INVESTIGATING INFORMATION NEEDS OF LIBRARY USERS: A CASE OF BUSHBUCKRIDGE COMMUNITY LIBRARY

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the information needs of rural communities in Bushbuckridge. Investing information of communities is vital because information plays an important role in enabling communities to meet their development needs, such as employment, education, health, safety, food security, and leisure. Libraries are therefore instrumental in helping library users to meet these needs. The study utilised triangulated (quantitative) and (qualitative) research methods. Participants in this study included 100 library users, four librarians and one library manager drawn from four local libraries through a combination of random (probability) and purposive (non-probability) sampling. The quantitative part of the study i.e. survey measured the perceptions of users on library services through questionnaires, while unstructured interviews elicited the experiences of librarians in addressing the information needs of library users in the four libraries of Bushbuckridge. Findings from the survey revealed, inter alia, that: most (65%) users had access to library services, although high travelling costs were a major barrier for those living in remote villages; a large number of users (60%) still depended on librarians to help them find information, while a growing number of users (33% had begun using computers and the internet to meet their information needs; the most important reasons for using the library were: assignments, study and careers, and, the majority of users in all four libraries were generally satisfied with the quality of the services rendered, although significant improvements were required in the supply of materials and water. Findings from interviews with librarians demonstrated that significant steps had been taken to address information needs of users across the four libraries. Common examples include: books and materials; computers and internet services; study groups; user training, and outreach programmes – although these were hampered by shortage of staff and vehicles. Cross-cutting problems included delays in purchasing of library materials; shortage of water and low perceptions about the benefits of library services in the community. In light of these results, it was concluded that information needs of library users had been partially met, with greater room for improvement in areas like human resources, information technology, transport and procurement systems and processes. The research findings have demonstrated that if provided well, library information services may help reduce the challenges of illiteracy,

poverty and unemployment in this area. In light of these findings, the study recommended, inter alia, that the skills of library staff along with procurement systems and processes be upgraded in order to satisfy the information needs of library users in the study area. The study further recommended that outreach programmes be scaled up to increase awareness in the community about the role and benefits of library services in facilitating community development, particularly in Bushbuckridge where challenges of illiteracy, poverty and unemployment continue unabated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Masters in Information Studies has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University: that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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Sambo P.K   DATE

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mentor, Sipho Richard Shilenge, who has been supporting and encouraging me throughout this research project. I would also like to dedicate this work to my parents,especially my mom Racken Saiya, my two sisters: Jabu and Lerato and my children, Buhle, Sibusiso and Muhluri, who have supported and inspired me to work hard to achieve the things that I wanted in my life.I also wish to acknowledge the support from my colleagues at Mafemani public library , Patience Mbowane , Mike Maaboi and Tiyani Nxumalo. I am also grateful to Shodi Nyawo for editing this work. Lastly my helper, Franscina Sithole who was always available when I was busy with my studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult basic education and training
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BLM	Bushbuckridge Local Municipality
EDM	Ehlanzeni District Municipality
HIV	Human immune deficiency virus
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDP	Integrated development planning
ISP	Information search process
IT	Information technology
LIASA	Library and Information Association of South Africa
LIS	Library and information service
NCLIS	National Commission on Libraries and Information Science
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

"Information is increasingly becoming an important resource that contributes to the development of rural communities as it brings knowledge that enables them to meet their needs, e.g. health, careers, business, education and training" (Islam and Ahmed, 2012:1). Easy and affordable access to current, sufficient and relevant information ensures that rural communities gain the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to participate and contribute to their own development (Moore, 2007; Kamba 2009 and Etebu, 2012). The information needs of rural communities are therefore important to providers of library and information services (Balit, 1996, Munyua, 2000 and Moshapo and Hanrahan, 2004 in Islam and Ahmed, 2012).

According to Ngulube (2012:1), "libraries and librarians play a central role in organising and communicating knowledge. They are also an important part of the knowledge production and use chain." Thus, as a source of knowledge or information, libraries and librarians must be able to "meet the diverse and rapidly changing information needs of library userk2s/users, particularly in rural areas where such information tends to be scarce and/or limited" (Naidoo and Raju, 2011). This means that "the information kept by library must be relevant, accurate, current and consistent with the needs of users". "These needs must be assessed and appropriate strategies developed to ensure that library services meet them" (Wiese and du Plessis, 2014).

The above view is also supported by Islam and Ahmed (2012:1) who argue that "as communities change so do the information needs of the people". Therefore, "a library cannot continue to attract users without tailoring information and resources to meet the needs of the community." One of the most difficult but necessary activities in the provision of community information is the assessment of the needs. This must be done regularly, for libraries and information centers to remain relevant Kaniki (1994). According to this author, 'several factors impede assessment of community's

information needs and these include indifference of library personnel, genuine lack of staff and financial resources, and staff reluctance to conduct such assessments. Related and perhaps more critical is the lack of knowledge of assessment techniques and the difficulty of developing simple but reliable methodologies.'

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Public Library Manifesto (1994:1) describes a public library as a living force for education, culture and information and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through minds of men and women. What is this means is that libraries can and should contribute to the holistic development of individuals and groups in rural areas, including Bushbuckridge which is the focus of this study. Balapanidou (2015:4) concurs with this statement when he says that public libraries have always been collecting, preserving and providing resources and services relating to the history and development of the local community – including library users.

According to the International Federation of Library Associations (2001:2), the primary purpose of the public library is to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including creation and leisure. They have an important role in development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinions.

It has been acknowledged that libraries play a key role in ensuring that rural communities achieve their educational goals. Community libraries in particular, have always been central to promoting literacy in the populations that they serve (Library and Information Services Transformation Charter, 2014:1-2). "The provision of books and other media for leisure and personal exploration and fulfillment will remain a central part of the mission of library information services. The promotion of reading, for example, through family literacy projects, adult education programmes, teenage reading clubs, and storytelling and writing activities is vital. Knowledge and learning societies are

reading societies" (Dick 2009, in Library and Information Services Transformation Charter, 2014:1-2).

Against this background, this study utilises triangulation approach to investigate the information needs of library users in four local libraries of Bushbuckridge. The study is based on the assumption that libraries need to play a major role in addressing the information needs of rural communities by providing relevant, useful and tailored information that meet people social and economic development needs.

1.2 Background of the study

According to Kamba (2009:2), "rural communities in Africa constitutes the larger percentage of the population whose information and development needs are not adequately met and consequently they have not been able to productively participate in the development process and enjoy the benefits thereof. "Equity and justice requires that any programme for socio-economic development, whether general or in a specific sector, should cover and benefit all sections of the society, irrespective of race, caste, colour, religion, culture and other social, economic or political differences" (Kamba ,2009:2).

Crucially, Cheunwattana (1998) notes that the majority of rural population in developing countries are poor and illiterate and are economically and socially disadvantaged and their information needs have not been receiving much attention. Supporting this view, Kamba (2009) and Chester and Neelameghan (2006) argue that rural communities in Africa constitute the larger percentage of the population whose information and development remain largely unmet; which hampers their socio-economic development.

In the case of South Africa, lack of library and information services in rural areas conflict with the national imperatives to which LIS services are aligned. According to the South African Libraries 20 Year Review Report (2014:1-8), "these national imperatives include redress and equity, social and economic development, social cohesion, poverty

eradication, diversity and responsiveness, nation-building, entrenching a culture of reading and developing a national literature in South Africa's indigenous languages."

1.2.1 Information needs of rural communities

As previously mentioned, the main focus of this research is the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge. Kamba (2009) point out that the information needs of library users are diverse and multifaceted. These range from farming, family planning, basic services, welfare agencies, child care, transport, indigenous plants and herbs, crops, schools, colleges, universities, churches, support networks and nature conservation.

Harande (2009:2) argues that "sometimes rural communities are provided with information that is either not reliable or distorted in the process of transmission. This unhealthy situation constitutes a major impediment, which keeps the rural communities in developing countries far away from development indicators." Besides receiving distorted and/or insufficient information, rural communities also face other barriers that prevent them from meeting their information needs. These include "basic infrastructure (e.g. electricity, telecommunication, utilities, roads and transportation); low level of literacy; lack of proper information services and technical competencies" (Kamba, 2009).

In light of the challenges mentioned above, Kamba (2009:7) suggests several steps that may be taken to address the information needs of rural communities. These include "creating awareness (through village heads, community leaders); public lecturers (on market days, hospitals and other social gathering); reawakening the role of oral tradition in most of the rural communities and integrating it with digital technologies for enhancement; organising shows and public gathering for education and entertainment; constructing viewing centres, establishing innovative community information centres; skills acquisition centre, and deploying extension information workers to rural communities".

1.2.2 Role of libraries in community development

Research indicates that "the emergence of information and knowledge society is a significant intervention with the potential to ensure that knowledge and information are very important for achieving meaningful development" Sturges and Neill (1998). This view is supported by Balit (1998:1) in Kamba 2009:2) who points out that the least expensive input for rural development is knowledge. Knowledge and information are basic ingredients of making one to be self-reliant and are essential for facilitating rural development and bringing about social and economic change. Therefore, libraries should be at the forefront of this information provision revolution."

Munyua (2000) points out that library users require information inter alia on supply of inputs, new technologies, early warning systems (drought, pests, and diseases), credit, market prices and their competitors. There is general consensus in the literature that information plays such an important role in almost every human activity and access to information and advice is a key resource for local people (Harande,2009). According to Sturges and Neil (1998) in Kamba 2009:2), "lack of information has impacted negatively on the development process, particularly in rural areas. One of the factors contributing to this problem is that information is still not perceived as important as other resources necessary to support rural development. "What compounds the problem is that "planners, developers and governments do not yet acknowledge the role of information as a basic resource, or are unaware of its potential value" (Kamba, 2009:2).

For this reason, information can be regarded as a basic resource by African communities which the populace may use to improve their conditions of living and is essential to development process. Not only does information expand the possibilities of social, political and educational and economic development of any country, but it also facilitates awareness and empowerment. Information is an asset and a resource for development of communities, governments, agencies, and the target population. "Making full use of the right of access to information is the decisive operation in modern society and the source of wealth and power" (Kamba, 2009:2). It is for this reason that Okiy (2003) described information as an important ingredient I the development

process. He argues that people in rural areas whether literate or not should have access to information which will empower them in their social and political obligations and enable them to become better and informed citizens

Kamba (2009:7) further argues that "rural community development is the back bone of a country's development; ignoring rural communities by not providing them with basic needs and access to information infrastructure and services will basically lead them to migrate from rural communities to concentrate in urban areas which not augur well for African development."

1.2.3 Overview of the library services sector

The survey of public libraries led by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) in 2007 found that "South Africa had three libraries per million people, comparing unfavourably with countries in the developed world but quite well with other African countries like Botswana or Kenya" (Department of Arts and Culture Report, 2008:122).

Furthermore, the DAC Report also revealed that "South Africa has only 34% of the public libraries it requires, meaning that another 2762 need to be built (DAC Report, 2013). In Bushbuckridge, which is the central focus of this research, more than 5941 246 people rely on four libraries to satisfy their information needs. Clearly, there is a need to understand whether these libraries are able to meet the information needs of library users, particularly in Bushbuckridge which is the main focus on the study.

- **Challenges and opportunities in LIS sector**

An examination of the LIS Transformation Charter (2014:30-31) suggests that there are both challenges and opportunities that impact provision of library information services to communities, particularly in rural areas. These range from shortage of human resources and funding to limited access to LIS. Below is a brief discussion of these challenges.

- **Shortage of human resources and skills**

It is generally accepted that effective delivery of library and information services to rural communities in particular depend on the availability of skilled and hard-working employees. Unfortunately, as explicitly acknowledged in the LIS Transformation Charter (2014:32), "too few library professionals are being trained to meet present and future needs; some institutions are closing their LIS schools and few are still training librarians; present practitioners are not receiving continuing professional development to equip them with new skills; attracting young people into the library profession is a major challenge, and that the work the workforce in all sub-sectors are ageing, with serious implications for the future." With respect to education and training needs of library staff, the LIS Transformation Charter (2014: 32) notes that "the LIS curriculum does not always meet the needs of the contemporary profession and its constituencies." As will be seen in Chapter 4, the study included some questions that focused on the staffing needs of the four participating libraries in Bushbuckridge.

- **Funding constraints**

In addition to the challenges mentioned above, community libraries in South Africa have also been seriously affected by the lack of adequate funding arrangements. There is no funding framework or model with clear emphasis on the funding of library and information sector and of libraries within organisations (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **Limited access to library and information services**

Access means the ability to access the functionality, and benefit of libraries. This include distance and transport, building design, assistive technology, relevant and usable content of resources, suitable format of resources, and the languages spoken by staff. Accessibility is also used to focus on people with disabilities and their right of access to library services (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

According to the LIS Transformation Charter (2014), many people do not have access to library services. There is unequal spatial access to library services with regard to

urban/rural, suburb/township/informal settlements as well as the different provinces and local governments. This applies not only to community and school libraries but also certain university libraries. The shortage of suitable resources in the languages of potential library users also limits their access to information and the services of the library. Many libraries ate in old buildings and in buildings which have not been designed as libraries. The creation of physical infrastructure to provide access to the facilities is a challenge. Most libraries do not provide formats that are accessible to visually impaired and learning disabled users (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **High level of adult illiteracy and a low level of functional literacy**

According to the LIS Transformation Charter (2014:92-93) "there is a high level of adult illiteracy and a low level of functional literacy", all of which prevent communities from meeting their information needs. Based on the 1995 Household Survey and 1996 General Population Census, of about 26 million adults in South Africa (people aged 15 and over), about 12 to 13 million have less than a full (Grade 9) general education, 7. 4 to 8,5 million have less than Grade 7, and about 2. 9 to 4.2 million have no schooling at all, and are illiterate. There is an unsatisfactory literacy environment in homes. The National Survey into the Reading and Book reading Behaviour of Adult South Africans (2007) revealed that half of South African households have no books (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

The LIS Transformation Charter (2014:93) further notes that "the majority of South Africans are infrequent readers and the usual reading materials are newspapers and magazines. A quarter of the population never read in their leisure time, with people in rural areas and older people featuring strongly in this group". Some of the factors that continue to prevent libraries from contributing to a reading culture include poor supply of reading materials in indigenous languages, the impact of the mass media, the mismatch of content and reader needs, budget cuts, tax on books, library closures and the issue of unfunded and under-funded mandates.

Other constraints limiting access to LIS services include the following: First, distance is a deterrent to use of the library, particularly given the spatial distribution of public libraries, thus privileging white communities. This is a legacy of the past. Second, opening hours limited to the typical working day also negate social inclusion. Thirdly, the extension of opening hours affects operating finance because of cost implications. The average opening hours of libraries in South Africa are 40 hours per week, compared with Cuba, with its admirable literacy rates, where the average opening hours are 90 hours per week. Fourth, security issues – public libraries have also been exposed to threats to security as have so many other entities. This has limited opening hours in many instances to office hours. Fifth, membership charges also act as a barrier and highlight the unevenness of provision. In some areas they are applied and in others not (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **Access for people with disabilities**

According to the LIS Transformation Charter (2014), between 5% and 12% of South Africans live with moderate to severe disabilities, which include sight disability, hearing disability, physical disability, and other kinds. People with disabilities are excluded from the mainstream of society and experience difficulty in accessing fundamental human rights. Disabled people's organisations across the world have therefore repositioned disability as a human rights issue. The social model has become the accepted approach to people with disability. This model recognises that it is society itself that should accommodate people with disability rather than the other way round. This model requires substantial changes not only to the physical environment but also to people's attitudes in order to ensure the right of people with disabilities to play a full, participatory role in society (LIS Transformation, 2014).

- **Information communications technology**

While information communication technology (ICT) is increasingly becoming a major competitive and service delivery tool worldwide, many community libraries in South Africa are not adequately equipped with information communications technology to be able to deliver much needed information to users, who need this information to meet their development needs. ICT has significantly transformed the way in which libraries

package and deliver information services to users. For example, computers and Internet services enable users to search and find information quickly and timeously.

- **Procurement of library and information resources**

Inflexible and ineffective procedures hamper the procurement and acquisition of library and information resources and this leads to waste. Given this situation, there is a need for libraries to work with publishers and booksellers with recognised professional organisations as LIS sector stakeholders that are fully committed to assisting libraries to deliver their mandate to their communities (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **Community-related challenges**

According to the LIS Transformation Charter (2014), some of the challenges impacting provision of LIS are linked to the recipients i.e. users. First, many people lack the reading and information skills for them to be able to benefit optimally from library services, including at tertiary level and in the workplace. Second, many are also unaware of the benefits that libraries offer, e.g. information on rights, services, health and work. Third, poverty has a significantly negative impact on library use. The spatial distribution of libraries mostly places them out of reach of the poor. Lastly, in rural areas, traditional leaders are not being sufficiently involved in the kind of LIS decision-making and promotion which would strongly enhance community involvement and LIS use.

- **Opportunities**

Despite the problems mentioned above, opportunities exist to provide LIS that meet the development needs of library users nationwide. These include but are not limited to the following (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014):

- **A culture of reading**

As knowledge centres, libraries are expected to play a leading role in promoting and instilling a culture of reading with an emphasis also on writing and learning. Although reading occurs both inside and outside of libraries, they play a leading role in building a nation of life-long readers. They supply not only books, but other reading materials such as newspapers, magazines, reports and pamphlets.

In addition to their educational and cultural roles, libraries also contribute to economic development by improving productivity through a reading and functionally literate workforce. There are already several state and private literacy organisations, as well as public-private partnerships, that promote reading and that involve libraries in these partnerships. There are however challenges that need to be met in order to entrench a culture of reading (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **Additional Funding**

According to the South African Public Libraries Review Report (2014), the community library conditional grant was deployed in 2007 with the allocation of R1 billion for a period of three years. It estimated that R1, billion would be spent for this purpose in the cycle 2012/13 to 2014/15. This represents a good opportunity to scale up provision of library and information services to meet the information needs of library users, especially in rural areas where supply of these services tend to be limited and dissipated.

1.2.4 Legislation impacting library and information services

Consideration of the key laws underpinning provision of LIS is central to the goal of this study for two reasons: firstly, they set the guidelines that should inform delivery of these services to communities. Secondly, they provide the yard stick against which the efforts of libraries in meeting communities' information needs can be determined. These are summarised below (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014:26-30):

- **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996)**

Crucially, the Bill of Rights in the Constitution (Chapter Two) enshrines the fundamental rights to equality; freedom of express and access to information, education and training opportunities for all South Africans. These rights impact directly on the functions of libraries as both custodians and providers of information services to library users generally and library users in particular. In this way, the Constitution paves the way for people to use library services in order to develop themselves through reading, research, learning and information sharing (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014:26).

- **The White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, 1996**

Driven by the Department of Arts and Culture, this White Paper aims to promote, develop and make accessible the rich and diverse traditions of all South African literatures in written and oral forms. Additionally, the White Paper also emphasises the role of libraries in development and in the promotion of a culture of reading and learning. In the same vein, this White Paper also acknowledges explicitly the lack of an entrenched reading culture in South Africa; suggesting that library services are currently not being utilised by all the people of South Africa due to lack of understanding about the potential benefits of these services (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **The National Library of South Africa Act, No.2 of 1998**

Chiefly this Act establishes the National Library of South Africa through the amalgamation of the South African Library in Cape Town and the State Library in Pretoria. More importantly, this Act also provides for the collection, recording, preservation and giving access to the national documentary heritage and the world's information resources. The overarching goal is to ensure that library users have reasonable access to archival information; which they can use to meet their development needs (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **The South African Library for the Blind Act, No.91 of 1998**

This Act is primarily designed to promote the information needs of people with disabilities. Specifically, the Act focuses on blind and print-handicapped readers and on improving access to library and information services for South Africans with disabilities. A fundamental objective of this Act is to ensure that librarians create a suitable environment that enables disabled persons to access and use library services to meet their development needs (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol**

As a member of the international community, South Africa ratified the UN Convention and its Protocol, thus committing itself to modify and amend existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that discriminate against persons with disabilities. This commitment is reflected in the LIS Charter (2014), which provides for redress and equity in the provision of library and information services.

- **The Legal Deposit Act, No. 54 of 1997**

In terms of this Act, publishers in South Africa must provide copies of each new publication to places of legal deposit. Additionally, this act also guarantees the preservation of the national documentary heritage, and its availability across the country. The Act further notes that suppliers of library and information resources are key stakeholders in ensuring that communities have access to these services (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **The Copyright Act, No.98 of 1978**

Essentially, this Act regulates copying and access to information. Under this Act, it is noted that copyright laws must be fair, and that such laws should "balance the interests of commercial and non-commercial publishers with the public interest." In addition, the Act also makes special provision for libraries, education, literacy training, inter-library lending, preservation, and access by persons with sensory-disabilities. However, this Act also limits the amount of information that library users can extract from books and related publications. Thus, it is important for library users to obey copyright laws when

looking for information to meet their development needs (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **The National Council for Library and Information Services Act, No. 6 of 2001.**

As implied by its title, this Act establishes the National Council for Library Information Services. In terms of this Act, the functions of the Council entail providing information and advice to the Ministers of Arts and Culture, and Education on the deficiencies of library and information resources in African languages, and on the promotion of basic and functional literacy, information literacy, and a culture of reading. Together, these provisions pave the way for communities to use the library in order to meet their information needs, particularly in the study area i.e. Bushbuckridge (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **The Education Laws Amendment Act, No.31 of 2007**

Although not directly related to ordinary library users, this Act however, requires the availability of a library in communities as a minimum uniform norm and standard for school infrastructure; thus ensuring that young people, who are part of the research population, have easy and affordable access to library information services (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

- **The Library and Information Services Transformation Charter (2014)**

Jointly led by the Department of Arts and Culture, National Library of South Africa and the National Council for Library Information Services (NCLIS), the Transformation Charter aims to achieve the following overarching objectives (26-30):

  o To develop an integrated funding model for the Library and Information as prescribed by the South African Constitution, with the most crucial focus on redress and equity
  o To develop an integrated funding model for the library and information services sector

- o To ensure that all South Africans have access to information as prescribed by the constitution
- o To promote employment equity and skills development, thus ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in meeting the information needs of clients i.e. library users
- o To position libraries as places where people from all backgrounds can find each other

1.2.5 Institutional Arrangements

In addition to the laws mentioned above, specific institutional networks have been set up to support provision of library information services to communities. These networks are central to extending information services to both urban and rural areas. Table 1 provides a summary of these institutional networks:

Table 1.1 Institutional arrangements for library services

Institutional arrangement	Responsibilities
National Level: The Minister	- Formulating national policy and minimum uniform norms and standards for community libraries and library and information services - Monitoring and evaluating the provision of community libraries and library and information services - Promoting general coordination and consultation on matters regarding community libraries and library and information services between national, provincial and local government
Provincial Level: Members of the Executive Committee (MECs)	- Developing provincial legislation on community libraries and provincial library and information services - Establishing and maintaining community libraries and providing library and information services - Planning, coordinating and facilitating community libraries and library information services - Formulating provincial policy and provincial minimum norms and standards for community library and information services - Promoting consultation on matters regarding

	community libraries and library information services
	• Ensuring that municipalities providing community libraries and library and information services are capacitated to perform their functions
Local Level: Municipalities	• Establishing and maintaining community libraries and library information services in that municipality
	• Managing the funds allocated for the implementation of library and library information services in that municipality
	• Providing professional support to library officials and
	• Providing and maintaining the infrastructure and equipment required for library and information services

Source: LIS Transformation Charter (2014:26-30)

1.2.6 Overview of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality

Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (BML) is a category B municipality, forming part of the five local municipalities of Ehlanzeni District Municipality (EDM) in Mpumalanga Province (BLM, IDP, 2014-2016). For the purposes of this study, a category B municipality shares municipal executive and legislative authority in its area with a category C municipality (i.e. district municipality) in an area that includes more than municipality (Department of Arts and Culture,2014). The municipality covers the largest population size of 541,248 persons as per 2011 Census statistics, which is 34% of the total population of Ehlanzeni District Municipality and 14% of the provincial population. The BLM is renowned for its agricultural and tourism attractions (Bushbuckridge Local Municipality: Integrated Development Plan (IDP), 2014-2016).

Bushbuckridge was declared a presidential nodal point by the president of the Republic of South Africa in 2001. It is located in the north-eastern part of the Mpumalanga Province and is bounded by Kruger National Park in the east, Mbombela Local Municipality in the South and Thaba Chweu Local Municipality and it covers approximately over 1 000, 000 hector, after the recent Municipal Demarcation Board has expanded the locality by including part of the Kruger National Park. The Municipality currently consists of 37 wards with 37 ward Councillors and 37 Public Relations

Councillors and covers part of the Kruger National Park (Bushbuckridge Local Municipality IDP, 2014-2016). Below is a locality map of the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

Figure 1.1 Locality of Bushbuckridge Municipality
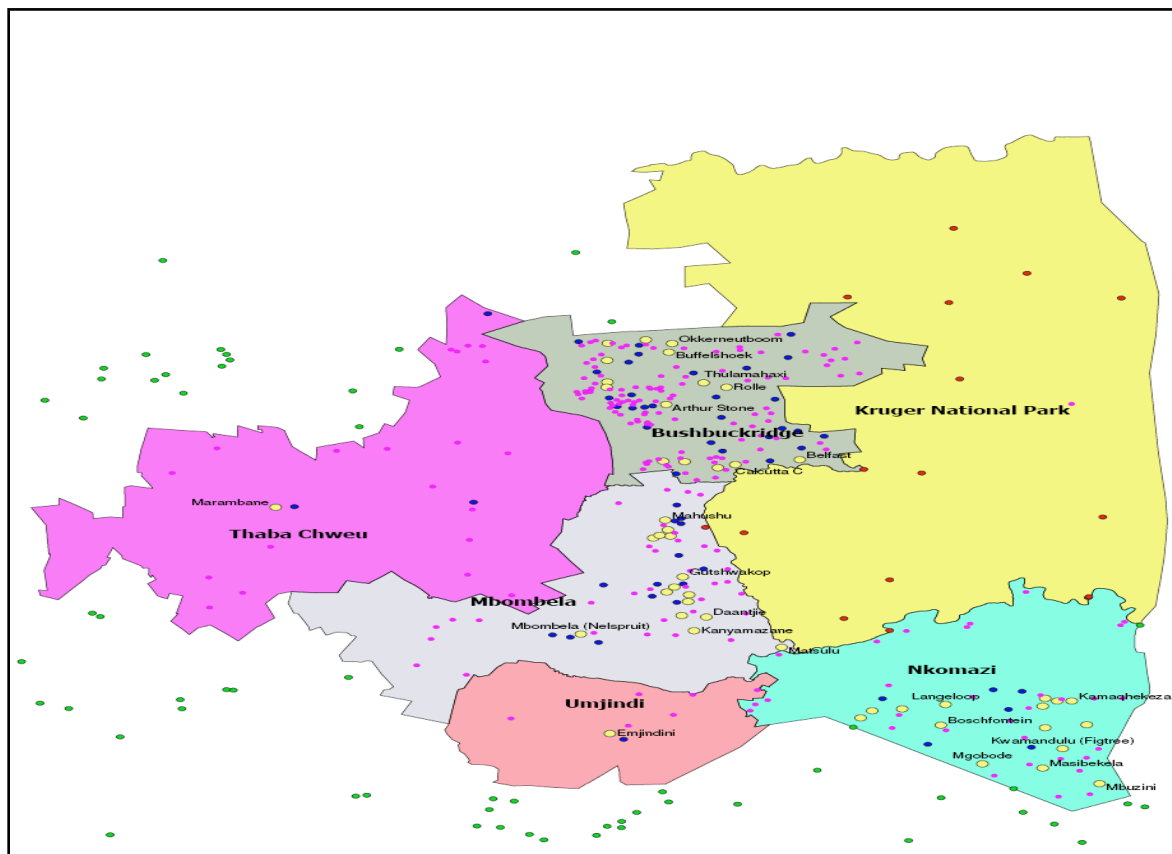
Source: Bushbuckridge Local Municipality: IDP (2014-2016).

The municipality has a number of challenges which form part of the priorities in the interim and certainly the Long Term Development Strategy. These include high poverty levels, crime, unemployment, backlog of service delivery, skills shortage, high illiteracy, rural nature, HIV/AIDS epidemics and lack of access to basic services (Bushbuckridge Local Municipality IDP, 2014-2016). Figure 2 below depicts the demographics of the BLM.

Demographics

Figure 1.2 Population
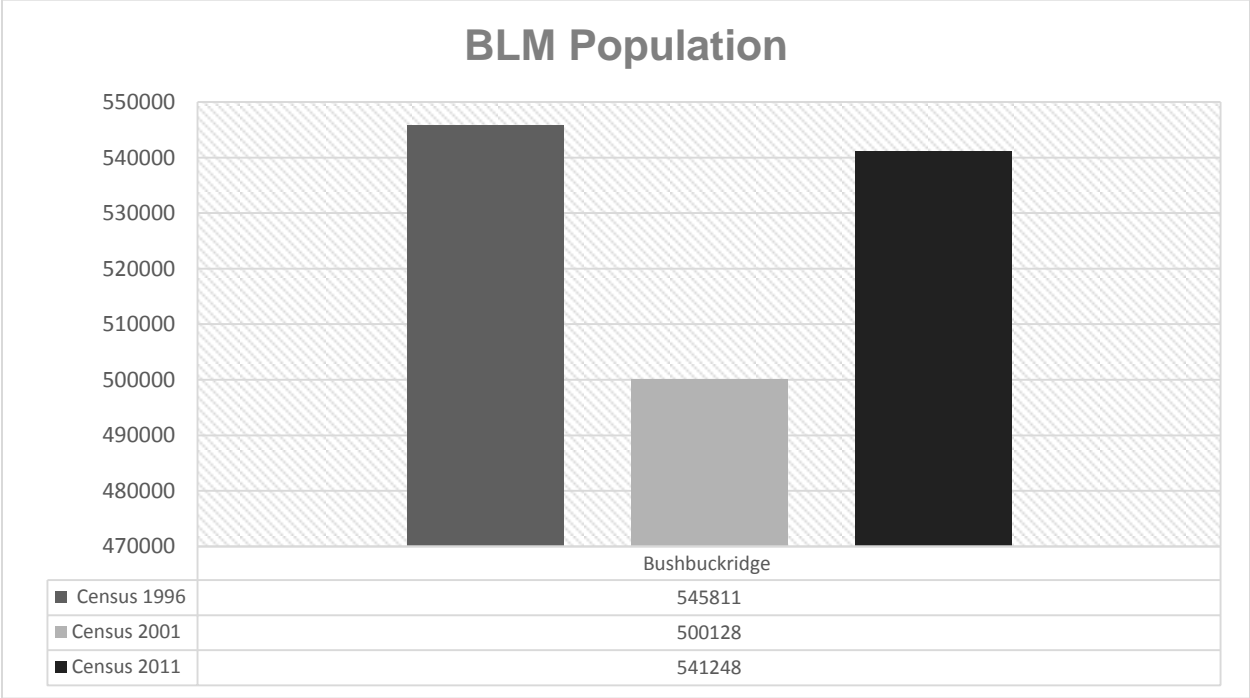
Source: Bushbuckridge Local Municipality: IDP (2014-2016).

The population of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality was 545 811 according to the Statistics South Africa 1996 Census. The 2001 census shows that there was a decrease to 500 128 in population. There was an increase in 2011 census as the number rose to 541 248. Contributing factors might be the fertility and mortality rates, migration and influx to increase residential and business development in the municipality as a result of neighbouring countries such as Mozambique and Zimbabwe (Bushbuckridge Local Municipality IDP, 2014-2016). To some extent, the increase in population size highlights the need more adequate LIS in the study area.

Figure 1.3 Population by age group
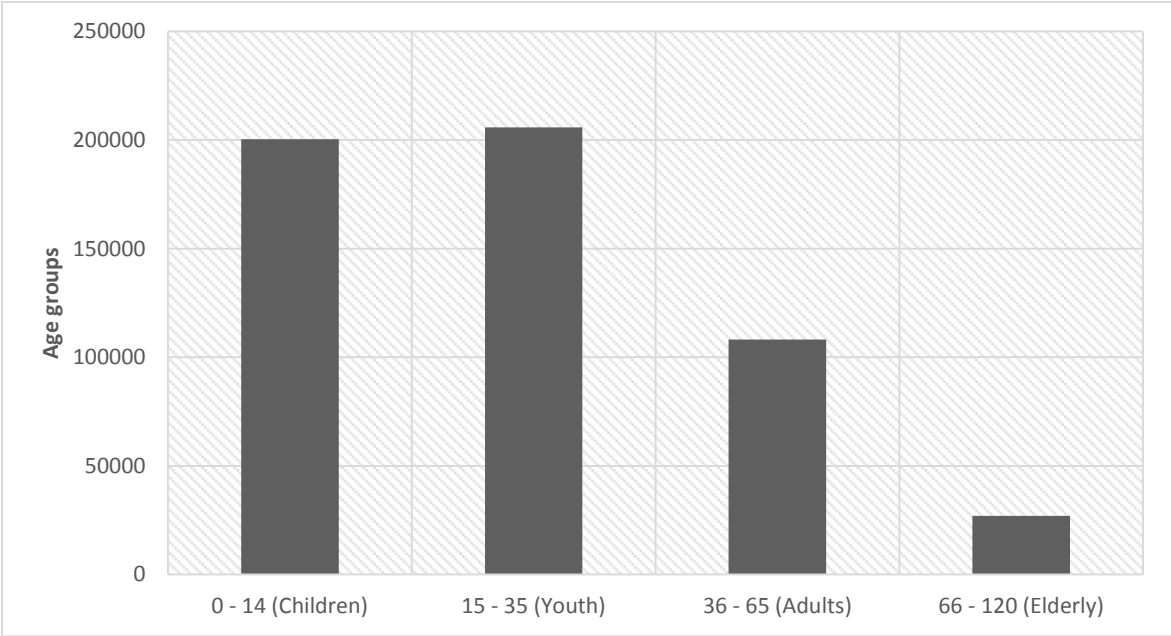
Source: BLM: IDP (2014-2016:23-24)

This is the second highest population in the BLM is the youth residents aged 15 to 34 and below contributing to 205, 811 residents, children from age group 0 to 14 MIGuals

200,352, the adults from 35 to 65 are 108, 172 and the elderly from 66 to 120 are 26,912. Female residents contribute 295, 224 (52.1%), while male constitutes 246,023 (47.9%) of the entire population. The above figures indicate that the municipality needs to co-ordinate various programmes to support females and youth in skills development, job creation and provision of basic services. Table 1.2 below indicates the poverty rate in the BLM.

Table 1.2 Poverty rate (Use 2017 Stats SA Report)

Year	Rate
2001	62.60%
2010	45.40%

Source: STATS SA census 2001 and 2011 cited in BLM IDP 2014-2016

Table 1.2 shows that the poverty rate for BLM was initially high at 62.60% in 2001; shrinking to 45.40% in 2010. This indicates that the poverty rate is decreasing and lower than district but higher than province and 193 764 poor people – third highest in the province. Poverty gap recorded at R1.1 billion in 2011 – increasing trend and highest/worst in province. Second most deprived area in the province according to the Multiple Deprivation Index of Oxford University (Bushbuckridge Local Municipality IDP, 2014-2016).

Unemployment

Table 1.3 Unemployment rate

Unemployment rate (Strict definition)	Census	Percentage (%)
General (15-65 years)	1996	53.89
	2001	63.50
	2011	52.11
Persons with Disability (15-65 years)	1996	54.70
	2001	60.19
Women (15-65 years)		
	1996	60.19
	2001	68.38

	2011	56.17
Youth (15-35 years)	1996	61.95
	2001	74.57

Source: BLM IDP 2014-2015 & Statistics South Africa, 1996, 2001, 2011

As can be seen from table 3 above, the unemployment is higher than the employed because most of the employed people are in the services sector (government) and that alone cannot accommodate all the people (BLM IDP, 2014-2016). Although the tourism and agricultural sectors have a high growth potential, this is dampened by the lack of investment in these industries. Most of the farms and irrigation are under resuscitation by the sector departments in collaboration with the municipality in order to employ more personnel from the community (BLM IDP, 2014-2016).

Relatively, BLM is the second highest municipality with high unemployment rate after Nkomazi Municipality. Employment opportunities are very minimal given the nature of the municipality hence the nodal status. There is no large scale mining in the municipality as there are no underground resources. The mining that is being practised is sand mining and stone crashing. Table 4 below summarises household income in BLM.

Table 1.4 Household income

Income	Number of households
R1000 – R4800	12075
R4801 – R9600	20199
R9601 – R19 600	29927
R19601 – R38 200	25684
R38 201 – R76 400	10962
R76401 – R 153 800	6571
R153801 – R307 800	3976
R307 601 – R 614 400	1504
R614 001 – R 1228 800	240
R 1228 801 – R 2 457 600	102
R 2 457 601 or more	83

Source: BLM IDP 2014-2015 and STATS SA Census 2011

Looking at table 1.4 above, it is evident that BLM households' income is relatively low in the province as it is ranked number 13 as per department of finance 2011 report. An income of R9601-R19 600 has the most households surviving on it followed by income from R19601 –R38 200 with 29927. The average households' income is R36 569 (BLM, IDP, 2014-2016).

Education

BLM has 213 primary schools, 119 secondary schools (1 school sponsored by the New Partnership for Africa's Development), 4 combined schools and further education and training institutions. Access to basic education is realised and made possible through the provision of free Learner and Teacher Support Materials (LTSM) and by also declaring other schools no-fee schools for the previously disadvantaged communities. Higher education remains a challenge since there is only one new higher education institution within the boundaries of the province (BLM IDP 2014-2015:22-24).

However, as explicitly acknowledged in the BLM Integrated Development Plan (2014-2016), serious problems are experienced in many of these schools; including overcrowding and high failure rate that could be attributed to poor infrastructure and facilities. There are other educational facilities which are currently not used for education purposes such as Mapulaneg and Hoxani Colleges of Education. The municipality has realised a 37% reduction in illiteracy, an attribute in the access to Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). In comparing the illiteracy level of the Census 2001 conducted by Statistics South Africa and the Community Survey of 2007 of the same, Census 2001 recorded 86 866 people aged 20 and above with no schooling while Community Survey recorded 54, 696 with about 32, 170 difference which indicates a drop in illiteracy. Table 1.5 indicates the highest levels of education in BLM.

Table 1.5 Highest levels of Education in the Municipality

Education indicators	Trend	Latest figure	Better (+) or worse (-)	Better (+) or worse (-)	Ranking: best (1) –

	2001	2011	than Ehlanzeni	than province	Worst (18)
Number of people with no schooling	88 366	50737			17
Population with no schooling (%)	39.4%	18.6%	(-) (16.6%)	(-) (14.0%)	15
Population with Matric and higher (%)	18.5%	33.1%	(-) (38.5%)	(-) (38.5%)	12
Functional literacy rate	46.4%	74.0%	(-) (75.4%)	(-) (76.9%)	11

Source: BLM, IDP 2014-2015

According to table 1.5, the percentage of the population with no schooling in the BLM is 18.6%, the fourth highest/worst. Population with Matric and higher 33.1% shows improvement but lower than district and provincial averages. Functional literacy rate (15 with grade 7) 74.0% is improving but worse than the district and province. Matric pass rate in 2012 at 61.7% - improving but lowest in the province – very low degree/university admission rate (Bushbuckridge Local Municipality IDP, 2014-2016). Taken together, these figures highlight the role that libraries can play in enabling library users to meet their information needs in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality; thus contributing to the improvement of education standards in the area.

- **Library and information services**

Out of the 37 wards of Bushbuckridge local municipality, only four benefit from library services. People from the other wards have to travel between 40 and 60 kilometers to access library services. For the entire Bushbuckridge with a population of 541 248 people, of which 99.5% are black South Africans, with the other population groups making up the remaining 0.5% (Statistics South Africa, 2011), there are only four libraries (Bushbuckridge Local Municipality IDP, 2014-2016). Before the transition to democracy in 1994, Bushbuckridge was one of the communities in the former

homelands of Gazankulu and Lebowa that had no access to public libraries where the people could satisfy their information needs.

Writing in the late 1980s, Bekker and Lategan (1988) maintain that "little was then known of the general information needs of residents living in the urban and rural areas." This remains true today as there have been little or no studies identifying the information needs of people living in rural areas, suggesting a significant gap in the literature about the information needs of rural communities. Through this study, the researcher will be able to assess the information needs of the community, and this will enable library professionals to provide relevant information according to the information needs of the community. People from rural communities used to rely on radio or word of mouth from their chiefs or indunas to satisfy their information needs.

It is generally accepted that people have different information needs ranging from social needs, career opportunities, educational, financial and health information needs. In the case of Bushbuckridge residents, it is difficult to meet these information needs. This is because only four communities have access to libraries and an information centre where they are able to access information that is suitable to satisfy their information needs in reasonable fees or no fees at all.

Given that there are only four libraries in Bushbuckridge, it is not easy to meet the information needs of all the academics, researchers, financial advisors, health professionals, skilled and unskilled workers, educators and learners. The reason is that libraries do not have enough resources such as books, journals, articles and computers to meet their needs. The other reason is that the library staff is not professional enough to conduct reference interviews about the users in order to determine their information needs. Reference interviews will assist both the user and the librarian in terms of the provision of relevant information sources.

According to Smit, Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2011), data refer to unprocessed information. Information is data that has been processed in such a way as to be

meaningful to the person who receives it. Ferreira, Erasmus and Groenewald (2003:16-17) emphasise that "in order for information to be useful, it must be correct and accurate so that it contributes to effective decision making. Information must be timely, summarised where possible, and presented in an acceptable form". It must also be clear, detailed, presented in a required pre-determined sequence and format and be relevant. In the case of the Bushbuckridge community, the provision of information needs is less adequate in the sense that the information has to be transferred through word of mouth or using the local language due to the shortage of libraries, poverty, lack of exposure, ignorance, illiteracy and computer illiteracy.

In view of the above, this study aims to investigate the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. Therefore, when defining information needs, various meanings of information needs will be used. The need for information will require information that is reliable and up to date in order to satisfy the needs of all library users regardless of their age groups, social, education or economic background. However, there is lack of reliable information that enables users to make informed decisions in the community libraries of Bushbuckridge. This is due to the changes in information technologies, computer illiteracy, and the high rate of illiteracy. It is important to recognise, as Moodle (2003: 92) points out, that communities change, so do the information needs of people.

Kaniki (1995) states that a resource center, and a community or a public library cannot continue to attract its current and new or potential users without tailoring information and resources to meet the new needs of the community. Regardless of the fact that there is a strong expressed need for all categories of information, each library user has specific information needs. It is identified that the respondent's occupation, age, and level of education influence the need for some types of information. As Wiese and du Plessis (2014) observe that distribution of information has primarily been done by libraries. Deducing from this statement, it can be inferred that libraries are central to meeting the information needs of library users.

1.3 Problem Statement

According to Islam and Ahmed (2012:5), "many public libraries in rural areas do not know what communities' information needs are. Their understanding is related to funding or better management skills and frustration over public's non-use of library materials and services. As long as librarians remain book-oriented, instead of information-and public-people-oriented, people will continue to ignore the library. Citizens may see the book as neither crucial to their survival needs not important to their entertainment needs."

Similarly, Etebu (2009:3) notes that the "provision of information services in Africa has been dispersed and access to various information services has become more difficult; the principal victims of these developments have been rural people without having any individual means of becoming literate, due to them being too illiterate, too young, too old, too poor or too ill because of the economic and information poverty." Thus, the absence of information may impede development of people in rural areas. .

A similar situation exists in South Africa. For example, the Library and Information Services Charter (2014:4) acknowledges that "most South Africans are shut out from the benefits of the knowledge or information society. Only 10% of South Africans are users of the Internet, compared with over 70% of the citizens of the knowledge societies of Northern Europe. LIS resources and ICT facilities serve to provide physical access to the information society to marginalised groups. Librarians' expertise in the world of information, together with their information literacy and literacy programmes, develop the information skills needed to exploit the technologies in people's everyday lives" (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014:5).

Similarly, Dick (2009) in LIS Transformation Charter (2014:5) argues that "today many South Africans still do not have access to information that could make a difference to the quality of their lives or circumstances. This exacerbated by the digital divide which impairs the functional and cognitive development of the majority of South Africans."

Nicolson (2007) concurs with this view by stating that the effects of apartheid still exclude many rural communities from the world of reading and communication.

According to the LIS Transformation Charter (2014:6), "the location of many libraries has been influenced by former apartheid spatial planning with the result that many areas, such as former townships, informal settlements and rural areas are under-served. In addition, there are a number of municipalities where there are no libraries at all, a situation affecting more than 2 million people. What is more, some libraries have changed their designation to community library in order to emphasise their connection to the community and to indicate the availability of a broad range of services than those associated with the traditional public library."

According to the researcher's observation as a librarian in one of the branches, Bushbuckridge libraries are not being adequately utilised by users. The purpose of community libraries is to help people solve their day to day problems. Those problems should receive precedence are those that do not have access to other sources of assistance, that is, the poor or disadvantaged communities. Moodley (2013) cites examples of community needs under consumer goods and services, physical and spiritual, health and welfare, teaching, education and leisure activities, personal, family and community concerns, finance and law.

The researcher observes that residents of Bushbuckridge have information needs that libraries are unable to meet due to insufficient library information resources, illiteracy and lack of computer skills. It is vital to realise that the social system of apartheid denied rural communities like Bushbuckridge Municipality the satisfaction of even the most basic information needs. Maslow (1970), in Hierarchy of human needs in La Monica (1986) identifies the following human needs: physiological, safety, social and esteem needs. He believes that human behavior is influenced by an attempt to satisfy these needs. Psychological needs include the need for food, water, shelter, electricity and basic things that sustain life.

As stated in the LIS Transformation Charter (2014), "knowledge societies are learning societies. These societies rely on the documenting, preserving, communicating and sharing of information. Thus LIS collections and their information retrieval systems are crucial in the learning and research cultures that characterise knowledge societies."

Library users in BLM are experiencing a gap in the provision of information and in meeting their daily information needs. Without information resources and training on computer skills, library users are left desperate or denied access to information that caters to their life enrichment and improvement in solving their information needs. For example, users need to make informed decisions on how they can handle their financial issues, educational matters, research projects, work and careers opportunities, and school work on day to day basis. Without effective and professional guidance in meeting these needs, other users opt for expensive methods of acquiring information such as internet cafés and the use of personal computers. This leaves the majority of library users in BLM with no alternatives to meet their information needs.

The researcher's view above is also supported by Moore (2007) who argues that "information is a key contributor to the development of individuals and communities. People need information to develop their potential through education and training, to succeed in business, to enrich their cultural experience and to take control of their daily lives."

What is more, as Cheunwattana (1998) correctly observes, not much empirical data is available about the information needs and gathering habits of library users in rural areas. No information support through information services is available, and very little is known about how information has been provided to this disadvantaged segment of the population through existing library and information services, or whether the library and information services offered are relevant and appropriate to the local needs and context. Obviously, these fundamental questions still remain unanswered, and empirical research in this area is needed to illuminate our understanding of the current pattern of rural information services, and help devise better approaches to service delivery.' It is

precisely this knowledge gap that prompted the researcher to investigate the information needs of library users in four community libraries in BLM which forms part of Ehlanzeni District Municipality in Mpumalanga Province.

1.4 Purpose of the study

1.4.1 Aim

The aim of the study is to investigate the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge.

1.4.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To identify the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge.
- To establish whether the four local libraries in Bushbuckridge are able to meet the information needs of users in the area
- To determine the experiences of library users on the quality of services that they receive from the four libraries.
- To investigate the challenges that libraries face as they satisfy users' information needs

1.5 Delimitation of the study

As already mentioned previously, this research is primarily focused on investigating the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. This will include investigating their attitudes, behaviors and preferences in searching for library information and the ability of local libraries to meet these needs. The unit of analysis consists of four case study libraries situated in Bushbuckridge. Chief participants include library users, librarians, and 1 library manager responsible for all libraries. With its strong focus on community information needs, this investigation, therefore, excludes academic libraries.

1.6 Structure of the report

The report is divided into six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Chapter one sets the scene by explaining the background, aims as well as the objectives of the study; including the broad research questions that the study seeks to address regarding the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature pertaining to the information needs and information seeking behaviors of library users is scanned to enhance understanding of the research topic and to provide a theoretical basis for the study. The knowledge gap resulting from this review is also highlighted to justify the need for this study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

This chapter explains the key theories underpinning the research to enhance understanding of the research problem. These include the socio-cultural perspective, analytical discourse perspective, Maslow's hierarchy of Needs theory and information needs theory.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Here, the focus is on the methodological aspects of the study, such as: research design, which entails triangulation of quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative research methods (interviews) process followed to conduct the study i.e. field experience; validity and reliability issues; limitations of the study and research ethics.

Chapter 5: Presentation and discussion of findings

Numerical and non-numerical data from the four case study libraries are presented and explained to establish the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge. Data analysis is done in accordance with quantitative and qualitative methods. For example, descriptive statistics e.g. percentages, frequency tables are used to present quantitative information, while inductive reasoning is used to identify patterns, themes, deviations

and contrasts across the four case study libraries. The last part of chapter four provides a summary of the main findings of the study.

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions and recommendations

The first part of Chapter six reflects and infers on the results. It achieves this by comparing the results against the research objectives, hypothesis, research questions and theoretical evidence from the literature. Based on this test, conclusions are reached on the information needs of library users and the ability of the 4 libraries to meet these needs. The last part of chapter five recommends measures to help improve service delivery in these institutions.

1.7 Conclusion

Chapter one outlined the background and objectives of the study, which aims to investigate the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge. The study is necessitated by the need to understand whether the four participating libraries are able to meet the information needs of library users, given the relatively high rates of unemployment and illiteracy in this community. Hopefully, the information generated though this research will enable these libraries to address the information needs of library users in this community. In the next chapter a literature review is undertaken to provide a theoretical basis for the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The foundation of the study was laid in Chapter One by explaining the background as well as the aims and objectives of the study which, as articulated, investigated the information needs of rural communities in Bushbuckridge. The focus of Chapter Two is literature review. The review covers information needs of library users as this framework provides the basis for interpreting the findings of the study in chapter five.

Key thematic issues covered in this review include information needs of rural communities; access barriers; information sources and flows; the role of libraries in meeting the information needs of library users; studies on the information needs of library users; knowledge gap and conclusion.

2.2 Defining literature review

According to Vinthal and Jansen (2010), a literature review entails a synthesis of what has already been written on the topic, what has not been written on that topic, or is written in such a way that is conceptually or methodologically in adequate with the goal of clarifying, and how the researchers proposal addresses the gap, silence or weakness in the existing knowledge base. It helps the researcher to see how other scholars have investigated the research problem that he/she is interested in." According to Taylor (2008:1), "a literature review is an account of what has been published on a topic by

accredited scholars and researchers." To add value, a literature review should be organised around and related directly to the thesis or research question one is developing; synthesise results into a summary of what is and what is not known; identify areas of controversy in the literature, and formulate questions that need further research."

In addition to the above, there is also general consensus in research literature that the primary objectives of a literature review are to: provide a context for the study; justify the research; enables researcher to learn from previous research undertaken in the same area or field; highlight knowledge gaps in previous research; help the researcher to continuously refine and align the research topic as required, and, lastly, demonstrates that the planned research is adding new knowledge to the field (Kirby, Greaves and Reid, 2006; Boote and Beile, 2005, Vinthal and Jansen, 2010 and De Vos, 2006). Through literature review, researchers are able to "familiarise themselves with the current state of knowledge regarding the research problem and learn how others delineated similar problems" (Bogopane, 2013).

2.3 Information needs of library users

In the literature, information need is described as an individual or group desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious need or unconscious need (Yusuf, 2012:3). Case (2007) suggests that an information need is a recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that you have. People need accessible information in order to solve problems in their daily lives. This information provides them with a sense of security, achievement and control. Unperceived or unconscious needs are unrecognised as information needs and so answers are not pursued. In other words, the user is unaware that there is a gap in their knowledge which can be classified as unidentified.

Personal needs are the basis of motivation to seek information and these also affect the information seeking behaviour of the user. Personal needs include physiological needs such as the need for food, water and shelter; affective needs, such as the need for

attainment and for domination; cognitive needs, that is, the need to learn a skill and take decisions (Moodley, 2013:20). Information is an important resource for individual growth and survival. The progress of modern societies as well as individuals depends upon the provision of the right kind of information, in the right form and at the right time. Information is needed to be able to take a right decision and also reduce uncertainty (Yusuf, 2012:1). In their study of information needs, Bopape, Dikotla, Mahlatie, Ntsala and Makgahlela (2017:1) found that the kind of information required by youth and adult library users in Limpopo libraries revolved around health matters, education programmes, career guidance and crime prevention.

Olarongbe, Adepoju, Akanbi-Ademolake and Pedro (2013:2) explain that users' needs are dynamic requiring different services at different times. For example, information may be required by users about local history, local industries and local personalities. And a layman might require information for survival. This is why the public library has come to play a significant role as a repository of knowledge to serve the information needs of all groups of people in the community where it is located. The fundamental aim of libraries is to provide timely, accurate, pertinent and reliable information for their users. Given this, it is therefore paramount that librarians strive to improve access to information and satisfying the user (Olowu, 2004).

More importantly, librarians must be aware of the kind of information being sought and how it can be obtained. Because of rapidly escalating cost of purchasing and archiving print journals and electronic media, the library has a duty to provide and maintain efficient services. A recent study by Iwara (2015) found that in order for users to meet their information needs, they need to be supported an assisted by librarians on a regular basis, as some of them do not possess the necessary library skills.

Although the traditional viewpoint has always viewed information as a product of human invention or symbolic representations of reality, a lot of attention tends to be given to alternative/cognitive viewpoint that focuses on the user, be it as a recipient or producer of information. In this instance, the existing knowledge base, values and beliefs

influence what a person perceives, receives, or produces. Central to the formation of perceptions is the allocation of meaning to the information received, as well as the context in which the person finds himself (Mostert and Ochola, 2005:1).

According to Ikoja-Odongo and Ocholla (2004:2), seeking information is the process where an individual goes about searching for information, which requires the information seeker to apply personal knowledge, skill or personal information infrastructure to solve a problem. What is evident from this explanation is that users need information to address their needs.

A recent study conducted by Marton (2015:1) in the United Kingdom shows that more and more users are turning to the internet to meet their information needs. This has led to the emergence of online health information seeking behaviours where users seek and find advice and tips in the Internet on how best to improve their health and life style.

Based on IFLA (2006), Balapanidou (2005:7) suggests that in order for users to benefit from the information resources provided by libraries, they should have three sets of competencies, namely access, evaluation and use. Practically, this means that they should learn to: (i) access information effectively and efficiently, (ii) evaluate information critically and competently and (iii) use or apply information accurately and creatively

2.4 Access Barriers

Bora (2017:1) explains that information needs are impacted by a wide range of factors, including type of information available, varieties of uses to which information will be put, the background, motivation, professional orientation, discipline, type and area of work and other individual characteristics of the user, the social, political and economic system as well as the consequences of information use.

The literature highlights a wide range of factors that prevent rural communities from meeting their information needs. In Malaysia, for example, it was found that gender inequality is a major problem that prevents women from seeking information to develop

themselves. This was attributed to strong kinships and traditions that still confine women to domestic roles (Hirschman, 2016). What is clear from this study is that gender issues impact negatively on women's ability to access information in this country.

The literature on information needs further reveals that users are unlikely to have common information needs. This is because people have different roles and responsibilities in their work situations. This causes them to seek information that is pertinent to their work or roles (Bawden, 2006:675). This means that information seeking behaviour is sometimes motivated by the performance of particular tasks, such as teaching, caring for patients, or the desire to improve one's occupation.

Furthermore, in their study of rural women in Borno State, Nigeria, Saleh and Lasisi (2011:5) found that the major barriers to information needs of rural women included "high rate of illiteracy; inability to access formal channels of information due to poverty; lack of adequate and efficient information delivery mechanism; ignorance of governments responsibilities to its citizens; skepticism of rural women towards government and its information agencies; attitude of extension workers towards effective rural information service and inaccessibility of the rural areas by non-governmental organisations (NGOs)."

In South Africa, barriers to information include slow progress in the roll out of information and communications technology (ICT) in rural areas; computer and Internet literacy, and low perceptions about the importance of information in both self-development and community development (Korsgaard, Muller and Tanvig,2015). Aligned to this is the problem of illiteracy, that is, a lack of interest in reading and using available resources (Moshapo and Hanan, 2004). According to the South African Institute of Race Relations' 2010/2011 education report, about 2.9 million people over the age of 15 in South Africa were unable to read and write.

2.5 Information sources and flows

Commenting on rural information flows, Dixon, Wattenbach and Bishop-Sambrook (2005:1) observe that rural households and communities use multi-level systems to access information, such as radio, social support networks, non-governmental organisations, state-owned institutions e.g. government departments and agencies. However, as Dixon et al (2005) further observe, these information flows are retarded by lack of access to information technology, particularly in Africa; where most households do not have easy and affordable access to the Internet.

In a study of the information needs and information seeking behaviour of rural women in Borno State, Nigeria, Saleh and Lasisi (2011:5) found that "rural women, despite the challenges they faced in education, they were able to use both formal and informal sources of information to support their families. The common sources used included government and its agents, elite groups, relatives and friends, market women, and non-governmental organisations" (NGOS).

In addition to the above, formal channels of communication included (Saleh and Lasisi, 2011): radio and television, local government information office, agricultural extension workers, primary health care workers, and the only public library in the zone situation in Monguno. The informal channels on the other hand constitute village or ward heads, the school head master, the Imams (religious leaders) and other elite group in the community; friends and relatives, market women, as well as Non-governmental organisations, particularly the Kanem Women, have been cited as important informal channels of information. Although the population of North Borno is homogenous, the information needs of the rural women differ. It ranged from information needs of farmers to sawing, weaving, midwifery and animal husbandry. Table 2.1 below shows the information needs of women identified in Borno State (Saleh and Lasisi, 2011):

Table 2.1Information needs of rural women in Borno State, Nigeria

Type of information	Importance
Agriculture	53%,

Education	12%,
Economy	11%,
Health	20%,
Political	03%,
Others	01%.

Source: Saleh and Lasisi (2011)

2.6 The role of libraries in meeting the information needs of library users

Based on their study of the role of community libraries in South Africa, Mnkeni-Saurombe and Zimu (2013) concluded that community libraries can play an important role in tackling inequalities in South Africa by making a wide range of amenities accessible to the financially challenged. However, as they further observe, lack of information and communication technologies (ICT) connectivity prevents people in rural areas from utilising ICT for work, educational and other purposes. In 2007, only 6% of people had access to the Internet from home" (Mnkeni-Saurombe and Zimu, 2013).

Similarly, Islam and Ahmed (2012) observe that in rural areas, the local public library could be an important source of information. Research has shown that government-run public library services are largely inadequate and ineffective in rural areas as their collection and services do not always meet the needs of the local residents. The local information needs must be understood to be able to develop libraries that will meet those needs. The libraries must also provide useful information to illiterate members of the community through non-traditional channels such as picture books and audio-video recordings.

In addition to providing useful information, indigenous low-cost innovative technologies for providing Internet access to rural areas must also be seriously considered. Public libraries in rural areas must be better equipped and the librarians should also actively help the rural communities in adopting new technologies. It is true that well-trained librarians are not attracted to jobs in rural areas where resources are scarce and basic human comforts are usually lacking (Islam and Ahmed, 2012).

To overcome these challenges, Islam and Ahmed (2012) argue, local volunteers can be recruited and trained to work in rural library projects. In many rural communities, oral tradition and traditional knowledge is an important part of their cultural identities. They still play a vital role in the daily lives of the vast majority of people in the developing world.

"There is a need to preserve and promote the future use of traditional knowledge and rural libraries can play a significant role in this regard. A number of studies, for example, Zijp (1994) and Correa (1995) indicate that rural communities have difficulty in locating and having access to the needed information in a timely fashion. Besides, rural communities do not always know what their information needs are, how can they meet their needs and from where they can get their required information. Besides, rural communities do not always know what their information needs are, how can they meet their needs and from where they can get their required information" (Islam and Ahmed, 2012).

2.7 Studies on the information needs of library users

Consideration of studies on information needs is central to this research as they will provide clues as to how rural communities generally look for when they search for information to develop themselves. This exercise will also help highlight the knowledge gap in this area. For simplicity, the studies are divided into two early studies and recent studies. The discussion here draws on the work of Islam and Ahmed (2012) who have done comprehensive review of studies on information needs of library users in both developed and developing countries.

2.7.1 Early studies (1980s - 1990s)

In an early study, Barron and Curran (1979) in Islam and Ahmed (2012) assessed the general information needs of residents in rural South and produced guidelines for rural library personnel so that the planning of library services could meet the information needs of users. They identified 24 need categories and listed them by subject. In

another study in Lincolnshire, Illinois, Clark and Unwin (1980) distinguished between realised and latent information needs of library users.

Focusing on the information needs of rural communities in developing countries, Cheunwattana (1998) noted that the majority of the rural population in developing countries are poor and illiterate and are economically and socially disadvantaged and their information needs have not been receiving much attention.

In Africa, the first research attempt was made in 1982 when an experimental library project was set up in a village near Ibadan, Nigeria, for the non-literate community to gain insight into their perceived information needs and those of which they were not aware of (Aboyade 1984, in Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu,2012). This research attempted to establish the information needs of neo-literates and how such needs could be satisfied by a modified formal information service. Aboyade (1984) identified the following categories of information needs: health and sanitation, agricultural production, government policies and programmes, occupation, recreation and leisure, literacy primers, Islamic religious literature, childcare and care of pregnant women, problems of daily existence such as water supply, electricity and roads, employment problems and work opportunities.

Targeting the United States of America (USA), Wilde (1981) identified six major information needs by rural residents in western USA. These included community planning, small business management, family health and nutrition, legal information regarding federal laws, information on energy and conservation, and information on agricultural practices. In another study in the USA, Chen and Hernon (1982) found that the most commonly mentioned needs were for information on consumer issues, getting and changing jobs, housing and household maintenance, education and schooling.

In addition to the early studies mentioned above, Mears (1989) observed that rural America has poverty, isolation, inadequate services, and inequality. Due to this, the need for information becomes even greater. She noted that rural Americans need

information about parenting, nutrition, water quality, family living, family economics, environment issues, health care, services available, job skills, money management, communication techniques, housing standards, and processes for making changes in government regulations (Islam and Ahmed, 2012).

Examining the information needs of rural Americans, Vavrek (1990, 1993) commented that their needs are very comprehensive and systematic, and that both users and non-users of public libraries demonstrated in their daily information needs knowledge of current decisions of local government, health and medical services, and local news. Within the same context, Patterson (1995) in Islam and Ahmed (2012) found that Native Americans felt that their important information needs related to employment, vocational training, legal and civil rights and health.

2.7.2 Recent studies (2000-2015)

A recent study on the information needs of rural communities by Yusop and Ibrahim (2013) has found that "accessing required information via the Internet is becoming significant to improving the quality of life. The findings of this study show that the types of information requested by these communities cover business, career opportunity, education, health and ICT. Regardless of their economic sectors, the information needs can be categorised into two groups: (i) in association with economic activities, and (ii) in relation with daily life. This information can be included in a portal especially designed for people from different economic sectors to cater their needs."

2.8 Knowledge Gap

The review undertaken in this chapter has shown that the information needs of rural communities have not been sufficiently addressed. This knowledge gap is also confirmed by Saleh and Lasisi (2011) who posit that studies on information needs in Africa are generally fewer than the developed world, despite the high level of interest generated by the field in the last decade. Available studies, for example, Dutta, (2009)

and Momodu, (2002), tend to concentrate on professional groups mostly within institutions in urban settlements. A similar situation exists in South Africa where much of the documented research efforts tend to focus on the information needs of students in academic settings. Clearly, there is a need for a comprehensive study to address this knowledge gap to improve understanding of the information needs of rural communities, particularly in Bushbuckridge which is the domain of the study.

2.11 Conclusion

Chapter Two scanned the literature on the information needs of rural communities. Overall, this review confirms that rural communities need information in order to support their development needs. However, in many instances, these needs remain largely unmet, mainly because in most rural areas, library and information services are limited (Cheunwattana, 1998; Momodu, 2002; Saleh and Lasisi, 2011; Kamba, 2009 and Islam and Ahmed, 2012).

Following from the above, the main conclusion that can be drawn from this review is that the information needs of rural communities in both developed and developing countries are largely on the same parameter. The common information needs are related to the daily life of the rural communities (Islam and Ahmed, 2012). In the case of South Africa, research into the needs of rural communities is significantly insufficient and emerging which means that there is a knowledge gap in this area.

It is precisely this knowledge gap that warranted this study to understand the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge and the ability of the four case study libraries to meet these needs. The following chapter discusses the research methodology used by this study.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

While chapter two focused on literature review, Chapter three presents and explains the theoretical framework underpinning this study, namely: Information Needs Theory. Consideration of this theory is important for three reasons. First, it enhances understanding of the research topic which concerns the information needs of rural; communities in Bushbuckridge. Second, this theory provides insights and ideas on what the information needs of library users look like in reality as well as the dynamics that impact these needs. Third, this theory provides the basis for judging and validating the findings of the study on the information needs of library users in the study area.

3.2 Defining theory

As defined by Rubin and Babbie (2001), a theory is "a systematic set of interrelated statements intended to explain some aspect of social life or enrich our sense of how people conduct and find meaning in their daily lives. Thus a theoretical framework could be described as "a well-developed and coherent explanation for an event. It is a system

which orders concepts in a way that produces understanding or insight" (Vinthal and Jansen, 2010:17).   Following is a discussion of the Information Need theory which underpins the study.

3.3 Information Needs Theory

Cole's (2011) model in Beheshti and Large (2013) propose a theory of information need for information retrieval (IR). "Information need traditionally denotes the start state for someone seeking information, which includes information search using an IR system. There are two perspectives on information need. The dominant, computer science perspective is that the user needs to find an answer to a well-defined question which is easy for the user to formulate into a query to the system. Ironically, information science's best known model of information need (Taylor, 1968, in Cole 2011) deems it to be a "black box" – unknowable and non-specifiable by the user in a query to the information system. Information science has instead devoted itself to studying eight adjacent or surrogate concepts and these are information seeking, search and user, problem, problematic situation and task; sense making and evolutionary/information foraging."

According to Cole (2011), the central assumption of the Information Need theory is that while computer science sees Information Retrieval as an information or answer-finding system, focused on the user finding an answer, an information science or user oriented theory of information need envisages a knowledge formulation/acquisition system.

Cole (2011) further explains that the ultimate goal of presenting a theory of information need is to contribute to the design of information retrieval systems that, by interlinking knowledge formation with the act of information search, will (a) ameliorate the information overload problem of IR systems especially the overload engendered by the results list, and (b) facilitate the utilization of information and IR systems, via information need-oriented design, to a greater diversity of the population, especially for information disadvantaged sections of the population. The information needs theory suggests three

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concepts that can be used to understand the information needs of library users and these include behaviours, context and human conditions. These are considered below.

3.3.1 Information Behaviours

According to Cole (2011:1220), "the essence of information search, compared to the broader concepts of information behaviour and information seeking, is that the user must formulate a query or question to an information system to make the system work. Formulating the query requires a specific mindset in the user. The user must somehow (1) collect his or her thoughts on the information that is needed, (2) identify and label these thoughts with concept terms, then (3) forecast which key words will obtain results and list citations to the needed information, that is, information that will satisfy the information need. Information use is defined by Wilson in Cole (2011) as the physical and mental acts involved in incorporating the information found into the person's existing knowledge base. These acts include reading, thinking about, note taking, diagramming, and any of the other physical and mental actions humans do to work information. During information search, according to the effects of the physical and mental acts the user does to incorporate found information into their existing knowledge base may create, elaborate, or modify the user's information need specification (Cole, 2011). Consistent with this reasoning, the study also included questions aiming to establish how users in the participating libraries of Bushbuckridge search for information to meet their development needs.

3.3.2 Context

By contextualizing the user's information need in the user's problem situation, social and work environment, or the user's task, an information retrieval system (i.e. librarian or computer) could, it was reasoned, get at, and implicate in the information search (so that the system could facilitate the satisfaction of the user's need), the user's primary psychological, emotional and cognitive human needs (Cole, 2011).

3.3.3 Human condition

Drawing on Dervin's (2003) Sense making approach, Cole (2011) explains "humans seek information because the world has persistent gaps – the assumption of discontinuity, which is our continuing human dilemma. We bridge the gaps by seeking and finding information to reestablish our sense of the world and our place in the world. Sense is almost a mediation mechanism between humans and the reality of the world. It is this sense-as mediation mechanisms that ensure our survival. It offers enormous survival value" (Dervin 2003, in Cole, 2011:1226). In relation to this study, this means that communities constantly search for information in order to meet their changing development needs; and the role of libraries in this regard is to ensure that these needs are adequately met at all times.

3.3.4 Strengths and weaknesses

It is important to highlight that the information needs theory suggested by Cole (2011) is fairly new and emergent as it is borne out of traditional information seeking models linked to design of information retrieval (IR) systems. As such, this model is yet to be tested and critiqued in order to determine its relevance and practicality.

The Information need theory is relevant to the study as it suggests three important concepts that can be used to understand information needs of library users in the study area e.g. Bushbuckridge. According to Cole (2011:1223), these concepts include "Information Behaviour i.e. information need is analysed in terms of the information behaviours which it initiates; Context i.e. information need is produced in the user by context in which the user finds himself/herself, and, finally, the Human Condition, which implies a holistic approach to information need which defines the need for information as fundamental to the human condition."

3.4 Models of Information behaviour

Information seeking behaviour models help to explain how library users decided and go about searching and finding information to meet their needs. Models considered here include The Information Search Process (ISP) Model, David Ellis' (1989) Model Information Search Process and Wilson's (1999) model. These are discussed below.

3.4.1 The Information Search Process (ISP) Model

According to Kuhlthau (2004), the information search process (ISP) is a six stage model of the users' holistic experience in the process of information seeking. The ISP model, based on two decades of empirical research, identified three levels of experience, namely: affective (feelings), cognitive (thoughts) and the physical (actions) common to each stage. Central to the ISP model is the notion that uncertainty, both affective and cognitive, increases and decreases in the process of information seeking. According to this model, information generally increases uncertainty in the early stages of the search process as the user tries to sieve through the large volumes of information before him/her. Kahlthau's ISP model identifies six steps that are followed by users when seeking information to meet their needs, and these include (Du Preez, 2008):

i.   **Initiation**

This is earliest stage where the user becomes aware of a gap in his or her knowledge or understanding; where feelings of uncertainty and apprehension set in immediately. During this stage of uncertainty, the user's thoughts are contemplating the problem, comprehending the task and relating the problem to prior experience and personal knowledge. This is followed by action where the user attempts to discuss possible solutions or avenues to pursue with peers and people around him/her (Du Preez, 2008)

ii.   **Selection**

Having figured out what type of information is needed to meet their development needs (stage 1), the user (information seeker) then identifies and selects the general topic or issue to be pursued and the method that will be used to find the necessary information to address that issue or need. Feelings of uncertainty begin to decline as the user is

now ready to search for the solution to his/her problem or topic. During this period, the user's thoughts focus on weighing prospective topics against the criteria of task requirements, time allotted, personal interest and information available. The option with the highest possibility of success is often considered in the end. The actions likely to be taken at this stage include consulting others with a view to begin the initial search of information available, and skimming and scanning such information to identify alternatives and to improve understanding of the chosen topic or issue of interest. However, feelings of anxiety are more likely to resurface if available information falls short of meeting the identified need (Du Preez, 2008)

iii.   Exploration

The third stage of the ISP model entails exploration, which is often accompanied by feelings of confusion, uncertainty and doubt as the user or information seeker tries to understand the chosen topic. In this stage, the user's thoughts are firmly focused on gaining more knowledge about the topic or subject of interest. Associated action steps entail locating information about the chosen topic; reading to gain more insight into the topic and linking new information with one's prior knowledge. Quite often, available information scarcely meets all the expectations of the user, resulting in more frustration and self-blame for being inadequately prepared for the task at hand. Exploration is regarded as the most challenging state of the ISP model (Du Preez, 2008).

iv.   Formulation

The fourth stage of the ISP model entails formulating a focus based on the information encountered in the previous stages of the information seeking process. The user's thoughts are now geared towards locating and selecting ideas from the information at hand and using those ideas to guide development and finalisation of the topic or subject of interest. The topic becomes more personalised as the construction of ideas finally materialises (Kuhlthau, Maniotes and Caspari 2015). When this happens, a feeling of accomplishment, vindication and increased confidence often set in as the information seeking process begins to yield positive results i.e. providing "answers to all my

questions." The following criteria is often used to aid the selection process (Du Preez, 2008): Task: what am I trying to achieve? Time: how much time do I have? Interest: what do I find personally interesting? Availability: what information is available to me?

v. Collection

Collection represents the fifth stage of the ISP model where interaction between the user and the information system functions most effectively and efficiently. The most important consideration at this point is gathering information on the identified topic. Critical actions here include selecting information that is pertinent to the chosen topic and making notes to support one's perspective or assumptions about the topic. It is in this stage that the role of intermediaries such as librarians and computer technology becomes crucial in enabling the user to meet his/her information needs. Feelings of confidence and optimism increases as uncertainty subsides, with interest in the chosen topic or subject growing even further (Kahlthau, Maniotes and Caspari 2015).

vi. Presentation

The final stage of the ISP Model entails completing the search and presenting the topic or project as planned. At this stage, the user's thoughts are focused on "getting things right" and "personalising the whole information seeking process" to achieve satisfaction. Actions involve a summary search in decreasing relevance and increasing redundancy are noted in the information encountered (Kahlthau, 2015).

3.4.2 David Ellis' (1989) information search process

According to Meho and Tibbo (2003), David Ellis carried out a study in which he used semi-structured interviews for data collection and Glasser and Strauss's grounded theory for data analysis. His research resulted in a pattern of information-seeking behaviour among social scientists that included six generic features, namely:

i. Starting

Starting is the initial search for information, such as identifying references that could serve as a starting point of the research process. Typically, these references include sources that are expected to provide relevant information. Asking colleagues or

consulting literature reviews, online catalogues, and indexes and abstracts often initiate starting activities.

ii. Chaining

Chaining entails following chains of citations or other forms of referential connection between materials or sources identified during the starting activities. Chaining can be backward or forward. Backward chaining takes place when references from an initial source are followed; while forward chaining identifies, and follows up on, other sources that refer to an original source (Meho and Tibbo (2003).

iii. Browsing

In practice, browsing involves casually looking for information in areas of potential interest. It includes scanning of published journals and tables of contents and references and abstracts of printouts from retrospective literature searches (Meho and Tibbo (2003).

iv. Differentiating

Differentiating entails using known differences (for example, author and journal hierarchies or nature and quality of information) between sources as a way of filtering the amount of information obtained (Meho and Tibbo (2003).

v. Monitoring

Monitoring involves keeping abreast of developments in an area of interest by regularly following particular sources, for example, core journals, newspapers, conferences, magazines, books, and catalogs. This information-seeking behaviour is likely to be manifest among regular library users (Meho and Tibbo, 2003).

vi. Extracting

These are activities associated with going through a particular source or sources and selectively identifying relevant material for those sources, for example, sets of journals,

series of monotables, collections of indexes, abstracts or bibliographies, and computer databases.

The importance of Ellis's model is that it has strong similarities with other influential information seeking models, such as that of Kahlthau (1988, 1991 and 1993), in AL-Suqri and Al- Saleem (2014) particularly in terms of the various types of activities or tasks carried out within the overall information seeking process (Wilson, (1999) Model, in Meho, Tibbo, (2003) and Tella (2016). "Ellis's model is also important because it was based on empirical research."

3.4.3 Wilson's (1999) model of information seeking behaviour

Building on previous models on the information seeking behaviour of users, Wilson (1999) Models in Tella (2016) came up with an integrated model to explain a myriad of factors that influence a user's decision to seek and use information; including library users. The model encompasses the following elements (Figure 3.1):

Figure 3.1 Wilson's (1999) Model of information behaviour

```
┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
│  Context of  │ →  │  Activating  │ →  │  Intervening │ →  │  Activating  │    │ Information  │
│ information  │    │  mechanism   │    │   variable   │    │  mechanism   │    │   seeking    │
│     need     │    │              │    │              │    │              │    │  behaviour   │
└──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘
```

Person-in-context / Stress/coping theory / Psychological / Demographic / Role-related/interpersonal / Environmental / Source characteristics / Risk /reward theory / Social learning theory / Self-efficacy / Passive attention / Passive research / Active research / Ongoing research / Information processing and use

Source: Adapted from Mostert and Ochola (2005:138)

According to this model, the information seeking behaviour of library users is impacted by a wide range of factors, including, context, environment and knowledge of searching strategies or methods. An important aspect of this model is the recognition that information search is an ongoing and evolving process shaped by the changing needs and preferences of users.

Of the three information behaviour models mentioned above, the study makes use of Kuhlthau's (2004) information search process (ISP) model. This models stands out from the other models as it indicates that (1) information search is a goal-driven activity with a clear outcome; (2) as they search for information, people or users are bound to explore different types of information available to them before they make the final decision which information to use and (3) the information search process is a complex process characterised by varying degrees of uncertainty as the person or user intensifies the search and 4) satisfaction is likely to result when the user finds what he/she is looking.

3.5 Conclusion

From the perspective of the Information Need Theory, it is possible to conclude that information needs of library users can also be understood by focusing on three factors, namely information behaviors, context and human conditions; all of which have a bearing on how communities search for and find relevant information in order to satisfy their development needs.

Within this context, the next chapter outlines the researcher methodology adopted by the study to investigate the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter three, the theoretical framework underpinning the study was explained to enhance understanding of information needs of rural communities. Chapter three outlines the methodology used to investigate the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge. Specifically, attention is focused on the following methodological imperatives: research design, sampling strategies and sample size; data collection instruments, the research process, data analysis techniques, validity and reliability issues; limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

4.2 Defining Research

As defined by Meterns (2005:1), "research is one of many different ways of knowing or understanding. Research is different from other ways of knowing, such as insight, divine inspiration, and acceptance of authoritative dictates, in that it is a process of systematic inquiry that is designed to collect, analyse, interpret and use data." In the words of Leedy and Ormrod (2005:2), "research methodology is the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project."

In the same context, Creswell (2003) explains that research is conducted for a variety of reasons, including to understand, describe, predict, or control an educational or psychological phenomenon or to empower individuals in such contexts. Based on this understanding, this research was undertaken with a view to investigate the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

4.3 Research Design

Generally, the research design demonstrates how a researcher intends to conduct his/her investigation. In more specific terms, "a research design is a plan or blue print of how a researcher intends to conduct research. In essence, a research design focuses on the end products, formulates a research problem as a point of departure and focuses on the logic of research" (Mouton, 2001:55). The research plan also indicates clearly the

strategies that will be employed by the researcher to obtain data from the respondents (Neuman, 2011 and Patton, 2002).

Similarly, Berg (2001) explains that research design includes important decisions about the research idea, problem or question. Such questions may be, for example, what types of information or data should be gathered and through what forms of data collection technologies? Where will the research be undertaken, and among what groups of people (questions of site, setting and sample)? Importantly, Marshal and Rossman (1999) emphasise that it is crucial to establish a rationale for identifying and using a particular setting as a data collection site. In this study, the setting for data collection comprised four libraries situated in Bushbuckridge. Using the above definitions of research design as a guide, this study adopted and applied the triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods approach comprising quantitative and qualitative tools to investigate the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (Figure 2). The rationale for using this approach in the study is provided below.

4.3.1 Triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods

According to Yeasmin (2012:156), triangulation is a process of verification that increases validity by incorporating several viewpoints and methods, In the social sciences, it refers to the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or investigators into one study of a single phenomenon to converge on a single construct, and can be employed in both quantitative (validation) and qualitative (inquiry) studies. The benefit of using triangulated research methods (i.e. quantitative and qualitative) in this study is that by combining multiple observers, theories, methods and empirical materials, the researcher was able to overcome the weaknesses or intrinsic biases and the problems that come from single-method, single-observer, single-theory studies.

Triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry" (Creswell, 2003:3). As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative

approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analysing, in both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. A triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods approach is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds. The triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods approach utilises strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems (Creswell, 2014).

Applying the triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods approach in this research is consistent with the point made by Yin (2009:2) that, "regardless of its source, case study evidence can include both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data may be considered non-numeric, for example, categorical information that can be collected and presented in narrative form, such as word tables. Quantitative data may be considered numeric data, for example, information based on the use of ordinal if not interval or ratio measures". Figure 4 illustrates how the triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods approach was employed in this inquiry.

Figure 4.1 Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods

Triangulation of quantitative
and qualitative methods

QUALITATIVE METHODS
- Interviews
- Document reviews
- Inductive reasoning
- Grounded theory

QUANTITATIVE METHODS
- Questionnaire
- Pilot test
- Deductive reasoning
- Descriptive statistics
  e.g. percentages

INTEGRATED ANALYSIS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS
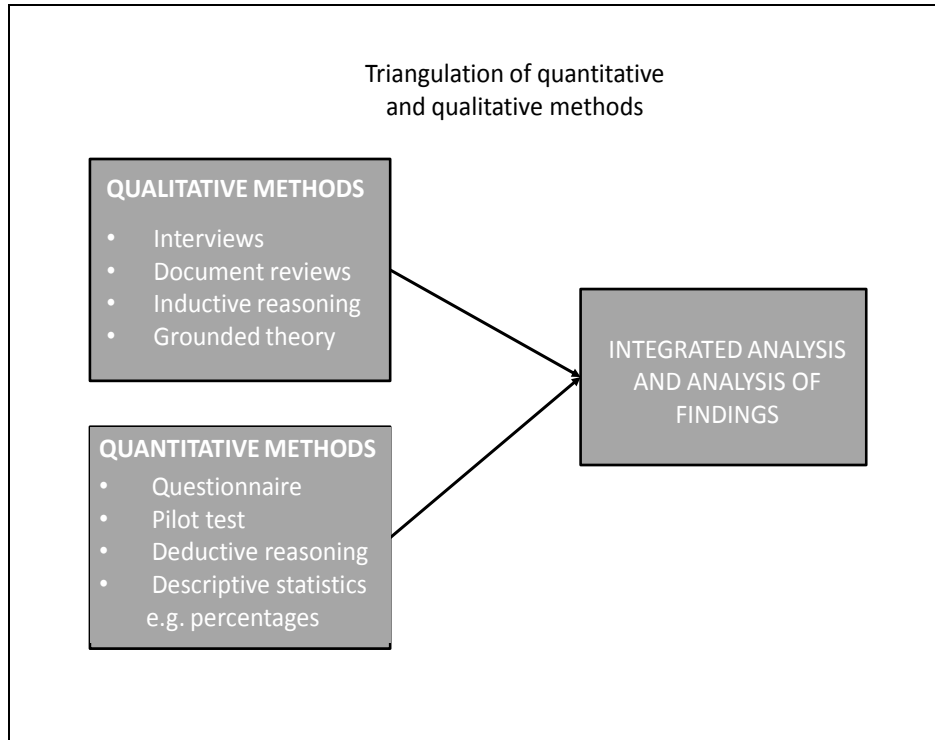
Source: Adapted from Creswell (2009)

As shown in figure 4.1 above, the study employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods to enable an integrated analysis of the results. This will give a holistic picture about the perceptions and experiences of managers, librarians and regular users on the information needs of library users, and the extent to which the four libraries in Bushbuckridge have been able to meet those needs. A quantitative methodology allows the research to quantify social phenomena, to collect and to analyze numerical data, and to focus on the links among a smaller number of attributes across many cases (Babbie, 2014). To this end, a questionnaire with closed ended questions will be administered to the respondents in order to collect numerical data. Details of the questionnaire used in the study are provided in subsection 5.3, which deals with the research instruments.

In addition to questionnaires, qualitative methods, for example, interviews were used to enable the collection of qualitative data from the four participating libraries in Bushbuckridge. As described by Neuman (2012), "qualitative data exist in the form of written or spoken language, or observations that are recorded in language, and analysed by identifying and categorizing things." The aim of the interview is to elicit the experiences of librarians in meeting the diverse and rapidly changing information needs of library users. More is said about the interview in subsection 5.3.

4.3.2 Justification of triangulated research

Cameron (2011) and Teddlie (2010) in Creswell (2014) explain that "triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods research is a growing area of methodological choice for many academics and researchers from across a variety of discipline areas." In this research, the triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods approach was chosen because it enabled the researcher to "converge quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem" (Creswell, 2003). By mixing the data sets, the researcher was able to provide a better understanding of the information needs of library users in the study area. Through the combination of quantitative and qualitative data, it was possible to understand the perceptions and experiences of library users (i.e. community members) and library personnel (i.e. providers of library services) concerning the provision of LIS to library users.

In justifying the use of triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods research, Creswell (2003:5) explains that this approach is practical in the sense that the researcher is free to use all methods possible to address a research problem. It is also practical because individuals tend to solve problems using both numbers and words, they combine inductive and deductive thinking, and they employ skills in observing people as well as recording behaviour. It is natural then, for individuals to employ triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods research as the preferred mode of understanding the world. In this way, triangulated qualitative and quantitative methods research provides the strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research. It helps answer questions that cannot be answered by qualitative

or quantitative approaches alone" (Cresswell, 2003:5). Mathers, Fox and Hunn (2009:1) explain that quantitative research is beneficial as it has internal and external validity; for example, the use of random sampling technique produces a sample which is representative of the particular population under study and produce findings which may be generalised to the wider population.

4.4 Ontology

Cameron (2011) explains that selection of research methodology is largely informed by philosophical (ontological and epistemological) assumptions. In other words, a researcher needs to position themselves paradigmatically. According to Walter and Anderson (2013:12), ontology refers to our understanding of what constitutes reality, how we perceive the world around. At its most concentrated it is about how the world is understood – what reality is. Epistemology, on the other hand refers to a theory of knowledge – ways of knowing. It is concerned with understanding how the (mostly unwritten) rules about what is counted as knowledge are set, that is, what is defined as knowledge, who can and who cannot be knowledgeable, and which knowledge is valued over others.

There are two dominant ontological and epistemological traditions, namely positivism and interpretivism. While positivist researchers do not regard themselves as important variables in their research and believe they remain detached from what they research, interpretivist researchers, do not accept the idea of there being a reality "out there", which exists irrespective of people (Tuli, 2010). Interpretivism sees reality as a human construct. The interpretivist research paradigm views reality and meaning making as socially constructed and it holds that people make their own sense of social realities. The study employed the interpretivist paradigm to investigate the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa.

The interpretivist perspective was chosen because it emphasises the meaning individual actors give to social interactions, and the use of symbols, such as language, in the creation of that meaning. From an interpretivist perspective, the human world is a

world of meaning in which our actions take place on the basis of shared understandings. To understand society, we need to understand people's motives and interpretations of the world. The meanings actors give to their circumstances are the explanations of what they do (Walter and Anderson, 2013). This same logic applies to understanding the information needs of library users in the study area. Interpretivism dictates that the purpose of inquiry is to understand a particular phenomenon, not to generalise the findings to a population. Researchers within the interpretivist paradigm are naturalistic since they study real-world situations as they unfold naturally. They tend to be naturalistic since they study real-world situations as they unfold naturally. More specifically, they tend to be non-manipulative, obstructive, and non-controlling (Tuli, 2010).

4.5 Population and sampling

4.5.1 Population

In the words of Strydom and Venter (2002:1), a research population is "a collection of all individuals, families, groups, organisations, communities or events that will participate in the study." It is the sampling units that are linked to the research phenomenon." Similarly, Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:23) define a population as "the set of elements that the research focuses on and to which the obtained results should be generalised."

Using the preceding definitions as a guide, the study population in this research includes the community of Bushbuckridge. At the time of conducting this study, the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality has a total population of 541 248, of which 99, 5% are black African, with the other population groups making up the remaining 0, 5% (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

4.5.2 Sampling

As defined by Mugo (2002:1), sampling is "the act, process or technique of selecting a suitable sample or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. "Since the study used triangulated methods (quantitative and qualitative) respondents were selected in

accordance with the sampling principles applicable to each of these research methods. For this reason, a combination of random sampling (probability sampling) and purposive sampling (non-probability sampling) was used to construct a sample that enabled the researcher to collect sufficient data needed to understand the library needs of Bushbuckridge communities. Random sampling was used to select 100 library users, whilst purposive sampling was used to select 4 librarians and 1 manager. These sampling methods are explained in more detail below, including the actual sample for each one of them.

- **Random Sampling (Non-probability sampling method)**

According to Shenton (2004:3), the benefit of using random sampling is that "it may negate or reduce charges of researcher bias in the selection of participants as very element has an equal chance of being selected." More importantly, random sampling ensures that any unknown influences are distributed evenly within the sample. Bourma and Atkinson (1995) add that a random sample procedure provides the greatest assurance that those selected are a representative sample of the larger group. A key disadvantage of random sampling is that the researcher does not have control over the choice of respondents; if uncooperative or inarticulate members of the population are included in the sample, the researcher may not be able to obtain sufficient data on the research phenomenon.

Berg (2001) explains that in order for a researcher to accomplish a simple random sample, each element in the full population must have an equal and independent chance of inclusion in the eventual sample to be studied. Simple random sample typically begins with a full listing of every element in the full population to be studied. Once the list of all the elements has been constructed, the size of the sample must be determined. In this study, a list of users was compiled from the data base of each participating library. Following from this logic, the random and purposive samples for the study were as follows (table 4.1 and 4.2):

Table 4.1 Random sample

Participating library	Estimated Number of users per month
Library a	450 users per month
Library b	260 users per month
Library c	400 users per month
Library d	320 users per month
Total	1430
Average	357.5

As shown in table 4.1 above, the desired sample was selected by combining/adding together the data bases of the four libraries and dividing the total (1430) by four to get the average number of users in all the libraries per month, which works out as follows: $N^= 1430/4 = 357.5$. Based on this, a computer-based random selection was then constructed from the combined 357.5 regular users to get a sample of 100 respondents representing the four libraries. The selected regular users were considered based on their knowledge of the library collection that the libraries have, community background and the knowledge of library services that are offered by the library staff. Most of the registered members reside within Bushbuckridge Municipality.

- **Purposive sampling (Non-probability sampling method)**

In addition to the random sampling mentioned above, purposive sampling was also used to address the qualitative aspects of the study. Purposive sampling is described as a non-probability sampling method that belongs to qualitative research (Martens, 2005; Creswell, 2009). Since it is based on the researcher's prior knowledge of the target population, purposive or judgmental sampling enables the selection of rich and

informative cases or subjects from the target population (Huysamen, 2001). Through purposive sampling, 1 manager and 4 librarians were selected from the four case study libraries in Bushbuckridge. Details of the qualitative sample are given in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Purposive sample

Participating libraries	Number of respondents selected
Library A	1 Librarian
Library B	1 Librarian
Library C	1 Librarian
Library D	1 Librarian
	1 Manager (responsible for all libraries)
Total	**5 Respondents**

Table 4.2 above indicates that one manager and one librarian was chosen from each participating library. In total 5 respondents took part in the interview, which consisted mainly of open-ended questions (see Annexure 1). The inclusion of managers in the sample is important because they make decisions on a range of critical issues that impact on the information needs of library users as well as the operation and sustainability of library information services in Bushbuckridge, which is the main focus of the study.

4.6 Data Collection Instruments

In research literature, data collection instruments are defined as the tools that a research utilises to obtain data from participants (Neuman, 2012). They are techniques of data collection analysis, such as a quantitative standardised instrument or a qualitative theme analysis of text (Creswell, 2006). An important consideration in choosing data collection methods is to determine the most efficient, feasible and ethical methods for collecting data as the research progresses (Marshall and Rossman 2006).

Following from the above explanations, this study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools to obtain sufficient data from the four case study libraries concerning the information needs of library users. These include questionnaires and interviews. The data collection instruments are explained in more detail below.

4.6.1 Questionnaire

As defined by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:52), a questionnaire is "an instrument of data collection that includes a standardised series of questions relating to the research topic to be answered by participants". Adding to this, Marshal and Rossman (2006) says that questionnaires usually involve several questions that have structured response categories. Neuman (2003) points out that a good questionnaire is an integrated whole where the researcher weaves questions together so that they flow smoothly. Questionnaires are used for the following purposes (Delport, 2005 in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport and Babbie, 2014):

- To obtain facts and opinions about a problem from the community or group of people or organisations being studied
- To gather information on consumer behaviour or a particular group of people involved
- To gauge attitudes/opinions of a group of people on a particular issue or problem in their area and
- To collect baseline information that can be used to track and measure changes in a project over time

For the purposes of this study, self-administered questionnaire with closed-ended questions was designed to collect numeric data from library users in the four libraries. The questionnaire, which is included in Appendix 2, consists of 2 sections/parts. In addition, interviews were used to collect data from four librarians and one library manager responsible for all the libraries between 01 and 20 February 2017.

4.6.2 Pre-testing of the questionnaire

Research literature indicates that pre-testing of questionnaires is an effective way of reducing errors or mistakes in the main study (Babbie, 2014). As the vehicle of data collection, the questionnaire is one of the critical components in achieving high quality in a survey. DeMaio, Rothgeb and Hess (1998:2) identify several methods that can be used to determine the effectiveness of questionnaires before conducting the actual research with the chosen respondents. These include cognitive interviewing, respondent debriefing, and behaviour coding of respondent/interviewer interaction.

Using the respondent debriefing technique, questionnaires were pre-tested with 10 potential respondents from the four libraries prior to the survey. Inputs and suggestions from this pre-test were subsequently used to improve the design and contents of the questionnaire to enable effective data collection in each of the four libraries of Bushbuckridge. Respondent debriefing involves incorporating follow-up questions in a field test interview to gain a better understanding of how respondents interpret questions.

The primary objective of respondent debriefing in this inquiry was to determine whether concepts and questions were clearly understood by the respondents in the same way that the researcher intended. Respondent debriefings were quite useful in helping the researcher to establish the reason for respondent misgivings in some of the questionnaires; especially on the quality of library services rendered. More importantly, the de briefing technique proved useful in indicating the type of questions that had to be maintained and those that needed adjustment and modification.

- **Response Rate**

According to the American association for Public Opinion Research (2008:1), "a response rate, or the completion rate, refers to the number of people who answered the survey divided by number of people in the sample; usually expressed in percentage terms." Importantly, Sivo, Saunders and Chang (2006:1-2) point out that "a poor response rate is particularly troublesome for descriptive studies because their

usefulness lies in their capacity to generalise the findings to a population with high confidence. Not only does non-response bias a sample, but it can also lead to low power and inaccurate effect size estimation, particularly when size turns out to be too low."

According to Pinsonneault and Kraemers (1993), non-response introduces substantial error into survey estimates when the number of non-respondents is large relative to the sample size and when non-respondents differ greatly from respondents. Such low response rates jeopardize any attempt to generalise the findings in an adequate way.

In this study, the response rate was 89%, which was calculated using the following formula (Brennan, 1992):

Response rate = $\dfrac{\text{Number of valid returns 89}}{\text{Total sample 100} - (\text{Non-responses 0} + \text{spoiled 11})} \times 100$

4.6.3 Strategies used to improve the response rate

A variety of strategies were used to improve the response rate in this study. These include but are not limited to the following (Brennan, 1992, Mathers, Fox and Hunn, 2009 and Babbie, 2014):

i. A covering letter stating the aims and objectives of the study was included in each batch of questionnaires sent to the four case study libraries

ii. Before conducting the study, some of the questionnaires were translated into local languages to enable ease of reading and completion by the respondents

iii. Friendly reminders and follow-up calls were made to each collection point (i.e. participating library) to determine progress in the completion of questionnaires

iv. Supplementary questionnaires were printed and sent out to each participating library to compensate for spoiled questionnaires

v. "The use of random sampling not only enhances external validity, but also supports statistical conclusion validity if enough people are randomly sampled,

the power is sufficient, and the magnitude of the effect size of interest is ascertainable" (Sivo, Saunders, Chang and Jiang, 2006:5).

4.6.4 Interviews

In the words of Babbie (2014:34), "an interview is a conversation between the interviewer and interviewee aimed at eliciting specific information from the interview in order to answer the research question." According to Cresswell, (2001), the primary aim of qualitative interviewing is to understand the world from the participant's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. Patton (2002) divides interviews into three general categories, namely: the informal, conversational interview; the general interview guide approach, and the standardised, open-ended interview.

Within the same context, Marshall and Rossman (2006) explains that qualitative, in-depth interviews typically are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories. The researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's views but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses. This method, in fact, is based on an assumption fundamental to qualitative research, and that is, participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher's view.

There are benefits to using interviews. For example, Yin (2009) explains that open-ended interviews, if properly done, help to reveal how case study participants construct reality and think about situations, not just to provide the answers to a researcher's specific questions and own implicit construction of reality. For some case studies, the participants' construction of reality provides important insights into the case. The insights gain even further value if the participants are key persons in the organisations, communities or small groups being studied, not just the average member of such groups.

Based on the preceding definitions, the study used in-depth interviews. The interview guide, which provided in Annexure 1, was used to elicit data from library managers/supervisors in each of the four participating libraries. They were targeted because they have the power to make decisions about the allocation of resources and the delivery of library services, which ultimately affect the information needs of library users.

The interview guide/schedule consists mainly of unstructured questions to enable the respondents to provide in-depth answers regarding their experiences in packaging and delivering library services to meet the information needs of library users in the Bushbuckridge area. The specific themes covered during the interview were as follows:

4.6.5 Interview themes

- Information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge;
- How the four local libraries meet information needs of users in Bushbuckridge
- Experiences of library users on the quality of services received from their libraries
- Challenges that libraries face as they satisfy users' information needs in this area
- Ways of improving the provision of library services to rural communities

4.6.6 The Research Process

Process steps

Following the approval of the Proposal by the Thesis Committee in March 2016, the research project was subsequently executed between 31 March 2016 and 25 April 2016. As illustrated in figure 4.1 below, the data collection process was accomplished in two phases:

Figure 4.1 The research process

Phase 1 Interviews	Phase 2 Questionnaires
Interview schedule	Limited number of questionnaires translated into local languages
Field notes	Pre-testing
Follow-up	Distribution
Transcribing	Collection
Data processing: Microsoft Word	Data processing: Microsoft Excel
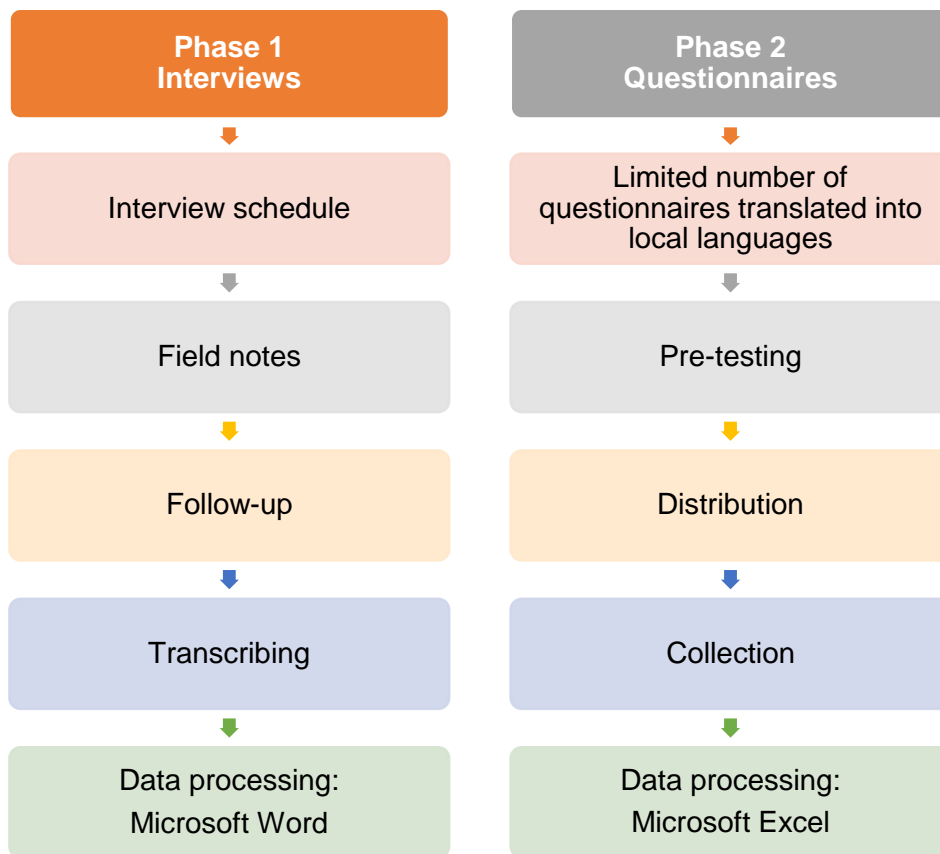
According to figure 4.1, the first phase of the research entailed conducting the unstructured interviews with 4 Librarians and 1 manager presiding over the four libraries of Bushbuckridge. The interviews were conducted from 01 to 20 February 2017. Each interviews session with participants took approximately one hour (60 minutes) to enable

meaningful data collection. The aim of the unstructured interviews was to elicit data on how each library met the information needs of library users. Interview questions were fairly open-ended, allowing greater flexibility and free discussions (Neuman, 2012). Each interview session took 45 minutes. Answers from each interviewee were recorded in a note book and later processed through Microsoft Word.

The second phase was about the questionnaires, which targeted librarians and library users in each of the four participating libraries of Bushbuckridge. This questionnaire consisted mainly of structured (closed-ended) questions to get specific answers from the respondents. The aim of this survey was to gauge the perceptions and experiences of librarians and users on the nature and quality of the services provided. As indicated in Annexure 2 and 3, each category of respondents had its own set of questions in a separate questionnaire.

As shown in figure 4.1 above, some of the questionnaires were translated into local languages, e.g. Xitsonga and Sepedi as the two dominating languages to mitigate the challenge of illiteracy and multiculturalism and to enable ease of completion by the respondents. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), translating entails the transfer of meaning from a source language to a target language and that the translator is "actually an interpreter who processes the vocabulary and grammatical structure of the words while considering the individual situation and the overall cultural context. Thus the focus on generating accurate and meaningful data through translation processes is paramount. Clearly, the issues associated with translating from one language into another are much more complex than transcribing because they involve some subtle issues of connotation and meaning. In this study, translation was not a big challenge as the researcher speaks all the local languages mentioned above.

With the assistance of support staff, twenty-five (25) questionnaires were distributed in each participating library on 2 April 2016; giving a combined total of (25x4) 100 questionnaires. An interval of two weeks was allowed to enable respondents to complete the questionnaires. On 15 April 2015, completed and spoiled questionnaires

were counted and collected from each of the participating libraries. Following the verification process, a 99% response rate was registered in all four libraries, suggesting a positive response to the questionnaires.

- **Overcoming the challenge of Insider Research**

Insider research refers to when researchers conduct research with populations of which they are also members (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009 and Kanuha, 2000) so that the researcher shares an identity, language and experiential base with the study participants (Asselin, 2003). The complete membership role gives researchers a certain amount of legitimacy and/or stigma (Adler and Adler, 1987).

"Although this shared status (i.e. insider research) can be very beneficial as it affords access, entry and acceptance by participants, and a common ground from which to begin the research, it has the potential to impede the research process as it progresses" (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009:3). Based on this logic, the challenges of insider research that had to be mitigated to ensure effective data collection in this study include the following:

- **Insider Knowledge**

Gunter (2004) explains that people come to research with backgrounds that shape what they are interested in. Similarly, this research was undertaken with a keen interest to understand the information needs of library users and what their libraries were doing to meet these needs. Kanuha (2000) suggests that sharing similarity with the context and research phenomenon is also related to insider knowledge. As an insider in the library environment, I was privileged in understanding my participants' daily professional activities and their roles in providing library and information services to users. However, there challenges as well and these can be framed as follows:

Although I had knowledge of my participants' occupational and social backgrounds, it was difficult to separate these roles from data collection, as some of the participants assumed that I already knew some of the answers to the research questions. For example, when certain questions were posed in the interview, some responded by

saying: "As you probably know" and "You should know better because you have been here for a long time". One way of dealing with this challenge was to use probes and follow up questions to help participants focus on the issues at hand i.e. information needs of library users and role of the library in meeting them.

- *Over-familiarity with my participants*

Although pre-understandings (Innes, 2009) of the research environments i.e. four libraries and their employees helped participants settle quickly during the interview, certain limitations also surfaced. These included the need to frequently redirect the conversation/interview to ensure that participants do not bring in irrelevant issues into the interview. For example, guidelines and examples were used to make participants understand the specific information required in each question.

- *Entanglement*

According to (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009) Entanglement refers to the researcher's involvement with participants in both professional and social matters at work. Entanglement can create both positive and negative outcomes. In my case, some participants assumed that being politically correct (i.e. speaking the library language) would be the right thing to do, as opposed to saying things that would probably unsettle me as a manager. As I work in one of the libraries, it was hard to separate my professional role from that of a researcher as participants now and again referred to my management position. To deal with this, I encouraged participants to use the opportunity to express their own views and experiences regarding the information needs of library users and the role of the library in addressing these needs.

4.7 Data Analysis

In research literature, data analysis is defined as the process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data in order to create meaning (Babbie, 2014; Neuman and 2011). Yin (2003) recognise the importance of organising data during the analysis process to

ensure consistent and fair reporting of results. Berg (2001:34) provides a plausible explanation of the data analysis process that was followed in this study:

"Typically, the immediate collected raw data are not immediately available for analysis. Rather, the raw data requires some sort of organising and processing before it can actually be analysed. Field notes, for example, may fill hundreds of pages of note books or take up thousands of megabytes of space on a computer disk. "These notes need to be edited, corrected, and made more readable, even before they can be organised, indexed, or entered into a computer-generated text analysis programme file. Recorded interviews must be transcribed (transformed into written text), corrected, and edited; also before being somehow indexed or entered into a text-based computer analysis programme."

Using the preceding definitions as a guide, numeric and non-numeric data from the four libraries were critically examined before transferring them to the computer for processing and analysis. Excel was used to process numeric data; while Word processing was used to organise and treat non-numeric data. The analysis process combined deductive (quantitative) and inductive (qualitative) approaches. As will be seen in chapter five, tables and tables were also used to summarise and display data. For example, frequency tables were helpful in prioritising quantitative data; while graphical representations helped to illuminate analysis of qualitative data.

4.8 Reliability and Validity

In conducting this research study, it was essential to adhere to the principle of reliability and validity to ensure that the research findings and conclusions of the study are credible and acceptable in the eyes of the reader and end users (Neuman, 2012). As defined by Babbie (2014), reliability is a matter of whether or not a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same objective, yields the same results each time it is used. Similarly, Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred

to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under similar methodology then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.

Validity, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration. Underlying the principle of validity is the notion that research findings should be replicable and/or assimilated to the population from which the sample was drawn. As the study employs both qualitative and quantitative techniques, it became necessary to use different measures to enhance the reliability and validity of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. Table 4.3 summarises some of the techniques used to improve the reliability and validity of the study.

Table 4.3 Strategies to enhance reliability and validity of the study

Qualitative methods	Quantitative methods
• Triangulation of data sources • Comparing findings with the literature and theoretical framework • Using probing and follow-up questions during the interview to verify the respondents' claims	• Representativity of the sample • Generalizing the findings across the four participating libraries • Testing the hypothesis (if applicable) • Double-checking figures to ensure accuracy • Comparative analysis of data from the four libraries

4.9 Limitations of the study

The unit of analysis in this study comprised four local libraries in Bushbuckridge. Consequently, libraries in adjacent local municipalities such as Mbombela and Nkomazi were not considered; meaning that the results can only be prioritised across the four participating case study libraries. Generalizability refers to the researcher's ability to generalize the results from the sample to the population from which it was drawn. The ability to generalize results depends on how representative the sample is of the population (Mertens, 2005).

A related limitation concerns the subjectivity generally associated with insider research. As already pointed out above, conducting research in intimately-known communities can be a challenge. Qualitative researchers face "surprises, twists and turns in the road, and unforeseen obstacles" that need to be addressed in the research process (Minichiello and Kottler, 2010:11). During the research, it was necessary to make participants understand that although the researcher was part of library staff, however, it is important to be objective and impartial in answering the research questions, as their inputs and suggestions would be vital in helping libraries to meet the information needs of library users.

4.10 Ethical considerations

Best and Kahn (2006) contend that ethics has become a cornerstone for conducting effective and meaningful research. As such, the ethical behavior of individual researchers is under unprecedented scrutiny. Thus every researcher has a responsibility to protect the participants in an investigation.

According to Babbie (2014) being ethical in research means conforming to the research standards. In other words, research ethics is about doing what is right, i.e., minimising or preventing any harm that the research may cause the respondents. The following ethical standards were adopted and applied to ensure that the study is conducted in a fair and acceptable manner:

4.10.1 Consent

Consent involves the procedure by which an individual may choose whether or not to participate in a study. The researcher's task is to ensure that participants have a complete understanding of the purpose and methods to be used in the study, the risks involved and the demands placed upon them as a participant (Drew, Hardman and Hosp, 2008).

In view of the above, ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Limpopo Ethics Committee. Participants were informed that participation in

the study is voluntary and thus not coercive. To secure consent, participants were also informed about the objectives of the study.

4.10.2 Approval

A letter of approval from the university was given to the participants as proof that the study had been 76 authorized by the institution and thus legitimate. In addition to this, approval to conduct the study was also obtained from the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

4.10.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Frequently, research of this nature is aimed at obtaining information concerning attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and behavior. Thus, pursuing the goals of science, while guarding against unnecessary invasion of participants' privacy, presents complex issues (Drew, Hardman and Hosp, 2008).

Invasion of privacy represents a substantial risk in qualitative research because of the sensitive data often collected and analysed. One of the traditional methods of circumventing privacy problems—anonymity—is a way to protect individual participants (Drew, Hardman and Hosp, 2008).

Based on this logic, participants were assured that their views and inputs were protected. This means that the information that they provide during the research would not in any way be used to harm their lives or reputations. This assurance was given to participants prior to the study.

4.10.4 Identity and privacy

The participants were assured that their identity would be protected. Ways to achieve this included concealing their real names and personal particulars. This was achieved through the use of pseudonyms in data presentation and analysis, i.e. respondent A, B, C and D. In addition, respondents were also reassured that their real names would not be published in the report. Other important ethical principles that informed and guided this study include (Mertens and Ginsberg, 2009)

4.10.5 Beneficence

Maximising good outcomes for science, humanity, and the individual research participants and minimising or avoiding unnecessary risk, harm, or wrong. In an effort to meet this ethical principle, the study incorporated the views of both community members and providers of library and information services in Bushbuckridge.

4.10.6 Respect

Treating people with respect and courtesy, including those who are not autonomous, for example, small children, people who have mental retardation or senility. During the study, all participants were interviewed separately in their private work stations; while self-administered questionnaires were used to prevent intrusion into respondents' private lives.

4.10.7 Justice

Ensuring that those who bear the risk in the research are the ones who benefit from it; ensuring that the procedures are reasonable, non-exploitative, carefully considered, and fairly administered. The study contributed to this principle by alerting Bushbuckridge officials and librarians to the information needs of library users and what they could do to meet them.

4.11 Significance of the study

One of the key roles of libraries is to meet the information needs of library users. Based on this understanding, the study aims to raise awareness about the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge and to recommend ways in which local libraries can improve services to satisfy these needs.

The study will also indicate to the local government the need and value of libraries in meeting the information needs of library users. The findings from this research could be of great value and useful in raising awareness to library officials and officials in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality to support the purchasing of library materials, the

hiring of professional librarians and the facilitating of outreach programmes in order to satisfy the information needs of all community members.

As Mnkeni-Saurombe and Zimu (2012) observe, community libraries have a vital role to play in the battle against illiteracy and social exclusion. The study will also alert community members to see the value of libraries and the impact that they could make in their community to improve their lives as a result of easier access to information. The study contributes to knowledge creation by investigating the information needs of rural communities; a subject which has not been adequately researched in South Africa particularly.

4.12 Conclusion

Chapter four elucidated and justified the mixed method approach adopted by the study to investigate the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge. Through questionnaires and interviews data were collected from the four case study libraries in this area. The data, which are presented and analysed in the next chapter, reflect the perceptions and experiences of library users, librarians and library management regarding the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

As reflected in Chapter one, the aim of the study was to investigate the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge with a view to find out if such information met their development needs. Using this logic as a point of departure, chapter five presents and analyses the data to determine whether the four participating libraries are able to meet the information needs of library users/users in this area. The study was conducted in four local libraries in the following villages: Dwarsloop/Mafemani, Henry Mdluli, Shatale and Mkhuhlu between June and July 2016. Questionnaires were used to obtain quantitative data from library users (community members), while interviews were employed to elicit qualitative data from librarians.

5.2 Overview of data presentation process

Numeric data was transformed into percentages to provide answers to each of the items in the questionnaire. The data was presented in tables using the code "Library A to D" in order to protect their identity of the respondents (i.e. four libraries) and to enable meaningful comparison of the results across them. Qualitative data from interviews was transcribed and subsequently categorised into themes and subthemes in accordance with the research questions to enable in-depth analysis of the results. The following formula was used to convert quantitative data into descriptive statistics or percentages:

Number of respondents per library divided by 89 multiply by 100 = % e.g.:

14 / 89 x 100 = 16%

5.3 Characteristics of the sample

The research sample was drawn from a population of 541 248, in Bushbuckridge. Twenty-five (25) participants were randomly selected from each of the four participating libraries to obtain a total sample of 100 respondents for the survey/questionnaires. The combined response rate for the four libraries was 89%, which is fairly reasonable. Of these respondents, 49% were males and 40% females; suggesting a slight gender imbalance in the use of library services in the study area.

On average, 60% of the respondents (i.e. library users) were between the ages of 18 and 34. Only a small number (29%) of the respondents were above the age of 34; meaning that young people were more likely to use the library than elders in the study area. Regarding the qualitative aspect of the study, two (2) librarians were purposively selected from each of the four libraries to participate in interviews, which were conducted between July and August 2016. The combined number of interviewees from the four libraries was five (5). Based on this, the findings from the survey and interviews were as follows:

5.4 Findings from the survey (quantitative research)

5.1 Use of library services by gender

The aim of this question was to determine whether library services were equally accessible to men and women in the study area; given the gender biases and exclusions generally experienced by women, particularly in rural communities. Responses to this question are summarised in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1 Use of library services by gender

Participating	Male	Female

libraries	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Library a	14	16%	10	11%
Library b	16	18%	6	7%
Library c	8	9%	13	15%
Library d	11	12%	11	12%

The results in Table 5.1 indicate that most library users were predominantly male, particularly in library A, B and D. By contrast, 15% of users in library C were female. The high proportion of male users (e.g. library A = 16%, library B = 18%, Library D = 12%) could be an indication that not many women are using library services in the study area; suggesting a gender bias in the consumption of these services.

5.4.2 Use of library services by age

During the survey, respondents from the participating libraries were asked to indicate their ages. The aim of this question was to establish the age range of community members who used library services quite often and to see if library services were being utilised by all age groups (e.g. youth, middle age and elder people) in the Bushbuckridge community. Table 5.2 summarises the answers from the respondents.

Table 5.2 Age range of users per library

	Age range of users per library							
	16-21		**22-27**		**28-33**		**34 and above**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	8	9%	4	4.5%	4	4.5%	4	4.5%
Library b	6	7%	8	9%	8	9%	3	3%
Library c	2	2%	16	18%	2	2%	2	2%
Library d	9	10%	1	1%	10	11%	2	2%

The data in table 5.2 suggest that library users in the four libraries generally included people from all age groups. For example, 9% of users were between the ages of 16 and 21 in library A, followed by 7% in library B and 2% in library C, the lowest and 10% in

Library D. In the 22-27 category, library C had the highest number (18%) of users, followed by library B with (9%). Library D had the lowest number of users in the 22-27 category at only 1%. Library B and D dominated the 28-33 range with 9% and 11% respectively; compared to the relatively small number of users in Library A (4%) and library C (2%).

Furthermore, in the "34 and above" category, library A and B were slightly ahead with 4.5% and 3% respectively, while library C and D had a small share of the user market at % each. Overall, these results suggest that young people were more likely to use library services than older people (i.e. 34 and above) in the Bushbuckridge community.

5.4.3 Knowledge of Library Services

- **Access to library information**

The aim of this question was to determine whether library services had been communicated to users in each of the four libraries in the study area (i.e. Bushbuckridge). The results are summarised in table 5.3   below.

Table 5.3 Knowledge of library services

Participating libraries	Yes		No	
	Number of respondents	**Percentage (%)**	**Number of respondents**	**Percentage (%)**
Library a	22	25%	1	1%
Library b	21	24%	2	2%
Library c	18	20%	3	3%
Library d	16	18%	6	7%

The data in table5.3 show that many users in each participating library (for example, library A=25%, library B= 24% library C= 20% and library D= 18%) had been informed about available library services. And, the number of users who had not been properly informed about these services was relatively small across the four libraries (for example, Library A=1%, library B=2%, library C=3% and library D=7%). To some

degree, this means that efforts had been made by librarians to communicate library services to users in the participating libraries; although significant improvement are needed to improve communication of LIS in library D, where the number of users who had not been informed about these services remained relatively high at 7%.

- **Language used to inform users about library services**

In this question, the respondents were asked to indicate which language was used by libraries to inform them about available services. The aim was to establish whether library services had been communicated in local languages that respondents understood well. Respondents' opinions on this issue are summarised in table 5.4 as follows:

Table 5.4   Language used to communicate services to users

Participating libraries	Yes		No	
	Number of respondents	**Percentage (%)**	**Number of respondents**	**Percentage (%)**
Library a	4	4%	18	20.2%
Library b	5	6%	17	19.1%
Library c	3	3.4%	20	22.5%
Library d	4	4.5%	18	20.2%

From table 5.4, it can be seen that only a small number of users in each of the participating libraries (Library A=4%, Library B=6, Library C=3% and Library D=4%) received information in their home language (e.g. Tsonga, IsiSwati, and Sepedi, which were very common in the study area). The majority of users in each library (Library A=20%, Library B=19%, Library C=22% and Library D=20%) denied having received library information in their home language. To some extent, this finding indicates that library communications were disseminated to communities through English, which created barriers for those not conversant with this language. This was confirmed by some of the librarians during interviews in the second phase of the study. Given the challenges of illiteracy in the study area, it is therefore important for librarians to use

local languages to accommodate those who cannot read or write in English.

- **Availability of library information services**

Essentially, this question was intended to find out if community members /users had libraries in their respective wards so that they could be able to meet their development needs on a daily basis. Users' experiences on the availability of libraries varied across the participating libraries. Table 5.5 summarises the results on this issue.

Table 5.5   Availability of library information

Participating libraries	Yes		No	
	Number of respondents	**Percentage (%)**	**Number of respondents**	**Percentage (%)**
Library a	21	24%	2	2%
Library b	16	18%	4	4%
Library c	21	24%	2	2%
Library d	20	22%	3	3%

According to table, 5.5 users in the four libraries commonly agreed that library information was available in their respective areas, as illustrated by the complementary data across the respondents (for example, Library A=24%, Library B=18%, Library C=24% and D=22%). In some way, these results show that information on available library services had been provided to users in each of the participating libraries in varying degrees. Very few users denied having access to library information services (Library A = 2%; Library B = 4%; Library C = 2% and Library D = 3%)

- **Does this information meet your needs?**

The respondents were also required to indicate if the information that they received from

the participating libraries met their needs. Basically, this question sought to determine if libraries provided relevant and useful information to community members in the study area. The answers to this question are summarised in table 5.6 below:

Table 5.6 Information needs of library users per library .

Participating libraries	Yes		No	
	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Library a	19	21.3%	2	2.2%
Library b	18	20.2.%	4	4.5%
Library c	20	22.5%	3	3.4%
Library d	22	25%	1	1%

According to the data in table 5.6, the majority of users in each participating library agreed that the information provided by librarians helped them to meet their development needs in varying degrees (for example, Library A=21%, Library B=20, Library C=22% and Library D=25%). Only a small number of users in each library (library A=2%, library B=4%, library C=3% and library D=1%) reported that the information received did not meet their development needs. Taken together, these findings indicate that while efforts had been made to provide information to users in the study area, such information however was partially useful, as some users could not utilise it to satisfy their development needs.

- **Is the library information provided on time?**

In addition to usefulness of library information, respondents were also asked if they received library information on time so that they could meet their needs. A key objective of this question was to gauge the responsiveness of libraries in meeting the information needs of library users in the study area i.e. Bushbuckridge. The findings were as follows:

Table 5.7 Timeliness of library information

Participating libraries	Yes		No	
	Number of respondents	**Percentage (%)**	**Number of respondents**	**Percentage (%)**
Library a	16	18%	6	7%
Library b	18	20%	3	3%
Library c	17	19%	5	6%
Library d	22	25%	2	2%

The findings in table 5.7 confirm that most users in each of the four libraries received library information on time (Library A=18%, Library B=20%, Library C=19% and Library D=25%). Only a small number of users in each library felt that library information was not provided on time (Library A=7%, Library B=3%, Library C=6% and Library D=2%). Thus, late delivery of library information was more likely in library A and C, as opposed to library D, which had the lowest number of complaints (e.g. 2%). On the whole, these results suggest that timeliness of library information differed from one library to another and that significant improvement was therefore needed in this area.

5.4.4 Sources of Library Information

- **Sources of information on available library services**

In this question, the respondents were required to indicate the type of media that they used to obtain relevant information on available library services. The aim was to identify the most common media types that the participating libraries used to communicate their services to users and/or community members in the study area. The results per library were as follows (table 5.8):

Table 5.8 Sources of information on library services

	Sources of information on library services									
	News papers		**Radio**		**Library staff**		**Family/friends**		**Other**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	2	2.2%	1	1%	17	19%	3	3.4%	0	0%
Library b	3	3.4%	2	2.2%	16	18%	2	2.2%	0	0%
Library c	4	4.5%	1	1%	14	16%	2	2.2%	1	1%
Library d	5	6%	2	2.2%	4	4.5%	8	9%	2	2.2%

Deducing from the data in table 5.8 it appears that newspapers and radio were the least preferred sources of information across the four libraries (Library A=2%; Library B=3%; Library C=4% and Library D=6%), as none of these media channels scored more than 10% in the survey. Interestingly, library staff i.e. librarians were preferred over newspapers and radio as a reliable source of information (Library A=19%, Library B=18%, Library C=16% and Library D=4%). The only exception in this instance was library D, where library staff received a relatively low preference (e.g. 4%). To some

extent, family and friends were also seen as alternative source of information with 3% for library A and 2% for library B. The highest number of users (9%) who relied on family and friends to get library information were found in Library D.

None of the users in library A and B used other channels of communication except newspapers, radio, family and friends. In library C, only 1% of the users considered alternative sources of information, followed by 2% in library D. What is evident from these results is that media preference was probably influenced by such factors as convenience, affordability, geography and life style.

5.4.5 Frequency of Library Information

During the survey, respondents in the four libraries were asked how often they received information on library services. The intention was to determine if users get this information regularly so that they are able to meet their development needs. The results are presented in table 5.9 below.

Table 5.9 Frequency of library services

	How often respondents receive library services									
	Weekly		Monthly		Quarterly		Yearly		Other	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	20	22.5%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	0	0%
Library b	15	17%	2	2.2%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	3	3.4%
Library c	12	13.5%	3	3.4%	2	2.2%	3	3.4%	2	2.2%
Library d	15	17%	2	2.2%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	3	3.4%

Judging by the results in table 5.9 it seems that many users in each of the four libraries received library information on a weekly basis, as evidenced by the relatively high scores in this category (Library A=22% Library B=17%, Library C=13% and Library D=17%). Approximately, less than 5% of users in each library received services

monthly, quarterly, yearly or otherwise. These results show that in most cases, library services were consumed on a weekly basis, which is normal, given the reportedly high cost of community transport in the study area.

5.4.6 Access to Library Services

- **Availability of library services**

During the survey, each of the respondents was asked to indicate if they had a library in their area or ward. The aim of this question was to establish if the respondents had easy and affordable access to library services in their wards. Their answers are summarised as follows (table 5.10):

Table 5.10 Availability of libraries

Participating libraries	Yes		No	
	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
library a	22	25%	1	1%
library b	23	26%	1	1%
library c	20	22.5%	2	2.2%
library d	17	19%	3	3.4%

The data in table 5.10 suggest that many users had libraries in their respective villages (Library A=25%, Library B=26%, Library C=22% and Library D=19%). Very few respondents denied having libraries in their areas (Library A=1%, Library B=1%, Library C=2% and Library D=2%). All in all, these findings suggest that many users in the study area (Bushbuckridge) were generally in close proximity to library facilities, although some users in remote areas struggled to get to the library due to rising transport costs.

- **Have you been encouraged to use the library?**

This question sought to determine if any effort had been made by librarians to sensitise and motivate community members to use available library services in order to meet their development needs. Table 5.11 summarises their responses to this question.

Table 5.11 **Encouragement to use library**

Participating libraries	Yes		No	
	Number of respondents	**Percentage (%)**	**Number of respondents**	**Percentage (%)**
Library a	21	24%	2	2%
Library b	16	18%	4	4%
Library c	22	25%	1	1%
Library d	23	26%	0	0%

According to the results in table 5.11, the majority of users across the four libraries (Library A=24%, Library B=18%, Library C=25% and Library D=26%) had been encouraged by librarians to utilise library services in their respective villages (i.e. Dwarsloop, Vhukani and Mkhuhlu). In library A, only 2% of the respondents had not been encouraged to use library services, followed by 4% in library B and 1% in library C. By contrast, all the respondents in library D indicated that they had not been motivated to use the library. This finding suggests that more still needs to be done to encourage local people to use the library services here.

- **How far is the library from your home?**

In this question, respondents in the four libraries were required to indicate the distance from their homes to the library. The aim was to find out if library services were easily or conveniently accessible to users; given the generally high cost of transport in rural areas as a result of geographic constraints e.g. mountains and gravel roads. The results were as follows (table 5.12):

Table 5.12 Distance/proximity

	Distance from home to library									
	1.5 km		2-5 km		5 -10 km		10-20 km		Other	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	17	19%	1	1.1%	2	2.2.%	2	2.2%	1	1.1%
Library b	16	18%	2	2.2%	2	2.2%	2	2.2%	1	1.1%
Library c	14	16%	2	2.2.%	2	2.2%	1	1.1%	3	3.4%
Library d	13	15%	3	3.4%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	3	3.4%

Looking at the data in table 5.12, it appears that most users lived in close proximity to their libraries, that is, 1.5 km (Library A=19%, Library B=18%, Library C=16% and Library D=15%). Only a small number of users (less than 10%) in the 2-5 km, 5-10 km and 10-20 km category lived far from their libraries. The results in the last column ("other") indicate that other users probably travelled more than 20km to get to the library. This finding resonates with the data from interviews which, as will be seen later, revealed that some users, particularly those in remote villages, had difficulty reaching the library as they could not afford high travelling costs in taxis and buses locally.

- **How do you get to the library?**

As part of the survey, the respondents were asked what mode of transport they used to reach the library. The underlying intention was to establish whether local transport services were available to help users reach the library in order to meet their information needs. The answers on this question are provided in table 5.4.1.1.13 below.

Table 5.13 Mode of transport used to reach library

| | How respondents reached the library | | | | | | | | | |
| | Walk | | Taxi | | Bus | | Own/family car | | Other | |
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	7	8%	5	6%	5	6%	4	4%	1	1%
Library b	8	9%	7	8%	2	2%	4	4%	1	1%
Library c	16	18%	4	4.5%	2	2%	2	2%	0	0%
Library d	5	6%	5	6%	4	4%	6	7%	1	1%

These results (table 5.13) indicate that many users walked to their respective libraries (Library A=8%, Library B=9%, Library C=18% and Library D=6%). By comparison, library C had more users (18%) who walked to the library, suggesting that their households were probably located closer to these services. In addition, a significant number of users in each library used taxis to access these services (Library A=6%, Library B=8%, Library C=4% and Library D=6%). The number of users who preferred to use the bus was slightly higher in library A (e.g. 6%) compared to the other libraries, where less than 5% of users considered using bus services to reach the library. A relatively small number of users in each library relied on family cars to reach the library (Library A=4%, Library B=4%, Library C=2% and Library D=7%).Library D had a larger share of the family car category than the other three libraries at 7%. Meanwhile, less than 5% of users across four libraries used other means of transport to access library services. On the whole, these results indicate that users utilised different modes of transport to access library services.

5.4.7 Usage of library services

- **How often do you use library services order to meet your information needs?**

During the survey, respondents were required to indicate how often they used the library services available in their respective wards or sections. The intention was to determine whether the frequency of use was high or low, given the challenges of

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illiteracy, unemployment and poverty in the study area (i.e. Bushbuckridge).

Table 5.14 Frequency of use

| | How often respondents use library services | | | | | | | | | |
| | Weekly | | Monthly | | Quarterly | | Yearly | | Other | |
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	15	17%	4	4.5%	2	2.2%	1	1%	0	0%
Library b	17	19%	3	3.4%	1	1.1%	1	1%	0	0%
Library c	19	21%	2	2.2%	2	2.2%	0	0%	0	0%
Library d	16	18%	4	4.5%	2	2.2%	0	0%	0	0%

As indicated in table 5.14, many users in the participating libraries often used the library on a weekly basis (Library A=17%, Library B=19%, Library C=21% and Library D=18%). The number of users who came to the library on a weekly basis was relatively higher in library C than the other libraries (e.g. 21%), an indication that a growing number of users were probably using the library in order to meet their information needs here. On aggregate, the number of monthly users across the four libraries was 60%, while quarterly users were less than 10% in participating library. Similarly, the number of yearly (annual) users was significantly lower at 2% in library A and B respectively. None of the users in library C and D used the library once a year; meaning that library services were probably used frequently in these establishments.

5.4.8 Reasons for using the library

- **Possible reasons for using the library**

The respondents were asked as to why they used the library. This question was aimed at establishing the underlying development needs that prompted users to visit the library in order to satisfy those needs.

Table 5.15 Reasons for using library

	Why respondents used library									
	Reading		**Assignments**		**Research**		**Study**		**Other**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	4	4.5%	8	9%	4	4%	8	9%	0	0%
Library b	2	2.2%	11	12.3%	2	2%	6	7%	0	0%
Library c	2	2.2%	13	15%	1	1%	6	7%	0	0%
Library d	3	3.4%	11	12.3%	3	3%	5	6%	0	0%

The data in table 5.15 indicate that very few users came to the library just for reading purposes only (Library A=4%, Library B=2%, Library C=2% and Library D=3%). Overall, this means that only 10% of users across the four libraries used the library to support their studies. The data (table 5.15) further show that a larger number of users came to the library in order to do their assignments (Library A=9%, Library B=12%, Library C=15% and Library D=12%). By contrast, Library C had the highest number (15%) of users who came to do their assignments than the other libraries.

Strikingly, research was not seen as a major reason for using the library (Library A=4%, Library B=2%, Library C=1% and Library D=3%). A significant number (9%) of users in Library A used the library to meet their study needs, followed by library B and C with 7% respectively. Library D trailed the other three libraries with only 6% of users coming to do their studies in the library. In all four cases, no respondents used the library for other reasons except for reading, assignments, research and study.

5.4.9 Information-Seeking Strategies

- **Possible methods used to find information in the library**

Under this question, the respondents were required to indicate the methods that they use to find relevant information in the library in order to satisfy their development needs. The primary objective of this question was to learn whether users had been taught on how to access and find the type of information that would enable them to meet their needs on a regular basis. The findings on this issue were as follows (table 5.16):

Table 5.16 Strategies used to find information in the library

	Strategies used to find information									
	Ask librarians		**Read notice boards**		**Peruse books**		**Ask friends or users**		**Use Internet**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	8	9%	3	3.4%	1	1%	4	4.5%	4	4.5%
Library b	13	15%	1	1.1%	2	2%	3	3.4%	4	4.5%
Library c	18	20%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	2	2.2%
Library d	17	19%	1	1%	1	1%	2	2.2%	2	2.2%

The results in table 5.16 show that 9% users in library A usually ask librarians for assistance to meet their information needs. Nearly 15% of users in Library B approached librarians for help/guidance. The highest number (20%) of users relying on librarians for assistance was recorded in library C, followed by library D with 19%. Meanwhile, the use of notice boards was significantly low across the four libraries; for example, 3% in library A and only 1% in library B, C and D. This corresponds with the small number of users who perused books to find information in their libraries (Library A=1%, Library B=2%, Library C=1% and Library D=1%). The number of users who asked friends/colleagues for help in each library was less than 10%. Interestingly, a growing number of users in the participating libraries used the internet to find information (Library A=4%, Library B=4%, Library C=2% and Library D=2%). As will be seen later, this finding was also corroborated by interviews. To some extent, these

results indicate that the majority of users in each participating library generally lacked basic library skills, hence the dependence on librarians.

5.4.10 Quality of Services Received

During the survey, respondents were also asked to evaluate the services that they received from their respective libraries on a daily basis. For the purposes of this analysis, these have been classified into two categories, namely: (i) core library services and (ii) health and safety services. The ratings given by the respondents on each category (per library) are provided in the following tables.

- **Core library services**

The aim of this question was to gauge the perceptions of users on the quality of core library services as well as complementary services such as health and safety, which play a key role in enabling users to meet their information needs.

Table 5.17 Equipment and machinery

	Equipment and machinery									
	Good		Better		Poor		Excellent		Unsatisfactory	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	18	20.2.%	1	1%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	2	2.2%
Library b	19	21.3%	2	2.2%	2	2.2%	0	0%	0	0%
Library c	1	1.1%	20	22%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%
Library d	3	3.4%	6	7%	5	6%	5	6%	2	2.2%

The data in table 5.17 indicates that a significant number of users in library A (20%) and Library B (21%) thought that equipment and machinery in their respective libraries was good. Only a small number (1%) of users in library C and library D (3%) felt the same way as their counter parts in the other two libraries. Approximately 22% of users in library C thought these services were better; compared to 1% who thought they were

poor in library A and 2% in library B who expressed a similar concern. Roughly 7% of users in library D had a negative experience of these services; followed by 1% in library A and D who were also dissatisfied with equipment and machinery. Only a small number of respondents in library A (2%) and Library D (2%) expressed dissatisfaction with library equipment and machinery. By contrast, none of the respondents in library B and C were dissatisfied with these services. Overall, these results indicate that many users across the four libraries were generally satisfied with equipment and machinery.

Table 5.18 Information technology

	Information technology									
	Good		Better		Poor		Excellent		Unsatisfactory	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	12	13%	4	4%	1	1%	1	1%	4	4%
Library b	11	12%	0	0%	0	0%	5	6%	6	7%
Library c	5	6%	5	6%	2	2%	6	7%	5	6%
Library d	13	15%	5	6%	0	0%	4	4%	0	0%

With regard to information technology (e.g. computers and the internet), table 5.18 shows that users thought IT services were good in their respective libraries (Library A=13%, Library B=12%, Library C=6% and Library D=15%). Less than 10% of users in each library felt that IT services were better. Very few (less than 5%) of users in each library felt that these services were poor. None of the respondents in library B and D rated IT services as poor in their libraries. In library A, only 4% of users were felt that these services were unsatisfactory; followed by 7% in library B and 6% in library C who had a similar experience of these services. Taken together, these results indicated that a larger number of users across the four libraries were somewhat content with IT services.

Table 5.19 Supply of books and materials

	Supply of books and materials									
	Good		**Better**		**Poor**		**Excellent**		**Unsatisfactory**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	18	20.2 %	1	1.1%	2	2.2%	1	1%	1	1%
Library b	1	1.1%	18	20.2 %	1	1.1%	1	1%	0	0%
Library c	19	21.3 %	2	2.2%	2	2.2%	0	0%	0	0%
Library d	15	17%	2	2.2%	3	3.4%	1	1%	1	1%

From the findings in table 5.19, it can be seen that a significant number (20%) of users in library A felt that supply of books and materials was good in their library. Library C had the highest number (21%) of users who rated library services as "good" in their villages, followed by library D with 17%. The only exception was library B with 1% of users saying that library services were good in their area. In the second category ("Better"), only library B scored 20%, while library A, C and D got the lowest rating (e.g. less than 5% each) in this area. Overall, less than 10% of the respondents across the four libraries felt that supply of books and materials was poor in their respective libraries. Very few (i.e. less than 5%) of users in library A, B and D thought these services were excellent. By contrast, none of the respondents in library C thought supply of textbooks was excellent in their library. In addition, only 1% of the respondents in library A and D felt that these services were unsatisfactory in their respective libraries. None of the respondents in library B and C rated their libraries in the last category ("unsatisfactory"); an indication that most of these users were probably content with these services in their library.

- **Health and safety services**

Table 5.20 Hygiene standards in the library

	Hygiene standards									
	Good		Better		Poor		Excellent		Unsatisfactory	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	5	6%	14	16%	0	0%	5	6%	0	0%
Library b	14	16%	2	2%	0	0%	4	4%	1	1%
Library c	0	0%	17	19%	1	1%	3	3%	1	1%
Library d	5	6%	1	1%	1	1%	15	17%	0	0%

According to table 5.20, nearly 6% of users in library A felt that hygiene services were good, followed by 16% in library B and 6% in library D. None of the respondents in library C rated their services in the "good" category. However, a significant number (16% and 19%) of users in library A and C indicated that hygiene services were better, followed by library B with 2%. Only a small number of the respondents in library B and D felt that hygiene services were better. None of the respondents in library A and B rated their services as poor, a clear indication that most of them were probably satisfied with hygiene services. Equally, the number of users who thought hygiene services were poor was relatively small (less than 5%) in library C and D respectively. In the "excellent" category, library A received 6%, followed by library B and C with the lowest ratings e.g. 4% and 3% respectively. Only library D received the highest rating (17%) in this category, suggesting that the majority of users here were probably happy with the quality of hygiene services rendered by their library. None of the respondents in the four libraries were dissatisfied with hygiene services.

Very few (less than 5%) of users felt that hygiene services were unsatisfactory in library B and C. By contrast, none of the respondents in library A and D felt this way, meaning that they were relatively satisfied with hygiene services in their libraries. To some

degree, these results indicate that hygiene standards were generally satisfactory to many users in the participating libraries.

Table 5.21 Lighting

	Lighting									
	Good		**Better**		**Poor**		**Excellent**		**Unsatisfactory**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	15	17%	3	3%	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%
Library b	5	6%	13	15%	0	0%	5	6%	0	0%
Library c	8	9%	17	19%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Library d	14	16%	0	0%	0	0%	6	7%	0	0%

The results in table 5.21 indicate that many (17%) of users in library A thought that lighting was good in their library, whereas less than 6% of users in library B and C had a similar experience. Furthermore, as was the case in library A, many users (19%) in library D also felt that lighting was good in their library. Only 3% of users in library A indicated that lighting was better, followed by 15% in library B. None of the respondents in library D felt that lighting was better. Additionally, less than 10% of the respondents in each library felt that lighting was excellent. Interestingly, none of the respondents in the four libraries thought lighting was poor or unsatisfactory, suggesting that the standard of lighting was generally suitable in the participating libraries.

Table 5.22 Windows/air-conditioning

	Windows/Air conditioning									
	Good		**Better**		**Poor**		**Excellent**		**Unsatisfactory**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	14	16%	2	2%	3	3%	2	2%	2	2%
Library b	9	10%	7	8%	6	7%	0	0%	1	1%
Library c	20	22%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Library d	0	0%	18	20%	0	0%	5	6%	0	0%

Table 5.22 reports that 16% of users in Library A thought that windows or air-conditioning were good in their library. Similarly, 10% of users in library B felt this way, followed by 22% in library C, which is significantly higher than the ratings received by the other three libraries in this category (i.e. "good"). Only Library D received a high rating (20%) in the second category (i.e. better), while library A and B got less than 10% each. In library A, 3% of users thought that air-conditioning services were poor, followed by 7% in library B. None of the users in library C and D found these services to be poor in their libraries. On aggregate, 4% of the respondents across the four libraries felt that air-conditioning services were unsatisfactory, meaning that the majority of users were generally happy with provision of these services in their respective libraries.

Table 5.23 Seating arrangements/furniture

	Seating arrangements									
	Good		**Better**		**Poor**		**Excellent**		**Unsatisfactory**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	9	10%	2	2.2%	8	9%	3	3.4%	0	0%
Library b	14	16%	0	0%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	4	4.5%
Library c	1	1.1%	17	19%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	3	3.4%
Library d	10	11%	1	1.1%	11	12%	2	2.2%	0	0%

From table 5.23, it can be seen that users' experiences on seating arrangements (i.e. furniture) varied significantly across the four libraries (for example: Library A=10%, Library B=16%, Library C=1% and Library D=411%). The data sets from library A, B and D suggest that many users here thought that furniture was good in their libraries, compared to 1% who felt the same way in library C. However, library C received a much higher rating (19%) in the second category (i.e. better) compared to the other libraries, which received less than 4%. The number of users who thought seating arrangements were poor was slightly higher (9%) in library A and D, compared to 1% in library B and C respectively. On average, less than 10% of users across the four libraries felt that these services were excellent. Only 4% of the respondents in library B felt that these services were unsatisfactory, followed by 3% in library C. None of the respondents in library A and library D were dissatisfied with seating arrangements. Based on these results, it can be argued that that the level of dissatisfaction in respect of seating arrangements was significantly low across the four libraries in the study area, meaning that many users were generally happy with these services in their respective libraries.

Table 5.24 Atmosphere

	Atmosphere (e.g. peace and order in the library)									
	Good		Better		Poor		Excellent		Unsatisfactory	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	1	1.1 %	1	1.1%	3	3.4. %	18	20.2 %	0	0%
Library b	18	20.2 %	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	0	0%
Library c	1	1.1 %	3	3.4. %	0	0%	20	22.5 %	0	0%
Library d	16	18%	2	2.2%	2	2.2%	1	1.1%	0	0%

The results in table 5.24 suggest that, with the exception of library A and C, users in library B and D thought that the atmosphere (e.g. peace and order) was good in their respective centres (Library B=20% and library D=16%). In the second and third

categories (i.e. better and poor), each library received less than 15% rating. However, the situation was slightly different in the fourth category (i.e. excellent), where 20% of users in library A and 18% in library D indicated that the atmosphere in their respective libraries was excellent. Library C dominated this category with 22%, which is the highest rating across the participating libraries. Encouragingly, none of the respondents in the four libraries were dissatisfied with the atmosphere in their respective centres.

Table 5.25 Education on HIV/AIDS

	HIV/AIDS education									
	Good		Better		Poor		Excellent		Unsatisfactory	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	17	19%	1	1.1%	1	1%	2	2.2%	1	1.1%
Library b	16	18%	2	2.2%	1	1%	3	3.4.%	1	1.1.%
Library c	14	16%	1	1.1%	1	1%	1	1.1%	4	4.5%
Library d	18	20.2 %	2	2.2%	1	1%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%

According to the data in table 5.25, most users across the four libraries felt that HIV/AIDS education was good in their areas (Library A=19%, Library B=18%%, Library C=16% and Library D=20%). Very few (less than 10%) users across the participating libraries thought that these services were better. On aggregate, only 4% of the respondents felt that these services were poor across the four libraries. Library A 2% and B 3% in the excellent category, followed by library C and D with 1% respectively. On average, less than 10% of users felt that HIV/AIDS education was unsatisfactory in their respective libraries. Importantly, these findings show that the majority of the respondents had been informed and/or educated about the risks of HIV/AIDS in their respective libraries.

Table 5.26 Sanitation services

	Sanitation									
	Good		**Better**		**Poor**		**Excellent**		**Unsatisfactory**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	1	1.1%	20	22%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	0	0%
Library b	16	18%	1	1.1%	2	2.2%	0	0%	0	0%
Library c	19	21%	2	2.2%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	0	0%
Library d	1	1.1.%	21	24%	1	1.1%	1	1.1.%	0	0%

In terms of table 5.26, the highest positive rating for sanitation services in the participating libraries were found in the first two categories i.e. good and better. For example, Library C dominated the first category with 21%, followed by library B with 18%; an indication that users in these two libraries thought that sanitation services were good. Library A and D received a significantly lower rating (1%) in this category. However, library A and D topped the second category with 22% and 24% positive rating, meaning that many users here felt that sanitation services were better, compared to 1% and 2% who had a similar experience in Library B and C. Only a few (less than 5%) users across the four libraries thought that these services were excellent.

On aggregate, less than 10% of users in the four libraries felt that provision of sanitation services was poor. Finally, none of the respondents in all the participating libraries expressed dissatisfaction with sanitation services; meaning that provision of such services was probably equitable in these institutions.

Table 5.27 Security

	Security									
	Good		**Better**		**Poor**		**Excellent**		**Unsatisfactory**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Library a	18	20.2%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	0	0%
Library b	21	24%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	1	1%
Library c	1	1.1%	17	19%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	1	1%
Library d	1	1.1%	18	20.2%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%	1	1%

The data in table 5.27 show that users across the four libraries had different experiences on security services. For example, 20% of users in library A thought that these services were good. Library B had a slightly higher number (24%) of users in this category. Only a small number (1%) of users in library C and D felt that these services were good; although this situation improved markedly in the second category, where both libraries received 19% and 20% positive ratings. On average, 4% of users across the four libraries indicated that security services were either poor or excellent. In addition, approximately 5% of users these libraries were unhappy with security services; suggesting a need for incremental and progressive upgrading of these services in the long term here.

On the whole, the results from the survey indicate that although users had different experiences on library services, in most cases, these were complementary. The overall impression from these results is that most users received better services from their libraries, which enabled them to meet their needs; although more still needs to be done to improve access to these services, particularly in remote areas. The next section presents findings from the interviews (qualitative research).

5.4.11 Analysis of qualitative data

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the second phase of the study involved interviews with librarians and library managers in the four libraries. The following data reflect their views and experiences in meeting the information needs of rural communities in the study area (i.e. Bushbuckridge.

5.5. Steps taken to meet the information needs of library users

Library A

Participants here explained that a wide variety of services were being offered to users, including guidance on how to use the library; internet and free lessons when it is not too busy. One participant reported that: "We show them how to find books and career information using the computers in the library. We also visit local schools where we encourage children to read books as part of our literacy campaign in Mafemani. We give them books, materials, magazines and newspapers".

Library B

Participants in library B agreed with those in library 1, saying that they gave users information on many things, such as job opportunities, universities and colleges and we show them how to do their personal profiles and CVs. "We have help them to form study /support groups, where they help each with studies, research and assignments", one respondent added.

Library D

Similarly, respondents in library D confirmed that their library helped users in many ways. One of the participants summed up the matter as follows: "We always put information on notice boards where most users look for updates on latest news and library information. We give them newspapers on a weekly basis e.g. Sunday times, City Press and The Star. They (users) like newspapers because they want to check things like jobs and bursaries. There is also an open day for school children to come

and read books. We want them to develop love for books because knowledge will help them to get to university one day".

On the whole, the findings in the foregoing demonstrate that the four libraries had made some efforts to meet the information needs of library users in the study area. Of particular significance were the school visits which sought to encourage children to improve their reading skills. Apart from school visits, some of the participating libraries had "open days" which enabled children and adults to come and experience library services personally.

The findings also reveal that users had been encouraged and assisted to form study groups. In addition to these innovative initiatives, some librarians also assisted users with compilation of personal profiles and curriculum vitae to help them find jobs through online job search; which was provided free of charge.

- **Type of library services provided to communities/users**

The aim of this question was to identify the type of library services that were being provided to community members (i.e. users) on a daily basis. Their experiences were articulated as follows:

Library A

Participants in library A reported that they offered different types of services to their clients (i.e. users). For example, users were able to do photocopies in the library; they also had the opportunity to learn about computers, and those who wanted to use the internet could do so freely. In addition, outreach programmes were being rolled out yearly in order to educate community members about the benefits of using library services.

Library B

One of the participants reported confirmed provision of library services to users by saying that: "the most important services that we provide are books, materials, the internet and advice for those who want to have membership with the library so that they

can borrow books and materials. For new members, we take them through the search process so they know exactly how to find books on their own. Membership is free, they do not pay, but some are not taking advantage of this opportunity".

Library C

Participants in library C concurred with their colleagues in library 1 and 2, saying that it is mostly the books for all subjects e.g. mathematics, history, science, research and newspapers and magazines. As one interviewee put it: "we also help them to open and use email accounts – because some of them want to send their CVs to employers in different places. So emails help them because they do not have money for travelling to those places. We are a rural community so transport is hard to get because it is expensive".

Library D

In library D, it was commonly agreed that users were being assisted in many ways: including free internet lessons; guidance on how to search for books on shelves and catalogues and referrals to other libraries through an integrated library data base system.

The above findings indicate the four libraries offered a wide variety of services to users, such as book search, computers lessons, the internet literacy, opening emails, and referrals to other libraries. It was reported that referrals helped users to save travelling costs because the integrated data management system made it easier for librarians to locate specific libraries in which to find the books and materials that users wanted to in order to meet their information needs.

- **Community access to library services**

The primary objective of this question was to determine whether library users had easy and affordable access to library services in Bushbuckridge. Following are the comments and inputs of participants on this question.

Library A

"*I can say for those who stay close to the library – yes, it is easy for them to use the library now and then. But some of them (i.e. users) are 30 km away from the library so they have to catch taxis and buses to get here. It can be very expensive…you can pay up to R30 a day including the return trip*".

Library B

According to one of the respondents here, users "*find it easy because most of them stay here. The challenge is how to get them to the library because even if we tell them about the library, some think that it is for those who are studying; the interest is low, very low. Even those who come, they just check newspapers for jobs and then leave the library*".

Library C

Participants in this library expressed two different views. While others felt that the majority of users had access to library services, others felt that getting to library was very difficult for users living in remote villages. One of the participants summed up the problem as follows: "*Not all the people are able to come here every day. Transport is a big problem. It's hard to get here for those who stay in remote villages. But it is not a problem for neighbouring settlements because they walk to the library*".

Library D

Similarly, participants in library D reported that the library was not easily accessible to all members of the community. According to one participant "*The problem is that the library is not at the centre where everyone can use it. Many of them (i.e. users) have to travel to get to the library. It's a challenge – because transport is scarce in those areas because of bad (gravel) roads. On top of that they pay R20 for transport. This is too much for children coming from poor families*".

From these findings, it can be seen that access to library services was not evenly spread across users. This problem was attributed to long distances, rising transport

costs; and poor perceptions about the importance and benefits using library services to improve one's life. This problem was rife in Library B, where it was indicated that although the library was fairly accessible to nearly all the community members in the area; however, most people had no interest in these services.

- **Quality of services provided to communities/users.**

As implied in this heading, this question sought to elicit the views and experiences of librarians and library managers on the quality of the services that they provided to users and community members. Their responses to this question were as follows:

Library A

Participants in library A affirmed that *"our services are good because our clients get most of the things that you can get when you go to big libraries in town. We are also connected to the main library system in town, which makes it easier for our clients (users) to find the type of information that they are looking for. It was further indicated that librarians used the automated interlibrary system to help users to locate the specific books/materials that they wanted. This, according to one interviewee, "saves them (i.e. users) money because they do not have to go to all the libraries to find information. We tell them which library has got the right information and they go there to find it"*.

Library B

One interviewee in library B described the quality of services in her library as follows: *"It is better now, we have books, computers and the internet. Even our stocks look good for now. Unlike in the past when we had few books and materials. Today, the library is well equipped. But the number of users is increasing so we might have to extend the building and get more staff in future so that we have more space for people to study in the library*".

Library C

Concurring with the above view, interviewees in library explained that: "*things have changed, because we are now able to work with school principals and parents to plan*

reading campaigns for children and the community. It is working and people are starting to realise the benefits of using the library, although the number of users is still small. We can do better if books can be ordered and brought to the library early".

Library D

"*The service is good because they (users) do not complain quite often. We help them with everything, including free computer lessons and search for registered and accredited tertiary institutions so that they can further their studies. The only problem is water shortages. In summer, it is hard for people to use the library without water. But we are working on that. The situation will improve gradually*".

Taken together, the above findings suggest that the quality of library services in the participating libraries had proved overtime. Indicators of success in this regard included declining rate of customer (user) complaints; improved cooperation between libraries and schools and increased demand for referrals to other local libraries via the integrated library database system.

- **Communicating library services to users**

This question was intended to determine whether library services were being communicated to users as part of customer service in the four libraries. Following are the comments and inputs of participants regarding this issue.

Library A

Participants in library affirmed that library services were being communicated to users on a regular basis. One participant described her experience in this process as follows:
"*Yes. We distribute pamphlets and advertisements in every section so that they (community members) know what services are available in our library. We also work with schools to distribute library information. Every year we run outreach programmes in the community to make them aware of our services; but most people still do not understand the importance of using the library*".

Library B

Participants here confirmed that users got information on library services regularly. As one interviewee indicated "*We often give free materials e.g. brochures and newsletters to regular users so that they can distribute in their areas. We also have a reading week, where we work with the municipality to host reading events. In these events we tell them about the library and the type of reading materials that they can find in the library and how to register for membership to enjoy library services".*

Library C

Similarly, interviewees in library revealed that information was being communicated to users. In the words of one participant: "*We are a small community, so most people here know about the library. We put notices in bus stops and in local shops to make people aware of the library. We also have a local library association which runs campaigns to encourage people to use their libraries. According to one interviewee, "the library is the meeting place for those seeking job opportunities and career information services".*

Library D

In library D, it was reported that librarians had tried to help users, but the problem was that they could not reach community members living in remote parts of the village by car "*So, those people do not have easy access to library information services. We rely on regular users to convey our messages to them. We also use youth representative structures to spread our messages to those communities during political and social events that involve the youth*", one interviewee reported.

Judging by these comments, it is evident that, generally, all four libraries had made some efforts to communicate library services to users in different ways. The most common methods used included notice boards, pamphlets, handouts, and newsletters. But some participants hinted that these communication efforts were not reaching all users, particularly in remote parts of the villages.

- **Ways in which libraries combat illiteracy**

This theme was primarily aimed at establishing whether the four libraries played any meaningful role in helping to reduce illiteracy in the study area. It is important. This question was based on the literature reviewed (Chapter 2), which highlighted that the role of libraries in developing library users also included leading the campaigns against literacy by making information available to them. Participants' responses were as follows:

Library A

In library A, one participant indicated that they (i.e. librarians) did a lot of things, like reading weeks, outreach programmes and distribution of library materials." *We also show them how to use the internet to write emails and to find employment opportunities. Sometimes we help them form study groups. We also host library days where our librarians teach them how to use the library".*

Library B

Here, one interviewee summed up their efforts in reducing illiteracy as follows: "*As a library, we are expected to have outreach programmes once a year to encourage reading in the community. We do that every year, and people get the opportunity to meet library staff and other users. Our staff (i.e. librarians) also teach computer literacy by showing community members how to use computers and the internet to find information in the library. They (users) love it".*

Library C

"*We host library promotion events with library associations to educate the community not only about library information services but also important social issues such as HIV/AIDS, career guidance and crime prevention as part of community development".*

Library D

"*In my opinion, the library is the source of information and learning for the community. We transfer information technology (IT) skills to them; we help them to find employment and we teach them about life skills e.g. healthy living and HIV/AIDS".*

Deducing from the results above, it is evident that four libraries had contributed to reducing illiteracy in various ways; such as outreach programmes, computer literacy and HIV/AIDS education. This shows that these libraries understood their role in developing library users educationally.

- **Challenges faced by the participating libraries**

Library A

One participant summarised the challenges facing their library as follows: *"Yes, like purchasing of textbooks, sometimes it takes long to get the books to the library. If we can fix that, I think people would benefit more from the library. Other challenges include water shortages, illiteracy, which prevents many community members from using the library, even though the library had relatively better supply of textbooks. Also, the transport needs to be beefed up so that librarians can reach remote areas".*

Library B

In this library, participants suggested that staff numbers should be increased to ensure that users' information needs are sufficiently addressed. Improvement was also needed in the supply of water – because the library could not keep people without drinking water and sanitation services. Computers were also needed to help users meet their information needs.

Library C

Here, participants suggested the following: introduction alternative library systems to reach remote areas e.g. mobile library; viable community transport to enable users from remote areas to reach the library; more education on the use and application of information technology in the library; recruitment of staff, especially qualified librarians; train existing staff to help them improvement their skills and get more vehicles to support reach out programmes.

Library D

Interviewees in this library agreed that selection and delivery of books and materials was often delayed and that this prevented users from meeting their information needs on time. As one interviewee put it "*Every time they come to the library they cannot find certain books and that discourages them*".

Overall, the above findings confirm that indeed the four libraries faced some challenges in meeting the information needs of library users (i.e. users). These ranged from unreliable water supply and shortage of staff to delays in the purchasing of library materials. However, collective evidence from participants across the four libraries suggests that these problems delayed rather blocked provision of library services to users; meaning that most of these challenges could be resolved with the help of the local municipality and relevant departments.

- **Suggestions for improvement**

Library A

Participants here wanted to see improvement in areas such as procurement /purchasing of library stocks, implementation of awareness campaign in remote villages and better attraction of users in these areas, where library services do not exist.

Library B

In library 2, participants felt that community transport is problematic and thus needs drastic improvement to ensure easy and affordable access to the library. Library stocks also needed improvement, including network capacity and the supply chain.

Library C

Participants in library 3 suggested that as the library is far from rural communities, it would be helpful to increase the number of community representatives i.e. the people who are tasked with the responsibility of promoting library services in each section of the Shatale community.

Library D

Participants from library D proposed the following improvements, which they felt would help community members to meet their information needs: water supply; alternative toilet system to mitigate water shortages; and purchasing and delivery of books and materials on time and increase in information technology (IT) network.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that all the participants were keen to see greater improvement in the provision of library services in their communities. In part, this also shows that librarians were committed to meeting the information needs of library users in the study area.

5.6 Discussion of findings

The majority of users, who were largely between the ages of 18 and 34, were generally aware of library services in their respective villages, for example, Dwarsloop, Shatale, Hluvukani and Mkhuhlu. In part, this was attributed to outreach programmes undertaken by library staff to raise awareness about LIS. Even users who stayed far from the library knew about these services.

Concerning users' knowledge about existing library services, the results show that users learnt about LIS through a range of media sources, including newspapers, radio, library staff, family and friends and the internet. However, most (60%) users still relied heavily on librarians to find need-satisfying information. The use of social networks (e.g. family and friends) as informants illustrates the importance of using social capital to enhance access to library services. In a related study by Namugera (2014:1), it was found that the rate of awareness of library services was relatively low among users and this was attributed to poor communication and inadequate interaction between users and the library, coupled with the library's failure to apply marketing strategies to promote these services. In the current study low levels of awareness were generally attributed to lack of information about these services in remote villages.

Regarding access to library services, the results indicated that it users who stayed next

to the library found it conveniently easy and affordable to access these services; compared to those in remote parts of the village; as was the case in Shatale and Hluvukani. The difficulty of accessing LIS was attributed to lack of a reliable transport system high travelling costs for those who stayed in remote villages. There was a strong feeling that provision of public transport in remote areas would improve access to library services. What is evident from this finding is that effective delivery of library services needs to be complemented with improvements in other basis services such as transport and water.

In relation to frequency of use, the results show that respondents were divided on this issue. For example, while some respondents used library services on daily basis, others used these services weekly. In both cases, the users were mostly scholars who needed the library to complete assignments and to study for examinations. By contrast, some respondents only used the library occasionally. These were likely to include job seekers and general users who used the library to improve their knowledge and skills.

Common reasons for using the library included preparation of assignments; study for examinations; self-development (i.e. improving one's knowledge and skills); looking for employment opportunities and socializing with support groups. These findings are corroborated by similar research conducted by the UK Meseum, Libraries and Archives Association (2010:17), which found that book borrowing was the most common activity amongst library users in the UK, with 76% using library to borrow books for pleasure and 44% for study. In addition, sizable proportion used the library for other purposes, such as computers (20%) or to rent DVDs or CDs (15%).

Taken together, these findings, suggest that the respondents used the library in order to meet their personal, social and economic needs. To a larger extent, these results also affirm that four libraries attempted to cater for the diverse needs of users in the study area. Overall, these findings are consistent with Motion's (2010:5) observation that:

"Libraries are the places we go to discover ourselves and the world at the same time. They allow us to find out more deeply who we are, through the range of services they offer, while at the same time encouraging us to make new connections, and to develop new skills and understandings"

Respondents used different strategies to identify and locate relevant information in the library. The most popular information-seeking strategies used included perusal of books in the shelves, computer-based searches and asking librarians for assistance. Interestingly, a growing number (30%) of the respondents used information technology to find books in the library; while half (50%) still relied heavily on librarians for guidance. Findings from interviews, which focused on the experiences of librarians in providing services to help community members meet their information needs, confirmed that efforts had been made to meet the information needs of users in each of the four libraries. Examples include:

- Guidance and assistance on how to use library services
- Offering free computer and internet lessons to users
- Helping users to locate books in other libraries through the (automated) interlibrary data base system
- Outreach programmes, which were held annually across the four participating libraries as part of organizational policy
- Search for universities and colleges and career opportunities

Taken together, these findings indicate that participants were committed to providing better services to users so that they could be able to meet their information needs. These results also indicate that users were generally content with the services that they received from their libraries.

In respect of opportunities and constraints, the results suggest that these varied across the four libraries. Cross-cutting issues included delays in procurement of library stocks and shortage of suitably qualified staff. Unique problems facing each library included

low turnout – which was attributed to poor perceptions about the benefits of library services in the community (Mafemani); shortage of water (Mkhuhlu); high transport costs for users living in remote villages (Hluvukani) and limited capacity (Shatale).

The finding on the shortage of qualified librarians is corroborated by the literature. For example, a study by Burnett (2013:4) identified many skills that seem to be lacking (or not practised) by LIS professionals in Ethiopia; such as leadership, human resources management, evaluating and reporting skills, communication skills, professional ethics, marketing of library services and teaching skills. These are in addition to the more obvious IT related skills such as gateway and portal development, web authoring, database development (Burnett, 2013:4).

In addition to the above mentioned challenges, Saleh and Lasisi (2011) have also identified several barriers that impact the information needs of rural communities, including high rate of illiteracy, inability to access formal channels of information due to poverty, lack of adequate and efficient information delivery mechanism, ignorance of governments responsibilities to its citizens, skepticism of the rural woman towards government and its information agencies; attitude of extension workers towards effective rural information service and inaccessibility of the rural areas by NGOs.

The above-mentioned constraints also negate the widely-held notion (in the literature) that public and/or community libraries are expected to play a key role in their societies by providing users with access to information in an effective and timely manner. The fundamental aim of libraries according to Olowu (2004) in Olarongbe, Adepoju, Akanbi-Ademolake, and Pedro (2013), is to provide timely, accurate, pertinent, and reliable information for their users. He wrote further that librarians are devoted to improving access to information, and satisfying the user is paramount. Some of these suggestions formed part of the recommendations discussed under section 6.3 of this chapter.

The above results are consistent with the literature. For example, Yi (2013) argues that in order for libraries to attract clients, generate non-user awareness, and raise

awareness of available services and resources, libraries need to find ways to promote services and resources to clients as effectively as possible. As such, promotional approaches are used to convey the availability and value of services and resources to target markets and should be designed to cause library users and non-users to act. These approaches must be developed in such a way that they gain user attention, providing a reason for the library's services and resources to be selected over those of competing services (Yi, 2013).

The literature further indicates that a variety of techniques has been used to promote library services and resources. For example, Nkanga (2002) in Yi (2013:1) found that promotional techniques such as personal contacts, circulars, memos, telephone calls, meetings, direct mailing, displays, talks, newsletters, library tours and leaflets were widely used. Many forms of techniques such as a combination of outreach programmes, holding lectures, changing library exhibits, library tours, classroom instruction, one-on-one appointments, library homepage, online catalogue and one-on-one training were suggested to promote library services and resources (Yi, 2013). This study found that outreach programmes were the most popular method used by the four libraries to promote library services in Bushbuckridge.

Most (60%) users were generally satisfied with the services that they received from their libraries; e.g. Mafemani, Shatale, Henry Mdluli and Mkhuhlu; although improvement was required in security management water services and supply of textbooks. On the whole, these results confirm that the information needs of users in the participating libraries had been partially met and that many of the users found it fairly easy to access these services, especially those who lived in close proximity to the library.

The next chapter offers summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study on the information needs of users in Bushbuckridge.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Building on the analysis in chapter five, this chapter provides an integrated summary and synopsis of the research findings to demonstrate how the research problem was addressed. To recap, the main findings of the study were as follows: Most (65%) users had access to library services, although high travelling costs were a major barrier for those living in remote villages; a large number of users (60%) still depended on librarians to help them find information, while a growing number of users (33% had begun using computers and the internet to meet their information needs; the most important reasons for using the library were: assignments, study and careers, and, the majority of users in all four libraries were generally satisfied with the quality of the services rendered, although significant improvements were required in the supply of materials and water. Findings from interviews with librarians demonstrated that significant steps had been taken to address information needs of users across the four libraries. Common examples include: books and materials; computers and internet services; study groups; user training, and outreach programmes – although these were hampered by shortage of staff and vehicles. Cross-cutting problems included delays in purchasing of library stocks; shortage of water and low perceptions about the benefits of library services in the community.

To reiterate, the objectives of this study were to identify the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge; to establish whether the four local libraries in Bushbuckridge

are able to meet the information needs of users in the area; to determine the experiences of library users on the quality of services that they receive from the four libraries and to investigate the challenges that libraries face as they satisfy users' information needs in this area. As demonstrated below, the research objectives were achieved by the study.

The first objective of this study was to identify the information needs of library users in the study area. The study achieved this objective by demonstrating that the information needs of library users across the four libraries generally included: career information, job search, sending and receiving emails, academic books and general topics. However, accessing this information was a challenge in areas like Dwarsloop or Mafemani where some users had to travel more than 30 km in order to reach the local library; which cost them approximately R60 per day. Therefore, the objective of the study regarding the information needs of library users was achieved.

Overall, the above findings confirm what the literature (in Chapter Two) says about the information needs of rural communities generally. For example, Islam and Ahmed (2012) found that information needs of library users in India related to parenting, nutrition, water quality, family living, family economics, environment issues, health care, services available, job skills, money management, communication techniques, housing standards, and processes for making changes in government regulations

The second objective of the study was to determine how the four libraries met the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge. The study achieved this objective by providing common examples of library services provided by the four libraries of Bushbuckridge; which included free computer lessons to transfer information technology skills to users; internet services to enable users to find information on line quickly; and notice boards to keep users informed about available job opportunities locally.

On the whole, these results are compatible with the literature; which indicates that libraries are designed for the purpose of rendering information services to the general

public irrespective of status, occupation, sex, age, and these services are meant to be free or attract little fee. Libraries exist primarily to serve the entire members of its locality referred to as its general public. They provide the public with spaces for information and learning and are accessible to all groups of society, regardless of gender, age and ethnic affiliation. Public libraries are significant institutions in the development of individual and society (Olarongbe, Adepoju, Akanbi-Ademolake and Pedro, 2013).

The third research objective concerned the quality of the services rendered to library users across the four libraries of Bushbuckridge. The study achieved this objective by revealing that approximately, 60% of users across the four libraries generally had positive experiences on library services, as evidenced by the relatively high ratings for such services as support from librarians. Only a small number (20%) of the respondents had a negative experience on library services. This was reflected in the low/poor rating of services such as water (1%), sanitation (1%) and security (1%). In library D, it was conceded that frequent water shortages sometimes prevented community members from using the library to meet their information needs. To some extent, these results resonate with the Information Needs Theory (Chapter Three); which states that that humans seek information because the world has persistent gaps – the "assumption of discontinuity," which is our "continuing human dilemma. We bridge the gaps by seeking and finding information to reestablish our sense of the world and our place in the world. Sense is almost a mediation mechanism between humans and the reality of the world (Cole, 2011).

The fourth research objective was to determine whether there were any favourable and/or unfavourable conditions that affected delivery of library services to users in the four participating libraries of Bushbuckridge. The study achieved this objective by showing that information technology (i.e. computers and internet) gave library users the opportunity to learn and use computer skills in order to meet their information needs. This claim is also validated by a study conducted by Uddin and Hasan (2012:1); which shows that Information technology (IT) has facilitated electronic librarianship with the diversification of library facilities and services to its user. Every function carried out in a

library has been altered to some extent by advances in electronics, computerisation, and telecommunications. In the library environment, IT has enabled effective information collection, storage, processing and transmission for the benefit of users. In other words, Information technology (IT) is for better management and exchange of information, for more efficient communication and ultimately for the benefit of the people using IT (Uddin and Hasan, 2012:1).

The fourth research objective was also achieved by revealing some of the major challenges that prevented the four libraries from meeting the information needs of library users in Bushbuckridge. For example, in Library A (Dwarsloop – Mafemani), the biggest challenge was how to bring library services to community members living in remote areas. A related challenge was the delay in purchasing of library stocks (i.e. books, materials and equipment); which made it difficult for some users to meet their information needs on time. This was attributed to inefficiencies in the supply chain. In library B (Henry Mdluli), the challenge was shortage of qualified library staff and the cumbersome cost of public transport for users living in remote villages.

A follow-up question in respect of the constraints mentioned above was: What can be done to improve the delivery of library services to meet the information needs of rural communities in Bushbuckridge? In answering this question, the study canvassed several suggestions from the participants and these included: training existing library staff; hiring additional staff i.e. qualified librarians; expediting purchasing and acquisition of library materials, resources and equipment; improving security services; ensuring reliable supply of water in the library and increasing awareness about the benefits of library services among community members.

6.2 Conclusion

The foregoing discussion revealed five critical issues that impacted provision of library services to users in the participating libraries. These include: access, information technology, procurement, and human resource needs. Consideration of these issues is important because that is where corrective measures are needed to improve both

provision of library services and client (i.e. user) satisfaction.

In respect of access, it can be inferred that the majority (60%) of user in the four libraries had easy and affordable access to library information services as their households were in close proximity to library facilities; thus making it fairly simple for them to meet their information needs regularly. Adversely, users (40%) living far from libraries services experienced limited access due to rising transport costs.

Importantly, the provision of information technology services (e.g. computers and internet) in all four libraries gave users the opportunity to not only acquire essential IT skills but also to use these services in order to meet their information needs; such as online application for bursaries and tuition; emails, job search, and searching for additional reading materials to complete assignments and to prepare for examinations.

Evidence from the literature (Chapter Two) indicated that effective procurement of library resources is key to meeting the information needs of library users, particularly in rural areas where these services tend to be scarce or limited. However, the results in the foregoing have demonstrated that this vital function had not been adequately executed in the participating libraries; suggesting a need for greater improvement in this area.

Finally, is also important to note that the four libraries faced constraints in both the demand and supply of human resources. During interviews with librarians, it was indicated that the majority of staff did not have suitable qualifications and that additional staff was needed to enable their libraries to cope with the growing demand for information services.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the inferences made above, the following interventions are recommended to enable the four libraries to meet the information needs of library users in

Bushbuckridge.

6.3.1 Improve information technology capacity across the four libraries

Librarians across the four libraries felt that although computers had been provided in their libraries, however, these were not enough to meet the information needs of library users. In view of this finding, it is proposed that additional investment be made in information technology to enable the four libraries to impart IT skills to users. The results showed that a growing number of users (40%) were using the internet to meet their information needs; which makes IT infrastructure very paramount in this regard.

6.3.2 Improve access to library services by providing transport to facilitate outreach programmes.

Given that all the participating libraries are required to implement outreach programmes on a yearly basis, it would be prudent to provide them with vehicles so that they can do their job well. This requires library management to provide additional funding to facilitate acquisition of vehicles for this purpose

6.3.3 Improve water and sanitation services to accommodate users

One of the pressing issues, particularly in Mkhuhlu Library, was that water supply was inadequate, which made it difficult for many community members to use the library. This can be achieved by enhancing collaboration between the local libraries and the municipality's water and sanitation unit. It is the responsibility of library management to ensure that library users have access to these services.

6.3.4 Improve staff complement and support training

As previously stated, staff shortages were reported in all four libraries. This problem could be solved in two ways: firstly, by training internal staff so that each library has more qualified librarians than semi-skilled workers, and secondly, by recruiting additional staff, particularly qualified librarians to improve service delivery; which is central to meeting the information needs of users. Again, library

management is responsible for ensuring that all the four libraries are adequately equipped with suitably qualified staff. To be effective, these initiatives need to be aligned with the human resource development strategy of libraries in the study area.

6.3.5 Review and enhance procurement systems and process

One of the cross-cutting issues that impacted services delivery in the four libraries was slow procurement of library material and services. One way of addressing this problem is to review and streamline procurement systems and services to ensure that books and materials are selected, ordered and delivered on time. It is the responsibility of the finance department (supply chain) to enhance procurement of library resources so that users can be able to meet their information needs.

6.4 Future Research

As explained in Chapter One, the study only investigated the information needs of library users in four libraries in one local municipality (i.e. Bushbuckridge). In practice, this means that the findings of the study could not be extrapolated and/or generalized across the local municipalities of Ehlanzeni. In view of this, the following areas are suggested for further research:

- Efficacy of procurement systems and processes
- Staff development in libraries
- Information technology capabilities of public libraries
- Outreach programmes for library users
- Provision of water and sanitation services to public libraries
- Expansion of the LIS network to remote areas

Research into any of these areas could assist policy makers and library management to improve both planning and provision of LIS in the study area.

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Annexure 1: Questionnaire for library users

Library users (members and ordinary users)

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Kholo Sambo and I am currently doing a masters' programme with the University of Limpopo. I am doing research on library and information services. The purpose of the research is to find out whether the people of Bushbuckridge have adequate access to library and information services. Your participation in this interview could help improve library services in the Bushbuckridge area. Please answer the

following questions:

Instructions
1. Please answer all the questions by putting a cross (X) next your answer.
2. Please note that the answers you provide will be treated as confidential.
3. The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only.

2.1 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Section A: Biographical Data
Please indicate your gender

Male	Female
1	2

Which of the following best describes your age?

16-21	22-27	28-33	34 and above
1	2	3	4

2.2 Knowledge of Library Services

Have you been informed about library services?

Yes	No
1	2

Is this information given in your language?

Yes	No
1	2

Is library information readily available in your area?

Yes	No
1	2

Does this information meet your needs?

Yes	No
1	2

Is the library information provided on time?

Yes	No
1	2

2.3 SOURCES OF LIBRARY INFORMATION
Which of the following sources are likely to give you information on library services?

Local news papers	Local radio station	Library staff	Family and friends	Other (please specify) ………………..
1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY INFORMATION

Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly	Other (please specify)
1	2	3	4	5

2.5 ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES:

Is there a library in your area?

Yes	No

Have you been encouraged to use the library?

Yes	No

How far is the library from your home?

1.5 km	2-5 km	5 -10 km	10-20 km	Other (please specify) …………….
1	2	3	4	5

How do you get to the library?

By foot /walking	By taxi	By bus	Own/family car	Other (please specify …………………………………
1	2	3	4	5

1.6 USAGE OF LIBRARY SERVICES

How often do you use library services order to meet your information needs?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly
1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 6: REASONS FOR USING THE LIBRARY

Which of the following probably motivates you to use the library?

To improve my reading skills	To do my assignments	To search for career information	To study i.e. prepare for tests and examinations	Other (please specify)
1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 7: INFORMATION-SEEKING STRATEGIES

Which of the following methods do you probably use to find information in the library?

Ask for help at the information desk	Read Notice boards in the library	Peruse books in shelves	Discuss information needs with friends or other library users	Use the Internet to search for and find relevant information
1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 8: QUALITY OF SERVICES RECEIVED

How well does the library meet your information needs? Please rate the quality of the services you receive from your library in terms of the following:

	Good	Better	Poor	Excellent	Unsatisfactory
1. Support/guidance from library staff	1	2	3	4	5
2. Equipment and machinery e.g. furniture, computers, printers, photocopiers, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Information technology e.g. Computer Internet services	1	2	3	4	5
4. Supply of books and materials	1	2	3	4	5
5. Health and safety:	1	2	3	4	5
5.1 Hygiene/Cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5
5.2 Lighting e.g. bright, dark, dim, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
5.3 Windows/Air conditioning	1	2	3	4	5
5.4 Seating arrangements	1	2	3	4	5
5.5 Atmosphere e.g. peace, order, quietness, décor, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
5.6 Health education e.g. warnings about the dangers of HIV/AIDS, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
5.7 Public toilets (or bathrooms)	1	2	3	4	5
5.8 Security measures e.g. video cameras, security personnel, fire extinguishers, emergency exit signs, assembly points, etc.	1	2	3	4	5

Annexure 2: Translated version of the questionnaire

SWIVUTISOANGARHELO

Ndzavisiso henhla ka swilavekonkulu swa vatirhisi va tilayiburari eka masipala wa Bushbuckrisge

XIYENGE XA 2: VATIRHISI VA TILAYIBURARI (SWIRHO NA VATIRHISI NTSENA)

EKA MUCHAVISEKI

Hi mina Kholo Sambo loyi sweswi a nga le ku endleni ka dyondzo ya masters eka Yunivhesithi ya Lipompo. Ndzi le ku endleni ka vulavisisi hi vukorhokerhi bya le tilayiburari. Xikongomelo xa ndzavisiso iku kuma loko vaakatiko va Bushbuckridge va swi kota kumbe va nga swikoti ku fikelela layiburari na vuxokoxoko hi vukorhokeli. Ku hoxa ka wena xandla eka nkonamiso lowu swi ta pfuna ku antswisa vukorhokeli. Ku hoxa ka wena xandla eka nkonamiso lowu swi ta pfuna ku antswisa vukorhokeli bya tilayiburari eka ndhawu ya Bushbuckridge. Wa komberiwa ku hlamula swivutiso leswi landzelaka.

Swileriso na swiletelo

1. Wa komberiwa ku hlamula swivutiso hinkwaswo hi ku vekela xihambano (X) kusuhi na nhlamulo ya wena.
2. Tinhlamulo ta wena ti ta tekiwa ti ri ta xihundla
3. Vuxokoxoko lebyi u nga ta byi nyika byita tirhisiwa swa dyondzo ntsena.

2.1 vuxokoxoko hi wena

Xiyenge xa A: Vuxokoxoko ha wena wa komberiwa ku boxa rimbewu ra wena.

Wanuna	Wansati
1.	2.

Xana u wela eka malembe wahi?

16-21	22-27	28-33	34 no hundza

2.2 vutivi mayelana na vukorhokeri bya layiburari.

Xana u tshame u tivisiwa hi vukorhokeli bya layiburari?

Ina	EE
1	2

Xana vuxokoxoko lebyi byi nyikiwa hi ririmi ra wena?

Ina	EE
1	2

Xana vuxokoxoko lebyi bya layiburari bya kumeka endhawini ya ka n'wina?

Ina	EE
1	2

Xana vuxokoxoko lebyi bya fikelela swilavekonkulu swa wena?

Ina	EE
1	2

Xana vuxokoxoko lebyi byi kumeka hi nkarhi?

Ina	EE
1	2

2.3 SWITIRHISIWA SWA LE LAYIBURARI

Hi swihi swa switirhisiwa leswi landzelaka swinga ku pfunaka mayelana na vukorhokeli bya layiburari?

vhikinavhiki	Nhweti na nhweti	Kotare na kotare	Lembe na lembe	Nswin'wana boxa
1	2	3	4	5

2.4 mfikelelo wa vukorhokeli bya layiburari

Xana yi kona layiburari endhawini ya ka n'wina?

Ina	EE

Xana u tshame u khutaziwa ku tirhisa layiburari?

Ina	EE?

Xana mphuka wo ya layiburari wu fika kwihi ku suka ekaya?

1.5 KM	2-5KM	5-10KM	10-20 KM
1	2	3	4

XANA U YISA KU YINI ELAYIBURARI?

HI KU FAMBA	HI THEKISI	HIBAZI	MOVA WALE KAYA
1	2	3	4

1.5 Ntirhiso wa vukorhokeli bya layiburari.

Xana uyi endzela kangani ku fikelela swilavekonkulu swa wena?

Siku na siku	Vhiki na vhiki	Nhweti na hweti	Kotare na kotara	Lembe na lembe

Xiyenge xa 6: Swivangelo swo tirhisa layiburari

Hi swihi swa leswi landzelaka swiku susumetaka ku tirhisa layiburari?

Ku antswisa mahlayelo	Ku endla mintirho vutiendleri
1	2

Ku kumisisa hi ntirhovutomi	Ku hlaya	Swin'wana boxa
3	4	5

Xiyenge xa7: Maendlelo yo kuma vuxokoxoko hi wihi maendlelo lama landzelaka u ma tirhisaka ku kuma vuxokoxoko elayiburari?

Kombela ku pfuniwa evuamukelo	Hlaya eka bodo	Hlaya tibuku	Bula na vanghana
1	2	3	4

Tirhisa inthanete
5

Xiyenge xa 8: Nkoka wa vukorhokeri lebyi amukeriwaka

Xana layiburari yi hlangavetana njhani na swilavekonkulu swa wena? Wa komberiwa ku ba xihambano mayelana na vukorhokeli lebyi u byi amukelaka.

	kahle	Swinene	Tsanile	Swinene ngpfu	a swi amukeleki
1. Nseketelo wa vatirhi 2. Switirhisiwaxik. Fenichara,michini	1	2	3	4	5
3. Vuxokoxoko byo thekinloji xik. khompnyntor,inthanete	1	2	3	4	5
4. Mphakelo wa tibuku	1	2	3	4	5

5. Rihanyu na nhlayiseko	1	2	3	4	5
5.1.Ntivorihanyu/vubasi	1	2	3	4	5
5.2.ku voninga xik voninga, xinyama	1	2	3	4	5
5.3.Mafasitere/xihungamoya	1	2	3	4	5
5.4.Matshamelo	1	2	3	4	5
5.5.Xiyimo xik pongo,ntohamiseko,ku rhulile	1	2	3	4	5
5.6 Dyondzo hi swa rihanyu xik,lemukiso hi HIV-AIDS	1	2	3	4	5
5.7 Swihambukelo swa mani na mani	1	2	3	4	5

Annexure 3: Translated Questionnaire - Sepedi

Koketso ya10: Dipotsiso go basomise ba bokgobapuku

Basomisi ba bokgobapuku (Moloko le ba e se bego maloko)

Nna Kholo Sambo keswaragane le lengwalonyakisisobabokgobapukulengwalonyakisiso la MastasemoYunibesithingya Limpopo. Keswaragane le go diralengwalonyakisiso la bokgobapuku le tsebokamogetso. Maikemisetsoa nyakisisoke go lekolageebabathoba Bushbuckridge bana le botsebibjobolekanego le go hwetsathuso go tsabokgobapuku le tsebokamogetso. Go tseakarabogagagomogomorero/ therisano go tlaba le dipoelotsebotse go kaonafatsengbokgobapuku le tsebokamogetsomotikologongya Bushbuckridge. O kgopelwa go arabadipotsisotse di latelago

1. O kgopelwa go arabadipotsisokamokaka go bealeswao la sefapano (x) kgauswi le karabo.
2. O lemoswa gore dikarabotse o tla di fago e tlabatsasephiri.
3. Tsebo ye o tlafanagokayona e tlasomisetswatsathutofela.

2.1 Taodisopheloyadintltatse di filwego.

karaboya A: Taodisopheloyadintlhatse di filwegosupetsa bong bjagagoka

kgopelohle.

Monna	Mosadi
1	2

Mengwagayagago e welakae go ye e latelago?

16-21	22-27	28-33	34 and above
1	2	3	4

2.2 Tseboyatsabokgobapuku le tsebokamotso o kilewahwetsatsebokatsebokamogetsoyabokgobapuku?

Ee	Aowa
1	2

Naatsebo ye e filwekapoleloyagogo?

Ee	Aowa
1	2

Naatseboyatsabokgobapuku e gonatikologongyageno?

Ee	Aowa
1	2

Naatsebo ye e kgotsofatsadinyakwatsagago?

Ee	Aowa

1	2

Naatsebo ye yatsabokgobapuku e fiwakanako?

Ee	Aowa
1	2

2.3 Mothopowatseboyatsabokgobapuku.

Keofemothopowo o ka go fagotshedimoso a ditirelotsabokgobapuku?

Kurantayasediko	Radio yasediko	Basomedibabokgobaku ku	Metswalle le bagwera	Methapo ye mengwe (etsweletsekakgopelohle
1	2	3	4	5

KAROLOC: Biopoeletsobyatshomisoyatshedimosoyabokgobapuku.

Kgatisobeke	Kagwedi	Kakotara	Kangwaga	Tsedingwe (Tsweletsahle)
1	2	3	4	5

2.5.Tetlaya go somisaditirelotsabokgobapuku.

Naa go na le bokgobapukutikologongyageno?

Ee	Aowa
1	2

Naa o kilewahlohleletswa go somisabokgobapuku?

Ee	Aowa
1	2

Naabokgobapukubokgolebjobokaakanggotlogalegaeng la gago/ geno?

1.5 Km	2-5 Km	5-10 Km	10-20 Km	Tsedingwe (Tsweletsakakgopelohle)
1	2	3	4	

Naa o fihlabjangbokgobapuku?

Kamaoto	Kathekisi	Kapese	Sefatanaga sag ago/ geno	Tsedingwe (tsweletsakakgopelohle)

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1	2	3	4	5

1.6 Tshomisoyaditirelotsabokgobakuku.

Naa o somisabokgobapukugakaakang go kgotsofatsadinyakwatsagagotsa go

nyakatsebo?

Tsatsikatsatsi	Kabeke	Kakgwedi	Kakotara	Kangwaga
1	2	3	4	5

KAROLO Y 6: Mabaka a go somisabokgobapuku

Keenggarega se se go hlohleletsago go somisabokgobapuku

Go kaonafatsabokgonibjakabja go bala	Go dira di asementetsaka	Go nyakatsebokatsamosomo	Go ithuta go itokisetsamelekwana le ditlhahlobo	Tsedingwe (Tsweletsakakgopelohle)
1	2	3	4	5

KAROLO7: Mekgwaya go nyakatsebo .

Kemokgwaofewo o kabago o osomisago go nyakatsebobokgobapuku?

Kgopelethuso go basomedibabokgobapuku	Balabotoyaditsebisobokgobapukung	Baladipukudirakengtsabokgobapuku	Thusoyatsebokapoledisano le bagweragobabasomisibabangwebabokgobapuku	Somisainthanete go nyakana l tseboya maleba.
1	2	3	4	5

KAROLO 8:Bolengbyaditirelotsa di hweditswego

Bokgobapukubokgotsofatsagokaangdinyakwatsagagotsa go thopatsebo. Kakgopelobontshabolengbyaditirelotse o di hwetsagogotswa go bokgobapukungbyageno. O lebeletsetselatelang:

	Gabotse	kaone	Bokoa	Bokgwari/ gabotsebotse	Gaekgotsofatse
1.Thuso go tswa go basomedibabokgobapuku	1	2	3	4	5

2. Ditlabelo le metshene,mohlfenitshara, dikhomphutara, digatisi, fotostetebjbj	1	2	3	4	5
3.Tseboyatekenolotsimohlkaboyaint hanete.	1	2	3	4	5
4.Tirelo yadipuku le materiele/ ditlabelo	1	2	3	4	5
5.Tsa maphelo le polokego	1	2	3	4	5
5.1Maphelo/Tlhweko	1	2	3	4	5
5.2 Ponagalo,mohl, lesedififalo,fifatsa	1	2	3	4	5
5.3 Matsikangope/ tekanyamoyo	1	2	3	4	5
5.4 Kaboyamadulo	1	2	3	4	5
5.5Atmosfere, mohl, thakgegiso,setu, kgatisobjbj	1	2	3	4	5
5.6. ThutoyatsaMaphelo,mohl, temosokakotsiya HIV/AIDS bjbj	1	2	3	4	5
5.7 Tshwamare (gogabohlapelo)bjbj	1	2	3	4	5
5.8 Seemosatshireletso, mohlsegatisisa video, basomibatshireletso, setimamollo,maswao a go tswamoagongkapela, lefelo la kgobokano, bjbj	1	2	3	4	5

Annexure 4: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Kholo Sambo and I am currently doing a masters' degree with the University of Limpopo. I am doing research on library and information services. The purpose of the research is to find out whether the people of Bushbuckridge have adequate access to library and information services. Your participation in this interview could help improve library services in the Bushbuckridge area. Please answer the following questions.

1. What steps, if any, have you taken to meet the information needs of library users in your library?

1. What type of services does the library provide to communities?

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. Do community members have easy access to library services? Explain.

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Are you satisfied with the quality of the services provided by the library? Give reasons.

    _____

    _____

    _____

4. Are library users informed about library services? Discuss.

    _____

    _____

5. In what way are library services used to help combat illiteracy in your community?

    _____

    _____

    _____

6. Based on your experience, are there any challenges or problems from the library side, or community side which you think hinder delivery of library services in your area? Give examples

    _____

    _____

    _____

7. What do you think can be done to improve delivery of library services to meet the information needs of rural communities in Bushbuckridge? Give examples.

    _____

    _____

    _____

Once again, thank you for taking your time to participate and contribute to this interview session. Please note that your answers will be treated confidentially at all times.

Annexure 5: Questionnaire for library staff

INVESTIGATING THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF LIBRARY USERS IN BUSHBUCKRIDGE

SECTION 1: LIBRARIANS (LIBRARY STAFF)

INSTRUCTIONS

4. Please answer all the questions by putting a cross (X) next your answer.

5. Please note that the answers you provide will be treated as confidential.

6. The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Please indicate your gender

Male	Female
1	2

2. Which of the following best describes your age?

16-21	22-27	28-33	34 and above
1	2	3	4

3. Which of the following best describes your residential area?

Urban	Semi-urban	Rural	Other please specify ………………………………
1	2	3	4

SECTION B: INFORMATION NEEDS OF LIBRARY USERS

4. Which of the following channels do you probably use to meet the information needs of library users in your library?

Print	TV	Radio	Internet	Other please specify…………..
1	2	3	4	5

5. How often do you use the above mentioned channels to meet the information needs of library users in your area

Seldom	Sometimes	Always	Occasionally	Never
1	2	3	4	5

6. Do you provide support /assistance to help users meet their information needs?

Yes	No
1	2

7. In meeting their information needs, how often do library users ask you for help?

Seldom	Sometimes	Always	Occasionally	Never
1	2	3	4	5

8. From your experience, do community members use computers to meet their information needs in your library?

Seldom	Sometimes	Always	Occasionally	Never
1	2	3	4	5

9. Which of the following best describes the information needs of community members in your library?

Reading	Research	Culture	Study	Other (please specify) ……………
1	2	3	4	5

10. Which of the following probably prevents you from meeting the information needs of library users in your library?

Lack of funds	Shortage of staff	Lack of support	Limited supply of books and materials	Other please specify ………………
1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: USING ICT SKILLS TO MEET THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF LIBRARY USERS

11. How would you rate your ICT skills in meeting the information needs of library users in your library?

Ms Word	Poor	Moderate	Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4
Ms Excel	Poor	Moderate	Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4
Ms Power Point	Poor	Moderate	Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4
Internet	Poor	Moderate	Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4

Thank You

Annexure 6: Approval to conduct study from Bushbuckridge municipality

BUSHBUCKRIDGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Tel: 013 799 1835/45/51/57   Fax: 013 799 1865   Email: info@bushbuckrdige.gov.za

Private Bag X 9308
Bushbuckridge
1280
R533 Graskop Road opp. Mapulaneng DLTC
Maviljan Region
Bushbuckridge

Website: www.bushbuckridge.gov.za

Enq: S. Mgiba

23 September 2016

University of Limpopo
Private bag x 1106
Sovenga
0727

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY ON THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES IN BUSHBUCKRIDGE

This letter serves to confirm that Sambo P.K is permitted to conduct research with library users and librarians on the information needs of communities in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

It would be appreciated if the research can cover all four local libraries within Bushbuckridge Local Municipality that is Mafemani, Shatale, Henry Mdluli and Mkhuhlu.

Yours faithfully

**MR C. LISA
MUNICIPAL MANAGER**

Together Speeding Service Delivery

Annexure 7: Clearance from the Ethics Committee, University of Limpopo

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 2212, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email:noko.monene@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING:	25 January 2017
PROJECT NUMBER:	TREC/01/2017: PG

PROJECT:

Title:	Investigating information needs of Library Users: A case of Bushbuckridge Community Library
Researchers:	Ms PK Sambo
Supervisor:	Mr LA Makgahlela
Co-Supervisor:	N/A
School:	Language and Communication Studies
Degree:	Masters in Information Studies

PROF TAB MASHEGO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:
i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding solutions for Africa

Annexture 8 : Editor's confirmation letter

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Tel. 0152862684
Cell: 0822198060
Rammalaj@ul.ac.za

Dr J R Rammala
440B Mankweng
Box 4019
Sovenga
0727

To whom it may concern

22 January 2018

Confirmation letter: Sambo P K (9635715)

Dear Sir/Madam

This memo serves to confirm that I edited a dissertation by the above-mentioned candidate entitled: **Information needs of Library users in Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa: A case of four community libraries.**

Editing was done on language, typesetting and technical appearance. There were not so many language errors. Technically the document was well written and not much was done is this area except rearranging headings and subheading in accordance with rules for the University of Limpopo Research Administration and Development. There were a few repetitions which I corrected with the help of the student telephonically and through email communication.

I confirm that the document is now readable and clean with regard to language issues and recommend that it can be submitted for assessment.

Thanks

Signed: ....

Dr J R Rammala