

**ACCESSIBILITY OF MABESKRAAL PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES BY
TEACHERS IN BOJANALA, NORTH WEST PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

BY

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DECLARATION STATEMENT

I declare that this is my work explicitly prepared for the (MDCHSAL) module and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the above thesis is my work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged using complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality-checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my lovely wife Poki and my wonderful children Kgomotso Ntsako, Duduetsang Nkhesani and Matlhogonolo Nkateko for constant support and love, inspiration, source of strength and encouragement during the challenges of juggling graduate school life, being a husband and father. I'm genuinely thankful to have you in my life; my love for you will never be quantified. I also dedicated this to my Supervisor Dr Collence, T. Chisita for believing in me and my potential to change the world and staff at the UNISA department of Information Science and all lovers and believers in knowledge and a better world through libraries. To my lovely, heartfelt and lovely wife Poki and kids let me conclude

“When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure.”– Unknown

ABSTRACT

Public libraries play a critical role as service providers that benefit various user communities. Such institutions have helped sustain societies' information, educational, recreational, and leisure needs. Public libraries arose at the beginning of the nineteenth century when Europe and American economies were transforming from a feudal to a capitalist economy based on industrialization. In Africa, Public libraries were established by the colonizers as part of the so-called oxymoronic civilizing mission that sought to turn the local people into labourers to sustain capitalism. The study investigated the accessibility of Mabeskraal Public Library services by teachers in Bojanala in the North West province of South Africa. The public library serves as a democratic institution whose doors are open for all people irrespective of race, sex, gender, educational level, religious affiliation, and any other discriminatory factor. The study sought to discover how teachers in Bojanala can use the Mabeskraal Public Library to fulfil their dynamic, diverse, and growing information, educational and recreational needs. Public libraries have a pedagogical mandate that requires them to support various demographic groups, including students, teachers, and other users, to access their services at no cost. This study examined how the Mabeskraal Public Library addresses the informational, educational and recreational needs of the teachers working near the library. Everyone should access public library services, and teachers were selected as the study's target population because they serve as opinion leaders and change agents. This study chose a qualitative research methodology underpinned by an interpretive research paradigm. The researcher selected the qualitative approach because it is essential in responding to the research questions and permits subterranean comprehension and apprehension of the social world, particularly experiences, phenomena, and context. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions and Associations (IFLA's) Public Library Manifesto (2022), Oldenburg's (1989) "third place theory," Jochumsen Rasmussen and Skot-Hansen's (2012) "four space model" and Putnam, Feldstein, Cohen's (2003) theory of "New Third Space," and Conceptual model of library resources and accessibility based on an integrated framework of Ranganathan (1931) and Gorman's (1995) theories underpinned the study. The researcher chose a non-probability sample that resonates with qualitative studies and interpretive research paradigms. The study sample was drawn from teachers from five schools serviced by the Mabeskraal Public Library. Data collection methods included interviews, focus group discussions, and literature review. Qualitative data was presented by deducing meaning from the verbatim responses from the research participants. The researcher combined the findings to ensure the study's conclusions were achieved at the end of the study.

The results revealed that the Mabeskraal Public Library encountered budgetary constraints that ultimately affected service delivery. The organization and representation of library books proved cumbersome for users, thus affecting information searches, discovery, and access. The study recommended adopting modern ways of organizing and representing information using modern technologies by the library, including OPACs. The study advocated using ICTs to ensure teachers' optimum use of library resources. The Mabeskraal Public Library lacks resources to manage library resources to enhance optimum use by teachers effectively. The study recommends that the Mabeskraal Public Library forge strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including the government and development partners, to secure resources for leveraging library services for its users. The study contributes knowledge that adds to the corpus on public library service delivery in South Africa. Further research should focus on how the Mabeskraal Public Library can utilize library networks to build social capital for sustainability.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFLIA: The African Library and Information Associations and Institutions

ICTs: Information and Communication Technologies

IFLA: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

LIASA: Library and Information Association of South Africa

NLSA: National Library of South Africa

OPAC: Online Public Library Catalogue

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The study focused on the accessibility of information resources and services in public libraries in Mabieskraal, South Africa. The research study title is “Access to information resources and Services to Teachers in public libraries in Bojanala, Northwest: a case of Mabieskraal Library, South Africa. The proposal presented the contextualization of the study, problem statement, aim and objectives, significance of the study, scope and limitation, literature review, conceptual framework, research methodology, the proposal of chapters, and ethical consideration.

The availability of information resources should translate into use by people (Laugesen, 2014). Accessibility implies that users can identify, locate, retrieve, and use library resources without problems. The need for the availability and accessibility of library resources in public libraries has long been a topical issue in the history of library service provision (Whitehurst, 2012). Public libraries have multiple roles, including fostering information literacy and providing information resources to the community. These libraries offer numerous other services to users to address their diverse and dynamic needs, characteristics, and interests. In perspective, librarians and information professionals balance specific research, information needs, and valuable information resources to meet the emotional needs of institutions and users. Handa (2015) states that the availability, accessibility, and use of information resources are essential factors in knowledge acquisition, learning, and research. Indeed, regardless of size, every public library is expected to have comprehensive and adequate information resources available for its community to support reading, learning, and research purposes.

The speed with which a user may retrieve information output in any format is determined by accessibility (Howie 2017). Therefore, relevant information resources should be acquired, processed, identified, located, discovered, retrieved, used, and shared to meet the desired need of a diverse clientele (Abdulsalami 2013). Public libraries serve as a support system where students can enhance their studies outside the school parameters. The acquisition of relevant

Information resources become necessary for enhancing and sustaining teaching, learning, research, and other functions/services in the school environment.

1.2 Contextualization of the study

The study was conducted in cluster 23 in Mabeskraal, part of the Moses Kotane Local Municipality. The Mabeskraal library is surrounded by five schools: three high schools (Rakoko, Semetsa, and Kalafi) and two primary schools (Molotsi and Mabeskraal). The Mabeskraal library, located in Mabeskraal village, was founded by the Department of Arts and Culture (CATA) and handed over to the Moses Kotane Local Municipality (MKLM) on 24 July 2004. It is the oldest library in the municipality. The library offers access to a wide range of materials, resources, services, and programmes to meet the needs of its users. Although it has been 14 years since the establishment of the library, not many community residents have access; for example, school learners and teachers, and this brings the question of relevancy, accessibility, and availability of information resources and services.

The premise of this study was the assumption that improving access to the Bojanala library's resources in multimedia format would promote the reading culture in Bojanala, reducing illiteracy and enhancing sustainable reading habits in Bojanala, South Africa. Although the five schools near the Bojanala Public Library have many teachers, surprisingly, many do not use the library services and resources within their proximity. One would argue that the teachers would be the public library's primary users since it is the only information resource in the community. The public library provides access to multimedia content, which can also be accessible from mobile devices, laptops, and computers. Therefore, the study sought to establish the contextual factors affecting the teachers' ability to access the library.

1.3 Research problem

Every public library aims to support its community by providing relevant information to respond to the ever-increasingly diverse and dynamic information needs of the different users in the community (IFLA, Public Library Manifesto 1998). However, due to budgetary constraints, the general trend in developing countries finds it challenging to fulfil the IFLA

Public Library Manifesto (1998/2022). The result is that public libraries end up failing to provide for the dynamic and complex needs of patrons. Mabeskraal Public Library is not an exception to the challenges encountered by other public libraries throughout the country concerning the accessibility of services by teachers in Bojanala, Northwest province of South Africa.

Public libraries, like other libraries, acquire, organize, store, and transmit information to improve access to information and encourage national growth. To be functional, a library must meet the needs of its users and ensure that they make the best use of the information resources and services available. Today, a country's education and information development level is a significant determinant of that country's progress and development. The library's programs, resources, and services are all focused on assisting the public in meeting its information, educational, and recreational needs.

Access to information resources and services in modern-day public libraries should encompass the provision of ICT facilities to enhance service delivery. The librarians' technical expertise is equally important since they manage and operate digital tools. There is a need for a basic policy that guides library operations to ensure adherence to global standards and practices in terms of service delivery. The sensitization and awareness-raising initiatives on the importance of libraries to the populace are significant since the community has to benefit.

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of availability and accessibility of information resources for educators at Mabeskraal Public Library. Several public libraries have been established in Bola by the Northwest Municipality to assist residents. Library resources be made readily available and accessible to maximize usage and satisfaction by users. Even though this library is an essential resource, several information resources were inaccessible to the users. Another problem observed is that the accessibility of information resources seems affected by a lack of awareness of what the library can provide to the users. Furthermore, due to poor processing and organisation of the information, library users find it challenging to navigate and effectively use library resources.

1.4 Aim of the study

The study examines the accessibility of Mabeskraal Public Library services by teachers in Bojanala, North West province of South Africa

1.5 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study were to:

- determine the extent to which the Mabieskraal Public Library resources and services are accessible to teachers
- describe the types of information resources and services preference among teachers in the public library
- Analyse the relationship between the accessibility of information resources and services among teachers in the Mabieskraal public library
- Establish the challenges experienced by teachers in accessing information resources and services at the Mabieskraal public library.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do the teachers access information resources and services at the Mabieskraal public library?
- What types of information resources and services were preferred mainly by teachers in the Mabieskraal public library?
- What relationship existed between accessibility and information resources and services among teachers in the Mabieskraal public library?
- What were the challenges experienced by teachers in accessing information resources and services at the Mabieskraal public library?
- What recommendations can enhance the accessibility of the Mabieskraal public library?

1.7 Significance of the study

This study was significant because it sought to address the contextual factors affecting teachers' ability to access library resources at the public libraries in Bojanala. The recommendations from the study would guide the stakeholders and policymakers to implement measures that improve the accessibility of information resources and services among teachers in public libraries in Bojanala, Northwest. This study will benefit the teachers in Bojanala by proffering solutions to overcome challenges in utilising public library services. Furthermore, the study will

recommend relevant authorities to redress the challenges by improving access to library resources. The improved accessibility to the public library will result in better services for the community of Bojanala.

This study hypothesizes that improving the accessibility of information resources and services in public libraries in Bojanala will positively influence reading culture and education, reading, and illiteracy levels among schoolchildren.

1.8 Definition of terminology

Public library: According to Helling (2012), a public library is provided wholly or partly from public funds. Its use is not restricted to any class of persons in the community but is freely available to all. The public library provides materials in multimedia format for use by users. It collects, preserves, organizes, retrieves, disseminates, and communicates information, ideas, and the creative product of the human imagination. Public libraries provide circulation, references, photocopying, outreach, typing advocacy, readers' services, and the Internet.

Accessibility: Accessibility implies the ease of locating and retrieving a piece or piece of information from the storage medium. In general, accessibility describes the degree to which a system is useable by a wide range of users. It also refers to the ability to access library services.

Availability: This refers to the availability of information sources, which entails acquiring and providing means by which users can access the necessary information sources. Availability refers to the retrieval of information to satisfy users' needs. It concerns resources and the library of physical and virtual resources.

Resources: This refers to all input utilised in the library to provide users with a conducive and vibrant learning environment. Resources include human resources, such as library professionals; non-human resources, such as documentary resources, which have printed documents; and virtual sources, such as electronic resources in various formats.

Library use: This refers to when a public library or any form of the library serves its users at

any point in time and gives out quality information and services in terms of currency, relevance, and accuracy, and readily meets the information needs of its users.

1.9 Research scope and demarcation

The study focused on three high schools and two primary schools in Bojanala concerning the accessibility of the Mabeskraal Public Library services by teachers. It sought to determine the degree to which library resources are accessible to teachers. The study also focused on assessing the variety of resources available at the Mabeskraal Public Library and how they help support the information needs of teachers. Furthermore, the study analysed the barriers that inhibit teachers from accessing the Mabeskraal Public Library Services. The study sought to suggest recommendations to enhance the accessibility of Mabeskraal Public Library Services by teachers. The justification for the study arises from the failure of the Mabeskraal Public Library Services to fulfil the information needs of its diverse community with specific reference to teachers in surrounding schools. Public libraries exist to serve the educational needs of their users, hence the need to undertake this research to generate knowledge for the benefit of policymakers, staff, and users. The researcher was responsible for formulating the research topic, conceptualise the research design, developing data collection tools, seeking ethical clearance, administering the data collection instruments, analysing the data, and suggesting recommendations

Firstly, the case study design had an epistemological challenge to generalise results. Willig (2008:85) alludes to the extent to which the case study research lends itself to generalisation as a matter of debate. When generalizing the results, using case studies to study intrinsic or multiple-case studies is a cause for concern. As such, the researcher did not want to generalize the survey results to other libraries in Bojanala or South Africa, although lessons can be drawn from different institutions investigating similar trends. The study chose the case study design because of its advantages in facilitating the collection of large amounts of data with limited resources such as time and other costs.

The concern of the study was the quality of the data obtained concerning the research objectives and questions (*See 1, 6*).

1.10 Limitation

The participations were teachers who were not necessarily working directly with communities. The study focused on teachers who arguably would be knowledgeable about school and library policy matters.

1.11 Delimitation of the study

The study provided insight into the challenges of providing access to information resources and services to teachers in the public library in Bojanala and the Mabeskraal community library. The investigation only focused on teachers from five different schools in the Mabeskraal area. The study drew responses from the teachers from other schools included in the study because they constituted the research population.

1.12 Literature review and theoretical framework

According to Jesson, Matheson, and Lacey (2011), the literature review is a systematic, clear, and reproducible method to assist researchers in identifying, evaluating, and synthesising the existing body of knowledge accomplished by researchers, scholars, or practitioners.

The reasons for undertaking a literature review vary depending on the purpose of the research (Newman 2014). The researcher uncovers research trends, activities, and empirical weaknesses in previous research studies by critically evaluating current literature (Randolph 2009).

The current study used a literature review as the first phase of the study that sought to build an understanding of the accessibility and availability of the information resources and services of the Bojanala Public Library. The research questions and objectives guided the literature review. It added to the understanding of the research phenomenon under study. Public libraries play a fundamental role by providing access to information and knowledge without restrictions. Teachers should use shared services to access resources that support teaching, learning, and research. Public libraries serve as conduits of timely information; for example, they equip teachers and learners with lifelong learning and literacy skills to empower them positively to shape the future of their societies.

Based on the research objectives and questions, the researcher analysed a literature review according to the proceeding subsections.

1.12.1 Availability of information resources

The availability of information resources comprises acquiring and facilitating access for users to access the relevant information resources. The public library adheres to the principles of providing unlimited access to information for users' educational, recreational, informational, and cultural requirements. The availability of information resources justifies the existence of a library or an information centre. The availability of information resources includes providing information in multimedia and multilingual formats, such as textbooks, reference books, and serial publications, as vital print information carrying resources for effective teaching, learning, and research (South African Book Development Council 2016). These multimedia resources supplement classroom instruction.

The adaptation of information and communication technology (ICT) has supplemented traditional library resources by offering the convenient and flexible availability of information via Internet connectivity. Libraries, on the other hand, must have the necessary capability in terms of ICT infrastructure to support the availability of digital and online information resources.

Libraries must demonstrate the presence of functional and readable ICT infrastructure as sources of information and multimedia content for broader and deeper access to users, even though a “library is judged adequately by the quantity and quality of its physical stock” (Chizwina 2011). This statement should be extended to virtual stock, considering many libraries have a web presence.

The availability of library resources has different interpretations due to different user perspectives. The lack of resources and innovation affects the library's ability to fulfil its users' dynamic and growing information demands (Raju & Raju, 2010:98). Libraries should be innovative by utilising multimedia sources, including physical and digital platforms, and ensure that information resources are accessible for the benefit of dispersed users. The failure to adapt to technological developments in the dynamic information landscape might render the

institution useless. The advent of digital and online resources has pressured libraries to adopt innovative ways of providing access to information accessible to users. Ridley (2012) advises that since libraries are changing, there is a need for management to formulate enduring policies capable of maintaining information resources available for the benefit of users in a dynamic technological environment. Such policies should guide libraries in developing innovative services that benefit users. Librarians must maintain sound financial management qualities to overcome economic challenges resulting from inadequate funding and the high cost of information resources, including emerging library technologies, to ensure that information resources are available.

1.12.2 Accessibility of information resources

Accessibility generally describes the degree to which a system is useable by a wide range of users, irrespective of time and space (Willenberg 2018). It also refers to the degree of ease with which it is possible to connect the location through networking. Chatterjee (2013:48) opines that “accessibility” can also be viewed as the ability to access the functionality and potential benefit of a system or entity by the intended or rightful beneficiaries.”

There is a difference between the availability and accessibility of library resources. If resources are available, they should be accessible and usable by the users. Kernicky (2006:36) posits that “...information resources can be accessed through ICTs that enable access to information and services by minimising the barriers of distance, time, cost and interference...” The resources are inaccessible if they are in print format, but the target user does not understand the language utilized. Information resource availability correlates to the inquirer's capacity to use the resources effectively.

Information resources, library services providers, and users represent an interdependent intellectual or multifaceted reciprocating triad (Lerner 2009:26). Libraries and information centres are not simply stores of books and materials or organized knowledge but also crucial and influential hubs for community cultural, informational, and recreational activities.

Therefore, information in books or journals is published, processed, and stored in memory institutions only when judged to have continuing potential influence. In other words, intellectual access is possible through physical or virtual access as an indicator or index of how facilities are used (IFLA, 2010).

Jones (2009) states that “access is used by different people concerning open access and a knowledge access system.” However, the term refers to one or more aspects of providing means

of access to information in the broader sense. According to Ngulube (2015:24), the accessibility of information sources is central to the library’s ability to fulfil its mandate. The expansion and availability of information resources to clients will aid in expanding their knowledge base. However, the increased use and relevance of information resources raise concerns about whether these services are accessible to all users and suit their needs. According to Ugah (2008:6), the absence of any constraint on guidance as the nature of the library’s contents emphasizes the primary importance of accessibility to all recorded knowledge and experience. The information framework assumes two values: a library’s function and the right to access it. User groups can get information from library resources.

1.13 Conceptual framework

Jabareen (2009:51) defines the conceptual framework as “a network or plane of interlinked concepts drawn on theory, research, and experience.” The conceptual framework examines the relationship between constructs and ideas. Maxwell (2013) describes the conceptual framework as “a tentative theory of the phenomena that the researcher uses to explain the phenomena under investigation.”

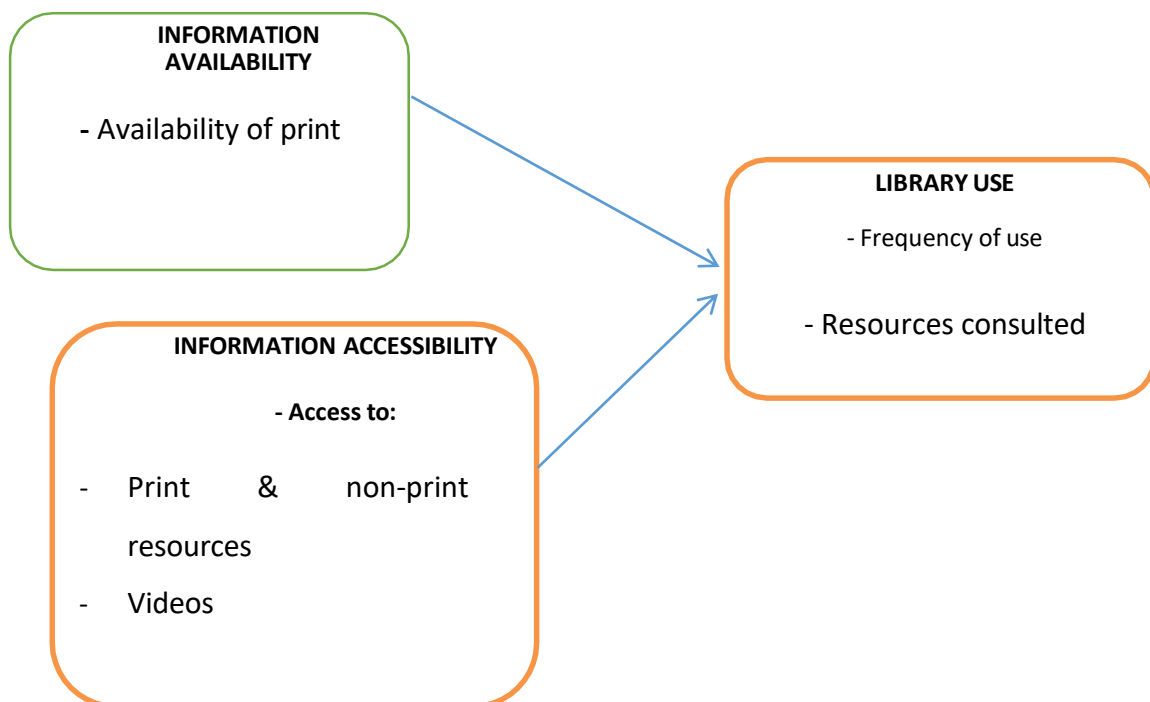


Figure 1: Conceptual model of library resources and accessibility to the Mabeskraal library (An integrated framework of Ranganathan (1931) and Gorman (1995) theories)

The conceptual framework (Fig, 1) integrates Ranganathan and Gorman's laws of the library. The key concepts, namely, library use, information availability, and accessibility, underpin the fundamental aspects concerning the objectives of a public library. Ranganathan's (1931) seminal work, the five laws of library science, provides an excellent framework for addressing critical issues of public library resources, as highlighted in the proceeding paragraphs.

The first law ensures that users utilize books (library material). According to the second and third laws, every reader and their book and every book and its reader are essential components of constructing a library collection. The fourth law of library science (Ranganathan 1931) discusses the efficiency of services and how to save the reader time. The fifth law regards the library as a growing biological organization, implying the necessity to adapt to the changing environment to offer more access to services.

Gorman (1995) proposes the new laws of library science based on a reinterpretation of Ranganathan's (1931) truth in the context of the library of today and its likely future. Gorman's (1995) laws are as follows:

- Libraries serve humanity;
- Respect all forms by which knowledge is communicated;
- Use technology intelligently to enhance service;
- Protect free access to knowledge; and
- Honour the past and create the future.

Gorman's (1995) new laws of the library complement Ranganathan's (1931) rules of libraries. The new laws of the library by Gorman (1995) are guided by the notion that the proliferation of digital technologies requires libraries to rethink their services by adopting change.

The conceptual model on library resources and accessibility to library use views the library as an institution that adds value to users through the experience of transformation as they access knowledge and information. The model (Fig 1) reflects the fundamental role of the library in providing access to multimedia resources to meet users' dynamic, complex, and diverse needs.

The conceptual model for library resources and accessibility highlights the relationship between information resources and library use. The model demonstrates how the Mabeskraal Public Library relies heavily on the availability of information in the library and its accessibility to teachers. The model primarily focuses on multimedia information formats, specifically print and non-print resources. Information accessibility covers print-based and non-print resources and multi-media resources, including videos, magazines, and other resources that teachers should access. The conceptual framework highlighted above (Fig, 1) will guide the study

1.14 Research methodology

Creswell (2011) defines a research methodology as “the description of the specific technique to be employed, the specific measuring instruments to be utilised and the particular series of activities to conduct measurements. The study used key research concepts or terminologies such as paradigm, approach, design, sampling and population, and data collection to ensure clarity in the flow of ideas.

1.14.1 Paradigm

According to Danaee (2012:98), a paradigm is “a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them.” There are different research paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. Paradigms help address epistemological and theoretical questions (Leiner 2014). The researcher used interpretivism in this study.

1.14.2 Research approach

This study adopted the qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research studies subject in their natural settings to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people attribute to them.

Newman (2008) adds that a qualitative approach focuses more on observing events from the perspective of those who are involved and aims to understand human behaviour”. Leedy and

Ormrod (2013) add that “a qualitative approach is concerned with non-statistical methods.” It aims at deepening and interpreting the research phenomenon from those experiencing it.

The qualitative approach utilized in this study allowed the researcher to interact with the individuals or groups whose behaviour and experiences were the study's subject or focus. Rather than generalizing to a hypothetical population, the researcher attempted to comprehend social action in its context (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). The Bojanala area has five libraries, but this study focuses on the Mabeskraal library and its contacts with teachers from the five schools in the area.

1.14.3 Research design

This study used the case study research design. Mouton (2009:107) points out that “a research design serves as a comprehensive plan for data collection in an empirical research project. It is a blueprint for empirical research aimed at answering specific research questions”. The research design specifies at least three processes: data collection, instrument development, and sampling. The researcher chose this design as it was deemed ideal for exploring the perceptions and experiences of schoolteachers regarding the information resources provided by libraries in Bojanala. Since there are many schools and libraries in Bojanala, the case study design helped the researcher focus on a small segment of the total population of teachers in Bojanala and study them rather than seek to generalise the results. Helling (2012) described a case study as an in-depth examination of a single instance of some social phenomena, such as a village, a family, or a juvenile gang. In the current study, the researcher sought to conduct an in-depth examination of the patterns of interaction between schoolteachers in the Mabeskraal area and the staff of the Mabeskraal library. Bechhofer and Paterson (2015) and Yin (2009) regard a case study as “an intensive investigation of a single unit. A case study design pays attention to the interaction of the unit of study within its context”. In this study, the unit of study is the Mabeskraal Library, which is seeking to improve the accessibility of its services and information resources to its users, in particular, the teachers from the five schools that surround it.

1.14.4 Sampling and Population

According to Campbell (2011), the research population is “a group, usually of people, about whom the study wants to conclude.”

In this study, the research population was drawn from teachers from the five schools mentioned above: three high schools and two primary schools. The researcher selected the five schools mentioned above for the study because of their proximity to the Mabeskraal Library. The researcher obtained a sample of eight to ten teachers per school to participate in the study. Bradley (2013:135) states that a sample or a sample unit is “that element or set of elements which are considered for selection in some stage of sampling.” A sample size of 40 teachers was selected for the study. The researcher used the nonprobability-sampling method, which Chu (2015:341) referred to as “a technique in which samples are selected in a different way from the probability theory.” This study used purposive (judgemental) sampling- a technique in which the groups to be observed are chosen based on the researcher's assessment of which professors were the most beneficial or representative (Booth, Papaioannou & Sutton 2012). For this study, the researcher met the school principal first to obtain a list of teachers, their responsibilities, classes, and the subjects they teach. The researcher selected one teacher per subject from the list, starting with those responsible for the school's information technology and library services. The school library services teacher was included in the study because their knowledge of the Mabeskraal library information was valuable.

1.14.5 Data collection

According to Leiner (2014), data collection tools are “described as the specific procedure that determines how a researcher gathers data. A case study's most commonly used data collection tools include questionnaires, interviews, observation, and surveys”. As already noted, this study employed interviews and focus groups.

1.14.6 Focus groups

Focus group discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data for this qualitative study. A focus group is a group of research participants who, rather than working alone, come together to create meaning. According to Creswell (2013), FDGs are group interviews. The researcher used the group interview to ask frequent questions to several

individuals simultaneously in an informal or informal setting.

1.14.7 Interviews

The second data collection method was a semi-structured interview. Creswell (2013) described a qualitative interview as an interviewer and interviewee interaction. The latter has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be probed in exact words and particular order. Kinney (2010) states that a qualitative interview is “essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent.”

Given (2008:811) avers that “interviews may be conducted face to face or telephonically.” In the current study, the researcher utilised face-to-face interviews with a semi-structured interview schedule.

Newman (2008) states that semi-structured interviews are “interviews that usually start with rather specific questions but then allow the interviewee some flexibility to follow his or her thoughts as the interview progresses.” The researcher interviewed staff members of the Mabeskraal Public Library to find out about the patterns of interactions that the library staff had with teachers to ascertain whether the teachers use the library’s information resources and services.

The questionnaire investigated whether the library had some of the common challenges that libraries traditionally experience, as highlighted by Akobundu (2008). For instance, the condition of the library facilities concerning indexing and cataloguing tools, the efficiency of the loaning and discharge system, shelving arrangement, guides to library arrangement, administrative and physical barriers that may bar disabled people from accessing the library, and the retrieval tools assist users in accessing information from electronic databases (Braun & Clarke 2008).

Some questions emanated from the focus group interviews with the teachers on their interactions with the Mabeskraal library staff and accessibility to information resources and services. Responses to these questions assisted the researcher in suggesting recommendations to the Mabeskraal library regarding improving the accessibility of information resources and services for the teachers in public libraries in Bojanala, North West.

1.14.8 Data analysis

Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2015:379) emphasised that “the key idea in data analysis was that each case must be intensively analysed as a separate entity’. While the researcher used the case study method to study the Mabeskraal library, the research participants from the five sampled schools served as a sample. The researcher analysed focus group interviews and responses from the participants were collated as data. The findings were analysed using the research questions or key themes of the study. Yin (2012) states the case refers to a multi-faceted or singly unified entity. “The case can be analysed as a system consisting of separate parts but also as a whole unified operating in an environment.” As such, the case study report reflected the views of all five focus groups as an integrated entity. In other words, it reflected on the whole and its parts (Given 2008). The research presented findings unambiguously. In keeping with Bryman (2016:96), the results were distinguished from the additional findings and information. The researcher used illustrations in graphs, tables, and figures to summarise the findings and facilitate a quick understanding of demographic issues.

1.15 Ethical consideration

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) warn about the use of interviews because “an interview is a negotiated text, a site where power, gender, race, and class interest are influenced by the personal characteristics of the interviewer, which include but are not limited to race, class, ethnicity and gender’. Greener (2011:136) further cautions researchers about conducting their research, as they have to consider that the research subjects are human beings, and there is a potential to cause harm. This warning to researchers demands a particular set of values and ethical considerations so that the interviewees or research participants are not exploited or harmed. In the current study, the researcher observed the following:

Firstly, the researcher sought informed consent. Babbie (2016) states that informed consent is “a norm in which research participants base their voluntary participation in research projects on the full understanding of the possible risks involved.” The above citation reflects Phiri and Nadar's (2009:57) call, “Going through the fire with eyes open.” The researcher obtained consent from each research participant after having carefully and truthfully informed them of the research and assuring them the right to change their minds even if is to withdraw their consent at any time (Fontana & Frey 2010; Babbie 2016).

Secondly, the researcher was aware that social research often requires respondents or participants to disclose certain parts of their data about themselves, which may be unknown to their friends, family, or associates (Babbie 2016); therefore, the researcher honoured the participants' right to privacy. To protect the identity of the participants, the researcher ensured them that their real names would not be published unless consent is obtained before the publication of the research report. Instead, the researcher used codes or pseudonyms to ensure the research participants' anonymity.

Thirdly, the researcher ensured that participants were protected from any harm (malevolence), whether physically, emotionally, or any other kind (Fontana & Frey 2010:62).

Lastly, although Wiid and Diggins (2013) argue that "social research often intrudes on people's lives and disrupts participants' regular activities, in this research, the participants were made aware that their participation in the research was voluntary and that there were no financial benefits for participation." However, they were encouraged to participate because the study's results may help with the service delivery of information resources and services by library staff.

The focus group method used in the study had ethical challenges regarding sensitive information volunteered by participants. Fink (2005) indicates that a case study inquiry often requires the active participation of the research participants. The research participants are obliged to disclose certain private or confidential information they never intended on the condition that the information would be used solely for the research study. Thirdly, depending on the direction or topic of the focus group discussion, the participants would bring to light feelings of resentment, anger, and regret, which, once labelled and recognised, may haunt their thoughts (May & Powel 2008). The researcher was aware of such possibilities, mainly when teachers were to narrate their perceptions or experiences of the Mabeskraal library. To deal with this ethical challenge, the researcher made the participants aware, at the beginning of the study, of the other forms of support that were available; for example, counselling services, support groups, disclosure sources of information, and help services they would need because of participating in the study.

1.16 Trustworthiness

Connaway and Powel (2010) emphasized that the researcher upheld the trustworthiness principle. The study's credibility was realised by spending time with all participants while collecting data for the interview. The research used a tape recorder to record data during interviews to increase the conformability of the study. Transferability ensured the completeness of the research methods.

1.17 Structure of the study

This study consists of six chapters, as highlighted below:

1.17.1 Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This chapter highlights the contextual background of the study, the research problem, the aim of the study, the research objectives, the research design, the population, the sample, the conceptual framework, the case for the significance of the analysis and the contextualization of the study. It provides an introduction to its essential components.

1.17.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter constitutes the study in the context of previous research and scholarly material. The study addresses a gap or problem in the literature. It also examines the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

1.17.3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter situates the study within a particular methodological tradition, provides a rationale for that approach, and describes the sample, data collection, and analysis methods.

1.17.4 Chapter 4: Presentation of findings of the study

This study organises and reports the study's main findings, including presenting qualitative (narrative) data.

1.17.5 Chapter 5: Discussions of Findings

This chapter synthesises and discusses the results using research questions, a literature review, and a conceptual framework.

1.17.6 Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents a set of concluding statements and recommendations. Conclusions are assertions based on findings.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This study explores improving schoolteachers' access to information resources and services through the Mabeskraal Library in public libraries in Bojanala, Northwest province, South Africa. The study focuses on a case study of the Mabeskraal Public Library. This chapter reviews literature related to the topic under investigation. Fink (2005) defines a literature review as "a systematic, clear and reproducible method to assist researchers in identifying, evaluating and synthesizing the existing body of knowledge built up by researchers, scholars or practitioners." This chapter seeks to find out the contextual factors affecting the reading culture in South Africa. It also explores the aspects that resulted in low reading standards in South Africa. Aitchison (2018) gives a general outlook of the challenges South Africa is experiencing that gave rise to a reading crisis. The chapter analyses the theoretical framework that underpins the provision of library services concerning public libraries, and then it will proceed to review the relevant literature.

However, this study sought to explore the contextual factors in the Bojanala area. As such, the current study uses a literature review as the first phase to improve the accessibility of information resources and services offered by the Mabeskraal public library to its various stakeholders in the community of Mabeskraal. It also sought to appraise what had been written by other scholars on the factors contributing to the reading crisis in South Africa (Jesson et al. 2011) and the challenges in the availability and accessibility of information services in public libraries. This written appraisal must entail selecting available documents on the particular topic that have reported views on the nature of the case and how it should be investigated by researchers (Hart 1998). There is consensus among researchers on the purposes of conducting a literature review. For example, Booth et al. (2012) agree that "literature review places each work in the context of how it contributes to an understanding of the subject under review, as a description of how each work is related to others under consideration." It also helps identify what other scholars have written so that current scholars do not reinvent the wheel. Abdulsalami (2013) opines that "the more accessible information sources are, the more likely they are to be used. Public libraries present a window to the outside world and can provide useful information for those preparing to learn". Furthermore, access to information and

participation in a democracy are mutually interdependent.

Mouton (2001:86) argues that there are two ways of using a literature review: The first is a literature review as a study in itself, and the second is a literature review as the first phase of empirical research. This study uses the latter approach.

The chapter explores the following issues:

- 1) The historical and contextual reasons for establishing libraries globally and locally;
- 2) How the availability of library resources or the lack thereof is affecting the reading culture and literacy rate in South Africa compared to other countries;
- 3) The challenges or factors affecting the efficient utilisation of library services and information resources globally and mainly in the South African context; and
- 4) South African libraries are making efforts to optimise the use of library services and information resources.

2.2 Brief history of libraries

Whitehurst (2002) is not alone in promoting the agenda of learning to read. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) strongly advocates for a reading culture. The history of public libraries stretches as far back as the 10th century. In her article titled *UNESCO and the Globalization of the Public Library Idea, 1948 to 1965*, Laugesen (2014) traces the origin of the library services of UNESCO. The idea of a public library was articulated by UNESCO as early as 1949, as stated in *1949 by Google, the book* promulgated in UNESCO's Public Library Manifesto. Since then, the public library idea has evolved over the decades, and yet its primary objectives have not changed much, but ICTs have afforded its users better options to use the library. Laugesen (2014) pointed out that;

“UNESCO's initial reason for establishing libraries was an expression of its belief in the public library as a living force for popular education and the growth of international understanding, and thereby for the promotion of peace.”(Laugesen,2014)

Libraries are meant for use by everyone, regardless of their creed, colour, race, or any other marks that distinguish one person from another. According to UNESCO (1957), “It is imperative that everyone should be offered the opportunity, through the library, to continue to

educate themselves, to develop their creative abilities, to aid in the advancement of knowledge, and to use their leisure time to promote personal happiness and social well-being.” Libraries should also play a dynamic role in community life by creating communities with knowledge. The library is an important institution for the substance of democracy (UNESCO 1957).

While establishing a library in the Mabeskraal community has not changed much in the lives of the surrounding community, there is a need to re-strategize how public libraries could be more beneficial to the community. Modern information technology allows users to utilise electronic media in the comfort of their homes, workplace, classroom, and other places. Preliminary investigations indicated that not many teachers in the area accessed the library. Therefore, the current study investigated why the teachers were not utilising the public library in Mabeskraal.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Considering the changing nature of the information sphere, numerous theories have developed to explain how public libraries should operate. Such approaches include the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions and Associations (IFLA’s) Public Library Manifesto (2022), Oldenburg’s (1989) “third place theory,” Jochumsen Rasmussen and Skot-Hansen’s (2012) “four space model” and Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen’s (2003) theory of “New Third Space.”

According to the IFLA (2022) Public Library Manifesto, freedom, prosperity, and developing society and individuals are fundamental human values. IFLA (2022) recommends that public libraries attain such values by developing well-informed citizens' ability to exercise their democratic rights and play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education and free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture, and information (IFLA, Public Library Manifesto, 2022).

According to the (IFLA Public Library Manifesto, 2022), the word “education” is repeatedly used more than ten times, implying the critical role of public libraries in supporting education for all. The following are selected guidelines from the IFLA’s Public Library Manifesto (2022) that emphasise the importance of Public libraries in education:

- Providing access to a broad range of information and ideas free from censorship, supporting formal and informal education at all levels as well as lifelong learning, enabling the ongoing, voluntary, and self-conducted pursuit of knowledge for people at all stages of life;
- initiating, supporting, and participating in literacy activities and programmes to build reading and writing skills, and facilitating the development of media and information literacy and digital literacy skills for all people at all ages, in the spirit of equipping an informed, democratic society;
- ensuring access for all people to all sorts of community information and opportunities for community organizing in recognition of the library's role at the core of the social fabric; and
- creating and strengthening reading habits in children from birth to adulthood.

Jochumsen, Rasmussen, and Skot-Hansen, (2012) proposed the “4 space model” that incorporates the four goals of offering patrons experience, involvement, empowerment, and innovation, which are fulfilled by providing four spaces: inspiration, learning, meeting, and performative, used to excite and explore, participate, and create, respectively. The 4 spaces model highlighted by (Jochumsen et al., 2012) interfaces social and educational factors. In contrast, the Australian stance leans towards the Norwegian emphasis on libraries as public meeting spaces, and the American focus on academic and recreational purposes (Hider, Garner, Wakeling, and Jamali, 2022). Australian public libraries provide meaningful informal learning opportunities and areas that foster and embody social connection and interaction (Hider et al., 2022).

Oldenburg (1989) stated that the basis of his third place theory was that the library served a unique purpose, where people gather primarily to enjoy social interaction. According to the approach mentioned above, libraries should reconfigure their spaces in response to the growing demand for such democratic areas that are freely accessible, for example, the public library. Oldenburg's (1989) theory of third space was revised by Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen's (2003) “new third space theory.” According to Putnam et al. (2003), by providing space for connecting and bonding with people, the library will also produce social capital to enhance symbiosis and trust among people.

A more well-known model is that of the “four spaces,” developed and used in Scandinavia: Jochumsen et al. (2012) discuss the model's potential applications following its introduction in Denmark. It incorporates the four goals of offering patrons experience, involvement, empowerment, and innovation, which are met by providing four spaces: inspiration, learning, meeting, and performative, used to excite and explore, participate, and create, respectively. Norway emphasises more on libraries

as public meeting spaces, while in Japan, there is a greater emphasis on developing the “literary public sphere.” In the United States, public libraries are governed by local government, focusing on their role in the public sphere too, but more for educational and recreational purposes than infrastructure. The study will utilize the above theories to explore the accessibility of Mabeskraal Public Library services by teachers in Bojanala in the North west province of South Africa

2.4 Contextual factors affecting the use of information resources.

Studies showed that there is a generalised reading crisis in South Africa. For example, in 2016, the survey done by Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) and Howie et al. (2017:1) revealed “shocking results of reading literacy levels among the grade 4 learners in South Africa”. The study showed that approximately 78% of South African grade 4 learners failed to meet international benchmarks. As such, they lacked basic reading skills by the end of their grade 4 school year compared to only 4% of global learners.

According to PIRLS (Howie et al. 2017:11), “South Africa performed the lowest with a mean score of 320 out of the 50 countries involved in the 2016 PIRLS 2016”. The PIRLS assesses “reading comprehension and monitors trends in reading literacy with five-year intervals.” The PIRLS assessed “fourth-grade reading comprehension in more than 60 countries since 2001 and set international benchmarks for reading comprehension”. In 2016, the PIRLS sampled “12 810 grade 4 learners in 293 schools and 5 282 grade 5 learners, a sample that was said to be nationally representative”. The study assessed international, national, and provincial benchmarks. The primary purpose of the PIRLS study was “to determine how well South African grade 4 learners read and identify possible contextual factors. The researchers also wanted to compare the reading literacy of grade 4 South African learners, internationally and nationally, in all 11 South African official languages in nine provinces. The PIRLS used an international scale ranging from zero to 1 000. A centre point of 500 and a standard deviation of 100 was used to determine the scores”. The results were shocking and did not show any statistical difference in the overall scores from 2011 to 2016. In other words, there has not been any improvement in reading literacy.

Wallenberg (2018) referred to the poor reading culture phenomenon as “a reading crisis” in South Africa, while Aitcheson (2018) described it as a “cognitive catastrophe.” Wallenberg (2018) responded to the reading culture crisis by stating that “...although South Africa is nearly a quarter of a century into democracy and has had four presidents and several school curricular revisions, the literacy level has not made any headway... calls it a reading crisis.”

The reasons are many that contribute to the reading crisis in South Africa. In his study *South Africa's reading crisis is a cognitive catastrophe*; Aitcheson (2018) highlighted “causes including the absence of a reading culture among adult South Africans, the dearth of school libraries, the high cost of books and the low quality of training for teachers for reading.” Several factors contribute to the reading crisis in South Africa, for example, inadequate training of teachers and poor library services available to teachers for reading. This study sought to engage schoolteachers in the Bojanala area and the staff of the public Mabeskraal library to investigate possible associated contextual factors that contribute to the teachers not accessing library services in Bojanala. Although some studies indicated that the reading crisis is experienced among grade 4 learners, scholars like Aitcheson (2018) and Wallenberg (2018) argue that the reading crisis does not involve only grade 4 learners in South Africa but also includes adults. In their analysis, they gave the following four contextual factors:

2.1.1 Accessibility and availability to library resources and services

In his study, *South Africa's reading crisis is a cognitive Catastrophe*; Aitcheson (2018) raised concern over three South African contextual factors that account for the reading crisis. Aitcheson (2018) highlights the cause, including the absence of a reading culture among adult South Africans, the lack of school libraries, the high cost of books, and the low quality of training of teachers for reading. Concerning the absence of school libraries, not every school in South Africa has a library. Aitcheson (2018) is adamant that the reading crisis may not be solved unless accessibility and availability of information resources are made possible.

The researcher argues that the provincial education departments should ensure that every school has a simple library and that children can access affordable books written in their mother tongue. Failure to take action will undermine South Africa's reading culture. On the issue of books, Aitcheson (2018) is not alone. Wallenberg (2018) also blames the literacy crisis

in South Africa on the lack of access to books. A national survey commissioned by the South African Book Development Council (SABDC), which investigated “the reading and book reading behaviour of adult South Africans in 2016, revealed that six out of 10 South Africans older than 16 years lived in households that did not own a single book”. Wallenberg (2018) suggests that “there must be increased book access to eradicate the literacy crisis. The problem of access to information resources goes beyond the South African borders, although it affects South Africa the worst”.

A study by Akobundu (2008:7) at the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Nigeria, revealed many obstacles to the accessibility and availability of information resources. For example, Akobundu (2008) points out those information resources are not always available or accessible to the users. In Akobundu’s (2008) study, several reasons were highlighted, including “poor conditions of library facilities relating to indexing and cataloguing tools, inefficient loaning and discharge system, shelving arrangement that is poor and in disarray, no adequate guides to library arrangements, and administrative and physical barriers that may bar people living with disabilities from accessing the library and using the resources.” Another reason revealed in Akobundu’s (2008) study was “the lack of adequate retrieval tools in libraries to assist the users in accessing information from electronic sources.” In this age of electronic resources, both availability of the internet and the expertise in accessing electronic resources matter. The current study sought to find out these two variables at the Mabeskraal library: accessibility and availability of information resources and services to support the learning needs of the schools’ teachers.

2.1.2 The high cost of accessing e-resources.

Although it is paramount for researchers to have access to available scholarly information and material, many people cannot afford to pay the subscription fees. This is a challenge for developing countries like South Africa and developed countries. For example, Dulle (2015:45) reports that “most developing countries fail to pay subscription fees for scholarly content of their choice to satisfy the information needs of the scholarly community.” Dulle (2015:45) is adamant that the costs of scholarly literature bar many researchers and information services users from accessing the required information. As such, many scanty information resources are to blame for the low knowledge contribution of developing countries to the global scholarly research output pool. For example, studies conducted by King (2005), Gray (2007), and Ezema

(2009) confirmed that developing countries contributed less than 3% of the visible global literature.

More studies revealed that some commercial publishers set unrealistic prices for scholarly content beyond what developing countries can afford (Dulle, 2010; Weicher & Zhang, 2011). Nevertheless, there is good news. Other studies acknowledge that a shift is taking place concerning the accessibility and availability of e-resources, as more and more organisations are either subscribing to e-resources or making e-resources available to developing countries. Publishers are also offering e-resources at a price that developing nations can afford. For example, Dulle (2015:46) states that “the Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) and the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) are playing a significant role in ensuring that developing countries buy e-resources bundles at lower prices. Even better, some organizations are facilitating free access to e-resources”. The United Nations (UN) funded Research for Life (R4L), an initiative making online scholarly literature available to developing nations. Furthermore, open-access initiatives like Open Access Journals and Open Access Repositories are examples of online information resources that provide access free of charge to end users (Dulle, 2015).

However, the cost of scholarly literature continues to challenge the accessibility and availability of academic literature. Access to relevant online resources in public libraries remains challenging due to the cost of entry and internet use. The need for broader access to e-resources motivated the researcher to investigate whether teachers in the Mabeskraal library can access the scholarly literature they want to enhance their subject areas or advance their studies.

2.1.3 Poor quality training of teachers for reading

Another concern raised as a contributing factor to the reading crisis in South Africa was the low quality of training for teachers for reading. Aitchison (2018) argues that the teacher-training curriculum and teaching and reading instructions were outdated. What compounds the problem is that teacher training was offered by universities, which had never previously been the case before. Following the dawn of democracy in South Africa, teacher-training colleges were closed between 1994 and 2000.

The government attempted to improve the quality of teacher education by making teacher training the sole responsibility of universities, but the plan did not work (Aitchison 2018).

Aitchison's (2018) findings revealed that universities specialised in preparing high school teachers and were requested to enrol foundation-level teachers for training. Worse, the universities only incorporated those training college educators with postgraduate degrees. Aitchison (2018) also blames the education faculties for being stuck in traditional teaching models instead of embracing modern scientific advances in reading.

Willenberg (2018) also has a problem with the training of teachers in South Africa. Aitchison (2018), also highlights the inadequacies of the teacher training programmes as a reason for the literacy crisis. Willenberg (2018) states, "The ultimate responsibility for educating South Africa's children lies with the school system."

However, Willenberg (2018) argues that there is "incontrovertible evidence that initial teacher education programmes are not producing graduates sufficiently equipped to teach reading." Willenberg (2018) suggests that there "must be a strategy to support more effective primary teacher education on literacy. One of the recommendations is the need to develop curriculum frameworks and resources for university courses and building university academics' capacity to deliver higher quality teacher education".

Although this process is slow, Willenberg (2018) is adamant that teachers must access in-service training to develop themselves professionally to support reading instructions continuously. In the PIRL study, Howie et al. (2017:11) made similar recommendations "that measures must be taken to strengthen the teaching of reading literacy and training of pedagogical content knowledge of teachers across all languages in the foundation phase, especially African languages."

2.1.4 Lack of reading culture

Aitchison (2018) lamented the declining reading culture in South Africa due to the lack of access to libraries, "South Africa's reading catastrophe is due to a lack of reading culture. This problem seemed to yield intergenerational consequences and caused a cycle of reading catastrophe mainly because most parents do not read to their children". Aitchison (2018) further deliberates that "the reasons could be that parents themselves are not literate or because there are very few relatively affordable children's books written in African languages."

Willenberg (2018) concurs with Aitchison (2018) on the lack of a reading culture. McEwan (2002) defines reading culture as "the collective attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of all the

stakeholders in a school, which enables all learners to read at the highest level of attainment for both their academic and personal gain.” Willenberg (2018) attributes this “lack of reading culture to most adults in South Africa spending an average of four hours per week reading, compared to 7.5 hours per week watching TV or DVDs”. This problem has spilt over to most children, who become disinterested in reading. At the same time, they prefer to watch TV despite Whitehurst’s (2012) argument that “learning to read is a key milestone for children living in a literate society.”

2.2 Summary

Some studies blamed parents for not teaching their children how to read, but Willenberg (2018) sustains that the Department of Education is to blame. The author is adamant that “Ultimately, the buck stops with the Department of Education. Inadequate instruction is the root cause – the rest are peripherals”. As such, Willenberg (2018) asserts that “accelerated efforts must be made to equip teachers for their task of teaching children to read. South Africa’s children deserve no less”. It is, therefore, on this basis that this current study investigates the plight of teachers in Bojanala. The study seeks to engage teachers from the five schools near the library to find out their perceptions and experiences about reading culture and how or whether they need in-service training to upscale their professional development to support reading instruction of learners who may be in a reading crisis.

Teacher development is the most effective response to the literacy crisis, yet many efforts seem to focus only on learners. For example, in a study investigating the status of reading promotion projects in South Africa, Chizwina (2011) identified “77 reading promotion projects that existed in South Africa”. The beneficiaries of these projects were mainly school-going children.

The 77 projects identified by Chizwina (2011) used “a variety of methods to promote reading, with the most common methods being mobile libraries and book donations. The study concludes that the picture of reading promotion in South Africa is bleak”. Chizwina (2011) is adamant that there is little government support, haphazard funding, unevenly distributed projects, and no research in the field. Chizwina (2011) claims that no research in the area makes this current study in Mabeskraal critical, as it investigated the experiences of adults, in this case, teachers and staff of the Mabeskraal library. Thus, the research addressed an existing research gap.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers research methodology, as illustrated in Figure 3.1. This chapter aims to solve the research questions and unpack the research methodology's essential aspects. The purpose of this theoretical background is to clarify issues of using the key research concepts in research methodology and outline various concepts of the research methodology.

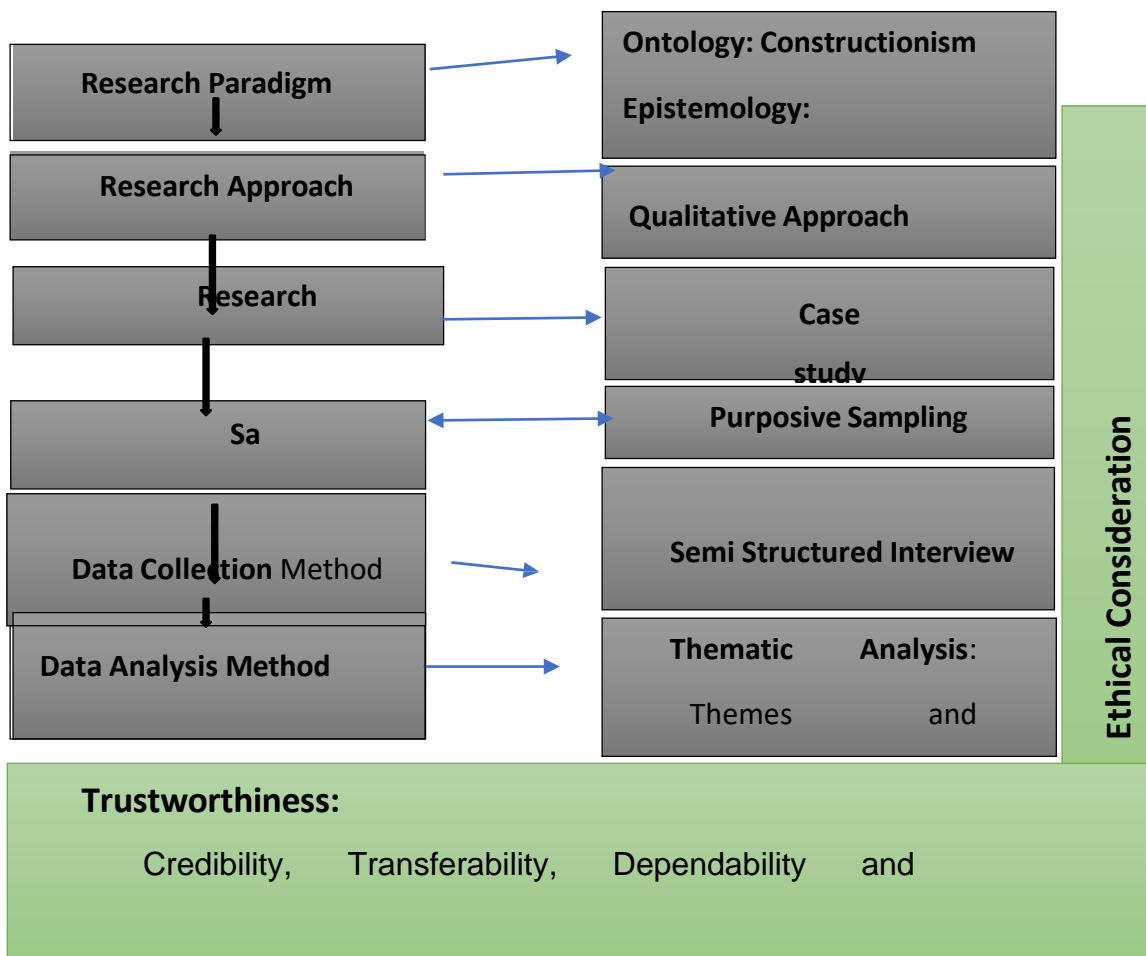


Figure 3.1: Research Road Map Source: Ngulube 2015

3.2 Research methodology

Remier and Van Ryzin (2015:70) define research methodology as “a description of the specific technique to be employed, the specific measuring instruments to be utilised, and the specific series of activities to measure a scientific study.” Research methodology is a process of conducting research and encompasses tools and techniques to conduct a scientific research study.

The chapter discusses the research approach, research design, sampling, population, and data collection adopted in the study. This chapter also discusses the measures to ensure trustworthiness and adherence to ethical issues of the study.

3.3 Research paradigm

Creswell (2014:18) defines “a paradigm as a worldview or a set of beliefs.” While Leavy (2017:264) views it as “a paradigm as a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them.” Paradigms are philosophies or theories about the world that help us understand decisions, perspectives, and activities relating to the world.

There are various paradigms in scientific research, for example, positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. These paradigms help address the theoretical questions of the current study (Yin 2017:22). The researcher used interpretivism for the present study. The sections below briefly explain fundamental research paradigms:

- Interpretivism (social constructivism) is a philosophy called the phenomenological approach (Newman, 2014:103). This approach aims to understand people, interpret everyday happenings, and develop ideas from observations (Punch, 2014). A recent study by Creswell (2018:22) highlights the purpose of interpretivism “It focuses on exploring the complexity of social phenomena to gain understanding.”

- Yin (2016:22) views positivism as the traditional scientific, deterministic, reductionist, and empirical observation, a theory verification aligned with the quantitative approach. Furthermore, Taylor (2016:28) asserts that “positivism produces qualitative data, uses a large sample, has an artificial location, has high reliability and low validity, and generalises from sample to the population.”
- • Post-positivism is not regarded as a separate philosophical tradition. Creswell (2014:24) describes post-positivism “as an extension of positivism since it represents the thinking after positivism.” Fick (2014) and Martens (2015) explained positivism as a scientific research method based on rationalistic principles. Positivism is the traditional scientific or quantitative approach to scientific studies. These researchers state positivism is a research philosophy that argues that the social world exists externally (Martens 2015:72).
- Babbie (2015) avers that “pragmatism has an efficient orientation, uses abductive reasoning moving back and forth between inductive and deductive reasoning, and is a way to understand human behaviour.” In some ways, pragmatism aimed to reconcile the two opposed perspectives of positivism and interpretivism. Gross (2018:107) describes the mixed methods approach as “a combination of the qualitative and quantitative research methods and as research design with philosophical assumption as well as methods of inquiry.”

Given the above information, interpretivism was adopted as the framework of this study. Interpretivism as a paradigm is associated with the qualitative approach. According to Taylor (2016:04), interpretivism focuses “on exploring the complexity of a social phenomenon to gain and deepen understanding.” Moreover, interpretivism provides the context for the targeted population's experience and the researcher's understanding of the world of human experience (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016:35).

The researcher would be able to approach the participants in their natural environment and question their lived experiences, perceptions, and opinions about the topic matter, which is why interpretivism was chosen for the study by the researcher. The study's primary purpose was to collect thorough information about the accessibility of information resources and services at public libraries. This was accomplished by soliciting direct responses from participants in similar settings.

3.4 Research approach

Creswell (2018:136) asserts, "A research approach refers to the method used to gather and analyse data and present results." The qualitative approach was used as it aims at the development of theories and understanding. There are three research approaches in scientific research: the qualitative research approach, which is related to interpretivism; the quantitative research approach, which is related to positivism; and the mixed methods research approach, which is related to pragmatism. Mills (2014:36) states that "the choice of a research approach is influenced by factors such as philosophical assumptions about reality, the purpose of the study, and research questions."

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology because the researcher sought to gain detailed insight into the accessibility of information resources in public libraries.

Qualitative research observes persons in their natural environments and strives to understand or interpret things in terms of the meanings people assign to them. Patton (2015) states that "a qualitative approach focuses more on observing events from the perspective of those who are involved and aims to understand human behaviour." Leedy and Ormrod (2016:228) opine that "where understanding phenomena from the perspective of participants is required, a qualitative approach will generate non-statistical findings to understand and interpret more local meaning." The study took a qualitative method, allowing the researcher to interact with the individuals or groups whose behaviour and experiences were the focus of the investigation. This approach also allowed the researcher to investigate the research problem of public library access to information resources and services. Rather than generalize to a hypothetical population, the researcher attempted to understand social action in its specific environment.

There are five libraries in the Bojanala area, but the study focused on the Mabeskraal library and its interactions with teachers from the five nearby schools.

3.5 Research design

Yin (2016:84) defines research design as "a plan for a study, providing the overall framework for collecting data as well as the strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research questions and the execution." On the other hand, Creswell (2014:209) defines

research design as “the process of the detailed exploration of a phenomenon in a real-world scenario.” Moreover, Bechhofer and Paterson (2015:83) view a research design as “a comprehensive plan for data collection in an empirical research project. It is a blueprint for empirical research aimed at answering specific research questions and specifying at least three processes: the data collection processes, the instrument development processes, and the sampling”. Lastly, Creswell (2014:304) defines ‘research design’ as the process of a detailed exploration of a phenomenon in a real-world scenario.

Several research designs can be used in social science research, including ethnography, phenomenology, biography, transformational, convergent, and experimental. The case study research design was used for the current study. This study used the case study approach since it was well suited to answering the research questions correctly and adequately. Because the study focused on exploration rather than prediction, a case study was used. Particular academics regard case studies as research designs (Leavy 2017:299). A qualitative case study examines occurrences in their natural setting to gain a better understanding and detailed description of the event under investigation (Salmons 2016: 49). The researcher chose the case study design because it was ideal for exploring the perceptions and experiences of schoolteachers regarding the information resources that the libraries in Bojanala provide. Since there are many schools and libraries in Bojanala, the case study design helped the researcher focus on a small segment of the total population of teachers in Bojanala and study them rather than seek to generalise the results.

3.6 Sampling and population

Leedy and Ormrod (2016:180) define a research population as “a group, usually of people or objects, about whom the researcher intends to conclude.” This study's research population was drawn from teachers from the three high schools and two primary schools mentioned above.

Mabeskraal is a village in South Africa's North West in the Bojanala District Municipality. It is a settlement in old Bophuthatswana, now the North West province once known as Tlhakong. There are two primary schools and three secondary schools in the village. Malefo, Semetsa, and Rakoko are the high schools, and Mabeskraal and Molotsi are the primary schools. Each school has eight teachers, for a total of 40 teachers. Because of their proximity to the Mabeskraal library, five schools were chosen. The method utilized by the researcher was non-probability sampling, which is a strategy in which samples are selected in a way that is not advised by probability theory (Chu 2015:341). Purposive (judgmental) sampling was utilized in this study, which means that the study units were chosen based on the researcher's opinion of which professors were the most valuable or representative.

3.6.1 Sample Size

Purposive sampling was used to select 10 participants for the study. A sample, or what Remier and Van Ryzin (2015:253) refer to as “a sample unit, is that element or set of elements which are considered for selection in some stage of sampling.” Purposive sampling was employed in this research to select respondents who are most likely to provide accurate and helpful information, as well as to identify and select cases that are likely to make optimal use of limited research resources (Palinkas, Horwitz and Green, et al. (2015). The researcher adopted a purposive strategy considering the aims and objectives of the study that require specific kinds of people who hold different and essential views about the ideas and issues in question and therefore need their inclusion in the sample(Campbell, et al (2020).

The researcher sought permission from the school principal to obtain a list of teachers with their responsibilities, classes, and the subjects they teach. The researcher selected one teacher per subject from the list, starting with the teacher responsible for the school’s information technology and library services. The school library services teacher was included in the study because their knowledge of the Mabeskraal library information was valuable.

Table 3.6.1: Sample Size

Mabeskraal public library sphere of influence		Number of teachers	Number of participants
High school	Malefo	8	2
	Semetsa	8	1
	Rakoko	8	2
Primary school	Molotsi	8	2
	Mabeskraal	8	1
Total		40	8

3.6.2 Data collection

Bryman (2016:53) notes that data collection tools refer to the specific procedure that determines how a researcher gathers data. The most commonly used data collection tools in a case study are questionnaires, interviews, observation, and surveys”. As already specified, the study adopted interviews for data collection.

3.6.2.1 Interviews

The data collection method used in this study was semi-structured interviews. A qualitative interview involves two or more interlocutors, as highlighted below “...an interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked in particular words and a particular order...” (Roulston, 2016:13).

Silverman (2016:122) opines that a qualitative interview is “essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the participants.” Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014:198) argues that “interviews can be conducted face to face or by telephone. In the current study, the researcher utilised face-to-face. The researcher chose semi-structured interviews because they are ideal for collecting qualitative data (Silverman, 2016). Semi-structured interviews in qualitative research enabled

the researcher to collect qualitative, open-ended data. The researcher engaged the participants in a formal interview. The researcher developed and utilised an interview guide and a list of open-ended questions to probe answers to the research questions (see Section 1.6).

Semi-structured interviews were selected as data collection tools because of the following reasons:

- They are ideal for collecting qualitative, open-ended data;
- They allow exploring participant's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic; and
- They provide a manageable mechanism for the researcher to deeply investigate personal and sometimes sensitive issues.

The research participants were selected from staff members at the Mabeskraal Public Library. These participants were interviewed to determine the patterns of their interactions with teachers to ascertain whether they used the library's information resources and services. Research questions investigated the following challenges that the library encountered in fulfilling its obligations to users (Saldana 2016): the condition of the library facilities regarding indexing and cataloguing tools, the efficiency of the loaning and discharge system, the shelving arrangement, guides to library arrangements, administrative and physical barriers that affect users with visual, hearing, material or other impediments that hinder access to information by the teachers (Saunders et al. 2016:391).

The research questions emanated from teacher interviews regarding their interactions with the Mabeskraal library staff and accessibility to information resources and services. However, participants were free to share their experiences in any comfortable way.

Responses to these questions assisted the researcher in suggesting recommendations to the Mabeskraal Library regarding improving the accessibility of information resources and services among teachers in public libraries in Bojanala.

The researcher sought approval and ethical clearance from the University of South Africa to proceed with the study. Permission was obtained from the school principals at which the teachers were working. The researcher requested consent from the teachers before commencing the interviews. Informed consent was granted verbally and in writing by signing informed consent forms. Semi-structured interviews were used for collecting data. According to Creswell (2014:90), a qualitative interview is "an interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that

must be asked in particular words and a particular order.” A semi-structured interview is one in which the interviewee is asked a series of specified questions before being given some autonomy to follow their thoughts (Newman 2014:95).

3.6.2.2 Focus Group Discussions

The study utilized Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to collect data. An FGD refers to a carefully planned discussion to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment (Krueger and Casey, 2014). It is deemed suitable to gain insights into customer behaviour and conjoin their experiences (Krueger and Casey, 2014). In other words, research participants were asked to respond to one question at a time and then tackle the next question until all questions on the interview schedule were covered. Then the research participants were asked at the end of the focus group interview if they had any questions or information, they felt the researcher needed to know. Still, they were not requested more information about it. A one-hour meeting was held with each of the sampled focus groups per school within the school premises, with the possibility of a follow-up group interview, depending on whether the focus group had provided complete answers to the research questions (Flick 2008).

3.7 Data analysis

Neuendorf (2019:213) defines data analysis as “the process of moving from raw interviews to evidence-based interpretations that are the foundation of a published report.” For this study, the researcher analysed data in non-numeric and unstructured text. For the case study, thematic analysis was adopted. In thematic analysis research, the researcher acted as an interpreter who combed through the data in search of meaningful units.

The central idea in case study data analysis is that each case must be thoroughly analysed as a distinct entity (Christensen et al. 2015:379). In this study, although the research used the case study of the Mabeskraal library, participants from the five sampled schools represent the research sample. Yin (2017:45) states, "A case study can be analysed as a system with parts, but also as a whole unified operating in an environment. “

The case study report reflects the views of all five focus groups as an integrated entity. It reflects the whole and its parts (Mohajan, 2018:16). The findings explicitly (Rossman, 2017) and the main results are separately presented from the additional findings and information. Graphs, tables, and figures summarise findings and facilitate a quick understanding.

3.8 Ethical consideration

The researcher sought approval and ethical clearance from the University of South Africa. Other licenses were obtained from the school principals where the teachers were working.

The researcher obtained consent from each participant after having carefully and truthfully informed them about the research and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were informed that participation in the study was completely optional and that there were no monetary incentives. They were signing the informed consent form provided informed consent. According to Berg (2018:48), informed consent is “a norm in which research participants base their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of the possible risks involved.” This reflects what Howitt (2016:63) calls “Going through the fire with eyes open.”

The researcher upheld the confidentiality of the participants by keeping their personal information secure and private. The researcher used codes or pseudonyms to ensure the research participants’ anonymity. The researcher was aware that social research frequently demands people to reveal personal information about themselves that their friends, family, or associates may not be mindful of (Babbie 2016:78). The researcher respected the individual's right to privacy.

In other words, the researcher did not publish their real names or display their photos unless consent had been obtained before the research report's publication to protect the participants' identity. Under no circumstances was the researcher's actual name or personal information published.

Because it is a researcher's job to ensure that subjects are protected from physical, emotional, or other types of harm, the researcher provides that they were (Harding 2013:148).

Denzin and Lincoln (2014:26) warn about the use of interviews because “an interview is a negotiated text, a site where power, gender, race, and class interest are influenced by the personal characteristics of the interviewer, which include but are not limited to race, class, ethnicity and gender.” Rahman (2017:108) further cautions researchers that “in conducting their research they have to take account of the mere fact that the research subjects are human beings and there is a potential of causing harm.”

The researcher ensured that the research did not intrude on participants’ everyday lives or disrupt their regular activities. Gering (2017) argues that “social research often intrudes on people’s lives and disrupts participants’ regular activities. Although the participants were made aware that their participation in the research was voluntary, they were encouraged to participate because the study results may help with service delivery of information resources and services by library staff”.

3.9 Trustworthiness

The rigour of the research was ensured by measures for the trustworthiness of qualitative research in terms of credibility, conformability, dependability, and transferability. Leavy (2017:154) highlights “the importance of ensuring trustworthiness in scientific research. Credibility was achieved through spending time with all participants during the acquisition of information during interviews”. A tape recorder was used in interviews to increase the conformability of the research. Marshall (2016:114) states that “dependability of research involves checking the interpretation of the transcripts of the interviews with the participants to ensure it conveys exactly what they meant during the interviews”.

The transferability of the findings was checked by comparing the findings with other research done on the topic, and the suitability of the findings was checked by describing other settings with similar conditions as the current study settings.

3.10 Summary

The research methodology for the study of the accessibility of information resources and services among teachers in the Mabeskraal library was covered in this chapter. The study paradigm, research approach, research design, sampling, population, data collection, scope, and procedures to assure trustworthiness and conformity to ethical principles were all discussed in the chapter.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on presenting the findings that emerged from the data collected from the interviewees. The demographic details of the participants are presented to indicate the nature of population characteristics. Themes are presented, illustrated, and discussed with the aid of tables and the verbatim words of the participants.

4.2 Demographic details of participants

The participants were identified in the order of their participation from participants 1 to 8. Demographic details of the participants were gathered in terms of gender, age, marital status, race, working experience, and educational level.

The sample consisted of five (62.5%) male and 3 (37.5%) female participants; 7 of them were married and 1 was single. The race of the participants indicated that 5 (62.5%) were black and 3 (37.5%) were coloured. The age group between 25-30 years was represented by 1 participant, between 31-35 years was represented by 3 participants, between 36-40 years was represented by 3 participants, and between 46-50 years was represented by 1 participant. The working experience of participants indicated that the range between 3-6 years was the largest portion represented by 6 participants, while the ranges between 0-2 and 6-8 were represented by 1 participant each. The educational level of participants suggested that 3 had master's degrees, 2 had honours degrees, two had diplomas and 1 had a bachelor's degree.

Table 4.2: Demographic details of participants

Participant	Gender	Age (years)	Marital status	Race	Working experience (Years)	Educational level
1	Female	31-35 (34)	Married	Black	0-2 (2)	Diploma
2	Male	25-30 (30)	Married	Coloured	3-5 (4)	Bachelor's
3	Male	36-40 (37)	Married	Coloured	3-5 (5)	Master's
4	Male	31-35 (35)	Married	Black	3-5 (4)	Honours
5	Male	46-50 (46)	Married	Black	6-8 (7)	Master's
6	Male	31-35 (35)	Married	Black	3-5 (3)	Diploma
7	Female	36-40 (40)	Married	Coloured	3-5 (4)	Honours
8	Female	36-40 (36)	Single	Black	3-5 (4)	Master's

4.3 Presentation of themes

Table 4.3-1: Themes emerged on teachers' access to information resources and services in a public library.

Themes	Illustration
Classification system	Four teachers indicated that they were facing challenges with the the classification system used to arrange information resources at the Mabeskraal public library.

The narrow range of sources	Four teachers reported that information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library had a narrow range.
Manual processes	Four teachers criticized the use of exclusively manual processes at the Mabeskraal public library as inhibiting adequate access to information resources and services.
Lack of internet connection	Four participants showed that the lack of internet connection hindered the accessibility of information resources at the Mabeskraal public library.
Borrowing system	Two teachers indicated the borrowing system as problematic in accessing information resources and services at Mabeskraal public library.

Table 4.3-2: Themes emerged on information resources and services required by teachers from the public library

Themes	Illustration
Academic sources	Three teachers highlighted that they frequently went to the Mabeskraal public library seeking academic sources.
Leisure sources	Four participants reported that they often visited the Mabeskraal public library looking for information resources for leisure purposes.

Table 4.3-3: Themes emerged on the relationship between information resources accessibility and teachers' motivation

Themes	Illustration
Teaching motivation	Four teachers reported a strong connection between information resources' accessibility and teaching motivation.
Lesson preparation	Four participants identified the usefulness of information resources and services in preparation for lessons, while two participants criticised the benefit of the library in their lesson preparation.

High academic grades	Two teachers highlighted the usefulness of the information resources and services from the library in achieving high academic grades by the students.
Personal academic development	One teacher emphasised that information resources and services could be used for personal intellectual growth.

Table 4.3-4: Themes emerged on challenges faced by teachers in accessing information resources and services in the public library

Themes	Illustration
Poor infrastructure	Four teachers indicated that the poor infrastructure of Mabeskraal, the public library, was limiting its usefulness.
Location of library	Four teachers indicated that they could not access the library more often because the library was located far away from their workplace and home.
Poor reading environment	Two teachers suggested that the Mabeskraal public library did not provide a perfect reading environment.
Poor reading culture of users	Two participants pointed to the poor reading culture of library users as a barrier to the effective usage of the Mabeskraal public library.
Poor security	One participant indicated that there was poor security control at the Mabeskraal public library to safeguard information resources from theft.
Inadequate skills of librarians	One teacher indicated that librarians at the Mabeskraal public library had inadequate human resources skills to assist the library users.

4.4 Discussion of themes

The main themes emerged from the data. The researcher presented the main themes by

extracting from the participants' actual words. The extracts are interpreted from the researcher's analysis of the text.

4.4.1 Teachers' access to information resources and services in a public library

4.4.1.1 Classification system

The study findings indicated that the classification system of information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library hindered adequate access to it by the teachers. Four teachers expressed their sentiments that they spent much time trying to access the information resources because the library's classification system did not promote easy access. The library is using a manual classification system yet the techno-savvy teachers as users require an electronic or digital system in the form of an OPAC "...it is still a challenge to find the book I will be looking for because I am not yet aware of the arrangement of resources in the library. I can spend like 20 minutes or more trying to find a book, so I wouldn't know if the book is available in the library or is the issue of resource arrangement." (Participant 1)

Another participant considered the issue of the classification system of information resources and services as a challenge, and teachers found it difficult to access the books.

"Real challenge emerges in the classification systems of the library, which makes it difficult to identify the information sources. I don't know how they can improve the classification system, but the current classification is difficult to direct the users to the existing information resources." (Participant 4)

In the same context, participants highlighted that they left the library without accessing the information sources they were looking for in extreme situations because the classification system was ineffective.

"I can't imagine that sometimes I can leave the library before I find the sources I am searching for and come back tomorrow and find them. It seems to be a challenge to find the source in the library even if they are available." (Participant 5)

One of the teachers explained that it was not all about the classification system that made it challenging to locate the sources in the library but also the frequency at which the users visit

the library. Despite giving the opinion to adjust the library's classification system, the teacher seemed to be a victim of the library's classification system.

“My opinion is that the information resources and services are accessible if you understand the setup in the library; otherwise, if you are someone like me who spends like three weeks or more without going to the library, it becomes a big problem.” (Participant 7)

4.4.1.2 The narrow range of sources

Teachers reported that the narrow range of sources in the library compromised the accessibility of information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library. Four participants raised the issue of the narrow range of sources limiting the accessibility of information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library.

Participant 3 mentioned that the range of sources at the Mabeskraal public library was inadequate to meet the users' needs, despite the availability of essential sources.

“The range of sources is not yet wide for me to say there is a variety of information sources and services. Books, catalogues, manuals, atlas, and magazines are accessible at the Mabeskraal public library.” (Participant 3)

“The range of information resources is still shallow; you can access some information resources like books, novels, magazines, and sometimes newspapers.” (Participant 4)

Another participant highlighted that accessing the resources available in the library was not an actual problem; rather, the resources were limited to the extent that the users became familiar with the available information resources.

“Accessing resources available in the library is not a challenge to me, but the resources available are limited. I cannot always go to the library to read because the sources become so familiar, yet, I need different sources to learn from different scholars.” (Participant 8)

The suggestion from another teacher indicated that the information resources and services were available at the Mabeskraal public library. Still, they could be considered inaccessible, depending on what the library user sought. The teachers continued to elaborate that those current sources were often unavailable, indirectly describing the narrow range of information resources at the Mabeskraal public library.

“Information is accessible at Mabeskraal; however, sometimes it can be unavailable,

depending on the information you seek. If I go to the library looking for current books published one year or two years ago, it becomes a challenge because sometimes the library assistants haven't yet gotten access to those materials.” (Participant 2)

4.4.1.3 Manual processes

Teachers suggested that manual processes limited the accessibility of information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library. Four participants reported using manual processes to search for the information resources on the shelves, which made locating the help they needed cumbersome.

Participant 3 described the Mabeskraal public library as different from other libraries, which used online services to check the availability of information resources and their location on the library shelves.

“It seems like there are no other strategies I can use to search for resources at Mabeskraal other than manual searching on the shelves or asking the librarians. It's unlike other libraries when information resources can be checked online whether available in the library or not.” (Participant 3)

The same sentiments on the difficulties of using the manual circulation system were raised by Participant 4 (P.4), as highlighted below:

“I use a manual process to access the information resources at Mabeskraal public library because it is the only available way of accessing the information resources and services. You need to physically visit the library and search for the books available on the shelves” (Participant 4).

“Mabeskraal public library is at that level where I have to access information resources by myself or manual process of reaching the sources.” (Participant 5)

Another participant mentioned that the library did not have an Open Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), an electronic platform used by libraries globally to check the availability and location of information resources in the library.

Participant 6 (P 6) lamented the lack of an OPAC.

“Mabeskraal doesn't have an electronic searching system like OPAC to search the availability of the

information resources, the shelf in which it is found, and category of the sources. I use manual searching strategies to get the information resources and services I want in the library.” (Participant 6)

4.4.1.4 Lack of internet connection

The research findings indicated that internet connectivity hindered the convenient accessibility of information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library. Three participants reported that the lack of internet connection limited the library users’ access to information resources. The participants recommended the adaption of a digital library

The system use of integrated library management software to enable web-based access to library resources.

“In terms of information resources accessibility, it is better, but in terms of information services, there is no internet connection, only computers. I can go to the library to do some research, but what I can only access are books, novels, manuals, and catalogues which are physical; no other sources which need the internet connection.” (Participant 3)

Participants noted that an internet connection provides additional and flexible information to come up with a comprehensive perspective and saves time during searches. However, the lack of internet connection at the Mabeskraal public library remains a challenge. “Lack of internet connection is another problem to take note of. These days, the internet is very important to assist library users to access information, which is additional to the one accessible in the library. I can be satisfied with accessing books in the library, but they are not giving flexible information at the same time. Instead of reading ten sources on the internet within a few hours, I will be reading one book with a one-sided perspective.” (Participant 4)

Participant 4 mentioned that the library did have computers available, but they were not connected to the internet due to a lack of funding. Participant 7 indicated that the use of internet-connected computers was useful in helping the public library to fulfil its role as a provider of education and recreation or leisure since its users would be able to multitask by reading and listening to music.

“My problem is that there are no computers connected to Wi-Fi. If they have computers which are working and connected to Wi-Fi, I was going to enjoy reading there because I will be

playing music, putting my earphones while reading, so that I can keep myself awake and concentrating.” (Participant 7)

Teachers emphasised that the lack of internet connection at Mabeskraal poses a challenge in accessing information resources and services in the public library. The teachers suggested that if the library had an internet connection, they were going to benefit from accessing both the physical and the digital library.

“The library does not offer internet services, which is also a challenge to me if I want to confirm some information or compare the information, I get from the library with other sources which are accessible online. Sometimes I wouldn’t have data bundles to use my resources to access the internet, so when I rely on the information I get from the library, sometimes it won’t be enough to describe the true picture of the fact.” (Participant 3)

4.4.1.5 Borrowing system

Participant 4 reported that the borrowing system at the Mabeskraal public library compromised the convenient accessibility of information resources and services in the library. The two sentiments were emphasised by participants 4 and 7 who highlighted the need for digital membership cards.

“Accessing information resources and services at Mabeskraal public library depends largely on your membership status, so if you don’t have a membership card, it becomes difficult to enjoy the services of the library. Without a membership card, you can browse through the books, journals, newspapers, and other materials in the library, but it becomes a challenge if you want to borrow the book for some days to read at your convenient time.” (Participant 4)

Another teacher elaborated that borrowing information resources from the library might lead to the risk of re-paying if it is lost.

“I don’t like borrowing books because if that book is lost I need to repay it, which means another unnecessary cost to my budget.” (Participant 7)

4.4.2 Information resources and services required by teachers from the public library

The findings indicated that teachers visit the Mabeskraal public library often for academic and leisure services to fulfil various tasks.

4.4.2.1 Academic sources

Three participants (P1, P 2, P 3) suggested that information resources and services accessible at the Mabeskraal public library were useful for academic purposes. Teachers confirmed that academic resources assisted them in conducting research, broadening their imagination, and relaxing their minds. Participant 1 suggested that textbooks are preferable because they are more readily available than other information resources.

“Information resources and services accessible at Mabeskraal public library are useful for academic purposes and individual research. Most of the time I visit Mabeskraal public library looking for books, newspapers, and catalogues.” (Participant 1)

“Some information resources and services are available, such as novels, books, dictionaries, manuals, and others which I never bother to check. I like reading novels and textbooks exclusively because they help me to widen my imagination and think about the things which I am researching on.” (Participant 5)

“I regularly go to the library looking for books... textbooks assist me to conduct my research, and they are readily available in the library as compared to all other information resources.” (Participant 6)

4.4.2.2 Leisure sources

The study found that the teachers often accessed the public library for leisure during their spare time. Three participants reported that they went to the library to spend their spare time and keep themselves busy reading information resources from the Mabeskraal public library.

“Sometimes I go to the library to spend my spare time. In that case I cannot say I access information resources and services for productive purposes but only to occupy myself.” (Participant 2)

“I make sure I find time for the library so that I keep myself busy with doing something important like reading textbooks and novels that I will use to teach students another day.” (Participant 8)

“What I mean is that I don’t only go to the library when I have something to research, but sometimes I go for fun or when I am feeling that I want to read something.” (Participant 3)

Another participant indicated that they read novels in the Mabeskraal public library to refresh themselves from stress caused by work pressure.

“I can look for novels when I need to refresh from work stresses or to change my focus from the work pressure and strains.” (Participant 6)

4.4.3 The relationship between information resources accessibility and teachers’ motivation

4.4.3.1 Teaching motivation

The findings confirmed that the accessibility of information resources motivated teachers to perform their job effectively and address the questions raised by students during the lessons, clearly explaining concepts as highlighted below.

“I want to highlight that a strong relationship exists between the accessibility of information resources and my teaching motivation because at some point students ask me questions in the lesson, so I need to answer the questions with full knowledge which I get from the library, that is the reason I prefer to search for information resources from Mabeskraal Public library.” (Participant 1)

“There is a relationship that exists between the accessibility of information resources and teaching motivation, so when the resources are available it becomes easy to explain concepts to the students which is a good thing in teaching and learning institutions.” (Participant 4)

Participant 4 stated that there was a correlation between the accessibility of information resources and teaching motivation. The participant emphasised that this connection between the aforementioned variables relation needed to be strengthened by investing more time in utilising information resources from the library.

“I bet a strong relationship exists between the accessibility of information resources and motivation for teaching because my question would be, ‘If you don’t read, where do you get

what you are teaching?’ So, to feel motivated in teaching, I need to invest my time in reading around many information sources accessible in the library and other sources.” (Participant 5)

Participant 8 perceived teaching motivation as a process that starts from acquiring knowledge from reading information resources, and re-produces that knowledge to teach another person. “I believe that the relationship exists between the accessibility of information resources or services and motivation for teaching because I have to acquire knowledge first, and then use that knowledge to teach someone.” (Participant 8)

4.4.3.2 Lessons preparations

The study found that the teachers used the information resources from the public library to research to prepare their lessons so that they could enrich their lesson delivery by citing practical examples and making references to relevant sources for the benefit of students. “I am a teacher at a high school, so I want to do some research in preparation for the lesson, notes and build knowledge which can assist me to make my lessons more practical, and make reference to practical examples which make more sense to the students.” (Participant 1) “I can’t teach something which comes from my head daily; I have to do more research to spice my lesson not to be too ordinary every day.” (Participant 4)

“The information sources are useful to do some researches which I can use for my lessons... I perceive these information sources as helping me in preparing the lessons...” (Participant 8)

Participant 7 viewed the public library as additional or complementary to the information resources provided by the school institutions. Therefore, they did not visit the library frequently because they had access to other information resources at work.

“Even at work we are given some books to help us prepare the lessons and guide during the marking, so it’s not like we have to go to the library all the time to look for information resources.” (Participant 7)

Contrary comments were made by other participants who highlighted that their use of the public library is not based on their intentions to prepare for the lessons, but it is rather their reading culture that motivates them to visit the library as well as the need for continuous professional development.

“On my side, reading is my culture, I enjoy it besides that I want to prepare for my lessons.”
(Participant 2)

Additionally, participant 7 denied the usefulness of the library resources in preparing for the lessons with the argument that the resources available in the library did not match the information in the study guides.

“I don’t use the library to prepare for my teaching lesson because the information resources are not matching with the study interest we are using at work.” (Participant 7)

4.4.3.3 Source of confidence

Teachers noted that the accessibility of information resources was and remained a source of confidence motivating teachers to perform their job effectively. Teachers emphasised that they felt confident in front of students when they were teaching because they were well prepared to deliver their lessons confidently.

“Accessing information resources is the motivating factor, especially in the teaching profession because it builds confidence in front of the students who seek to benefit from me as their teacher. After reading my textbooks in the library, I take some time alone to regenerate the information I was reading to make it sounder when I am teaching my students.” Participant 1) “I am convinced to teach when I have full information of the subject I am teaching... this is very important for me because I know what I will be doing in the class, which is different from going to the classroom without fully prepared.” (Participant 6)

4.4.3.4 High academic grades

The findings showed that the accessibility of information resources in the library provided students with the potential to achieve high academic grades in terms of passing.

“It is interesting to get good results from the students I am teaching because I can see the fruit of my sweat that will motivate me to research more and more.” (Participant 5)

“All I can say is that accessibility of information resources and service result in good teaching and learning practices.” (Participant 6)

4.4.3.5 Source of reference

The findings indicated that the teachers use the information resources available at the Mabeskraal public library as a source of reference where they can seek clarification for

challenging concepts.

“I am teaching based on what I was trained to do, and my personal teaching experience. I go to the library to seek clarification of a few concepts; otherwise, I don’t need to strain myself reading to prepare for the lesson.” (Participant 2)

“When I encounter new concept which I need to teach in the class, I can go to the library and do more research” (Participant 3)

4.4.3.6 Personal academic development

The study found that teachers also use the Mabeskraal public library for personal research seeking to improve their knowledge in different aspects, which is a building block for academic development.

“I prefer going to the library to read books and any other information source available, just to improve my knowledge; you never know what will happen in the future. Maybe I will need to make use of that knowledge to survive or to help another person... just for personal development as someone who works in the teaching and learning institution. At least your mind should be sharp and up to date.” (Participant 4)

4.4.4 Challenges faced by teachers in accessing information resources and services in the public library.

4.4.4.1 Poor infrastructure

The findings indicated that poor infrastructure was an obstacle to the accessibility of information and services at the Mabeskraal public library. Teachers expressed concern that the library could not provide enough information to meet their needs.

“I understand that there is no library with the capacity to carry all the information sources, it’s possible not to find other books, then I wait for some months, or find a related source which can give the information which is related to the concept I am researching on.” (Participant 2)

Teachers perceived the infrastructure condition at the Mabeskraal public library as less appealing, and there was a small space to accommodate many library resources and library users. The teachers suggested that the library could be extended to meet their needs.

“The infrastructure conditions are not that appealing, and the library is small to contain adequate information resources covering the diverse users' needs. I wish the library could be

extended so that I will have as many shelves as possible and widen the accessibility of information resources and services.” (Participant 3)

“The space is minimal to put more information resources and services which can make a variety of sources in the library; if the library is extending then need also to add more furniture inside in terms of shelves, chairs, and desks.” (Participant 8)

One of the participants raised the issue of poor infrastructure to accommodate users with disabilities. The teachers expressed concern that the Mabeskraal public library’s infrastructure was not conducive to allowing usage by users handicapped with various disabilities and impairments.

“I can also mention the barrier to users with other impairments like physical impairment; the library's design does not accommodate users with disabilities and impairments. I am not impaired, but I am also concerned about other groups of users who wish to use the library resources and services.” (Participant 6)

4.4.4.2 Location of library

Four participants reported that the location of the Mabeskraal public library is a barrier to their accessibility of information resources and services. The findings indicated that the teachers were concerned about the distance they travelled from work or home to access the public library.

“I would want to access the resource more often, but the distance from school and home is still a barrier. I would want to balance time for work and home duties, so I don’t have much time to go to the library more often.” (Participant 1)

“I often visit the library, but the major constraint is the distance I need to travel from home to the library; even from work to the library is far. So, that’s why I miss some days without visiting it, but as much as I am concerned, I am enjoying the services provided by Mabeskraal public library.” (Participant 5)

“I go to the library regularly, but the limitation is the distance I cover from work to the library. Otherwise, I am a good reader. If the library were close to my workplace, I would visit the library even double the time I spend there now.” (Participant 6)

Another participant commented that the distance from the library to Rustenburg town delays

the changing or replacing old information resources in the library with new ones.

“Another challenge I see which affects access to information resource and services at Mabeskraal public library is that its located in rural areas, and far away from Rustenburg town, so they take time to get new books to replace the old ones” (Participant 2)

4.4.4.3 Poor reading environment

The study indicated that the library did not create a favourable reading environment for the teachers. The teachers reported that the reading environment at the Mabeskraal public library was compromised by noisemakers, users making or receiving phone calls, and walking around the library, which disturbs other library users.

“The environment itself in the library is not perfect; it should be so quiet and strictly monitor not to let library users make noise or make phone calls while in the library which so disturbing.” (Participant 5)

“The library is not giving a peaceful environment which makes the users concentrate on reading the books because sometimes people will be walking around, and making some noise which makes the environment disturbing.” (Participant 8)

4.4.4.4 Poor reading culture of users

Two teachers mentioned the issue of the poor reading culture of library users as a barrier to the effective utilization of the Mabeskraal public library. Teachers shifted attention from the structural barriers faced by the public library and placed the blame on the library users themselves.

“Mabeskraal public library is useful to me and other students, but the reading culture and motivation are not strong because sometimes I find less than 10 library users, which shows that the usage of the library is not that high, which is not the reason to say that the library is not useful.” (Participant 6)

“Library is not a place which I enjoy visiting most. I can even see that if I borrow that book, I won't read it at home. I will be concentrating on other things, which are more important such as preparing notes for my lessons.” (Participant 7)

4.4.4.5 Poor security

The findings indicated poor security compromised the accessibility of information resources

and services at the Mabeskraal public library.

Participants emphasised that the lack of security control resulted in the shortage of information resources because some users borrow books without returning or replacing them if the book were lost.

“Another challenge that leads to the shortage of information resources is the lack of security control to protect resources from damage and theft. Users borrow the resources and go; no one can follow up to check which book is missing, or if the book returned is still in a good state, so it becomes a challenge which leads to loss of many books and other information resources.”

(Participant 8)

4.4.4.6 Inadequate skills of Librarians

The findings indicated that the librarians had inadequate skills to assist the library users as much as needed. The teachers raised the concern that the library users encountered challenges with locating and retrieving the information resources in the library. Yet, it should be the responsibility of the librarians to assist the library users as much as possible. “Librarians are not yet equipped with the proper human resources skills that can assist the library users in accessing the information resources and services as easily as they should be. I have seen many library users face challenges in locating the sources they want but not getting assistance from the librarians. I think it was supposed to be the role of the librarians to observe and assist library users who are facing challenges instead of waiting for the users to complain because some users don’t even know the duties and responsibilities of the librarians.”

(Participant 8)

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings as they emerged from the participants’ narratives during the interviews. The themes were presented and illustrated in terms of their meanings. These themes have been discussed with direct participant quotations to support the researcher's interpretation. This chapter gave the discussions, the findings, and the conclusions, which is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the study's findings and how they were used to answer the research questions. The findings addressed issues such as teachers' access to information resources and services required by Mabeskraal public library teachers, the relationship between the accessibility of information resources, teachers' information needs, motivation, and challenges teachers encounter in accessing information services at the public library. The data collection process also discussed the nexus between the findings and existing literature. When findings are empirically supported by existing literature, they are considered empirically supported; when findings are not empirically supported by existing literature, the researcher interprets the findings as insight gained from the study participants.

5.2 Teachers' access to information resources and services in a public library

The findings indicated that the classification system of information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library hindered its access by the teachers, which resulted in delays in accessing or failure to access the desired information resources in the library. Corral (2014) views the shelving arrangements and inadequate guides to the arrangement of the library as an obstacle to the accessibility of information resources and services in the library. The consistency of the findings and literature gives the impression that the classification system of information resources and services in public libraries is a common challenge encountered by public library users.

Teachers reported that the accessibility of information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library was compromised by the narrow range of sources available and the inadequacy of the collection in fulfilling diverse and dynamic needs. The narrow range of sources goes to the extent that library users become familiar with the information resources available. One teacher mentioned the perception of a limited range of sources in the library and stated that there was no element of surprise. Another participant argued that the perception of a narrow range of

sources in the library was subjective because the information sources are accessible, and their values of usefulness depend on the library users' information needs.

Taylor (2016) cites a lack of access to information resources as the central cause of the literacy crisis in South Africa and suggests implementable measures to improve access to multimedia resources to eradicate the literacy crisis.

In addition, Nwousu (2013) found in a study in Nigeria that the lack of information resource accessibility in libraries is a common phenomenon in Africa. This scenario denies library users the ability to access information to fulfil their information needs. Thus, the narrow range of information resources hinders the accessibility of information resources and services in many public libraries, as supported by the findings of this study and existing literature.

The findings revealed that manual circulation processes limited the accessibility of information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library, thus making it difficult for the teachers to discover, locate and retrieve information resources. Participants expressed concerns regarding how the manual library processes limit their library usage. The participants recommended using an OPAC, an electronic platform, to ascertain the availability, floatability, retrievability, and usability of the library's information resources, improving their experience with the library to meet users' information needs. In line with the findings, Breeding (2020) recommends using open-access platforms such as Open Access Journals, Open Access Educational Repositories (OAER), and Open Access Repository, which can enhance the accessibility of online information resources free of charge. Therefore, the manual library process limits the use and accessibility of information resources and services required by teachers in public libraries. The solution to this is the usage of OPACs, as confirmed by the findings and existing literature.

Furthermore, the findings also indicated that the lack of internet connectivity hampered the accessibility of information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library. The absence of internet connectivity limits library users to physical information resources rather than providing information services accessible via the internet. Participants considered the importance of an internet connection in providing additional and flexible information to enhance access to the library's resources in support of teaching, learning, and research. Similarly, Mojapelo (2016) stated that the inadequacy of information retrieval tools in libraries

to assist users in accessing information from electronic sources is a challenge that poses a barrier to the full accessibility of information resources and services.

The findings and literature concurred that the lack of internet connection was an obstacle to the accessibility of information resources and services in public libraries and meeting the needs of library users who wished to access other sources on the internet.

Participants reported that the circulation system at the Mabeskraal public library compromised the accessibility of information resources and services. The possibility of losing the information resources after borrowing puts them at risk because they are not paid for if lost. Chisita (2021) found that the insufficient discharge system of information resources made it difficult for library users to enjoy the library services fully. The fear of losing information resources and a poor circulation system is an obstacles to the accessibility of information resources and services in the public library. Borrowing books also hindered the accessibility of information resources and services in public libraries, as supported by the findings and existing literature.

5.3 Information resources and services required by teachers from the public library

Findings indicated that the research participants often visited the Mabeskraal public library, searching for academic and leisure sources to fulfil different tasks. The teachers' participants revealed that they often visited the public library to access information resources and services to assist them in accomplishing academic endeavours, including research and teaching. Findings identified textbooks as the common information sources accessed by teachers in pursuing their scholarly research in the public library. The results aligned with Zimmerman's (2014) assertion that "many schools in South Africa do not have enough space and functional libraries that enable public libraries to support teachers and learners." Raju and Raju (2010:7) concur that "the demand on public libraries to meet the needs of learners and teachers has risen. The consistency of the findings and existing literature, which points to the usefulness of academic sources in public libraries, indicates that these public libraries support academic library users".

The participants further revealed that they visited the public library to fulfil leisure information needs concerning relaxation and refreshment and to keep themselves updated with current

issues. They reported that leisure information sources, including novels and newspapers, assist them in reducing stress and strain caused by work pressure. Garmer (2016) suggests that public libraries provide a valuable space for creativity and opportunities for positive dialogues between different social groups and generations.

The findings and existing literature pointed out that public libraries were not limited to serving academic purposes; instead, they extend to relaxation purposes and give space for creativity and creating positive dialogues. The findings and existing literature suggest that information resources in public libraries are helpful for leisure purposes besides academic uses. The literature further states that public libraries create space for creativity and the creation of dialogues(Oldenburg, 1989) “third place theory”; Jochumsen Rasmussen and Skot-Hansen’s (2012) “four space model”; and Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen’s (2003) theory of “New Third Space.” (see Chapter, section, 2.3)

5.4 The relationship between information resources accessibility and teachers’ motivation

The study found a strong relationship between the accessibility of information resources and teaching motivation. It emphasized that this relationship needs to be strengthened by investing more time in reading information resources from the library. Teachers explained that the accessibility of information resources motivates them to perform their job effectively and address the questions raised by students during the lessons, clearly explaining key concepts. Teachers use the information resources available at the Mabeskraal public library as a source of reference where they can seek clarification for challenging ideas. The findings supported the assertion of Serema (2017:39) that schools do not have enough space and functional libraries to support the reading needs of teachers and learners. Thus, the findings and existing literature agreed on the perception of a relationship between information accessibility and teachers’ motivation. Teachers use the information resources from the public library to research in preparation for their lessons, use practical examples, and reference relevant sources. Teachers consider the public library as an addition to the information resources provided by the school institutions suggesting that the library information resources complement the resources available in schools.

In addition, some teachers raised the concern that the usefulness of the library is compounded

by the mismatching of accessible and available sources in the library with the study guides available in schools. The existing literature does not cover this aspect. This insight was necessary for inclusion in the body of knowledge, as confirmed by the findings.

The teachers reported that accessibility of information resources is a source of confidence motivating teachers to perform their job effectively. The participants emphasised that they felt confident in front of students when they were teaching because they were well prepared to explain all the concepts with complete confidence through library usage. The study found that teachers also use the Mabeskraal public library for personal research to improve their knowledge in different aspects, which is a building block for academic development. The researcher also interpreted the connection between information accessibility and source of confidence as insight gained. The literature does not speak to this aspect; hence, it must be added to the existing body of knowledge.

The findings revealed that the accessibility of information resources in the library has the potential to enable students to achieve high academic grades in terms of passing. The accessibility of information resources supports the teaching and learning process, which results in quality learning outcomes. The findings also identified the connection between the accessibility of information resources with ultimate quality learning outcomes, which does not exist in the literature; hence, the researcher interpreted this relationship as insight gained during the study.

5.5 Challenges faced by teachers in accessing information resources and services in the public library

The findings indicated that poor infrastructure was an obstacle to the accessibility of information and services at the Mabeskraal public library. Teachers expressed concern that the library could not provide adequate resources to meet users' diverse and dynamic information needs. Participants perceived the infrastructure condition at the Mabeskraal public library as less appealing because of spatial challenges regarding accommodating many library resources and users. They suggested that the library space should be extended to meet user needs. Additionally, the teachers raised the issue of poor infrastructure to accommodate users with disabilities. They hinted that the Mabeskraal public library infrastructure fell short of providing

the necessary conditions that ensure that users with disabilities can use the resources in the library. They indicated that the Mabeskraal public library infrastructure fell short. Sullivan (2017) posits that “information resources are not always available and accessible in the libraries due to poor library facilities and physical barriers, which block some people living with disabilities”.

The findings and existing literature showed consistency regarding the challenge of poor infrastructure to accommodate many information resources and enable library users with disabilities to access public library services easily.

The study found that the location of the Mabeskraal public library is a barrier to their ability to access information resources and services. Participants expressed the long distance they had to travel from work or home to access the public library. The study indicated that the library did not create an environment conducive to reading. This scenario was further completed by noisemakers, users making or receiving phone calls, walking around the library, and disturbing other users.

The issues of the location of the library and the poor reading environment were highlighted by the findings. These factors are regarded as insights derived from the study.

The poor reading culture of users was found to be a barrier to the effective utilization of the Mabeskraal public library. Some teachers shifted attention from the structural barriers faced by the public library and blamed their poor reading culture as a challenge limiting their use of the public library. Mazibuko (2018) refers to the poor reading culture in South Africa as ‘a reading crisis’ and, simultaneously, Aitchison (2018) calls it a ‘cognitive catastrophe’ which derailed the literacy level in South Africa. Chisita (2011) states, "A poor reading culture in South Africa is prevalent across all age groups – from children to adults". The study's findings and existing literature suggested that poor reading culture is a common challenge affecting the effective use of public libraries in South Africa. The findings indicated poor security compromised the accessibility of information resources and services at the Mabeskraal public library. Teachers emphasised that the lack of security control resulted in the shortage of information resources because some users borrow books without returning or replacing them if they are lost. Mugwisi, Jiyane and Fombad (2016) noted that “public libraries are prone to a lack of security to protect their resources from theft, damage, and mutilation and suggest that the security systems in public libraries should be strengthened.” Both findings and previous literature identified the issue of

poor security in public libraries as a factor that compromises access to information resources and services in public libraries since many of the resources are lost, damaged, and mutilated.

In addition, the findings also indicated that the librarians had inadequate skills to assist the library users to the extent to which they needed assistance. The teachers raised concerns that the library users faced challenges locating the information resources in the library. Yet, it should be the responsibility of the librarians to assist library users as much as possible. Mugwisi et al. (2016) note that librarians should be equipped with relevant skills that facilitate adequate assistance to library users to build a positive image of public libraries. The same was observed from the findings and existing literature regarding the inadequacy of librarian skills to assist library users in accessing information resources and services in public libraries.

5.6 Summary

Structural factors and the internal setup of the libraries compromise the accessibility of information resources and services in public libraries. Teachers use library information resources and services for academic, research, and leisure purposes. A strong relationship exists between the accessibility of information resources and teaching motivation. Teachers encounter many challenges accessing information resources and services in a public library. The existing literature strongly supports the prevalence of challenges teachers face in accessing information resources in public libraries. The study provides insight into the relationship between the accessibility of information resources, teaching motivation, and the purposes for which teachers use shared libraries. The study's conclusions are drawn, and recommendations are suggested in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

6.1 Conclusions

Teachers' ability to access information resources in public libraries is affected by obstacles in the library environment and other external factors. The library classification system used by public libraries presents a barrier to the accessibility of information. Library users encounter challenges locating information resources on the shelves because they are unaware of the guidelines for arranging information resources in public libraries. The flawed classification system of information resources in public libraries has implications for libraries, such as delays in accessing the help they are looking for or failure to access the information sources.

The narrow range of information resources limited the discovery and accessibility of information resources and services in public libraries. Participants found that this narrow range limited the accessibility of information resources and services in public libraries to the extent that they became familiar with the information resources available before they were withdrawn.

The manual processes adopted in public libraries hinder the accessibility of information resources and services in public libraries. According to the findings, the participants encountered challenges physically accessing all the information resources they needed from the public libraries because some were available on the Internet. The teachers suggested using OPAC in public libraries to enhance online navigation to access essential web-based sources and browse the available resources hosted through the library through the OPAC platform.

In addition to the manual process, the lack of internet connection raised concerns among the study's participants because of limitations relating to the accessibility of information resources and services to teachers who sought to use public libraries. The participants highlighted that they needed to explore information resources from physical and online or web-based sources in the library to meet their information needs. The lack of internet connectivity in public libraries remained an obstacle to the accessibility of information resources and services to fulfil the dynamic and diverse information needs of various users.

Public libraries are associated with poor borrowing systems, which is a barrier to the

accessibility of information resources and services by library users. The study participants perceived the public library's borrowing system as poor, and they were discouraged from borrowing books because most books were old.

The study participants indicated that they often visited public libraries seeking academic sources that could assist them in researching different aspects that appear to be challenging in their profession. Scholarly sources available and accessible in public libraries are helpful to the participants' information needs in pursuing their careers and research purposes.

Public libraries are not limited to only providing for resources academic purposes but also to providing resources relating to relaxation purposes whereby users visit the library to access leisure and recreational information resources. The participants sometimes went to the public library to keep themselves occupied by reading novels during their spare time and to reduce stress or strain caused by work pressure.

A strong relationship exists between information accessibility and teachers' motivation regarding the role of public libraries in assisting teachers in preparing for their lessons, widening their understanding of concepts, using reference sources, and developing practical examples during the studies. Another connection between the accessibility of information resources and teachers' motivation happens when the teachers access the public library as a source of confidence to share their knowledge with students. Public libraries complement the information resources available in the schools and allow teachers to access more information that may not be available. Another concern emerged that some of the information sources available in the public libraries did not match the study guides that participants must follow as the course guidelines.

Poor infrastructure was a challenge faced by public libraries, which affects the accessibility of information and services by participants. The inadequacy of infrastructure resulted in a limited range and a scarcity of information resources available in public libraries. The study's findings confirm that public library infrastructure has failed to accommodate users with disabilities, especially Braille readers. Attention is needed to address the infrastructure issues in these libraries to be conducive to diverse users with different conditions.

The participants cited location barriers of the public library as a reason why they do not access the information resources and services as much as they need to because they travel long distances from home or work to access the library.

In addition to the location, the reading environment of the public libraries did not provide the users with good reading facilities. Participants associated the reading environment of the public library with noise, people walking around, and making or receiving phone calls in the library. This scenario confirms that the public should implement policies that promote an environment conducive to reading.

Poor reading culture is a common challenge encountered in South Africa, limiting the use of public libraries. Both teachers and students are subject to the poor reading culture in the country, identified through a literature review as a 'reading crisis' or a 'reading catastrophe.' Besides the accessibility of information resources and services in public libraries, library users continue encountering challenges concerning developing reading literacy.

Poor security issues dominated the public libraries, which resulted in information and resources being damaged, lost, and mutilated. Public libraries do not have adequate security systems to ensure that information resources are kept safe from theft, damage, and mutilation. Security measures are needed during the borrowing and returning of information sources and the arrangement of library sources.

Inadequacy of librarian skills poses challenges in public libraries that affect the accessibility of information resources and services by library users. The participants noted that the library assistants in the public libraries did not take responsibility to assist them in locating the information resources and providing guidance regarding the arrangement of information. Resources. Librarians should be equipped with critical resources to assist library users in accessing information resources and services effectively.

6.2 Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations to enhance the accessibility of Mabeskraal Public Library services by teachers in Bojanala, North West province of South Africa

6.3 Librarians

Public librarians should take full responsibility for assisting library users in accessing information resources and services in public libraries. Librarians should undergo continuous professional development courses to acquire knowledge and skills to perform their public library duties effectively. It is also the responsibility of the librarians to guide the arrangement of information resources in the library and design the information resources classification system to improve the accessibility of sources. The librarians should implement library rules and regulations to create a supportive reading environment for all library users. Librarians can draw lessons from theories on spatial configuration propounded by Oldenburg's (1989) "third place theory," Jochumsen Rasmussen and Skot-Hansen's (2012) "four space model", and Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen's (2003) theory of "New Third Space." (see Chapter, section, 2.3).

6.4 Public library stakeholders

The public library stakeholders should advocate for the development of infrastructure that will provide critical information resources and accommodate the needs of library users living with disabilities. They should ensure that information resources and services are improved and maintained regularly in response to the needs of library users. The security systems of the library should be guaranteed and enhanced by the active role of the library stakeholders. Librarians in public libraries need to be given the necessary training to equip them with human resources skills to improve the accessibility of information resources and services through their assistance. Library stakeholders must ensure computers and internet connection use in public libraries to facilitate practical accessibility of information resources and services.

6.4.1 Non-governmental organizations

Public librarians in South Africa should forge strategic partnerships with professional associations, including the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA), to strengthen library services for the benefit of users. Independent and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or development partners, including the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), AFLIA, are encouraged to support the public libraries in South Africa to improve the accessibility of information resources and services to achieve its primary objectives. NGOs should provide funds and help to keep improving public libraries'

infrastructure and supply information resources to widen the range of information sources. Public libraries should re-strategies to offer relevant services for the benefit of the users.

6.4.2 Government

Through the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sports, the government of South Africa should facilitate the programmes and initiatives supporting public libraries' operations regarding fundraising programmes to provide information resources required in public libraries. The Department of Cultural Affairs and Sports should integrate public libraries into the national policies through the Department of Education to ensure they benefit from the national budget. The government's support can be in the form of funding, donations of ICT equipment, information resources, maintenance equipment, or any material or non-material assistance that can improve the standards of public libraries. It is also the government's responsibility through the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sports and public librarians to guarantee that the infrastructure of public libraries meets the demands of a varied population, including those with disabilities.

6.4.3 Library users

Public library users should take responsibility for observing the library rules and regulations, which create a supportive reading environment for all other library users. Library users should appreciate the public libraries' standards, use the available information resources and services, and remain optimistic towards public libraries. Library users must observe ethical considerations to ensure that the library resources are safe from mutilation, such as damage, theft, and defacement.

6.4.4 Future research directions

Public librarians should conduct further research on the same subject area to cover the current study's limitations associated with adopting one-sided methodologies based on qualitative research. Further research could focus on determining the demographic profile of library users of public libraries and investigating the impact of public libraries on the communities and on improving the literacy of the users.

6.5 Summary

The study's conclusions and recommendations are presented in this chapter, as highlighted in Chapter 6. The researcher concluded the survey from the findings backed by existing literature and the knowledge gathered from the previous chapter's study. Conclusions mainly addressed the research questions and objectives, reflecting how the study addressed the research objectives. Individuals, organizations, departments, and the government all received recommendations. Recommendations for additional research were made to highlight research areas that needed to be researched.

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