and relationships will increase the management complexity.
- Requirements regarding quality assurance inspections by both the Department of Education and the public library service must be clear.
- The public library service requirements concerning adding resources, the provision of statistics, standardised housekeeping policies and procedures and undertaking training courses will need to be allowed for in staffing provision.
- Multiple audits to satisfy the accountability requirements of the contributing parties may prove onerous.

4. Physical facilities

- Locating the library in the centre of the school could be inconvenient for the public.
- Locating the library at the edge of the school could be inconvenient for teachers and students.
- Schools are usually located away from main roads and central business districts, which could reduce visibility and accessibility for the public and require additional staff time in marketing services.
- School resource centre and public library standards are different.
- Vehicle access to schools will need to be addressed.
- Easy access for people with disabilities is crucial.

5. Library resources.

- Special attention is required to ensure that the public has access to resources for mature readers and that students do not have access to inappropriate material.
- Careful planning is necessary to ensure that curriculum resources are available when needed.
- Different cataloguing and classification systems will need to be considered and resolved.
- Different automation systems will need to be examined and co-ordinated.

- Increased demands on public library stock, including the possibility of interlibrary loans by teachers and students, will result in increased workload for staff.
- Increased vandalism of resources could result.
- Any savings in resource acquisitions for adults will be minimal.

6. Users

- Members of the public may have to overcome negative feelings about entering a school building.
- The public may find noise levels high.

2.9 Study centres for youth

Libraries, like Grassy Park Library, are extensively used as study centres by learners. However, during peak periods, there is usually not enough seating space, and the library is noisy due to overcrowding and other activities. Some students are then frustrated when they find that they cannot do much serious studying at the public library.

Brooke-Norris (1986:202) investigated the high student usage of the reference facilities of the Johannesburg Public Library. He recommends that it is necessary for the educational authorities to expand their library facilities considerably and that educational and local authorities jointly co-operate in providing study facilities in areas where these were needed. These facilities should provide study halls, with ample seating accommodation, long open hours to enable students to work during the evenings and weekends and a basic stock of reference works. It should be located in geographically convenient areas and preferably staffed by trained personnel to provide maximum assistance to users.

Greenhalgh and Worpole (1995:109-110) found that research done in the UK has shown the need for places for out-of-school study and the potential for such centres to improve students' self-confidence and develop independent learning skills. In the UK, study centres were started in various ways. The Prince Trust, for example, set up thirty centres in various areas in partnership with local authorities (Greenhalgh and Worpole, 1995:109). Although most of these centres were in schools or community centres, there was some crossover between informal use of libraries as homework places and the role of study centres.

Study centres are thus important in providing study space to the large numbers of students who are unable to study at home, school or the public library. There is a need for these facilities especially in developing communities.

2.10 The role of the government.

Adolescents do not live in a vacuum. What happens in society around them and their immediate environment have an impact on them. It is important that at governmental level actions occur which have a positive impact on the development of adolescents. Even with the current poor economic climate, it is important that funds be spent on the youth. In South Africa, a large part of the population is under 19 years old. Their education and development are thus very important for the future of this country.

The National Youth Commission was established to address the development of South Africa's youth. The Commission formulated South Africa's first National Youth Policy. Among other issues, the policy proposes the implementation of a national youth service programme, which would facilitate the development of skills among young people. Another proposal is the youth information services project, which would provide free telephonic access on a wide range of issues, e.g. crisis help, health

services, employment support programmes, unemployment support programmes, drug and alcohol advice, emergency services and youth rights. According to the Youth Commission, the information would also be obtainable via Internet access points which will be made available via a national infrastructure linked to multi-purpose youth centres. (National Youth Commission. 7/1/2000)

Antunes (1996:65) argues that in today's world, fierce economic competition relies more and more on cognitive abilities tailored to the production and acquisition of knowledge which needs to be developed in childhood and adolescence. Those who received inferior education are at a disadvantage. She argues that nothing is as important for the economic and social future of a country as the education of its youth.

Beilke (cited in Bristow, 1992:74) argues that educational systems in many developing countries failed to achieve their qualitative and quantitative objectives because existing resources are used inefficiently. Public and school libraries are efficient ways of using public funds. Bristow (1992:75) argues that books are indispensable tools in education and children who have learnt to use and enjoy them are better able to continue their studies when they leave school.

2.10.1 Government's role in developing reading

South Africa has a considerable backlog as far as literacy and reading skills are concerned. Although no consensus can be reached on the exact number of illiterate South Africans, it was estimated that in 1994 there were approximately 7,5 million people aged 15 and older who were illiterate or severely undereducated, if the calculation is based on a Grade 7 level of education as an indication of functional literacy (SAIRR, 1998:118). Furthermore, recent surveys conducted for READ (Read, Educate and Develop) Educational Trust in six provinces, showed that the reading and writing abilities of pupils were significantly lower than that of their peers internationally. Pupils who are mother tongue speakers of English have on average a reading age which is between eighteen months and two years behind their peers, while second-language speakers of English are up to six years behind international reading comprehension age norms (Perold et al., 1997: 29-30). It is clear that much needs to be done in South Africa to develop literacy and reading skills.

Many countries have recognised the advantages which derive from having a reading population and have taken active steps towards promoting reading. Perold et al. (1997:5-7) examined a variety of policies which developing countries adopted to promote the reading habit. Countries such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Malaysia have adopted national book policies and other measures to promote books, reading and libraries.

Staiger (1979:28-29) states that there are many ways in which government, or an individual government official, can help to promote reading and the book habit in a country. He argues that a government which is concerned about the future of a nation cannot help but be supportive of measures to promote reading. Some of the methods used by various countries are the following:

- Government support for an educational system and adequate teachers; the provision of school libraries are included in this support.
- Well stocked, accessible public libraries, which are adequately staffed.
- Special training facilities are provided to encourage a skilled labour supply.
- Books are exempted from customs duties and low postage rates are established for books, newspapers and periodicals.
- Media plays an important supporting role in the promotion of the reading habit.

Staiger (1979:89-90) further argues that in countries where the provision of reading materials, and encouragement to use them, have become a high priority of the government and the private sector, the results have been good. He argues that effort on the part of the community is necessary if changes are to occur in the reading public's size and enthusiasm for buying and borrowing books. The book community, i.e. publishers, booksellers, governments, writers and translators, librarians and educators can attain wonderful results if they plan and work together.

Brooke-Norris (1986:202) argues that the national educational authorities should consider granting subsidies to libraries which are active in the provision of study facilities and other assistance to students. He says that these libraries are making a material contribution to the national education effort and given more funds, this effort could be even greater. However, Shillinglaw (1986:40) found that public administrators and policy makers generally do not regard the public library as an instrument of development. Even in the field of formal and informal education the public library is not regarded as a significant factor.

Karlsson (1996:29) argues that the new curriculum which is based on critical thinking, cannot be implemented in the absence of learning resources. If no apparent attempts are made to address the learner's need for curriculum-support resources, the learners would lose patience with the new curriculum and become disgruntled. She says that:

Politicians and senior education officials should take care to avoid unnecessary delays in the provision planning and development processes, particularly when confrontation is an avoidable matter. Although politicians and administrators are the key budgetary decision-makers, it is difficult to envisage changes that favour library provision unless this is brought to their attention by teachers, learners and librarians. These stakeholders will therefore have to develop consensual positions on library reconstruction and development priorities before lobbying politicians.

Zinn (1997:69) states that in government schools, the Education Department has an important role to play in legislating that all schools are entitled to a library of minimum standard and a trained librarian. She says that the department has the power to:

- ensure adequate staffing in conjunction with guidelines;
- determine minimum size of libraries and resource collections;
- influence timetabling schedules for optimum library use;
- ensure that all schools have access to the new technology;
- insist that teacher training institutions include a compulsory unit on information, resources and learning in their pre-service programme;
- offer on-going in-service training of teachers and school librarians to reinforce strategies for information skills teaching;
- make teachers and librarians aware of new research in education and related fields;
- and
- be at the forefront of change and innovation.

It is important that the Education Department address the issue of school libraries. Olen and Kruger (1995:151) argue that as long as the media centre is perceived by educational authorities to be peripheral, as an additional educational resource which is not central to the educational programme, there will be little incentive to establish, develop and maintain media centres in schools.

The government thus has an important role to play in creating an environment in which the reading and learning habit can thrive in South Africa. It is important that all stakeholders, e.g. librarians, educators, parents and the community at large, actively and continuously work and lobby for more and better school and public libraries.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research approach

The primary objective and scope of this research are to explore and identify the library usage and reading behaviour of adolescents in Grassy Park, the type of library needs that they might have and how they satisfy these needs. A systems approach was adopted to this research, where the library is seen as part of a larger system, i.e. the community, and where various other systems, e.g. schools, interact with the library and its users. In accordance with this approach, adolescents as a group of library users, cannot be studied in isolation, but as a group in constant interaction with their environment.

The survey method was chosen for the empirical component of this research, as it can provide a fairly accurate analysis of the distribution of opinion on almost any issue within a given population. Surveys can also reveal the intensity with which opinions are held and the reasons for these opinions.

According to Denzin (1989:139), the survey can be defined as a methodological technique that requires the systematic collection of data from populations or samples through the use of the interview or the self-administered questionnaire. The researcher approaches a sample of persons who have been exposed to a set of events or experiences and interviews them with respect to these experiences.

It was decided that a cross-sectional survey would be the best method to use in this research. A cross-sectional survey involves the collection of data at one point in time

from a random sample representing some given population at that time (Wiersma, 1991:168).

The ideal would have been to do an area wide survey of all the adolescents living in Grassy Park. In that way, the more elusive groups, e.g. non-users of libraries and school drop-outs, could also be reached. Unfortunately, this exercise would have been too costly and time-consuming. Instead, it was decided to limit the research to two sample groups. The one group was a sample of adolescents aged 13 to 16 who attend a high school in Grassy Park. The second group was a sample of the same age who visited Grassy Park Library. They are not mutually exclusive groups, as the high school learners often frequent the public library.

The age group 13 to 16 was selected because this age group is classified as teenagers in the library membership statistics. Members older than 16 are classified as adults as library members are registered for a three year period. For the sake of consistency, the library and school samples were the same age group: i.e. 13 to 16.

Self-administered questionnaires formed the basis of the research. Busha and Harter (1980:62) listed several advantages to questionnaires of which the following are applicable to this research:

- It allows a wider range and distribution of the sample than the interview method.
- It provides an opportunity for respondents to give frank anonymous answers.
- It allows greater economy of effort (i.e. a single questionnaire duplicated and distributed to numerous respondents can produce a large amount of data).
- It can be constructed so that quantitative data are relatively easy to collect and analyse.
- It can be designed to gather background information about respondents, as well as original hard-to-obtain data.
- It facilitates the collection of large amounts of data in short periods of time.

- It allows the collection, in exploratory studies, of insightful information about a relatively unexplored problem area or subject.
- Through the preparation of a formal questionnaire, researchers are encouraged to define clearly the research problem, the implications of the problem and the nature of the needed research data.
- In regard to ego-involving questions, it can enhance the collection of subjective data, as there is no interviewer the interviewee needs to impress.
- Because of its fixed format, it helps to eliminate variation in the questioning process.

There are, however, certain problems that the researcher needs to be aware of. Busha and Harter (1980:63) once again list several, of which the following could be applicable to this research:

- It precludes personal contact with respondents, which could cause the researcher to gain insufficient knowledge about the participants in the study.
- It does not allow the respondents to qualify ambiguous questions.
- If the questionnaire does not arouse respondent emotions, valid responses might not be elicited.
- Poorly worded or direct questions might arouse antagonism or inhibitions on the part of respondents.
- There may be difficulty in obtaining responses from a representative cross-section of the target population.
- As opinionated respondents might be more likely than other subjects to complete and return questionnaires, there might be a non-response bias.
- Verification of the accuracy of the questionnaire responses might sometimes be difficult or even impossible.
- Most questionnaires cannot be designed to uncover causes or reasons for respondents' attitudes, beliefs or actions.

In this study, pilot questionnaires were used in an attempt to overcome some of these problems. In both surveys, pilot questionnaires were given to samples of ten respondents. This enabled the researcher to identify and rectify any shortcomings before drawing up final versions of the questionnaires. The presence of the researcher while respondents completed their questionnaires allowed respondents to clarify questions that they were unsure of. The open-ended questions and ample space on the questionnaires allowed respondents to express themselves as fully as they wished to.

Unfortunately, it proved to be very difficult to address the non-response bias of the library sample, as the researcher could not compel the non-respondents to complete and return their questionnaires. The more articulate respondents were more likely to complete and return their questionnaires. There was thus a non-response bias.

3.2 The survey format

3.2.1 The high school survey

The first part of this research was to evaluate public and school library use and non-use among the school going section of the adolescent population. A random sample of learners aged 13 to 16 at one of the high schools in Grassy Park was selected. The school was chosen because it was felt that adolescents who do not use the public library might be reached in this way.

The school selected for the survey, is one of many in the area whose learners frequent Grassy Park Library. It is an ex-HOR school and can be seen as representative of high schools in "coloured" communities in the Western Cape. Permission was granted by the principal of the school for the survey to be conducted.

The survey was conducted at the school during the first two weeks of the second semester of 1998. The questionnaire was administered to the sample group. The respondents were selected at random among the 13 to 16 year old learners at the school. From every class 10% of the 13 to 16 year olds were selected and handed a questionnaire to complete. The researcher was present to answer any queries that the respondents might have had.

The questionnaire consisted mainly of questions about school projects, e.g. how many projects were done, where respondents found the information needed for their projects, whether their school library and/or public library had the information they required and how they ranked their school and public libraries' ability to meet their requirements. This was a useful way to assess the value of both the school and public libraries to the sample of adolescents.

3.2.2 The public library survey

The second part of the research concentrated specifically on the adolescent public library users, to investigate various aspects of their public library usage. It was hoped to reach a wider range of adolescents than with the school sample. This was because the library is frequented by adolescents from a wider range of backgrounds than those who attended the school.

Questions were asked relating to their reasons for using the public library, their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the public library, what services the library should offer to their age group, what items they mostly borrowed from the library and their reading patterns and interests.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to a random sample of adolescents visiting Grassy Park Library. The researcher observed the people as they entered the library and selected individuals who looked as if they were the required age category. They were handed the questionnaires and asked if they could complete it at the library and return it to the researcher. Unfortunately, an equitable gender distribution could not be achieved, as more females than males entered the library and more females completed and returned their questionnaires. The research was done at different times on different days over a number of weeks to obtain a reasonable spread of adolescents, e.g. mornings, afternoons, evenings and Saturdays.

3.3 Sampling

The first sample was drawn from learners attending a high school in Grassy Park. The sample size was relatively easy to determine as there was a known number of learners in the required age category. A total of 570 learners aged 13 to 16 attended the school (May 1998). Fifty seven adolescents, i.e. a sample of 10% were surveyed.

The 57 respondents were selected randomly among the 13 to 16 year olds, from the each class at the school. This method meant that the age and gender were not proportional to the total number of learners at the school. A stratified sampling approach might have been a better method to use, but this could not be applied to the library sample, as the library did not keep record of individual members' ages and gender. Members are simply classified as children, teenagers or adults. For the sake of consistency, the same sampling method had to be applied to both sample groups.

The size of the second sample posed more difficulties as the total number of adolescents using the library was difficult to determine. No reliable sources existed which could be used to determine the total number of adolescent library users. A total

number of 1 584 registered members were aged 13 to 16 (May 1998). However, library users included an unspecified number of non-members as well. Unfortunately, statistics are not kept on gender, which made it impossible to determine the exact number of male and female adolescent members.

The adolescent library users also included adolescents living or attending schools outside the area, and the age group could also include school dropouts; employed or unemployed. Population census data or local high school statistics could not be used to determine the total number of adolescent public library users at Grassy Park Library. For the sake of convenience, the size of the sample was based on the number of registered adolescent library members, 10% of 1 584 resulted in a sample of 158 adolescents.

In order to obtain a fairly representative sample of the adolescent library users, adolescents were approached at random as they entered the library. This could have led to a form of bias, as those who looked too young or too old could have been overlooked. However, this was the most practical method to implement. Another drawback was that far more male than female members entered the library.

3.4 Data collection

For this study, two different questionnaires were constructed to survey the two sample groups. The majority of the questions in both questionnaires were structured, with multiple-choice answers, which enabled respondents to select the most relevant answers from several options. This format made it easier for even reluctant respondents to answer the questions, as they did not have to construct answers. Respondents who could not find their answers among the given options, could choose the "other" category and formulate their own answers. The respondents did not have

any difficulty choosing options which applied to them and almost all these questions were answered by all the respondents. The structured sections of the questionnaires were also helpful to the researcher, as it was fairly easy to tabulate and analyse the results.

Both questionnaires also contained a number of open-ended questions, as the intention was to not only obtain statistical data, but also the respondents' own uninhibited views on their library usage and reading habits. The open-ended questions allowed the respondents more freedom of response because feelings or information could be expressed that might not be possible with the multiple-choice answers. The disadvantage was that the responses tended to be inconsistent in length and content across respondents. The questions and answers are also susceptible to misinterpretation. The responses to open-ended questions were also more difficult to categorise, tabulate and synthesise, than the responses to multiple-choice questions.

The open-ended sections of the questionnaires revealed a wide range of abilities among the respondents. Many of them experienced problems in constructing their own answers. A large number, especially the males in the library sample, either did not return their questionnaires or left many of the open-ended questions unanswered. Only the more articulate, vocal and confident adolescents, who were mostly female, attempted to answer all the questions posed to them.

Wiersma (1991:181) argues that the possibility of a high rate of non-response is a major problem with questionnaire studies. In fact, the validity of the survey results depend on the response rate and quality of response. The problem with non-response is that it introduces the possibility of bias, since the respondents might not be representative of the group intended to be surveyed. Non-response can result in a data gap which can distort the real situation. One cannot assume that non-response is randomly distributed throughout the group.

A far higher response rate could have been gained had the researcher sat down with the respondents, read the questions to them and filled in their answers. However, the responses might not have been very reliable, as the respondents might have been careful not to offend the researcher/interviewer who is a staff member at Grassy Park Library. They might have been overtly positive in their responses. The fact that respondents could fill in their own questionnaires anonymously, meant that the responses were honest reflections of their thoughts and feelings. In this research, the quality of answers was more important than the quantity.

3.5 The high school questionnaire

In order to provide a complete picture of the adolescents using Grassy Park Library, it was necessary to survey the situation at one of the local high schools, as many of its learners frequent the public library on an almost daily basis. Such a survey would also reveal how many, if any, of the learners did not use the public library at all and whether alternative sources of information were used.

The high school questionnaire consisted of 17 questions. The full questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

The first three questions were posed to ascertain the demographic details of the respondents. These questions related to their gender, age and standards. The fourth question asked about the number of school projects they had done so far that year. The fifth question asked where they found most of the information that they needed for their projects. The sixth to ninth questions related to their use of their school library and their level of satisfaction with it. The tenth to sixteenth question related to their

use of the public library and their satisfaction with it. The seventeenth question related to their use of alternative sources of information.

3.6 The public library questionnaire

The second questionnaire was directed at the adolescents using Grassy Park Library. The public library questionnaire consisted of fifteen questions. The full questionnaire is presented in Appendix B.

The first three questions were posed to ascertain demographic data from the respondents, viz. gender, age and standards. The fourth question was asked to determine the extent of public library membership. The fifth question investigated the reasons why the respondents were in the library. The sixth and seventh questions established the level of the respondents' satisfaction with the public library. The eighth and ninth questions related to what the library should do to attract people of their age group. The tenth and eleventh questions related to the items they mostly borrowed, while the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth questions related specifically to books. The fifteenth question was to determine the reasons why they do or do not read.

3.7 Observations

In addition to the surveys, the researcher was able to draw on her experience as librarian-in-charge of Grassy Park Library for ten years. During these years close contact was built up with many of the library users, including adolescents. The researcher was thus able to apply a great deal of first hand observations and practical experience to this research.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS: THE HIGH SCHOOL SAMPLE

4.1 Introduction

The high school in this study is situated fairly near to the public library. When the survey was conducted in 1998, the school had a school library and a teacher-librarian. The school library was under-resourced and used as a classroom by the teacher-librarian who taught English. In 1999, the teacher-librarian left the school and the school library was renamed the media centre. The book stock was donated to CAFDA and replaced with computer equipment. At present, the school uses the public library for access to books. Teachers occasionally bring learners to the public library for "library periods" during which the public library staff teach the learners how to use various reference materials. Many of the learners visit the public library after school to work on projects, study, attend programmes, borrow library materials, use photocopy facilities, play chess or to socialise.

4.2 The demographics of the high school sample

Fifty-seven questionnaires were handed out and all were returned as the survey was conducted in the controlled environment of classrooms. There was thus a 100% response rate. Thirty one (i.e. 54,4%) of the respondents were female and 26 (i.e. 45,6%) were male.

The respondents' age and standard distribution are illustrated by Table 3:

Table 3 The age and standard distribution of the school sample

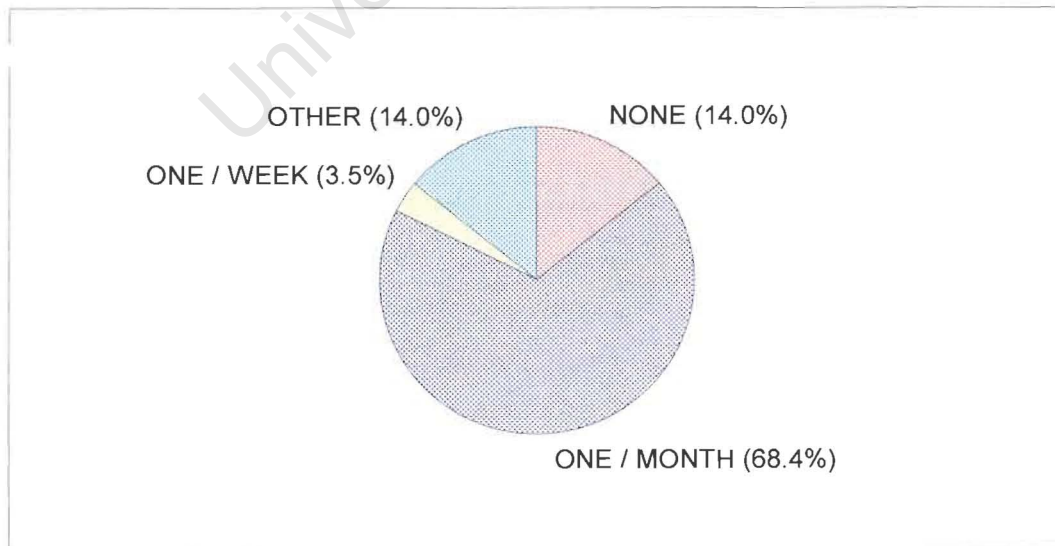
	Age 13	Age 14	Age 15	Age 16	Total
Std. 6 (Gr. 8)	7	7	3	4	21
Std. 7 (Gr. 9)	0	6	6	1	13
Std. 8 (Gr. 10)	0	0	7	5	12
Std. 9 (Gr. 11)	0	0	0	11	11
Total	7	13	16	21	57

Their age and standard distribution show that some learners were in lower standards for their ages, e.g. there were three 15 year olds and four 16 year olds in standard six. One possible reason for this could be that these individuals were held back due to poor academic performance, although some could have entered school at a later age.

4.3 Projects

Question four was asked to determine the number of projects the sample had to do for school that year. The responses are illustrated by Figure 3:

Fig. 3. Frequency of projects.

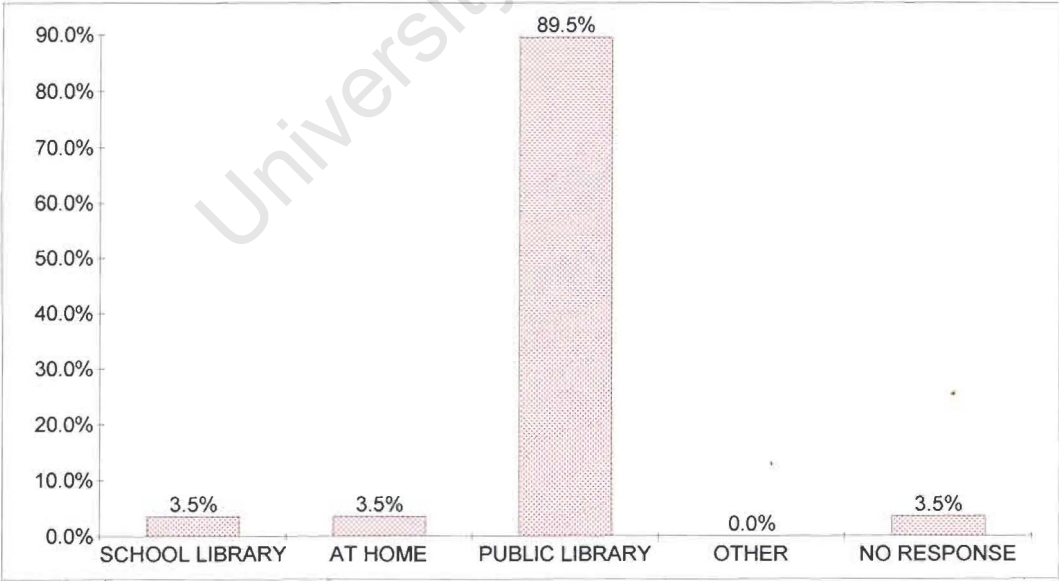


It was surprising to find that 14% of the respondents said that they have not done any projects so far that year, as the survey was conducted after the June holidays. By that time of the year, half of their year's work should have been completed and all learners are required to do projects as part of their curricular requirements. It could be that these respondents used different terminology, and misunderstood what was meant by "projects". The majority of respondents (68,4%) did one project per month, which is a reasonable number of projects that high school learners could be expected to do.

4.4 Where project information was found

In response to question five, respondents indicated where they found most of the information they needed for school projects/themes. The result is illustrated by figure 4:

Fig. 4. Sources of project information.



Other issues raised by the respondents were that the books did not relate to their school work, people wrote in the books, pages were sometimes missing, books were torn and lay around, there was not much time to find the information, the library was often locked, it was disorganised and it was difficult to find required information. These factors all discouraged the use of the school library.

The following quotations are samples of the responses:

"It's not big enough and there isn't much time to find the information you need." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"The school library does not have any recent information which is relevant enough for our school projects." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"Books are torn and lay around in the class; verbal violence is written in them and most of the library is locked." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std.7)

"The books are old, out-dated and therefore of no use for our projects which require recent, factual and relevant information. The school library is unorganised and thus difficult to find required information." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std 9)

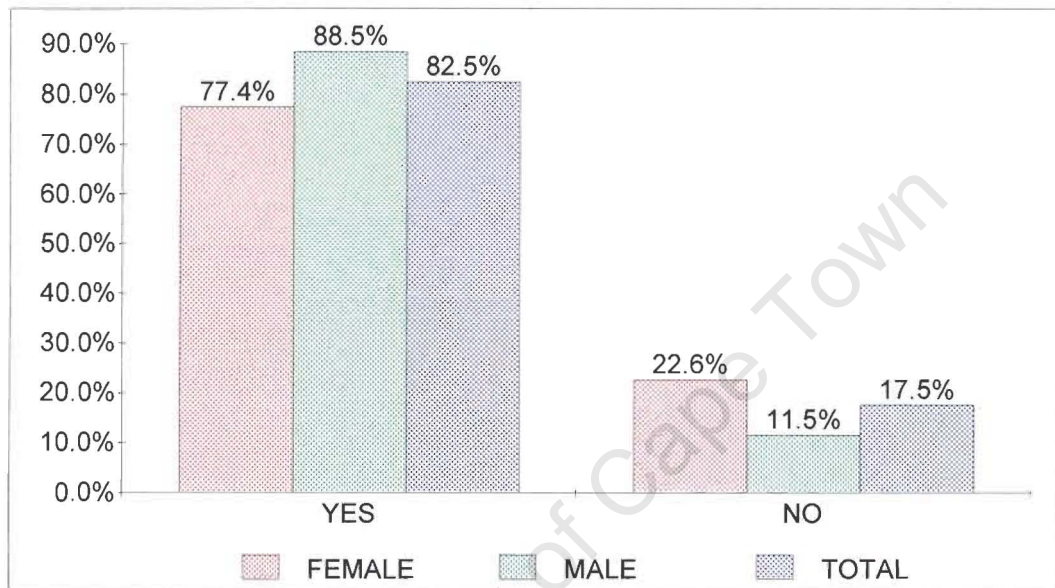
Two learners said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied because they do not use the school library at all. (Boy, 14 yrs, Std. 6 and boy, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

From the responses it is clear that especially the females, felt that their school library was inadequate.

4.8 Public library membership

In response to question ten, respondents had to indicate whether or not they were members of a public library. The results are shown in Figure 8.

Fig. 8. Public library membership: comparison by gender.

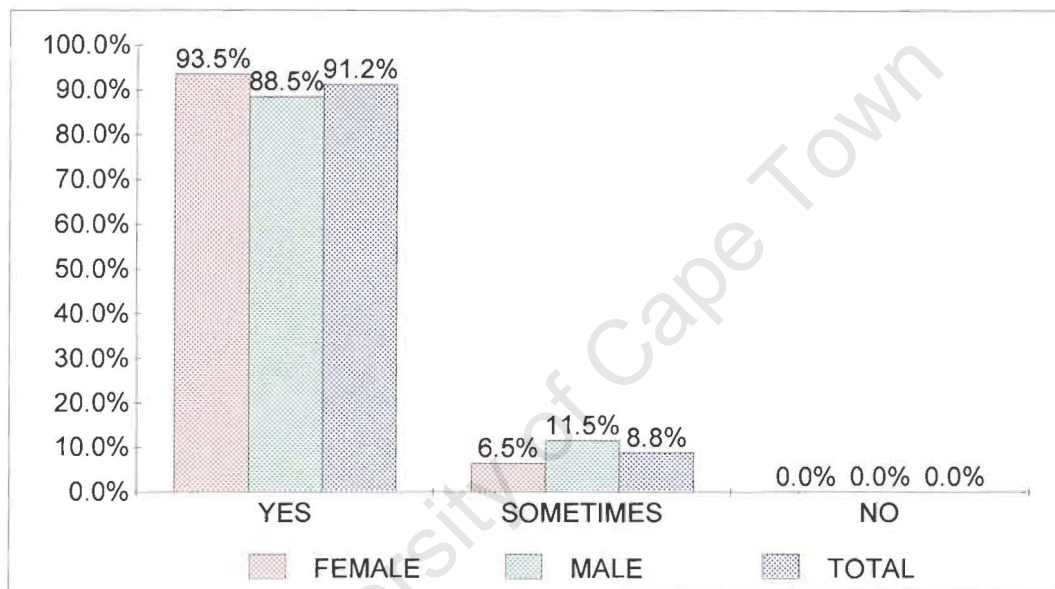


An overwhelming majority indicated that they were public library members (82,5%). Surprisingly, a greater percentage of males (88,5%) than females (72,5%) said that they were members. Seventeen comma five percent of the respondents said that they were not public library members.

4.9 The use of the public library for information for projects

In response to question eleven, the respondents indicated whether or not they used the public library for information for their projects or themes. The responses are illustrated by Figure 9.

Fig. 9. The use of the public library for information for projects: comparison by gender

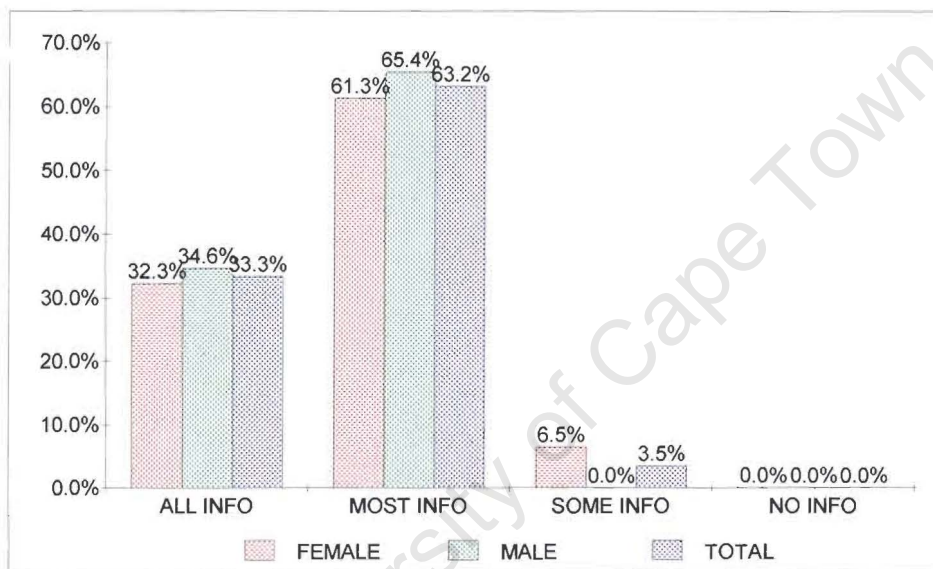


An overwhelming 91,2% of respondents indicated "yes" to the question. Together with the 8,8% who used the library only sometimes, this added up to 100% of respondents. None of the respondents indicated that they did not use the public library for information for their projects and themes. A greater number of respondents indicated that they used the public library, compared to the number who indicated that they were library members. In the case of the males, the "yes" group equalled the number who said that they were library members (88,5%). However, for the females, the "yes" group (93,5%) far exceeded those who said that they were library members (77,4%).

4.10 Whether the public library had the information required for projects

In response to question twelve, respondents indicated whether or not the public library had the information they required for their projects. The responses are illustrated by figure 10:

Fig. 10. Whether the public library had the information required for projects : comparison by gender.

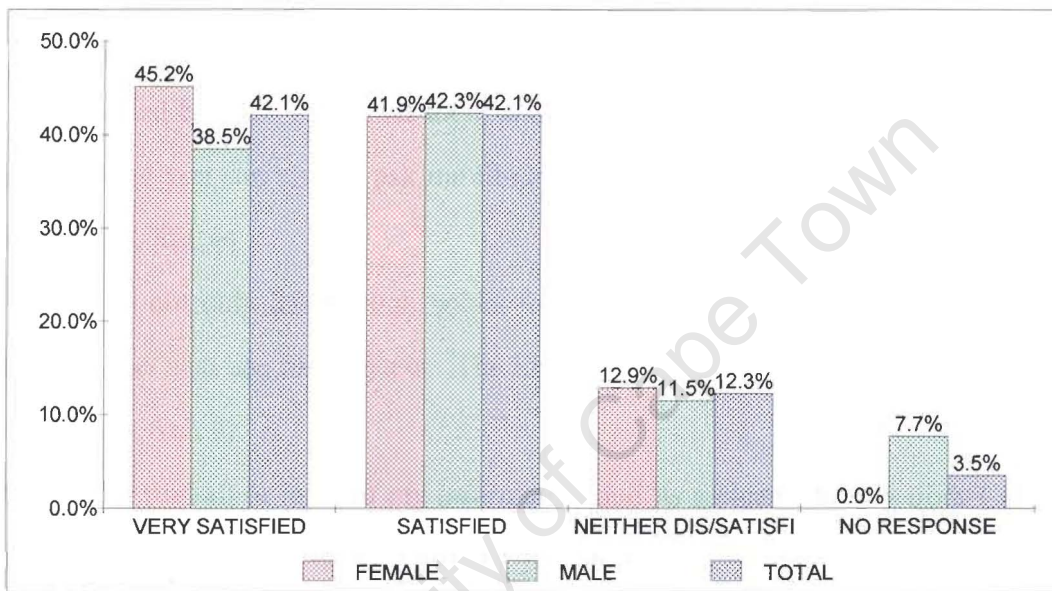


Of the respondents, 33,3% (a third) indicated that the public library had all their required information and 63,2% indicated that the public library had most of their required information. None of the respondents indicated that the public library had none of their required information. The differences between the genders are insignificant.

4.11 Ranking of satisfaction with the public library

In response to question thirteen, respondents had to rank their satisfaction with the public library's ability to meet their information requirements. The results are shown in Figure 11.

Fig. 11. Ranking of satisfaction with the public library: comparison by gender.



The figures illustrate a very high degree of satisfaction with the public library. While the majority of respondents indicated that they were either very satisfied (42,1%) or satisfied (42,1%), none of the respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the public library. A higher percentage of females than males was "very satisfied", while a higher percentage of males than females did not respond.

In response to question fourteen, respondents explained their ranking. For many respondents, the fact that the public library had the required information was an important reason for their satisfaction. That they could get friendly and helpful assistance from the staff, was also very important to them.

The neither satisfied nor dissatisfied group also raised issues that they felt strongly about. These were the same issues that were important to the other groups: i.e. they required information and assistance:

"You hardly ever find the information you need. The library should have more books containing information that will suit our needs when it comes to projects (pictures especially) More photocopy machines are needed. The library must create projects to keep the community and children busy." (Girl, 15 yrs, Std. 8)

"Sometimes there are not enough books which relates to a certain subject and being close to a school one tends to wait for books that are needed." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std 9)

"You don't always find what you need. There are things you find but are out-dated. When the project requires modern information, you seldom find it in the library. A library is a place you find information. Not only that but it also needs computers for updated information and on which you can do / print your projects. A library is there for the public and must supply the public's needs. Librarians provides a service to the community and needs to be friendly. This is a major lack at the public library. When you ask for help it is as if its a bother for the librarian to help you." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std 9)

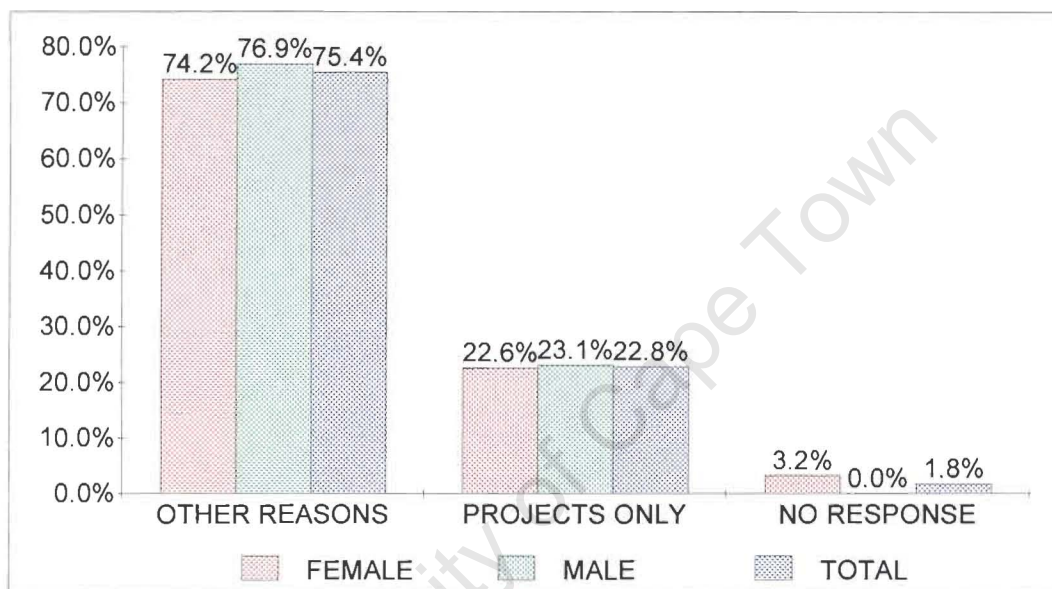
It was clear that different respondents experienced the public library in different ways. While many found that the library met all their requirements, others felt the library fell short. This was also evident in their view of the librarians; while some found them friendly and helpful, others did not. Their views of the library are thus very subjective, and differed from person to person. On the whole, however, more positive, than negative sentiments were expressed.

It is notable that the female respondents were more likely to express themselves, irrespective of whether their comments were positive or negative.

4.12 Reasons for using the public library

In response to question fifteen, respondents indicated whether they used the public library for projects only or for reasons other than projects. The responses are illustrated in Figure 12.

Fig. 12. Reasons for using the public library: comparison by gender.



The majority of respondents (75,4%), both male (76,9%) and female (74,2%), indicated that they used the library for reasons other than projects, while 22,8% indicated that they used the public library for projects only. The differences between the genders are insignificant.

Of those who used the library for reasons other than projects, the majority used the library to borrow books to read. The next most frequently cited reasons were to read books in the library, to photocopy or to study. Other reasons for using the library were:

"Sometimes I use it for home because it is quiet and relaxing." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std.7)

"To find an interesting book or the newspaper." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std.6)

"I look at artwork in the library." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std.9)

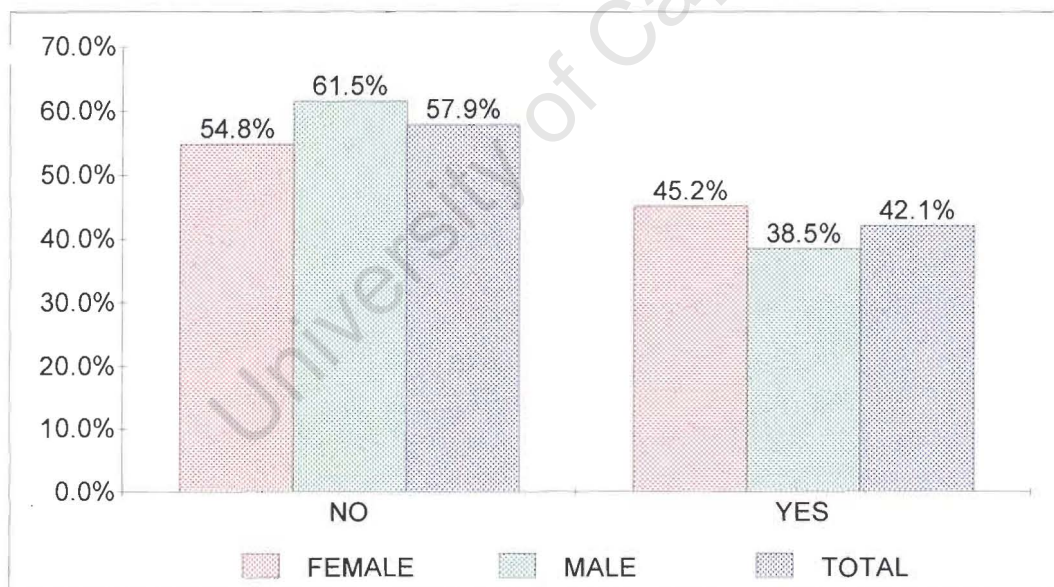
"Socialising with friends and forming study groups." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std 9)

"To meet girls and friends." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

4.13 The use of the public library during the last school holidays

In response to question sixteen, respondents indicated whether or not they used the public library during the last school holidays. The responses are shown in Figure 13:

Fig. 13. The use of the public library during the last school holidays: comparison by gender.



The figures illustrate a relatively low level of use of the public library by the respondents during school holidays. Fifty four comma eight percent of the female respondents and 61,5% of the male respondents did not use the library during the school holidays immediately preceding the survey. Only 42,1% of the respondents used the library during the same period.

Those who used the library during holidays did so mainly to read or to borrow books or videos or to study or to work on projects. Other reasons were the following:

"To find out about dogs and whales" (Girl, 14 yrs, Std.6)

"To read the sports section of the newspapers." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std.9)

4.14 The use of alternative sources to obtain information

In response to question seventeen, 52,6% of the respondents indicated that for specific projects, they have used sources, other than school and public libraries, to obtain information. Only one respondent mentioned using a newspaper. Relatives and personal computers were the most frequently used alternative sources.

The following quotations are samples of the responses:

"I used my computer to get information about my geography task and I also got some information from my mother." (Boy, 15 yrs, Std. 7)

"My grandparents (had to do a family tree)" (Girl, 15 yrs, Std. 8)

"Friends who have encyclopaedias." (Boy, 15 yrs, Std. 8 and girl, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"Shopping malls (people's opinions); parents' occupations (jobs)" (Girl, 15 yrs, Std.8)

"I phone people or places that can help me with the information." (Girl, 15 yrs, Std.8)

"I spoke to an artist for information for an art project." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std.9)

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS: THE GRASSY PARK LIBRARY SAMPLE

5.1. The demographics of the Grassy Park Library sample

One hundred and fifty eight questionnaires were handed out to a random sample of adolescents aged 13 to 16 who visited Grassy Park Library during the weeks following the June 1998 school holidays. The public library was extremely busy while the survey was conducted, and proved to be a less controllable environment than the school. It was difficult to monitor whether or not respondents handed back their questionnaires before leaving the library. Of the 158 questionnaires handed out, only 118 were returned. Of the 118 questionnaires returned, three were unusable as two respondents were of the wrong age, while one respondent did not state his age. Only 115 of the responses were useable. There was thus a 72,8% response rate. There were 80 female (69,6%) and 35 (30,4%) male respondents. There were far more female than male respondents as there were more females than males using the library and the females were more likely than the males to complete and return their questionnaires.

The respondents' age and standard distribution are illustrated by Table 4:

Table 4 Library sample's distribution by age and standard

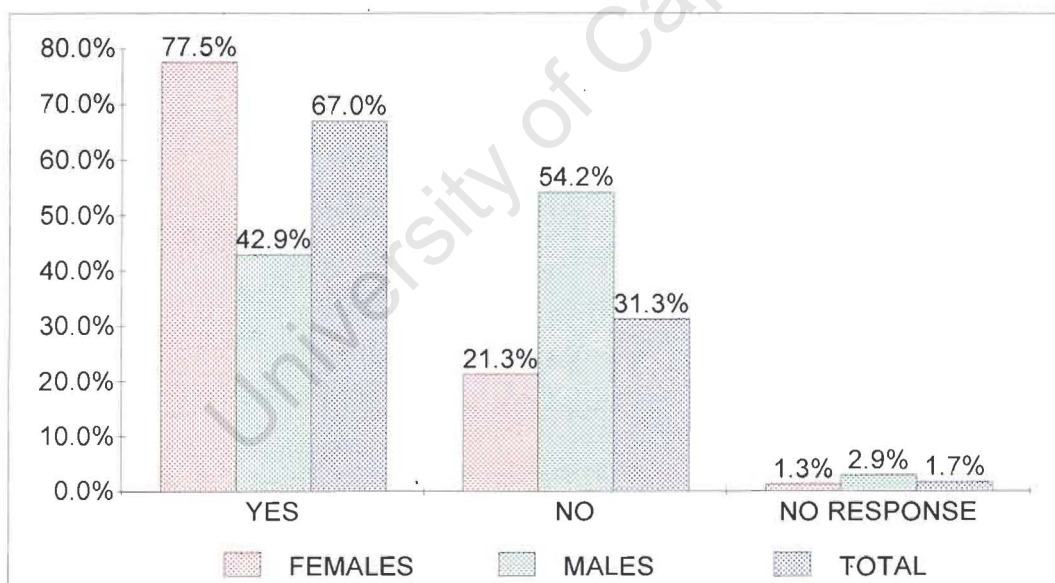
	Age 13	Age 14	Age 15	Age 16	Total
Std. 4 (Gr. 6)	2	0	0	0	2
Std. 5 (Gr. 7)	11	2	0	0	13
Std. 6 (Gr. 8)	19	13	2	0	34
Std. 7 (Gr. 9)	1	11	12	5	29
Std. 8 (Gr. 10)	0	0	4	14	18
Std. 9 (Gr. 11)	0	0	0	18	18
Std 10 (Gr. 12)	0	0	0	1	1
Total	33	26	18	38	115

As in the case of the school sample, the age and standard distribution also show that some learners were in lower standards for their ages, e.g. there were two 13 year olds in standard four and two 14 year olds in standard five. As in the case of the school sample, these individuals could have been held back due to poor academic performance, although some could have entered school at a later age.

5.2 Public library membership among the respondents

Question four was used to determine the percentage of library members among the respondents. The responses are illustrated in Figure 14:

Fig. 14. Public library membership: comparison by gender.

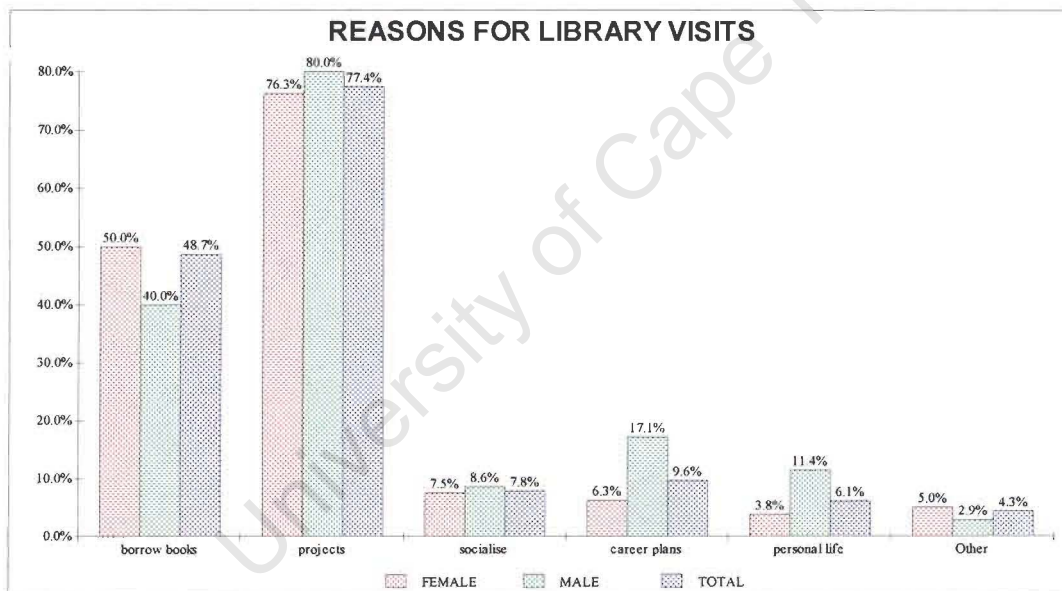


Of the library respondents, 67% were members, while 31,3% were non-members. The disparity between the males and females is significant, with 42,9% of the males and 77,5% of the females indicating that they were members of the library. The figures illustrate that a significant number of non-members (31,3% of the respondents) was using the public library.

5.3 Reasons for being in the public library

In question five the respondents were asked to choose among several options, their main reason for being in the library on the day that they filled in the questionnaire. Many respondents chose more than one reason, thus considerable overlapping took place, e.g. one respondent might be in the library to borrow books, work on a project and socialise. The responses are shown in Figure 15:

Fig. 15. Reasons for being in the public library: comparison by gender.



(Other: studying; meeting somebody; to stimulate my mind; occult for personal reasons and to see the library "boy")

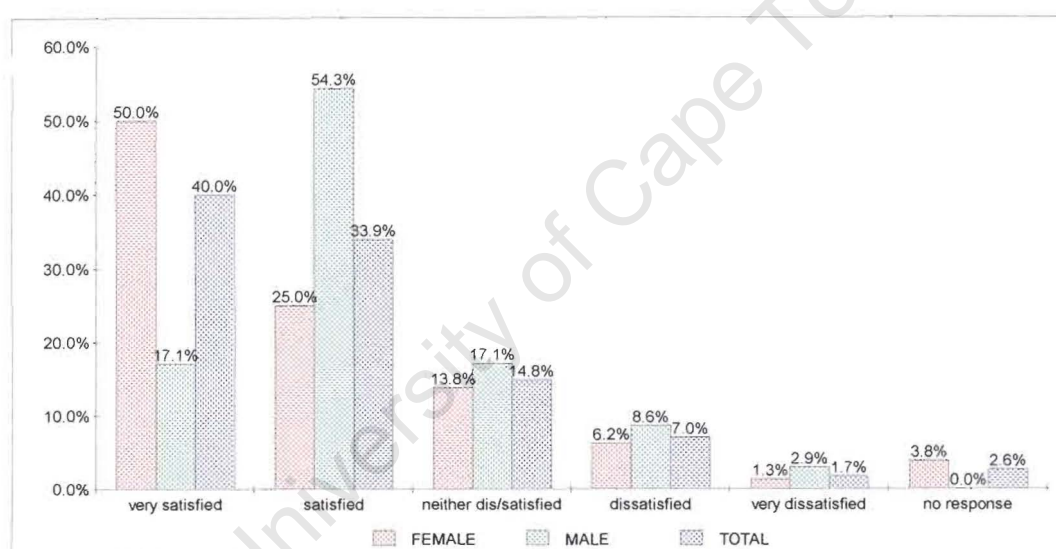
It is significant that 77,4% of the respondents were in the library to work on projects, while 48,7% were in the library to borrow books. The figure is an indication of the great extent to which the public library is used for curricular requirements by the respondents. The gender difference is notable, with more females than males

borrowing books (10% difference), while a slightly higher percentage of males compared to females, worked on their projects (3,7% difference).

5.4 Ranking of satisfaction with the public library

In response to question six, respondents had to rank their satisfaction with the public library's ability to meet their needs. Figure 16 shows the responses:

Fig. 16. Ranking of satisfaction with the public library: comparison by gender.



There were far more respondents in the "very satisfied" and "satisfied" categories (73,9% in total) than in the dissatisfied categories. Gender differences are once again evident. Among the females, "very satisfied" was the biggest category, while the majority of males chose "satisfied". The most frequent explanation given by the respondents for choosing these categories was that they could find their needed information, especially for projects. The following quotations are examples of their responses:

"It has everything I need for my projects or books that I want to read." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 6)

"You always get the information what you are looking for and I am always satisfied when I walk out of this library." (Girl, 15 yrs, Std. 8)

"Every time my teacher gives me a project I come to this library and I find everything I need. This library has always helped people getting information and I thank the library for this." (Boy, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

The service they received from the staff was also frequently mentioned, as illustrated by the following quotations:

"The librarians are very helpful." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"I find this library very satisfied, because of their good service and they always try to give you as much information as possible." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"The way the librarians is, they don't get cross if you ask for information." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

The fact that the library is well organised was also offered as explanation:

"Everything is organised and everything is in order and it is a pleasure to visit this library." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 6)

"The books are easy to find and there are always books for information." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

Other explanations offered were:

"I like it here." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 6; Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 6)

"It is very nice." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"The library has the books I am interested in." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

"Because there is lots of place for children to be in." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

"It's clean." (Boy, 15 yrs, Std. 7)

"This library is very well equipped and feels like home." (Boy, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"Because it's still and you know where the books are." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 7)

One respondent who chose the satisfied category raised several issues which would indicate that she experienced various degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with using the public library:

"The reason why I am not very satisfied is because sometimes I can't find books and the library does not always have the books and information I need. Sometimes I want to take out the books, but see that I cannot take them. The library supplies me with most of the books I need. The librarians are also very helpful but sometimes do not direct me properly to the books I need. But I understand how tired they are and don't expect 'smiling faces' all the time because some of the kids are very naughty and they have to talk to them all the time." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

The respondents who were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, mostly had problems with the book stock:

"They should get new books to read." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"They do not have enough books that I am interested in." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"It is big but does not sometimes has the books I require therefore I must go to another. I think it should get more books" (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"They never have the books you need (totally outdated)" (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

Examples of explanations offered by the neither satisfied nor dissatisfied group were the following:

"This library is too small. When I come here most of the time there is no place to sit and study. It is always full." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"We want to have access to computers." (Boy, 15 yrs, Std. 7)

The dissatisfied group had much to complain about:

"The CDs and movies are not really interesting and are mostly for 'older people'".
(Girl, 16 yrs. Std. 9)

"No computers, here's no discipline, here's no silence. The library got to have more volunteers to guide the children and people for what they are looking for." (Girl, 16 yrs Std. 7)

"There's never enough information. The book range isn't wide. No colour-copier."
(Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

The very dissatisfied group consisted of two respondents. The one respondent offered no explanation for his answer, while the second respondent said that the library was too quiet. (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 7)

5.5 Meeting the needs of adolescents

In question eight, respondents were asked what the library should do to meet the needs of people in their age group. This was an open-ended question and respondents could write down whatever they wanted. The respondents raised a wide range of issues that were important to them. The females were, once again, the more vocal group.

Most of the respondents suggested programmes which they felt would attract the youth; such as the following:

"Have more workshops about teenage pregnancy, drugs, alcohol, etc." (Girl, 15 yrs, Std. 8)

"Every holiday you should have more activities, right through the holiday." (Boy, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

"They can have a programme or go to schools and have a programme so the teenagers can explain their needs. The state that the world is in now the teenagers need more attention to their needs in the library." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 7)

The next most frequent suggestions were for more books:

"They must get more books on how to choose your career." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"More international books." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"Get more exciting books about mysteries." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"Get more educational books." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 5)

"Get more teenage books." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"Some of the books need to be updated, in that way we are able to keep in touch with the rest of the world who live in the modern and fast lane." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

Requests relating to information, schoolwork and projects were also frequent:

"They should provide more information for us." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"Help them to cope with their schoolwork, e.g. projects." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"To help each other if we have any problems with homework or anything else." (Girl, 15 yrs, Std. 6)

"Have classes for students who have trouble with certain subjects that they don't understand at school." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

Audiovisuals were the next most frequently mentioned category:

"More up to date CDs, cassettes and videos" (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"Update musical section." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"More movies and everything else." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 10)

Computers were also frequently requested:

"Supply computers for the students, i.e. for projects, etc." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"Let us play on the computers." (Boy, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"Have access to computers for those who don't have their own personal computer." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

Other suggestions ranged from the fantastic to the practical:

"Get more sexy young librarians (boys)." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"More fun and excitement." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"They should be there to answer questions that are asked." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"Play soft music." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"They should make it fun for the children." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"Just help us if we need help." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"To take care of the books and to keep the books safe." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 7)

Some of the respondents felt it was not necessary for the library to take any measures to attract the youth:

"I think it has already succeeded in that respect." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

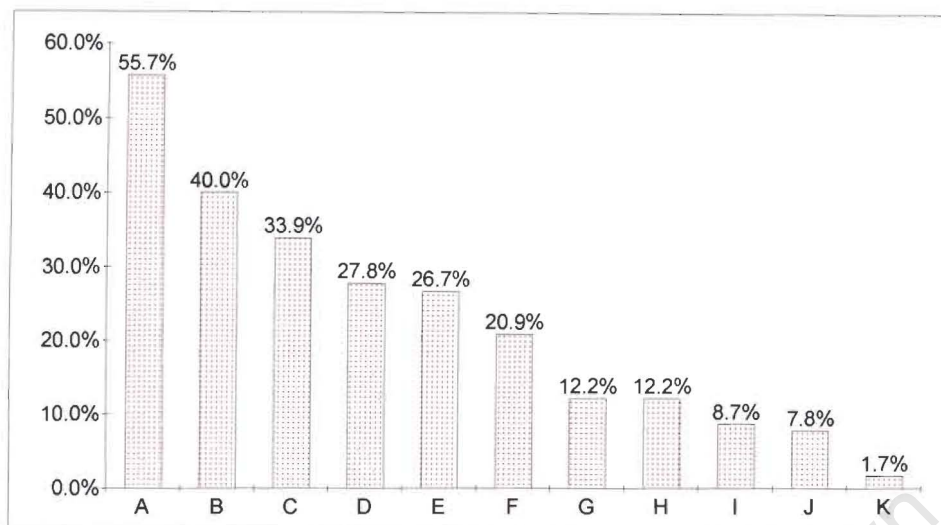
"It already meets our standards." (Boy, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

"Nothing, I think they are already well balanced and functional." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 6)

5.6 Programmes chosen by the adolescents

In question nine, the respondents were required to choose from specific options, programmes or workshops directed at their age group that they would attend if held at the library. They could choose as many as they wanted to. The responses are illustrated in Figure 17, arranged according to the frequency chosen:

Fig. 17. Programmes chosen by the adolescents.



KEY

- A: How to use various resources to find information on projects/themes
- B: Birth control, safe sex and relationships
- C: Career information/guidance
- D: How to start your own business
- E: Family life, caring for children and marriage counselling
- F: How to handle personal problems, e.g. peer pressure, teenage pregnancy
- G: Health matters
- H: Gangsterism, violence and crime
- I: Human rights, consumer affairs and legal matters
- J: Drugs and alcoholism
- K: Other: computer course; computer technology; communication between parents and teenagers; abusing people; talks with teenagers about daily happenings like date rape; harassment

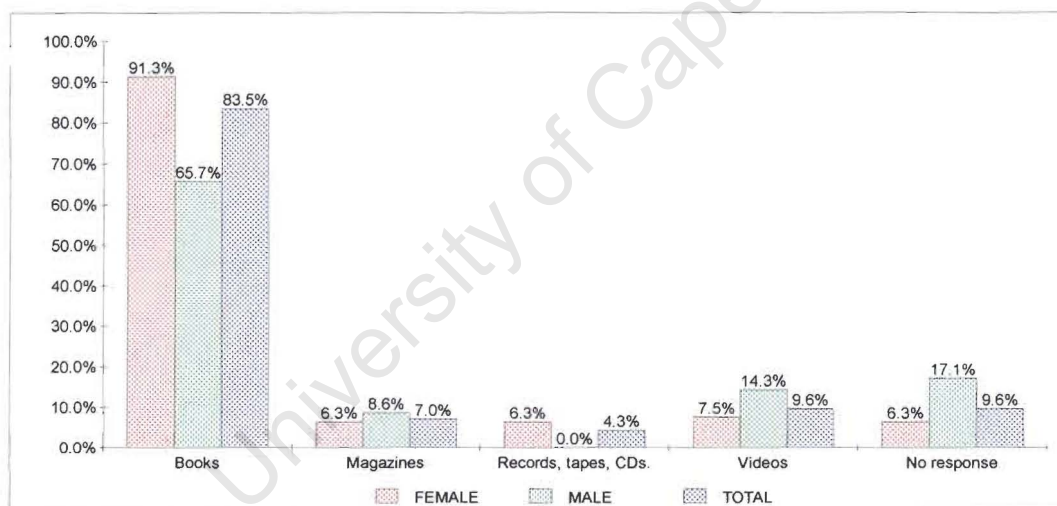
The high ranking of programmes on using various resources to find information for projects indicated that this was a primary concern for a large number of the respondents. There appeared to be very little interest in programmes relating to social

problems, like drugs and alcoholism, but there was a higher interest in personal matters e.g. birth control, safe sex and relationships, career information/guidance and how to start your own business.

5.7 Items most frequently borrowed from the public library

In question ten, the respondents had to choose the items they most frequently borrowed from the library. The results are shown in Figure 18:

Fig. 18. Items most frequently borrowed from the public library: comparison by gender.

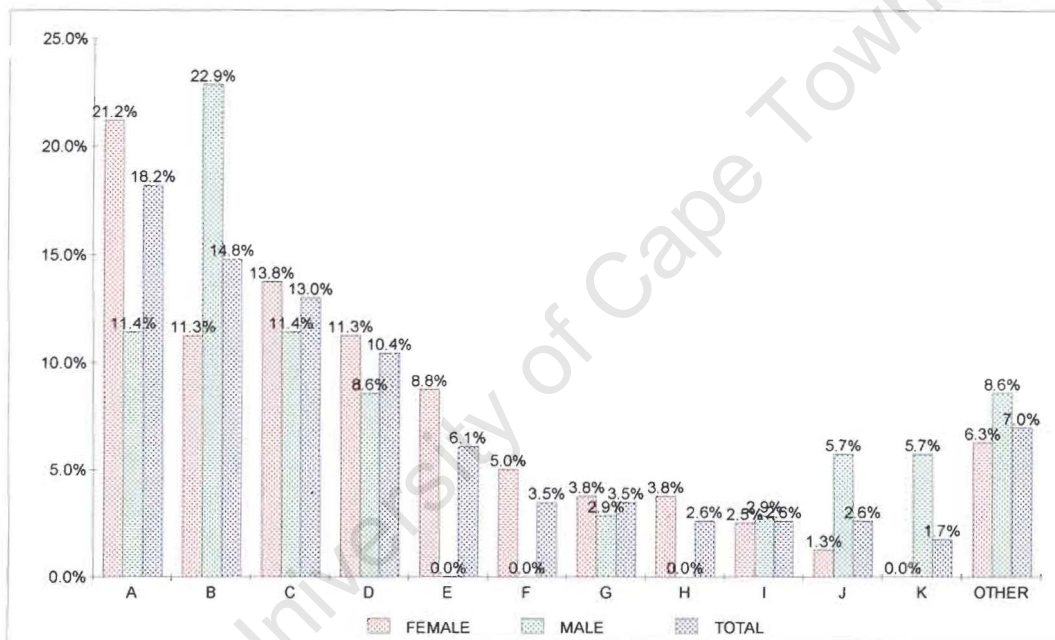


The category of items most frequently borrowed was books, selected by 83,5% of the respondents. Even non-members indicated that they borrowed books, as a high level of interlending took place among the adolescents. A higher percentage of female than male respondents borrowed books, records, tapes and CDs, while a higher percentage of males than females borrowed magazines and videos.

5.8 Items and facilities that the adolescents wanted

In response to question eleven, respondents had to state which items or facilities they would like to see more of in the library. This was an open-ended question and respondents could state whatever they wanted. Seventy one of the respondents, 50 females and 21 males, answered the question. The response rate was thus 61,7% The most frequent requests are illustrated in Figure 19:

Fig. 19. Requests for items/facilities by the adolescents: comparison by gender.



KEY

- A: More books
- B: Computers
- C: More videos
- D: More CDs
- E: More photocopiers
- F: Music in the library
- G: More cassettes/tapes
- H: More information
- I: Movies
- J: More Afrikaans books
- K: More toilets
- Other: Career projects, television, workshop prominently displayed, sport activities, reading to younger children, games, study aids, magazines.

The differences between the genders are evident. A greater percentage of females than males wanted more books, more videos, more CDs and more cassettes/tapes. On the other hand, a greater percentage of males than females wanted computers in the library and more Afrikaans books. In fact, computers stood out as the item most frequently requested by the male respondents. Items that only females requested, were more photocopiers, music in the library and more information; while only males wanted more toilets. The items listed under "other" were each only mentioned once.

The respondents requesting more books and information specified their needs as follows:

"More about South Africa" (Girl, 15 yrs, Std. 6)

"Historical books" (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"More career books." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

The respondents who wanted computers in the library, explained their reasons as follows (although a greater percentage of males than females requested computers, only female respondents gave explanations):

"Computers that we can work on, e.g. for typing out projects." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"More computers, computer classes." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"Computer for the students to use." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

The respondents who requested more audiovisuals wanted the following:

"Life stories of the people young people see today (famous people) on video." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

"Music: all types of music" (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"More interesting books and CDs so that more children namely boys could come." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 10)

The following were also suggested:

"Adventure books and action movies to watch every Wednesday between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m." (Boy, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

"I would like to hear some music (classical)" (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"Games for the small children to enjoy." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"Sport magazines" (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"Different working field projects, like drama, chefs, etc. (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

A small number of respondents felt no additional items or facilities were needed:

"I think you have enough books for everybody." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 6)

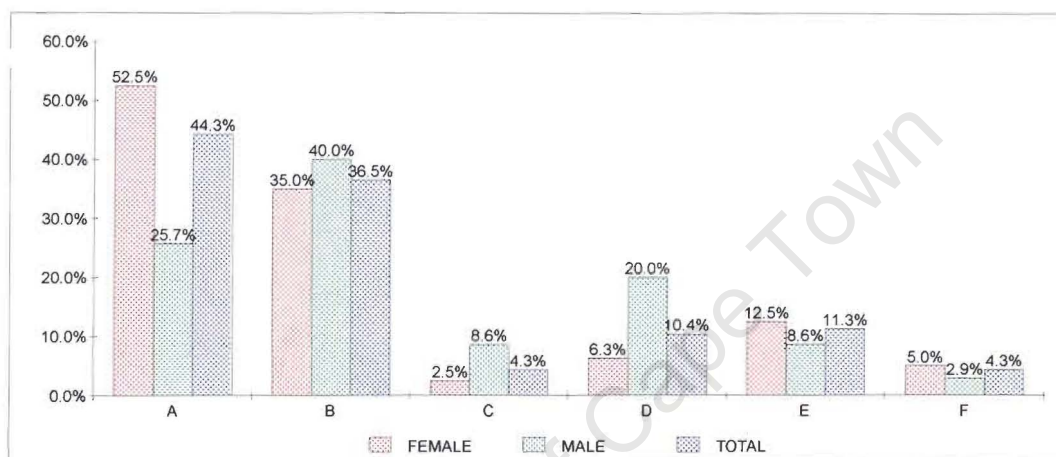
"I think that this library has enough of everything." (Girl, 15 yrs, Std. 8)

University of Cape Town

5.9 The kinds of books the adolescents most often borrowed

In question twelve, the respondent had to choose the kinds of books they most often borrowed from the library. Their choices are illustrated in Figure 20:

Fig. 20. The kinds of books most often borrowed from the library: comparison by gender.



KEY

- A: Books that you enjoy reading, e.g. stories
- B: Books needed for school purposes
- C: Books relating to work interests
- D: Books relating to hobbies and sport
- E: Books that help you deal with personal problems
- F: Other ("boys", "stories that impact on my daily life", "medical e.g. diseases", "witchcraft", "books that give me confidence")

The majority of females (52,5%) indicated that they most frequently borrowed books that they enjoyed reading, while the males (40%) most frequently chose books needed for school purposes. This suggests a difference between recreational and utilitarian reading along gender lines.

5.10 Kinds of books the respondents wanted more of

In question thirteen, the respondents had to state which kinds of books that they would like to see more of in the library. This was an open-ended question.

From the responses it could be seen that some respondents in all age groups read fairly widely, while others have limited taste. The difference between males and females could once again be observed. Females asked for romances, specific series, e.g. Sweet Valley, and authors, e.g. Judith Krantz and Danielle Steel, while the males had more general requests, e.g. project books and adventure books. While the females enjoyed the kinds of books that the males enjoyed, e.g. mysteries, thrillers and horror, e.g. Point Horror, the males did not read the books that the females enjoyed, e.g. romances.

The following quotations are a sample of the requests of the respondents:

"Teenage love stories" (four respondents)

"More horror books" (four respondents)

"More romances" (three respondents)

"Modern books" (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"Sports books and a wider variety of thrillers" (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"Adventure and comedy; cartoon books" (Boy, 15 yrs, Std. 8)

"More science fiction" (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 5 and boy 13 yrs, Std. 6)

Specific series and authors asked for were the following:

Sweet Valley (20 girls), Point Horror (4 girls), Sweet Dreams (2 girls), Goosebumps (2 girls), Bunty magazines (1 girl), Reenboogrant (1 girl), Ballet School (1 girl), Raven Hill (1 girl), Asterix and Obelix (1 girl), Christopher Pike (1 girl), Danielle Steel (1 girl), Judith Krantz (1 girl) and Iynia Wayans (1 girl).

Books needed for school purposes were also requested. Respondents wanted books on slavery, health, Nelson Mandela, Princess Diana, animals, career books, marine life, drugs, science, history and geography. These were all project topics, and they were mainly requested by the males. Although the library had coverage on all these topics, the concentrated demands when projects were in progress, meant that there were never enough copies to go around.

Seven asked for sports books and magazines; with three asking specifically for car books and magazines.

Music books were also frequently requested:

"Music including musical scores" (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"I like to see books of gangster rappers." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"Life stories of singers and rappers (except Tupac Shakur because he swears too much and he sucks)" (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

Other requests were:

"Occult" (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"More soccer books and movie stars and about their careers." (Boy, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

"New art books" (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 9)

"Books on sexuality" (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"Books about relationships and teenagers." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 7)

One respondent was satisfied with the book collection and said that everything that she could think of was already in the library. However, there was a clear need to constantly update library materials to meet curricular requirements and changing trends among the adolescents.

5.11 Frequency of books read by the respondents

Question fourteen required that respondents chose among specific options how frequently they read books. The results are illustrated in Figure 21:

Fig. 21. Frequency of books read by the respondents: comparison by gender



KEY

- A: More than one book per week
- B: One book per week
- C: One book per month
- D: Fewer than one book per month
- E: Other
- F: No books
- G: No response

A surprisingly high number (49,6%) of respondents indicated that they read more than one book per week, while only 0,9% indicated that they read no books. However, 7% did not respond to the question.

5.12 Reasons for reading

In question fifteen, respondents had to state their reasons for reading. This was an open-ended question. The responses were categorised according to the following categories: enjoyment; education and self-improvement; cases where respondents said that they enjoyed reading, but qualified their statements by pointing out the educational and self-improvement benefits of reading (qualified enjoyment); and finally, miscellaneous reasons. The results are illustrated by Figure 22:

Fig. 22. Reasons for reading: comparison by gender.



KEY

- A: Enjoyment
- B: Education and self-improvement
- C: Qualified enjoyment
- D: Miscellaneous reasons
- E: Did not read
- F: No response

The majority of respondents (30,4%) indicated that they read for enjoyment. Among the females, the majority of female respondents indicated that they read mainly for educational value and self-improvement (30%) or enjoyment (27,5%) or qualified enjoyment (20%). On the other hand, the majority of males indicated that they read mainly for enjoyment (37,1%), while lesser numbers read for education and self-improvement (17,1%) and qualified enjoyment (11,4%). Although more females (7,5%) than males (5,7%) indicated that they did not read, a very high percentage of males (20%) compared to females (3,8%) did not respond to the question.

Some of those who read mainly for enjoyment gave their reasons as follows:

"I enjoy it every minute." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"I enjoy reading although I am not that clever." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 6)

"I enjoy a good story and a good joke." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"I always read. I like the cool stories." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

Some of those who read mainly for educational benefits and self improvement, explained their motives as follows:

"To improve my language and to understand." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"To build my vocabulary." (two girls, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"It helps me with my pronunciation of my words and the way I use them in a sentence." (Girl, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"I want to learn to read fast and be better in English and Afrikaans." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"It teaches you many things." (Boy, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

"It makes you wise." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"It helps me with my work and other stuff." (Girl, 15 yrs, Std. 7)

"You must read to become something in life." (Girl, 15 yrs, Std. 7)

"Books give you ideas and you get clever." (Boy, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

"When I talk I speak more fluently and my big, nice words impresses everyone." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 6)

Some of those who enjoyed reading, qualified their enjoyment by pointing out the educational benefits of reading (qualified enjoyment). The following are some examples:

"I enjoy it, it helps with writing composition / language." (Girl, 14 yrs, Std. 7)

"I enjoy the novels that is available. It improves my vocabulary." (Girl, 15 yrs, Std. 7)

"It is fun and help me a lot with my English and other subjects." (Girl, 13 yrs, Std. 6)

"I like it and it makes me smarter." (Boy, 13 yrs, Std. 5)

Among the miscellaneous responses there was a number of respondents who said they read because they were bored. Seven percent said that they did not read. Of these, half said that they did not have time to read.

Other reasons given by the respondents for not reading were that they did not like reading and:

"It's sometimes boring." (Boy, 16 yrs, Std. 8)

"Here is no *lekker* books to read and here is almost no information." (Girl, 13 yrs. Std. 5)

"I never get books I enjoy." (Girl, 16 yrs. Std. 9)

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The objective and scope of this research was to explore and identify the library usage and reading behaviour of the adolescents in Grassy Park and to investigate the types of needs that they might have and how they go about to satisfy these needs. It is within this context that the research findings will be discussed.

6.2 The demographics of the two sample groups

The composition of the two sample groups differed considerably. The school sample was a fairly homogeneous group, as schools generally tend to attract pupils from more or less similar backgrounds. The public library sample was much more heterogeneous. The respondents came from a wide range of schools from both inside and outside Grassy Park. They included both primary and high school learners. From observing the respondents, it could be seen that their academic abilities and the quality of schooling which they received varied considerably.

Some of the respondents experienced difficulties in answering all the questions. Some respondents, especially males, were unable and/or unwilling to answer the open-ended questions which required them to construct their own sentences. It could be that they were either indifferent or lacked the confidence or vocabulary to articulate their thoughts and feelings. Where they answered questions, they experienced problems expressing themselves clearly and also had problems with spelling, grammar and

sentence construction. In the library sample, more female than male responses were forthcoming, hence a non-response bias occurred.

The survey revealed major differences between the genders. While the school sample had 54,4% female and 45,6% male respondents, the public library sample had far more female (69,6%) than male (30,4%) respondents. There was a correlation between gender and public library usage, with mostly females being in the library while the survey was conducted. In general, female adolescents were more likely to visit the library and spent more time at the library, than the males. They were also more likely to complete their questionnaires fully and to return the questionnaires to the researcher. The results were thus biased towards female adolescents.

The differences are largely due to the prevalent different socialisation of the genders. As part of their growing up process, male adolescents need to show that they were no longer boys and establish their identity as men in society. Eriksen and Havighurst (cited in Fourie, 1998:17) identified the establishment of a masculine or feminine social role, as one of the various psycho-social stages that adolescents must go through to progress from childhood to adulthood. Reading and library visits might be considered "non-macho" activities by many male adolescents (Jones, 1992:30). There is also a fear among adolescent males that they might be considered as "nerds" and peer pressure discouraged reading and library visits. However, it appeared to be socially acceptable for males to use the public library to work on projects, make career plans, read magazines and "cowboy" stories, borrow videos and use computers. On the other hand, it was socially acceptable for females to enjoy library visits, to read books, especially teenage love stories and to show very little interest in computers. Society transmits different messages about reading to the two genders (Cherland, 1994:84-87).

6.3 Public library membership

Of the school sample, 82,5% (88,5% males and 77,4% females), indicated that they were members of the public library. The principal and teachers actively encouraged their learners to join the public library, as they were aware of the shortcomings of their school library. The learners also regularly visited the public library during class visits.

On the other hand, the public library sample, with its more heterogeneous user make-up, differed considerably. Only 67% (42,9% male and 77,5% female), of the public library sample, were library members. Notably, less than half of the male respondents who were using the library, were members of the library.

6.4 The use of the public library

The respondents used the public library for a variety of purposes, with curricular requirements emerging as the dominant reason for both genders. Among the high school sample, 91,2% indicated that they used the public library for projects and 8,8% used it "sometimes". This is extremely high, especially when compared to Spreadbury and Spiller's London finding (1999:9) where 56% of respondents indicated they used a public library, 15% used it "sometimes" and 29% did not use a public library at all. The difference is due to the fact that British schools are required to provide adequate learning resources to underpin National Curriculum teaching (Spreadbury and Spiller, 1999:3). As a result, there is less reliance on public libraries to meet curricular requirements.

Of the school sample, 22,8% indicated that they used the public library for projects only while 75,4% indicated that they used the library for other reasons as well. Of those who used the library for reasons other than projects, the majority used it to

borrow books. The next most frequently cited reasons were to read books in the library, to photocopy or to study.

Among the public library sample, the majority of respondents stated that their main reason for being in the library, was to work on their projects. Seventy seven comma four percent worked on their projects, while 48,7% borrowed books. Career plans (9,6%), socialising (7,8%) and personal life (6,1%) were less frequently cited. There were very few differences between the genders, except for career plans, which a higher percentage of males (17,1%) than females (6,3%) were working on. From the above, it can be deduced that a very high degree of in-house library use took place among the adolescents.

6.5 The use of the public library during holidays

Among the school sample, 57,9% of the respondents reported that they had not used the public library during the immediately preceding school holidays (June 1998). This was in spite of the fact that the June holidays are in the middle of winter, with very few leisure pursuits available in Grassy Park for this age group. The respondents who used the library during the holidays, did so mostly to borrow books or videos or to study or work on projects. The library did not do anything to attract the adolescents, as the holiday programmes that the library had on offer, were directed at younger children. The lower level of visits to the library during school holidays, is noticeable in lower library circulation statistics for holiday periods (see Figure 1).

This, together with the fact that 22,8% of the school sample indicated that they used the public library for projects only, are factors which indicated that many adolescents might associate the public library with school. This perceived association of the public library with school, has tremendous implications for their current and future

library usage patterns. There is a danger that adolescents who are only exposed to public libraries for curricular requirements might "drift" away from libraries. This trend was observed as early as 1968 by Barnes (1968:26).

Adolescents might regard libraries as an integral part of education to be abandoned on leaving school. Jones (1992:9) argues that if library patrons are "lost" during their adolescent years, they often do not return to libraries or sustain literacy. It is thus important that public libraries should not only be associated with curricular requirements, but adolescents should be exposed to non-curricular aspects of public libraries as well. This is important if they are to become lifelong users of public libraries.

6.6 The use of the school library

The school library was under-utilised by the school sample. In sharp contrast to the public library, the school library was seldom, if ever, used for project information. The learners experienced difficulties in using their school library and large numbers (74,2% of the school sample) did not use their school library at all. Lack of access and lack of relevant materials were the two main problems. The majority of those who did use it, reported that they found only some or none of their required information.

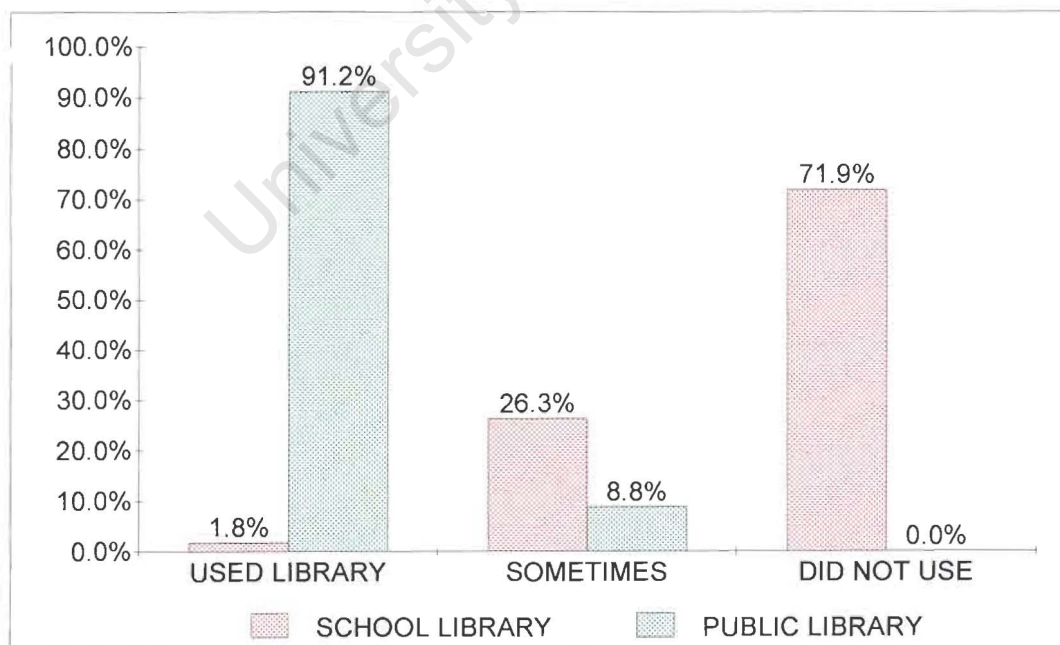
The researcher found that the teacher-librarian taught English and used the school library as a classroom. The library was also closed after school, during weekends and during school holidays. This meant that the school library was often inaccessible to users. It was obvious that the school library was marginalised, and that very little was spent to equip the library. It was not seen as valuable or important to the functioning of the school. It was also not seen as vital to the successful implementation of Curriculum 2005.

The situation at this school library is not unique, as other researchers e.g. Radebe (1997), Olen (1997), Overduin and De Wit (1986) raised similar concerns about school libraries in "coloured" and "black" schools in South Africa. On the other hand, Mniki (1995:52) found that the media centre at Vela Secondary School in Transkei was well utilised, which indicates that there are some exceptions to the rule.

6.7 Comparison of the use of the public library with the use of the school library

The public library is used to a much greater degree than the school library by the respondents in the school sample. This is illustrated by figure 23.

Fig. 23 The school sample: comparison of the use of the school library with the use of the public library



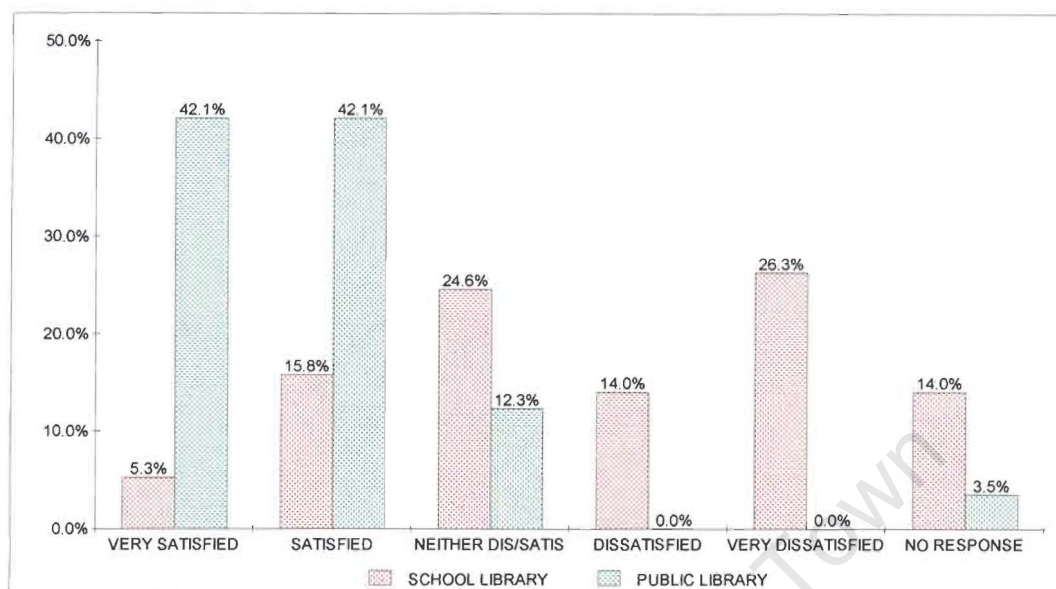
These figures indicate an extremely high level of use of the public library by the respondents in contrast to their use of their school library. As the literature review revealed, the poor state or lack of school libraries have forced many local learners to rely extensively on public libraries, especially since the introduction of the continuous evaluation system of education. Their reliance will increase when Curriculum 2005 is introduced more widely. Public libraries in these areas are then forced to play a dual role of being both school libraries and public libraries, as stated by Naidoo (1997:7). As school libraries become more and more marginalised, learners increasingly rely on public libraries to supply them with their required curricular information. Learners who do not have access to either school or public libraries are at the greatest disadvantage.

6.8 Levels of satisfaction

There was generally a high level of satisfaction with the public library among both sample groups. The most frequently cited reason for their high ratings were the fact that they could find their required information. Other reasons frequently cited were that the books were properly organised, they could study in the library, there was time to read the books and they could get friendly and helpful assistance from the staff.

The fact that learners could find their required information and get assistance from helpful and friendly staff, contributed to the high level of use of the public library. Learners were more likely to satisfy their information requirements at the public library, rather than the school library, which meant that there was a much higher level of satisfaction with the public library than with the school library. This resulted in a high level of use of the public library. The school sample's satisfaction with the school library as compared to the public library is illustrated in Figure 24.

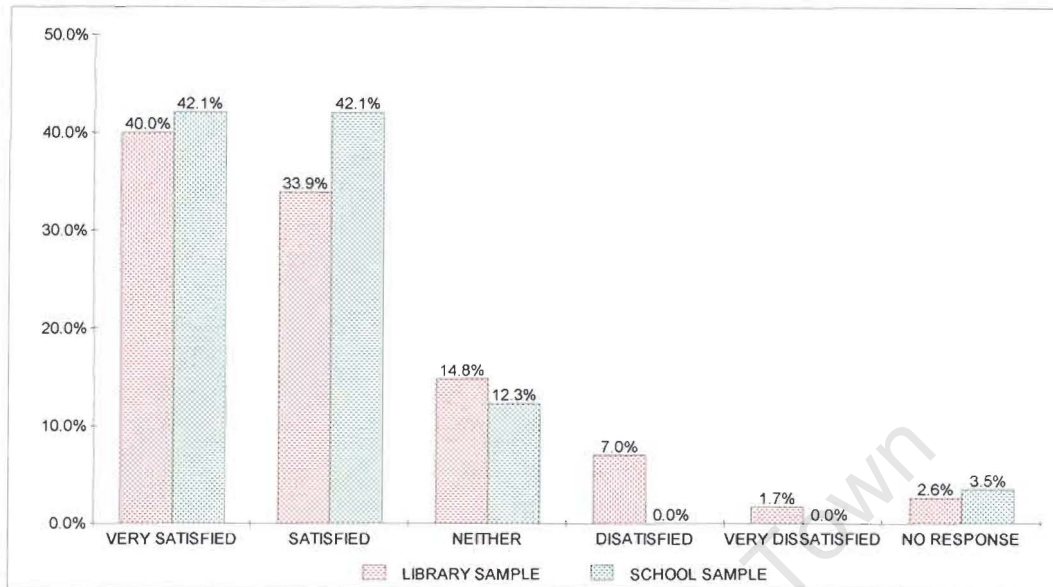
Fig. 24. The school sample: satisfaction with the school library as compared to the public library



The low level of use of the school library was closely related to the lack of satisfaction with the school library. Large numbers of the school sample were either dissatisfied (14%) or very dissatisfied (26,3%) with their school library. Even those respondents who were very satisfied (5,3%) or satisfied (15,8%), pointed out the shortcomings of their school library, e.g. the poor quality, inappropriate and out-dated books that were available in the school library. The learners were unhappy with their school library and not motivated to use it. Generally, the females were more negative than the males in their perception of their school library.

However, when the levels of satisfaction with the public library were compared for the school and library samples, the school sample showed a higher level of satisfaction with the public library, than did the library sample. This is illustrated in Figure 25:

Fig. 25. Levels of satisfaction with the public library: the school sample compared with the public library sample.



A likely reason for the higher rate of satisfaction with the public library by the school sample, could be because the school sample were first asked questions about their school library. When they were asked questions about the public library, they could compare it with their school library and the public library received much better reviews. On the other hand, the respondents in the public library sample were using the library when they were asked to complete their questionnaires, and some of them were experiencing the frustrations of finding information. They were not expected to compare the public library with their school libraries. It is thus understandable that they would be less positive than the school sample.

The few respondents who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, mainly had problems with the public library's lack of ability in meeting their curricular demands. One of the reasons for this is suggested by Fourie's finding (1996:208) that the provision of information to learners was mainly hampered by a high demand for information on the same topic concentrated at specific times and a lack of available material. In her study of learners as curricular information seekers, Fourie (1995:135) found that well over

59,1% of public librarians surveyed in the Pretoria-Verwoerdburg municipal areas reported that they were not always able to assist secondary-school learners in finding information. Another reason could be that the schools seldom inform the public library about forthcoming projects. Consequently, librarians are unable to collect suitable materials beforehand.

Another factor which affected the less satisfied group, was the problem of noise and/or lack of discipline in the library. This proved to be a sensitive issue and a bone of contention among all age groups. Noise appeared to be subjective and while some people found the library too noisy to study at times, others found it relatively quiet, and wanted music, fun and excitement in the library. The library is an open plan building and often overcrowded. Besides borrowing books, people use the library for a variety of reasons: to study, to work in groups on projects, to meet each other, to conduct business, to read, to chat or to escape boredom. People receive phone calls on their cellphones, babies cry, toddlers fight and run around and grown ups catch up on gossip, all while using the library. Under these circumstances most people find it difficult to engage in serious studying. Although the staff generally try to keep the noise level down to a minimum, it does sometimes reach unacceptable levels, especially when the library is overcrowded. While one would hope that the community itself would become more considerate in their behaviour towards each other, it is unrealistic to expect complete silence.

6.9 The borrowing habits of the adolescents

Books were the single category of materials most frequently borrowed from the library. Among the library sample, even non-members indicated that they borrowed books, as a high level of interlending took place among the adolescents. Often members would borrow items on behalf of accompanying friends who might be non-

members, or they would lend each other books. Cherland (1994:100) found in her study (in Canada) that girls sometimes borrowed books in order to lend them out.

The female respondents borrowed more books, records, CDs and tapes than the males, while the males borrowed more magazines and videos than the females. In response to the question of what items or facilities they would like to see more of in the library, 18,2% (21,2% females and 11,4% males) indicated that they wanted more books in the library, e.g. career books, mysteries, educational books, teenage books and "updated" books. Computers and audiovisuals were the next most frequently mentioned category, with respondents asking for more up to date CDs, cassettes and videos. In comparison, the London respondents of Spreadbury and Spiller's research, (1999:13) asked for "more up to date books" (selected by 52%), 39% wanted more computers and 20% wanted more tables and chairs. "Other" suggestions included "advertising new books in the library within the school" and "allowing pupils to suggest new books". From these responses, it can be deduced that the needs and interests of adolescents are often similar, irrespective of where they might live.

The figures for borrowing non-book materials by the Grassy Park respondents are generally low. The fact that so few of the respondents borrowed non-book material, is not surprising, considering their opinion of these collections. Many of them perceived the audio-visual collection as outdated and not according to their taste. They felt that these items were more suitable for "older people's" taste. Many urged the library to cater for their taste as well. The adolescents had a perception that they were being discriminated against by the library in the provision of non-book materials.

Only 7% of the adolescents indicated that they borrowed magazines. This is far below the levels reported among adolescents in the USA. In the USA, magazines are more popular than books among adolescents (Jones, 1992:30). From observing local adolescents, it was clear that many preferred to read the magazines in the library, while

borrowing books instead. Adolescents in the USA, like more advantaged local adolescents, have a wide range of activities and interests to keep them busy and might give reading books a low priority. Youth in the USA also have access to a far wider variety of magazines than the local youth. The following magazines are available at Grassy Park Library: Bunty, Car, Cosmopolitan, Cricket, De Kat, Everyday Practical Electronics, Fair Lady, Financial Mail, Garden and Home, Huisgenoot, Humpty Dumpty, Joy, Junior Education, Living and Loving, Molo Songololo, Muscle and Fitness, National Geographic, National Geographic World, Newsweek, Rooi Rose, Sarie, Seventeen, Sports Illustrated, Tribute, Vogue, Women's Value and You. Women's magazines form the biggest single category of magazines. Only Seventeen is directed specifically at teenagers. The adolescents' perception that they were discriminated against in the provision of non-book materials, is thus based on fact in the case of magazines, the majority of which are for the adult market.

Magazines are important part of adolescent reading, because they cover topical issues, can be read quickly, cover social aspects with articles and pictures and it is also "acceptable" for male adolescents to read magazines. In fact, the survey revealed that a higher percentage of males than females borrowed magazines. Jones (1992:56-7) found that even reluctant readers are drawn to magazines with their attractive covers, relatively simple vocabulary, many pictures and short articles. Furthermore, the most current and readable information for adolescents was often available in magazines. Magazines are an important means by which reluctant adolescent readers can be encouraged to read.

A difference between recreational and utilitarian reading along gender lines, could be observed. The majority of females indicated that they most frequently borrowed books that they enjoyed reading, while the males mainly chose books needed for school purposes. Books relating to hobbies and sport were also frequently chosen by the males.

Considering the high value that the adolescents placed on curricular information, and the degree to which they used the public library for curricular purposes, it might come as a surprise that the majority most often borrowed books that they enjoyed reading, rather than books required for school purposes. The reason was that the books needed for school purposes were mainly used in the library. Only the "early birds" tended to be able to find books for their projects on the open shelves. Due to limited sources and high demand, the library keeps a core collection of project books in the reference and study area for in-house use only. This practice ensures that unlimited numbers of users have access to at least some of the required project information. The reference materials and pamphlet collections can also be used only in the library. Some learners worked in groups in the library, while others made photocopies and used the information at home.

The policy of keeping a core collection of project books for in-house use only, is not popular among a number of teachers, learners and parents, who feel that they need to take the books home in order to use them properly. Reasons given to the staff for this preference were usually that the library was too full, the photocopy queues were too long, they did not have money for copies or they simply preferred to use the material at home. However, if these books were allowed to circulate in the first place, large numbers of users would not have access to these items. Overnight loans do not help, as it has been found that people tend to keep the books for as long as the projects are in progress. These materials also do not have long life-spans due to heavy wear and tear. The shortage of vast numbers of project books remains a cause of dissatisfaction among the users concerned, which the public library cannot solve on its own. Co-operation between schools and public libraries is essential in addressing problems relating to a lack of adequate quantities of project materials.

6.10 The reading behaviour of the adolescents

The high percentage of heavy readers among the sample (49,6% indicated that they read more than one book per week) could be ascribed to three factors. Firstly, the respondents could have over-estimated the amount of reading done. Secondly, any survey conducted in a public library is more likely to find more readers rather than non-readers. Thirdly, as there are very few alternative leisure pursuits available to teenagers in Grassy Park, there were many avid readers, especially among the females. Many of them were in the library every week or fortnight to exchange their books.

Whereas reading might be seen by some as solitary, anti-social and an activity the main purpose of which is to find information, reading among the avid adolescent readers in Grassy Park was largely social. Especially the females often made their library visits social events. They came to the library in groups, discussed books, exchanged their books among themselves and recommended books to each other. Cherland (1994:88) found that the girls in her study also discussed, exchanged, and recommended books amongst each other, while the boys did not openly engage in this kind of activity.

The high percentage of readers contradicts Heather's finding (cited in Carter, 1986:4) that non-readers were likely to attend schools where there were no class libraries, library lessons, qualified librarian, silent reading periods, school bookshops or clubs. The local schools lacked almost all of the above, yet there were a large number of avid readers among the library respondents.

When respondents had to choose the kinds of books that they most often borrowed from the public library, their choices suggested a difference between recreational and utilitarian reading along gender lines. The majority of females indicated that they most frequently borrowed book that they enjoyed reading, while the majority of males

indicated that they most frequently borrowed books needed for school purposes. On the other hand, an analysis of the reasons the library sample gave for reading, points to differences in the conscientiousness of the genders. While a large percentage of male respondents (37,1%) indicated that they read mainly for enjoyment, many of the females expressed their concern about their education and indicated that they read mainly for educational value and self-improvement (30%), or they qualified their enjoyment by pointing out the educational value of reading (20%). They were very much aware of the educational benefits of reading, especially as far as English as a subject was concerned. The fact that this community largely changed from Afrikaans to English speaking is evident by the large number of adolescents who commented that reading improves their vocabulary and English skills.

Mniki (1995:48) also found in her research that several learners stated that they read English books to "improve their vocabulary" or to improve their "reading". The respondents in Mniki's research were mainly Xhosa speaking and like some of the adolescents in Grassy Park, spoke English as a second language. As Hugo (1996:90) found, where children used a language that is not their own, their competence in their second language (in this case, mostly English) was closely related to the development of their reading. This was found to have a positive effect on their learning of other subjects as well.

In spite of socio-economic, educational and cultural disadvantages, and heavy school related workloads (projects, homework and studying) and although many of the respondents were in the library specifically for curricular-related needs, it was clear that a significant number of the respondents were also recreational readers who enjoyed and/or were interested in the books that they read.

6.11 Meeting the needs of adolescent library users

Harmon and Bradburn's (1988:21) three categories of young adult needs that libraries must attempt to meet, provide an useful framework within which to analyse the respondents' needs. The categories are:

- research needs (for both school and personal explorations);
- recreational materials (reading, listening and viewing collections);
- informational needs (family planning, personal care, etc.)

6.11.1 Research needs

Curricular requirements, in the form of projects, emerged as a major concern for the respondents of both sample groups. The majority of respondents indicated that they were required to do projects as part of their course work. Among the high school sample, 91,2% indicated that they used the public library all the time for projects and 8,8% used it occasionally. Among the library sample, 77,4% were in the library to work on their projects. These factors indicate that their research needs, especially as they pertain to projects, are of primary importance to a large number of the respondents. Their level of satisfaction with the public library also related closely to whether or not their curricular information requirements were met.

Among the library sample, the number of adolescents who were in Grassy Park Library for their projects (77,4%) was far higher than the 53,4% Fourie (1996:206) found among the secondary school learners who visited public libraries in the Pretoria-Verwoerdburg areas for curricular purposes. On the other hand, only 48,7% of the Grassy Park respondents were in the library to borrow books. This finding is an indication of the extent to which the public library is used for curricular information, as opposed to borrowing.

Among the school sample, a third (33,3%) indicated that the public library had all their required information and 63,2% indicated that the public library had most of their required information. None of the respondents indicated that the public library had none of their required information. Among the same sample group, 54,4% of respondents indicated that they could only find some of their required information in their school library, while 38,6% indicated that they could find none. Fifteen comma four percent said that they found most of their information in the school library, while none of the respondents indicated that they could find all their information in their school library. In Spreadbury and Spiller's research (1999:43), 18% of their sample said that they "always" found information, and 56% found it "most of the time" at their school library. If one compares these results, the Grassy Park school sample reported a higher success rate in meeting their curricular requirements at the Grassy Park Library, while their school library has a lower success rate than the school libraries investigated by Spreadbury and Spiller.

From observing the adolescents it could be seen that large numbers experienced difficulties and frustrations in finding information. The library staff at Grassy Park Library often observed that when learners complained about a lack of information available to them, the problem was seldom a lack of available information, but more often a lack of ability among learners to access the available information. Learners often displayed an inability or unwillingness to use basic reference tools, which points to shortcomings in information skills teaching or the lack thereof. Some adolescents appeared to lack the skills to select relevant information needed for the topics that they were researching and simply copied large extracts from encyclopaedias. Some could not understand their tasks or understand what they were reading. Learners often required intensive assistance from librarians and/or wanted the librarians to explain the subject matter to them. In the survey, respondents frequently expressed requests relating to help with information, schoolwork and projects and "classes for students

who have trouble with certain subjects that they don't understand at school". Due to work pressure, the librarians often do not have much time available to spend on individual learners. Zaaiman (1988: 19-20) also found that public librarians were asked by learners from especially the developing sections of the community, to explain certain concepts. There is thus a need for intensive guidance.

Zinn's (1997:168) research finding that teachers at a certain high school offered their learners no structured guidance during the course of project work, appears to apply to the schools in the Grassy Park area as well. Mniki (1995:10) states that a learner becomes information literate as s/he masters the skills of information interpretation, retrieval, selection, reduction, application and management. Without information literacy, learners tend to complete projects by simply copying information from one or two sources (Olen, 1997:22) as some learners could be observed doing at Grassy Park Library. This practice makes the value of doing projects doubtful, as the learners then do not learn how to effectively engage in research.

When asked to choose programmes or workshops that they would attend if held at the library, 55,7% of the library sample selected the option of "how to use various resources to find information on projects/themes". There was more interest in this option than in any of the other options available, which indicates that there was a willingness among the learners to acquire the necessary skills to access information required for projects.

The socio-economic environment of many of these adolescents, also plays a role in their inability to successfully access information. In the less privileged sections of the community, children grow up with unemployment, poverty, violence, gangsterism and alcohol and drug abuse around them. Under these circumstances, meeting "survival" needs is more important than reading books. Children from these homes, where reading might seldom take place, experience numerous academic problems. Research

has shown that children who have not been read to and have not had access to books and stories are at a disadvantage when they enter school (Olen, 1996:82). This disadvantage becomes apparent when learners are required to do reading for their projects and fail to understand the content of their reading matter. Understanding fiction, non-fiction and reference works often presupposes certain background knowledge from the reader. If that background knowledge is absent, the reader is unlikely to understand much of what s/he reads. This makes academic support and intensive assistance very important to these adolescents.

Although only 2,8% of the library respondents specifically asked for more Afrikaans books, Afrikaans speaking learners often complained to the library staff that the information that they required for projects were only available in English. This problem is expressed by Baker (1994:6-7) who argues that "if culture and language construct thought, even apparently straightforward text can disempower children who come from language and class backgrounds which do not match their reading matter". Olen (1996:83) found that English second language pupils may decode text satisfactorily, but experienced problems with comprehension, especially when the questions on text are not literal but inferential.

6.11.2 Recreational needs

Recreational reading is an important part of adolescents' recreational needs. Recreational reading is an important way in which the respondents develop their academic, social and imaginative skills. Even though the majority of respondents used the library mainly for curricular purposes, when they borrowed books, they chose books to read for enjoyment, rather than for school purposes. A large number of respondents (44,3%) stated that they most often borrowed books that they enjoyed reading, compared to 36,5% who indicated that they most often borrowed books

needed for school purposes. This is especially evident among the females, with 52,5% indicating that they mostly borrowed books that they enjoyed reading. The series and authors asked for also reflect their preferences for recreational reading. Female respondents asked for Sweet Valley, Point Horror, Bunty magazines, Reenboogrant, Ballet School, Goosebumps, Raven Hill, Christopher Pike, Danielle Steel, Judith Krantz and Iynia Wayans.

The differences between the genders are evident. Fourie's finding (1998:18) that significant differences appeared in the reading interests of boys and girls during middle and late childhood and continued throughout adolescence, appears to be applicable to this study. The females asked for specific authors and series, while the males had more general requests, e.g. horror stories. The females asked for romances, but also for the more "masculine" genres, e.g. horror and science fiction, whereas the males only asked for "masculine" genres. This is a general trend; both Sarland (1991) and Carlsen (1967) reported that while females enjoyed "masculine" stories, men seldom enjoyed "feminine" stories. Green and Kruger (1992:86-87) argue that realistic teenage fiction plays a role in the socialisation of girls. They found that the task of learning about heterosexual relationships was the most dominant theme in realistic teenage fiction for girls. The popularity of the genre is illustrated by the large number of females who wanted teenage love stories, especially the Sweet Valley series (20 girls).

Spreadbury and Spiller's research (1999:29) revealed almost similar gender differences in reading habits. They found that romances and family/friendship novels were favoured by female adolescents, while science fiction and adventure/fantasy were preferred by the males. The top three preferences for females were horror, thrillers and family/friendships, and for males science fiction, horror and adventure/ fantasy. Thrillers and detective stories received equal billing from both genders

Non-book materials, e.g. CDs, videos and magazines, are also important in meeting the recreational needs of adolescents. However, few adolescents borrowed these materials, mainly because they felt these collections were more suitable to "older" people's taste. They frequently asked for more updated materials. Jones (1992:62) believes that music is essential to youth culture and offers a perfect opportunity for libraries to make connections with adolescents.

6.11.3 Informational needs

The public library has an essential role to play in meeting the informational needs of adolescents. The informational role of libraries includes providing programmes to suit the needs and interests of adolescents. In response to the open-ended question where respondents could suggest what the public library should do to meet the needs of people their age, the programmes proposed by the respondents reflected typical adolescent concerns and interests. The suggestions ranged from holiday programmes to music in the library. The need for programmes to meet their recreational and informational needs, could be expected from adolescents in Grassy Park, as there are very few forms of recreation or programmes directed at their needs, available to them locally. For many of them, apart from school and church, the public library is the only place which they can frequent almost daily, in a non-threatening environment and without needing any money.

It is generally acknowledged that the lack of social programmes and positive forms of recreation, often creates fertile ground for the spread of problems associated with delinquent youth, e.g. gangsterism, drug abuse, loitering, vandalism, alcoholism and petty crime. The public library thus has a very important role to play in providing positive forms of recreation.

Le Roux (1996:133) argues that libraries can promote positive moral development in discussion groups such as sex education, social studies and reading and career guidance. It is important that libraries such as Grassy Park Library, which have access to large numbers of youth, engage in various programmes which will meet the information needs of adolescents.

Informational programmes that respondents expressed an interest in, ranged from birth control, safe sex and relationships, career guidance and starting one's own business. These needs are similar to the information needs that Fourie (1991:3-4) identified among the adolescents that she investigated. These information needs could be expected as many of these adolescents face uncertain futures, with the current high unemployment rate likely to worsen. Many matriculants leave school to face unemployment. Many schools concentrate mainly on passing exams, to the detriment of equipping adolescents with the necessary lifeskills to succeed in the real world.

The respondents expressed little interest in programmes relating to health matters, gangsterism, violence and crime, human rights, consumer affairs and legal matters, and drugs and alcoholism. To the respondents these matters were less important than their immediate concerns of relationships, safe sex, birth control, career matters and starting an own business.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Adolescent public library usage

The research revealed a very high level of public library usage among the adolescents investigated, to the extent that overcrowding occurred during peak periods. The adolescents used the public library for a variety of reasons, with curricular requirements in the form of projects, as the dominant reason. More in-house usage than borrowing took place among this age group. They were largely satisfied by the service offered by the library, but some felt that the public library did not adequately cater for all their curricular information requirements and audio-visual interests.

Gender played a very important role in adolescent library usage, reading habits, needs and interests. Traditional "male/female roles" appeared to be very much the norm. Females were more likely to visit the library and spent more time in the library, were more likely to be members of the public library and were more likely to borrow books than males. A higher percentage of males than females were working on their career plans while at the library. The females borrowed more books, records, CDs and tapes than the males, while the males borrowed more magazines and videos than the females. Males enjoyed "masculine" genres, e.g. Westerns, thrillers and horror, while females enjoyed both "masculine" and "feminine" genres, e.g. teenage love stories. The males were more likely than the females to ask for computers in the library. The differences are largely due to the prevalent different socialisation of the genders. Different approaches are thus necessary in order to provide an effective library service to both genders.

Due to their heavy reliance on the public library for curricular requirements, a danger exists that many adolescent library users associated the public library with school. A large number of adolescents also indicated that they did not use the public library during the school holidays. The reality exists that these adolescents might abandon the public library when they leave school, which would be detrimental to their post-school learning experiences.

There were many heavy readers among the adolescents. Reading among the avid readers, who were mostly female, was largely social. While the majority of females indicated that they mainly borrowed books that they enjoyed reading, they also indicated that they read mainly for educational value and self-improvement, or they qualified their enjoyment by pointing out the educational value of reading. On the other hand, while the majority of males indicated that they mostly borrowed books needed for school purposes, the majority indicated that they read mainly for enjoyment.

The single category of items most frequently borrowed from the public library by the adolescents, was books. Non-book materials, especially audio-visuals, were less often borrowed, mainly because they were perceived as out-dated and not according to the adolescents' taste. More females than males wanted more books, videos, CDs, photocopiers, music in the library, cassettes/tapes and information in the library. More males than females wanted computers, movies, more Afrikaans books and more toilets in the library.

7.2 The use of the school library.

The school library was generally under-utilised. In contrast to the public library, the school library was seldom used by the respondents for project information. This was

mainly due to a lack of relevant curricular related materials and the inaccessibility of the school library. The school library was marginalised and not seen as important to the functioning of the school. The teacher-librarian had subject teaching responsibilities and used the library as a classroom. Information skills is an optional subject, largely neglected.

The poorly resourced and under-utilised school library is a cause for concern. Studies have shown that well equipped and utilised libraries have a positive impact on academic achievement. Curriculum 2005 is based on the principle that learners would have access to a wide range of information. Instead of relying solely on their textbooks and teachers, learners would access information by using various resources and by this process gain knowledge. Teachers would largely guide this process. The successful implementation of Curriculum 2005 at the school could be compromised by the poor state of the school library and due to the fact that the teaching of information skills is neglected. This reality is acknowledged by the African National Congress in its statement that "without libraries and information services, student-centred and resource-based learning, which liberate students and teachers from authority-centred and textbook-based rote learning, are doomed to failure" (Radebe, 1997:210).

7.3 Meeting the needs of adolescents

Meeting curricular requirements, especially pertaining to projects, is a very important aspect of public library usage among the adolescents. A far higher number of respondents (77,4%) were in the library to work on projects, than to borrow books (48,7%). Some of the learners experienced difficulties and frustration in finding and using curricular information and needed intensive assistance. The provision of curricular information to learners was mainly hampered by a high demand for information on the same topic concentrated at specific times and a lack of available

material. Local schools also do not inform the public library about forthcoming projects. There appears to be a great need for co-operation between the schools and the public library in order to meet the curricular requirements of learners.

A lack of information skills could be observed among large numbers of the adolescents. Some experienced difficulties and frustrations in finding information, or lacked the skills to effectively use reference tools or to select relevant information needed for the topics that they were researching and simply copied large extracts from encyclopaedias. Some could not understand their tasks or understand what they were reading. Afrikaans speaking learners had problems understanding information that was only available in English. Learners often required intensive assistance from librarians who were not always in a position to give it, due to the fact that the library is extremely busy and there were often long queues of people waiting to be helped.

Recreational needs also proved to be an important category of needs. The adolescents most often borrowed books that they enjoyed reading. This preference was also reflected in their choices of books they would like to see more of in the library. The females expressed an interest in "masculine" and "feminine" genres, while the males were only interested in "masculine" genres. Teenage fiction proved to be the most frequent genre required by the adolescents, especially among the females. The fact that they wanted teenage romances, teenage series, horror, mysteries, adventure, cartoon books, science fiction, etc. is indicative of the fact that many of these adolescents read for pleasure and wanted more of the books that they enjoyed reading. A large degree of recreational reading took place.

The informational needs expressed by the respondents are similar to the informational needs identified in most other studies. These needs were mainly related to their current interests, e.g. birth control, safe sex and relationships, career guidance and starting one's own business.

All three categories of needs: curricular, informational and recreational, do not differ much from the needs expressed by adolescents in other studies. The needs and interests of adolescents appear to be universal.

7.4 Limitations of the study

As the research progressed, certain limitations were revealed. The main limitation was the lack of material available which dealt specifically with heterogeneous communities such as Grassy Park. It was also clear that the adolescents' library usage and reading habits could not be studied in isolation from their environment. Many factors impacted on the adolescents, which could only be dealt with in a cursory manner by this research. The educational crisis, politics, history and socio-economic circumstances are but a few of the factors that impacted on the adolescents.

It was clear that there were certain areas touched on by this research which require more in depth investigation. For instance, there is a need for more in-depth investigation into the roles that issues like language, socio-economic circumstances, schooling, teaching methods, home environment, alternative leisure pursuits, academic abilities, etc. play in library usage and reading habits.

Another limitation was that the research was biased, albeit unintentionally, to the more vocal, female adolescents. It is important that the more elusive adolescents should be reached, e.g. males, non-users, non-readers and school drop-outs. It is particularly these adolescents who need a library service the most.

An area wide survey could have drawn a wider range of respondents, including non-users. However, the cost involved in such a research project was unfortunately prohibitive.

The large number of unanswered questions posed a problem. Only the more vocal, confident and articulate adolescents answered all the questions. It would have contributed much to the research if the "silent" ones, also made use of the opportunity to be heard. This is probably a weakness of most self-administered questionnaires. However, anonymous, self-administered questionnaires were the best way to obtain reliable responses.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 8

RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

The current situation as it affects adolescents in South Africa leaves much to be desired. South Africa has a considerable backlog as far as literacy and reading skills are concerned. In 1994, there were approximately 7,5 million people aged 15 and older who were illiterate or severely undereducated (SAIRR, 1998:118). Furthermore, the reading and writing abilities of South African pupils are significantly lower than those of their peers internationally (Perold et al., 1997:29-30). Inadequate and/or the lack of public and school library facilities and resources have negative effects on the development of adolescents in this country. Adolescents from poor socio-economic areas and schools are especially disadvantaged. As the majority of South African adolescents come from homes where parents might be poorly educated, where very little reading takes place, and where there are no books and reading culture, libraries have an essential role to play. Concerted short term and long term strategies should be adopted to improve the library situation in South Africa. The following parties all have a role to play: the government, the Education Department, schools, local government, the public library sector and also individuals like school principals, teachers and librarians.

8.2 The role of the government

The government plays an important role in creating an environment in which the reading and learning habit can thrive in South Africa. Even in the current poor economic climate, it is essential that funds be spent on the youth. Education is an

important starting point. "Nothing is as important for the economic and social future of a country than the education of its youth" (Antunes, 1996:65).

A bigger budget must be allocated to the Department of Education to enable it to provide the best quality of education available and access to an excellent school library service for all learners. Well equipped and well utilised school libraries are a means by which the quality of education could be improved and the current high failure rates could be reduced. Several studies have shown that a relationship exists between well equipped school libraries and academic achievement. An example is the 1988-89 study conducted by Lance, Welborn and Hamilton-Pennell of 221 Colorado schools. They found evidence of a positive impact of media centres on academic achievement (Olen and Kruger, 1995:155). They also found that when more money is spent on media centres, academic achievement will be higher. Money spent on school libraries has the potential to save the country millions of rands in the long run.

Many countries have recognised the advantages which derived from having a reading population and have taken active steps towards promoting reading. The government must support the establishment of well-stocked, accessible and adequately staffed public libraries throughout the country, especially in disadvantaged areas. National book policies and other measures to promote books, reading and libraries should be developed, for example those adopted in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Malaysia (Perold, et al., 1997:5-7).

Other recommendations are mostly measures that have been successfully implemented by various countries. The most important are that books must be exempted from customs duties and VAT and low postage rates must be established for books, newspapers and periodicals, to make them more affordable. According to the International Publishers' Association, out of 43 countries listed, South Africa and six other countries, do not differentiate between VAT on books and the standard rate of

tax. According to this information, South Africa is out of step with international trends (Perold et al., 1997:136-7).

Media which are largely supported by public funds, should play a greater role in the promotion of books and reading, e.g. as the BBC is doing in the UK. Lower telecommunications rates would make Internet more accessible to the poor. More computer and Internet facilities must be established in public facilities. Internet access in public facilities must be subsidised.

8.3 The role of the Education Department

The Department of Education has a responsibility to consult with the public library sector whenever policy decisions are made which have direct impact on public libraries, e.g. the introduction of Curriculum 2005 has direct implications for public libraries. Consultation would enable the public library sector, in co-operation with the education sector, to plan strategically, instead of merely responding reactively and by default.

Due to the lack of or inadequate school libraries, learners rely heavily on public libraries to meet their curricular requirements. As public libraries cannot alone meet all the curricular requirements of learners, school libraries will have to play a greater role in this regard. The Education Department has a responsibility to relieve some of the pressure curricular demands place on public libraries by improving the school library services.

The Department needs to be aware that the provision of well-equipped school libraries is essential for the successful implementation of Curriculum 2005. The Department

needs to officially recognise the importance of school libraries and formulate effective policy and minimum standards for school libraries for all schools.

The Department needs to allocate a greater part of its budget for resources for school libraries, so that learners are able to meet more of their curricular requirements at their school libraries. The current Western Cape Education Department policy of providing a budget for learning resource material is not effective as very few schools appeared to use the funds for library resources. Cash-strapped schools spend most of their meagre budget on textbooks and stationery instead.

Full-time teacher-librarians must be employed at each school. Teacher-librarians add value to library resources by making them more accessible to users. Without professional staff, even the best facilities, media and equipment, do not have the same impact. It has been found that learners' achievements in reading, study skills and use of newspapers, are significantly greater at schools with school library personnel, as compared to schools without (Didier, cited in Olen, 1997:19). The main tasks of the teacher-librarian should be the teaching of information skills, providing reader guidance, managing and organising the school library, assisting learners in accessing information and liaising with teachers, parents, public librarians and community members.

With regard to teacher training, the Department must insist that teacher training institutions include a compulsory unit on the integration of information resources in teaching. The use of library resources and their integration into the classroom, must be an integral part of teacher training and practice. The Department should offer on-going in-service training of teachers and school librarians to reinforce strategies for information skills training (Zinn, 1997:69).

The subject, information skills, which is currently optional in most education departments, should be made compulsory so that all learners can learn to use libraries and various information sources with a greater degree of independence and competence. The subject should be exciting and relevant to the needs of learners and also incorporated into subject teaching. The learners need to become information literate as they master the skills of information interpretation, retrieval, selection, reduction, application and management. These skills would enable learners to access information independently (Mniki, 1995:10). School library initiated and library-based motivational programmes which incorporate "fun-type" activities were found to be more effective, rather than the teaching of traditional library skills (Loertscher, Ho and Bowie, cited in Olen, 1997:22).

The Education Department must officially recognise the important role that public libraries currently play with regard to both formal and informal education. Their role must be supported in the provision of curricular materials to public libraries. Subsidies should be granted to libraries which are active in the provision of study facilities and other assistance to students. These libraries are making a material contribution to the national education effort and given more funds, this effort could be even greater (Brooke-Norris, 1986:202). In public libraries where large numbers of learners use the public library for curricular needs, the Education Department should appoint teacher-librarians at public libraries who could assist public librarians in dealing with the large number of learners. Learners often need intensive guidance and teacher-librarians present at public libraries could teach learners information skills and help them to access information.

It is important that a policy of co-operation be promulgated and promoted at Departmental level to ensure that all schools co-operate with public libraries and that co-operation does not simply occur on an *ad hoc* basis. Such a measure would enable public libraries to better deal with curricular requirements. Co-operation is necessary

for schools and public libraries to more effectively serve their adolescent users. It would facilitate the optimal use of limited resources, a factor that is very important in the current economic climate. There are various ways in which public libraries and schools can co-operate. They need to get together and agree on the level and nature of co-operation. An example is the liaison committee that was initiated by the council of Kempton Park and local schools (Fourie, 1996:209). The national guidelines for co-operation between school and community libraries which is currently being formulated, is a positive step towards co-operation (UNESCO, 26/11/1999).

The Education Department, together with the relevant local authorities and public library service sector, should implement combined public and school libraries in areas which lack both, especially in rural areas. Successful examples of combined libraries already exist, especially in countries like Australia. In South Africa, one such example is the Botriver library, where Biblionef, a children's book providing agency, started a joint community-school library at a primary school in the small rural town of Botriver (Williams, 22/9/1999, personal communication).

Several possible options for co-operation and partnership between schools and public libraries exist, e.g. the options published by the Queensland Department of Education in 1996. There should be an awareness of the possible advantages and disadvantages of joint libraries, e.g. those drawn up by the Queensland Department of Education (1996:7-8). It is essential that feasibility studies be conducted beforehand and that clear guidelines for responsibility are drawn up and agreed and adhered to by all the parties involved.

There is a need for study support centres for the youth. Especially disadvantaged youth often need places where they can do their homework, study, work on their projects and get academic support after normal school hours. Public libraries, like Grassy Park, that are overrun by learners during peak periods, do not have the capacity

to provide academic support and enough study space for all learners. The situation leads to dissatisfaction and complaints about overcrowding, noise, lack of seating and lack of adequate assistance.

It is necessary that the Education Department, schools, community organisations, local authorities and public libraries jointly co-operate in providing study facilities in areas where these are needed. These facilities should provide study halls, with ample seating accommodation, long open hours to enable students to work during the evenings and weekends and a basic stock of reference works. They should be located in geographically convenient areas and preferably staffed by trained personnel to provide maximum assistance to users (Brooke-Norris, 1986:202). In the UK, the Prince Trust, for example, set up thirty centres in various areas in partnership with local authorities (Greenhalgh and Worpole, 1995:109).

8.4 School libraries or media centres

Teachers, especially principals, need to change their attitude towards school libraries and recognise that well equipped and well utilised school libraries could greatly enhance the quality of education offered by their schools. A correlation exists between the active support by the school principal of individualised learning, and the successful development of the school library. In South Africa, principals in general, undervalue school libraries and do not support their establishment (Radebe, 1997:218-220). The teaching profession needs to see libraries as important to the functioning of the school and not peripheral to it. Schools should supplement Departmental funding by allocating part of funds raised to equipping their school libraries as it is a resource from which the entire school body could benefit.

In order to increase the use of school library facilities where these exist, they need to be effectively designed and equipped, e.g. there should be facilities for learners to work on assignments in small groups, the interior should be attractive and rules should be kept to the minimum. Learners should be encouraged to use their school libraries and become involved in their school libraries, e.g. learners at Livingstone High School, in Claremont, are library assistants, positions they are very proud of.

School libraries should have longer open hours in order to allow learners greater access to these facilities. Learners should be allowed to use the libraries before school, during intervals, after school and also during normal school hours. School libraries should not be used as classrooms, staff rooms, locked storerooms of books, meeting rooms or for any other non-library related activities.

A balanced school library collection, consisting of books and audio-visual material, which complies with educationally sound qualitative and quantitative standards, is essential for school library services to be rendered. The collection should provide for all the curricular and extra-curricular media needs of the school. A close liaison between subject teachers and teacher-librarians should be promoted so that the collection building of school libraries relates to curricular requirements and the collection can be relevant to the needs of learners. The collection should also be regularly weeded and supplemented to ensure that the material is relevant to the curriculum and the needs of the learners (Overduin and De Wit, 1986:813-814.) Library materials should be well organised, so that learners can find the items that they require. Like the public libraries are currently doing, school libraries should supplement their collections with pamphlet and newspaper clipping files of current information. This would give learners greater access to up-to-date information. Collection development responsibilities could be divided between school libraries with subject-orientated collections and public libraries with the more comprehensive collection (Fourie,1996:212).

8.5 The role of teachers

Subject teachers play a significant role with regard to the use of school libraries. Teachers' use of resources and the school library are directly related to teachers' attitude toward and competency in using information sources. Teachers should become aware of the information sources available to them and encourage their use by learners through the inclusion of media in the classroom situation and in assignments. Teachers must be seen to be users of the school library and its collection (Didier, cited in Olen, 1997:19). American educational research shows that the use of the school library needs to form an integral part of the curriculum to have a real impact on the quality of learning. Resource-based teaching is thus important (National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), 1994: 59-60).

Teachers need to provide learners with structured guidance on how to do their projects. Without proper guidance, the value of doing projects is doubtful, as learners tend to complete projects by copying information from one or two sources and gain very little from the experience. Learners who have problems with schoolwork, need more intensive assistance and guidance from teachers when doing project work. For this reason some learners in the investigation wanted the public library to provide classes for students who could not cope with certain subjects. Teachers have a responsibility towards such children.

Teachers, accompanied by their classes, should visit the public library and school library to attend a library orientation session, before any projects are set. Regular class visits to the public library and school library should take place where the subject teacher, together with the library staff, assists learners in accessing information resources.

Before setting any assignment topic, subject teachers must make sure that the school library and/or the public library have the relevant materials, at the level and in the language required. Topics should be carefully chosen, keeping the available materials and the abilities and skills of the learners concerned in mind. Subject teachers need to inform both the teacher-librarian and public library timeously of all topics set. To prevent concentrated demand on limited resources, the same topic should not be set to more than one class and learners should be allowed flexibility in selection of topics.

Teachers often see projects and assignments as the only form of continuous assessment and libraries as the only sources of information, and this message is passed on to learners (Zinn, 9/2/99, personal communication). Teachers and learners should be encouraged to be more creative and explore and experiment with exciting and innovative ways of discovering, learning and presenting information. Learners should also be encouraged to consult sources other than libraries where possible and relevant. For example, they should be encouraged to use various media, newspapers and magazines to a far greater degree than is currently the case.

8.6 The role of the public library

Adolescents must be recognised as an important group of public library users as their library experience at this stage of their lives can influence their library usage for the rest of their lives. It is important that each library experience is a happy one, in order to create a nation of life-long readers and learners.

Public librarians need to recognise that the needs and interests of adolescents are not only diverse within the group itself, but also distinct from other user groups. These diverse and distinct needs and interests must be recognised and catered for.

Adolescents have wide and varied needs and interests, which public libraries tend to ignore because they are overwhelmed by curricular requirements. It is important that all the needs and interests of adolescents are adequately catered for.

The recreational interests of adolescents should also be adequately catered for. Recreational reading is important to adolescents as many of them grow up in deprived circumstances and reading is an important way in which they can dream, fantasise, develop and learn. Children can only learn a limited amount through experience. Their further development is dependent on media of which books have an important potential (Russell, 1979:4). Many adolescent readers in the survey wanted more teenage novels and audio-visual collections more suited to their taste. Adolescents who find that their non-curricular interests are also catered for by the public library, are less likely to abandon the library once their formal schooling is completed.

There are many programmes that are of interest to adolescents. Librarians should conduct their own surveys to determine the most pressing needs and interests in their communities. Librarians do not need to present proposed programmes themselves, as there are many organisations and specialists, e.g. SPADES, NICRO and various social workers, who are willing and qualified to present these programmes. Librarians often only have to act as catalysts by calling on relevant people, providing a venue and publicising the programmes. Where these programmes already exist in the community, it would be unnecessary for libraries to duplicate them. The adolescents might not always know about the existence of these programmes and it is therefore necessary for the library to publicise these programmes. Public libraries can also provide support for these programmes in various ways, e.g. referrals, book displays or talks by guest speakers.

Local authorities need to provide adequate staffing levels, so that specific staff members can be assigned to work specifically with the adolescent users. Many

libraries have children's and adult's librarians, but due to staffing shortages, there are seldom any staff appointed whose sole responsibility is service to adolescents. As a result adolescent services are often neglected. Such staff members should also liaise with schools to ensure that co-operation between schools and public libraries is maintained.

In order to assist users to achieve a greater degree of independent library usage, public libraries must have library orientation sessions for all age groups. Public libraries must make sure that they have user-friendly, clear and unambiguous directional and locational signs.

The survey showed that there is a clear correlation between gender and public library usage, which indicates that the public library might not be reaching many adolescent males. It is thus important that public libraries take steps to attract more male adolescents, e.g. by being more sensitive to their needs as far as collection development and library programmes are concerned. The public library needs to address its image.

Appropriate magazines, audiovisuals and computers can all be utilised to draw male adolescents and reluctant readers into the library. Magazines are frequently read because they cover topical issues, they can be read quickly, they cover social aspects with articles and pictures, and it is also "acceptable" for male adolescents to read magazines. Even reluctant readers are drawn to magazines with their attractive covers, relatively simple vocabulary, many pictures and short articles. Furthermore, the most current and readable information for adolescents is often available in magazines (Jones, 1992:56-7).

It is not enough that libraries be user-friendly, they should also be adolescent-friendly. This means getting rid of unnecessary rules and regulations that impede the

adolescents' use of the library and its resources, e.g. at some libraries teenagers are not allowed to borrow videos. It also means a helpful and friendly staff to assist adolescents. An adolescent-friendly library should be a pleasure for adolescents to visit and revisit.

It is important that public libraries provide users with access to computers and the Internet. The Internet's interactive and multimedia approach is becoming the norm among competitive nations. Learners should be able to access electronic information and participate in electronic networks which will enhance learning and teaching (Karlsson et al., 1996:19) To cope in today's competitive world, it is essential that the Internet becomes a feature in every public library, especially in communities where people have no access to computers at home. Lack of access will mean that our adolescents will be left behind in the information society

Enough facilities, like photocopy machines, toilets, tables and chairs should be supplied to meet the needs of the users, although the experience of Grassy Park Library has shown that it is very difficult to keep up with the demand for these facilities.

It must be recognised that public libraries currently play a very important role in meeting the various needs of adolescent library users. The public library has the potential to have a great positive impact on the lives of adolescent library users. The staff, the books, library materials, including audio-visual materials and various library programmes expose adolescents to the world, and could be their key to a better life. With adequate support from various role players, e.g. the Education Department, local authorities, teachers, parents and the community at large, the potential exists for a further expansion of the role of public libraries. The end result will be better informed, more confident adolescents, well prepared to face the challenges of the future and adulthood.

8.6.1 Improving Grassy Park Public Library's service to adolescents

In addition to the recommendations mentioned above, there are specific measures that the staff of Grassy Park Library could implement in order to improve the public library service to teenagers.

As some of the adolescents felt that the library neglected their interests, one of the respondents suggested that the library should establish a forum for teenagers to express their needs and interests. As a result, the library intends establishing a forum for teenagers to express their needs and interests. The forum could establish a formal line of communication between adolescents and library staff which could address some of the misconceptions some of the adolescents have of the library and vice versa. The forum could make recommendations for new books, magazines and audio-visual materials. The Friends of Grassy Park Library could be approached about fund-raising for the specific aim of improving the library's CD collection.

The forum will also plan holiday programmes and programmes on the issues that the adolescents are interested in. The forum could also start a newsletter which could be distributed at the local schools and places where adolescents congregate. Such a measure would make non-users aware of what is happening at the public library and they might be encouraged to visit the library. A greater involvement in the library would make adolescents aware that the library is not only interested in the needs and interests of children and adults, but that the needs and interests of adolescents are also important and would be catered for.

Due to the widespread interest among the surveyed adolescents for workshops on how to use various resources to find information for projects/themes, the library will

provide ongoing workshops on the topic. Help with projects and homework will be provided where possible. A campaign to encourage retired teachers and librarians to volunteer their services will be implemented. The aim is to provide learners with as much guidance as possible, without actually doing their projects and homework for them. Jones (1992:79) provides some useful principles to apply when providing reference services to adolescent learners:

- Help students find the information they need;
- Be friendly both verbally and nonverbally;
- Help them increase their "information independence";
- Follow up;
- Try to reduce frustration when necessary.

The public library needs to develop a quality working relationship with the surrounding schools in order to provide a better service to learners. Currently only a few teachers respond to requests to inform the library timeously of projects. Very few teachers visit the library before setting projects and some teachers have been giving their learners unchanged reading lists for years. It is necessary that the public library staff becomes more proactive, set up formal channels of communication, visit schools and build a working relationships with the teachers. At the very least, a method for formal communication about forthcoming assignments should be established, in order to facilitate the following (Fourie, 1995: 134-6):

- public library staff could identify and locate relevant sources required for projects;
- relevant materials could be held on reserve for potential users;
- a study collection of suitable material could be built up;
- advance preparation would relieve pressure on staff at peak times.

Computers and Internet access should be provided, as it is important for learners to become computer literate as very few of them are exposed to computers and are in danger of being left behind in the information age. Currently, the public library sector

in partnership with the Cape Metropolitan Council and the private sector, are establishing small business corners in various public libraries in the Cape Metropolitan area. Each small business corner has Internet, printing and faxing facilities available for public use (Mawela, 1999:14). Grassy Park Library is one of the public libraries which will get a small business corner. In this way it is hoped that the growing demand for access to computers and the Internet can be met. This could change the adolescents' negative perception of the library as being "out-of-touch with the modern world".

To paraphrase Harmon and Bradburn (1988:24-25), libraries and librarians have much to offer young people to help them fulfil their needs. Librarians who serve the youth, have a responsibility to be advocates for all their patrons' needs. One must believe in the right of adolescents to arm themselves with any information which will enhance their growth.

These measures would go a long way to make Grassy Park Public Library a teenager-friendly library, where adolescents will feel welcome. In meeting a wide range of adolescent needs and requirements, the public library will no longer only be associated with curricular requirements, and the adolescents will be exposed to the non-curricular aspects of the public library as well. It is hoped that these measures would attract adolescent non-users to the public library and encourage the current users to continue using it long after adolescence and formal schooling. For the well-being of our country, it is important to create a nation of information literate people, who are readers, learners and lifelong users of public libraries.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE 1 (To be conducted at the high school)

The aim of the following questionnaire is to determine the use of information resources. The results will enable Grassy Park Library to provide a better service to you. You will remain anonymous, so please feel free to express your opinion.

Please place a tick (✓) in the appropriate box:

1. You are: Girl Boy
2. Age:
3. Standard:
4. How many projects/themes do you have to do for school this year?
 - 4.1. None
 - 4.2. One per month
 - 4.3. One per week
 - 4.4. Other (specify).....
5. Where do you find most of the information that you need for school projects/themes?
 - 5.1. At your school library
 - 5.2. At home
 - 5.3. At the public library
 - 5.4. Other (specify).....
6. Do you use your school library for information for your projects/themes?
 - 6.1. Yes
 - 6.2. Sometimes
 - 6.3. No
7. Does your school library have the information that you require for your projects/themes?
 - 7.1. All of the information that I need
 - 7.2. Most of the information that I need
 - 7.3. Only some of the needed information
 - 7.4. None.
8. If you use your school library, please rank your satisfaction with your school library's ability to meet your information requirements:
 - 8.1. Very satisfied
 - 8.2. Satisfied
 - 8.3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - 8.4. Dissatisfied
 - 8.5. Very dissatisfied

Please explain your answer:

.....
.....

10. Are you a member of a public library?

10.1. Yes

10.2. No

11. Do you use the public library for information for your projects/themes?

11.1. Yes

11.2. Sometimes

11.3. No

12. Does the public library have the information that you require for your projects/themes?

12.1. All of the information that I need

12.2. Most of the information that I need

12.3. Only some of the needed information

12.4. None.

13. If you use the public library, please rank your satisfaction with the public library's ability to meet your information requirements:

13.1. Very satisfied

13.2. Satisfied

13.3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

13.4. Dissatisfied

13.5. Very dissatisfied

14. Explain your answer:

.....
.....
.....

15. Do you use the public library for any other reasons besides finding information for projects/themes?

Yes

No

If yes, please specify:

.....
.....
.....

16. Did you use the public library during the last school holidays:

16.1. No

16.2. Yes

If yes, for what purpose

.....
.....
.....

13. Name the places and/or people, other than the school and public libraries, that you have used this year to gain information for your school projects/themes:

.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (To be conducted at Grassy Park Library)

The aim of the following questionnaire is to determine whether Grassy Park Library meet your needs. The results will enable us to provide a better service to you. You will remain anonymous, so please feel free to express your opinion:

Please place a tick (✓) in the appropriate box:

1. You are: Girl Boy

2. Age:

3. Are you:

3.1. A scholar If you are a scholar, in what standard are you?

3.2. Working

3.3. Unemployed

3.4. Other (specify).....

4. Are you a member of this library (Grassy Park Library)

4.1. Yes

4.2. No

5. What is the main reason you came to this library today:

5.1. To borrow books to read

5.2. To find information for my school project/theme

5.3. To socialise

5.4 To find information relating to my career

5.5 To find information relating to my personal life

5.6 Other (specify).....

6. Please rank your satisfaction with the public library's ability to meet your needs:

13.1. Very satisfied

13.2. Satisfied

13.3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

13.4. Dissatisfied

13.5. Very dissatisfied

7. Please explain your answer:

.....
.....

8. What should the library do to meet the needs of the people in your age group:

.....
.....

9. Would you attend any of the following programmes or workshops held at the library which are directed at your age group (tick off any number):

9.1. How to use various resources to find information on projects/themes

9.2. Birth control, safe sex and relationships.

9.3. Family life, caring for children and marriage counselling

- 9.4. Career information/guidance
- 9.5. How to start your own business
- 9.6. Health matters
- 9.7. Human rights, consumer affairs and legal matters
- 9.8. How to handle personal problems, e.g. peer pressure, teenage pregnancy
- 9.9. Drugs and alcoholism
- 9.10. Gangsterism, violence and crime
- 9.11. Other (Specify).....

10. What items do you mostly borrow from this library:

- 10.1. Books
- 10.2. Magazines
- 10.3. Records, cassette tapes and/or C.D.s
- 10.4. Videos

11. What items would you like to see more of in this library?

.....

.....

12. What books do you borrow most often from this library:

- 12.1. Books that you enjoy reading
- 12.2. Books needed for school purposes
- 12.3. Books relating to work interests.
- 12.4. Books relating to hobbies and sport.
- 12.5. Books that help you deal with personal problems.
- 12.6. Other (specify).....

13. What kinds of books would you like to see more of in the library?

.....

14. On average, how many books do you read?

- 14.1. More than one book per week
- 14.2. One book per week
- 14.3. One book per month
- 14.4. Less than one book per month
- 14.5. None
- 14.6. Other.....

15. Why do you read/ or do not read? Complete the answer which applies to you:

read because

..... I do?

not not read because

.....

Please make any further comments/suggstions on the back of this page. Thank you for your participation.