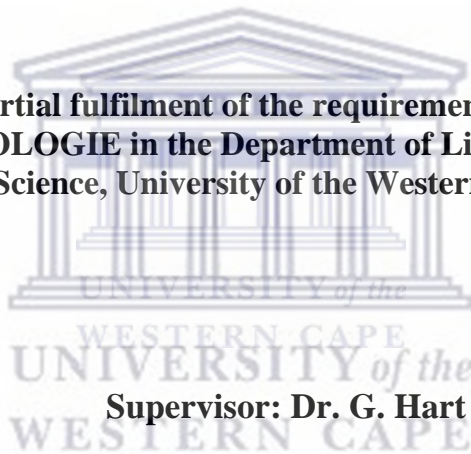


**The Provision of Library and Information Services to Gays and
Lesbians in Cape Town's Public Libraries**

Mini Dissertation

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MAGISTER
BIBLIOTHECOLOGIE in the Department of Library and Information
Science, University of the Western Cape.**



Supervisor: Dr. G. Hart

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DECLARATION

“I declare that **THE PROVISION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES TO GAYS AND LESBIANS IN CAPE TOWN’S PUBLIC LIBRARIES**” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references”

Signed:

Date:



ABSTRACT

The research project is based on the belief that Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) people have specific information needs and interests that public libraries should cater for. The philosophical literature of public libraries states that they have to cater for all sectors of their diverse communities without discrimination. The aim of the research study was to gauge if Cape Town's library and information services (LIS) include gay and lesbian materials in their collection development policies and procedures. It also aimed at finding out if City of Cape Town Library and Information Services (COCTLIS) provide for the information needs of their gay and lesbian users in their provision of information services.

The research problem and the review of literature led to the following research questions:

- Do the gay and lesbian library user community constitute a special user group with particular information and reading needs?
- If it is accepted that public libraries have a responsibility for the special information and reading needs of gay and lesbian library users, how do they cater for these needs?
- How do South African public libraries, specifically the City of Cape Town Library and Information Services (COCTLIS), provide for these needs with their collections and their information services?
- Are the public library staffs aware of the UNESCO principles in terms of LIS services for gay and lesbian library users?

The first two research questions were answered by means of a review of the theoretical and professional literature. The last two questions were answered by analysis of COCTLIS collection development procedures and policy and a questionnaire survey of library staff.

A survey was conducted among librarians in charge of collection development in the COCTLIS libraries early in 2009, collecting data by means of a structured questionnaire. The sample comprised 69 libraries of the total 100, with an even spread across the six city library districts and including a mix of “types” of library (regional and community).

The findings of the research study echo the agreement found in the literature that the provision of library services to LGBT people is inadequate. City of Cape Town collection development policy does not have any explicit mention of the LGBT user group. The major finding of the survey is an evident gap between stated beliefs and actual practices. The majority of respondents agree that public library collections should cater for LGBT people but in fact they buy very few books or magazines oriented to gays and lesbians. And only 55% indicate that they do consciously consider the needs of gays and lesbians in their book selection. The information services to gays and lesbians appear to be rather thin. For example, less than 10% include gay and lesbian oriented information in their community information files and only 37% display gay and lesbian oriented information on their community notice boards. The study provides some evidence that practices might differ according to size and position of library.

The research study hopes to make a difference in the provision of gays and lesbians in the City of Cape Libraries. It also hopes to remind librarians of the mandate they have to develop their collections to reflect diversity.

KEYWORDS

Public libraries, Public librarians, LGBT, Gay, Lesbian, Cape Town, Homosexuals, Collection development, Information Services

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My honour and my sincere gratitude go to my supervisor Professor Genevieve Hart, for her professional guidance, assistance, and her encouraging words throughout this research study. This study would have not been a success with out her.

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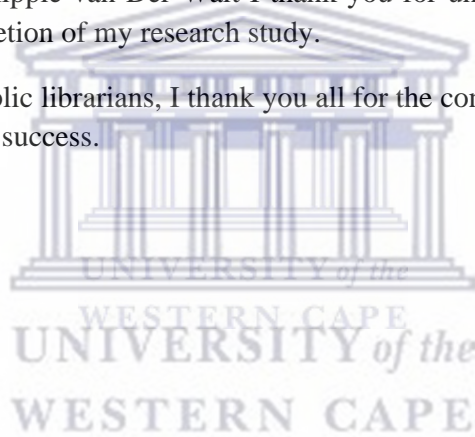


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

1.1 Background and motivation

Section 9(3) of the South African constitution explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of “sexual orientation” (South Africa, 1996). The origin of the gay and lesbian rights clause came from the realization that there needs to be social justice and that all forms of discrimination ought to be eradicated. In November 2006 South Africa became the first African nation and the fifth country in the world to legalize same sex marriages (Goldblatt, (2006:261).

Although South Africa has embraced social justice for all, it is evident through the literature that not all African countries share the same ideals with regard to the rights of homosexuals. For example, Aarmo (1999) points out that throughout the African continent gays and lesbians are still discriminated against and that there are reported and unreported cases of homophobia, resulting in lives lost. In countries like Zimbabwe homosexuals are perceived as being worse than dogs and there is no place for such people (Aarmo, 1999:2). Some African leaders have given orders to the police to arrest and detain any homosexuals that they may come across.

This research project is based on the belief that gays and lesbians have specific information needs and interests that public libraries should cater for. As a public librarian who has worked for eight years in public libraries in Cape Town, it seems important to investigate if public libraries are providing for the information needs of these formerly marginalized groups. The researcher has witnessed incidents at book

selection meetings when library staff indicates that they put “this kind of thing” under the desk or they claim that “our community” does not want this kind of book.

Internationally public library services look to the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) for leadership and vision. South Africa is a signatory of the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (2004), a statement of principles which explicitly prohibits discrimination. This public library document promotes the principle that public librarians have to provide inclusive services to all people and avoid discriminatory censorship practices. In her study of gay and lesbian public library collections in Queensland, Australia, Moody (2004:1) advocates that public librarians uphold the social justice philosophy of free access to information for all people. She points out that all public librarians have the duty to provide information and reading materials for all, regardless of sexual orientation. Rothbauer and McKechnie (2000:5) point out that gay and lesbian community’ information materials are of interest to library and information science scholars and practitioners because of their professional commitment to the principles of intellectual freedom and access to information.

1.2 Conceptual analysis & theoretical background

As defined by the Dictionary of Sociology (1998:281), homosexuality refers to those who have sex with, or are sexually attracted to, persons of the same sex. Homosexuality is a sexual orientation. It is not an illness. Curry (2000:11) points out that the concept of homosexuality today is very loose unlike the “simplified, unified, distorting, often medical, frequently criminal, always devalued categories of the past.” She argues that homosexuality must include a “diverse array of relational, gendered, erotic, political, social and spiritual experiences, difficult to tame and capture with

restrictive and divisive labels.” Perhaps this is why the inclusive term LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered people) is preferred by some. Curry (2000) moreover argues that homosexuals are now exploring identities in the context of class, gender and ethnicity.

Homosexuality can be found in any society, religion and any cultural background. But a Google search for information on homosexuality statistics immediately shows the politics of LGBT studies. The first page of hits mostly consists of propaganda from anti-gay church groups who claim that pro-gay groups have exaggerated the proportion of homosexuals in society so as to make political gains. The context of this kind of debate, it might be asked why gays and lesbians can claim “special” attention in terms of LIS. Do they have “special” information and reading needs that might be compared to those of other social groups? The following quotation from the website of the International Gay and Human Rights Commission (2007) answers this question by placing gay and lesbian rights in the frame of human rights:

We believe in the universality of human rights, and recognize that violations on the basis of sexual orientation/expression, gender identity/expression, and HIV/AIDS status--which include murder; incarceration; forced psychiatric treatment; forced HIV testing; torture; arbitrary arrest and detention; denial of freedom of association, expression, and movement; denial of privacy and confidentiality; denial of the right to seek refuge and asylum; immigration restrictions; denial of the right to health and access to treatment; discrimination in the workplace; forced marriage; and the revocation of parental rights--are among the most easily concealed or frequently overlooked.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (2004), its related document, The Public Library Service: Guidelines for Development (2001) and the Multicultural Library Manifesto (2006) form the philosophical background for the research study.

Public libraries throughout the world are established and supported by the community through local, regional or national government. In South Africa the provinces are mandated to run public libraries with the exception of a few large cities like Cape Town, which receives funds from the province to run its own service. Public libraries can therefore be seen as part of a country's public services. Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 defines the basic values and principles that govern public administration as follows:

- providing service impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias
- transparency and accessibility of the service to the public
- promoting public participation in policy making.

One of the standard references in librarianship says that public libraries are established “for public use and the public good”. They “collect, preserve, organize, retrieve, disseminate and communicate information, ideas and the creative product of the human imagination” (Feather & Sturges, 2003:530). The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (2004) sees the purpose of these tasks to be education, information services and personal development. The mission to serve all in a diverse community is stressed in one of the standard reference works which provides the following definition of public libraries:

The public library is a library or library system that provides unrestricted access to library resources and services free of charge to all the residents of a given community, district or geographical region, supported wholly or in part of public funds. Because public libraries have a broader mandate than academic libraries and most special libraries, they must develop their collections to reflect diversity (Reitz, 2004: 578).

The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (2004) proclaims that the public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and

information readily available to its users. It further points out that its services are based on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality language or social status. The Manifesto clearly guides all public librarians on the functioning of public libraries as institutions that are there to render free services to all and every user has to receive equal treatment.

One of the central areas of library theory, education and professional practice is collection development. As Carrigan (1995) points out, a library's collection is at the heart of its social mission. Different kinds of libraries inside a system will have different collection policies – with large central library's serving as depots and lending pools for example. But the Public Library Manifesto claims that all public libraries need a collection development policy document that makes collection policies and selection criteria clear. The following generally accepted principles, gathered from the Manifesto and the IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines for Public Library Development, are relevant to this research project:

- a range of resources is needed which cater for all members
- there should be a constant inflow of new materials
- a wide range of fiction categories and of non-fiction subject coverage must be provided
- the development of local information sources and resources is vital
- the collection should reflect the surrounding cultures
- the local community should have a voice in the collection development
- and selection minority groups' interests and needs should be reflected.

The Guidelines stress the ethics of collection development in stating: “Librarians must not allow their personal attitudes and opinions to determine which members of the public are served and what materials are selected and displayed” (The Public Library Service: Guidelines for Development, 2001: 65). Moody (2004:1) illustrates how the philosophy of free access to information for all people has long been upheld by public library association policies around the world.

But despite these kinds of policy statements, there is agreement in the literature that is surveyed in the following chapter that the provision of library services to LGBT people is inadequate. Reasons may include the content of the material that may conflict with the librarians’ personal values. Many librarians are not aware of the stereotypes and prejudices which form their personal values and which influence their professional roles. Some librarians may censor materials because they fear external pressures from the community.

Vincent (1999:63) points out that there has been much written about social exclusion, but the focus has been on poverty. The writings on socially excluded people have generally ignored what he calls “lesbigays”. Lesbigays are still cautious about “coming-out”. Names like “poof” or “faggot” are still used - evidence of their marginalisation. Vincent claims that library staff needs training in service delivery and awareness of LGBT issues. Meaningful partnerships between public libraries and “lesbigays” communities should be developed and public libraries should amend their policies to cater for the LGBT community.

1.3 Research problem

The research objective is to investigate the provision of library materials and services to gay and lesbian users of the City of Cape Town's public libraries. Gay and lesbian literature is available in abundance as shown by publishers' catalogues, websites and bookshops. While gay literature in the West has existed for 4000 years, in the last three decades there has been an explosion of gay literature as a distinctive form of cultural expression (LGBT Literature Chronological Survey, 2007). The question is: Do public libraries make this literature feely available? And if so, how? Where is it shelved for example?

The study has the following aims:

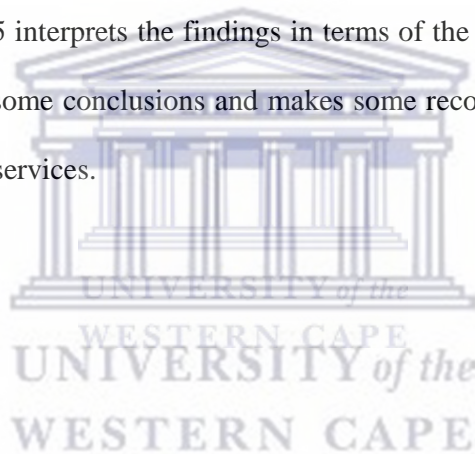
- to find out if Cape Town's library and information services (LIS) include gay and lesbian materials in their collection development policies and procedures
- to find out if Cape Town's library and information services (LIS) include the information needs of their gay and lesbian users in their provision of information services.

The researcher must acknowledge that her underlying purpose is also to alert all public librarians that they have a role to play towards the information needs of gay and lesbians and to advocate to all professional staff to conduct introspection when conducting book selection and rendering service to minority groups to ensure that they do not censor any information.

The research questions that arise from the problem and the review of literature will be identified in Chapter 3 where the research design and methodology are described.

1.4 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1 introduces the research project. It describes some background to the problem and the professional public library context. It also analyses the chief theoretical concepts. Chapter 2 reviews the research in the problem area. It will use the findings of research across a number of countries to build a picture of the state of services to gay and lesbian public library users. The review also examines the questions and methods used in these studies as they provide guidance for the study in Cape Town. Chapter 3 formulates the research problem and questions and outlines the methods to be used in the study. Chapter 4 summarises and analyses the data gathered and Chapter 5 interprets the findings in terms of the research questions. The final chapter 6 draws some conclusions and makes some recommendations for South African public library services.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The review found two kinds of study:

- user studies, which investigate gays' and lesbians' information needs and their satisfaction with library services
- studies of public libraries' practices and services to the gay and lesbian community. These examine library criteria and attitudes in developing collections and services to the gay and lesbian community. This second group examines materials selection and interviews library staff in an attempt to explore the perceptions of their services to the gay and lesbian community.

Both strands of research have comments on librarians' preparedness for serving LGBT people. It seems that librarians' negative attitudes towards this user group might affect their services.

In the initial literature search it became apparent that the information needs of gay and lesbian library users have been rarely investigated, and there is paucity of research in the South African and African professional library literature. The research reviewed in this section comes from the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Carmichael from United States (1998:5) argues that librarians have failed to conduct research in gays and lesbians needs because they fear that they could be fired and lose their jobs. He suggests negative attitudes to research on the topic come from

perceived links between homosexuality and AIDS. In some instances gay and lesbian research is not conducted because there are no incentives to produce such studies. Carmichael claims that students are warned not to conduct research on the topic of the gay and lesbian community. Instead students are encouraged to conduct their research in more high-prestige specialties like information science, software applications, and refinements to theory from other fields. He sees thus the exclusion of gay and lesbian communities from mainstream society reflected in their exclusion by the library profession.

2.2 User studies of gays and lesbians

Research conducted attests to the fact that gay and lesbian library users indeed have particular information needs. For example Hamer's (2003:73) inquiry found that gay and lesbian library users have information needs which include information about self-labelling, consequences for self-identifying and forming an understanding of a gay identity.

Creelman and Harris (1990) investigated the information needs of lesbians at the coming out stage. The research focused on lesbian and bisexual women, using interviews to collect data. Fifty women in two Canadian cities were interviewed on information needs during the stage of coming out of the closet. The investigation had mixed findings. Some respondents reported that they were able to consult the library for their information needs and they found the library helpful. Some respondents reported that they had either not found anything or that the material available did not include practical lifestyle information, while other participants reported that the only available information was on the experiences of gay men rather than those of lesbian women.

The researchers recommended that libraries should expand their collection to meet the information needs of lesbians. The researchers also recommended that public libraries should improve outreach to the LGBT population through displays, more broad exploitation of community bulletin boards, and raising general awareness of LIS among these users.

Whitt (1993) conducted her research on the information needs of lesbians only. The researcher used survey for her data collection by inserting questionnaires in a lesbian newsletter in North Carolina, USA. She found out that the participants were dissatisfied with the quality of information they found in the library, proclaiming that the information needs of gays and lesbians had changed from coming out to factual entertainment needs and from general to more specific needs. The researcher made recommendations to public libraries that they need to have a collection that would cater for these types of needs, and also focused on how the staff members help people find related information. The results showed that the majority of respondents had not asked for help, citing reasons that they were afraid of the reaction of librarians or that the public librarians were not well informed about the lesbian topics and their information needs. In summary Whitt recommends that the library collection should be inclusive and LGBT materials should be integrated in the larger collection particularly with regard to the information for teenagers who are dealing with identity issues. The researcher also recommended that lesbian related material, like other more personal information needs, should be accessible without the assistance of a librarian, as lesbians find it very uncomfortable asking librarians for assistance regarding the topic.

Joyce and Schrader (1997) conducted research which focused on gay/ bisexual men and their use of the Edmonton Public Library in Canada. A questionnaire survey was used in the data collection. The results of the study showed that the majority of participants were dissatisfied with the information available in Edmonton Public Library. The majority of participants also revealed that the service they received from the staff had little sensitivity. Joyce and Schrader recommended that staff should be provided with diversity training and libraries should become institutions of tolerance and neutrality, where an environment is created that would be conducive to everyone who uses the library's materials.

More Canadian research echoes these findings. Stenback and Schrader's (1999) small scale qualitative study of a non-random sample of lesbian women focused on their information needs in their struggling with the coming out processes. Although the potential value of free access to public services was acknowledged, participants reported several barriers. These included homophobic attitudes of library staff in both small and large libraries and poor quality of the library resources, which were outdated and too scholarly. This leads participants to not viewing the public library as a known and trusted information resource. Most participants wanted materials that provided personal insight into their feelings and experiences. It was recommended that the employee service attitudes be addressed by public library managers as this was hampering the service to the marginalised minority group. It was also encouraged that the scope should be widened beyond the coming out, to accommodate the changing requirements and information needs of the lesbian community. In summary it was suggested that public librarians should adhere to their professional ethical obligations and their institutional missions if they were to fulfil the gay positive policies in material selection and customer relations.

Mehra and Braquet (2006) conducted a qualitative study which focused on the “queer” manifesto of library interventions in support of gay and lesbian youth during various phases of the coming out process. The core concern of the author was the provision of appropriate information such as awareness, application, and developing access to meaningful information as these were the main services that youth were in need of. Narrative interviews and informal discussions were methods used in collection of data with a mix of participants which included gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in the study. The findings attest that both public libraries and academic libraries have made few advances in achieving equal representation of queer issues in their services, collections and policies. Some interventions were suggested to public and academic libraries as weapons that can be used to become proactive supporters of gay and lesbian youth during different coming out phases. Library recognition of the need to be user-friendly to gay and lesbian collections was highlighted to give directions for library efforts.

The researchers recommended that libraries should extend their traditional library functions of information provision to provide greater access to gay and lesbian materials. The issue is complex as information provision has to be discreet and the same time it has to be visible. The library should act as a referral point to other more fitting gay and lesbian avenues such as local support groups and counselling agencies. Public libraries should also partner with educational institutions, community organizations, public or private agencies in marketing, educating the community about the “queer” materials.

One of the questions confronting libraries is where to house their LGBT materials. Should they be in a separate gay and lesbian section or integrated into the larger

collection? How does their placing affect their use? Norman's (1999:188) study in two British libraries, in Brighton and Hove, examined the demographic profile of GLB collection users, the effect of collection positioning and the use of information retrieval tools. Norman found out that there was little literature on specific LGBT needs such as "coming out" and sexual health. His finding – unlike Whitt's mentioned earlier – was that separate LGBT collections aid access and that most LGBT users used the collection for recreation. He also found that LGBT collections have a variety of educational, cultural, and economic roles, providing access to resources that may be difficult to find, or that may be expensive.

Kingston (1998) conducted research in the information needs and access problems of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender college students at the University of Indiana, USA. The researcher became interested in this particular research because of being gay and a college student. He echoes Norman's point that LGBT students have a variety of informational needs. They range from coming out process to academic information and entertainment needs. Kingston aimed at discovering the reasons for the underuse of the LGBT library in Indiana University at Bloomington. He also focused on how reference librarians can provide outreach to the LGBT patrons and encourage them to ask for reference assistance. The survey method was executed to collect data of the LGBT student community on the Indiana University campus. Kingston's research findings revealed the Internet as the most utilized source for all diverse needs of LGBT people. Public libraries emerged as an unused source of information as homophobic attitudes were identified among reference librarians. Recommendations such as advertising and marketing of the LGBT, library location and holdings were made by the researcher. Diversity education should be increased in the LIS curriculum as it is hoped that reference librarians would be more aware of the

behaviour that may appear homophobic during requests for assistance in locating LGBT material.

Gamar (2000) conducted a study in Denver, USA, of LGBT information needs during and after the “coming out” process and how various information sources are used. He points out the need to differentiate between the needs of different segments of the LGBT population. The survey method was used with open ended questions to rank some information services. His results showed that the Denver LGBT community was more likely to use the community centre and LGBT bookstores than a library when seeking LGBT information. The Internet was also a popular source of information. It was suggested that more studies of that nature should be conducted and with more geographical coverage.

2.3 Research in library collections and information services

Clyde and Lobban (2001) researched the availability in libraries of books for young adults on homosexuality or related issues. The researchers surveyed all books in the published literature in which there was a homosexual character or in which issues associated with homosexuality were discussed. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in the collection of data. The research study found out that there was 30% increase in the publication of books on homosexuality or related issues since the 1970's. Recommendations were made that libraries should reflect the increase in their collections.

A similar study in 2004 by Boon and Howard (2004: 133) compared the published LGBT fiction between 1998 and 2002 with collections in Canadian public libraries. It evaluated public library collections for the inclusion of young adult fiction with

LGBT content. The researchers' aim was to encourage librarians to ensure that the needs of that group were met and that bias did not influence selectors to under-represent or exclude materials with LGBT content. The study measured access to such fiction and determined whether any evidence of bias was identified on the selectors. The study found several factors which contributed to the limited access to YA fiction with LGBT content in public libraries, for example bias on the part of review periodicals or inadequate marketing by publishers. Boon and Howard (2004:134) found that the subject heading access to LGBT titles of interest to young people was inconsistent and inadequate. They made no conclusion as to possible prejudice on the part of selectors in general.

Schrader and Wells (2005) conducted a research study on the LGBT resources available in Canadian school libraries. The research paper has two parts, the legislative, policy, and ethical framework for social justice advocacy that can be utilized by teacher and public librarians to improve the social climate and everyday experiences of LGBT youth. The second section identified the key educational resources for administrators, counsellors, teachers, school and public librarians. In the research study LGBT youth were asked about their school environment and many concluded that they often felt like outsiders in their schools and they also said that they hated school. LGBT youth thus stated very clearly that their schools had failed to provide them with safe and nurturing learning environments. The researchers recommend that an ethical responsibility means librarians and teachers have to be more than "neutral". They need to reflect on and critically examine absences in service and harmful practices that prevent LGBT youth from having fundamental rights to access information. Schrader and Wells (2005) argued that both school and public librarians have a social responsibility that begins with crucial self-reflection

that invites teachers and librarians to examine their feelings, attitudes, prejudices, and biases toward LGBT persons. The researchers also suggest that public libraries can serve as important places of safety from an otherwise hostile and uninviting world. They point out though that inclusive policy needs to be developed by school and public librarians. Libraries should be an environment where diversity is embraced.

Ritchie (2001) investigated if the collection development efforts of Illinois Public Libraries were fulfilling their mandate to serve all their communities and conforming to intellectual freedom principles. His study looked at collections, selection practices and policies, and the provision of public access to the collections. The author decided to conduct the research in Illinois public library partly because of his personal interest, of his professional career was spent working in the in a mid sized central Illinois public library. Library collections and online catalogues were examined and interviews with library staff were conducted. Based on the collections development policies of the public libraries the researcher found that almost 72% of libraries surveyed did not include or mention any thing about sexual orientation and never anticipated change in that respect within the predictable future. The study also found that gay and lesbian services needed to be boosted. More periodicals and newspapers should be stocked and staff should be more in touch with the LGBT resources, groups and activities in their cities. The availability of community display spaces in libraries should be publicized better. Recommendations were made that:

- Public libraries should subscribe to LGBT- related periodicals.
- Public library staff should be fully cognizant of LGBT-related resources, groups and activities which are available within their geographical area.

- The entire community should be made more aware of LGBT library needs and services.
- Libraries should reach out to the GLBT population.

Schneider (1998) conducted a study in which a select bibliography of gay fiction was compiled and checked against the catalogues of the public libraries in Franklin County, Ohio. The intent was to determine whether catalogue subject access was provided for these works. Like other researchers he found little research in the field of librarianship. His study intended to investigate current practice in the libraries selected for the study. The research objectives of the study were to determine how many of a select list of gay men's fiction was held by the public libraries and to quantify the number of reviews of each title on the checklist. The reasoning was that the number of reviews can affect library acquisitions. The research also tried to determine whether each title on the checklist had subject headings assigned that would identify these works as gay fiction in each of the libraries catalogues.

Hayes's study (2007) investigated the existence of gender bias within LGBT young adult fiction collections in terms of bias towards gay men. She examined three library systems in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. The online catalogues were also compared against each library system to verify whether the collections had sexist bias and if so, to what extent. The research found evidence of the disparity between the numbers of books geared toward gays as opposed to lesbians.

Rothbauer and McKechnie (1999) conducted a research study across a number of Canadian public libraries to examine what access young adults have to novels with homosexual content. The focus was on access via the library catalogues. A random sample of 40 English language young adult novels with gay/ lesbian content was

checked against the holdings of 40 medium and large Canadian public libraries. The primary purpose of the study was to determine if young adults, or others interested in the literature designed for them, were able to gain access through public libraries to novels with homosexual content. The findings of the study indicated that access to gay and lesbian fiction for the young was somewhat limited and inconsistent. Further research was recommended by the researchers to explore the reasons. The researchers also revealed that the sensitive and controvertible nature of gay and lesbian fiction for young adults makes a promising venue for the investigation of intellectual freedom issues associated with collection development, especially in terms of collections intended for youth.

One year later, Rothbauer and McKechnie (2000) conducted another study of the treatment of gay and lesbian fiction materials in reviewing publications. Content analysis was used to analyse reviews of a sample of gay and lesbian fiction for youth to explore the attitudes of reviewers. Book reviews are the traditional book selection tools used by librarians in collection building. A sample of 32 books was selected from an authoritative and comprehensive bibliography of gay and lesbian novels for young adults and their reviews were examined. The researchers then assessed the overall tone of the review and how well reviewers gave access to the homosexual content. It was very difficult for the researchers to make any conclusions from the findings of the study about attitudes of reviewers and librarians to gay and lesbian fiction for young adults. The findings indicated that an ambivalence on the part of reviewers and librarians as reviewers sometimes included cautions and warnings about the homosexual content. They tended to describe the books in terms of life lessons and “problem” books. Tension seemed to exist between the desire to provide

access to gay and lesbian fiction and to serve gay and lesbian teenagers and young adults.

Loverich and Darrah (1999) investigated a sample of 136 public libraries' holdings to see how many libraries had more than 33 titles selected from the 92 finalists for the American Library Association Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual awards over ten years. Findings were that the 33 titles from the sample received unequal treatment in the review publications, ranging from four per title to none. It was also found that the titles with more reviews were likely to have been purchased than the titles not reviewed, despite the fact that all of the books were finalists for a national award. Another concern that Raaflaub (1991) investigated was the small size and relative invisibility of LGBT publishers. It seems that small publishers which lack money to promote their books are hard to contact and, as a result, their titles are often overlooked.

Research undertaken in USA by O'Leary (2005) came after she had conducted an online search where she found out that there was lack of adequate information and resources geared for LGBT communities. Her aims were to find reasons for the disparity of provision between Sheffield, UK, and Denver, USA, libraries. O'Leary used various methods in collecting data, and reports on the sensitivity and logistical problems arising from LGBT issues. The findings of the research were that the services and the collection development of the two libraries were not the same and that one library had a superior service to the other. She acknowledged the need for more research on the topic.

Some researchers focus on librarians' attitudes. For example Gough and Greenblatt (1992) investigated services to gay and lesbian patrons by examining the myths in

how public libraries perceive gay and lesbian patrons. The following is one of the examples of gap between myths and reality as perceived by public library staff:

Myth: The library's book about AIDS adequately addresses the information needs of its gay and lesbian patrons.

Reality: While AIDS is disproportional impact on gay men but not lesbians in the United States, providing information about the epidemic only addresses one of many concerns. Like anyone else lesbians and gay men have a wide spectrum of information needs beyond health information needs. They have unique legal, financial, social, cultural, interpersonal, and religious information needs the library needs to provide for as well.

The research findings identified that one of the contributing factors for most libraries' poor services to lesbian and gay library users is heterosexist prejudice. The prejudice is instilled early in librarians' socialization and it has been echoed and supported in every cultural arena by the values, policies, and activities of their institutions including their religious prevailing attitude and mass communication. The research also found out that there were stereotypical assumptions that the information needs of gays and lesbians are identical.

Hellenius (2001) observed interactions between reference librarians in British Columbia public libraries and young gay and lesbian users. An unobtrusive observation method and records of actions of librarians without the librarians' knowledge were used in the research study. Her research findings evidenced that there were barriers between even the most well-meaning librarians in the provision of adequate reference service to LGBT youth. The researcher also highlighted that there was little training offered to prepare librarians to deal with LGBT issues. Therefore she argued that, it comes as no surprise that so many librarians were indifferent to, or unaware of, the needs of that particular library area. A second finding was that miscommunications occur which result in a librarian not acting confidently and sensitively enough to provide distinct and adequate service. Lastly it was also found

that public library collections were generally poor and lack focus on new material although there has been an enormous growth in LGBT publishing over the two decades.

Goldthorp (2006) investigated the sensitivity of Scottish library staff in providing lesbians with equal opportunity for leisure reading. Observations, interviews with staff and a survey of staff were used to collect data. Her findings were that Scottish public librarians lacked the necessary knowledge on how to include LGBT people and their needs into the development of their services. And they were not interested in amending the situation. Managers were found to be cloaking discrimination and prejudice with a false front of neutrality and a “one-service-for-all” approach. A more inclusive service could only come about after library staff had been sensitivity trained.

The studies that reveal prejudices, of unconscious, among librarians point to the need for changes in LIS education. Carmichael and Shontz’s (1996) surveyed 465 recent graduates from library and information science about LGBT issues. Findings evidenced that LGBT issues were not discussed in the curriculum. The lack of education can lead to problems in providing good service to the LGBT community.

It is significant that recent research has focused on two issues:

- the use of the library by gay and lesbian groups to publicize their activities. The gathering and spreading of community information is an everyday community service in all public libraries and is an important part of their role in building social inclusion. Though this has been identified there is no improvement in providing an inclusive service towards the LGBT people instead they are neglected

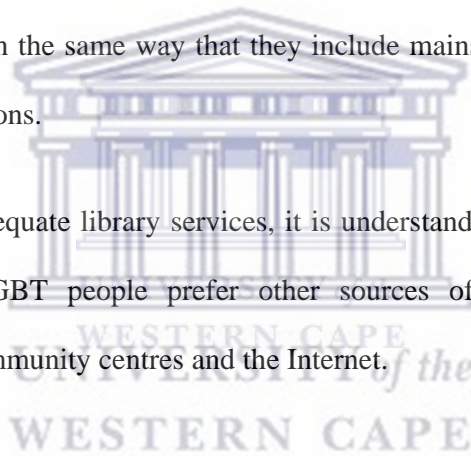
- the provision of leisure reading materials and media. Rothbauer, 2007:101 conducted a research study in Canada trying to make awareness of what a library as a place is suppose to constitute. He argues that if a library is a place it must be through its physical feature such as its buildings architecture, the layout of its floors, the mapping of its internal spaces, and also through its function of its users. Public library as a site for recreational and cultural activity are suppose to be vibrant social places, but most researchers found out that there are barriers to access to desired texts and needed information. Therefore it was evident that those LGBT patrons fail to perceive the public library as an inviting social space for them, neither its collection nor its collections.

2.4 Conclusion

The literature attests that gays and lesbians' information needs and library services have been rarely investigated. This chapter has followed two threads of research: library user studies of gays and lesbians and studies inside libraries of their collections and services. The main conclusions of the literature review are as follows:

- LGBT library services are on the whole inadequate. The majority of researchers argue that the information needs of the LGBT user group are often overlooked or bypassed by the library staff responsible for collection development.
- Although there is huge LGBT literature available, library collections do not reflect this and access to the literature in library catalogues and reviews is difficult.

- Library staff might discriminate against gays and lesbians, even if unconsciously.
- LGBT people have specific reading and information needs but they are not a homogenous group.
- Their library needs vary just as heterosexual people's do. They need and want leisure materials and a wide range of information. The emphasis on entertainment materials in the research might indicate possible discriminatory library selection policies since libraries might be happy enough to include information and reference materials but might hesitate to stock gay and lesbian entertainment in the same way that they include mainstream novels and films in their collections.
- Given the inadequate library services, it is understandable that some research shows that LGBT people prefer other sources of information, such as bookshops, community centres and the Internet.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research study belongs to the second category of research in the previous chapter. Thus is not a library user study. Its focus is on library collection development and information services.

This chapter gives an overview of the research methods that were used in the study to gather data. It also briefly describes the background of the City of Cape Town Library Services (COCTLIS) and its collection development procedures and policy. Methodology connotes set of rules and procedures to guide research and against which its claims can be evaluated (Miller and Brewer, 2003: 192).

3.2 Research questions and design

The research project aims at investigating services to gays and lesbians in Cape Town's libraries. The research problem, as discussed in Chapter 1, and the review of literature lead to the following research questions:

- Do the gay and lesbian library user community constitute a special user group with particular information and reading needs?
- If it is accepted that public libraries have a responsibility for the special information and reading needs of gay and lesbian library users, how do they cater for these needs?

- How do South African public libraries, specifically the City of Cape Town Library and Information Services (COCTLIS), provide for these needs with their collections and their information services?
- Are the public library staffs aware of the UNESCO principles in terms of LIS services for gay and lesbian library users?

The first two research questions were answered by means of a review of the theoretical and professional literature, as described in Chapters 1 and 2. The last two questions were answered by analysis of COCTLIS collection development procedures and policy and a questionnaire survey of library staff.

3.3 Research site and collection development background

The research site for this project is the City of Cape Town Library and Information Services (COCTLIS), which fall under the Directorate of Community Services, within the City of Cape Town municipality. The City of Cape Town public libraries cater for a growing population of around 3, 2 million people, in an area of 2479 square kilometres.

COCTLIS has 100 libraries, which are divided into six districts. Each district is structured to include a mix of libraries across the historically white suburbs and historically black townships of Cape Town. COCTLIS groups its libraries into three categories: city-wide, regional and community. Each category has its own standards with regard to space, facilities, staffing and collections. There are just two city wide libraries, Central and Bellville. They have comprehensive collections with some areas of specialisation, and they actively purchase the most important resources across the spectrum of service areas. They aim to be centres of excellence with special resource-

sharing responsibilities. Regional libraries supplement their standard collections through more comprehensive coverage that allows access to a wide range of titles and subjects. Community libraries have standard collections intended to provide general coverage and instruction on as wide a range of subjects and authors as possible. The aim is to build “vibrant and relevant” collections with a good basic stock of standard titles (City of Cape Town Library and Information Service Task Team on Staffing Standards: 2006).

In spite of the policy to equalize library services across the city, analysis of the list of COCTLIS libraries list shows that some unevenness in library provision still exists. There are 22 “regional” libraries and 14 of them (64%) are situated in what might be called the historically advantaged or “white” business districts and suburbs of the city.

3.3.1 Book selection procedures

COCTLIS is an independent metropolitan library but it has strong ties with the Western Cape’s Provincial Library Services (WCPLS), which serves the larger province, especially with regard to collection development and book selection. COCTLIS librarians build their collections from budgets allocated to each library by the city, based on their circulation figures and the type of the library. Librarians select their material according to the priorities and the needs of their communities. They rely heavily on monthly book selection meetings convened by the WCPLS, when a selection of books is displayed. The books have been selected for the meetings by a team of book selectors at WCPLS who are in touch with agents, publishers and book shops. The book selectors select according to Provincial Library Service procedures. Book selectors post book reviews via the CPALS computer software and individual

libraries connected to the CPALS are able to view reviews before they attend the actual selection meeting.

Two days before the WCPLIS meeting, the COCTLIS libraries receive the list of books to be displayed and attend their own so-called “pre-selection” meeting. There they choose for their libraries. On the actual day of the provincial book selection meeting, the Principal Librarian who is responsible for collection development in COCTLIS views the books and represents the city’s libraries. The library staff members responsible for collection development in the libraries are also free to select books on their own. They often visit book shops and buy from those bookstores that appear on the City of Cape Town list of vendors.

It has to be said that the collection development policies are not the same between the City of Cape Town and the Provincial Library Services, as they have different histories and are not being administered by one administration. The COCTLIS policy is described below.

3.3.2 COCTLIS collection development policy

To begin the project, the researcher first examined the collection development policy to see if there is any mention of LGBT people. The COCTLIS collection development policy’s vision is to provide collections in “appropriate formats, geared to the needs of each community served” (COCT, 2004). It endorses the following:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
- The UNESCO public library manifesto, including the Freedom to Read and the Freedom to View statements
- The Library Bill of Rights

- The Copyright Act of the Republic of South Africa

The collection development policy goes on to say that it subscribes to the following principles in developing its collection. It states that:

- Free access to information and the freedom to learn are an indispensable means of enabling citizens to make the informed choices necessary in a democracy.
- Because they serve such a diverse community, public libraries contain materials representing different points of view. Individual prejudice may not preclude the use of materials by others.
- This also means that the libraries' collection is generalist by nature; they aim to meet the majority of patrons' needs, at a level suited to public libraries.
- While collections cater to the widest range of patrons at a popular level, the service aims to provide the best quality materials available in all categories of stock. A balance between quality and demand is sought.
- While librarians working in communities are best placed to make decisions around the use of budget and the selection of stock for their community, collaboration with management and colleagues is vital in developing collections for the service as a whole.

Although the collection development policy of the City of Cape Town endorses the constitution and UNESCO public library manifesto, it does not mention "sexual orientation". It just makes a general statement that prejudices may not preclude the use of materials by others. It does not specify what kind of material might be referred to. It further shows that the library's collection, as it generalist in nature, should aim

to a “popular” level. It does not clearly state the nature of and procedures for “unpopular” material.

In the previous chapter, previous researchers were quoted who say that it should be imperative that institutions that are serving a wide public should always be reminded to explicitly state their stand on the issue of gays and lesbians. If nothing is “officially” stated about that particular group, the risk of that population being overlooked or bypassed seems considerable.

3.4 Questionnaire survey

The survey follows the example of some of the international studies described in the previous chapter. Survey research has an advantage of studying a large number of and geographically dispersed cases. The choice of the survey research method is because it is an efficient way to explore procedures and attitudes across Cape Town’s 100 public libraries. It has the ability to identify attributes of a population from a sample (Allison & O’Sullivan, 1996: 45; Creswell, 2009: 145). Powell (2004: 54) defines a survey as a methodology commonly used to determine the present status of a given phenomenon. The survey thus gathers descriptive data.

The questionnaire was drawn up after reading the literature on the rights of gays and lesbians and library services to them. This led to the research questions which then led to the questionnaire, in consultation with the researcher’s supervisor. The first draft was given to a group of 12 postgraduate LIS students at the University of the Western Cape, none of them working at a COCTLIS library. Some changes in wording were made after this pilot procedure. The final questionnaire is described in a later section. It was sent via COCTLIS transport to the “senior librarian in charge of collection”.

3.4.1 Sampling

The population of the study was the librarians in charge in collection development in the 100 public libraries under the City of Cape Town. The aim was to have stratified sampling, which divides a study's population into groups according to certain possibly significant characteristics such as size, position or budget (Powell, 2004: 57). The inequalities in Cape Town between township and suburban and business district libraries, which have been highlighted by previous research (Hart, 1999), mean that the stratifying process had to include a fair number of libraries in disadvantaged areas of the city. And, as mentioned in Chapter 2, previous research has shown the significance of position and size of libraries in their provision of services to LGBT people.

The division of the COCTIS libraries into six districts made the stratified sampling quite easy. The divisions are designed to ensure that each district has a mix of types of libraries (regional and community) and communities. To ensure a good response rate, it was decided to send the questionnaire to all 100 libraries by COCTLIS transport district by district and then to see if each type of library and district were represented evenly. The result is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Sample of libraries by type

Type	No in sample	Total no in COCTLIS	% of population
City wide	2	2	100%
Regional	11	22	50%
Community	54	76	71%
Totals	67	100	67%

Table 2: Sample by districts

Districts	No in sample	% of total sample	No of libraries in each district	% of total libraries in district
District 1	8	11.6	19	42%
District 2	14	20.3	21	66%
District 3	12	17.4	14	86%
District 4	13	18.8	15	87%
District 5	12	17.4	20	60%
District 6	10	14.5	11	91%
Totals	69		100	

The disparity in number (67&69) between the two tables comes from the fact that two libraries did not identify their ‘type’

3.5 Questionnaires

The questionnaire is provided in Appendix D. As well as a number of closed questions on practices and policies, it includes a number of Likert scale statements to assess attitudes and opinions and a few open questions that will allow for qualitative data.

The questionnaire is structured as follows:

- Section A asks about personal information-age, gender, job title, language etc.
- Section B asks about collection development practices and behaviours- for example, selection tools used awareness of policy.
- Section C focuses on services which libraries render towards the gay and lesbian community- for example community notice boards, community information files.
- Section D Likert scale statements try to look at the attitudes of librarians responsible for the collection development.

3.6 Analysis of the data

The following chapter presents the results of the questionnaire survey. The data gathered by the questionnaire were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel. The open ended comments of respondents were analysed according to theme and referred to when relevant.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data that were gathered by means of the questionnaire survey of staff responsible for collection development in Cape Town's 100 public libraries. As shown in the previous chapter, 69 completed questionnaires were received back and there was a fairly even spread across the city districts. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel were used in the analysis of the data. The presentation of the data follows the order of the questions in the questionnaire that is attached in Appendix C.

4.2 Background information

Section A of the questionnaire asks for information on the respondents' job titles, type of library, age, gender, home language and qualifications. These are variables that might be important in the analysis of later questions. For example, it might be useful to compare attitudes across district or language group. The literature review in Chapter 2 mentions some research that shows that, internationally, inner city libraries and large libraries are more likely to offer LGBT-friendly services.

Figure 1: Question 1: Job Titles

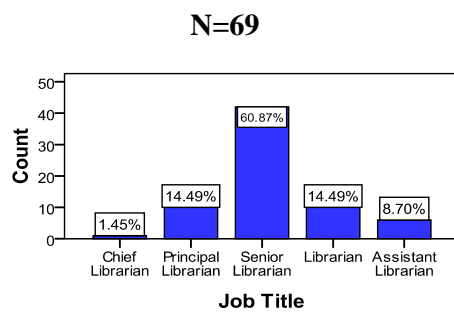


Figure 1 summarises respondents' jobs titles. It came as a surprise that assistant librarians were doing collection development which traditionally is regarded as professional work. Perhaps it reflects the blurring of professional barriers in public libraries across South Africa which recent investigations have commented on (Library & Information Services Transformation Charter, 2009).

Figure 2 shows that 37.5 % of the 24 respondents who answered the question are between the age of 40 and 50 years. Out of the 69 respondents 45 did not give their age.

Figure 2: Question 2: Age
N=24

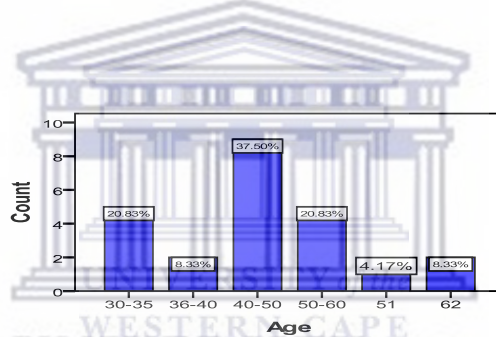


Figure 3 shows that 87% are females. The results reflect probably the dominating gender in public libraries throughout the country.

Figure3: Question 3: Gender
N=69

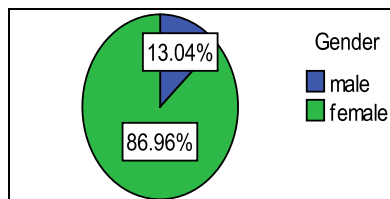
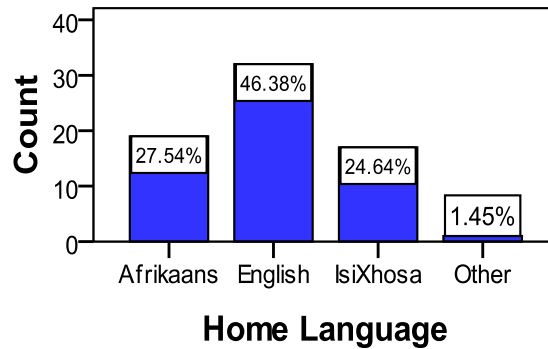


Figure 4 shows that the most common home language is English (46.385%)

Figure4: Question 4: Home Language
N=69



Sixty-three percent of respondents, according to Table 1, possess the professional qualifications, a BBibI degree or Higher Diploma in Library and Information Science. Another 5% have the three year para-professional qualification of a Lower or National Diploma in LIS. The questionnaire was addressed to staff responsible for collection development, most of whom, it was assumed, would be professionally qualified.

Table 3: Question 5: Highest Qualification
N=67

Table:1 Highest qualification	No of sample	%
Matric	7	10.10%
Lower Diploma LIS/National Diploma LIS	5	7.20%
BBIBL or Postgraduate Diploma in LIS	44	63.80%
Bachelors degree	5	7.20%
LIS Hons or Masters Degree	5	7.20%
Other: please specify	1	1.40%

Figure 5 and Table 2 give a breakdown of respondent's types of libraries and districts. Chapter 3 gave details on the classification of COCTLIS libraries into three groups. The vast majority of respondents work in so-called community libraries.

Cape Town's 100 libraries are classified into three groups: two large city wide libraries, 22 regional largish libraries, and 76 community libraries. The regional libraries have bigger buildings, larger collections and longer opening hours. Figures from COCTLIS show that 14 out of the 22 regional libraries (63.6%) are in the historically white business districts and suburbs of the city.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of respondents by type of library. As pointed out in Chapter 2, there is some research evidence that large and/or urban libraries are more likely to offer better services to gays and lesbians. So this variable will be considered in a separate section at the end of this chapter.

Table 4: Question 6: Type of library
N= 67

Type	No in sample	Total no in COCTLIS	% of population
City wide	2	2	100%
Regional	11	22	50%
Community	54	76	71%
Totals	67	100	67%

The researcher grouped the questionnaires into districts as she fetched them from a central collection point in each district. The sample represents each district quite fairly. District 1 stands out as the one with the lowest percentage of returns (42%). As discussed in Chapter 3, the library districts of the new city library service were formulated to break down the old divisions between white suburbs and townships. Apart from the two city-wide libraries, each district has a mix of library types, regional and community; but, as mentioned just above, there are still more of the better equipped regional libraries in the historically white suburbs and business centres. Hart's research in Cape Town's children's library services at the end of the

1990s found disparities in staffing and other resources between the suburban and township libraries (1999). These are not the subject of this project but they must be mentioned as they might have an impact on the findings.

Table 5: Districts
N=69

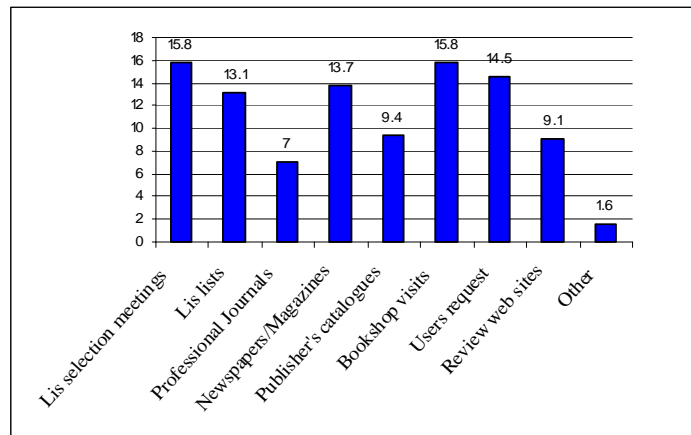
Districts	No in sample	% of total sample	No of libraries in each district	% of total libraries in district
District 1	8	11.6	19	42%
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District 3	12	17.4	14	86%
District 4	13	18.8	15	87%
District 5	12	17.4	20	60%
District 6	10	14.5	11	91%
Totals	69		100	

4.3 Collection development

Section B of the questionnaire, Questions 7 to 15, focuses on collection development practices and behaviours in terms of gay and lesbian materials.

Question 7 asks what tools are used in book selection. Figure 5 shows that book selection meetings, regularly held at the provincial or city head-offices, and bookshop visits are the most popular selection tools that library staff use when developing their collections. The implication is that the needs of gays and lesbians might well be overlooked. The books presented for “selection” at the head-office meetings have been pre-selected by the head-office staff together with their suppliers. And not all book shops in Cape Town have separate LGBT sections.

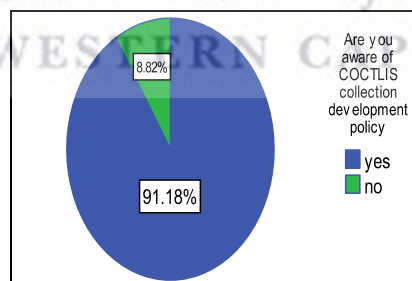
Figure 5: Question 7: Selection tools
N=69



It is encouraging to find out most respondents (91.18%) are aware of the COCTLIS collection development policy document, which is fundamental when developing the collection for the library.

Figure 6: Question 8: Awareness of collection development policy

N=68



Answers to Question 9 find that 55% of respondents indicate that when selecting materials they do consider the needs of gays and lesbians.

Table 6: Question 9: In selecting materials do you consciously consider the needs of gay and lesbian users?

N=64

Q 9. In selecting materials do you consciously consider the needs and preferences of your gay and lesbian users?	Yes	38	65.10%
	No	26	40.70%

However, as shown in Table 4, answers to Question 10 indicate that only 29% see the need to make an explicit statement in policy documents.

Table 7: Question 10: Need for explicit statement on the rights of gay and lesbians in collection development policy

N=66

Q10 In your opinion, should COCTLIS and individual library collection development policies make an explicit statement on the rights of gays and lesbians in terms of public library collections?	Yes	20	29%
	No	46	66.7%

As pointed out in Chapter 1, COCTLIS policy makes no mention of gay and lesbian library users. Again there is ambiguity in this finding when compared with the responses to Question 9. It might be that many respondents are reluctant to have explicit mention of the LGBT community. If little or nothing official is stated about a minority group, the risk of overlooking that group is high within the day to day operations. As the saying says, “out of mind out of sight”. A comment added by one respondent to her answer supports this suggestion. She says policies need to be “candid”:

I am not sure , because today before filling in the form [questionnaire] I browsed the system to see how many items I will get by typing in the words” gays and lesbians and I realized that we have some good materials available in our libraries (not a lot) but then again I know that if the policies can be candid about how important it is for the librarians in charge to spend some money to buy such materials and for the selectors to select these books for us to choose, then we will be in a position to meet the needs of the gays and lesbians in our communities.

The answers to Questions 8, 9 and 10 support her point. If so many are aware of the policy (91%) and only 55% consciously consider the needs and preferences of their gay and lesbian users, perhaps explicit mention must be made. It would raise selectors' awareness.

Question 11 asks if respondents have ever rejected materials because of gay and lesbian content. Only 7.2% say yes to the question. The added comment by one respondent, "*I would if I were to see it. I never saw any*", adds support to the above comment that some librarians might just not want to be made aware of the needs of gay and lesbian library users.

Question 12 follows up Question 11 by asking respondents to explain why they have rejected items that have gay and lesbian content. Only three respondents answered the question, with these reasons:

Yes, because it was not recommended by the selector because of its explicit content. It was a non-fiction book and apparently the publishing house that published it is notorious for publishing pornographic material, after hearing that from people who knew better than me. I decided to reject the book.

I have in non-fiction if there are any explicit photos

It was too explicit photographs.

If there were more comments like these, they might suggest a linking in people's minds of LGBT content to pornography. Follow-up research is needed to look at this suggestion more closely.

Table 5 presents the results for Question 13 which asks respondents if they look at the LGBT sections in publishers' catalogues and web sites. The Table shows that 65% of the 60 who answer the question say they do.

Table 8: Question 13: LGBT sections in publishers' catalogues and websites

N=60

Q 13 In browsing publishers' catalogues and websites do you consider gay and lesbian sections?	Yes	39	65%
	No	21	35%

Although 65% claim to consider LGBT materials, answers to Questions 14 and 15, which ask about purchases in the past year, show that very few LGBT materials were bought in the past year. Table 6 shows that only three (4.3%) subscribe to LGBT magazines or newsletters. And the average number of LGBT oriented books bought by the 46 respondents who answer Question 15 is less than one, .87. The median number is 0, meaning that half the respondents bought none. The fact that 23 chose not to answer this question is puzzling. If they are in fact buying books it is probable that they would answer the question. Until materials or books are bought and are made easily accessible, the prejudices and stigma, as described in Chapter 1, might put off gays and lesbians making requests. Three are large numbers of gays and lesbians who have not "come out" yet and would not risk exposure. Without requests, it seems that librarians will just not pay attention to this community's needs.

Table 9: Question 14: Gay and lesbian magazines/newsletters subscriptions

N=69

Q14 Does your library subscribe to any gay and lesbian magazines/newsletters	Yes	3	4.3%
	No	66	95.7%

4.4 Information services

Section C of the questionnaire, Question 16-20, moves away from book selection practices and focuses on the services which the libraries render towards the LGBT community. The questions ask about shelving of LGBT materials and how LGBT oriented information is provided.

A strong majority of respondents (88.7%), as presented in Table 8, reveal that they do not have a separate LGBT section in their reference or non-fiction section in their libraries.

Table 10: Question 16: Separate LGBT section in reference or non-fiction sections

N=68

Q16 Does your library have a separate section in its reference or non-fiction sections labelled “gay and lesbian interest (similar words)?	Yes	7	10.3%
	No	61	89.7%

The question led to some comments. A few respondents point out that they intentionally do not have a separate section but they label the LGBT books so people can find them. For example:

We have a gay fiction section-books are marked with pink triangle and there is a list of titles available.

Other comments reveal views that a separate section would do the LGBT community a disservice, for example:

I do not believe in labelling people. It perpetuates the perception that gay and lesbian are different and this will reinforce society negative attitude towards these individuals.

Question 17 asks if the library’s community information and pamphlet files include LGBT oriented information. Table 9 shows that 6 do, 35 do not and 24 do not have these kinds of files.

Table 11: Question 17: LGBT information in community information & pamphlet files

N=65

Q17 Do your community information and pamphlet files contain information on the city’s various gay and lesbian NGOs and support services	Yes	6	9.20%
	No	35	53.80%
	Don’t have	24	34.80%

Display boards can be used as more anonymous ways to reach the LGBT community. So respondents are then asked if they display information relevant to gays or lesbians on their community information notice boards. Twenty six (39.3) said yes.

Table: 12 Question 18: LGBT information on community information notice boards

N= 66

Q18 Does the library ever display information relevant to gays or lesbians on your community information notice board?	Yes	26	39.3%
	No	38	57.5%
	Don’t have	2	29%

Table 11 shows that 20 (29.4%) of respondents answered that they have been approached for information relevant to gay and lesbian people in the past year. There is no way of knowing if these queries came from gays and lesbians. A follow-up study should investigate the information seeking behaviour of gays and lesbians. This would find out if and how they use libraries and how satisfied they are with the services.

Table: 13 Question 19: Queries for information relevant to gay and lesbian people

N= 68

Q19 In the last year have you been approached for information relevant to gay and lesbian people?	Yes	20	29.4%
	No	48	70.5%

Question 20 asks those who answer yes to Question 19 if they were able to provide the desired information. However, more than the 20 who say yes to the previous question reply and it is difficult to make sense of the result. It is a pity as the question might have thrown light on whether the libraries have adequate LGBT oriented information resources.

4.5 Section D's Likert scale statements

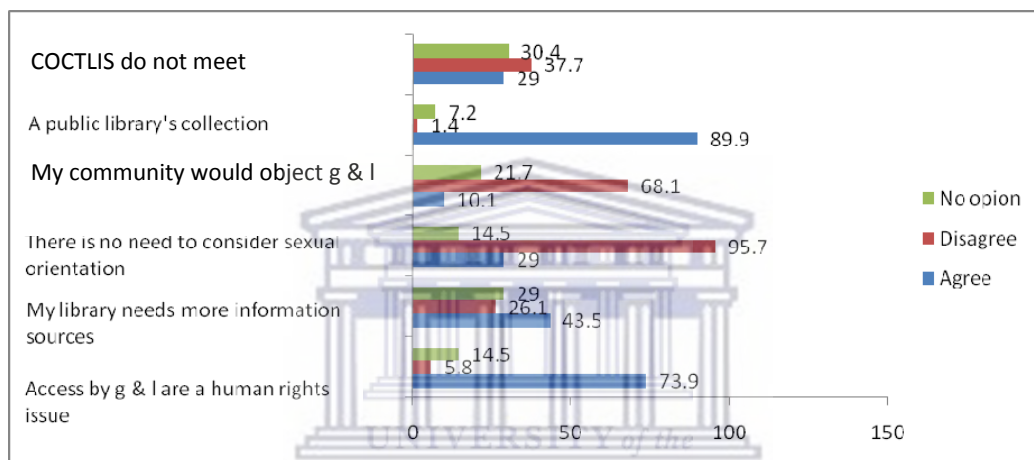
The purpose of Section D of the questionnaire, Questions 21 to 26, is to probe attitudes a little more deeply and to check if trends across questions are consistent. It provides six Likert scale statements and asks if respondents agree or disagree. The six statements are:

- The needs of gays and lesbians are not being met in COCTLIS libraries
- A public library collection should include gay and lesbian materials
- My community would object if we displayed gay and lesbian materials
- There is no need to consider people's sexual orientation in a public library's provision of materials and information

- My library needs more information sources to meet the needs of gays and lesbians in our community
- Access by gays and lesbians to information and reading materials relevant to them are a human rights issue.

Figure 7 presents the summary of results of the six questions as follows:

Figure 7: Questions 21-26



The Figure shows strong agreement (78%) with the statements that access by gays and lesbians is a human rights issue and that public libraries should include gay and lesbian materials (91%). But a lower percentage of 55% believe that there is need to consider peoples' sexual orientation in a public library's provision of materials. Opinion on whether COCTLIS libraries are meeting the needs of gays and lesbians is evenly divided with 26 saying they do, 20 saying they do not and 21 having no opinion.

The contradictions support the findings in earlier questions that, while respondents might *say* one thing they in fact *do* another. For example, most do not buy LGBT books but claim to believe that the libraries *should* cater for gays and lesbians. This

might lead to the conclusion that book selectors unconsciously censor gay and lesbian material. They need to be told what to do in policy. This is hinted at one comment added to Question 22, which throws light on the possible differences in policy between the provincial library services and the city libraries:

I think the Provincial library provides material but no-one has ever suggested buying specifically for the gay community from COCT.

Chapter 1 motivated the project by discussing how LGBT people are discriminated against, especially in Africa. As the researcher writes this chapter, a court case is proceeding in Cape Town against a group of men who raped and killed a lesbian who had “come out” (Jade, 2009). Table 12 cross tabulates Question 23’s statement that “my community would object if we displayed gay and lesbian materials” with Question 4, respondents’ home language. It reveals that the least agreement comes from the Afrikaans speaking respondents (0%) and the most from the Xhosa speaking. It should be pointed out that Afrikaans is the language spoken by Cape Town’s so-called “Coloured” community. So the responses might indicate higher levels of tolerance in the historically “coloured” areas of the city. But caution is needed in interpreting the results. The question asks about the community in which respondents work. Though it is probably true that the libraries in Cape Town’s Xhosa speaking communities are staffed by African Xhosa-speaking South Africans, there are many Xhosa-speaking people working across the city’s libraries. And many Coloured librarians will be working in the historically white areas of the city.

Table 14: Community objecting to display of LGBT materials by home language

	Q23: My community would object if we displayed gay & lesbian materials			
Q4	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Total
Afrikaans	0%	26%	74%	100%
English	13%	16%	72%	100%
isiXhosa	18%	29%	53%	100%
Total	10%	22%	68%	100%

It has to be said that the question relies on respondents' perceptions. It does not ask if they have tried before to display the gay and lesbian material. The statement led to some added comment, for example:

There are sometimes complaints about specific books eg. 'n man se man: author Brandt Varmus
 Its personal- may be true of some. Depends on the community you serve especially the African community
 It may be the old Afrikaans communities.

4.6 Breakdowns of analysis by type of library

So far the findings have been given for all of the respondents together, except for one question, where differences according to respondents' home language were examined. This section examines the findings more closely by breaking down the responses to several questions by type of library, large and community, and comparing them. The large are the city-wide and regional libraries combined into one group. The purpose is to see if the international research that finds significant differences in LGBT services between large downtown and small suburban libraries applies. In Cape Town, the city-wide and 62% of the regional libraries are found in the business districts and historically white suburbs of the city.

Table13 looks at Question 9 again, which asks if respondents consciously consider the needs of gays and lesbians in selecting materials. It shows now that, while 77% of the respondents in the regional and citywide libraries claim to, only 48% of those in the community libraries do.

Table 15: Question 6 and 9. Do you consider the needs of gays and lesbians in selecting materials? Breakdown by library type

Q9 Do you consider the needs of gays and lesbians in selecting materials?	Regional	Community	Grand Total
Yes	77%	48%	54%
No	15%	44%	39%
(blank)	8%	7%	7%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

A similar difference is found in analysing Question 13, which asks if respondents look at the LGBT sections of publishers' catalogues when they choose books. 85% of the "large" group say yes – while only 50% of the community libraries claim to do so. It could be that library staffs in the smaller libraries do not have the same knowledge of and access to selection tools.

Although overall only 37% of all the libraries have an openly labelled LGBT section, 31% of these sections are in the large libraries and only 6% in the community libraries. And analysis reveals similar patterns with regard to the provision of LGBT oriented information in community information files and on notice boards.

Table 14 gives the breakdown in responses to Question 21, on whether respondents believe that the needs of gays and lesbians are *not* being met by COCTLIS. It shows that more than twice the number of large library respondents as community library

respondents disagrees. This could indicate differences in services and awareness across the two types of library.

Table 16: LGBT needs are not being met by COCTLIS: breakdown by library type

Q21 LGBT needs are not being met by COCTLIS	Large	Community	Grand Total
Agree	15%	33%	30%
No opinion	23%	31%	30%
Disagree	62%	33%	39%
(blank)	0%	2%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

4.7 Conclusion

The breakdowns in the last section seem to be useful. It shows marked differences between the two kinds of library, large and community. No definite reasons for the differences can be given from this project. However, possible factors might be lower educational levels in the community libraries, less exposure to professional education, less knowledge of collection development principles and tools, and perhaps less awareness of public library ethos and idealism. All these might be impacting on the quality of library services to LGBT people.

The findings of this chapter will be interpreted in the light of the project's research questions in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to use the data summarised in Chapter 4 to return to the research questions. The research set out to investigate services to the LGBT community in Cape Town City libraries. Internationally there has been a focus on this user community, but the researcher could find no research on gay and lesbian library needs. Her survey of the thesis literature shows research in theology and health sciences but none in library and information science.

5.2. Answering the research questions

Chapter 3 listed the research questions as follows:

- Do gay and lesbian library users constitute a special user group with particular information and reading needs?
- If it is accepted that public libraries have a responsibility for the special information and reading needs of gay and lesbian library users, how do they cater for these needs?
- How do South African public libraries, specifically the City of Cape Town Library and Information Services (COCTLIS), provide for these needs with their collections and their information services?
- Are the public library staffs aware of the UNESCO principles in terms of LIS services for gay and lesbian library users?

Most of the discussion of these questions in this chapter looks at the broad findings and does not break them down by type of library. However, as shown in Chapter 4, the study shows that views and practices are different in the two groups of libraries, “large” and “community”.

5.2.1 Question 1

Do gay and lesbian library users constitute a special user group with particular information and reading needs?

The answer to this question in the literature is “Yes”. Chapters 1 and 2 surveyed gay and lesbian human rights documents, the South African constitution, the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto and the Batho Pele principles of provincial government in South Africa, as well as international research. The conclusion is that public libraries should regard gays and lesbians as a minority user community that should be paid attention to. This is stressed in one of the standard reference works which provides the following definition of public libraries:

The public library is a library or library system that provides unrestricted access to library resources and services free of charge to all the residents of a given community, district or geographical region, supported wholly or in part of public funds. Because public libraries have a broader mandate than academic libraries and most special libraries, they must develop their collections to reflect diversity (Reitz, 2004: 578).

The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (2004) proclaims that the public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. It further points out that its services are based on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality language or social status. The Manifesto clearly guides all public librarians on the functioning of public libraries as institutions that are there to render free

services to all and every user has to receive equal treatment. Public librarians responsible for collection development have to be reminded at all times of these principles. According to the literature, the public library has a mission to serve all in a diverse community.

The research reviewed in chapter 2 finds that gay and lesbian library users do constitute a special library group with its own particular information and reading needs. Gough and Greenblatt (1992) for example point to their “unique legal, financial, social, cultural and religious information needs.” Other research emphasizes the coming out and identity information needs and the need for entertainment materials.

However, the survey of Cape Town librarians gives a less definite answer to the question, as was shown in the previous chapter. Answers to some of the Likert scale questions indicate broad agreement with the international literature, with, for example, 90% agreeing that a public library collection should include gay and lesbian materials and 74% agreeing that providing access to gay and lesbian orientated information is a question of human rights. But there is a gap between belief and practice, it seems. The broad finding of the study must be that the LBGT community is not generally regarded as a user community with its own reading and information needs. Chapter 4 made the following findings, which support this claim:

- The collection development policy of COCTLIS makes no explicit statement on catering for the needs of gays and lesbians.
- Only 29% of respondents believe that the policy should make an explicit statement.

- About half of the respondents (55%) claim to consciously consider the needs of gays and lesbian in their collection development.

The policy of the City of Cape Town Library Services and respondents' views seems to reflect international trends. As mentioned in Chapter 2, according to Ritchie (2004), in Illinois, 72% of public libraries do not include mention of sexual orientation in their collection development policies, and respondents do not anticipate any change in this respect within the foreseeable future. The researcher agrees with Ritchie's argument that a mention of the LGBT group in policy would be a reminder to taxpayers that the library serves everybody and that it would ultimately influence selection practices and outreach efforts.

Goldthorp's study in 2006 led him to warn that prejudice is often hidden in the claim of "one service for all".

5.2.2 Question 2

If it is accepted that public libraries have a responsibility for the special information and reading needs of gay and lesbian library users, how do they cater for these needs?

The review of the literature suggests that, if public libraries wish to improve their services to gays and lesbians, they should:

- expand their LGBT oriented collection
- provide an inclusive collection
- display LGBT oriented information on their community notice boards and

- include information relevant to LGBT people in their community information services.

The principle is that libraries should render unbiased services to LGBT people. They should conform to the clause of the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto that promotes the principle that public librarians have to provide inclusive services to all people and avoid discriminatory censorship practices.

The study in Cape Town did not attempt to survey gays and lesbians and it did not assess the collections in the libraries. But, according to the findings from the literature, public libraries are underused by the LGBT community. Previous researchers' findings attest that public libraries do not cater for the needs of gays and lesbian library users. For example, Creelman and Harries (1990) found that the material available does not include practical lifestyle information. Other researchers seem to echo this criticism of the quality of library collections in terms of gay and lesbian users.

5.2.3 Question 3

How do South African public libraries, specifically the City of Cape Town Library and Information Services (COCTLIS), provide for these needs with their collections and their information services?

The data in Figure 8 in Chapter 4 show that the majority of respondents (90%) agree that public libraries should include gay and lesbian material in their collection. But the following findings must be considered in answering this question:

- Opinion is equally divided on the question if COCTLIS libraries are meeting the needs of gays and lesbians. And 21 people had no opinion on this question.
- In spite of their beliefs that libraries should include LGBT materials and that their libraries do not have enough LGBT related information sources, Cape Town's librarians are not selecting many LGBT materials. Only three (4.3%) subscribe to LGBT magazines or newsletters and the average number of LGBT oriented books bought by the 46 respondents in the past year who answer Question 15 is less than one. Half the respondents bought none.
- The fact that most respondents seem to rely on the pre-selected books at monthly book selection meetings and at bookshops might be a factor. And, as pointed out in Chapter 4, gays and lesbians are not likely to put in requests for LGBT oriented titles. The literature on LGBT services points out that librarians need to use alternative less mainstream sources if they want to know about LGBT materials.
- About 10% of libraries in the study have a separate section labelled "gay and lesbian interest". This might not be a sign that they are overlooking the needs of LGBT people. As some respondents point out, there are other less exposing ways of providing easy access to materials. Chapter 2 referred to Whitt's view that (1999) that the library collection should be inclusive and LGBT materials should be integrated in the larger collection, particularly with regard to the information for teenagers who are dealing with identity issues.
- Of the 41 libraries with community information and pamphlet files, 35 do not include gay and lesbian oriented information.
- 55% respondents reveal that they do not display any gay and lesbian related information on their notice boards.

- Not many respondents (20) say they have had LGBT related information queries in the last year. It could be that they are just not aware of the information needs of their gay and lesbian communities. Or it could be that LGBT people just do not approach librarians. Joyce and Schrader (1997) found this kind of lack of awareness among staff and suggested that staff should be provided with diversity training.

These numbers are lower than figures in the international research. For example, Ritchie (2001) found that about 31% of his sample said that they do not display gay and lesbian related events or news from local LGBT organisations.

5.2.4 Question 4

Are the public library staffs aware of the UNESCO principles in terms of LIS services for gay and lesbian library users?

Most respondents in the survey seem to be aware of the UNESCO principles in terms of LIS services for gay and lesbian library users. Most of the respondents (78.5%) agree that the provision of services to gays and lesbians is a human rights issue.

Figures presented in Figure 8 in Chapter 4 show that 91.2% of respondents agree with the statement that a public library collection should include gay and lesbian materials. But only 26% feel satisfied that their collections have enough LGBT materials. Those respondents that admit that their libraries need more information sources to meet the needs of gays and lesbians in their community are the libraries that know the role of public libraries and that are likely to change their attitudes to accommodate and respond to the needs of the LGBT user groups. It is encouraging to find out that

44.1% of respondents presented in Figure 8 are aware of the existing need that public libraries must maintain.

5.3 Conclusion

The cross tabulations in Chapter 4 that compare results by language group and by type of library reveal the need to take into account the different contexts of respondents. The study supports international studies that find that geographic place and size make a difference to LGBT library services. The study in Cape Town points to possible significant differences between the regional libraries and the community libraries. Chapter 4 provides evidence that the smaller community libraries might be providing less LGBT friendly service than the larger city-wide and regional libraries. It speculates that lower professional education levels and less exposure to the professional LIS ethos might be a factor.

In conclusion, the situation has been found to be “spotty” with regard to COCTLIS librarians’ awareness of and services to their gay and lesbian user groups. The researcher feels that there seems to be a contradiction between what people say they believe and their day to day practices in the libraries. It is good news that staff attitudes towards the information needs of gays and lesbians statements do not project prejudice. But this leaves mixed feelings in the researcher as this is not clearly reflected in practices in acquiring of materials for the libraries. As Gough and Greenblatt (1992) warn, a stated belief that sexual orientation is irrelevant to collection development can hide prejudice. It would be interesting though if the researcher had had a follow-up question to her questionnaires that asked the respondents if they were prepared to change their attitudes towards the provision of services for this minority group.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 presents recommendations made by the researcher from her research study. Her recommendations are twofold. The first recommendations are directed towards future research and the second group are directed specifically to library practice. At the end of Chapter 6 the researcher concludes the dissertation by disclosing her hopes that her investigation will have an impact on the services to LGBT people in Cape Town City Library Services.

6.2 Recommendations

Section 9(3) of the South African constitution explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of “sexual orientation” (South Africa, 1996). The origin of the gay and lesbian rights clause came from the realization that there needs to be social justice and that all forms of discrimination ought to be eradicated. On the basis of this study’s findings, the researcher believes that there is a great need for COCTLIS public libraries to improve its information services towards gay and lesbian communities.

The researchers reviewed in Chapter 2 all agree that too little research has been done on the gay and lesbian library user community. Carmichael from United States (1998:5) sees the exclusion of gay and lesbian communities from mainstream society reflected in their exclusion by the library profession. Librarians must not be afraid to make a self introspection and take a stand on behalf of these marginalised users. They might encounter resistance, but the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto and the South African Constitution of 1996 protects them in this regard.

6.2.1 Recommendations for future research:

The researcher makes the following recommendations

- Research is needed to investigate why there is so little research in this area in South Africa in particular in the Library and Information Science field compared to international countries.
- A limitation of the study is that it did not attempt to gather the views of the people in the communities or of the gays and lesbians themselves. Further investigation should be done to find from these LGBT users what they need and expect from libraries.

There are other limitations which could be attended to in further research. For example the emphasis was on books. Perhaps the study should have included questions on audio visual materials as the gay and lesbian film industry is very powerful. A future study should include observation of selection meetings since these meetings seem to be so important to respondents. Interviews with policy makers and with those people who pre-select books for their monthly meetings would add useful insights. Examination of library catalogues and holdings would have added depth to the study.

6.2.2 Recommendations for Library Practice:

The study suggests the following areas for librarians to consider:

- COCTLIS needs to examine why librarians do not want any explicit mention about gays and lesbians in the collection development policy of COCTLIS.

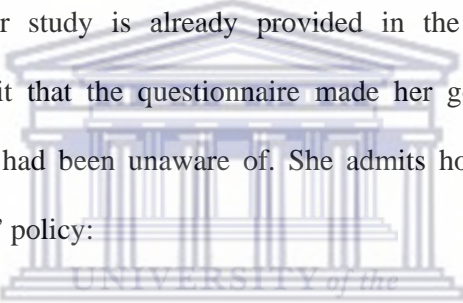
- Collection development policy should state clearly what percentage each library should spend towards gays and lesbian materials.
- Collection development policy must be rewritten to have a clear statement on gay and lesbian material.
- Book selection processes require some examination. Book selection procedures and policies are not uniform across the two library services, COCTLIS and WPLS. For example the question might be asked what criteria do librarians in each service use in selecting material at book selection meetings
- In the present diversity education workshops, more emphasis must be given to gays and lesbians
- Library workers must work in partnerships with gay and lesbian groups like Triangle to draw on their knowledge of the needs of this community
- The Library halls might be used for workshops to establish relationships with LGBT users and to signal that the library is welcoming. Some libraries already offer the halls as venues for HIV/AIDS support groups
- The professional body LIASA should pay more attention to the needs of the LGBT community in their documents and their conference programmes. LIASA has the power to change attitudes amongst their members.

6.3 Conclusion

Moody (2004:1) advocates that public librarians uphold the social justice philosophy of free access to information for all people. She points out that all public librarians

have the duty to provide information and reading materials for all, regardless of sexual orientation. There can be no quick fix for achieving this objective, but with clear collection development policy and individual commitment, this can be attained. Librarians should always keep in mind the role of public libraries towards gays and lesbians and try to eliminate the stereotypes and prejudices that may exist when they select materials for their libraries.

The researcher hopes that her study will make a difference to the quality of library services in Cape Town. She hopes that it will remind the library profession of their responsibility to providing unbiased and inclusive information for all. Evidence of the possible impact of her study is already provided in the words of one of the respondents, who admit that the questionnaire made her go to the catalogue and discover materials she had been unaware of. She admits however she needs to be encouraged by “candid” policy:



I am not sure , because today before filling in the form [questionnaire] I browsed the system to see how many items I will get by typing in the words” gays and lesbians and I realized that we have some good materials available in our libraries (not a lot) but then again I know that if the policies can be candid about how important it is for the librarians in charge to spend some money to buy such materials and for the selectors to select these books for us to choose, then we will be in a position to meet the needs of the gays and lesbians in our communities.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



09 February 2009

FACULTY OF ARTS

Department of Library & Information Science

Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2137
Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 3659

Ms N Steyn
The Director
City of Cape Town
Directorate: Community Services
Department: Library and Information Services

Dear Ms Steyn

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I kindly ask you to allow me to administer a questionnaire survey in your institution, in February 2009, as part of my research for my M. Bibl. Degree at UWC. As part of my course, I am required to produce a mini-thesis, and this involves conducting an investigation. My research is entitled: Provision of Library and Information Services to Gay and Lesbian Communities in Cape Town's Public Libraries. The study is done under the supervision of Professor G. Hart from the Department of Library and Information Science, University of the Western Cape.

As a librarian in Cape Town's library services, I believe this work will be of value.

The success of this study relies on the information that will be gathered. Please be assured that information gathered will be used strictly for the purpose of the study and confidentiality & anonymity are assured. Participation will be voluntary. The survey will consist of a questionnaire sent to the senior librarians in 50 randomly selected libraries across the library districts.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Neumisa Mfazo
E: mail: 9467548@uwc.ac.za; Neumisa.Mfazo@capetown.gov.za
Cell: 079 490 9536



UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



Civic Centre
12 Hertzog Boulevard
Cape Town 8001
P O Box 2815, Cape Town 8000
Ask for: Ms N Steyn
Tel: 021 400 3782
Fax: 021 400 4076
E-mail: Ninnie.Steyn@capetown.gov.za
Website: <http://www.capetown.gov.za>
Ref: N Mfazo request to conduct survey 260309cp
Your Ref: Email dd 090209
Filename: \\cbo-civic-039\Home\cprince1\My Documents\Colleen\Ninnie\Response N Mfazo request to conduct a Survey 260309.docx

Iziko loLuntu
12 Hertzog Boulevard
Cape Town 8001
P O Box 2815, Cape Town 8000
Cela: Nks N Steyn
Umnxeba: 021 400 3782
Ifeksi: 021 400 4076

Burgersentrum
Hertzog-boulevard 12
Kaapstad 8001
Posbus 2815, Kaapstad 8000
Vra vir: Me N Steyn
Tel: 021 400 3782
Faks: 021 400 4076

COMMUNITY SERVICES — Library & Information Services

2009-03-26

Faculty of Arts
Department of Library & Information Science
Private Bag X17
BELLVILLE
7535

ATTENTION: NCUMISA MFAZO

Dear Ncumisa

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Permission is hereby granted to conduct a survey for your research entitled *Provision of Library and Information Services to Gay and Lesbian Communities in Cape Town's Public Libraries* on the understanding that participation in the survey will be voluntary.

Yours faithfully

NINNIE STEYN
DIRECTOR: LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES

THIS CITY WORKS FOR YOU | ESI SIXEKO SISEBENZELA WENA | HIERDIE STAD WERK VIR JOU

APPENDIX B: AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

Dept. of Library & Information Science

Tel: [021] 959 2137 / 3623

Fax: [021] 959 3659

S Stroud (Secretary): sstroud@uwc.ac.za

30 April 2009

Dear Colleague

Research Project: Provision of Library and Information Services to Gays and Lesbians in Cape Town's Public Libraries

I am a MBibl student at the University of the Western Cape. My research topic is "The Provision of Library and Information Services to Gays and Lesbians in Cape Town's Public Libraries". I have chosen Cape Town City Libraries as my research site and have permission from Ms Ninnie Steyn, Director.

Your library is part of my sample group and I am attaching a questionnaire to be completed by the librarian-in-charge or the staff member who coordinates your library's collection development (selecting and ordering materials). *Please return the completed questionnaire to your district office by 20 May 2009.*

Public libraries as public services exist to serve the information and reading needs of all members of their communities equally. There is consensus that the gay and lesbian community have specific information and reading needs. The aim of my project is to investigate if and how Cape Town's public libraries provide for these needs with their collections and their information services.

I can assure you that the answers to this questionnaire will remain confidential. The names of participating libraries and staff members will never be mentioned in the reporting of the research. If you have any questions please contact with me or my supervisor at UWC, Prof Genevieve Hart (ghart@uwc.ac.za).

I am grateful for your help and will circulate a report on my findings in due course.

Yours sincerely

Ncumisa Mfazo

Senior Librarian: Rylands Public Library

021 637 2220/ Ncumisa.Mfazo@capetown.gov.za

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

The Provision of Library and Information Services for Gays and Lesbians

In Cape Town's Public Libraries

MBibl Research Project

Please answer all questions.

Your answers are confidential and you will remain anonymous.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Job title

Please give your job title	
----------------------------	--

2. Please give your age:

3. Gender

Male		1
Female		2

4. Home language

Afrikaans		1
English		2
IsiXhosa		3
Other: please specify		4

5. Highest qualification

Matric		1
Lower Diploma LIS / National Diploma LIS		2
BBibl or Postgraduate Diploma in LIS		3
Bachelors degree		4

LIS Hons or Masters		5
Other: please specify		6

6. Type of library

City wide		1
Regional		2
Community		3

SECTION B: COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT (please use spaces provided to add any comment)

7. Please tick the tools you use in selecting materials for your library (as many as necessary)

LIS selection meetings		1
LIS lists		2
Professional journals		3
Newspapers/magazines		4
Publishers' catalogues		5
Bookshop visits		6
Users' requests		7
Review web sites		8
Other: please specify		

8. Are you aware of the COCTLIS collection development policy?

Yes		1
No		2

9. In selecting materials do you consciously consider the needs and preferences of your gay and lesbian users?

Yes		1
No		2
Other comment		

10. In your opinion, should COCTLIS and individual library collection development policies make an explicit statement on the rights of gays and lesbians in terms of public library collections?

Yes		1
No		2
Other comment		



11. Have you ever rejected (refused) a possible item because of its gay or lesbian content?

Yes		1
No		2
Other comment		

12. If you answered “yes” to Question 11, please explain why you rejected the item(s).

13. In browsing publishers’ & booksellers’ catalogues or websites, do you consider the materials listed in their “gay or lesbian interest” sections?

Yes		1
No		2
Other comment		

14. Does your library subscribe to any gay or lesbian oriented magazines or newsletters?

Yes		1
No		2
Other comment		

15. About how many gay and lesbian oriented books have you bought in the past year?

Comment	

SECTION C: INFORMATION SERVICES TO GAYS & LESBIANS

16. Does your library have a separate section in its reference or non-fiction sections labeled “gay/lesbian interest” (or similar words)?

Yes		1
No		2
Comment		

17. Do your community information and pamphlet files contain information on the city's various gay and lesbian NGOs and support services?

Yes		1
No		2
Don't have such a file		3
Comment		

18. Does the library ever display information relevant to gays or lesbians on your community information notice boards?

Yes		1
No		2
Don't have an information notice board		3
Comment		



19. In the last year, in your reference and information work, have you been approached for information relevant to gay and lesbian people?

Yes		1
No		2
Comment		

20. If you answered "yes" to Question 19, were you able to provide the information?

No		1
----	--	---

Don't have an information notice board		2
Comment		

SECTION D: LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONS

Do you agree with the following statements? Please tick the box closest to your own view. And add any comment you like after each statement.

21. "The needs of gay and lesbian people are not being met in COCTLIS libraries"

Agree	No opinion	Disagree
1	2	3

Please explain your answer as you wish

22. "A public library collection should include gay & lesbian materials"

Agree	No opinion	Disagree
1	2	3

Please explain your answer as you wish

23. "My community would object if we displayed gay & lesbian materials"

Agree	No opinion	Disagree
1	2	3

Please explain your answer as you wish

24. “There is no need to consider people’s sexual orientation in a public library’s provision of materials and information”

Agree	No opinion	Disagree
1	2	3

Please explain your answer as you wish

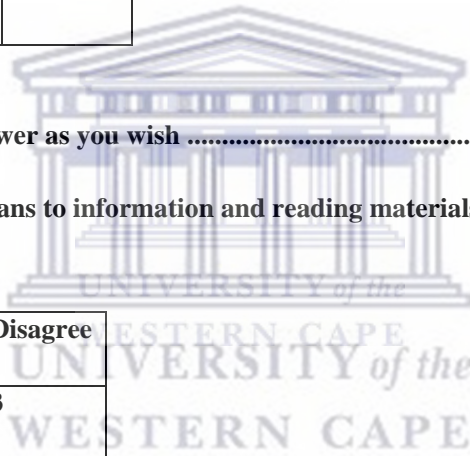
“My library needs more information sources to meet the needs of gays and lesbians in our community”.

Agree	No opinion	Disagree
1	2	3

Please explain your answer as you wish

“Access by gays & lesbians to information and reading materials relevant to them are a human rights issue?”

Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
1	2	3



Please explain your answer as you wish.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME & EFFORT!

PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR DISTRICT OFFICE BY

MAY 2009

For more information contact me Ncumisa Mfazo

Email ncumisa.mfazo@capetown.gov.za

Cell 0794909536