TEENS AND LIBRARY SERVICES: EXPERIENCES, EXPECTATIONS, PERSPECTIVES. AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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This work is dedicated to my mother Maria, to Michele and to the memory of my father.

Declaration

This dissertation is the sole work of the author, and is developed from a research proposal submitted by the author in Semester Two as part of the Independent Study Unit for Information Studies 2 of the MA/MSc Information Studies course.
The author has also used, in particular for the pilot study and the data analysis section, part of the small scale research study submitted in November 2002 as part of the Applied Research in Information Studies Unit of the course.

The opinions expressed in this dissertation are solely those of the author and acceptance of the dissertation as a contribution to the award of a degree cannot be regarded as constituting approval of all of its contents by the Division of Information & Communication Studies.

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Abstract

TEENS AND LIBRARY SERVICES: EXPERIENCES, EXPECTATIONS, PERSPECTIVES. AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by Elena Corradini

Young adults visit public libraries all over the world, but they receive in some cases, particularly in Italy, no high attention from the librarians' side.
Research on the relationship between adolescents and library use is not abundant. Mainly, studies on young adults concentrate on their reading habits, thus remaining bound to sociological aspects.

The researcher noticed a research gap in considering young adults as key informants to their needs as potential / real users of the library. Hence, this study investigating experiences, expectations and perspectives on library use was developed and carried out.

Until now no research has focused specifically this topic in Italy. This study therefore provides unique information and should promote greater understanding of the factors affecting library use by young adults. It is likely to be of interest to other librarians, teachers, educators and carers working with adolescents. Also administrators and funders of public libraries which provide services to this age group might be interested in this study, since some specific recommendations are provided.

A mixed-method, essentially qualitative approach was deemed to be particularly suitable to the research project. A small quantitative element to the study was provided by some of the questions devised for the questionnaire, while further qualitative data were collected through a limited number of in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Key findings are that young adults believe libraries are important institutions which they fancy as places where communication and dialogue is fostered. The key factors affecting their frequency to the libraries, as emerged from data collected, are linked with how they spend their free time.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

1.1. Context

Looking at an international context, there is currently a significant body of research publications – along with published studies and reports by official Institutions – that update yearly on specific themes related to some characteristics of the young adult population.

Unfortunately, for the major part they are concerned primarily with sociological aspects. Those most closely referring strictly or almost partly to cultural interests of the age group under study pertain widely to the reading habits of either large or small samples.[1] More recently, another core subject of interest among professionals has been developed on literacy skills, which have been object of a large scale study supported by the OECD in 2000, through the PISA study research.[2] The PISA study showed that in an environment defined as the "*Learning Society*"[3] the skills necessary to young citizens to transform information into knowledge and thus become real protagonists of the world of tomorrow are to be nurtured with care.[4]

In this respect, the role of the libraries is more and more focalised on the needs of different users,[5] which shall be addressed with active customer care policies.[6]

The Province of Trento, the county of which Ala – the town where the present research project has been undertaken – is one of the 223 municipalities, has also shown interest in having precise data on this phenomenon and recently commissioned a study on the juvenile condition in the various districts.[7]

The research, conducted by a pool of experienced professionals, revealed, among various matters of interest,[8] some distinctive features of the young adults living in Trentino from their national peers as far as their reading habits and their visits to the libraries are concerned. While in Italy only four in ten young adults occasionally enters a library, the half of the adolescents in Trentino visits these

institutions, a feature that is ascribed to the capillarity of libraries distribution in the region compared to other parts of the nation.[9]

Despite this confidently perceived local scenario, it should be asked if, in such a promising condition, it is socially acceptable and sustainable that the difference, towards libraries not so well stocked[10], can be so little.

Undoubtedly, librarians, as professionals, shall be in charge of the cultural development of the different population groups served, including the young adults' target group, which has been specifically addressed by IFLA in the *Guidelines for library services for young adults*.[11] But only a few tentative examples of good practices emerge in the Italian literature, which will be dealt with in the literature survey following this brief outline.

In Italy, there has been a limited acknowledgement on the importance of reserving special attention to adolescents.[12] This until very recently, when in Autumn 2003 a specific session of the BIBLIOCOM National Congress of the AIB, the professional Association of Italian Libraries, was completely dedicated to "Adolescents in libraries."[13] The session was co-ordinated by the National Commission of Youth Libraries and attended to with personal contributions by some of the libraries that had started programmes towards adolescents. Nonetheless, the session was very informally planned and no official and specific dissemination was made since then about the topics under discussion.[14]

Looking then at the Italian context through the lens of the World Wide Web, some features emerge. Recent examples of libraries - as the Bologna 'Sala Borsa Ragazzi'[15] or the San Giovanni Library in Pesaro[16] - induce to reflect on the chance that the library shall be projected towards the future with all means available.

With the exception of the situations illustrated above and some others,[17] that represent the most dynamic part of the sector, still many libraries in Italy are bound to a traditional role. At the best, they are conceived – sadly by staff more than by administrators – as places where to study, and not as cultural centres.

At a local level, the town of Ala has perhaps paid a tribute towards the new setting of the City Library of Rovereto, located about 16 km in the north. This library reopened at the end of November 2003, after some months, in a completely new

series of rooms inside the Museum of Contemporary Arts of Trento and Rovereto.[18] The architectural, very 'airy' solutions attracted since then many visitors, who can also benefit from the most suitable and flexible opening hours.[19]

This library has induced many young people living in Ala but studying in Rovereto to visit it soon after school time, and their perceptions have been positive, making of it a model to follow.[20]

That the relationship between adolescents and libraries has the potential to contribute in enhancing young adults' participation in social roles has been recently confirmed by the interest shown in this matter by the local Province of Trento. The county Administration participated in organising a course co-financed by the European Social Fund, aimed at developing new skills for the youth animators and librarians of the future. The course title included the innovative image of a professional involved in interpersonal skills: the '*Youth Leader'*.[21]

The reactions of local information professionals to this enterprising opportunity were twofold. Some librarians regretted that the course was too demanding in terms of intensity and duration,[22] for them to be able to attend it.

But other colleagues disputed on the practicability of such new professionals' figures inside a library, considering the particular setting of these institutions in Trentino, where for the major part are consisting of just one 'factotum' librarian.[23]

These opposite positions are not surprising in a context of animated discussions over the definition of the different, but often complementary, roles of the information professionals, which have been recently the central topic of a conference held in Milan in March 2004.[24]

One of the aspects underlined in that conference has been the necessity for the professional body to consider the changes in information technology and their potential for education and library services.

As Sue Brown observed, "*the sector must identify changes in education policies that will encourage members of the profession to think outside the professional box and to see the importance of the wider arena of which they are an important part. These must get away from the 'passive librarian' mode and take the profession into unexpected areas, as the users' champion and as authoritative*

experts in a single space information arena, as trans border data flows create networks that shrink distance and time."[25]

As already focussed in Italy, libraries should then be acknowledged among the modern welfare structures, which must reflect in particular the users' needs by offering them high quality information and education services. [26]

As a consequence, then, new skills are necessary to attract young adults to our libraries. Skills that are, in part, related to specific models of libraries: the American, the North-European and the Central-European models, which will be further discussed in Chapter 2, dedicated more broadly to the literature review on the topic of interest.

In Italy, children's and young adults' libraries[27] have experienced three main development steps.[28] Their first, marginal presence in the nation developed in the Sixties-Seventies of the last century, while in the following two decades a great interest flourished around the young, as central actors in reading activities.[29]

At present, though, it is felt that something has not properly worked. Despite the presence of this public in libraries goes very closely to a 50% of the total figures, there is no much attention for an old issue, that is, the decrease of reading practice among adolescents.[30] Hence, the necessity of a project that would concentrate the attention on the adolescent reader is felt as crucial.[31]

Considering the Italian context again, only the library in Bassano del Grappa (Treviso, Italy) promoted and published a small scale survey on adolescents.[32]

It has been therefore noticed how no research has been until now focussing on how young adults are involved in using the libraries, nor what image or model of library they have in mind. This was the rationale for this study, which aims to gain a deeper insight and comprehension of the issue.

1.2. Purpose of the study

From the literature survey conducted (see Chapter 2), it has been envisaged that topics on which researchers have mostly investigated are related to young people's reading interests, dedicated library services development in foreign contexts, and staff development. As far as the Italian context is concerned, as already mentioned, only one contribution refers about a survey on youth information needs, related to the offering of dedicated services.[33]

Taking into account the research gaps on the direct perceptions of young adults about the library services, the present study concentrates on the investigation about young people and their relationship with the local library.

The importance of knowing the distinctive features in which the library operates is essential. As registered in many other situations,[34] also in the district of Ala (TN), Italy, library loans show a consistent drop out of this age group after the end of compulsory school.[35]

The poor exploitation of the library services and resources by the focus population has been tracked in order to verify following hypotheses:

a) Young people lack awareness of the potential resources and services available to them;

b) Young people don't regard the library as a place that can make some difference in their lives.

1.3. Motivations for the study

The study has found its motivations in some of the aspects considered in the *Literature Survey* chapter (Chapter 2), namely:

- the interest in the target group shown by governments in the social field, also at local and regional level;[36]
- the necessity of knowing the expressed and hidden information needs of teenagers, in order to implement and / or improve services dedicated to this target group;
- the necessity of knowing the level of satisfaction expressed by teenagers about library services.

1.4. Aims and objectives of the study

1.4.1. Aims of the study

The following study aimed to explore the experiences, expectations and perspectives of library services for young people between 11 and 19 years of age in the community of Ala (TN), a town and surroundings of almost 7.700 inhabitants, of which 9% (about 690 individuals) between 6-24 years of age.

The principal aims are to gather data on following aspects:

- past library experience
- present library experience
- motivation to library use
- explicit needs to library use
- implicit needs to library use
- satisfaction scale for services offered (real library)
- requirements for services to be offered (ideal library)

The questions to which the study has aimed to find an answer are subsequently specified. Following the hypotheses made in paragraph 1.2, the main issues to test have been following:

A) Are young people in the area aware of the potential resources and services available to them?

B) Do young people in the area consider the local library an important institution?

These general questions have been further specified, in order to understand the motivations for the answers:

a) Is there any current awareness on the importance of library services among young people in the area?

b) Do they have any experience of the local library?

c) Do they have expectations about dedicated services?

d) Do they dream of an ideal library?

1.4.2. Objectives of the study

In order to accomplish the stated aims, the study has been conducted with attention to the following objectives:

- To gather information about young people's experience with the local library from their point of view
- To explore explicit and implicit needs of young people about dedicated library services
- To gather information on possible strategies in order to gain their attention and partecipation in the library's life
- To identify issues requiring further investigation

From the data collected, the study can provide information on:

- young people's experience of the local library
- main attitudes of this target group toward library services
- identification of factors affecting those attitudes
- identification of the main explicit and implicit needs for dedicated services
- creation of strategies to gain attention and partecipation, improving service
- identification of further issues requiring attention in future

1.5. Significance of the study

The investigation provides contextualised information about some aspects regarding young people use of the local library:

- past and present experience with library services;
- expectations about library services;
- perspectives in the use of the local library.

As such, the study has been carried out in exploratory form, devising, whenever possible, a strategic level of inquiry that was included in the conclusions and recommendations chapters (see Chapter 6 and 7).

This study can be significant for several audiences and different stakeholders of the library services. Researchers and students can consider it as a contribution to the body of knowledge about the relationship of young adults to libraries. Policy makers and administrators can reflect on information provided, to find support in decision-making at a strategic level, pondering the real value of libraries in society. Practitioners can compare results with evaluations made in their own working situations, and use them as to develop a core of good practices.

References

[1] See for instance WICKS 1995.

[2] See OECD 2000. Further developments of the study were published in OECD 2003.

[3] See the White paper on education and training: *Teaching and learning: Towards the Learning Society* published by the EU Commission, DG XXII, and available at the URL: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/doc/official/keydoc/lb-en.pdf (referred to in the Bibliography as "EU").

[4] See OECD 2000, p. 9; OECD 2003, p. 3-5.

[5] The IFLA has published various Guidelines focussing on different users' groups, that can be read at the URL: www.ifla.org/ VII/s10/pubs/ [Last access 2004-05-15].

[6] See BORETTI 2004, p. [5].

[7] See BUZZI 2003. The quantitative study was conducted over a sample of 1,023 individuals aged between 15 and 29 years. These included also almost 15 subjects living in Ala (see the methodological appendix, p. 259-260.

[8] See BUZZI 2003. The study aimed to collect data on basically following areas of interest: Transition from youth to adulthood, relationship to the family, education, work, social activism (including political engagement), leisure activities, consumes, risk factors, values, development of an individual / collective identity. A conclusive note on the study is given on the pages 249-256.

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 147. Almost each of the 223 municipalities, in fact, are provided with a library.

[10] The Province of Trento sustains library stock acquisitions, so that for the most part, libraries can have at their disposal more substantial financial resources than in the other parts of Italy.

[11] Cfr. IFLA 2001.

[12] The main contributions to this subject on professional journals have come from Carlo Revelli [see REVELLI 1995, REVELLI 2001], Antonella Agnoli [AGNOLI 1999c], Jasminka Grendele [GRENDELE 2000], Eros Miari [MIARI 2000], Rita Schmitt [SCHMITT 2000], and Mirella Tassoni [TASSONI 1999].

[13] See AIB 2003. The precise title of the session was "*Teenagers in the library*".

[14] The official topics under discussion were: rooms for adolescents in the library; organisation of services for young adults; strategies to enhance young adults participation in library activities.

[15] This library offers, in particular, specific services to children from 8 to 14 years of age. For more information, see www.bibliotecasalaborsa.it and www.bibliotecasalaborsa.it/content/cartacollezioni/raccolterag.htm#ragazzin [Last accessed 2004-05-15].

[16] The site of this library, offering various collections for the younger adolescents, is available at the URL: www.comune.pesaro.ps.it/biblioteca/default.asp [Last accessed 2004-05-15].

[17] Some libraries that are active in promoting activities and services to young adults are the public libraries of Schio (Vicenza), Abano Terme (Padova), Scandicci (Florence), Modena, Rozzano (Milan).

[18] See www.martrovereto.it for details.

[19] This library is open from 9.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m.

[20] For details, see in particular Appendix 5.5. p. CVIII-CX.

[21] The course was called "Progetto Stormo" and was presented as an opportunity to developing skills in organising activities of exchanging partnerships among young adults' group within Europe. For more details on the course, see http://www.diagonal.it [Last accessed: 2004-05-15].

[22] The course has begun in Autumn 2003 and was due to end in April 2004. Frontal lessons were taken once a week for a whole day.

[23] In most small public libraries of the county, librarians are in charge of all cultural activities, so that they have a central role in fulfilling the cultural policies of their villages. Nonetheless, this all-round role is mainly felt as a burden rather than an opportunity.

[24] The conference has been entitled "*Professione bibliotecario: come cambiano le strategie di formazione*." The Italian context doesn't yet use as frequently as in other parts of Europe the term of 'information professionals' to indicate the various specialists implicated in the library services to the population.

[25] See BROWN 2003, p. [3].

[26] See RAVENNI 2000, p. [4].

[27] There is no specific linguistic attribute to translate this concept in the Italian language, where the sections of libraries dedicated to this age group are simply called "biblioteche per ragazzi". However, since the materials offered frequently include documents suitable until an age of 16, this expression is considered applying for the present discussion.

[28] See CORDERO 2000, p. [5].

[29] *Ibidem.*

[30] *Ibidem*, p. [6].

[31] *Ibidem.*

[32] See GRENDELE 2000.

[33] See GRENDELE 2000.

[34] See for instance CORDERO 2000, p. [6].

[35] Local loans figures indicate almost a 30% drop in the first year (at the age of 14-15) and another loss of 10% in the following.

[36] From the sources gathered, no doubt that adolescence or, the "youth condition" is an ever-present issue in the governments' agendas across Europe, be it in the social or in the educational field. Nonetheless, it is not easy to define what "youth" is, let alone to define 'library services for young people', which in the professional literature are always linked to children services, without being particularly structured, even in the Anglosaxon context, which has a long tradition in this field [cfr. EDMONDS & MILLER 1990].

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1 Background

The coordinator of the Italian Libraries Association's National Committee For Children's Libraries, Antonella Agnoli, has recently expressed her opinion about the necessity of a national board co-ordinating all library activities to youth and polemically drew back on the assumption that library work with young people be difficult.[1] In fact, very few contributions on this field have been published on Italian professional journals in the last 5 years. This fact provides an incomplete image of the activities and services dedicated to this group, which are probably carried out in silence, rather than brought to light and disseminated.

At present, the relationship between young people and libraries is still difficult. According to the sources available, librarians frequently depict young people as loud, not serious, not interested in the library, and so on. Youth is still considered a difficult public of mostly non-readers and uneasy guests to manage, so that, as reported by some researchers, librarians ask themselves why this group should be worth their efforts.[2]

As a conceptual framework for the study, the present literature survey has been conducted with an eye on discussions and issues emerging in the professional body of literature (official periodicals) over the last 5 years – or more, when necessary – at international level. Relevant sources on this topic were primarily searched among the issued professional literature, so that the level of awareness about the importance of the topic could be determined. The aim was to gain evidence about the interest that librarians show on dealing with young people in the public library environment. Findings from other documents – particularly from official web sites – have been incorporated during the search process, when fitting to the aims of the present study.

2.2. Defining the object of study

The first difficulties in finding relevant literature on the topic came from having to handle with an apparently awkward definition, that of "*young people*", "*youth*" and "*youth condition*."[3]
As a matter of fact, denominations for this group vary considerably and confronting international experiences also means having familiarity with different cultural and socio-linguistic backgrounds (see Appendix 1).
As Agnoli pointed out, additional uncertainties arise from the shifting of the age boundaries for this category,[4] always under discussion by sociologists and psychologists.[5] Nonetheless, the existence of this group is firmly stated.[6]

As a consequence of these considerations, for the present study it has been necessary to investigate, at a first level, literature findings in LIS related to both "*children*" section and either "*teens*" or "*young adults*" sections, incorporating studies from other disciplines, when advisable in order to data interpretation.

2.3. Common features at strategic and organisational level

As acknowledged by IFLA in the *Guidelines for services for young adults*,[7] libraries should be "*an important force for the individual in achieving a successful transition from childhood to adulthood by providing access to the resources together with the environment that will foster intellectual, emotional and social development and offer a positive force for an alternative to societal problems*." Moreover, libraries should meet educational, information, cultural and leisure needs of young people.[8] As Tassoni recalls, the IFLA Guidelines urge public libraries to be a provider of transition services from the children's to the adults' sections,[9] such as the Unesco Public Library Manifesto urged these institutions to have an active role in society.[10]
As far as the practical implementation of these services is concerned, the professional literature has until now concentrated on some common areas of discussion: The

organisation of physical spaces and the demanding relationship towards young adults as one of the users' group of the libraries.

Theoretical discussions about developing young people's services separately from adults' and children's sections or even in a separate building abound.
Generally, there is agreement on the idea that libraries should provide a recognisable corner to be stuffed with desirable materials and facilities.[11]
Contrasts arise when deciding for or against a separate section for young people.

As for the Italian context, Agnoli argued that separate sections could reduce the possibilities of interacting with other library services and maintained that clear references to reading choices and promotion could be more useful.[12]
Nonetheless, in Orléans, children' and adults' areas are well recognisable by the users and most French libraries provide a separate section for young adults,[13] as recommended by the IFLA *Guidelines.*[14]

Moreover, an emerging tendency is exploring the possibility of creating not only real, that is, physical separate sections, but also virtual ones, where young adults can meet anonymously still converging to the library.[15] Still, the physical factor is considered important if allowing that young adults can have free access to the adult sections with which they tend to identify.[16]

Already in 1981, a study clearly underlined that restructuring services means for the staff showing the ability of developing book knowledge and changing attitudes.[17]
During this process, librarians could happen to be faced with a verification and judgement of their own values, something that most of adults would like to avoid.[18]
Nonetheless, from this point of view, also in the Italian context it has firmly stated that prejudices, stereotypes and barriers existing on both sides have to be abated.[19]

2.4. Young adults and libraries in the Italian context

Mainly, in Italy young people have been investigated as a social group to gain information about the lack of interest in reading and libraries.[20]
In spare cases, the need to develop specific and (also ethnic) detailed profiles of young people's groups of library users is taken into account in order to improve the range of dedicated services – also by directly consulting the end users.[21]

At the same time young adults observe that libraries are uninteresting and cold, solemn and rigid, boring and out of time.[22] When asked, they give as a reason for not frequenting the library its poorly updated collections and the absence of materials on relevant topics regarding the present world.[23]
The consequence: Many teenagers who are reluctant readers don't even know how rewarding reading can be. From many parts, the invoked solution is in reading promotion,[24] revision of document selection criteria and strategies for collection development.[25] That is: librarians must do something to help them.

The few contributions divulged on this topic in the last few years in Italy refer when stated to different cultural backgrounds, without offering a unique view on proposed models. According to Agnoli, library activities tend to reach young adult groups mainly at school time and provide series of bibliographic information and bulletins, reference services, guided tours, or activities to develop skills in using library resources.[26]
However, some examples from Italian and foreign contexts have been considered in the professional reviews, which draw a different picture: Ideas are spreading and sometimes go over theoretical hurdles to find new and imaginative solutions.[27]

In the Italian context only a few of the international works have found a wide echo through the professional journals and periodicals. Among the most investigated models and traditions are those from France, Germany, and the USA,[28] but some incursion to the North-European Countries will give a wider picture of the arena.

2.5. Young adults and American libraries

Library services for young adults in the USA, in the eyes of the Italian information professional, have been riding a long way.
The structure of the American Library Association, with a specific branch (YALSA), has been the backbone for the co-ordination of many activities, which receive regular acknowledgement, also through official publications from the Association.[29]

Many professionals have been involved in research on teens, but perhaps the most notable contributions to the literature in this sector have come by Patrick Jones. This researcher and practitioner dedicated his studies to the relationship between young adults and libraries, creating a web site for youth librarians[30] and providing a quantity of useful materials for librarians working with young adults.[31] He considers this task at a practical level, far away from theoretical discussions.
Jones' aim to establish a connection between young adults and libraries derived from the observation that libraries possess information and young people the need to access it.[32] But, as correctly stressed, in order to meet this need, librarians shall forget their prejudices and traditional tasks, and regard tensions as false feelings, emerging from themselves and not from young adults.[33]

2.6. Young adults and Central-European libraries

Foreign experiences show that significant factors in attracting young people to the libraries are above all media diversification and organisation of specific activities not connected to school environments, provided that place, services and collections available are adequate and visible to this target group.[34]
In France, many experiences show that young non-users have been attracted by new sections of the libraries, such as the "*discothèque*", the "*mediathèque*" and the "*logithéque*" or "*didacthèque*", e.g. computer programmes to be used for training.[35]
The success of the French "*mediathèques*" is explainable, according to Agnoli,

through their advantages: Up-to-date services, plenty of multimedia supports, free access to all rooms, modern and wide spaces – very different from the schools – where socialisation can be cultivated.[36]

The experiences of Hamburg and Rostock in Germany are also illuminating, with books and magazines considered not more valuable than other media and where document provision is carried out with the direct help of the target group.[37]

Other projects intended to develop new approaches to young adults were evaluated by the German Teilkommission der Kinder- und Jugendbezogene Bibliotheksarbeit of the Deutscher Bibliotheksinstituts.[38]

The interest for this target group also facilitated the publication of a specific magazine for librarians working mainly with young adults.[39]

The German experience shows that the co-operation between libraries, research institutes and – in some cases – private stakeholders[40] is effective.

2.7. Young adults and North-European libraries

The Unesco Libraries Portal[41] in the section Children and Young People[42] links to the libraries dedicated to this target group in different countries all over the world.

It has to be noted that on a total of 124 library sites linked to this web page, representing 21 countries, 60 are located in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.[43]

Owing to the peculiar climatic and geographical conditions, libraries in these countries (similarly as in Australia) have developed their services in order to be accessible through the web. Also children and young adults have been considered as valuable subjects of interests and have been dedicated much efforts to be included in the provision of specific information. Being dependent on technology, these efforts have been deemed worth of intensive collaboration between regions and even countries.

Thus, joint co-operation projects have been developed, such as the Children's Polar Library, defined as '*the children's library in cyberspace*'[44] – serving also young

adults – which has put together professionals from Norway, Finland and Sweden. The aim was to collect and digitise texts from the different Nordic traditions, as to concretise a digital library for all Nordic languages,[45] with the direct co-operation of youth themselves.

Another project favouring the active participation of youth in the development of services has been developed in Finland. Allianssi, the "national organisation representing and serving those in the field of youth work,"[46] has concentrated into a single portal all information concerning youth. Hence, also other customers, such as educators, were able to profit from this organisation.

2.8. Current issues and trends

The successful examples displayed above constitute a small minority of well-spent professional skills. Frequently enough librarians forget that the library is a place where people come for every kind of information, as the growing mediating function of the library in the ICT environment attests.[47]

Therefore, the old image of the library as barely a stock of books should be dismissed, as Agnoli advises,[48] and librarians should forget just tolerating young adults' presence in libraries.[49]

The new image of libraries – as mediated by reputed opinions[50] – should then reflect the needs of their younger stakeholders, to be accepted as:

- places where free and unconditioned reading be developed by means of reading clubs[51]
- observatory places for the reading preferences of young adults
- observatory places, documentation and training centres for educators and parents
- places where resources on reading, young adults literature and editorial market are constantly updated
- places where research and historical memory be fostered

As such, libraries should promote themselves as dynamic and ever changing places.[52] Moreover, as Ferrieri believes, they should also accept (again, not just tolerate) improper use by young people, as much as the unordered toddling among the shelves, allowing that the library becomes a refuge against rain and the hostile world: it is part of its hospitality.[53]

As a matter of fact, according to Poulain, librarians should never forget that a library is never just like the librarian would like it to be, because users force it to be a place of negotiation between personal needs and public materials, supports and fruition rules.[54]

The features envisioned would claim the identification of an appropriate library model, as some of those briefly examined in the previous pages. Nevertheless, Agnoli has been far from welcoming an importing flow of foreign models like they would be consume goods, because – as she observed – library history and development goes along with the history of mentalities, cultural traditions, institutions, legislation and regulations.[55]

As other specialists have underlined, any library model should be developed in a context bound to its entourage and its target groups. Any project as such could then be considered as a "*work in progress*", since "*only from constant self-evaluation and need analysis derives an attractive and effective library service.*"[56]

A particular feature has been emphasised from various practitioners. Any users are customers, and as such they will continue to visit the library if they enjoy it as a friendly environment.[57] As Jones reminds, librarians will then be remembered not only as "*the book people*", but will finally give a more active image of themselves.[58]

A recent article by Virginia A. Walter[59] focused on some research gaps, among which she took into account the following question:

"How and why do young people use public libraries?"

Walter urged to find answers on this topic, fostering the production of critical awareness on the contribution of M.K. Chelton, E. Meyers, P. Jones and D. Taylor.[60] Despite American libraries can already count on the presence of an existing network of collaborating practitioners and many practical manuals, Walter noticed the quasi-absence of illuminating essays on public library reference services to children and young people. As a consequence, she expressed the need of creating a national research body to discuss about dedicated library services to these users' groups.[61]

Anyway, it seems that the first and unavoidable co-operation must take place between librarians and young people themselves, as first-hand connoisseurs of their interests.[62] The teamwork with other services to youth is also considered as a positive factor in connecting young people with libraries[63] and, particularly in Germany, the collaboration with schools has been envisaged as particularly apt to avoid the risks that young adults would drop reading.[64]

To enhance teamwork, an action plan to investigate on the library's real and potential target group is needed, which, at the same time, can provide evidence or dismount the theoretical background provided by the international literature.

References

[1] See AGNOLI 2003.

[2] See TASSONI 1999, p.10; PATTE 2001.

[3] See JONES 1992; MARSHALL, 1975.

[4] See AGNOLI 1999a.

[5] See ANTONELLI 1996.

[6] See GALLAND 1996.

[7] See IFLA 2001.

[8] *Ibidem.*

[9] See TASSONI 1999, p.12.

[10] See UNESCO 1994.

[11] See AGNOLI 1999a.

[12] *Ibidem.*

[13] See AGNOLI 2001a, 2001b.

[14] See IFLA 2001.

[15] See GRENDELE 2000.

[16] See SCHMITT 2000, p.32.

[17] See WINSLADE 1981.

[18] See CAVALLI 1999, p. 254-255.

[19] See AGNOLI 1999a p. 35.

[20] See BUZZI 1997, 1998; SARTORI & BUZZI 1998.

[21] See GRENDELE 2000.

[22] See AGNOLI 1999a, p. 34.

[23] See GRINZANELETTURE 1995, p.111.

[24] See VIVARELLI 2000, p. [3]; CARDARELLO 2000, p. [9-10]; MIARI 2000, p. [11-12].

[25] See MACKEY 1996 and FABRI 2000, p. [15-16].

[26] See AGNOLI 1999a, p.67.

[27] See GRENDELE 2000, ARELLANO YANGUAS & GOMEZ SESMA 2001, SCHMITT 2000.

[28] See REVELLI 1995.

[29] See YALSA 1997.

[30] See the homepage of 'The Young Adult Librarian's Help' at the URL: http://www.kcpl.lib.mo.us/ya and the web site 'Connecting YA and Libraries', at www.connectingya.com.

[31] See JONES 1998.

[32] *Ibidem.*

[33] See JONES 1992, 1998. This opinion has been also supported by Revelli (REVELLI 1995).

[34] See AGNOLI 1999a p.35.

[35] See PISSARD 1994.

[36] See AGNOLI 1999a, p.34.

[37] See SCHMITT 2000.

[38] See DBI 1997a, DBI 1997b.

[39] The magazine is called "TEENidEE: Der Informationsblatt für JugendbibliothekarInnen" (started 1997).

[40] See the projects of the Deutscher Bibliotheksinstitut as illustrated at the URL: http://deposit.ddb.de/ep/netpub/89/96/96/967969689/_data_stat/www.dbi-berlin.de/dbi_pub/bd_art/kommbe97/komm08_1.htm

[41] See the website at the URL: http://portal.unesco.org/

[42] See UNESCOb.

[43] See UNESCOb. The countries represented at the last access to the web site [2004-05-15] were as follows: Australia (16), Belgium (1), Brazil (1), Canada (4), Costa Rica (1), Denmark (5), Finland (22), France (10), Germany (1), Ireland (1), Italy (3), Mexico (1), New Zealand (7), Norway (7), Pakistan (1), Russian Federation (1), Sweden (26), Switzerland (1), Thailand (2), UK (1), USA (12). The Italian libraries linked to this web page were the 'De Amicis' International Youth Library of Genua, the Public Library 'Casa Piani' of Imola (Bologna) and the 'Sala Borsa' Library in Bologna.

[44] See POLAR LIBRARY.

[45] *Ibidem.*

[46] See the web page of the ALLIANSSI 'Youth Information Library' at the URL: http://www.alli.fi/kirjasto/engstrat.html.

[47] See AGNOLI 1999a, p.64-65.

[48] See AGNOLI 1999a, p.33.

[49] See AGNOLI 1999a, p. 31.

[50] See AGNOLI 1999a, p. 65; REVELLI 1995; JONES 1998.

[51] See ARELLANO YANGUAS & GOMEZ SESMA 2001, p.23.

[52] See SCHUMAN 2002, p.36.

[53] See FERRIERI 2000, p.173.

[54] See POULAIN 2002, p.191.

[55] See AGNOLI 1999a.

[56] See ARELLANO YANGUAS & GOMEZ SESMA 2001, p.23.

[57] See AGNOLI 1999a, p.67.

[58] See JONES 1992 p. 155; JONES 1998.

[59] See WALTER 2003.

[60] For a quick overview of the works of some of these researchers, see the following references. Elaine Meyers, Head of the Phoenix Public Library, is Adjunct Lecturer at the University of

Arizona, School of Information Resources and Library Science for the course 'Teen Services in Public Libraries' (see www.sir.arizona.edu/fl03/688/); Mary K. Chelton is Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at the Queens College, New York (see brief curriculum in the web page of the e-magazine Voya, at http://pdfs.voya.com/5f/tBo/5ftBookshelf.pdf); Patrick Jones has developed his own web site at www.connectingya.com.

[61] See WALTER 2003.

[62] See SCHMITT 2000, p.34.

[63] See GRENDELE 2000.

[64] See DAUME 1999.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study has been conducted with a mixed-method approach,[1] so that the presence of bias throughout the research should be limited. Since the major focus was in understanding the phenomena under investigation ("why" and open-ended questions), there has been a prevalence of qualitative inquiry methods, which tend to "*understand the individuals' perceptions of the world*" as to gain insight into the existence of social facts.[2]

During the research process, as categories have been emerging from data, it has been necessary to consider whether some factors should be controlled, ignored or dealt with by randomisation.

3.2. Choice of research paradigm and methods

The selection of a theoretical paradigm as a starting point for social research is recommended, among others, by Creswell.[3] In the literature, the main research paradigms discussed are the *quantitative* and *qualitative*. Each approach has distintive characteristics, advantages and disadvantages. As Tashakkori and Teddlie observe, the conflicts between these paradigms have developed almost into animated discussions "over the relative merits of opposing worldviews or belief systems; in the social and behavioural sciences, these have typically been positivism and constructivism."[4]

This strong dualism in social research has been progressively softened in favour of mixed method approaches, which can generate the best balance among the various methods available to increase knowledge over a phenomenon, as reminded by Crotty.[5] The necessity of overcoming the dualism was felt to grant a future to survey research, that aimed to ensure the comparability of answers gathered from different respondents.[6]

Thus, it is now widely accepted and even encouraged[7] that the choice of the approach depends on the research questions, along with identified constraints. This implies that also a pragmatist orientation can be recognised.[8]

After having analysed the research questions as to the best methods to be used to fulfil aims and objectives of the study, the choice of a suitable paradigm will justify the theoretical perspective, and endorse the methodology and the methods used for the research.[9]

For the present study, after having considered the various epistemological positions and theoretical perspectives from the works of Crotty[10] and Patton,[11] provided that a prevalence to the qualitative aspects should be given, the researcher has adopted an approach suitable for the conduction of an exploratory study, as it was intended. The epistemological foundation for the study was found in the constructivist approach.

3.2.1. The constructivist approach

To improve understanding of the chosen approach, a quick overview on the two main attitudes to phenomena developed inside this perspective is to be given: constructionism and constructivism.

The basis of constructionism,[12] according to Crotty, lays in the attempt to give the same importance to scientific as well as non-scientific understandings, since none can claim to be absolutely objective, truthful, or generalisable.[13]

In this perspective, meaning is not created but constructed[14] through human interaction with objects and therefore are "*at once objective and subjective*.[15]

A particular aspect of this paradigm is embedded in the interpretation of social entities such as institutions, which are intended as the "*source of interpretative strategies whereby we construct meaning*."[16] This point of view is considered essential, and connected to the interactivity of the human community.[17]

Another important feature of this approach is the relativistic view of the results achieved. In different conditions, the same phenomena could be interpreted differently.[18] Evaluations on phenomena cannot subsequently conclude which of the collected set of data is right, true or real.[19]

Constructivism involves the ability of each of us to give an unique meaning to phenomena, thus each interpretation is equally valid and appreciable,[20] since the world is framed by our cultural and linguistic constructs.[21]

Evaluations will tend to comparisons among different subjects or groups, as to interpret data gathered, without giving more significance to one set of data (e.g., staff vs. customers) in particular. Issues emerging from all stakeholders function as the basis to determine what kind of information is required.[22]

Among the foundational questions of constructivism, as described by Patton,[23] following have been considered as particularly consonant with the aims and objectives of the present study:

> "*How are the people in this setting constructed reality? What are their reported perceptions, "truths", explanations, beliefs, and worldview? What are the consequences of their constructions for their behaviors and for those with whom they interact?*"[24]

3.2.2. Symbolic interactionism and phenomenology

3.2.2.1. Symbolic interactionism as communication device

Symbolic interactionism derives from the work of G. H. Mead, as pieced together and disseminated by H. Blumer in particular.[25] Among the basic interactionist assumptions cited by Crotty,[26] meaning of things arises out of the social interaction that individuals have with each other.[27]

Therefore, to understand attitudes, it is necessary to "*adopt the standpoint of others*."[28] Adopting this role is understood as a *symbolic interaction*:

- it is an *interaction*, because the observer takes the role of the actor;
- it is *symbolic*, because language and other symbolic tools are taken apt to grant communication between human beings.[29]

This theoretical perspective has contributed in the generation of the methodology widely known as "grounded theory."[30] This theory, as explained by Patton,

focuses on the process of theory generation, emphasising steps and procedures in a way to allow a connection between induction and deduction, through various methods,[31] which will be later discussed in this chapter.

3.2.2.2. Phenomenology as openness to new meanings

Along with symbolic interactionism, also phenomenology has provided some useful support to the study. This perspective suggests that former understandings of things should be revisited by direct contact with phenomena under study.[32] Referring to other works, Crotty describes this approach in various ways, among which as a return to uncontaminated things, and as an attempt to look anew at phenomena without prejudice.[33]

3.2.3. Rationale for methodology

3.2.3.1. Grounded theory

Following the interpretation of Patton,[34] grounded theory emphasises inductive strategies to proceed in theory development and this has an effect on the way the researcher learns about the phenomena. In fact, as Glaser and Strauss have devised, a theory generated from the data must come from the data and be "*systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research*."[35]

Grounded theory devices to understand phenomena have been envisaged in the constant comparative method, comparison among research sites, theoretical sampling, fieldwork to test emergent concepts.[36] This theory has offered for this study the necessary set of 'coding procedures' that enabled standardisation, rigor and validity to the research process.[37]

3.2.3.2. Survey research

The main characters of survey research, as enumerated by Fraenkel and Wallen,[38] are following:

> *"1. information is collected from a group of people in order to describe some aspects or characteristics (such as abilities, opinions, attitudes, beliefs and/or knowledge) of the population of which that group is a part.*
>
> *2. the main way in which the information is collected is through asking questions; the answers to these questions by the members of the group constitute the data of the study.*
>
> *3. information is collected from a sample rather than from every member of the population."*[39]

In conducting surveys, the researcher first of all must define the research problem, the target population as research object, the mode of data collection.[40]

After these steps, a sample population has to be selected and instruments apt to collect data (questionnaire, interview schedules, etc.) are to be prepared.[41]

Surveys can be either cross-sectional (information is collected from a sample at just one point in time, which can take one day to several weeks) or *longitudinal* (information is collected at different points in time to study changes occurring).[42] For the present study, due to time constraints, the cross-sectional typology was chosen.

3.3. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry

As observed by Tashakkori and Teddlie, mixed models can be used either in all phases of the research process (conceptualisation, data collection, data analysis, inference), or in some of these.[43] One of the model suggested is the 'parallel mixed model study', which the present study has tried to follow, consisting in the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.[44]

This 'multiple simultaneous approach'[45] provides following framework for the research process:

- data collection is achieved by a survey instrument (questionnaire, interview) with closed-ended and open-ended questions, classroom observation, focus groups;
- data analysis is fulfilled by means of univariate or multivariate analyses, through content analysis;
- some quantitative data can be qualitized, some qualitative data can be quantitized (counting the frequency of occurrence of events) by forming group profiles with similar characteristics
- results can be presented in terms of qualitative inferences and quantitative indices.[46]

The present study has tried to conform to this framework, whenever possible, according to the specific conditions in which it was conducted, as it has been illustrated in the following paragraphs.

3.3.1. Selection of subjects of inquiry

3.3.1.1. Population

The importance of knowing the distinctive features in which the library operates has been considered essential. Thus, to fulfil the aims of the study, the researcher had to gather demographic data.

The Home Office of the Town Hall provided figures on how many young people between 11 and 19 years of age were living in the community of Ala (TN), a town of almost 7.700 inhabitants (including the surroundings).

These figures were only to be split by age and sex, but not by location.

The area could in fact be divided into some sub-areas relating to the particular characteristics of each. On one side, the town area, where the library is located in the city centre, in an easily reachable position (0-1,5 km for the inhabitants). On the other side, the 7 surroundings, whose population can reach the library only with public or private transport means (1,5-6 km from the centre).

3.3.1.2. Sampling

Although it has been acknowledged that there are "*no absolute methods for specifying what your sample should be*"[47] the study was initially meant to try to provide a sample frame coherent with the characteristics a sample should contain, that is comprehensiveness, probability of selection, and efficiency, as devised by Fowler.[48] The sample used for the study should be preferably a multistage stratified one. Unfortunately, legal constraints (the Privacy Law) didn't consent that the researcher could have access to the data of minors directly from lists with their names and addresses, neither from the middle school, nor from the Town Hall Home Office.

This sampling method could so not be used.

In fact, to allow use of this method it was necessary to access from the beginning some features of the population under investigation.[49]

This could have resulted in correlating answers to particular indicators (e.g. age, users vs. non-users of the library, inhabitants of the town centre / of surroundings,

etc.), which could have biased answers. In that case particularly, information about the subjects' provenience should have been collected at the design stage and checked at the analysis stage, in order to verify any correlation with a direct experience of the library services.

Due to these constraints, an 'availability sampling' approach had to be chosen,[50] although the researcher was aware that theorists indicate stratified sampling as a technique that can achieve "*a greater degree of representativeness and thus decreasing the probable sampling error*".[51]

Initially, since the research problem was deemed to be relevant not only to the students', but also to the teachers' population, it was envisaged as advisable to attempt a parallel sample study about teachers, educators and carers in general. Due to time constraints, this was discarded in favour of a set of interviews and focus groups, described further in this chapter, in order to give a more round picture of the issues under investigation.[52]

3.3.1.3. Key informants

Ideally, adolescents were not meant to be the only key informants of the project.

For the group a) (students in the age 11-14), teachers could represent an important group to test. For the group b) (students in the age 15-19), the same function could be held by care providers, social workers, or sports coaches, as suggested by Walter.[53] These subjects have in fact been contacted for face-to-face semi-structured interviews or focus groups at a preliminary level and during the study, as illustrated below.

Some of them were willing to help, others were not interested in the study.

3.3.2. Procedures

During the study research times and instrumentation have been monitored as to provide that when facilities and subjects were available, the researcher should have been able to reach them at appropriate time and location. For the developmente of this study, following data collection tools have been devised:

a) Preliminary and follow-up focus groups,

designed to gain feedback prior and post study findings, as an ancillary method of collecting data that could help in interpreting results.[54] A focus group has been created during the pilot phase of the questionnaire, when learning "the vocabulary and discover the thinking pattern of the target audience"[55] could be of great value in order to avoid a confusing sequence of questions. Another two more focus groups have been organised after the administration of the questionnaire, in order to better interpret results from the data collected.[56] The setting of the focus group sessions has been carefully considered, as to necessarily elicit the most neutral environment from the answers to the questionnaire. In this respect, the researcher avoided to make any allusion to the questionnaires, focus groups and interviews during working time inside the library. Subjects were invited to participate in places mostly suitable for them.

b) Questionnaire,

designed for the study (see Appendix 3.2), as to match requirements of validity and reliability, including close-ended and open-ended questions from categories emerged from the preliminary focus group;[57]

c) Face-to-face interviews

carried out following a semi-structured scheme (see Appendix 3.3).

d) Available computer program to analyse data (Microsoft Excel)

e) OPACs and library catalogues / resources

from different institutions, available through the Internet and county ILL, including those of the special collections (e.g. University Libraries, research institutions of the area).

Until present no previous similar studies on this topic have been identified in the literature. This should determine that in choosing a mixed-method approach – with both qualitative and quantitative aspects –a prior dominance to the quantitative aspects should be welcomed.[58] Nonetheless, the "dominant-less dominant" design advocated by Creswell[59] has been considered in the opposite way. In fact, for the present study, qualitative aspects have been considered more valuable than quantitative ones, which have served as discussion basis for the findings.

From the literature review on the topic, particularly in Italy, research seems to be scarce. Hence, the researcher has tried to combine national and international issues with the categories emerging from the data collected, especially for the identification of further issues requiring particular attention in future. The following chart resumes the relationship between aims and objectives of the study and the desired means of accomplishing them.

Tab. 3.1. Research methods and study objectives: a relationship chart

Objectives	Literature Review	Questionnaire	In-depth Interviews / Focus Groups
Survey on young people's experience of the local library		✓	✓
Identification of the main explicit and implicit needs for dedicated services		✓	✓
Survey on the main attitudes of this target group toward library services		✓	✓
Identification of factors affecting those attitudes		✓	✓
Confrontation of attitudes with statistical figures available		✓	✓
Identification of further issues requiring attention in future	✓	✓	✓
Creation of strategies to gain attention and partecipation, improving service	✓	✓	✓

Data analysis has been carried out in almost two ways, with or without analysis.

Since there are no previous studies in this field in the area considered, it has been reputed that, first of all, it was necessary to present as much as possible a quantity of data organised but not analysed, so that they can be used in future by different researchers.

To accomplish this aspect, data have been transcribed and reported as they were collected in the most suitable form: tables, charts and diagrams or graphics illustrating the answers administered in the questionnaire; interview and focus groups transcriptions (see Appendix 4 and 5).

At a second stage, data have been explained and interpreted[60] on the basis and in confront with the emerging themes in the literature and / or other similar studies.

At a deeper stage, data could be interpreted to build a theory as to explain the phenomenon under investigation, checking the assumptions by going back to the sample population, to increase validity of the data gathered and come to conclusions.

3.3.2.1. Tools and strategies for data collection

Following the considerations on the statistical data on library use exposed in the introduction, the target population under inquiry has been identified as follows:

a) students in the age 11-14;

b) students in the age 15-19.

Since the two groups were to be contacted in different ways, particular attention has been given in devising a questionnaire distribution that was to be pretty similar, as to avoid bias related to the presence of the researcher. Another issue aroused from the researcher being contemporarily involved in working and studying activities in the same place. Both issues were overcome by instructing and advising teachers and carers on how to distribute the questionnaire inside classes and during their Associations regular meetings.

Hence, the first group has been reached altogether in their middle school classes (in Ala), through the teachers. The second group, instead, has been reached through the sports and leisure time Associations to which they belonged.

3.3.2.2. Ethical concerns.

Since the most part of the subjects under investigation were minors, it has been necessary for the researcher to reach them through their parents or carers, who have been informed in detail about the study aims and objectives, confidentiality of data gathered and dissemination of the findings.

For this purpose, a presentation letter has been addressed to the parents, the middle school director, to the administrators of the leisure time and sports associations, and to the local authorities, along with a copy of the questionnaire to be handed out (see Appendix 3.1 for details). The covering letters distributed have been written specifically for each person addressed. Even if very similar in the whole, as suggested by Fraenkel and Wallen[61] they contain distinctive features, as to enhance the credibility of the study and assure confidentiality and anonymity, as well as informing on the treatment and dissemination of data.[62] Every use for study reasons of the data collected has therefore been handled with the participants before their agreement to join the survey.

Data have been gathered from different sources and have been treated differently accordingly to their origin (users and non-users, male and female, town and surroundings residents, etc.).

The researcher has made anyone clear that data would have been treated as strictly confidential and in an anonymous way. The questionnaires and interview charts have been handled by a single researcher over the whole survey and were constructed according to these principles.

3.3.2.3. Piloting phase

The questionnaire has been piloted with some subjects easily available for the researcher. Questions have been gathered from other similar works,[63] from a personal study,[64] and from hypothetical suggestions based on theoretical underpinnings[65] and adapted to the situation.

The pilot study has been conducted trying to follow the most widespread considerations and opportunities devised by the relevant literature on the topic. [66]

The aspects that have been included in the piloting phase, as to increase internal validity and reliability of results[67] have been mainly following:

1. verifying the intelligibility of the questions, checking for response bias related to question words and ordering[68]
2. verifying that the number and content of questions were capturing the essence of the research aims and objectives[69]

Already at this stage, 'coding frames' were designed in order to try to draw expectations about how data will have been produced by respondents, as suggested by Oppenheim.[70]

A complete report of the piloting phase of the questionnaire and interviews is given in Appendix 2.2.

3.3.2.4. Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted in 20 questions (of which no. 17 was doubled):

- one Likert scale question (Q9), with even number of categories;
- 13 close-ended questions, provided with tick-boxes provided (Q1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17a, 20);
- 7 open-ended questions, provided with rows (Q3, 4, 14, 15, 17b, 18, 19).

Questions were aimed to relate to the study's objectives as follows:

No. of Question	Data to be gathered as related to research objectives
Q1, 2, 3, 4	Past library experience
Q5, 6, 7, 10, 12	Present library experience
Q8, 12	Motivation to library use
Q10, 13, 14, 19	Needs to library use
Q9	Satisfaction scale for services offered
Q11, 15	Requirements for services to be offered
Q15, 17, 18, 20	Expectations for the future

In the research phase, subjects have been reached with the final questionnaire administered via personal contact. They have been asked to complete the questionnaire in the time of two weeks. Since a delay in bringing the questionnaires back was expected, this time was calculated to allow for a maximum overall deferral of 10 days.

As already explained, students in the age between 11-14 have been reached at the middle school. The questionnaire was distributed along with a covering letter explaining the purpose and aims of the study, stating the confidentiality of data, inviting subjects to ask for a summary of results at the end of the study (see Appendix 3.2).

In case of poorly answered questions, particularly the open-ended ones, or if the returned questionnaires should be very few in number (under 50%), this stage should be followed by a single face-to-face interviews phase, with a selected sample of collaborative subjects.

Since only the 15-19 age group returned less than 50% of the distributed questionnaires, it was with this group that a focus group session was planned. The participants in the study were free from school and leisure activities at different times of the day, they have been asked to give notice of their time availability.

3.3.2.5. Interviews and focus groups

Time constraints limited focus groups to one adults' and one young adults' sessions, while interviews were taken with one parent and two librarians (see Appendix 5 for details).

Unlikely initially advised, young adults' focus group members were chosen to be representative of the 15-19-year old sample group. This followed from questionnaire data analysis, which resulted in a wider participation from the 11-14-year old group than the older group.

Each interview or focus group lasted a minimum of 40 minutes and a maximum of one hour 20 minutes. Subjects have been put at ease with the provision of drinks, junk foods and chocolates, according to their age and preferences. During the sessions elements of creative interviewing have been taken into account, although in order to obtain comparable data a semi-structured scheme has been followed.[71]

3.3.3. Limitations and delimitations

3.3.3.1. Involuntary constraints

A survey bases its success on the population sample participation. A first possible constraint had been envisaged in the possibility that the target group would drop consistently the invitation to participate in the survey or that the answers given would be unsatisfying to the research requirements to be fulfilled. In this case, the target population has volunteered for almost 50%, which was considered very successfully.

Another involuntary constraint has been time availability, being the researcher working full time during the survey period, although in hours which allowed to have 3 hours a day available for study purposes.

3.3.3.2. Voluntary delimitations

Since teenagers aged 15-19 and living in the surroundings should be attending secondary schools in another district, direct contact with them has been limited to a low number of subjects. Time availability constraints from both parts could have been disadvantageous in case of reiterated refuses of co-operation. This convinced the researcher to follow the procedures as described in the previous sections.

The questionnaire survey had been structured over a period of maximum two months (December 2003-January 2004), considering the case of delays in receiving questionnaires and organising inteview and focus groups sessions. In fact, questionnaires were collected until March 2004.

Accordingly, the design of the survey has been cross-sectional, as defined by Babbie.[72] The time saved has been used to analyse and present data in the most suitable way.

3.3.3.3. Time management during the dissertation project

The timeline for the project started soon after the handing in of the dissertation proposal in November 2003 and ended at mid May 2004, when all data gathered had been analysed and discussed.

During the development of the project phases have needed more or less time than expected, but anyway were to be carried out with the end date in mind. A complete Gannt Chart of the dissertation project is given as an overview in Appendix 2.1.

References

[1] See CRESWELL 1994, PREECE 1994.

[2] See BELL 1993.

[3] See CRESWELL 1994.

[4] See TASHAKKORI & TEDDLIE 1998, p. 1.

[5] See CROTTY 1998, particularly p. 1-17 and 214-216.

[6] See FODDY 1994, p. 17.

[7] See TASHAKKORI & TEDDLIE 1998, p. X: "*We stress the importance and predominance of the research question over the paradigm, and we encourage researchers to use appropriate methods from both approaches to answer their research questions*."

[8] TASHAKKORI & TEDDLIE 1998, p. 5 and 12-13.

[9] See CROTTY 1998, p. 4-5.

[10] See CROTTY 1998.

[11] See PATTON 2002, p. 1-205.

[12] Patton (2002, p. 97) underlines how Michael Crotty (1998) has made a distinction between the terms 'constructionism' and 'constructivism', but observes at the same time that the differentiation is easily confused and still not used by researchers. In this study the term used will be 'constructivism', as explained later in this chapter.

[13] See CROTTY 1998, p. 16.

[14] *Ibidem*, p. 43-44.

[15] *Ibidem*, p. 45-48.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 52-53.

[17] *Ibidem*, p. 55.

[18] Ibidem, p. 64.

[19] See PATTON 2002, p. 97-98. As TASHAKKORI & TEDDLIE report in a table (1998, p. 23), 'all entities [are] simultaneously shaping each other [and it is] impossible to distinguish causes from effects.'

[20] See CROTTY 1998, p. 58; PATTON 2002, p. 96-98.

[21] See PATTON 2002, p. 96. For developments in linguistics see BERRUTO 1996, TAYLOR 1996. As referred to by Neimeyer (NEIMEYER 1993, p. 23), linguistics is one of the research fields which could give a contribution in solving the 'crisis of methodology' of the 1980s.

[22] See GUBA & LINCOLN 1989, p. 50.

[23] See PATTON 2002, p. 96.

[24] *Ibidem.*

[25] The work Mind and society by Mead (see MEAD 1934) appeared posthumous. This work and Blumer's work (see BLUMER 1969) have been cited from CROTTY 1998, p. 72, 222, 228.

[26] See CROTTY 1998, p. 72.

[27] See BLUMER 1969, p. 2 (cited in CROTTY 1998, p. 72).

[28] See CROTTY 1998, p. 75.

[29] See CROTTY 1998, p. 75. As far as discussions on linguistic processes are concerned, see again BERRUTO 1995 and TAYLOR 1996.

[30] See CROTTY 1998, p. 78. This methodology was first used by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 (see GLASER & STRAUSS 1967).

[31] See PATTON 2002, p. 125.

[32] See CROTTY 1998, p. 78-79.

[33] *Ibidem*, p. 80.

[34] See PATTON 2002, p. 124-129.

[35] See GLASER & STRAUSS, 1967, p. 5-6.

[36] Methods have been listed according to the description in PATTON 2002, p. 125.

[37] Adapted from PATTON 2002, p. 127.

[38] See FRAENKEL & WALLEN 2003, p. 396.

[39] *Ibidem.*

[40] *Ibidem*, p. 398-400.

[41] *Ibidem*, p. 400-402.

[42] *Ibidem*, p. 397.

[43] See TASHAKKORI & TEDDLIE 1998, p. ix-x.

[44] *Ibidem*, p. 149.

[45] *Ibidem.*

[46] *Ibidem*, p. 153.

[47] See DOUGLAS 1985.

[48] See FOWLER 1993.

[49] *Ibidem*.

[50] This is also called 'convenience sampling' method, see WALLEN 1993, p. 87.

[51] See BABBIE 1991.

[52] *Ibidem*.

[53] See WALTER 1994.

[54] See BLOOR 2001.

[55] See KRUEGER 1993.

[56] *Ibidem*.

[57] See OPPENHEIM 1966, FOWLER 1993.

[58] See CRESWELL 1994.

[59] *Ibidem*.

[60] See STRAUSS & CORBIN 1991.

[61] See FRAENKEL & WALLEN 2003, p. 405.

[62] *Ibidem*.

[63] See for instance GRENDELE 2000.

[64] See CORRADINI 2002.

[65] See BORGMAN 2003.

[66] See BABBIE 1991, OPPENHEIM 1966, FRAENKEL & WALLEN 2003 p.404-405.

[67] See WALLEN 1993, p. 102.

[68] See OPPENHEIM 1966, p. 37-52, and FODDY 1994, p. 38-52.

[69] See ZANNA & DARLEY 1987, p. 121.

[70] See OPPENHEIM 1966, p. 227-234.

[71] See DOUGLAS 1985.

[72] See BABBIE 1991.

CHAPTER 4:

QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

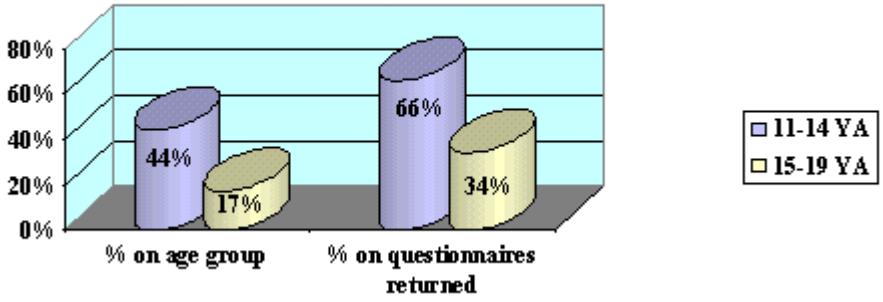
4.1. Introduction

As explicated in Chapter 3, according to study purposes the population was subdivided into 2 groups according to age (11-14 and 15-19), considering the difference places where they could be reached: The local middle school for the 11-14-year-old group and the free time Associations for the 15-19-year-old group. The two groups were contacted in different but close periods for reasons explicated below.

The 11-14-year-old group was given the initial deadline of 20th December, which was 3 weeks after the first contact. The final deadline was 20th January, two weeks after the Christmas vacations. The 5 invalid questionnaires returned after the final deadline were not included in the analysis, but were used to test for response bias. The general statistics for this group results in Table 4-2 in Appendix 4.

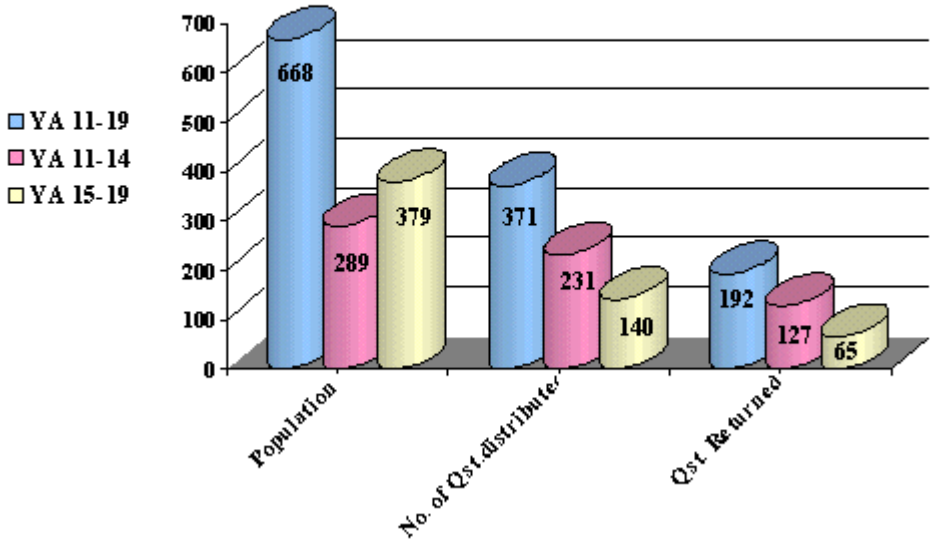
As far as the 15-19-year-old group is concerned, each of the groups contacted was given the initial deadline of 15 days, one week after the first contact. The final deadline was 10 days later. Each Association sustaining the project was contacted separately and to each responsible of the young adults was explained the way in which the questionnaire was to be administrated. The 5 invalid questionnaires returned after the final deadline were not included in the analysis, but were used to test for response bias. The general statistics for this group results in Table 4-3. Although more numerous, this age group was not easy to contact. This explains the low percentage of the respondents over the total population of that age group, which is reflected also by being less representative even in the sample available for research (see Figure 4.1 below).

FIGURE 4.1 - Questionnaires collected by sample group



The total number of questionnaires distributed to the 11-19-year olds were 371, of which 52% were returned (192 in total). The response rate over the population (668) was about 29% [see Table 4-1][1], but differed greatly between the two sample groups.
The response rate in the 11-14-year old group achieved 55% on the distributed questionnaires, while 44% over the total population of the same age group in the area [see Table 4-2]. As far as the 15-19-year old group is concerned, the results on the distributed questionnaires were also good, scoring 46%, but it is only about a 17% representative of the population in the same age [see Table 4-3].

FIGURE 4.2
Sample on Population



In this Figure: The total population of 668 individuals includes 289 adolescents between 11 and 14 years of age, and 379 young adults between 15 and 19 years.[2] Of these, 371 have been reached through the questionnaire, but it was neither feasible nor possible to maintain the same proportions, so that the returned questionnaires were in higher percentage (66%) from the 11-14-year old group.

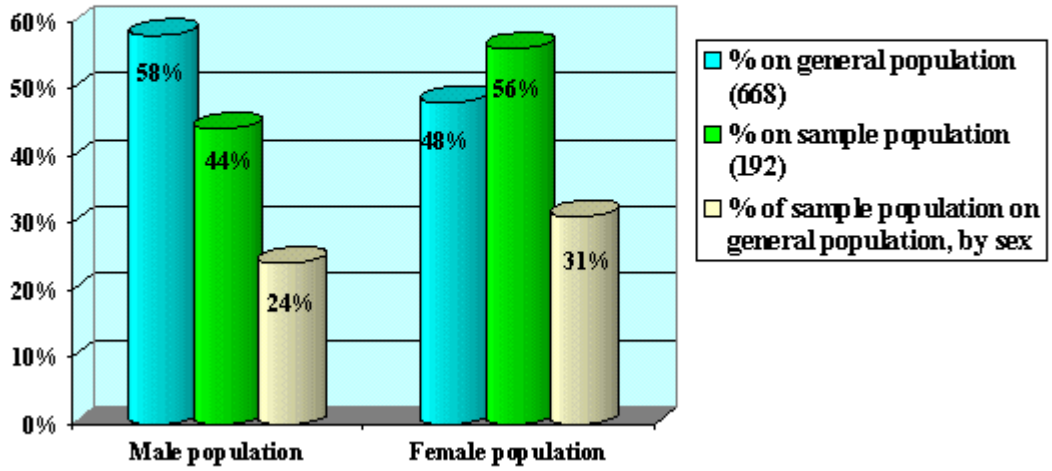
Given the strong differences in the response rates between the two sample groups [see Table 4-4], as to detect potential bias, responses have been divided by three major criteria per each group: age, sex and location. This distinction in the collected data proved to be very useful in order to analyse results more precisely.

Respondents were discovered better proportionally distributed in the 11-14-year old group as far as sex and place of residence were concerned [see Table 4-7 and 4-8].

In addition, females have granted a higher participation than males in responding to the questionnaire, indirectly revealing more enthusiasm for the chance of being asked their opinion [see Table 4-9].[3]

This feature emerges more clearly if the number of questionnaires collected among the two groups is compared, as pictured in Figure 4.3 below.

FIGURE 4.3.
Questionnaires identified by sex / General population sex

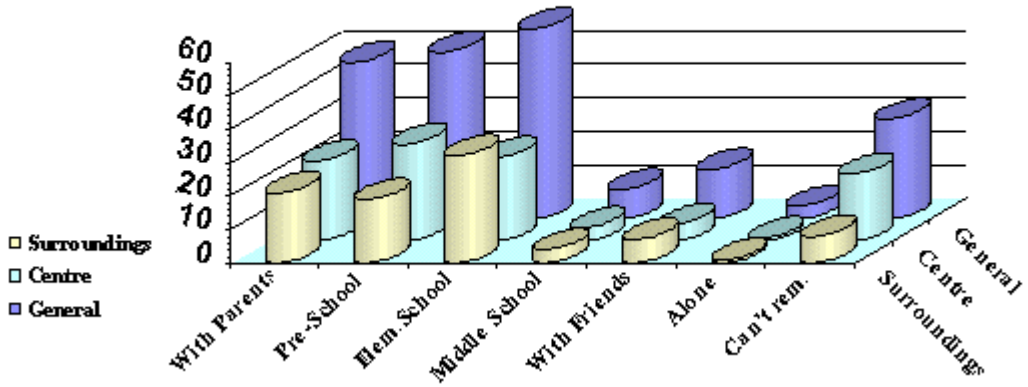


4.2. General findings

4.2.1. The library experience: past and present habits in library visits

Most respondents have had an early experience of the library. About 75% of subjects remembered to have visited the library before the end of elementary school [see Table 4-10]. In some fortunate cases – which correspond to about 24% - this happened in the infancy, at pre-school age: a condition which has been proved more likely to occur for children living in the town centre (27% of cases), rather than in the surroundings (just 20%). Here, children have experienced their first visit to the town public library more often during elementary school (35% of cases) [see Table 4-13].

FIGURE 4.4.
First visit to the library: General / Centre / Surroundings



Mainly, as illustrated in Figure 4.4 above, the first library visit has been experienced while being conducted there either by parents or adults [see Table 4-14]. As expected, this feature shows more relevantly in subjects living in the surroundings, who are highly dependent on the necessary transport facilities to reach the library. In fact, 69% of them scored this item, compared to a 32% of the mates living in the town centre [see Table 4-14]. On the reverse, the latter showed on the one hand more deficiencies in remembering this particular (32%), but, on the other hand, a better frequency in having

come "spontaneously", meaning perhaps also independently, to the library (15%) [see Table 4-17].

A higher percentage of older young adults who couldn't remember this first experience were expected. In fact, the passing of time proved to bring along memory faults. 39% of the 15-19-year-old sample turned out not to remember anything on this point, almost twice as much as the 11-14-year-old group [see Table 4-16].

Nonetheless, from the data collected it is apparent that positive experiences with the library abound [see Table 4-18]. Out of the 80 respondents to Question Three, that is, 94% of the total questionnaires returned, only six declared not to remember anything, while 19 to fail to remember. Some of them give as a reason the early age when they did come to the library.[4]

Most answers concentrate on the discovery of materials (44%) [see Table 4-18], and books in particular are depicted as strange objects to be either conquered or carefully examined.

A comparably high percentage considered the discovery of the library materials a joyful experience, while also services and activities, such as storytelling (13%), were named as important features [see Table 4-18].

Very low scored socialization or interaction aspects (4%), which were taken into account largely by female subjects (5 out of 7) [see Table 4-19] – and only in the age group between 11 and 14 years of age [see Table 4-20]. On the other hand, male subjects have shown to be particularly attracted by materials: they score 52%, against a 38% of the female group [see Table 4-19].

The importance of resources is more present in the answers of the 15-19-year-olds, with a 51% of total occurrences in spite of a 43% of the 11-14-year-old sample group [see Table 4-20]. Respondents underlined the possibility of looking "*for books with figures*" [190M18], the impact with the *"enormous books*" [170F14] and the astonishment in seeing the "*quantity of books*" [188M18].

In the surroundings the presence of resources in the library is also more apparent (with a 49% of ratings) than in the town centre (scoring 9 points lower) [see Table 4-21].

Negative experiences are not as abundant, or perhaps have been simply not reported. As a matter of fact, 31% didn't answer the correspondent question, and 9% declares to not remember anything negative about their first visit to the library [see Table 4-22]. Quite reassuringly from one side, 40% of respondents declared they didn't have any negative feelings in that occasion, and, in addition, three of them concluded that they liked everything they found in the library.

Although encouraging, these views are not particularly interesting in searching for critical points in case of an assessment on evaluation and improvement of services.

To this purpose, a more close focus onto the remaining 20% of respondents is worth a note. About the half of them indicated as a negative memory the poor or unfruitful interaction with people, as well as feelings related to personal or situational inadequacy, while a unenthusiastic view about the place is cited by only 3% of respondents.

Very often, the major cause of concern is silence: "*Everyone should hush, nobody could make noise*" [190M18] is a frequent opinion.[5]

As for the case of positive experiences, socialization aspects were called upon more by female (11%) rather than by male (7%) subjects, particularly over fifteen [see Table 4-23 and 4-24].

An uncomfortable feeling was proved more by younger than older subjects: the 45% of respondents in the 11-14-year-old group and the 29% in the 15-19-year-old sample. This figure is nonetheless counterbalanced by the absence of answers, which reached the 45% among the 15-19 olds and 26% in the younger sample group [see Table 4-24].

A peculiar aspect is to be emphasised among subjects living in the surroundings, who are more sensitive to the new place, where they often found themselves out of place (12%), compared to their peers residing in the town centre (only 5%). A similar proportion has emerged for socialization aspects, for which residents in the outskirts proved less prepared than town inhabitants [see Table 4-25].

Anyway, the first impression of the library is not the one that counts forever. If asked about the significance of their memories on the first visit to the library, 60% of respondents report to be confident that they have not been conditioned by them [see Table 4-26]. This applies especially to female subjects [see Table 4-27] and to 15-19-year-olds [see Table 4-28], with a 64% and 74% incidence respectively.

To correctly evaluate the questionnaire it must be constantly hold that 81% of respondents stated that they are actual library users [see Table 4-30].
Male subjects tend to be non-users – 25% compared to a 75% of declared users – more than females, who show a lower figure in this respect (12% of non-users vs. 88% of users of the library) [see Table 4-31].
Surprisingly, 15-19-year olds declare themselves users in a higher percentage (85%) than the 11-14-year-old group (80%) [see Table 4-32], while no significant variation in the frequency has been discovered between town and surroundings inhabitants [see Table 4-33].

The highest the frequency of the library experience, the likeliest the respondents count themselves among users rather non-users of the institution [see Table 4-34]. Only two subjects admit in this case never to visit the library, comparing to 36 subjects who confess being non-users in answering Question 6 [see Table 4-30 and Table 4-34]. Who are the 34 respondents missing?
This question revealed four non-respondents. Other 16 correspond to the group who affirm going to the library once a year. Furthermore, of the 11 respondents visiting it twice a year, the majority – 8 out of 11 – don't consider themselves as users. Yet the remaining two of them are to be found in the group of individuals who occasionally go to the library.[6]

Data on frequencies by sex prove the preponderance in the female subjects toward a more regular habit in visiting the library. In fact, 33% of them disclose to go to the library almost once every two weeks, or even more often, whilst male subjects only score 17% of the occurrences in the same categories.
On the opposite, males are more keen on being far from the library for longer periods of time, admitting – in the 42% of cases – that they go and visit it once every three months or even rarely. Female subjects corresponding tallies are about 28% [see Table 4-35].
As it could be envisaged, the highest percentages in low frequencies have been registered among over-14 subjects, thus confirming that the tendency through life is to progressively abandoning the habit of visiting a library [see Table 4-36].

Also from this answer, living in the surroundings proves to be a strong factor to increased irregularity of library visits. The distribution of 41% in the lowest frequency categories – from "once every three months" to "once a year" – is not far from being double as much as the one of the town inhabitants (24%) [see Table 4-37].
Other data collected confirm that subjects living in the centre can go more often to the library than those living in the outskirts. 30% of the first can visit it almost once a month -–against 23% of peers from the outside, a percentage which becomes more significant in the highest frequencies. In fact, while only 6% of the subjects living in the surroundings can visit the library once or twice a week, a round 23% of the town peers have the chance of doing it. Considering higher frequencies, only the latter group affirms to be able to go more than three times a week [see Table 4-37].

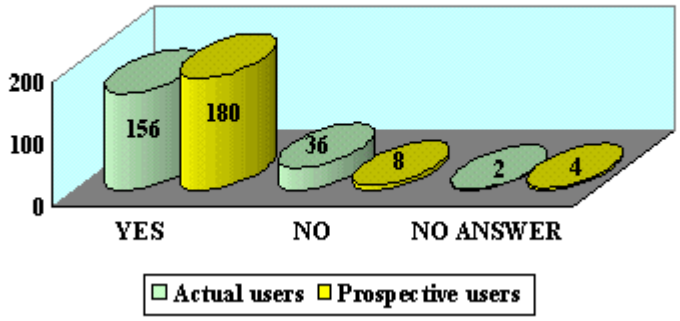
4.2.2. Reasons for visiting the library rather than skipping it

The vast majority of respondents answered the related question in 99% of cases within the items provided on the questionnaire. The prevailing reason to go to the library was found in studying – ticked by 42% of subjects, followed by reading pleasure (25%) [see Table 4-38]. Along with information searching and the development of personal interests, these categories concurred to a 41% of occurrences, whereas only 16% considered going to the library in order to meet friends – the most part of which were concentrated in the 11-14-year-old group [see Table 4-40]. This could be a sign of the beginning of a new life cycle in the near city of Rovereto, where students attend their classes after middle school.[7]
Male subjects are better keen on considering the library as a place for information retrieval rather than females, particularly in the 11-14-years old group. Nonetheless, this emerges more frequently in subjects living in the centre than in the surroundings [see Tables 4-39, 4-40, 4-41].
As the few non-users of the library affirm, the reasons for remaining out of the library are mostly to be envisaged in having other interests to cultivate (41%). However, they

also admit they don't like reading (38%). Someone living in the centre also reveals that he finds the library an annoying place (10%) [see Table 4-42, Table 4-45].
It is to be noted that in the 11-14-year-old group no critical discrepancies emerge from the categories, unlike to the data collected among the 15-19-year-olds, who don't depict the library as a boring place [see Table 4-44].

These ideas emerge for their present situation. But what do respondents tell about their future? Do they imagine themselves as users of the library?
Notably, young adults see themselves as real or potential users of the library in the 96% of cases. Only eight male subjects considered themselves to be more likely non-users in future [see Table 4-83]. This result can be considered very satisfying compared to the rates on actual users, because the percentage of positive answers registers an increase of 15% on the total, as depicted below.

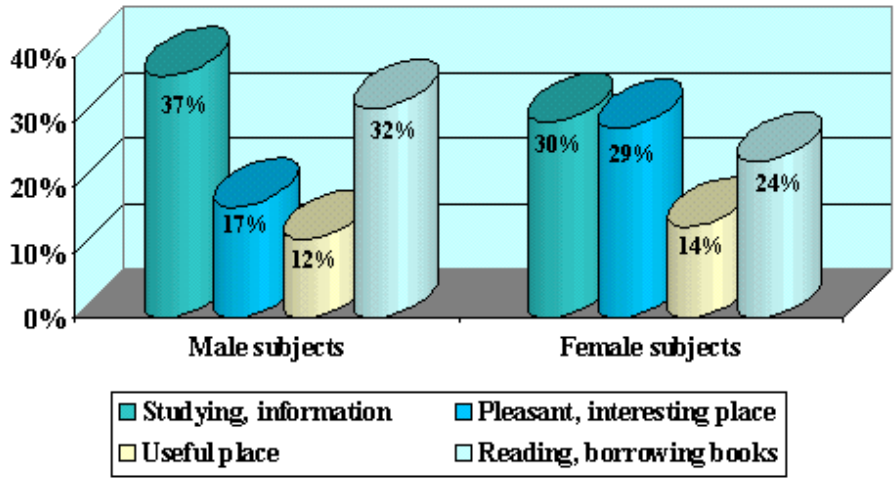
FIGURE 4.5 - Actual and prospective users



Consequently, among those who don't regularly visit the library at this moment, some envisage the chance of being future users of the library. In fact, they can nonetheless consider it *"an interesting place"* [158M19], or explain that "*when I will be grown up perhaps I will have more free time and then I will like reading*" [132F15].
Anyway, also in perspective, the reasons are mainly those identified for the present. Respondents imagine to be going there for studying and reading purposes, but additional causes arouse which were not previously indicated.

Subjects who are going to the library in the present have mainly stood by their reasons, confirming that the library "is always useful to find what one is looking for" [181F15], or in order to "deepen one's own knowledge and cultivate interests" [180F18].
Some are – perhaps sadly – convinced that they "will always have to do homework" [144F14], while others insist on the concept of a library as a "socially useful place" [173F17] and, moreover, a place where they think they "will need its services also for the future" [188M18].

FIGURE 4.6. - Perceived reasons for prospective users, by sex



More convinced than males, female subjects underlined that the place is pleasant and interesting [see Table 4-86 and Figure 4.6 above], but at the same time they assert that it is a source of information and resources for their studies.
In the whole, the library is really useful in the eyes of young adults, because it is felt as "never ending source for information and stories" [153F17]. So, as one of them reveals, "I will always find a good reason to go there" [152F17].

Turning to the importance of the library again at the end of the questionnaire [Q19], most respondents (90%) stated that the library is important to them [see Table 4-98].
Most of the answers already given in other parts of the questionnaire – particularly for Questions 13 and 15 [see Tables 4-64 to 4-68 and 4-73 to 4-76] – were confirmed at this

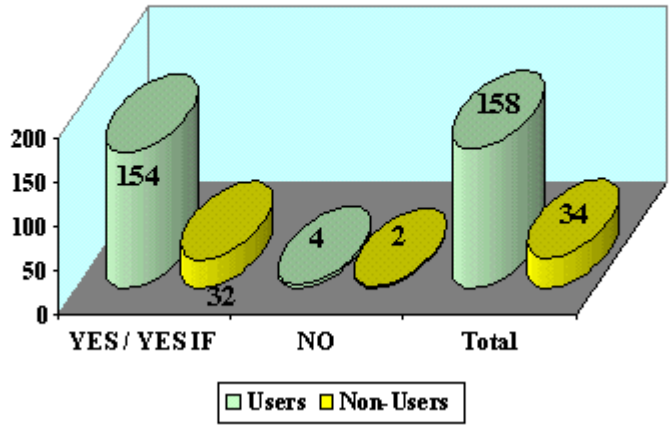
stage, which increases internal validity of data and methods used for their collection. Some macro-categories were identified as particularly important, such as the following [see Table 4-102]:

- studying, information, cultural purposes (42% of total answers);
- the whole of services offered by the library (28%);
- welcoming place (15%);
- reading / meeting friends, socialization (about 5% each).

In some cases (8%) respondents were not completely satisfied with the services. Nonetheless, they allowed the possibility that the library could improve, by way of updating the materials offered (47% of answers), but also if they would change their habits and would use it more, either to study or for recreational purposes (53% of answers). Curiously enough – but not surprisingly, if considering the data emerging from other answers mentioned before – the socialization aspects were stressed only by female subjects [see Table 4-103] in the 11-14-year old group [see Table 4-104] living in the town centre [see Table 4-105].
On the other hand, absolutely no importance to the library is registered only in four male subjects [see Table 4-109], who affirm either that they are "*not interested in it*" [160M19, 163M17], they "*don't find the materials needed*" [113M12], or "*have no time to go there*" [159M19].

Noticeably, these answers refer only to a personal situation and not to the general public. In addition, the low number of respondents who assert such views opens up for a more complex interpretation if compared to Question 6 mentioned above. As a matter of fact, self-declared Non-Users of the library amounted to 36 subjects, quite a lot more than the four who find the library really of no use to them – but, anyway, they don't exclude in their answers that others could benefit from it.
This can only mean, then, that also present Non-Users can provide a positive image of the library, as illustrated in following Figure [for details see Tables 4-98 and 4-30].

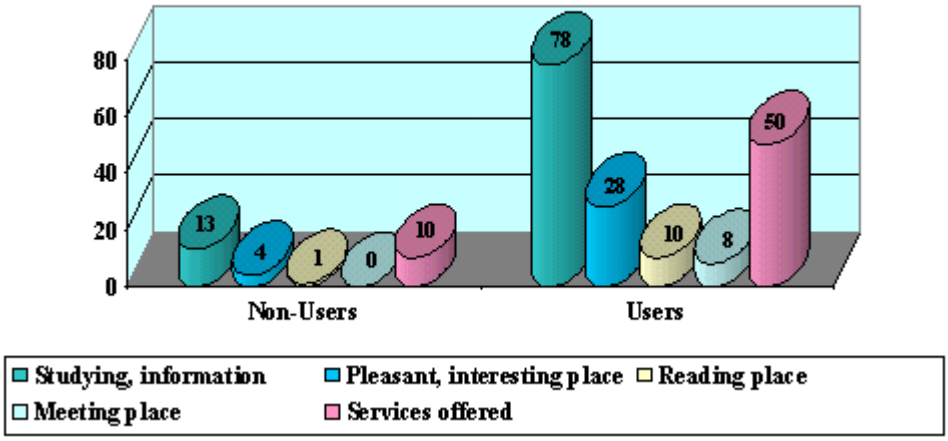
FIGURE 4.7.
Users/Non-Users and statements of importance of the library



According to the figures exposed above, 97% of users think that the library is an important institution, but also non-users perceive the importance of the library, and in a very high percentage (94%).

Moreover, non-users' opinions thereon do not diverge outstandingly from those provided by users, as outlined in Figure 4.8 below. On the contrary, they show almost the same proportions, with the exception of the data on socialization aspects.

FIGURE 4.8. - Perceived reasons for prospective users, by sex



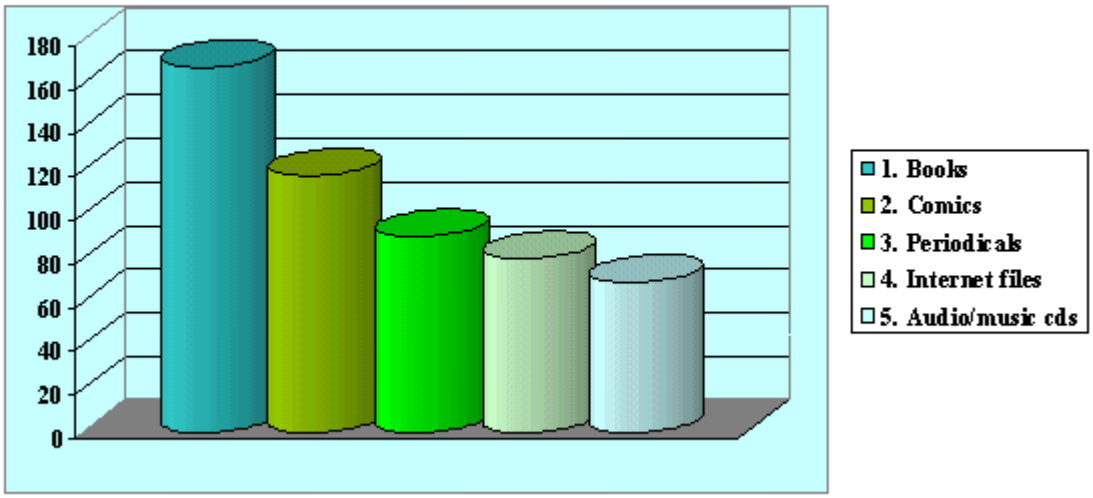
4.2.3. The library: a mysterious place? Image and reality of services and materials available

As far as the satisfaction for the services offered by the library is concerned, the most appreciated, as resulting from the data collected through the questionnaire, has been books and periodicals loan, along with activities of book displays [see Table 4-46].
Surprisingly enough, the book shelving system, which from time to time is under discussion among staff, has been found more appealing than the activities organised [see Table 4-46].
This conveys the message that the latter are not sufficiently disseminated, or perhaps that young adults find them not focussed on their interests. Anyway, from the results it can be said that users as well as non-users expect the library to organise more activities for their age group. This view was confirmed by the young adults' focus group.[8]

Apart from a judgement on some services offered, subjects were also asked to think about the different materials offered by the library [see Table 4-50]. The proposed list was compiled considering the actual composition of the supports currently available in the library, either physically present or accessible via databases or the web.
Occurrences show that most respondents (56%) chose three to five of the 13 items enumerated, while a good 26% deemed there were just one or two of them available for use in the library. At the same time, 88% of respondents were sure to find books and 68% comics [see Table 4-50].
The presence of CD-ROMs in the library is confirmed, interestingly enough, more by female subjects rather than males [see Table 4-52], although mainly in the 15-19-year-old group [see Table 4-53].
From the results it is clear that the higher the distance from the library – a feature already correlated to a lower frequency of visits – the less the respondents show to be aware of the existence of a variety of supports available. In general, subjects living in the outskirts have indicated more recurrently the presence of traditional printed supports such as books and comics, which they can use in the time available in their visits, rather than printed music and Dvds [see Table 4-54].

The "Top Five" rank displays at the first place books followed by comics, printed periodicals, Internet files and audio/music cds [see Table 4-51 and Figure 4.9 below]. This suggests that respondents conceive the library as traditionally bound to printed materials rather than open to other supports, and in fact there are high frequencies in the categories books and comics – particularly among 11-14-year-olds – and printed periodicals (the latter more considered by over 15) [see Table 4-53].

Figure 4.9. - "Top Five" items deemed available in the library



Registered frequencies for ***BOOKS: 168*** *(88% of respondents);* ***COMICS: 118*** *(62%);* ***PRINTED PERIODICALS: 90*** *(47%);* ***INTERNET FILES: 80*** *(42%);* ***AUDIO/MUSIC CDS: 69*** *(36%).*

4.2.4. Users and non-users expectations regarding the implementation of new library services and activities

The same list of supports available in the library was further presented to the respondents asking them to tick all items they would like to find in the library.

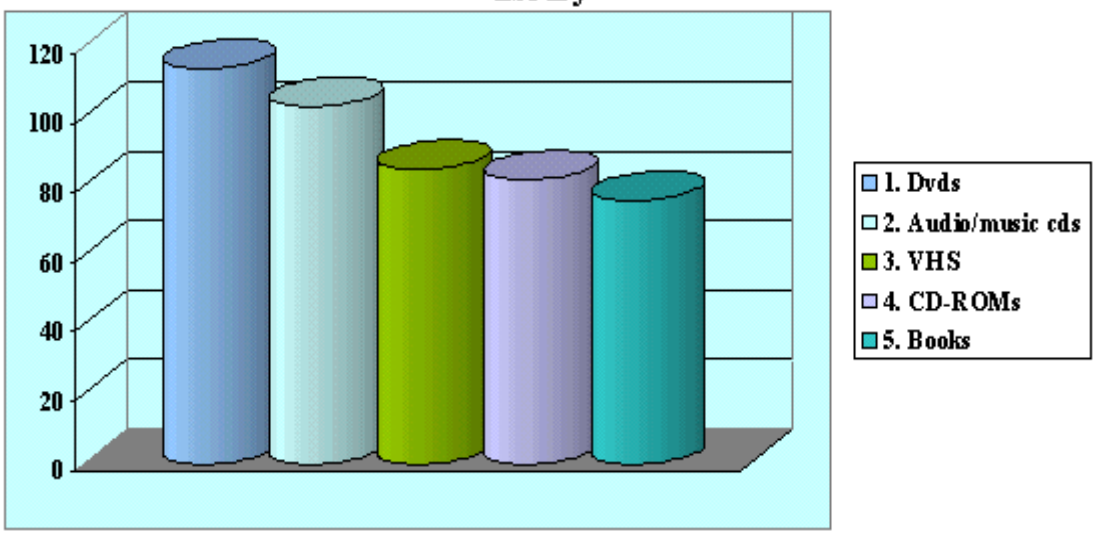
As expected, the results were very different from the previous question.

First of all, respondents took into account mainly one to four items, among which 41% included one of the non-book-materials indicated in the list. In particular, 12% of total answers have been concentrating on a single item, which turned out to correspond to Dvds [see Table 4-55].

Very interesting is a comparison between the "Top Five" figures of this answer and the rank previously given, as outlined in Figure 4.3 above [cfr. also Table 4-56].

Of 751 total occurrences, about 61% indicate non-book-materials as favourite items to be made part of the library collections. The same kind of supports had summed up to 39% when asked if they were now present in the library [see Table 4-51 and Table 4-56]. The rank of the "Top Five" wished supports is given in Figure 4.10 below.

FIGURE 4.10. - "Top Five" items to be introduced in the library



*Registered frequencies for **DVDs: 114** (61% of respondents); **AUDIO/MUSIC CDS: 103** (55%); **VHS: 85** (45%); **CD-ROMs: 82** (44%); **BOOKS: 76** (40%).*

Apart from these general considerations, some other points deserve attention.

Male subjects prove to be more aware of the existence and importance of databases [see Table 4-57], and particularly the 15-19-year-olds seem more interested in this service, along with periodicals [see Table 4-58]. Remarkably, they don't feel the presence of comics very urgent comparing to the younger group [see Table 4-58], perhaps because they begin to be economically independent, as a recent study on the local area attests.[9]

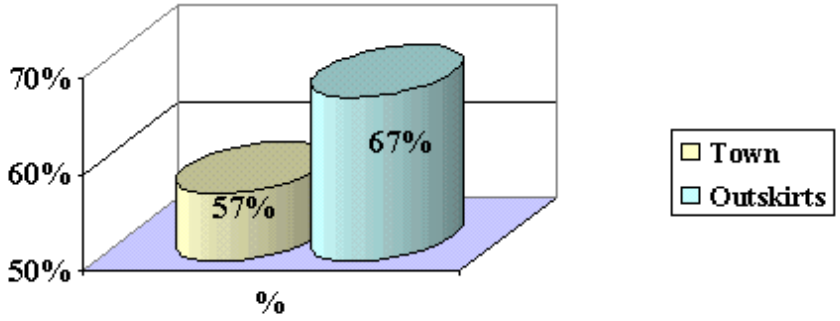
Consequently, more expensive items like CD-ROMs and audio/music cds are mostly preferred by 11-14-year olds and, as a rule, particularly in the surroundings [see Table 4-58].

The question on activities considered allowed in the library [Q12, see Table 4-60] was aimed at finding out if there was in the respondents either a serious or a friendly idea of the library. Not to give the impression of a severe institution just in asking the question, a free answer check was also provided, so that everyone could feel free of reporting other ideas than those provided.

As a matter of fact, "studying" was reckoned the most obvious activity allowed (39% of preferences), followed by "finding up-to-date information". Nonetheless, meeting people or attending to some cultural event – as well as other issues – were also considered possible activities inside a library [see Table 4-61].

For subjects living in the centre, it was more evident that there are various choices. On the contrary, for those living in the outskirts, the library assumes more the role of an information centre and a place where to go for study purposes [see Table 4-63 and Figure 4.11 on this page].

FIGURE 4.11.
Library as a place to study and information providing centre



4.2.5. Letting young adults imagine their ideal library

Asking about a definition of library could be an awkward task. For this reason, a series of questions have been developed to attempt and discover a wide range of ideas about what the library is, how it is currently perceived, and what it should be like [Q13, Q14 and Q15, see Appendix 4 for details].

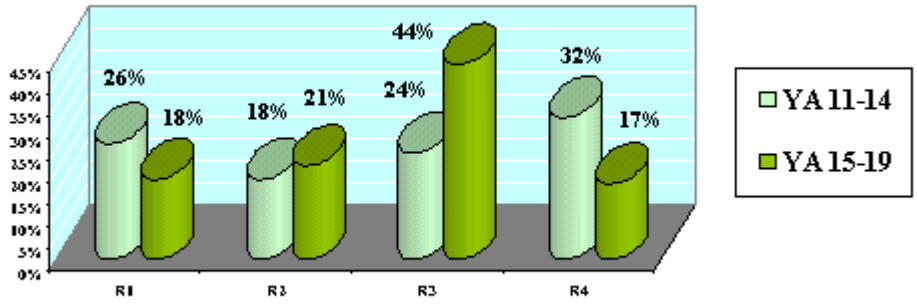
4.2.5.1. What is a library?

The answers regarding the definition of the library according to four choices provided in a close question [Q13] were highly variable, even considering that 78% of respondents chose just one item of the list [see Table 4-64].

In general, subjects divided themselves among those who consider the library a complex body of services realised to satisfy the needs of the users (29%), and those who see it just as a place where to borrow books (28%). But also the idea that the library is a place where books are collected and preserved was sufficiently widespread (24%), as well as the consideration that it is a place where services and activities are organised for the collection of books (19%) [see Table 4-65].

The most interesting variations in this case are not registered by sex [see Table 4-66], but on the whole by age group, where the younger group's occurrences differ consistently from those of the 15-19-year-olds [see Table 4-67], as outlined in Figure 4.12 following.

FIGURE 4.12. - What is a library?



***R1**= place where books are collected and preserved; **R2**= services and activities organised for collection of books; **R3**= services realised to satisfy the needs of the users; **R4**= place where to borrow books*

These answers show how younger users are less aware of the complexity of services offered by the library, compared to the users – and non-users – who have already completed middle school. Among the 15-19-year olds 44% of respondents is in fact aware of the mission of the library in satisfying its audience at a more general level than just giving books on loan or preserving supports – which is still important, but on minor scale [see Table 4-67 for details].

Next, respondents were also asked to reflect on a personal definition of library.

Answers to this question [Q14] differed consistently, but could be ranked into seven main categories, which are reported – including the non-answer category which summed up to 4% - in Table 4-69.

The free definitions confirmed the prevailing categories already discussed in the closed question Q13 and gave consistence to the data previously collected. An exemplary definition is that of "*a place where to study in peace and where many information sources are available*" [190M18], or "*where I can study and find books and sources of information helping me develop my own interests*" [180F18].[10]

In particular, 11-14-year-olds expressed their feeling that the library is a place where to read books and relaxing while meeting friends – making up to 47%, a very high occurrence in comparison with the 28% score of the 15-19-year old group [see Table 4-71]. This group was also better keen on giving a wider definition of library, thinking about it as a place where to find up-to-date information and develop personal interests (22% of answers, against 13% of the 11-14-year-olds).

At this stage, no significant difference among places of residence has come to light, with the exception of the lower occurrence of data on relaxing, entertaining and social meetings showed by inhabitants of the outskirts (17%) compared to those living in the centre of the town (21%) [see Table 4-72].

4.2.5.2 Thinking of an ideal library

Going deeper in the ideal library features, in answering Question 15 – another open question to gather qualitative insights from participants – respondents gave some other hints. Anyway, since this question showed double the non-answering rate than the previous question, arriving at 9% of total questionnaires, it should be noted that perhaps the insistence on this theme was irritating for some of them [see Table 4-73]. Non-answering subjects are mostly located in the surroundings (11%) rather than in the centre (6% of total respondents). Another hypothesis for non-answering could then be a minor interest in giving an opinion about an institution that is felt intellectually and physically remote.

Answers were in general fairly articulated. Some 59% of respondents thought materials and resources available were the qualifying things of their ideal library. A few others (5%) indicated the necessity of a new and modern setting, while almost 48% considered that more rooms reserved for specific purposes are to be made available. Only one fourth of the respondents expressed satisfaction for the present situation (24%).

Also in this case, male subjects distinguished themselves for their preference towards non-book-materials and new technologies (37%), while females dreamed again of the library as a place for socialization (12%) [see Table 4-74], in most cases when they are over 15 [see Table 4-75].

Reporting sketches of the ideas and suggestions emerged can give the pulse on the richness of data collected. Furthermore, complete sentences – which have been split up into categories for the analysis – will provide a more complete picture of the reality.

Trying to speak with the words of the protagonists of this study, it can be said that the atmosphere of a place is very important.

The library, in fact, must be "*not too severe and in a beautiful, welcoming, and orderly place, with much light*" [190M18]. The personnel is integral part of the welcoming space, and then they are wished to be "*highly skilled and friendly*" [185F15] who can "*give advice on the choice of books*" [170F14].

Someone asks for specific items, being well aware that he could be excessive in the request: "*It should be a place with much more things regarding music, although this topic could not represent a general interest*" [161M19]. He didn't imagine that other

peers suggested the presence of a dedicated place for this hobby, along with rooms where to watch TV, "*have more PCs connected to the Internet and a room where to talk to each other*" [180F18].

In the end, this institution should be "*more active*" [182F14], as to fill it with people [171F16] and make it "*a place which could enhance young adults to visit it*" [152F17].

Slowly, a real model emerges from the general descriptions of a "*place where to meet people and it is possible not only to study and find up-to-date information, but also make new friends and assist to interesting events*" [173F17].

The model library is "*that in Rovereto*"[11] [174M17], "*one of the few in which I can be at ease and where I can surely find what I need*" [145F14].

Moreover, this library provides wide opening hours, an interesting web site and mostly advanced technology: all features welcomed by respondents.[12]

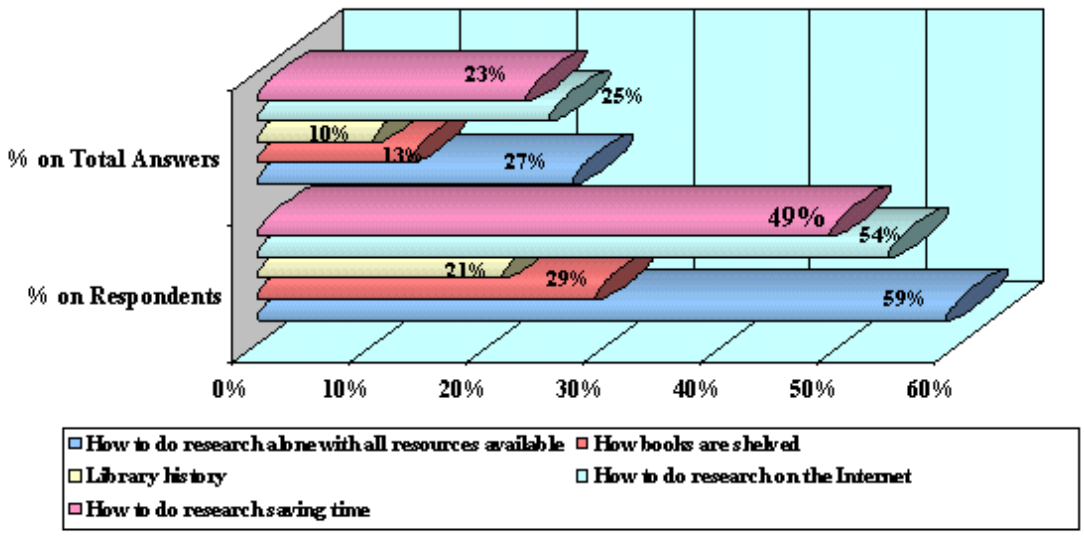
A male eleven-year-old wrote: "[I would like to have] robots that give you immediately the desired book and, if not available on the place, they would search for it in the Internet for you." [97M11]. This consideration introduces the next paragraph about services and activities to be developed in the library of the future.

4.2.5.3. Further developments to manage future needs

The chance of giving an opinion about future developments of the library activities and services has been only partly exploited by respondents.

Almost all subjects (191 out of 192, also 99,5%) gave their opinion on the kind of activities which should support them to develop their skills and relationship to the library resources. Many of them also indicated more than just one choice [see Table 4-77 and 4-78] and, specifically, the most requested advice is in the area of finding information, possibly in a short time, also in the Internet, as displayed in Figure 4.13 following below.

FIGURE 4.13. - Topics for lessons identified as potentially useful



Prevailing opinions mark preferences towards finding information needed, saving time and searching for desired information independently, which together count for about 75% of total answers. However, also library history and techniques of book shelving were considered as topics of interest [see Table 4-78].

Unexpectedly, male subjects were more attracted by the possibility of knowing more about the history of the library than their female counterpart [see Table 4-79], particularly in the middle-school group [see Table 4-80].

The high percentage of answers on the previous questions suggests that if subjects feel to be given attention to, they are more disposed towards giving recommendations, being those related to their interests.

This feature is reinforced by the different amount of data collected when respondents were asked to imagine freely which kind of services they would like to see implemented in the library in future. Question 18 has been answered by 74% of subjects, largely under the 99% score registered for Question 16 [see Table 4-94 and 4-77].

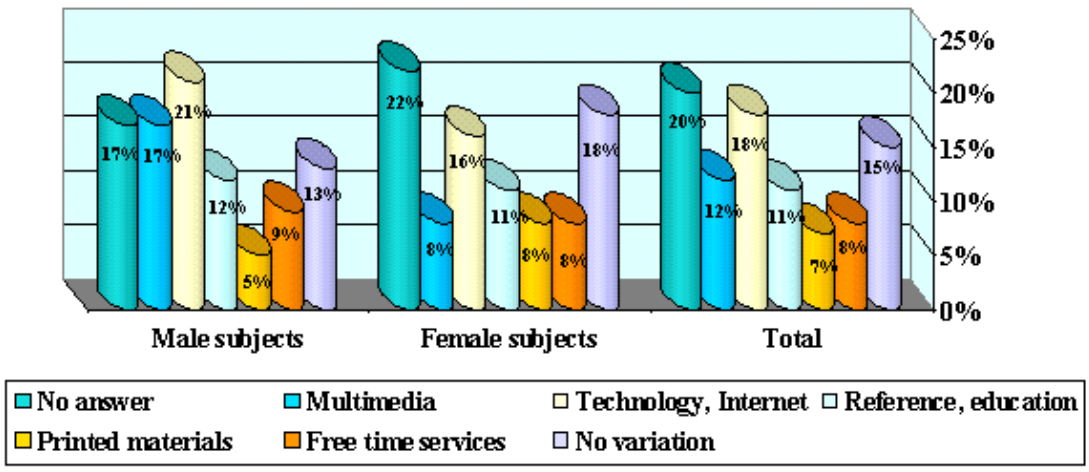
Leaving besides those who didn't answer Question 18 for reasons which remain undisclosed, other opinions are all valuable and strengthen some of the previously data discussed.

First of all, there is a not too small group thinking that services as they are now developed could be sufficient for their needs (15%) [see Table 4-94][13], but in some cases it is pointed up that these services have to be maintained.[14]

Secondly, there is a copious part of respondents who reckon that the library should do more for them in future. In particular, the acquisition of multimedia, their fruition and – possibly – their loan is desired with a 12% of occurrences on total answers, a percentage which shows even more impressively around the development of new technologies and the Internet, with 18% [see Table 4-94].

Figure 4.14 below provides the major cues for a quick overview.

FIGURE 4.14. - Services to be developed in future - by sex

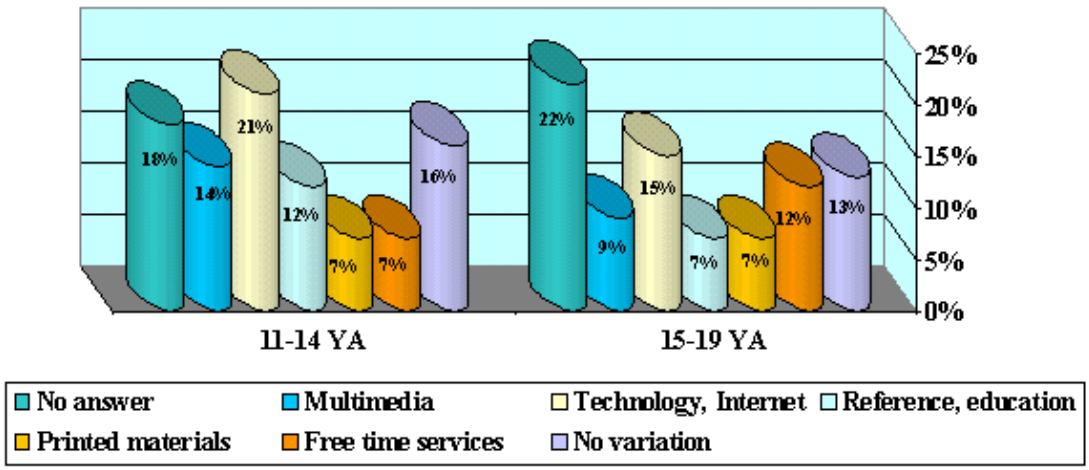


Once more, from the data emerges the peculiar concern of males towards the challenges of the new technologies, stating with 38% of occurrences that multimedia and the Internet or other related issues will be very important in the library of the future [see also Table 4-95]. On the other hand, female subjects found these aspects rather subordinate – and in fact for the female sample the two items reach 24% of occurrences. In addition, females disguised more themselves, either by saying that no variation is necessary (18%), or not answering the question (22%).

Differences in age result in a completely different view as far as services not directly connected to books and school activities are concerned.

In this respect, the young library users reveal their persuasion that the library could be in the condition to satisfy much more than giving them a book to read or materials for studying purposes.

FIGURE 4.15. - Services to be developed in future - by age group



From Figure 4.15 above, which illustrates the opinion of the two age groups about services to be developed, two sets of data are strikingly different from the general situation already described.

To begin with, the desire of having materials available decreases noticeably in 15-19-year olds, who are not so concerned that the library should have multimedia materials or technology. Also the reference and educational activities required results in being

mainly an idea proposed by the 11-14-year old group [see also Table 4-96], although it is present – and better articulated – in the older group.

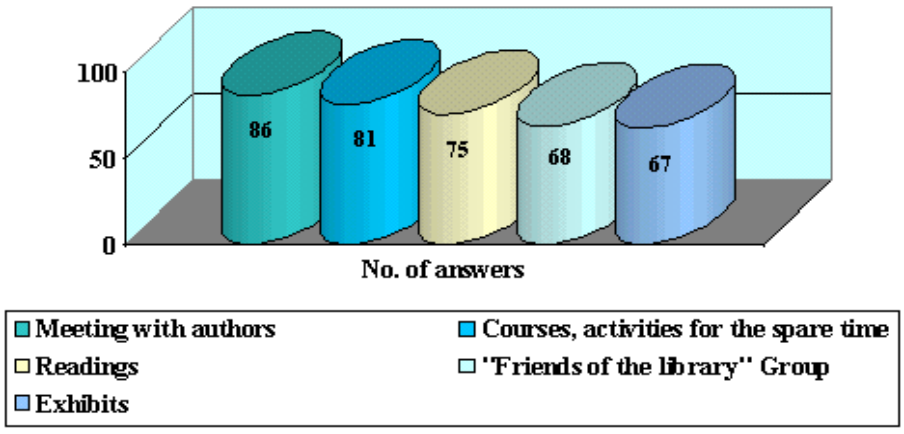
As one 18-year-old remarks: "*It would be useful if an educator would help the most deserving students in organising their study time*" [190M18]. Moreover, as studies deserve more attention, also welcomed would be "*the possibility of talking to personnel qualified in specific disciplines such as literature, foreign languages, history, etc*." [173F17]. In any case, having simply "*more personnel*" at disposal is felt as an advantage [167F15].

Secondly, the development of free time activities and services would be welcomed more by 15-19-year olds, showing that the library, as an institution where they are or were used to go during elementary and middle school, could become more and more a meeting and cultural place for them. To this purpose, the library should be "*open in the evening*" to host some author or organise "*a literary salon*" [156F16].[15]

The last question asked to the subjects involved regarded, once again, the development of activities in which they could be either interested or involved [Q20]. Nine categories were provided, as well as the possibility of giving a free choice [see Table 4-114].

Figure 4.16 below provides a summary of the results of the first five preferences over the nine choices.

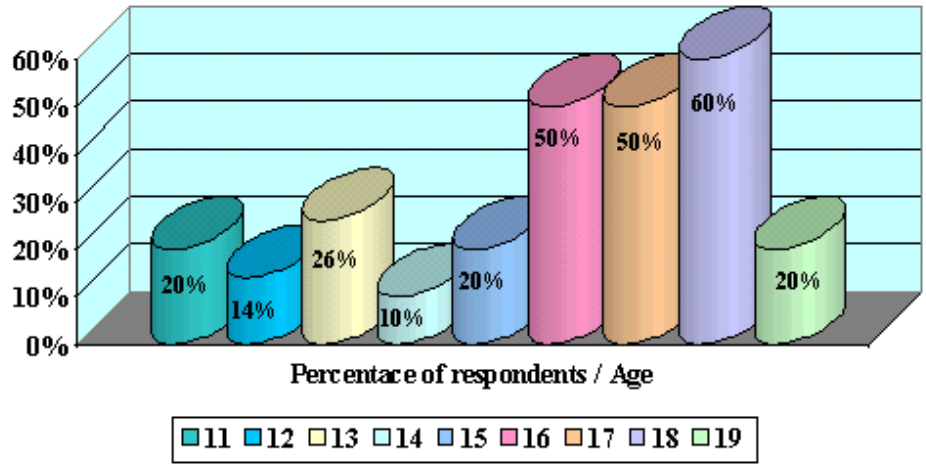
FIGURE 4.16.
Top Five activities to be organised in the library in future



If the data above appear not very significant, a remarkable observation can be done about the preferences in readings against meeting with authors (and also with experts of any discipline), if analysed with an eye on the age distribution.

The reduction of data in this guise reveal a trend which seems to increase at some critical ages, as illustrated in Figure 4.17, which coincide with the last year of middle school and the central years of the following educational path (normally, a 5-year-curriculum).

FIGURE 4.17.
Interest towards meetings with discipline experts



Other suggestions, not part of the list proposed to respondents, include specifications of the listed activities, such as courses to improve various skills (computer, photography, drawing), readings in foreign languages, reading evenings, games, and also meeting singers – rather than authors!

Someone stressed helpful advice from personnel again, like "*being guided to Books with a capital B*" and "*help in finding books*".

References

[1] Tables about the data discussed are all to be found in Appendix 4, and have been numbered in the text of this chapter with "4-" followed by the exact number of the table.

[2] Data have been collected by the Home Office of the Town Hall in Ala, at the date of 31.12.2003.

[3] One of the girls contacted was very pleased to help in the research, and affirmed: "*Wow, a questionnaire! Nobody has ever asked my opinion before! Thank you!*"

[4] See questionnaire 185F15, Q3 and Q4: "*I can't remember, I was too little*".

[5] See also questionnaire 178F14, Q4: "*I couldn't speak*", and in particular 152F17, Q4: "*I was frightened by silence*".

[6] Data collected directly from the questionnaires.

[7] After compulsory school adolescents begin very different lives and they meet either inside Associations boards / events, or in pubs. They still come to the library, but at more different times than before.

[8] For details, see Appendix 5, Interview 3.

[9] According to this study, a typical feature of the young adult condition in Trentino is the possibility to have early access to work through either school or University development projects [Buzzi, 2003, p. 252].

[10] Other respondents have suggested also that the library is "*a place where to study, to amuse oneself, to get information*" [156F16]; "*a place where you find books for nothing, always there for you*" [164M16] and also "*a place where one can acculturate himself*" [161M19].

[11] The library cited is the one of the city where all young adults from Ala go after compulsory school to attend superior education courses. This library, situated in the area of the major secondary schools, is the second largest in the county and is open from early in the morning to 10 p.m. in the evening. It is also part of the building that includes the Modern Art Museum of Trento and Rovereto (MART), which opened in December 2003.

[12] Among them, 156F16, 149M16, 179F14.

[13] Questionnaires giving this hint are: 142F16, Q18: "*The services now available are more than sufficient*";

[14] As stressed in Questionnaire 141F16, Q18: "All services now available".

[15] A female 15-year-old says: "… *[the library] should organise debates and meetings on particular topics*" [185F15, Q18].

CHAPTER 5:
INTERVIEW
AND FOCUS GROUPS FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter resumes the key findings of some in-depth interviews and focus groups with different groups of people. The model followed to choose the subjects was the "opportunity" or "availability" sample model. For a discussion of this method see Section 2.

The aim of the interviews and the focus groups was to explore a few specific areas resulting from the questionnaire findings and, in particular, to clarify answers to Questions 14, 15 and 18 of the questionnaire [See Appendix 3]. about the idea of the library and on the services to be developed in future. The convergence of interest on these questions has been matured after the analysis of the collected data, which showed similar answers, that necessitated further confirmation in the less represented age group – that over 15 – and a summary investigation on the adults' opinions on the issue.

Details on the selection of the subjects are given in Section 2.

The main points under focus were slightly differentiated among the groups or individuals contacted: young adults, librarians, parents, and educators.

Young adults' opinions were acquired in a single focus group session with three 15 to 18-year olds, of whom just one had filled in the questionnaire before. The three subjects who freely came to the focus group were part of a group of eight YA who attended a summer course in video production and decided to create a video on what their peers thought about their living place. The resulting video was presented to the local population on December 9th, 2003, as a part of a seminar on juvenile life conditions.[1]

These subjects, then, were in the condition to represent not only their own personal opinions, but also report on more widespread ideas on the social life of their peers. Coincidentally, they turned also out to represent three different models of viewing the library: as a place where to study, as a place where to cultivate one's own interests, and as a place where to come later on during life. A condition stated to enhance participation was the guarantee that the researcher would not tape the session.[2]

Librarians' opinions were collected from two in-depth interviews with members of different libraries, as to gather a variety of conceptions in practices. The two librarians contacted work in different conditions. One of them works in a public library of a village of about 2.500 inhabitants, with no room dedicated for YA activities. The other works in a bigger public library, with dedicated spaces, located in a city centre of about 40.000 people. These interviews have not been taped due to the uncomfortable location where they were taken.[3]

Parents' and educators' views were collected during a focus group with both categories (2 educators, 3 parents) and from one in-depth interview with one parent. The tapes of the interview and focus group have been fully transcribed and are to be read in Appendix 5.

Unlikely the original intents, the administrators' category has not been considered because of the high probability of bias in the answers, due to the imminent Town Council elections.

The major themes of concern were developed after a brief examination of the data collected through the questionnaire. Consequently, the following areas were treated:

- *Experience of the local library*.
  - Visits to the public library (by YA, directly / indirectly stated, of adults).
  - Motivations to visiting / not visiting the library.
  - Examples of either positive or negative experiences in the public library.
  - Ability to motivate others in presenting the public library as a place to visit and to reflect on the most important aspects for motivation
- *Expectations about dedicated services*.
  - Opinions on the public library: the most / least important aspects.
  - Public library image: definition, social utility, role in the life of YA.
- *Perspectives on future developments*.
  - Services which could be implemented in future.
  - Hypothesis of personal involvement in the library activities.

During the course of the interviews and of the focus groups, additional themes emerged, which have been deemed worthy of attention:

- Staff interaction with young users
- Interaction of the library with educational institutions of the area
- Library and school: the YA view on a delicate interaction

5.2 Analysis

5.2.1. The local library in the experience of YA: further opinions

The results of the questionnaire have given a very articulate portrait of the experience of the library by adolescents. From the interviews and focus groups, new insights have been gathered, which result in a more complex and overall picture.

5.2.1.1. The library and its young users: Motivations for visiting it

Data collected through the questionnaire were confirmed by adolescents, who affirm to go to the library mainly to do homework, but often also to meet friends, with no specific purpose in mind. They go to the library to study for the place is more quiet than home, there are lots of materials available and it is possible to cultivate one's own interests.[4]

Two of the three YA were library users, not only of the town's library but also of a more recent and bigger library in the city centre where they are studying, that is, the one in Rovereto.[5]

They also note that some of their schoolmates come only to use the Internet.[6]

Also parents involved in the interviews and focus groups confirmed these opinions. Their children appreciate the library services and initiatives, and always find the materials needed for school homework.[7] Apart from these reasons, the interviewed parent also commented that her love for books has found fertile ground in her children. According to their mother, "*They consider the library a meeting place, where they can do homework with friends, away from the intrusive glances of their mothers*."[8]

In accordance with this feeling, among other factors that encourage going to the library is also reported a sense of challenge experienced in the family – either in positive or negative way.[9]

5.2.1.2. The library and its young non-users: Motivations against visiting it

More interestingly, the views on motivations for non-using the public library reveal different attitudes towards reading habits – not only towards the library in itself – also showing peculiarities between generations.

Among the young adults interviewed, one of the adolescents affirmed to be a Non-User of the library, but that nonetheless he would come if the atmosphere would be consonant with reading.[10]

But, if on the one hand there are also readers who don't use the library as a source,[11] on the other hand, and mostly sustained, the opinion prevailed that adolescents prefer being involved in different activities rather than reading in their spare time. Indeed, the young adults interviewed asserted to have friends who prefer doing something else to going into the library. Pastimes like playing music, practising sports or outdoor activities are very common,[12] and exercise a high attraction towards all of them, as registered by a recent study on the juvenile condition in the area.[13]

The members of the adults' focus group agreed that this attitude also depends on time saturation. "If one spends so much time over books for studying, he might want to spend his free time away from books, even if there are moments of free reading and entertainment."[14]

Besides, adults observed that some young adults didn't develop a habit for reading, as they seem not to like this activity.[15] But the more practical explanation emerging is largely that young adults don't regard reading as a primary concern, confirming that "*at this age they like more practising some sports, playing music; reading can be really demanding, it is not always an amusement. For some YA reading means fatigue because it is not a habit. It is a matter of practice: the more you read, the more you would read…*"[16] – a remark that reminds to a recent observation made by a professional during a seminar held in Campi Bisenzio, Italy, about the development of a new concept of library for the young generations.[17]

The idea of necessary skills to feel not only readers, but users of the library, has been also underlined by an interviewee in a former project, who justified the lack of interest in the library because this place was felt as "*reserved to those who can make use of it*."

Moreover, the environment was perceived as "*pretty serious*", and thus provoking a sense of being in the wrong place. [18]

This subject asserted, besides, that he "*rarely visit[ed] the library basically for lack of time, because the time that I could spend in coming to the library I prefer doing something else like being with friends (and being loud), something that is not fair in the library environment*."[19]

Turning to collected data again, also groups of mates are highly considered by young adults in deciding which habits to cultivate or not. *"If you want to be part of that particular group you must follow their rules and so, if they don't go to the library, you shall not go there either."*[20]

As far as adults are concerned, during a very interesting discussion among the parents' and educators' focus group on young adults' library visits, two opposite ways of seeing the development of reading habits emerged. By the way, a different interpretation model of young adults' lack of interest in the library was put to light, which was not disclosed by adolescents. On the one hand, adults identified non-users of the library with those who don't like reading and go to the library only if forced, in the boundaries of school time. As a consequence, library frequency has been sadly interpreted as being not only a matter of occasion, it is a matter of personal character and disposition.[21]

This fatalistic vision has been counterbalanced and opposed by a parent who introduced the theme of the responsibility of the family in involving children with reading. "*I think there may be children who would like reading but they are not used to frequenting the library by their parents, so they don't visit it*."[22]

As suggested by another focus group member, the school might provide a chance for this group of children to get in contact with the library,[23] but this fact in itself is not perceived as sufficient, still. "*Also parents should bring their children into the library and stay there a whole afternoon, so that it is perceived as an amusement, not as an imposed thing."* [24] More convincingly, she argues that *"what school organises can be refused later*."[25]

Soon after this consideration, it was nonetheless appreciated that teachers bring their classes into the library, to attend activities that are organised in co-operation with the librarians.[26]

Anyway, much more value is given to the personal and free involvement in reading, because "*it is a different way to visit the library, considering it as a meeting place, a recreational and not too serious place. It would be an amusing way to go there, different than to go there with the class*." [27]

But with this vision the variety of interpretations is not yet settled. A high variability of factors has emerged regarding the role of adults in shaping an unimportant, when not negative image of the library in the young.

In a face-to-face interview with one parent, the fact that not all children equally visit the library was considered. Some children in particular don't visit it partly out of laziness, but partly also because many research materials are available for them readily at home.[28]

Another reason for not going to the library has been envisaged in the dependence of the children living far from the library by parents in order to reach it. Some of them shall be accompanied, but adults normally have other things to do,[29] for instance, working.[30]

A possible solution to this problem has been envisioned in the change of the library opening hours. If the free time of the family would coincide with the availability of library services, there could be an enhancement in the frequency.[31]

Another point raised is time availability for reading. "*Until the end of middle school there is more freedom to read and the children can cultivate this habit*."[32] When they reach the upper classes, teachers give them lists of books to read and some of them like these readings,[33] but some others do not and so they might lose their willingness to read.

As reported, teachers who assign homework can create a sense of compulsion to going to the library – thus provoking a negative impact on the students. As a parent in the focus group observed, "*I have noticed that my children from the college ahead have lost this passion* [for reading] *because teachers force them to read some books and so, just because they must, they loose the sense of amusement*."[34]

Anyway, there are also readers who don't come to the library. As clearly focussed by a member of the adults' focus group, "*the book lover doesn't like going into a library to read, he likes staying at home because total silence is the most precious thing and the book is his world, what he puts in it himself*."[35]

5.2.1.3. Positive and negative experiences in the library

The positive experiences with the library coincide with the richness of materials, of services and with the comfortable space.[36] The library is confirmed as a place where YA can meet friends, and where they can have advice on research, homework or books.[37] The library is also felt as being very well stocked with materials and PCs,[38] and have copies if needed.[39]

Other positive experiences with the library regard the courtesy of the personnel and the professional help, and, moreover, the answer to specific requests (like preparing bibliographies on demand)[40].

From the key informants counterpart, that is, the librarians, positive experiences were made with information providing and explanation "*of tips and tricks to find what they need for school, to enhance their freedom and independence in searching activities*".[41]

On the contrary, the same colleague reported with distress about negative experiences like when some subjects had to be "*discouraged or invited to go away*" from the library because of their loudness.[42]

As far as users are concerned, the experience of a turnover in the personnel has been felt as frustrating, showing that there is an affection towards some people whom one trust more than others in asking for information,[43] proving that professional skills and readiness for help are appreciated.[44] Sometimes, difficulties in finding materials on one's own also arouse, an issue raised both by adults[45] and by the young.[46]

By the latter also the lack of propaganda[47] for their age group has stemmed from the discussion.

Perhaps the most sensitive point of concern for parents has been reported when coming to the library in search of materials for school homework for the children, and having been got almost frightened or not properly served by the personnel as they would have expected. *"Some of them are not at their ease with books, and would like to be guided into the book to the desired page*", reports one of the parents.[48]

Undoubtedly, these experiences can nurture negative feelings among the parents, which could have repercussions on the younger generations.

5.2.2. Expectations of YA about dedicated services

Library services dedicated or conceived primarily for young adults are not widespread in Italy. The two librarians interviewed belonged to the standard and affirmed that, although young adults visit their libraries, they offer poor dedicated services and none of them tried to reach young adults in some special way in order to get them know the library better.[49] Anyway, one of them professed she would, but the difficulty is in reaching this target group.[50]

5.2.2.1. Most appreciated / Least appreciated materials and services by YA

From observations, librarians stated that, in his opinion, the most appreciated thing by young adults in the library is the possibility to surf the Internet,[51] along with the freedom to browse through the shelves and around the library without constraints.[52]

Furthermore, it has been highlighted that magazines and newspapers are not of great interest for young adults, thus implicitly reflecting that the choice to make available this typology of materials for them could be not essential.[53] Nonetheless, it could be argued that only a reorganisation in the arrangement of magazines in the library would prove this version, against which there is some example even in the county.[54]

Turning to users' perceptions, in the opinion of all members of the adults' focus group, service quality and the attention to the users' needs are vital features.[55] More explicitly, the atmosphere perceived by the user while entering the library can be a key factor in fostering and maintaining the relationship between user and librarian.[56] Another important factor is the ability of the librarian to offer specific advice and a professional quality of services.[57] Besides, the parent interviewed underlined the centrality of the loan services. Nobody, in fact, would ever be able to afford the purchase of so many books a library can offer.[58]

For YA in particular, services like music and the Internet, although someone observes that an Internet connection is slowly entering more and more households,[59] are considered absolutely necessary to attract them into the library.[60]

5.2.2.2. The image of the public library: Between the cold, traditional institution and the emotional nest of freedom and transgression

As far as the importance of the library for young adults is concerned, it was in some way surprising to ascertain that the least enthusiastic notes were collected among one of the librarians, who should promote actively this place also among this age group.

In fact, it has been observed that the public library doesn't really seem a primarily concern for young adults in particular: "*I don't think they look at it as an important place. It doesn't seem to be essential, they look for places where they can stay together without strict rules. The library is not such a place and, moreover, it is used for activities related with the school.*"[61]

According to this view, he suggested that the library – if promoting dedicated services to this group – should change name, accepting for the specific section a definition such as "YA Info Point" or "YA Centre", as to completely avoid the concept of "books" related with this place.[62]

Furthermore, in his opinion, the public library suffers from a vision too deeply connected with school activities, so young adults cannot see its potential and utility to their life. The library could only gain importance for them if "*its image would be detached from the stereotypes [mentioned above] and be associated to a more informal, open space and non-structured activities. Furniture such as tables and seats – too much similar to school rooms – shall be substituted with comfortable armchairs and sofas,"*[63] a vision, in fact, already emerged from some questionnaire answers.[64]

A more pragmatic and general view was defended by the other librarian interviewed, who observed that the public library is useful for research activities, for reading and as a safe room for everyone. This colleague[65] was more confident in being able to exercise a positive influence in habits, so she also suggested that to improve a positive approach with the library among young adults, the technique of the "concealed advertisement" should be considered.[66] Anyway, she had no doubt in stating that the public library is important for the young adults group first of all as a place for meeting friends, and only thereafter as a place where to read.[67]

The opinions of adults' and young adults' on this matter revealed agreement on this point, although slowly, thought after thought, a dual concept of library emerges.

On the one side, the concept of a traditional - and serious – library institution, where to study and do research. On the other, the affirmation of a new library, where to meet ideas and people.

For both age groups, the library has, undisputedly, a very important social role.

Adults asked what they would do if it there was a decrease or a loss of its financial resources, have envisaged the possibility of reacting with a collective action – be it a self-administration by a group of parents, an association or a committee named for the occasion.[68] In the extreme case of a closure, "*the reaction would be an action, a sit-in, a permanent presence of readers in front of the library. Surely some kind of very noticeable action, as strong as the loss of a library would mean*."[69]

No doubt then: the library is very important for the young as well as for the adults.

"I think it is a powerful aggregation centre that fosters curiosity and reading habits. It has a positive impact and above all it is a safe and very stimulating place."[70]

According to this vision, the interviewed parent defined it as a place with a high density of people and things, where it is possible to get in touch with something new every time. *"It is a place where they* [the children] *can do homework with their friends, be quiet or chat with friends,"*[71] and a meeting point for people of different ages. One of the most important things is that children of the elementary school can meet older ones, learn how to behave with them and how to interact with grown ups.[72]

From the young adults' side, there was even a more complex and stimulating answer. In growing up, they experience separation from one another because their personal interests and views are creeping out, so they reflect also on the choices of the others.[73]

As a consequence, their answers reflected firstly their own position about the theme, all agreeing on the importance of the library,[74] but secondly arguing on attitudes noticed in peers. One of them, in fact, disputed that *"the library means knowledge, opportunities – for students – but it is sacrificed, overshadowed, and overthrown by the television and especially by the so-called trash TV programmes."*[75]

Another one reminds that the attitude of the group leader dominates the participation in events, places or anything else by fellows.[76] This is felt as a pity, because a library is felt as very important as an information providing structure, and above all, interestingly

as "*a place where everyone can follow one's own path, outside of the consumers' paradigm*."[77] From this observation, a deeper thought emerges: "*Culture is transgression, not institution*,"[78] meaning that the library has to be seen as an opportunity for information and knowledge in itself, not solely confined to some specific use.

In the end, the major task devised is finding a strategy to promote a new image of the library among peers. As they suggested, this could be achieved through a big promotional action that can convey the idea of the library as a cultural place breaking with institutional rules, because everyone can freely choose between materials, formats and supports.[79]

5.2.3 Perspectives on future developments

5.2.3.1. Future services to be developed for / by young adults

The opinions of professionals on this matter are similar. Both cultivate the idea to develop an open space dedicated to YA, where they can rest in a more informal way without thinking about school.[80] To this, one of them adds that a better visibility of the specific services and a richer agenda of events dedicated to them are deserved. But, she argues, the difficulty is in getting in touch with young adults, anyway. [81]

Very clear ideas has the interviewed parent on this topic, showing to have a different view of the issue from the young adults' side, particularly of the younger part of them:

"*I think that reading promotion is the most important thing. In a library with plenty of materials, young people need to know about the choices and books should be better promoted… They also need to be advised about which books are most suitable for their age, because often they come home with some book that they cannot read and they must bring it back and search for something easier. It is frustrating to them*."[82]

Concerning the implementation of new services, a complex picture has been drawn by the adults' focus group, who identified four main areas to be developed in the library of the future, considering in particular adolescents and their needs:

- music and video materials – with a selection of the major production available on the market[83]
- painting activities with exhibitions[84]
- activities and events for families (thus combining the different ages)[85]
- promotion of activities that can be attractive to adolescents, such as a comics' laboratory with some famous artist, or similar events[86]

The public library of the future should be developed to become a Cultural Centre, with a theatre inside it, as to enhance its social and aggregation role.[87]

The idea of a centre where to read, watch movies, etc. with a room where it is possible to discuss over books, films and other matters of interest[88] is very consonant with those

emerging from the questionnaire data.[89] An enlarged vision of the aims of the libraries is also part of the recent county legislation proposal for the whole cultural sector.[90]

As expected, also the traditional image of the library as reading place emerged, with a favourable glance at the various interests developed by young people and a possible integration of these in the library sections. The desire, also from the parents' side, is to have a library with different rooms for different purposes.[91]

Anyway, in the end, the most important things the adults' group wanted to stress were very practical ones: The updating of books, and a more suitable opening time.[92]

When prompted to prepare a hypothetical discourse before the administrators in order to explain the expectations for the future of the library, three major points emerged from this adults' group:

1. administrators should listen to the librarians' requests with regard to human, financial and instrumental resources available;
2. opening hours should be tailored to the actual community needs;
3. rooms should be increased, with a theatre and rooms for specific purposes.[93]

Finally, one of the parents also suggested the idea of distributing some information sheet for which young adults could give their personal contribution (e.g. book listings, abstracts, etc.). Moreover, also reading games and contests, as well as some specific and – why not – local literary prize would be appreciated, so that young adults can vote for their favourites and feel important. In addition, the ones who are already frequently going to the library could be better involved and become acquainted with different literary genres.[94]

As far as young adults in person are concerned, in an ideal library they would like spaces for children being separated from those for adults. There should be then a sound-proof room, where they can play music or speak loud, and another room for discussions, study groups, services (a mini-bar, etc.). Very important should be the existing garden, where more activities could be organised. The library should become more and more a cultural and museum centre.[95]

The chance to be listened by administrators in order to obtain what they ask, is felt by young adults as a challenge to be exploited without fear of the consequences.[96]

The focus group members suggested to go to the discussion in a big number, asking for help in getting young adults closer to the library institution, which shall not be seen as the "boring palace", especially by under-18.[97]

Again, as these young citizens underlined, the library shall be seen – in a positive way - as a place where new interests can be cultivated and new things discovered.[98]

5.2.3.2. Young adults, parents and the idea of having an active role in the library

From an adult's point of view, the meeting between peers and know-how exchange are seen as potential enhancing factors in visiting the library, as well as the experiences connected with school activities, such as book presentations to other children as to exchange information between them without an adult intermediary.[99]

A direct involvement in organising the activities of the library towards young adults has been favourably welcomed by parents and educators, but soon after almost rejected, while thinking about the many activities in which parents are normally involved in for their children.[100]

Young adults, from their part, declared that they would like to participate as a group in the social activities of the library preferably in a group,[101] and provided useful hints on how to enhance their involvement. First of all, they would like to promote either film or book discussions[102] in a positive and sincere atmosphere, where nobody shall predominate over the others and in complete absence of cultural stereotypes.[103] Comprehensibly, they would prefer doing such experience during summer time, when they have school vacations.[104]

A particular way of being involved in the activities of the library was hypothesised by the researcher in favouring visits by peers. Thus, it was asked to participants what they would do in order to accomplish such a task.

The three adolescents interviewed have found very difficult to think how to enhance library frequency among peers. Since they all belong to some group, such a difficult task could perhaps be achieved in contacting each of the group leaders and work on their "energy" to promote interesting events in the library for all adolescents.[105]

One thought that a possible strategy to promote the library among young adults could be to appeal to the quiet place, helpful in providing useful information, developing knowledge, satisfying curiosities, and offering more materials than any other place in town.[106] They all agreed on separating the library from a concept of studying or school activities and, at the same time, on highlighting that young adults don't only need video games to be happy.[107]

If interesting activities would be organised, then a direct involvement of the young adults would supposedly be achieved. One of these activities could be creating a sort of "Literary Room" where young adults could discuss on books, films, and other matters of interest.[108] In particular, TV films or movies discussion would be an easier activity rather than discussions on other topics.[109]

Wider considerations have been made by the adults, who imagined different and various possibilities, among which material incentives (gadgets, chunk food, etc.)[110], but two more serious hypotheses have been taken into consideration:

a) the co-operation with the schools, and in particular with some teachers who are keen on library visits, because it was felt to be easier for them to accompany the students rather than for the parents to convince the children to follow them into the library, especially when they grow up. The school, it was maintained, has many occasions to go to the library and it is the easiest and most natural way for children to get acquainted with the library;[111]

b) the enhancement of extra-school activities, also targeted to families, so that the library is considered a meeting place and not an extension of school time.[112]

Both these suggestions, however, clash with the young adults' need of free rooms and no strict rules, as has been acknowledged by some experienced librarian.[113]

In conclusion, a discussion of the most evident contradictions and challenges follows in the next pages.

5.2.4 Some tricky points: Customer care, interaction towards schools, and young adults' opinions about it

5.2.4.1. Customer care: Staff interaction with young users

Improving the relationship between young adults and librarians could be a difficult task, if working conditions are not suitable or adaptable. A direct participation of the young adults in the public library activities would be very welcomed by the librarians interviewed, under the condition that there would be more room available.[114]

The loudness factor is basically the reason for which one of the librarians interviewed would improve young adults' frequency to the library through the creation of informal, fundamentally non-scholastic spaces, because the binomial structure 'library = study room' is an improper message.[115]

To their administrators, then, it could be frequent that librarians would ask a free space for this target group, where they can meet and chat without being forced to silence.[116]
In the focus group young adults didn't reveal any thought about library personnel.
The only suggestions for a better understanding between these customers and the staff still come from the questionnaires. It is worth to reconsider a few of the free answers given there, in which – as already illustrated in Chapter 4 – some of them ask for "*skilled, helpful and professional personnel*" [185F15], who can give advice on the choice of books [170F14]. A high variability of wishes is present in their answers. Some wants to have any required information [14M13, 145F14]. Some desires to meet there "*people who can help you in growing up*" [100F11]. Some other would like to have English lessons [11F13], or explanations about how to study and to do homework and searches [29M13, 35F14, 95F11, 117M12, 150M14, 190M18].
Although not expressed directly during the interviews, it is nonetheless apparent that young adults deserve much more attention than the personnel imagines or is in the condition to offer. In fact, some of them require more staff and the presence of qualified personnel in specific disciplines [167F15, 173F17].
An indirect corroboration of these needs is provided by some of the parents during the interviews.[117]

5.2.4.2. Interaction of the library with educational and social services institutions of the area: The adults' view

In general, adults welcome the co-operation between the library and the other institutions operating in the area, but in different ways.

Parents indicate – on the one hand – school activities as a mean to enhance library visits,[118] thus stating the importance of a contact between the two institutions. Though, the presence of sensible teachers is also necessary to come to a positive result: "*The school could be the provider of a connection, but it depends on the teachers. There are some of them who invite students to visit the library autonomously*… […] *The school can have thousands of inputs to give them [i.e. young adults] to make reading a joyful activity. School seems to me the best and easiest path to follow*."[119] Following this opinion, another parent suggested that "*the school should enhance the use of the library through some initiatives*."[120]

The presence of educational institutions and social services is perceived as particularly favourable from one of the librarians interviewed, who indicated it as one of the strengths of which to take advantage, but for different reasons from those explicated above and assumed by some parents.

Competencies, activities and roles could be better defined and integrated, as to mark out the boundaries and, at the same time, profit from distinctive skills. As he pointed out, "*the social services staff and educators in general are better prepared than librarians for this task* [i.e., in winning young adults' attention and participation], *they have a wider approach, not restricted to activities done within schools*."[121]

The 'wider approach' technique is alluded by one of the parents who didn't share the positions mentioned above. Perceiving that school visits cannot be sufficient to grant satisfying results,[122] she reckoned that experiences outside school hours are more amusing and activities should be organised for the free time.[123]

But, it has to be also acknowledged that during adolescence young adults progressively abandon reading. One of the librarians, considering some background literature, even asked himself: Is it worth finding a solution to this trend?[124]

5.2.4.3. Library and school: the young adults' view on a delicate interaction

Turning to young adults' voices, two important aspects were highlighted during the focus group session, which put in new light the considerations made by adults and illustrated in the previous paragraphs of this Chapter.

First of all, the binomial 'School + Library', as an unfruitful expression to them. Young adults, in fact, think that "*the library is too strongly connected with studying and school. Some of them reckon that it would be an excessive mental effort to go.*" [125] Given the strict relationship with the school, no surprise that there is no great interest towards the library.[126] Besides, as one of them reports, they have anyway been forced to go by teachers who assigned homework and research topics, with which they couldn't cope with materials available at home.[127]

Secondly, the statement of importance of the library, which was not undermined by any of the negative aspects listed above.[128] This means that there is the possibility of winning young adults' attention towards the organised activities. As a matter of fact, in considering the best strategies in capturing peers' attention towards any event promoted by the library, one of them suggests following solution: "*I should think about something that would not foster the relationship LIBRARY = STUDYING = SCHOOL.*"[129]

In the end, even if they don't exclude engagement in study or research activities,[130] the main concern is to "*remove the idea that the library is a boring place*."[131]

Reassuringly, librarians' collected opinions already follow this direction. They regard young adults as a peculiar target group, who deserves particular skills and techniques to be attracted,[132] from peer-to-peer interaction[133] to business models: "[The library] *could become and be perceived as a more useful place if it would be related to a general public and independent from school activities. I would see it more like a commercial store, a "literary salon", where the atmosphere is informal and activities not too structured from the beginning. A place where one can have services and places for entertainment, with no tables and chairs similar to those in the school rooms, but welcoming armchairs and sofas*."[134]

A definition that surely fits with all young adults' opinions collected and illustrated in the previous pages.

References

[1] The video production course, as an initiative of the Town Hall, was intended to give young adults the possibility of acquiring the basic skills on filming and producing a video, from the script to the final result. Eight adolescents from 15 to 19 years attended the course.

[2] This condition was also stated in the letter of presentation of the aims and objectives of the research. See Appendix 3 for details.

[3] The interviews were made on a professional trip to Bologna, on the occasion of the International Children's Book Fair held in 2004.

[4] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R9b, p.CIX Similar results had also been registered from the questionnaires, see Appendix 4, Tables 4-38 to 4-41.

[5] See *ibidem*, R1b, p. CVIII.

[6] See *ibidem*, R4a, R4c, p. CVIII.

[7] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R4, p. XCVII; Adults' Focus Group Interview, R4a-e, p. CIII.

[8] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R4, p. XCVII.

[9] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R6a, p. CVIII: "*When you grow up in a place where you must be informed to survive… It is a challenge between generations, between brothers and sisters*."

[10] See *ibidem*, R1c, p. CVIII.

[11] BUZZI 2003, p. 146-147: While only one fourth (23,7%) of the young adults in Trentino admit they are not readers, the percentage of those who never visit a library is about 50%.

[12] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R5a, p. CVIII.

[13] BUZZI 2003, p. 254. According to this study, the young adults in the Trentino county display the same interests as their Italian peers: listening to music and practising sports.

[14] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R5e, p. CIV.

[15] See *ibidem*, R5c, p. CIV.

[16] See *ibidem*, R5e, p. CIV.

[17] See CARDARELLO 2000, p. [9], in: IDEST 2000.

[18] *Ibidem*, p. 23.

[19] From the *Questionnaire on the library environment* completed by an 18-year-old for the small scale research project *Reading at teenage: a rewarding experience? Exploration of the reading choices of library users aged 15-24,* p. 23, compiled by Elena Corradini [CORRADINI 2002] and submitted on November 4th, 2002, to the University of Northumbria, MA/MSc Information Studies, LI 614 Unit: Applied Research in Information Studies.

[20] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R6c, p. CVIII. See also *ibidem*, R8a, p. CIX, on the importance of the library: "*It depends from one YA group to another. The real interest in the library is different and dominated by the attitude of the group leader*." This view has been acknowledged by BUZZI 2003, p. 254: "*From the research emerges the strength of the peer group with which most part of the free time activities are organised*."

[21] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R5a-b, p. CIII.

[22] *Ibidem,* R5b, p. CIII.

[23] *Ibidem.*

[24] *Ibidem.*

[25] *Ibidem.*

[26] See *ibidem*, R5b, R5d, p. CIII-CIV.

[27] See *ibidem*, R5b.

[28] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R5, p. XCVII.

[29] *Ibidem*.

[30] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R5e, p. CIV.

[31] *Ibidem*, R5e, p. CIV; R16c, R18c, p. CVII. The necessity for the library of an alignment with the time availability of the families has been also underlined by CONNOR 1990, p. 123.

[32] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R5a, p. CIII-CIV.

[33] See *ibidem*, R5c,d,a, p. CIII-CIV.

[34] See *ibidem*, R5a, p. CIV.

[35] See *ibidem*, R5a, p. CIV.

[36] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R13, p. XCVIII.

[37] See *ibidem*, R4, p. XCVII; Adults' Focus Group Interview, R4a-e, p. CIII; Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R4a-c, p. CVIII; Librarian's Interview 2, R4, p. CI.

[38] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R4, p. XCVII.

[39] See Appendix 5, Young Adults' Focus Group Inteview, R11a, p. CIX.

[40] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R13d-e, p. CVI.

[41] See Appendix 5.3, Librarian's Interview 2, R13, p. CII.

[42] See *ibidem*, R14, p. CII.

[43] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R14b, p. CVI.

[44] *Ibidem,* R14d, p. CVI.

[45] *Ibidem,* R14e, p. CVI.

[46] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R12c, p. CIX.

[47] See *ibidem*, R11c, p. CIX.

[48] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R14, p. XCVIII.

[49] See Appendix 5.2, Librarian's Interview 1, R2, p. XCIX; Librarian's Interview 2, R2, p. CI.

[50] See *ibidem*, R8, p. XCIX.

[51] See Appendix 5.3, Librarian's Interview 2, R4, p. CI.

[52] See *ibidem*, R6, p. CI.

[53] See *ibidem*, R7, p. CI.

[54] A positive experience in this respect has been made in Vigo di Fassa (Trento), Italy, where the ground floor of the library has been fully dedicated to young adults by way of PCs with Internet connection, dedicated readings and magazines section, Videogames section and TV corner.

[55] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R6c, p. CV.

[56] See *ibidem*, R6d, p. CV.

[57] See *ibidem*, R6b, p. CV.

[58] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R6, p. XCVII.

[59] See *ibidem*, R4, R6, p. XCVII.

[60] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R6e, p. CV.

[61] See Appendix 5.3, Librarian's Interview 2, R9, p. CI.

[62] See *ibidem*, R10, p. CI.

[63] See *ibidem*, R12, p. CI.

[64] In answering Question 15 of the questionnaire, a male 13-year-old hazarded that his ideal library should have "*sofas, a TV, hot dogs and Coke, DVDs*" [25M13]. Other similar answers to Q15 [among which 28M13, 34M13, 75F12, 126F12, 138F15] have been subsumed under the category "With a new setting" in the Tables 4-73 to 4-76 to be seen in Appendix 4.

[65] The colleague working in the little village.

[66] See Appendix 5.2, Librarian's Interview 1, R12, p. XCIX.

[67] See *ibidem*, R9, p. XCIX.

[68] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R12, p. XCVIII.

[69] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R12e, p. CVI.

[70] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R9, p. XCVII.

[71] See *ibidem*, R10, p. XCVIII.

[72] *Ibidem.*

[73] See D'AGOSTINI 1996, p. 64-65, p. 97-103.

[74] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R8a-c, p. CIX.

[75] See *ibidem*, R8c, p. CIX.

[76] See *ibidem*, R8a, p. CIX.

[77] See *ibidem*, R10a, p. CIX.

[78] See *ibidem*, R16a, R17a, p. CX.

[79] See *ibidem*, R9b, p. CIX.

[80] See Appendix 5.2, Librarian's Interview 1, R16, p. C; Librarian's Interview 2, R15, p. CII.

[81] See *ibidem*, R8, p. XCIX.

[82] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview 1, R8, p. XCVII.

[83] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R8c, p. CV.

[84] See *ibidem*, R8b, p. CV.

[85] See *ibidem*, R8a, p. CV.

[86] See *ibidem*, R8e, p. CV.

[87] See *ibidem*, R9b, p. CV, R10b-c, p. CV-CVI.

[88] See *ibidem*, R10b, p. CV.

[89] See Appendix 4, Table 4-73, p. LXXV.

[90] See PAT 2004, also available from the URL: http://www.trentinocultura.net/orizzonti/forum_cogo /linee2.asp#1 [Accessed: 14.05.2004].

[91] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R16b, p. CVII.

[92] See *ibidem*, R18b, R18e, p. CVII.

[93] See *ibidem*, R16e, R16c, R16b, R16a, p. CVII.

[94] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R18, p. XCVIII.

[95] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R14a-c, p. CX.

[96] See *ibidem*, R15c, p. CX.

[97] See *ibidem*, R16b, p. CX.

[98] See *ibidem*.

[99] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R4a, p. CIII, R5b, p. CIV; Adult's Interview, R16, p. XCVIII.

[100] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R17e, R17b, R17d, p. CVII; Adult's Interview, R17, p. XCVIII.

[101] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R13a-c, p. CIX-CX.

[102] See *ibidem*, R13b, p. CX.

[103] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R13c, p. CX. In the *Questionnaire on the library environment,* cited above, p. 25. The interviewee highlights the opportunity of organising "*meetings among young people without any external help, to gather who wants to speak about topics that are important for our life (news, politics, etc).*"

[104] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R13a, p. CX.

[105] See *ibidem*, R8a, p. CIX, R17c, p. CX.

[106] See *ibidem*, R9b, p. CIX.

[107] See *ibidem*, R9c, p. CIX.

[108] See *ibidem*, R9a, p. CIX.

[109] See *ibidem*, R9b, p. CIX.

[110] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R15e, p. CVII.

[111] See *ibidem*, R15a, R15c, p. CVII.

[112] See *ibidem*, R15b, R15d, R15e, p. CVI-CVII.

[113] See Appendix 5.3, Librarian's Interview 2, R15, p. CII.

[114] See Appendix 5.2, Librarian's Interview 1, R17, p. C.

[115] See Appendix 5.3, Librarian's Interview 2, R15, p. CII.

[116] See Appendix 5.2, Librarian's Interview 1, R16, p. C.

[117] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R14b, R14d, p. CVI.

[118] See Appendix 5.1, Adult's Interview, R15, p. XCVIII; Adults' Focus Group Interview, R5a, R5c, R5d, p. CIV.

[119] See Adults' Focus Group Interview, R15a, p. CVII.

[120] See *ibidem*, R15c, p. CVII.

[121] See Appendix 5.3, Librarian's Interview 2, R17, p. CII.

[122] See Appendix 5.4, Adults' Focus Group Interview, R5b, p. CIII.

[123] See *ibidem*, R5b, p. CIV; R15b, p. CVII.

[124] See Appendix 5.3, Librarian's Interview 2, R18, p. CII.

[125] *Ibidem*, p. 23: "*…to be able to find something really satisfying for yourself you have got to go deep down into a status of trance, skimming through books and topics of your interest*."

[126] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R15c, p. CX.

[127] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R6b, p. CVIII.

[128] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R8a-c, p.CIX.

[129] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R9c, p. CIX.

[130] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R17a, p. CX.

[131] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R16b, p.CX.

[132] See Appendix 5.2, Librarian's Interview 1, R10, p. XCIX.

[133] See Appendix 5.2, Librarian's Interview 1, R12, p. XCIX.

[134] See Appendix 5.3, Librarian's Interview 2, R12, p. CI.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed at verifying two main hypotheses and several objectives, of which some will be treated in this Chapter, others in Chapter 7, Recommendations (see next Chapter). In the present chapter, findings will back up discussion over the significance of the study, its relationship to other research, and any methodological or theoretical implications.

6.1. Testing of the hypotheses

6.1.1. Young people and their awareness of the potential resources and services available to them in the library

The first hypothesis was stated in the following way:

Young people lack awareness
of the potential resources and services available to them

The related research question stated:

Are young people in the area aware
of the potential resources and services available to them?

This hypothesis, devised as to find out if the poor exploitation of library services was due to poor awareness of the materials and services offered by the library, has been verified through Question 10, asking the participants to indicate the materials they thought to be available in the library. As already stated in Chapter 4 these were all available at the moment of the survey, and they still are.

From the results (see p. 58-59 and Tables 4-50 to 4-53 in Appendix 4), it is possible to conclude that, even in case of frequent users of the library, most of the users are unaware of all materials the library can offer.

This fact can be partially explained with the localisation of materials in the rooms, because most of them are on the open shelves and easily recognisable by the

customers. The data on the most 'wanted' materials (from a same list in Question 11, see Chapter 4, p. 60-61 and Tables 4-60 to 4-63) reveal that the ones already available should perhaps better promoted. This could be achieved either by finding a different collocation in the library or by means of brochures and other inviting advertisement, along with organised library tours.

The results, then, proved that information on materials and services was not sufficient to young adults to find or search for the desired materials. New strategies of promotion should be devised, for instance, through a more intense use of the Internet. Web sites of most libraries in several countries, as well as in Italy already provide this kind of information.[1]

6.1.2. Young people don't regard the library as a place that can make some difference in their lives

The second hypothesis was stated in the following way:

Young people don't regard the library
as a place that can make some difference in their lives.

The related research question stated:

Do young people in the area consider
the local library an important institution?

This hypothesis aimed at finding out if the young people contacted believed the library to be an important institution. Answers to Question 19 were precisely directed to this point, but some cues also came by the answers to Question 17, and from the overall quite high percentage of answers to the questionnaire (see Appendix 4 for details).

The respondents proved to be very interested in the library, despite their frequency (see Chapter 4, p. 53-57), thus enabling to infer that the library is considered an important institution. Also focus groups and interview findings proved the same (see Chapter 5, p. 82-84), providing some other interesting

insights on the institution, appearing at the same time as a cold, indifferent place and as a 'Treasure Island' for information seekers and culturally active minds.

6.2. Accomplishments of aims and objectives

6.2.1. Young people and their library experience

The present study met also the aim to gather satisfactorily when not significant information on following aspects:

- experiences that young adults have had with the library in the present and in the past

These were met particularly with answers to Questions 1 to 5 (for the past experiences) and 6 to 10 (for the present) of the questionnaire, and also in the interviews and focus groups. Most users considered their experience as a positive one, and many didn't remember any negative situation occurred in the library on their first visit, although the 'memory factor' could have had a deterring influence (see Chapter 4, p. 49-53, Chapter 5, p.80).

- motivation to library use / non-use

Motivation was explored through answers to Question 8 in the questionnaire and also in the interviews and focus groups. Results have shown that most users consider the library for studying purposes and recreational reading, while non users chiefly adduced as a motivation their absence of interest in its services, but did not exclude being users in future (see Chapter 4, p. 53-57 and Chapter 5, p. 76-79). In this respect, the picture resembles quite accordingly to the one proposed by Cardarello, who highlighted reading habits and skills as potential encouragement or deterrent to reading activities[2] - and thus of connected experiences.

- satisfaction scale for services offered (real library)

This point was satisfied by the Likert scale structure of Question 9 in the questionnaire and by Question 2 in the interviews and focus groups (see results in Chapter 4, p.58, Chapter 5, p. 76). The perceptions were quite positive but evidenced that extra activities organised by the library scored low in comparison to the other – more traditional – services offered. This could be linked to the 'lack of propaganda' perceived.[3]

- requirements for services to be offered (ideal library)

The image of an 'ideal library' was gathered through answers to Questions 11, 15, 16, 18 and 20 in the questionnaire and to Question 8 in the interviews and focus groups. The answers showed a high variability, but users and non-users agreed in that materials should be updated and activities should be attractive to the target group considered (see Chapter 4, p. 60-69 and Chapter 5, p. 85-87).

6.2.2. Young people and their needs for library services

Explicit and implicit needs of young people about dedicated library services have been gathered through answers to Questions 8, 9, 11, 12, 14-20 (see Chapter 4, p. 62-70) and from Questions 6-8 in the interviews and focus groups (see Chapter 5, p. 85-87). The answers demonstrated that there are more needs to be cared for in the area of educational activities (with the librarian assuming ad educational role, as described by Catarsi)[4] reference, information and technology development.[5]
Their ideal library meets the requirements indicated by Agnoli[6]: places where no strict rule of silence reigns, and where many interesting and lively activities are offered.

6.2.3. Strategies to enhance young people' participation in library services and activities

Young people participating in the focus group gave many inputs in considering how peers could be invited to visit the library, and also parents, educators and librarians tried to give their solutions (see Appendix 5 and Chapter 5, p. 88-89).

A first input emerged was the opportunity that the library acts as a complex 'cultural place', organising activities not formally linked to books or traditional supports. The most required activities related in fact to communication and interaction occasions (meeting with authors, discipline experts, etc.).

Secondly, the participation of young adults was bound to the satisfaction of some conditions: the presence of a group of peers, the dialogue outside strict rules (e.g. silence), the chance of forming discussion groups.

6.2.4. An awkward relationship: LIBRARY and/or SCHOOL?

Beside the points already raised, another most important factor has emerged finally from the focus groups: The library in its relationship towards the school (See Chapter 5, p. 91-92).

The results show that an interaction between these institutions can yield to misunderstandings of the role that libraries have in the life of the individuals, as they can be mistaken for mere appendices of school activities (see Appendix 5 for details).

Antonella Agnoli underlined that Italian libraries in promotional activities have tried not to be identified with schools.[7] Nonetheless, reading promotion activities are still suggested to freee groups of readers, as well as classes.[8]

This might depend in large part from the necessity for public libraries to sustain the informational needs of schools, which still do not possess sufficiently stocked and organised school libraries. Or it might depend from the habit teachers have in giving their pupils as assignment a list of books to read.[9]

Despite of this, the dualism between library and school resists and should be removed, by clarifying which way the one and the other must go.[10]

As Miari defends, the recent editorial production in the children's and young adults' area is composed from books that are now very enjoyable,[11] and then the libraries must be the disseminators of such desirable materials.[12]

6.3. Final consideration

I would like to end this discussion with a consideration by Cordero,[13] which in my opinion can deliver the impressions, insights and discoveries the researcher gathered in the whole research process:

> "*We know, in fact, what we want. We want that our libraries would develop from merely bookcases into factories of ideas and from documentary organisations into meeting and communication places. We want that public readings would forge firstly a new citizenship and secondly a new fancying ability. We want that our libraries would stimulate curiosity and creativity, that they would be no place for diversion but for involvement. Really, places where not only a catalogue could be consulted, but the whole world*."[14]

Not only librarians fancy their libraries filled with communication and action. As one of the young adults' focus group member said, "*adolescents defend themselves behaving like little birds in the nest. They stay there and wait*."[15] Young adults are waiting to librarians to give them a suitable place in their libraries. They deserve more attention. They just want to be citizens of their world.

References

[1] See for instance the web sites of some the libraries already cited (Hamburger Bücherhallen, www.buecherhallen.de, San Giovanni, Pesaro, at www.comune.pesaro.ps.it/biblioteca/, Sala Borsa, Bologna, www.bibliotecasalaborsa.it). Other Italian library web sites can be traced at the URL: http://www.aib.it/aib/lis/lpi09c.htm, a web page of the AIB, Associazione Italiana Biblioteche.

[2] See CARDARELLO 2000, p. [9].

[3] See Appendix 5.5, Young Adults' Focus Group Interview, R11c, p. CIX.

[4] See CATARSI 2000, p. [7].

[5] See CAMINITO 2000.

[6] See AGNOLI 2000, p. [14].

[7] See AGNOLI 1999a, p. 64.

[8] See MALGAROLI 2000, p. 52.

[9] An activity which is still regarded as potentially productive, see CARDARELLO 2000.

[10] See CORDERO 2000, p. [6].

[11] See MIARI 2000, p. [12].

[12] *Ibidem.*

[13] *Ibidem*.

[14] *Ibidem*. The author will forgive me for inaccuracies in the translation.

[15] See Appendix 5.5. Young Adults' Focus Group, R17c, p. CX.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is dedicated to the development of recommendations for all stakeholders (included young adults). At the end of the chapter also a section with suggestion for further research is included.

7.1. Librarians

Should:

General

- Improve the image of the library through knowing the stakeholders better
- Gain knowledge about young people social dynamics and interests, at a general and local level
- Assess methods, which could be disseminated, to improve knowledge about a specific environment
- Create connections with young adults groups in order to make the library more visible and open to this target group

Specific

- Update materials, with particular attention to multimedia for the target group
- Find appropriate ways to inform young adults about materials, services available and activities programmed in the library
- Promote a correct relationship with the school, teachers, educators
- Promote the services towards parents as well
- Promote the services towards administrators and other external stakeholders
- Create information materials with the help of the target group
- Organise libraries according to the needs of the target group

7.2 Local authorities

Should:

- Favour the relationship of libraries with social services units, educational institutions and other stakeholders working with young adults
- Favour the development of cultural and technical skills of all library staff involved in activities with young adults (in libraries of little dimensions, with a high turnover, of all staff)
- Locate and raise funds apt to create connections and partnerships in relationship to the development of activities and services for the target group

7.3 Funders

Could/Should:

- Support activities where a high involvement of young adults is desired, as to enhance their participation as real citizens of their world

7.4. Parents

Should:

- Favour the visits of their children to the library from early in life
- Encourage the use of the library during infancy and pre-adolescence
- Be willing to be involved in library activities

7.5. Educators / Teachers

Should:

- Favour the visits of their pupils to the libraries not connected to school activities
- Encourage the use of the library for recreational purposes
- Dismiss the practice of giving strict lists of books to be read by students

7.6. Young Adults

Should:

- Visit the libraries as places where information on different topics can be gathered
- Be willing to participate in library activities, in promoting library services to peers and in recommending improvements to the librarians.

7.7. Recommendations for further research

The study should also allow insights about possible future scenarios and developments in the use of the library. Results from the study will be confronted with theoretical underpinnings currently being held in LIS.

- Qualitative case study research on the perceptions about how libraries and schools should interact with each other
- A survey of the experiences, expectations, perspectives of library use and services in children under 10
- A survey of the experiences, expectations, perspectives of library use and services in adolescents over 19
- A qualitative evaluation and the production of a guide to best practices in activities to young adults organised by public libraries.

CHAPTER 8

REFLECTIVE REVIEW

8.1 Literature review

Great help in developing and following the evolving scenario of the specific literature review has been found in the possibility of consulting all databases and e-journals available from UNN Electronic Gateway. Very useful have been the Central Library of the University of Trento (Italy), Faculty of Sociology, for the methodological section and the Special Library in LIS of the Province of Trento, where most international professional reviews were to be found.

8.2 Questionnaire

The good response rate (about 50%) can be attributed to different factors.
Firstly, it proves that respondents were interested in the topic as much as to fill it in almost completely (it was 20 questions on 4 sides of A4 long), although time required to complete it was for their age fairly long (25-30 minutes).
The response rate also provides that the questionnaire design and presentation were correctly devised.
The presentation letter can have also had a role in motivating participation.

Changes to the questionnaire as a result of the pilot test were very small but it was useful to pilot in order to be prepared for a low response rate in some questions and anticipate the scheduling of interviews and focus groups if necessary.
Questions were reputed as clearly worded, which helped the respondents to answer the questions as it was intended. The researcher could so establish a coding frame for data analysis.
Even after piloting, some questions remained ambiguous. This proves the need for most careful planning of the research project. In particular, Question 10 and 11 of the questionnaire were not always correctly intended, as well as Question 14 and 15, and Question 18, which were considered almost identical by some respondents.

In the whole, the questionnaire produced plenty of relevant and complex information, and was thus an effective data collection tool.

8.3 Interviews

Due to time and resource constraints, the selection of interview subjects was purposefully made to accomplish the objectives of the study. Given more time and money, the researcher would have aimed for a more representative selection of interviewees, and would have conducted more interviews and focus groups.

The researcher wished to experiment with unstructured interviews, but, given the inexperience at conducting interviews, in the end a semi-structured interview plan was devised, which could provide more comparable results. The transcripts show that the researcher was always able to keep the interviews flowing. However, she had a tendency to interrupt, but encouraged the participants in carrying on. She was aware of this and tried to improve her technique over the interviews and focus groups.

Transcribing the interviews was a long process, even though the researcher had typing skills. Previous experience of audio-typing would have helped.
The time required to transcribe should be carefully estimated. Perhaps for inexperienced researchers a pilot in this skill would be of help.
In a qualitative research study, taping and transcribing interviews is a rewarding experience. During the interviews sessions the researcher could concentrate on communication and observation, and then listen carefully to the tapes, which provide rich material for quotations.
The low number of interviews and focus groups sessions allowed that data collection and analysis could be carried out almost simultaneously, so that the results from one interview could prepare for the next.

8.4 Extent to which aims of the study were met

The researcher believes that the aims of the study were met successfully, in that a broad and at the same time detailed picture of the expectations, experiences and perceptions of library services among young adults has been revealed.

She could make a number of recommendations for action based on the research evidence, and was able to identify a number of themes for further study or research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

DEFINITIONS OF "YOUNG ADULTS"

Definitions of "young adults" in the vocabulary of main languages in Europe

The sources for this Table have been chosen among the most widespread dictionaries of european languages

Language	Definitions	Usage	Source
Italian	Adolescenza	"Età della vita tra la fanciullezza e l'età adulta, caratterizzata dalla maturazione sessuale"	1
	Teen-ager	"Ragazzo o ragazza fra i 13 e i 19 anni"	2
	Giovane	"Di persona che è tra l'adolescenza e la maturità" / "Di ciò che è nato o sorto da poco" / "detto di ciò a cui si vuole dare una connotazione allegra, disinvolta, pratica e sim."	3
	Ragazzo	"giovinetto, fanciullo, adolescente" / "giovanotto"	4
	Gioventù	"età della vita umana che si estende dalla fine dell'adolescenza alle soglie della maturità"	5
French	Jeune	"Peu avancé en âge" "Qui est dans la première partie de la vie" "Personne jeune"	6
	Jeunesse	"Temps de la vie entre l'enfance et la maturité / Adolescence"	7
	Les jeunes	"Les personnes jeunes"	8
German	Jugend	"Wachstums- u. Reifezeit des Menschen"	9
	Jugendliche/r	"junger Mensch vom 14. bis zum 18. Lebensjahr"	10
English	Child	"A young human being below the age of full physical development"	11
	Teen-ager	"A person aged between 13 and 19 years"	12
	Young	"Having lived or existed for only a short time"	13
	Young person	(in the UK) "A person generally between 14 and 17 years of age"	14
	Juvenile	"Of / for / relating to young people"	15
	Youth	"The period between childhod and adult age"	16
Spanish	Joven	"De la juventud o que tiene relación con ella" "Que tiene poca edad" "Que tiene poco tiempo de vida, que está en la primeras etapas de su existencia"	17
	Juvenil	"De la juventud o que tiene relación con ella" "Que corresponde a deportistas de edades comprendidas entre los 15 y los 18 años"	18
	Muchaco /a Chico / a	"Que tiene poca edad"	19
	Juventud	"Periodo de la vida que está entre la niñez y el comienzo de la edad madura"	20

Quick reference to dictionaries

[1,2,3,4,5] Zingarelli 1995, p. 43, 1869, 778-779, 1475, 779.

[6, 7, 8] Robert micro 1996, p. 708.

[9,10] Wahrig 1991, p.709.

[11,12,13,14,15,16] Oxford 1998, p. 317, 1904, 2143, 2144, 993, 2144; cfr. also Oxford shorter 1993.

[17,18,19,20] Henares 2000, pp. 664, 669, 779 and 238, 669.

(a complete reference to dictionaries follows on next page)

Complete reference to dictionaries

Henares 2000	Diccionario para la enseñanza de la lengua española. Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, [2000?].
Oxford 1998	The new Oxford dictionary of english / ed. by Judy Pearsall; chief editor, current english dictionaries Patrick Hanks. Oxford, Clarendon, 1998.
Oxford shorter 1993	The new shorter Oxford english dictionary: on historical principles / edited by Lesley Brown. Oxford [etc.], Clarendon, 1993.
Robert micro 1996	Le Robert micro: dictionnaire d'apprentissage de la langue française / rédaction dirigée par Alain Rey. Paris, Dictionnaires Le Robert, 1996.
Wahrig 1991	Deutsches Wörterbuch: mit einem Lexikon der deutschen Sprachlehre / Gerhard Wahrig; hrsg. in Zusammenarbeit mit zahrlr. Wissenschaftlern u.a. Fachleuten. Jubiläumausg. Gütersloh-München, Bertelsmann, 1991.
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APPENDIX 2

2.1. STUDY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2.2. PILOT STUDY FINDINGS

2.1. STUDY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

GANNT Chart of the project

Activity	October 2003	November 2003	December 2003	January 2004	February 2004	March 2004	April 2004
Questionnaire design	✓						
Presentation letters to the stakeholders		✓	✓				
Pilot questionnaire	✓	✓					
Questionnaires administ.			✓	✓			
Questionnaire return				✓	✓		
Interviews appointments						✓	✓
Pilot interviews					✓		
Interviews sessions						✓	✓
Pilot focus groups						✓	
Focus groups sessions							✓
Questionnaire analysis				✓	✓	✓	✓
Interviews transcripts						✓	✓
Interviews analysis						✓	✓
Data presentation					✓	✓	✓
Researcher's log	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Writing dissertation			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Literature survey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Documentary analysis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Revising and presenting report					✓	✓	✓ **Mid May 2004**

2.2. PILOT STUDY

2.2.1. Pilot questionnaire

Part of the questionnaire used in the study (See Appendix 3.2) was first developed for a small research study conducted by the researcher in 2002 as part of the Applied Research in Information Studies (LI614) Unit [CORRADINI 2002].
That questionnaire, already piloted, served as a basis for being integrated with new questions answering the aims and objectives of the present study.

The pilot phase was carried out along with the design of the questionnaire in October-November 2003 and consisted in two different steps.

In a first stage, 30 individuals in the age 11-19 were contacted, in order to show them the questionnaire drafts, as to recognise faults, difficulties, misunderstandings or ambiguities in understanding the language chosen for the questions. Subjects were presented the questionnaire and should try to fill it in and commenting the questions.
At the same time, the researcher has tried to select young adults representing all ages, sexes and place of residences, according to the demographic data available [see Tables 4-1 to 4-9].
The result of this first pilot survey is given below.

Table 2.2.1. – Questionnaire pilot phase 1

No.	Age	Sex	Location	Faults	Diff.	Misund.	Ambig.	Q.indicated
2	11	M	Town	--	--	1	--	11, 14
2	11	F	Town	--	1	--	--	4
1	11	M	Outskirts	--	--	--	--	--
1	11	F	Outskirts	--	--	--	--	--
2	12	M	Town	--	1	--	--	4
2	12	F	Town	--	--	--	--	--
1	12	M	Outskirts	--	--	--	--	--
2	13	F	Town	--	--	--	--	--
3	13	M	Town	--	--	--	--	--
1	14	M	Town	--	--	--	1	11, 14,18
1	14	F	Town	--	--	--	--	--
1	14	F	Outskirts	--	--	--	--	--
3	15	F	Town	--	--	--	--	--
2	16	M	Town	--	--	--	--	--
1	16	F	Town	--	--	--	--	--
2	17	F	Town	--	--	--	--	--
1	17	M	Town	--	--	--	--	--
1	18	M	Outskirts	--	--	--	--	--
1	19	M	Outskirts	--	1	--	1	4, 18
Totals								
30				--	3	1	2	4,11,14,18

The results showed that there was a high percentage of understanding of the questions and that only three questions were indicated as potentially ambiguous or generating misunderstanding (Q11, Q14, Q18). The subject who indicated a misunderstanding for

Q11 was able to answer correctly soon after reading the question again [see Appendix 3.2, Q11]. The difficulties were all in remembering some past experience to answer Q4. The first draft was slightly revised and brought to two teachers working in the local School with adolescents of different ages, to ask for comments on it. They agreed on saying that the questions were posed in a language that their pupils would surely understand.

The second phase of the pilot study began after collecting the questionnaires from the middle school, where subjects in the age group 11-14 had showed the "worse" results from the previous stage.
This phase aimed at verifying the result of the previous one and could only test if there was a higher percentage of non-answers in the questions Q4, Q11, Q14 and Q18.
The analysis was conducted on the first 20 questionnaires of each age category displayed below, trying to combine data on both sex and location as well.
Each questionnaire was marked with a code in the collection order, so that they could be identified later. The code included the cardinal number (1, 2, 3…), the sex (M, F) and the age of the respondent (11, 12, 13…) to give a result such as [3M13], [35F14], or whatever else was the combination of these sub-codes.
Once the questionnaires were coded, they were separated into groups by sex and age categories. Then, three of each age and sex category from the town and the two of each age and sex category from the outskirts were randomly selected [see Table 2.2.2], choosing from each category group. The category groups were different in numbers, so it was decided that the questionnaires would have been mixed up and then the first three or two among each group were chosen.

Table 2.2.2. – Questionnaire pilot phase 2
Selected questionnaires

No.	**Age**	**Sex**	**Location**
1-3	11	M	Town
4-5	11	M	Outskirts
6-8	12	M	Town
9-10	12	M	Outskirts
11-13	13	M	Town
14-15	13	M	Outskirts
16-18	14	M	Town
19-20	14	M	Outskirts
21-23	11	F	Town
24-25	11	F	Outskirts
26-28	12	F	Town
29-30	12	F	Outskirts
31-33	13	F	Town
34-35	13	F	Outskirts
36-38	14	F	Town
39-40	14	F	Outskirts

After the selection of the questionnaires, the validating phase began. Each questionnaire was scrutinised in order to check for questions without answers. The control was in fact not limited to the questions that scored the worse results in the previous pilot stage. The results proved the data of the pilot, but some additional features emerged.

Table 2.2.3. – Questionnaire pilot phase 2
Percentage of Questions remained non-answered

No.	Non Answered	No.	Non Answered	No.	Non Answered	No.	Non Answered
Q1	1%	Q6	2%	Q11	1%	Q16	5%
Q2	1%	Q7	2%	Q12	3%	Q17	2%
Q3	1%	Q8	2%	Q13	1%	**Q18**	**20%**
Q4	**20%**	Q9	2%	**Q14**	**10%**	Q19	2%
Q5	4%	Q10	0%	**Q15**	**15%**	**Q20**	**8%**

At this point, the main strengths and weaknesses of the questionnaire were identified.
Q4, Q14 and Q18 proved to be too demanding for over 10% of the subjects (10% to 20%). But also Q15 and Q20, with a percentage of 15% and 8% respectively, could be also exacting.
Nonetheless, the researcher decided that the results were sufficiently satisfying and the questionnaire was further distributed. The questions with a higher no-answering percentage were to be analysed later on, through interviews and focus groups sessions.

2.2.2. Pilot interviews

Pilot interviews were taken about two weeks before the scheduled interviews should take place. They were conducted over two subjects with different backgrounds, a librarian and a parent not living in the area. They were asked to listen to the outlined questions and give answers, commenting on the language chosen and providing advice in case of misunderstandings.
The results of these efforts are to be seen in Appendix 3.3, where interview schemes are included.

2.2.3. Pilot focus groups

Similarly to pilot interviews, also pilot focus groups were taken about two weeks before the scheduled focus groups sessions. These were conducted on two groups:
1. three educators not working in the local School
2. three parents not living in the area

Their task was the same as the one of the subjects selected for the pilot interviews. The results of the sessions have yielded the schemes in Appendix 3.3.

APPENDIX 3

3.1. PRESENTATION LETTERS

3.2. QUESTIONNAIRE

3.3. INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS SCHEMES

APPENDIX 3.1.

PRESENTATION LETTERS

Foreword

In the following pages the letters of presentation are included, which have been used to gain the attention of Administrators, the local School and the Associations.

The letters are firstly presented in the original language (Italian) in which they were written. The content of the letters refers to the main points raised in the Methods Chapter (see Chapter 3 of the Dissertation).

LETTER 1: TO THE TOWN HALL IN ALA

Ala, 25 novembre 2003

Spett.le
Comune di Ala
P.zza San Giovanni 1
38061 ALA (TN)

Alla c.a. del Vicesindaco
Sig.ra Giuliana Tomasoni

Oggetto: ***sondaggio a scopo di ricerca sul tema: ADOLESCENTI E SERVIZI BIBLIOTECARI: ESPERIENZE, ASPETTATIVE, PROSPETTIVE. UNO STUDIO ESPLORATIVO***

Gent.ma Vicesindaco,

In qualità di studente del Master internazionale a distanza in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione tenuto dall'Università degli Studi di Parma e dalla Northumbria University of Newcastle upon Tyne (Inghilterra), ho scelto quale tema di approfondimento per la tesi finale il rapporto tra adolescenti e servizi bibliotecari di ambito pubblico.

L'interesse per questo tema è scaturito da osservazioni di carattere professionale nell'espletamento del lavoro di bibliotecaria presso la Biblioteca comunale, secondo le quali la maggiore frequenza in biblioteca, per fascia d'età, si ha entro i 14 anni, mentre con il passaggio alle scuole superiori gli iscritti al prestito che utilizzano i servizi bibliotecari diminuiscono drasticamente.

Se questo dato, ad un'analisi superficiale, può considerarsi legato al maggiore impegno in quantità di tempo richiesto dalla scuola superiore, d'altro lato si può ipotizzare – tra le varie possibilità – anche che i ragazzi non abbiano maturato, negli anni precedenti, la consapevolezza che i servizi bibliotecari a loro disposizione possano essere in grado di rispondere alle loro esigenze.

La ricerca, nelle intenzioni, mira a promuovere un sondaggio degli atteggiamenti, delle aspettative e delle prospettive di utilizzo della biblioteca pubblica da parte degli adolescenti, intesi come quella fascia di età "allargata" che va dagli 11 ai 19 anni. L'analisi verrà condotta su due sottogruppi, 11-14 e 15-19 anni, sui quali verranno testate delle ipotesi in modo da raggiungere gli obiettivi di ricerca di cui all'allegato A) [v. allegato].

Nonostante la complessa articolazione degli obiettivi indicati, si ritiene di poter giungere all'analisi degli stessi attraverso un questionario anonimo (v. allegato "Conosco la "mia" biblioteca?") in versione unica per ogni età, calibrato nel linguaggio e nella grafica rispetto a precedenti esperienze di ricerca in ambito internazionale. La scelta di non adottare versioni diverse del questionario in base all'età dei partecipanti è legata alla necessità, in fase di successiva analisi dei dati, di disporre di uno strumento unico con risposte che possano essere comparabili in base alle variabili di ricerca esaminate.

In accordo con le finalità dello studio, il questionario avrà tanto più successo quanto più le risposte saranno dettate da spontaneità e non da emulazione. Per questo motivo, il questionario sarà distribuito a quanti più ragazzi possibili lontano dall'ambiente della biblioteca,

in modo da non indurli a pensare che alcune risposte siano più adeguate di altre o che debbano corrispondere a particolari punti di vista.

E' dai loro bisogni, dalle loro aspettative e dai loro punti di vista che bisogna imparare a costruire il loro ambiente di domani, al di là di quello che gli addetti ai lavori pensano di dover fare per servire questo specifico target di utenza, che dovrà essere in grado di gestire il proprio futuro in quella che ormai viene definita la "società della conoscenza" con grande dinamicità e flessibilità.

Al questionario potranno seguire interviste e "focus groups" con un numero ristretto di soggetti, scelti secondo parametri in corso di definizione (luogo di abitazione, sesso, età e frequenza o non frequenza della biblioteca) e vagliati a seguito di una prima analisi dei dati che emergeranno dai questionari.

Scopo e obiettivi della ricerca sono già stati presentati – tramite la lettera allegata – al prof. Pancheri, Dirigente del locale Istituto Scolastico Comprensivo, che ha dimostrato interesse nel favorire la compilazione del questionario da parte degli studenti di età compresa fra gli 11 e i 14 anni (scuole medie).

La sottoscritta – in quanto dipendente della struttura comunale – si rende disponibile ad illustrare in maggior dettaglio direttamente all'Amministrazione gli scopi, i contenuti, e le modalità di effettuazione della ricerca, che verrà svolta al di fuori dell'orario di servizio. Si ritiene tuttavia opportuno dare qualche breve cenno sulle modalità di attivazione dei contatti per la distribuzione del questionario ai ragazzi (per lo più minorenni), in modo da poter rassicurare i partecipanti sulle garanzie di riservatezza della ricerca, qualora vi fossero osservazioni in merito:

- il sottogruppo 11-14 (classi medie) verrà raggiunto nei prossimi giorni mediante la distribuzione del questionario anonimo presso l'Istituto Scolastico Comprensivo, che se ne è fatto carico nella persona del Dirigente, prof. Italo Pancheri;
- il sottogruppo 15-19 (classi superiori) verrà raggiunto attraverso il medesimo questionario tramite contatti con le associazioni sportive e ricreative del territorio in un periodo di tempo ristretto;
- i questionari anonimi raccolti verranno trattati esclusivamente a scopo di studio e ricerca; in fase di analisi dei dati potrà essere necessaria la creazione di eventuali altri sottogruppi;
- le eventuali interviste verranno condotte in gruppi, non a singoli soggetti, con la modalità denominata "focus group", ovvero attraverso un gruppo di discussione a partecipazione libera mirato all'ottenimento di informazioni su un tema specifico in base alle esigenze di ricerca;
- i "focus group" verranno organizzati all'interno di gruppi già esistenti sul territorio, in base alla disponibilità degli stessi, alla presenza di persone leader nei gruppi stessi e in quanto tali persone di fiducia per i genitori dei ragazzi che vorranno parteciparvi;
- i dati relativi ai questionari e ai "focus group" non verranno ceduti a terzi, bensì analizzati in proprio da chi esegue la ricerca e – una volta terminato l'iter burocratico dell'approvazione della ricerca (presumibilmente entro il mese di luglio 2004) – verranno distrutti (informativa ai sensi della L. 675/96)
- l'analisi dei dati e il documento finale di ricerca sarà consegnato all'Istituto Comprensivo e all'Amministrazione comunale di Ala in forma integrale a stampa successivamente all'approvazione da parte del comitato accademico di valutazione.

Al fine di ottenere un riscontro sulle percentuali di risposta al questionario, chiedo, se possibile, di poter disporre dei seguenti dati:

- elenco non nominativo / non identificativo dei soggetti di età compresa tra gli 11 e i 19 anni, suddiviso per sesso, età e residenza alla data più recente

in modo da poter elaborare dati statistici comparabili sui due sottogruppi e su eventuali ulteriori sottogruppi che si rendesse necessario contattare in successive interviste.

I dati raccolti costituiranno parte sostanziale della tesi finale per il conseguimento del Master internazionale a distanza in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione, con termine previsto tra gennaio e aprile 2004 e valutazione entro l'anno 2004.

Sarò lieta di comunicare i dati non appena possibile, nonché di fornire copia della tesi in versione italiana successivamente alla consegna e alla valutazione dell'elaborato originale.

Nell'inviare in allegato il questionario predisposto per la distribuzione, resto in attesa di eventuali osservazioni e suggerimenti per il prosieguo della ricerca e mi rendo disponibile a fornire chiarimenti ed ulteriori informazioni in merito alle modalità di svolgimento dello studio.

In particolare, mi rendo disponibile, se richiesto, a rilasciare copia di ogni comunicazione inoltrata ai soggetti partecipanti alla ricerca, al fine di un costante monitoraggio dello svolgimento della stessa.

In attesa di cortese riscontro, porgo distinti saluti.

Dott.ssa Elena Corradini

Dott.ssa Elena Corradini
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Tutor e direttore del corso: prof. Pat Dixon
pat.dixon@unn.ac.uk

ALLEGATO A)

PRIMA IPOTESI

GLI ADOLESCENTI NON SONO CONSAPEVOLI DELLE RISORSE E DEI SERVIZI POTENZIALMENTE DISPONIBILI

SECONDA IPOTESI

GLI ADOLESCENTI NON CONSIDERANO LA BIBLIOTECA COME UN LUOGO CHE POSSA FARE LA DIFFERENZA PER LA LORO VITA

INFORMAZIONI DA RACCOGLIERE

ESPERIENZE DI BIBLIOTECA NEL PASSATO

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ESIGENZE IMPLICITE NELL'USO DELLA BIBLIOTECA

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DOMANDE DI RICERCA

GLI ADOLESCENTI DELLA ZONA SONO CONSAPEVOLI DELLE RISORSE E DEI SERVIZI POTENZIALMENTE DISPONIBILI?

GLI ADOLESCENTI DELLA ZONA CONSIDERANO LA BIBLIOTECA LOCALE UN'ISTITUZIONE IMPORTANTE?

GLI ADOLESCENTI SONO CONSAPEVOLI DELL'IMPORTANZA DEI SERVIZI BIBLIOTECARI?

HANNO ESPERIENZA DELLA BIBLIOTECA LOCALE?

HANNO ASPETTATIVE SUI SERVIZI DEDICATI?

SOGNANO UNA BIBLIOTECA IDEALE?

IL LORO PUNTO DI VISTA E' CONFERMATO DALLE STATISTICHE D'UTILIZZO DELLA BIBLIOTECA?

OBIETTIVI DI RICERCA

INDAGINE SULL'ESPERIENZA CHE GLI ADOLESCENTI HANNO DELLA BIBLIOTECA LOCALE

IDENTIFICAZIONE DELLE PRINCIPALI ESIGENZE ESPLICITE ED IMPLICITE PER SERVIZI DEDICATI

INDAGINE SUI PRINCIPALI ATTEGGIAMENTI DEGLI ADOLESCENTI VERSO I SERVIZI BIBLIOTECARI

IDENTIFICAZIONE DI FATTORI CHE DETERMINANO QUESTI ATTEGGIAMENTI

CONFRONTO DEGLI ATTEGGIAMENTI CON DATI STATISTICI DISPONIBILI

IDENTIFICAZIONE DI ULTERIORI ELEMENTI CHE RICHIEDONO ATTENZIONE IN FUTURO

CREAZIONE DI STRATEGIE PER INCREMENTARE ATTENZIONE E PARTECIPAZIONE, MIGLIORANDO IL SERVIZIO RESO

LETTER 2: TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL IN ALA

Ala, 18 novembre 2003

Spett.le
Istituto scolastico comprensivo
Via Anzelini
38061 ALA (TN)

Alla c.a. del Dirigente
Prof. I. Pancheri

Oggetto: ***sondaggio a scopo di ricerca sul tema: ADOLESCENTI E SERVIZI BIBLIOTECARI: ESPERIENZE, ASPETTATIVE, PROSPETTIVE. UNO STUDIO ESPLORATIVO***

Egregio prof. Pancheri,

In qualità di studente del Master internazionale a distanza in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione tenuto dall'Università degli Studi di Parma e dalla Northumbria University of Newcastle upon Tyne (Inghilterra), ho scelto quale tema di approfondimento per la tesi finale il rapporto tra adolescenti e servizi bibliotecari di ambito pubblico.

L'interesse per questo tema è scaturito da osservazioni di carattere professionale nell'espletamento del lavoro di bibliotecaria presso la locale Biblioteca comunale, secondo le quali la maggiore frequenza in biblioteca, per fascia d'età, si ha entro i 14 anni, mentre con il passaggio alle scuole superiori gli iscritti al prestito che utilizzano i servizi bibliotecari diminuiscono drasticamente.

Se questo dato, ad un'analisi superficiale, può considerarsi legato al maggiore impegno in quantità di tempo richiesto dalla scuola superiore, d'altro lato si può ipotizzare – tra le varie possibilità – anche che i ragazzi non abbiano maturato, negli anni precedenti, la consapevolezza che i servizi bibliotecari a loro disposizione possano essere in grado di rispondere alle loro esigenze.

Non si tratta in questo di dimostrare quanto valga la biblioteca pubblica, né quanto possa contribuire in tal senso la scuola; si tratta invece di capire quali dinamiche sottendano alla ricerca, alla capacità e alla curiosità per il recupero delle informazioni, per garantire ai ragazzi le competenze e le abilità loro richieste per essere veri cittadini nel futuro.

La ricerca, nelle intenzioni, mira a promuovere un sondaggio degli atteggiamenti, delle aspettative e delle prospettive di utilizzo della biblioteca pubblica da parte degli adolescenti, intesi come quella fascia di età "allargata" che va dagli 11 ai 19 anni. L'analisi verrà condotta su due sottogruppi, 11-14 e 15-19 anni, sui quali verranno testate delle ipotesi in modo da raggiungere gli obiettivi di ricerca indicati nell'allegato A).

Nonostante la complessa articolazione degli obiettivi indicati, si ritiene di poter giungere all'analisi degli stessi attraverso un questionario anonimo (v. allegato "Conosco la "mia" biblioteca?") in versione unica per ogni età, calibrato nel linguaggio e nella grafica rispetto a precedenti esperienze di ricerca in ambito internazionale. La scelta di non adottare versioni diverse del questionario in base all'età dei partecipanti è legata alla necessità, in fase di successiva analisi dei dati, di disporre di uno strumento unico con risposte che possano essere comparabili in base alle variabili di ricerca esaminate.

In accordo con le finalità dello studio, il questionario avrà tanto più successo quanto più le risposte saranno dettate da spontaneità e non da emulazione.

Al questionario potranno seguire interviste e "focus groups" con un numero ristretto di soggetti, scelti secondo parametri in corso di definizione (luogo di abitazione, sesso, età e frequenza o non frequenza della biblioteca).

Per una valutazione completa dei risultati, sarebbe auspicabile che alcuni docenti potessero rendersi disponibili ad un'intervista o, se preferiscono, alla creazione di un "focus group".

Al fine di compiere lo studio esplorativo, si chiede con la presente la disponibilità da parte di codesto Spett.le Istituto per:

- raccogliere i dati relativi al sottogruppo 11-14 (classi medie) mediante la distribuzione del questionario entro il mese di novembre, che potrà essere successivamente raccolto entro la seconda settimana di dicembre 2003;
- raccogliere i dati anagrafici relativi agli alunni della fascia di età considerata nello studio (11-19 anni), che verranno trattati esclusivamente a scopo di studio e ricerca in fase di analisi dei dati con la creazione di eventuali altri sottogruppi, se necessario ai fini del sondaggio, e non verranno ceduti a terzi (informativa ai sensi della L. 675/96).

I dati raccolti verranno analizzati e costituiranno parte sostanziale della tesi finale per il conseguimento del titolo di Master internazionale a distanza in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione, con termine previsto tra gennaio ed aprile 2004 e valutazione entro l'anno 2004.

Sarò lieta di comunicare i dati non appena possibile e di fornire copia della tesi in versione italiana successivamente alla consegna dell'elaborato originale.

Nel rimanere a disposizione per eventuali chiarimenti ed ulteriori informazioni in merito alle modalità di svolgimento dello studio, resto in attesa di un cortese riscontro.

Distinti saluti.

Dott.ssa Elena Corradini

Dott.ssa Elena Corradini
Studente del Master internazionale a distanza
in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione

Presso:
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ALLEGATO A)

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IL LORO PUNTO DI VISTA E' CONFERMATO DALLE STATISTICHE D'UTILIZZO DELLA BIBLIOTECA?

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CREAZIONE DI STRATEGIE PER INCREMENTARE ATTENZIONE E PARTECIPAZIONE, MIGLIORANDO IL SERVIZIO RESO

LETTER 3: TO THE LOCAL LEISURE TIME AND SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS

Ala, 15 dicembre 2003

Spett.le
«Società»
«Indirizzo1»
«CodicePostale» «Città» «Provincia»

Alla c.a. del Responsabile
«Titolo» «Responsabile»
«TelefonoUfficio»

Oggetto: ***sondaggio a scopo di ricerca sul tema: ADOLESCENTI E SERVIZI BIBLIOTECARI: ESPERIENZE, ASPETTATIVE, PROSPETTIVE. UNO STUDIO ESPLORATIVO***

«Titolo» «Responsabile»,

In qualità di studente del Master internazionale a distanza in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione tenuto dall'Università degli Studi di Parma e dalla Northumbria University of Newcastle upon Tyne (Inghilterra), ho scelto quale tema di approfondimento per la tesi finale il rapporto tra adolescenti e servizi bibliotecari di ambito pubblico. La ricerca, nelle intenzioni, mira a promuovere un sondaggio degli atteggiamenti, delle aspettative e delle prospettive di utilizzo della biblioteca pubblica da parte degli adolescenti, intesi come quella fascia di età "allargata" che va dagli 11 ai 19 anni. L'analisi verrà condotta su due sottogruppi, 11-14 e 15-19 anni, attraverso il questionario anonimo allegato.

Scopo e obiettivi della ricerca sono già stati presentati al prof. Pancheri, Dirigente del locale Istituto Scolastico Comprensivo, che ha dimostrato interesse nel favorire la compilazione del questionario da parte degli studenti di età compresa fra gli 11 e i 14 anni (scuole medie), nonché all'Amministrazione comunale di Ala nella persona della Vicesindaco, sig.ra Giuliana Tomasoni.

Si ritiene opportuno dare qualche breve cenno sulle modalità di attivazione dei contatti per la distribuzione del questionario ai ragazzi (per lo più minorenni), in modo da poter rassicurare i partecipanti sulle garanzie di riservatezza della ricerca, qualora vi fossero osservazioni in merito:

- il sottogruppo 11-14 (classi medie) è stato raggiunto mediante la distribuzione del questionario anonimo presso l'Istituto Scolastico Comprensivo, che se ne è fatto carico nella persona del Dirigente, prof. Italo Pancheri;
- il sottogruppo 15-19 (classi superiori) verrà raggiunto attraverso il medesimo questionario tramite contatti con le associazioni sportive e ricreative del territorio in un periodo di tempo ristretto;
- i questionari anonimi raccolti verranno trattati esclusivamente a scopo di studio e ricerca; in fase di analisi dei dati potrà essere necessaria la creazione di eventuali altri sottogruppi;
- le eventuali interviste successive verranno condotte in gruppi, non a singoli soggetti, con la modalità denominata "focus group", ovvero attraverso un gruppo di discussione a partecipazione libera mirato all'ottenimento di informazioni su un tema specifico in base alle esigenze di ricerca;
- i "focus group" verranno organizzati all'interno di gruppi già esistenti sul territorio, in base alla disponibilità degli stessi, alla presenza di persone leader nei gruppi stessi e in quanto tali persone di fiducia per i genitori dei ragazzi che vorranno parteciparvi;
- i dati relativi ai questionari e ai "focus group" non verranno ceduti a terzi, bensì analizzati in proprio da chi esegue la ricerca e – una volta terminato l'iter burocratico dell'approvazione della ricerca (presumibilmente entro il mese di luglio 2004) – verranno distrutti (informativa ai sensi della L. 675/96)

- l'analisi dei dati e il documento finale di ricerca sarà consegnato all'Istituto Comprensivo e all'Amministrazione comunale di Ala in forma integrale a stampa successivamente all'approvazione da parte del comitato accademico di valutazione.

I dati raccolti costituiranno parte sostanziale della tesi finale per il conseguimento del Master internazionale a distanza in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione, con termine previsto tra gennaio e aprile 2004 e valutazione entro l'anno 2004.

In sostanza, chiedo a Lei di essere autorizzata a consegnare presso la Vs. Sede alcuni questionari – in numero che Lei stimerà in base agli iscritti di età compresa tra i 15 e i 19 anni – per la compilazione e restituzione da parte dei ragazzi, con modalità e tempi da concordare.

Nell'inviare in allegato facsimile del questionario predisposto per la distribuzione, mi rendo disponibile a fornire ulteriori chiarimenti ed informazioni in merito alle modalità di svolgimento dello studio.

In attesa di cortese riscontro, porgo distinti saluti.

Dott.ssa Elena Corradini

Dott.ssa Elena Corradini
Studente del Master internazionale a distanza
in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione

Presso:
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Tutor e direttore del corso: prof. Pat Dixon
pat.dixon@unn.ac.uk

LETTER 4: TO THE YOUNG ADULTS' FOCUS GROUPS MEMBERS AND THEIR PARENTS

Ala, 15 marzo 2004

Ai ragazzi che partecipano
al Focus Group

e p.c. Ai genitori dei ragazzi
partecipanti al Focus Group

Oggetto: ***sondaggio a scopo di ricerca sul tema: ADOLESCENTI E SERVIZI BIBLIOTECARI: ESPERIENZE, ASPETTATIVE, PROSPETTIVE. UNO STUDIO ESPLORATIVO***

Cari partecipanti,

In qualità di studente del Master internazionale a distanza in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione tenuto dall'Università degli Studi di Parma e dalla Northumbria University of Newcastle upon Tyne (Inghilterra), ho scelto quale tema di approfondimento per la tesi finale il rapporto tra adolescenti e servizi bibliotecari di ambito pubblico. La ricerca, nelle intenzioni, mira a promuovere un sondaggio degli atteggiamenti, delle aspettative e delle prospettive di utilizzo della biblioteca pubblica da parte degli adolescenti, intesi come quella fascia di età "allargata" che va dagli 11 ai 19 anni. L'analisi è stata fin qui condotta su due sottogruppi, 11-14 e 15-19 anni, attraverso un questionario anonimo, distribuito presso le scuole medie e attraverso alcune delle maggiori Associazioni operanti sul territorio.

In questa fase, si chiede la disponibilità a coloro che si sono resi disponibili a partecipare al "Focus group", ovvero un gruppo di discussione con un preciso argomento di conversazione (vedi oggetto e paragrafo precedente), di fornire informazioni in modo assolutamente anonimo e in assenza di registrazione, tali da poter permettere un approfondimento degli aspetti fin qui rilevati ed emersi dai dati del questionario.

Per l'attivazione del "Focus group" è stata posta cura nel trovare riferimento in persone che potessero essere garanzia di fiducia per i partecipanti ed i genitori dei partecipanti. I dati relativi al "Focus group" raccolti dalla sottoscritta attraverso appunti durante la discussione verranno esclusivamente analizzati in proprio, non ceduti a terzi, e – una volta terminato l'iter burocratico dell'approvazione della ricerca (presumibilmente entro il mese di luglio 2004) – verranno distrutti (informativa ai sensi della L. 675/96). Non verrà effettuata alcuna registrazione sonora delle sessioni.

L'analisi dei dati e il documento finale di ricerca (contenente i dati in forma di tabelle riassuntive) verrà consegnato all'Amministrazione comunale di Ala e all'Istituto scolastico comprensivo successivamente all'approvazione da parte del comitato accademico di valutazione.

La partecipazione al "Focus group" è libera e può essere interrotta in qualsiasi momento. All'interno del "Focus group" emergeranno opinioni differenti su un medesimo argomento, sulle quali i partecipanti sono invitati a confrontarsi, nel rispetto delle opinioni di ciascuno. Il ricercatore avrà il ruolo di moderatore del gruppo e inviterà a soffermarsi su aspetti particolari inerenti l'argomento in oggetto. Ognuno è invitato ad esprimere liberamente le proprie idee ma, allo stesso tempo, lasciare adeguato spazio ad altri perché facciano altrettanto.

Nell'invitarvi ad aderire vi saluto cordialmente e vi auguro che, se deciderete di partecipare, questa esperienza risulti positiva per ognuno.

Elena Corradini

Elena Corradini
Studente del Master internazionale a distanza
in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione

Presso:
Università degli studi di Parma
http://www.aldus.unipr.it/master/
Tutor: prof. Anna Maria Tammaro

Northumbria University
Newcastle upon Tyne England
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Tutor e direttore del corso: prof. Pat Dixon

LETTER 5: TO THE ADULTS' FOCUS GROUPS MEMBERS

Ala, 15 marzo 2004

Ai partecipanti al Focus Group

Oggetto: ***sondaggio a scopo di ricerca sul tema: ADOLESCENTI E SERVIZI BIBLIOTECARI: ESPERIENZE, ASPETTATIVE, PROSPETTIVE. UNO STUDIO ESPLORATIVO***

Cari partecipanti,

In qualità di studente del Master internazionale a distanza in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione tenuto dall'Università degli Studi di Parma e dalla Northumbria University of Newcastle upon Tyne (Inghilterra), ho scelto quale tema di approfondimento per la tesi finale il rapporto tra adolescenti e servizi bibliotecari di ambito pubblico. La ricerca, nelle intenzioni, mira a promuovere un sondaggio degli atteggiamenti, delle aspettative e delle prospettive di utilizzo della biblioteca pubblica da parte degli adolescenti, intesi come quella fascia di età "allargata" che va dagli 11 ai 19 anni. L'analisi è stata fin qui condotta su due sottogruppi, 11-14 e 15-19 anni, attraverso un questionario anonimo, distribuito presso le scuole medie e attraverso alcune delle maggiori Associazioni operanti sul territorio.

In questa fase, si chiede la disponibilità a coloro che si sono resi disponibili a partecipare al "Focus group", ovvero un gruppo di discussione con un preciso argomento di conversazione (vedi oggetto e paragrafo precedente), di fornire informazioni in modo assolutamente anonimo e in assenza di registrazione, tali da poter permettere un approfondimento degli aspetti fin qui rilevati ed emersi dai dati del questionario.

I dati relativi al "Focus group" raccolti dalla sottoscritta attraverso appunti durante la discussione verranno esclusivamente analizzati in proprio, non ceduti a terzi, e – una volta terminato l'iter burocratico dell'approvazione della ricerca (presumibilmente entro il mese di luglio 2004) – verranno distrutti (informativa ai sensi della L. 675/96). Un'eventuale registrazione su nastro avrà luogo solo con il consenso di tutti i partecipanti.

L'analisi dei dati e il documento finale di ricerca (contenente i dati in forma di tabelle riassuntive) verrà consegnato all'Amministrazione comunale di Ala e all'Istituto scolastico comprensivo successivamente all'approvazione da parte del comitato accademico di valutazione.

La partecipazione al "Focus group" è libera e può essere interrotta in qualsiasi momento. All'interno del "Focus group" emergeranno opinioni differenti su un medesimo argomento, sulle quali i partecipanti sono invitati a confrontarsi, nel rispetto delle opinioni di ciascuno. Il ricercatore avrà il ruolo di moderatore del gruppo e inviterà a soffermarsi su aspetti particolari inerenti l'argomento in oggetto. Ognuno è invitato ad esprimere liberamente le proprie idee ma, allo stesso tempo, lasciare adeguato spazio ad altri perché facciano altrettanto.

Nell'invitarvi ad aderire vi saluto cordialmente e vi auguro che, se deciderete di partecipare, questa esperienza risulti positiva per ognuno.

Elena Corradini

Elena Corradini
Studente del Master internazionale a distanza
in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione

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Tutor: prof. Anna Maria Tammaro

Northumbria University
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http://online.unn.ac.uk/.
Tutor e direttore del corso: prof. Pat Dixon

LETTER 6: TO THE ADULTS' INTERVIEWEES

Ala, 15 marzo 2004

Ai partecipanti alle interviste

Oggetto: ***sondaggio a scopo di ricerca sul tema: ADOLESCENTI E SERVIZI BIBLIOTECARI: ESPERIENZE, ASPETTATIVE, PROSPETTIVE. UNO STUDIO ESPLORATIVO***

Cari partecipanti,

In qualità di studente del Master internazionale a distanza in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione tenuto dall'Università degli Studi di Parma e dalla Northumbria University of Newcastle upon Tyne (Inghilterra), ho scelto quale tema di approfondimento per la tesi finale il rapporto tra adolescenti e servizi bibliotecari di ambito pubblico. La ricerca, nelle intenzioni, mira a promuovere un sondaggio degli atteggiamenti, delle aspettative e delle prospettive di utilizzo della biblioteca pubblica da parte degli adolescenti, intesi come quella fascia di età "allargata" che va dagli 11 ai 19 anni. L'analisi è stata fin qui condotta su due sottogruppi, 11-14 e 15-19 anni, attraverso un questionario anonimo, distribuito presso le scuole medie e attraverso alcune delle maggiori Associazioni operanti sul territorio.

In questa fase, si chiede la disponibilità a coloro che si sono resi disponibili a partecipare ad alcune con un preciso argomento di conversazione (vedi oggetto e paragrafo precedente), nel fornire informazioni in modo assolutamente anonimo e in assenza di registrazione, tali da poter permettere un approfondimento degli aspetti fin qui rilevati ed emersi dai dati del questionario.

I dati relativi alle interviste, raccolti dalla sottoscritta attraverso appunti durante la discussione verranno esclusivamente analizzati in proprio, non ceduti a terzi, e – una volta terminato l'iter burocratico dell'approvazione della ricerca (presumibilmente entro il mese di luglio 2004) – verranno distrutti (informativa ai sensi della L. 675/96). Un'eventuale registrazione sonora dell'intervista avverrà solo con il consenso degli interessati.

L'analisi dei dati e il documento finale di ricerca (contenente i dati in forma di tabelle riassuntive) verrà consegnato all'Amministrazione comunale di Ala e all'Istituto scolastico comprensivo successivamente all'approvazione da parte del comitato accademico di valutazione.

Nell'invitarvi ad aderire vi saluto cordialmente e vi auguro che, se deciderete di partecipare, questa esperienza risulti positiva per ognuno.

Elena Corradini

Elena Corradini
Studente del Master internazionale a distanza
in Biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione

Presso:
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APPENDIX 3.2

QUESTIONNAIRE

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DO I KNOW "MY" LIBRARY?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOUNGSTERS BETWEEN 11 AND 19 YEARS OF AGE ABOUT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY:
WHAT ARE YOUR EXPERIENCES? WHAT ARE YOUR DESIRES? DO YOU THINK YOU WILL VISIT THE LIBRARY IN FUTURE?

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE YOU WILL COME ACROSS DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUESTIONS.
SOME ARE "MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS": IN THIS CASE YOU SHALL TICK WITH ONE CROSS THE ANSWER(S) YOU THINK ARE MOST APPLYING.
FOR OTHER QUESTIONS YOU WILL NEED TO ANSWER WITH SOME WORDS INDICATING YOUR EXPERIENCES AND YOUR IDEAS.
JUST IN ONE CASE YOU WILL FIND A QUESTION WITH A SET OF "POINTS" (FROM 0 TO 5), WHOSE MEANING IS EXPLAINED IN THE TABLE BELOW. YOU SHALL ANSWER ACCORDING TO YOUR OPINION, CIRCLING JUST ONE OF THE POINTS GIVEN FOR EACH ITEM.

0 = No satisfaction at all	***1*** = Very low satisfaction	***2*** = Low satisfaction	***3*** = Good satisfaction	***4*** = High satisfaction	***5*** = Maximum satisfaction

THERE AREN'T RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS FOLLOWING.
THERE ARE ONLY SOME ELEMENTS THAT CAN ALLOW YOU TO GIVE YOUR OPINION ON WHAT YOU ARE ASKED ABOUT.
IF YOU THINK THAT YOUR OPINION IS STILL NOT CLEAR ENOUGH AFTER HAVING ANSWERED THE QUESTIONS, YOU CAN INSERT A PAGE WITH FURTHER THOUGHTS ALONG WITH THE QUESTIONNAIRE, BEFORE GIVING IT BACK COMPLETED.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS ANONYMOUS. YOU MUST NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON IT OR ALLOW YOUR IDENTITY TO BE RECOGNISED. THE DATA COLLECTED WILL BE EXCLUSIVELY USED FOR A STUDY AND WILL BE DESTROYED SOON AFTER THE ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION PHASES WILL BE COMPLETED (FOLLOWING THE LAW NO. 675/96).

HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET THE DATA, YOU WILL BE ASKED AT THE END TO INDICATE YOUR SEX, AGE AND LIVING PLACE.

YOU CAN GIVE THE FILLED-IN QUESTIONNAIRE BACK TO THE PERSON WHO HAS GIVEN IT TO YOU.

THANK YOU FOR THE PRECIOUS CO-OPERATION.

If you want to obtain more information on the undergoing study, please contact me.

Elena Corradini – Via A. Mondini 2 – 38061 ALA (TN) – tel. 347-1403296.

Librarian, Student of the International Master in Library and Information Science of the University of Parma and Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne (UK)

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1. **WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN FOR THE FIRST TIME TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY?**

   ❑ WITH PARENTS ❑ AT PRE-SCHOOL ❑ AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

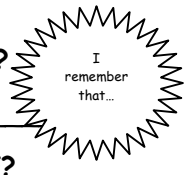
   ❑ AT MIDDLE SCHOOL ❑ WITH FRIENDS ❑ ALONE ❑ CAN'T REMEMBER

2. **HOW DID YOU GO TO THE LIBRARY FOR THE FIRST TIME?**

   ❑ I HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED THERE ❑ I HAVE GONE SPONTANEOUSLY

   ❑ CAN'T REMEMBER

3. **DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING POSITIVE ABOUT THAT EXPERIENCE?**



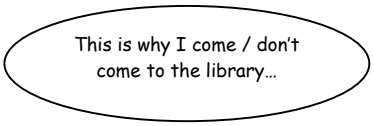
   _____

4. **DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING NEGATIVE ABOUT THAT EXPERIENCE?**

   _____

5. **DO YOU THINK THAT THESE EXPERIENCES HAVE BEEN CONDITIONING YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LIBRARY AFTERWARDS?** ❑ **YES** ❑ **NO**

6. **ARE YOU A LIBRARY USER NOW?** ❑ **YES** ❑ **NO**



7. **HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT THE LIBRARY?**

   ❑ ONCE A YEAR ❑ ONCE EVERY 6 MONTHS ❑ ONCE EVERY 3 MONTHS

   ❑ ONCE A MONTH ❑ OTHER FREQUENCY _____

8. **WHY DO YOU VISIT / DON'T YOU VISIT THE LIBRARY?**

   ❑ STUDYING ❑ ANNOYING PLACE

   ❑ INFORMATION, DEEPENING SUBJECTS OF INTEREST ❑ CAN'T FIND WHAT I NEED

   ❑ READING PLEASURE IN SPARE TIME ❑ DON'T LIKE READING

   ❑ MEETING FRIENDS ❑ OTHER INTERESTS

   ❑ OTHER REASON (PLEASE SPECIFY: _____)

9. **ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICES YOU FIND IN THE LIBRARY? (0=min. – 5=max)**

❑ BOOKS / PERIODICALS LOANS	0	1	2	3	4	5
❑ SHELF ARRANGEMENT LABELLING	0	1	2	3	4	5
❑ BOOK DISPLAYS	0	1	2	3	4	5
❑ OTHER ACTIVITIES (EXHIBITS…)	0	1	2	3	4	5

10. **WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTS CAN YOU FIND IN THE LIBRARY?**
(TICK ALL APPLYING ANSWERS)

   ❑ printed books ❑ printed periodicals ❑ e-journals

   ❑ Cd-roms ❑ music cds ❑ DVDs

   ❑ VHS ❑ printed music ❑ Data files

   ❑ Databases ❑ Internet files ❑ Comics

   ❑ Other (please specify) _____

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***11.* WHICH WOULD YOU LIKE TO FIND IN THE LIBRARY?**

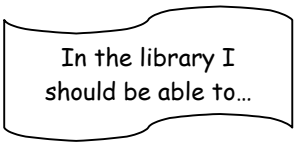
(TICK ALL APPLYING ANSWERS)

- ❑ printed books ❑ printed periodicals ❑ e-journals
- ❑ Cd-roms ❑ music cds ❑ DVDs
- ❑ VHS ❑ printed music ❑ Data files
- ❑ Databases ❑ Internet files ❑ Comics
- ❑ Other (please specify) _____

12. **WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO BE ALLOWED TO DO IN THE LIBRARY?**

(TICK ALL APPLYING ANSWERS)

- ❑ STUDYING
- ❑ FINDING UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION
- ❑ MEETING PEOPLE
- ❑ ATTENDING TO SOME CULTURAL EVENT
- ❑ OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____



13. WHAT IS A LIBRARY? CHOOSE AMONG THESE POSSIBILITIES:

- ❑ A PLACE WHERE BOOKS ARE COLLECTED AND PRESERVED
- ❑ THE WHOLE OF SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO BOOK COLLECTION
- ❑ THE WHOLE OF ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES CARRIED OUT TO USERS' SATISFACTION
- ❑ A PLACE WHERE TO BORROW BOOKS

14. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE A "LIBRARY"?

_____

_____

_____

15. HOW WOULD YOUR IDEAL LIBRARY BE LIKE?

_____

_____

_____

***16.* WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INFORMED ABOUT ONE /MORE OF THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS?** *(TICK ALL ANSWERS INTERESTING TO YOU)*

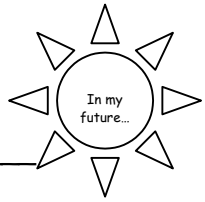
- ❑ HOW TO DO RESEARCH ALONE WITH ALL RESOURCES AVAILABLE
- ❑ HOW BOOKS ARE SHELVED
- ❑ LIBRARY HISTORY
- ❑ HOW TO DO RESEARCH ON THE INTERNET
- ❑ HOW TO DO RESEARCH SAVING TIME
- ❑ OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

17. DO YOU THINK YOU WILL VISIT THE LIBRARY IN FUTURE? ❑ YES ❑ NO

WHY?

_____

_____



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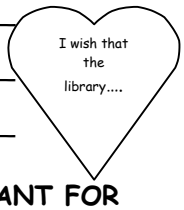
18. WHICH SERVICES ARE TO BE DEVELOPED IN THE LIBRARY IN FUTURE?

_____

_____

_____



19. IN THE END, WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE LIBRARY IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU?

❑ YES, IT IS BECAUSE…
_____

❑ NO, BUT IT COULD BE IF…
_____

❑ NO, IT IS NOT BECAUSE…
_____

20. LAST QUESTION: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU LIKE THAT THE LIBRARY WOULD ORGANISE? (TICK ALL FAVOURITE CHOICES)

- ❑ "FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY" GROUP
- ❑ GUIDED TOURS TO THE LIBRARY SERVICES
- ❑ GUIDED TOURS TO SPECIFIC LIBRARY SECTIONS
- ❑ READINGS
- ❑ MEETINGS WITH AUTHORS
- ❑ MEETINGS WITH DISCIPLINE EXPERTS
- ❑ BIBLIOGRAPHIC EXHIBITS
- ❑ ARTS EXHIBITS / OTHER EXHIBITS
- ❑ COURSES, ACTIVITIES TO DO IN THE SPARE TIME
- ❑ OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____

Your age: _____

Sex:
- ❑ Male
- ❑ Female

Living place:
- ❑ Ala
- ❑ Brustolotti
- ❑ Chizzola
- ❑ Marani
- ❑ Muravalle
- ❑ Pilcante
- ❑ Ronchi
- ❑ S.Margherita
- ❑ S.Lucia
- ❑ Sdruzzinà
- ❑ Serravalle
- ❑ Villetta

The questionnaire is over. Thank you for your precious co-operation!

If you want to tell more things, you can do it by writing them on another sheet of paper and handing it in along with this one.

FOLLOWING THE LAW NO. 675/96, I INFORM YOU THAT THE ANONYMOUS DATA COLLECTED WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR STUDY AND RESEARCH. AFTER COMPLETING THE STUDY, THE DATA COLLECTED WILL BE DESTROYED.

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APPENDIX 3.3.

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUPS SCHEMES

Foreword

The following general scheme has been used in order to gather comparable data.
In the next pages, all the interview and focus groups guides used have been reported.
Schemes and questions typology were developed following the considerations of KRUEGER 1998b, p.21-28.

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUPS' GENERAL SCHEME

Opening questions:

- *Presentations*

Introductory questions:

- *Beginning discussion about the topic*
- E.g. Describe… / Which is your first impression on… / What has induced you to…

Transition questions:

- *Moving slowly toward the Key questions*
- E.g. How have you been involved in…

Key questions:

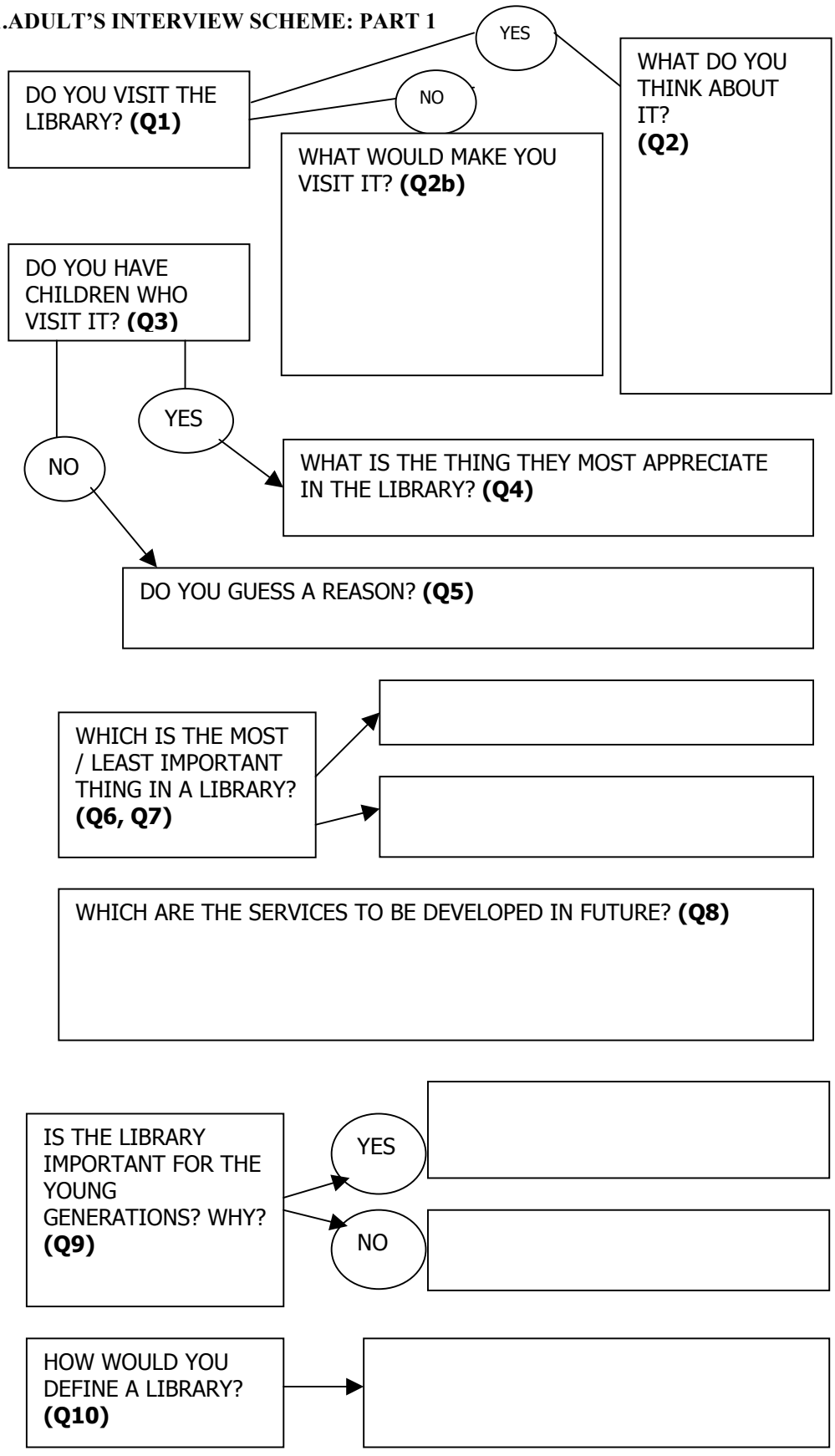
- *Deepening subject of interest*
- E.g. Which role have others had in… / What has helped you in… / Let us suppose that you should encourage a friend to… what would you do?

Ending questions:

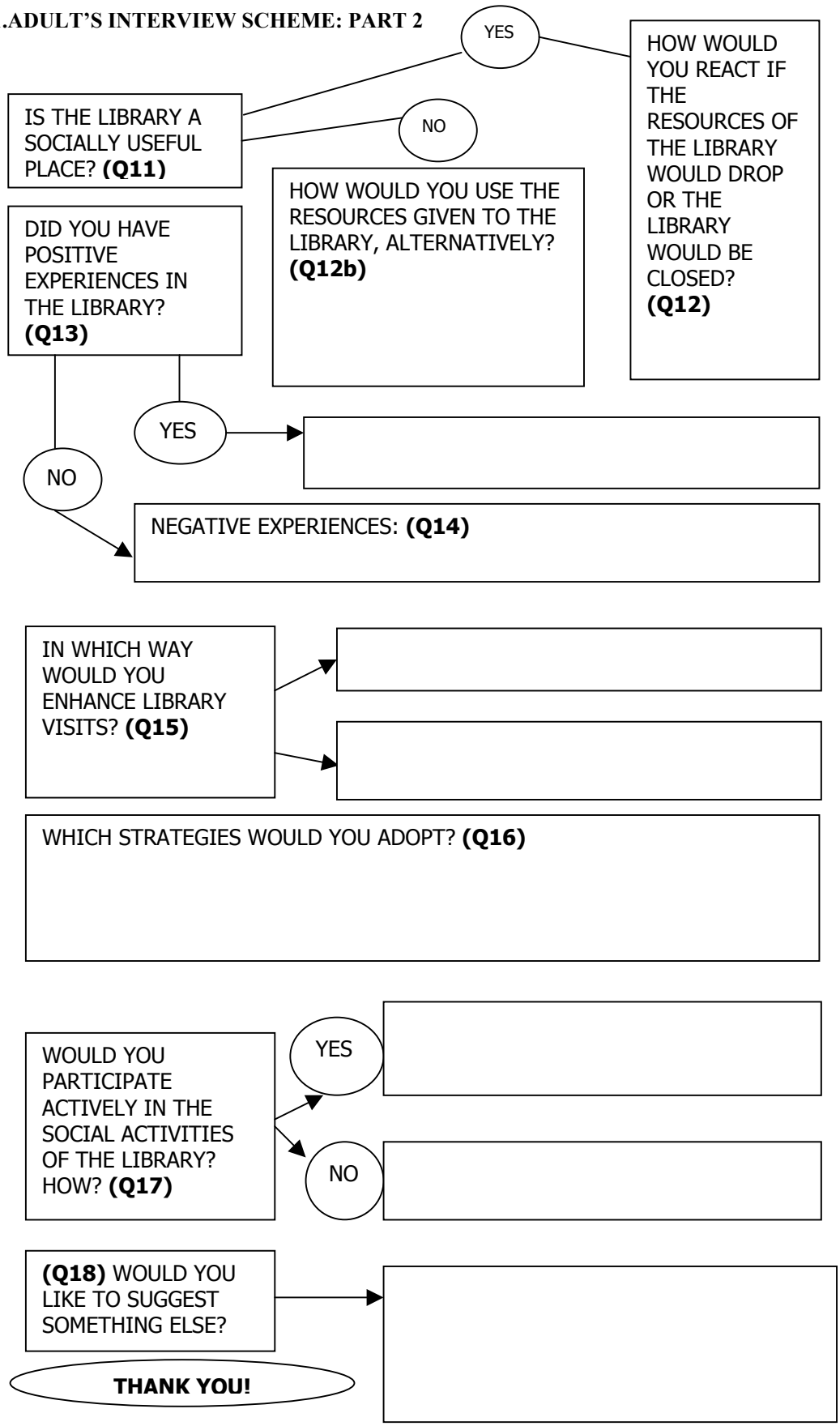
- *Understanding where to investigate more again*
- E.g. Supposed you had the chance to speak to the Administrators on the topic. What would you tell them? / Of all topics aroused, which ones are the most important?

- *Ending the session*
  E.g. Oral summary, asking for confirmation / Did we forget anything? / Do you have something to add?

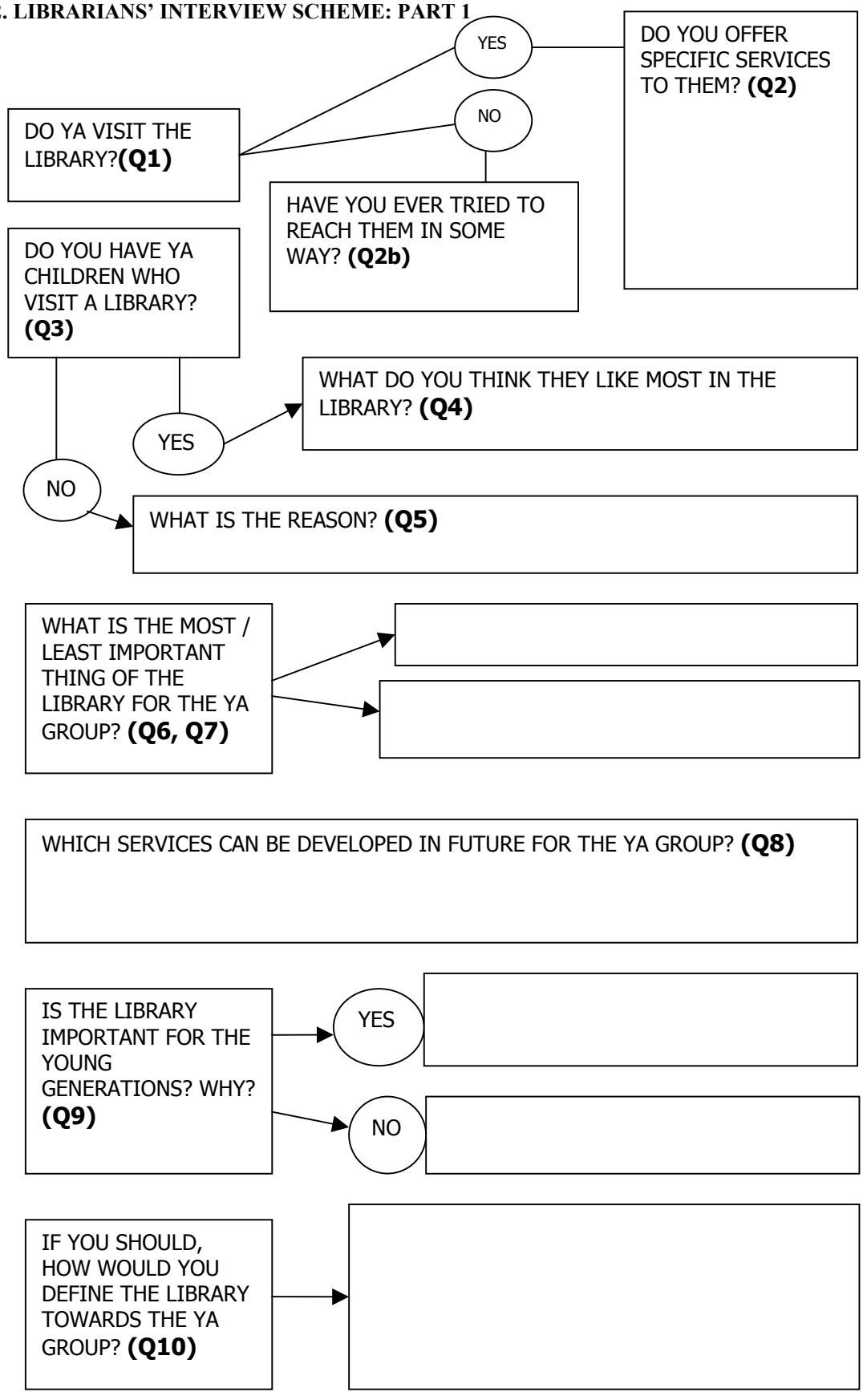
3.1.ADULT'S INTERVIEW SCHEME: PART 1



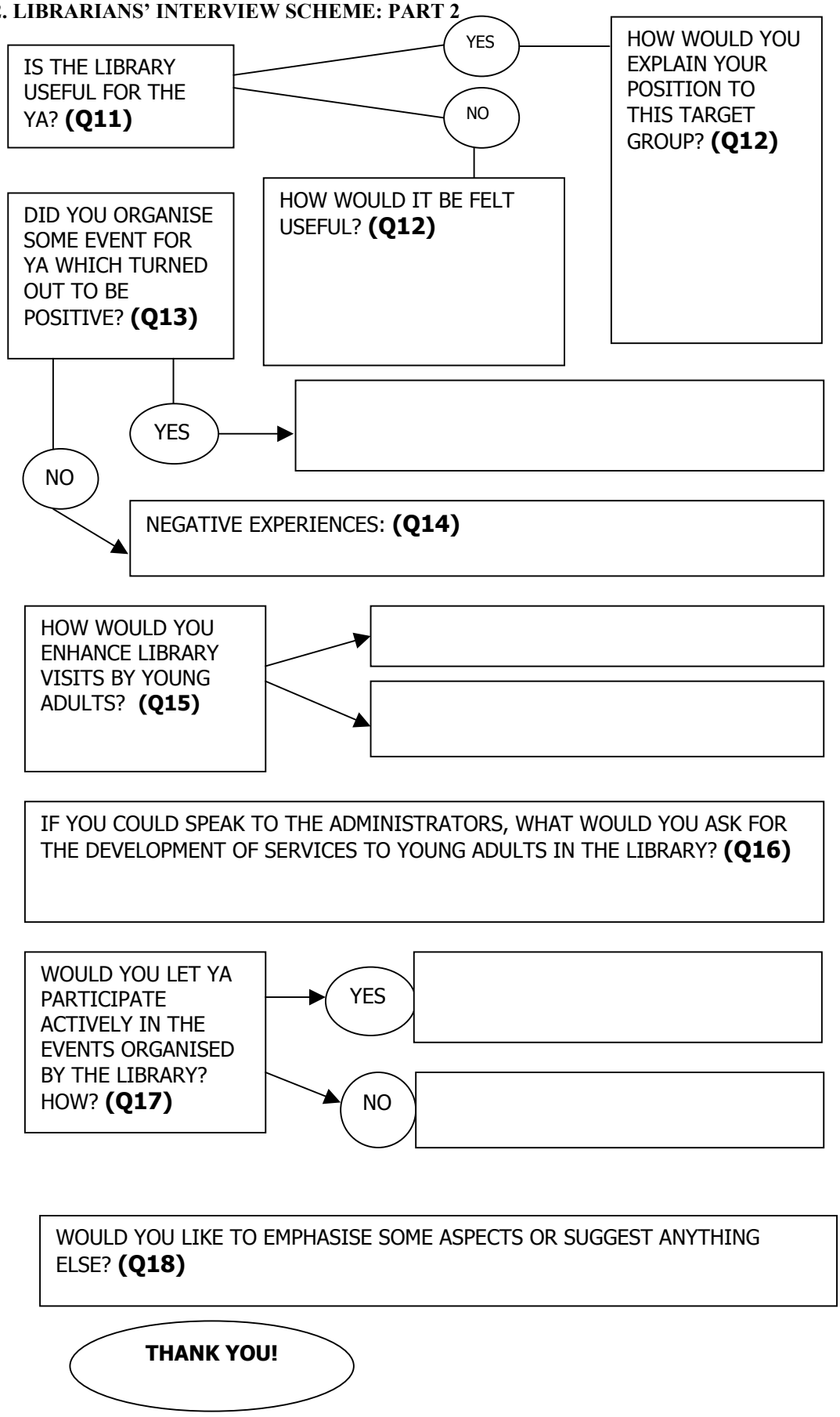
3.1.ADULT'S INTERVIEW SCHEME: PART 2



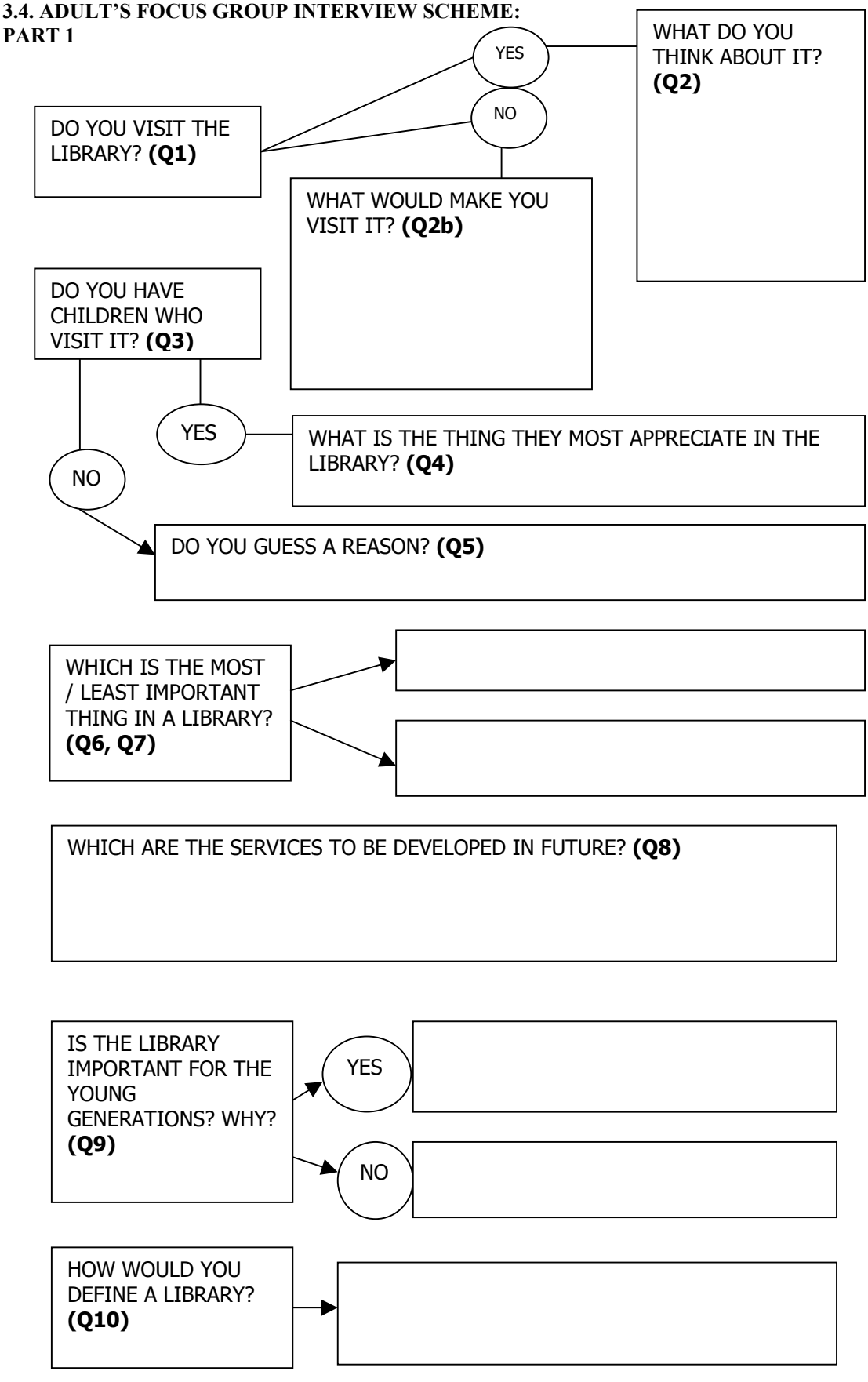
3.2. LIBRARIANS' INTERVIEW SCHEME: PART 1



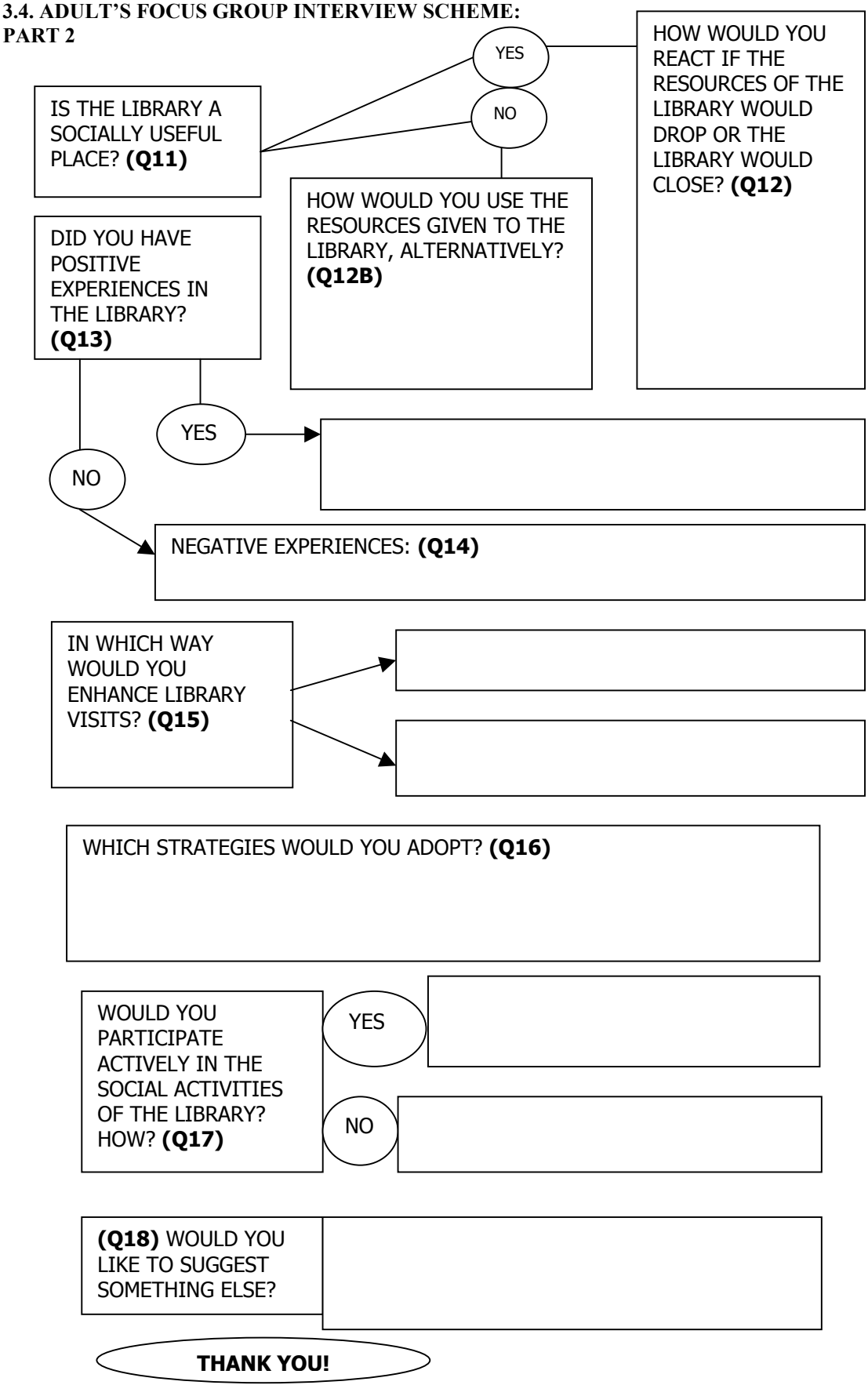
3.2. LIBRARIANS' INTERVIEW SCHEME: PART 2



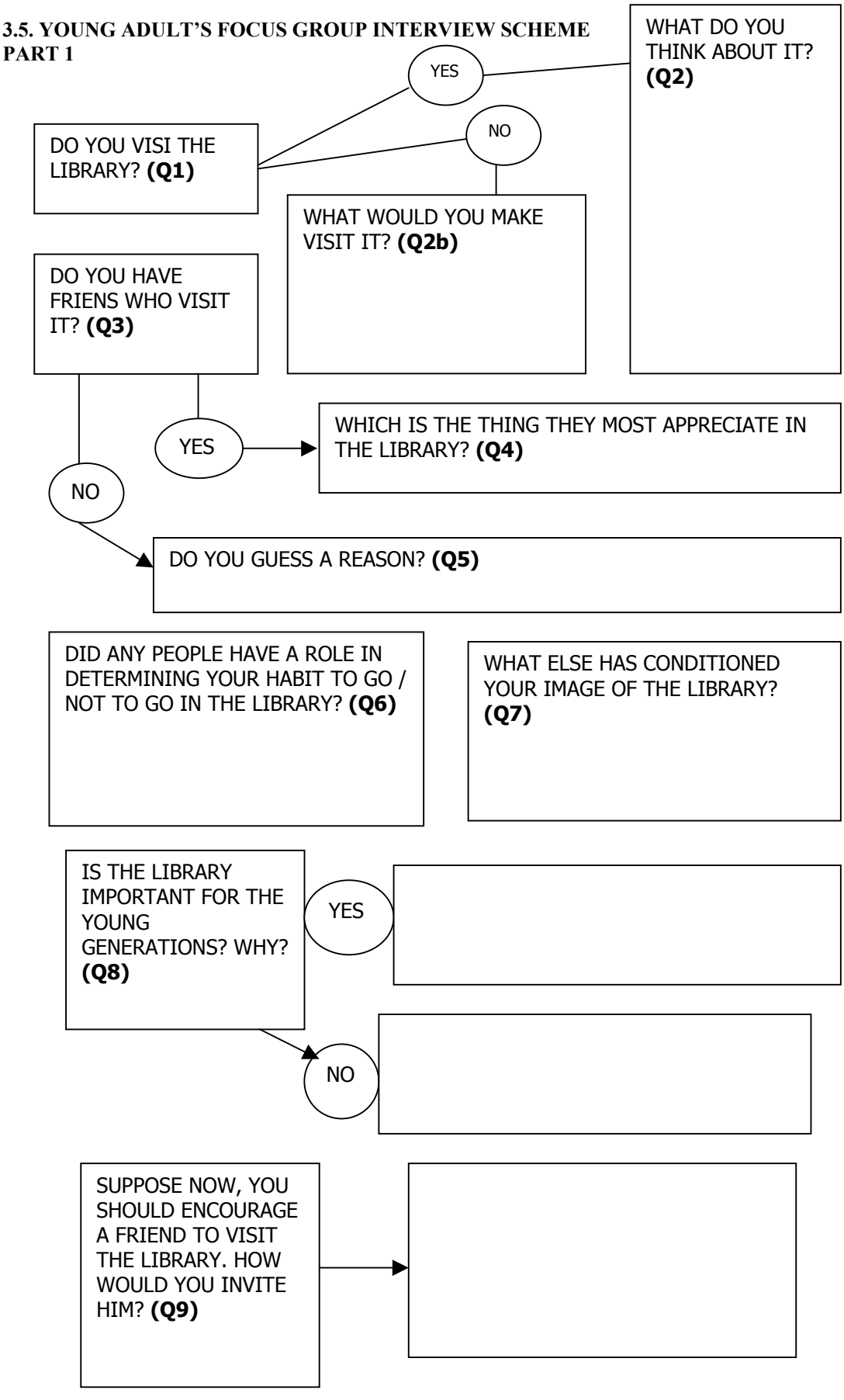
3.4. ADULT'S FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEME: PART 1



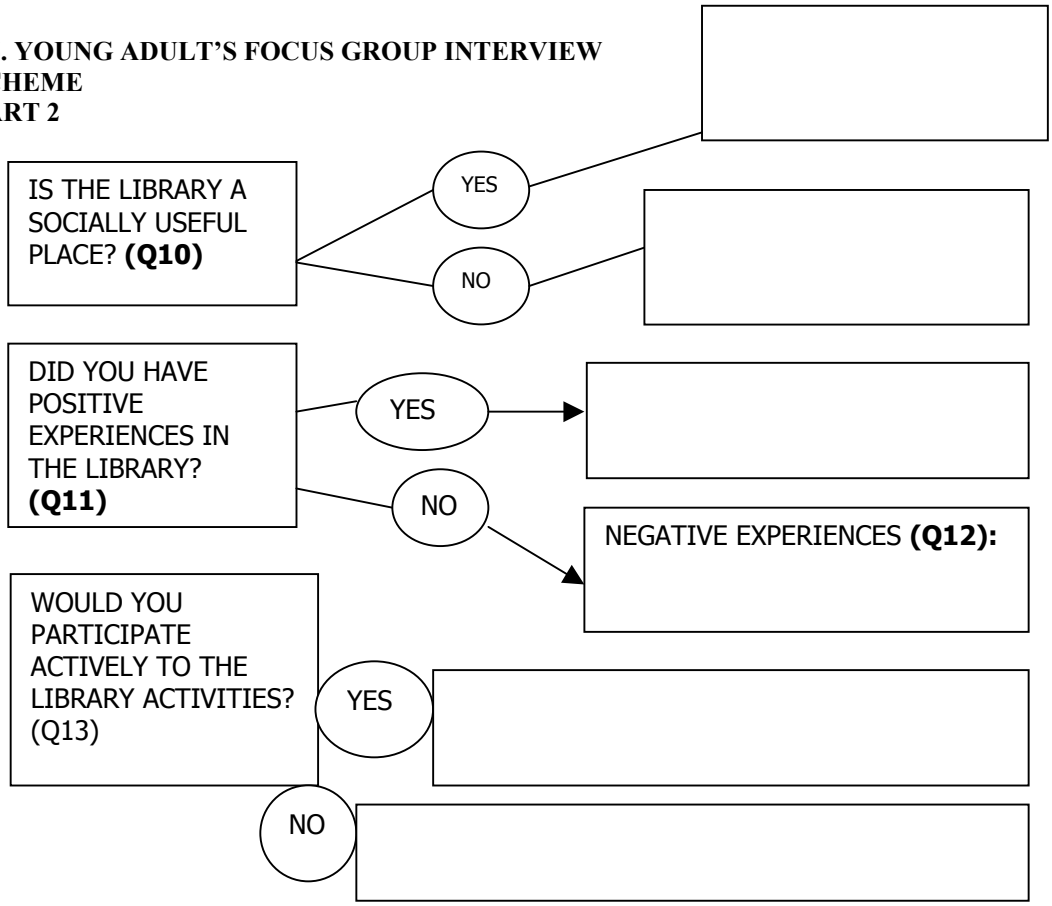
3.4. ADULT'S FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEME: PART 2



3.5. YOUNG ADULT'S FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEME
PART 1



3.5. YOUNG ADULT'S FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEME
PART 2



HOW WOULD YOU REDEFINE THE LIBRARY SPACES? **(Q14)**

SUPPOSED YOU WOULD HAVE THE CHANCE TO TALK TO THE ADMINISTRATORS. WHAT WOULD YOU ASK THEM FOR THE LIBRARY? **(Q15)**

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS MOST IMPORTANT, AMONG ALL THINGS WE SAID? **(Q16)**

DID WE FORGET ANYTHING? DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO ADD? **(Q17)**

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS TABLES

QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

4.0. Foreword

Questions have been answered by respondents in several ways (one-choice / mutually exclusive choice, multiple-choice, open-ended, Likert-scale), according to the instructions given.

One-choice questions / mutually exclusive choice: Q2, Q5, Q6, Q7

Multiple choice questions: Q1, Q8, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q16, Q20

Open-ended questions: Q3, Q4, Q14, Q15, Q17, Q18, Q19

Likert-scale questions: Q9

Results given in this Appendix are presented in Tables 4-1 to 4-117.
For each answer one general Table with collective data is given, followed by Tables with data analysed by sex, age and location of the respondents.
Under the Tables the number of answers are given with "N", while the number of respondents, if different, is given with "Respondents", followed by the correspondent number. Wherever possible and significant, a subtotal of the answers is given.

4.1. General statistics

Table 4-1. Questionnaire statistics 1

Population size 11-19-year-old group (general)	**No.**
Total number of questionnaires (see Appendix) sent out to the 11-14-year-old group	371
Number returned by initial deadline	157
Responses to reminder encounters	35
Total number of questionnaires returned by final deadline	192
Response rate	52%
Response as percentage of population (668)	29%
Number of invalid questionnaires returned after final deadline	10
Percentage of invalid questionnaires returned after final deadline	4%

Table 4-2. Questionnaire statistics 2

Population size 11-14-year-old group	**No.**
Total number of questionnaires (see Appendix) sent out to the 11-14-year-old group	231
Number returned by initial deadline	115
Responses to reminder encounters	12
Total number of questionnaires returned by final deadline	127
Response rate	55%
Response as percentage of population in that age group (289)	44%
Number of invalid questionnaires returned after final deadline Percentage of invalid questionnaires compared to returned in group	5 4%

Table 4-3. Questionnaire statistics 3

Population size 15-19-year-old group	**No.**
Total number of questionnaires (see Appendix) sent out to the 15-19-year-old group	140
Number returned by initial deadline	42
Responses to reminder encounters	23
Total number of questionnaires returned by final deadline	65
Response rate	46%
Response as percentage of population in that age group (379)	17%
Number of invalid questionnaires returned after final deadline	5
Percentage of invalid questionnaires compared to returned in group	7%

The percentage on the total numbers shown in following Table gives the significance of the two samples comparing to the total population.

Table 4-4. Responses by sample group

Sample group	Number of responses	Percentage of total population of the single age group	Percentage of total questionnaires returned
Group 11-14	127	44% out of 289	66%
Group 15-19	65	17% out of 379	34%
N = 192	192	29% out of 668	100%

Questions 4 and 15 were analysed for the existence of response bias.
Table 4-5 shows that bias was not detectable in these responses.

Table 4-5. Response bias

DetecTable Response Bias		
Question	Group 11-14	Group 15-19
Q4	NO	NO
Q15	NO	NO

As anticipated in the Foreword, responses have been divided by three major criteria per each group: age, sex and location. The groupings were possible because of a different colour of the questionnaire given to the Middle School, 11-14-year-olds sample (yellow) compared to the Non-Middle School, 15-19-year-olds sample (orange).

Table 4-6. Age of respondents

No. of collected questionnaires identified by age			
Criteria	Group 11-14	Group 15-19	Total
Identified	122	63	185
Non-identified	5	2	7
N max = 192	127	65	192

7 questionnaires out of 192 were not identified by age (3%).

Table 4-7. Age and Sex of respondents

No. of collected questionnaires identified by sex			
Criteria	Group 11-14	Group 15-19	Total
Male	66	18	84
Female	68	34	102
N max = 192	134	52	186

6 questionnaires out of 192 were not identified by sex (3%).

Table 4-8. Age and Location of respondents

No. of collected questionnaires identified by location			
Criteria	Group 11-14	Group 15-19	Total
Town	75	23	88
Surroundings	59	27	86
N max = 192	134	50	184

8 questionnaires out of 192 were not identified by location (4%).

Table 4-9. N. of Questionnaires Identified by Sex and Total Population Sex

No. of collected questionnaires identified by sex				
Criteria	Total number identified	% on total of collected Questionnaires	Total population	% on total Population
Male	84	44%	345	24%
Female	102	56%	323	31%
N max = 192	186	100%	668	27%

4.2. General findings

Q1: When did you visit the public library for the first time?

192 respondents (100%) answered the question. Some of them gave a multiple answer to the question.

Table 4-10. First visit to the library - general

Type of visit	No. of answers	Percentage
With parents	47	22%
Pre-school	50	24%
Elementary school	57	27%
Middle school	9	4%
With friends	15	7%
Alone	4	2%
Can't remember	30	14%

N = 212

Table 4-11. First visit to the library – by sex

Type of visit	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-10
	No.	%	No.	%	%
With parents	21	23%	26	22%	22%
Pre-school	19	21%	31	27%	24%
Elementary school	23	25%	34	37%	27%
Middle school	5	5%	3	3%	4%
With friends	6	7%	6	7%	7%
Alone	2	2%	0	0%	2%
Can't remember	15	16%	14	15%	14%

N = 205

Table 4-12. First visit to the library – by age group

Type of visit	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-10
	No.	%	No.	%	%
With parents	33	21%	14	25%	22%
Pre-school	34	22%	16	28%	24%
Elementary school	45	29%	12	21%	27%
Middle school	7	4%	2	3%	4%
With friends	14	9%	1	2%	7%
Alone	3	2%	1	2%	2%
Can't remember	19	12%	11	19%	14%

N = 212

Table 4-13. First visit to the library – by location

Type of visit	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-10
	No.	%	No.	%	%
With parents	24	22%	21	23%	22%
Pre-school	29	27%	19	20%	24%
Elementary school	25	23%	32	35%	27%
Middle school	4	4%	4	4%	4%
With friends	5	5%	7	8%	7%
Alone	1	2%	1	1%	2%
Can't remember	20	18%	8	9%	14%

N = 210

Q2: Why did you visit the library the first time?

191 respondents (99%) answered the question. Table 4-14 shows that the majority of visits (60%) have been established by being accompanied to the library by other people. Two of the respondents stated – sympathetically? – to have being accompanied, but nonetheless voluntarily followed.

Table 4-14. Spontaneity rate

Reason	No. of answers	Percentage
I have been conducted there	117	60%
I have come spontaneously	28	14%
Can't remember	49	26%

N = 194

Table 4-15. Spontaneity rate – by sex

Reason	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Tab. 4-14
	No.	%	No.	%	%
I have been conducted there	45	53%	68	65%	60%
I have come spontaneously	12	14%	15	14%	14%
Can't remember	28	33%	21	21%	26%

N = 189

Table 4-16. Spontaneity rate – by age group

Reason	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Tab. 4-14
	No.	%	No.	%	%
I have been conducted there	86	61%	31	57%	60%
I have come spontaneously	26	19%	2	4%	14%
Can't remember	28	20%	21	39%	26%

N = 194

Table 4-17. Spontaneity rate – by location

Reason	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Tab. 4-14
	No.	%	No.	%	%
I have been conducted there	52	53%	59	69%	60%
I have come spontaneously	15	15%	10	12%	14%
Can't remember	31	32%	16	19%	26%

N = 183

Q3: Do you remember anything positive about that experience?

Question 3 and 4 aimed to discover the extent to which users were positively engaged with the library on their first visit. 180 respondents (94%) answered the question. The qualitative results have been subsumed in the macro-categories shown below.

Table 4-18. Positive feelings - general

Macro-categories	No. of responses	Percentage
Discovery and frequency of the library	45	25%
Discovery of the services and activities	24	13%
Discovery of materials	79	44%
Can't remember	19	11%
Socialization aspects	7	4%
Nothing	6	3%

N = 180

Table 4-19. Positive feelings – by sex

Reason	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Tab. 4-18
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Discovery + frequency of library	17	21%	27	27%	25%
Discovery + frequency of services	8	10%	16	16%	13%
Discovery of materials	41	52%	38	38%	44%
Can't remember	7	9%	12	12%	11%
Socialization aspects	2	4%	5	5%	4%
Nothing	4	5%	2	2%	3%

N = 179

Table 4-20. Positive feelings – by age group

Reason	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Tab. 4-18
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Discovery + frequency of library	36	27%	8	22%	25%
Discovery + frequency of services	20	15%	3	8%	13%
Discovery of materials	58	43%	19	51%	44%
Can't remember	15	11%	4	11%	11%
Socialization aspects	4	3%	0%	0%	4%
Nothing	2	1%	3	8%	3%

N = 172

Table 4-21. Positive feelings – by location

Reason	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Tab. 4-18
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Discovery + frequency of library	25	27%	19	23%	25%
Discovery + frequency of services	15	17%	8	10%	13%
Discovery of materials	38	40%	40	49%	44%
Can't remember	7	7%	12	14%	11%
Socialization aspects	4	4%	3	4%	4%
Nothing	5	5%	0	0%	3%

N = 176

Q4: Do you remember anything negative of that experience?

133 respondents (69%) answered the question.

Table 4-22. Negative feelings

Macro-categories	No. of responses	Percentage
Nothing (included sub-category below)	76	40%
I liked everything: 3		
No answer	59	31%
Can't remember	18	9%
Socialization aspects	17	9%
Feelings of inadequacy (personal, situational)	16	8%
Feelings of inadequacy of place	6	3%

N = 192

Table 4-23. Negative feelings – by sex

Reason	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-22
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Nothing	33	39%	42	41%	40%
No answer	29	35%	28	27%	31%
Can't remember	5	6%	11	11%	9%
Socialization aspects	6	7%	11	11%	9%
Feelings of inadequacy (personal, situational)	8	10%	8	8%	8%
Feelings of inadequacy of place	3	3%	2	2%	3%

N = 186

Table 4-24. Negative feelings – by age group

Reason	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-22
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Nothing	59	45%	14	29%	40%
No answer	34	26%	22	45%	31%
Can't remember	14	11%	2	4%	9%
Socialization aspects	9	7%	7	14%	9%
Feelings of inadequacy (personal, situational)	13	10%	3	6%	8%
Feelings of inadequacy of place	2	1%	1	2%	3%

N = 180

Table 4-25. Negative feelings – by location

Reason	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-22
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Nothing	46	48%	28	32%	40%
No answer	27	28%	29	34%	31%
Can't remember	9	9%	7	8%	9%
Socialization aspects	6	7%	10	12%	9%
Feelings of inadequacy (personal, situational)	5	5%	10	12%	8%
Feelings of inadequacy of place	3	3%	2	2%	3%

N = 182

Q5: Do you think that these experiences have been conditioning your attitude towards the library afterwards?

177 respondents (92%) completed this question.

Table 4-26. Recall conditioning

Answer	No. of answers	Percentage
Yes	72	41%
No	105	59%

N = 177

Table 4-27. Recall conditioning – by sex

Reason	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-26
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes	35	45%	34	36%	41%
No	42	55%	61	64%	59%

N = 172

Table 4-28. Recall conditioning – by age group

Reason	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-26
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes	60	46%	12	26%	41%
No	70	54%	35	74%	59%

N = 177

Table 4-29. Recall conditioning – by location

Reason	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-26
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes	36	40%	31	40%	41%
No	55	60%	46	60%	59%

N = 168

Q6: Are you a library user now?

This question aimed a) to find out how many young people were actually users of the library; and b) discover any significant correlation between this question and Q7.

190 respondents (99%) of respondents answered the question.

Table 4-30. Actual library users (self-definition)

Answer	No. of answers	Percentage
Yes	158	81%
No	34	19%

N = 192

Table 4-31. Actual library users (self-definition)– by sex

Actual library users	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-30
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes	63	75%	92	88%	81%
No	21	25%	12	12%	19%

N = 188

Table 4-32. Actual library users (self-definition)– by age group

Actual library users	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-30
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes	112	80%	46	85%	81%
No	26	20%	8	15%	19%

N = 192

Table 4-33. Actual library users (self-definition)– by location

Actual library users	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-30
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes	82	82%	68	82%	81%
No	18	18%	15	18%	19%

N = 183

Q7: How often do you visit the library?

186 respondents (97%) answered the question. The respondents had five choices, and a very high percentage of them (39%) defined personally the frequency rate of their visits to the library, in 14 different ways. These have been subsumed in macro-categories below.

Table 4-34. Frequency rate - general

Frequency rate category	No. of answers	Percentage
Once a year	16	9%
Once every 6 months	11	6%
Once every 3 months	36	19%
Once a month	51	27%
Other (sub-categories included)	72	39%
- never	2 (1%)	
- no definite frequency	17 (9%)	
- seasonally	3 (2%)	
- once every 2-3 months	4 (2%)	
- once every 2 weeks	11 (6%)	
- 1-2 times a week	27 (15%)	
- 2-3 times a week	6 (3%)	
- almost every day	2 (1%)	

N = 186

Table 4-35. Frequency rate - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-34
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Once a year	10	13%	4	4%	9%
Once every 6 months	9	11%	2	2%	6%
Once every 3 months	14	18%	22	22%	19%
Once a month	22	28%	26	25%	27%
Other (sub-categories included)	24	30%	48	47%	39%
- never	2	2%	0	0%	
- no definite frequency	4	5%	11	11%	
- seasonally	0	0%	1	1%	
- once every 2-3 months	5	6%	1	1%	
- once every 2 weeks	6	8%	5	5%	
- 1-2 times a week	6	8%	20	20%	
- 2-3 times a week	1	1%	6	6%	
- almost every day	0	0%	2	2%	

N = 181 (79+102)

Table 4-36. Frequency rate– by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-34
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Once a year	11	8%	5	10%	9%
Once every 6 months	5	4%	6	11%	6%
Once every 3 months	23	17%	13	25%	19%
Once a month	38	28%	13	25%	27%
Other (sub-categories included)	57	42%	15	29%	39%
- never	1	1%	1	2%	
- no definite frequency	15	11%	2	4%	
- seasonally	3	2%	0	0%	
- once every 2-3 months	3	2%	1	2%	
- once every 2 weeks	9	7%	2	4%	
- 1-2 times a week	18	13%	6	12%	
- 2-3 times a week	6	4%	3	6%	
- almost every day	2	1%	0	0%	

N = 186 (134+52)

Table 4-37. Frequency rate– by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-34
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Once a year	5	5%	8	10%	9%
Once every 6 months	6	6%	3	4%	6%
Once every 3 months	13	13%	22	27%	19%
Once a month	29	30%	19	23%	27%
Other (sub-categories included)	42	46%	28	36%	39%
- never	1	1%	1	1%	
- no definite frequency	6	6%	11	14%	
- seasonally	0	0%	2	2%	
- once every 2-3 months	0	0%	4	5%	
- once every 2 weeks	6	6%	5	6%	
- 1-2 times a week	22	23%	5	6%	
- 2-3 times a week	6	6%	0	0%	
- almost every day	2	2%	0	0%	

N = 175 (95+80)

Q8a: Why do you visit the library?

181 respondents (94%) answered the question. Most of them gave multiple answers. Some answers included in the "Other" category by respondents, but which could fit into one of the other categories, have been shifted to the correspondent category.

Table 4-38. Reasons for visiting the library - general

Reasons for visiting	No. of answers	Percentage
Studying	135	42%
Information, deepening subjects of interest	52	16%
Reading pleasure in the spare time	81	25%
Meeting friends	47	15%
Other (included sub-categories)	4	1%
- surfing the Internet	1	
- borrowing books	2	
- silence	1	

N =319

Table 4-39. Reasons for visiting the library - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-38
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Studying	52	40%	81	44%	42%
Information, deepening subjects of interest	27	21%	25	13%	16%
Reading pleasure in the spare time	33	25%	47	25%	25%
Meeting friends	16	12%	29	16%	15%
Other (sub-categories included)	1	1%	3	2%	1%
- surfing the Internet	1				
- borrowing books			2		
- silence			1		

N = 314 (129+185)

Table 4-40. Reasons for visiting the library – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-38
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Studying	100	41%	35	47%	40%
Information, deepening subjects of interest	38	16%	14	19%	16%
Reading pleasure in the spare time	62	25%	19	25%	25%
Meeting friends	42	17%	5	7%	15%
Other (sub-categories included)	2	1%	2	2%	1%
- surfing the Internet			1		
- borrowing books	1		1		
- silence	1				

N = 322 (244+75)

Table 4-41. Reasons for visiting the library – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-38
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Studying	71	41%	59	43%	40%
Information, deepening subjects…	33	19%	18	13%	16%
Reading pleasure in the spare time	40	23%	38	28%	25%
Meeting friends	26	15%	19	14%	15%
Other (sub-categories included)	3	2%	2	2%	1%
- surfing the Internet	1				
- borrowing books	1		1		
- silence	1		1		

N = 309 (173+136)

Q8b: Why don't you visit the library?

27 respondents (14%) answered the question. Some of them gave a multiple answer.

Table 4-42. Reasons for not visiting the library

Reasons for not visiting	No. of answers	Percentage
Annoying place	4	10%
Can't find what I need	3	8%
Don't like reading	15	38%
Other interests	16	41%
Other (included sub-category)	1	3%
- I have no time	1	

N = 39

Table 4-43. Reasons for not visiting the library - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-42
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Annoying place	3	15%	1	6%	10%
Can't find what I need	3	15%	0	0%	8%
Don't like reading	6	30%	8	47%	38%
Other interests	8	40%	7	41%	41%
Other	0	0%	1	6%	3%

N = 37 (20+17)

Table 4-44. Reasons for not visiting the library – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-42
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Annoying place	3	13%	1	6%	10%
Can't find what I need	3	13%	0	0%	8%
Don't like reading	8	35%	7	47%	38%
Other interests	9	39%	7	47%	41%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	3%

N = 38 (23+15)

Table 4-45. Reasons for not visiting the library – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-42
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Annoying place	4	22%	0	0%	10%
Can't find what I need	1	6%	2	12%	8%
Don't like reading	6	33%	7	41%	38%
Other interests	6	33%	8	47%	41%
Other	1	6%	0	0%	3%

N = 35 (18+17)

Q9: Are you satisfied with the services you find in the library?

This question was the only one presenting the respondents with a Likert measurement scale from a 0 = min to 5 = max level to be assigned to the following services: Books / periodicals loans, Shelf arrangement labelling, Book displays, and Other activities (exhibitions, activities, events).

188 respondents answered the question (98%). However, 9 sets of answers were considered invalid because not all points were equally given to each service. The following Tables display the valid results for 179 respondents (93% of total questionnaires collected).

Table 4-46. Satisfaction scale for services

Services	Total points achieved	Percentage
Books / periodical loans	756	29%
Shelf arrangement labelling	604	23%
Book displays	692	26%
Other activities (exhibits, events…)	574	22%

N = 2626; Respondents: 188

Table 4-47. Satisfaction scale for services - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male Subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-46
	Pts	%	Pts	%	%
Books / periodical loans	320	29%	415	29%	29%
Shelf arrangement labelling	264	24%	326	22%	23%
Book displays	293	26%	386	26%	26%
Other activities (exhibits, events…)	232	21%	331	23%	22%

N = 2567 (1109+1458); Respondents: 188

Table 4-48. Satisfaction scale for services – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-46
	Pts	%	Pts	%	%
Books / periodical loans	562	29%	194	28%	29%
Shelf arrangement labelling	441	23%	163	24%	23%
Book displays	514	27%	178	26%	26%
Other activities (exhibits, events…)	423	22%	151	22%	22%

N = 2626 (1940+686); Respondents: 188

Table 4-49. Satisfaction scale for services – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-46
	Pts	%	Pts	%	%
Books / periodical loans	384	29%	329	28%	29%
Shelf arrangement labelling	299	22%	276	24%	23%
Book displays	356	27%	304	26%	26%
Other activities (exhibits, events…)	299	22%	247	22%	22%

N = 2494 (1338+1156); Respondents: 188

Q10: Which of the following supports can you find in the library?

This question aimed to test the awareness of respondents about each of the supports they can find in the library. From a prescribed list of supports that are all part of the collections of the library, respondents were asked to tick all the options which, in their opinion, corresponded to supports currently present in the library.

191 respondents (99%) answered the question.

Table 4-50 shows that the majority of respondents reckon at least 3 to 5 items are at their disposals in the library. In fact, 107 answers – that is, 56% of the total – concentrate on these frequencies.

Table 4-50. Number of supports deemed significant by respondents

Number of supports chosen	Total no. of choices	Percentage
None	1 (no answer)	1%
1	24	13%
2	24	13%
3	42	22%
4	44	23%
5	21	11%
6	14	7%
7	12	6%
8	3	1,5%
9	4	2%
10	1	0,5%
11	1	0,5%
12	1	0,5%
13	0	0%

N = 191

Table 4-51 . Supports to be found in the library

Kind of support	No. of respondents thinking support is present	% Distribution among supports deemed available	% of respondents thinking support is present
Printed books	168	23%	88%
cd-roms	51	7%	27%
VHS	25	3%	13%
Databases	29	4%	15%
Printed periodicals	90	12%	47%
Audio / music cds	69	9%	36%
Printed music	28	4%	15%
Internet files	80	11%	42%
e-journals	21	3%	11%
DVDs	23	3%	12%
Data files	28	4%	15%
Comic books	118	16%	62%
Other	5	1%	3%
Ancient books	1		
Interesting books	1		
Reviews	1		
Everything	1		
Activities	1		

N = 735; Respondents: 191

Table 4-52. Supports to be found in the library - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% Distr. Of Supports from Table 4-51
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Printed books	71	23%	92	22%	23%
cd-roms	17	5%	33	8%	7%
VHS	13	4%	12	3%	3%
Databases	16	5%	13	3%	4%
Printed periodicals	37	12%	52	13%	12%
Audio / music cds	27	9%	42	11%	9%
Printed music	11	4%	16	4%	4%
Internet files	35	11%	43	10%	11%
e-journals	8	3%	13	3%	3%
DVDs	13	4%	9	2%	3%
Data files	14	4%	14	3%	4%
Comic books	48	15%	68	17%	16%
Other	2	1%	3	1%	1%
Ancient books				1	
Interesting books				1	
Reviews				1	
Everything	1				
Activities	1				

N = 722 (312+410); Respondents: 191

Table 4-53. Supports to be found in the library – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% Distr. Of Supports from Table 4-51
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Printed books	121	24%	47	20%	23%
cd-roms	29	6%	22	10%	7%
VHS	14	3%	11	5%	3%
Databases	21	4%	8	3%	4%
Printed periodicals	51	10%	39	17%	12%
Audio / music cds	43	9%	26	11%	9%
Printed music	22	4%	6	3%	4%
Internet files	57	11%	23	10%	11%
e-journals	13	3%	8	3%	3%
DVDs	15	3%	8	3%	3%
Data files	21	4%	7	3%	4%
Comic books	88	18%	30	13%	16%
Other	5	1%	0	0%	1%
Ancient books	1				
Interesting books	1				
Reviews	1				
Everything	1				
Activities	1				

N = 735 (500+235); Respondents: 191

Table 4-54. Supports to be found in the library – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% Distr. Of Supports from Table 4-51
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Printed books	85	21%	73	24%	23%
cd-roms	28	7%	21	7%	7%
VHS	14	4%	11	4%	3%
Databases	14	4%	15	5%	4%
Printed periodicals	52	13%	35	11%	12%
Audio / music cds	38	9%	28	9%	9%
Printed music	20	5%	7	2%	4%
Internet files	42	10%	33	11%	11%
e-journals	12	3%	9	3%	3%
DVDs	15	4%	7	2%	3%
Data files	14	4%	13	4%	4%
Comic books	61	15%	51	17%	16%
Other	3	1%	2	1%	1%
Ancient books	1				
Interesting books	1				
Reviews			1		
Everything	1				
Activities			1		

N = 703 (398+305); Respondents: 191

Q11: Which of the following supports would you like to find in the library?

This question aimed to follow up the notion of the previous question.

189 respondents (98%) answered the question.

Table 4-55. Number of supports deemed significant by respondents

Number of supports	Total no. of choices	% on total choices	Choices of NBM*	% on total choices
None	*NR: 4*	*2%*		*2%*
1	27	14%	22	12%
2	34	18%	20	11%
3	35	19%	20	11%
4	33	17%	13	7%
5	14	7%	7	4%
6	15	8%	7	4%
7	10	5%	4	2%
8	9	5%		
9	3	2%		
10	1	1%		
11	1	1%		
12	3	2%		
13				

N = 185; Respondents + Non-Respondents = 189

**NBM = Non-Book-Materials*

Table 4-56 illustrates the significance that respondents placed on each support.

Table 4-56. Supports to be made available in the library

Kind of support	No. of respondents thinking support should be present	% distribution among supports to make available	% of respondents thinking support should be present
Printed books	76	10%	40%
cd-roms	82	11%	44%
VHS	85	11%	45%
Databases	25	3%	13%
Printed periodicals	31	4%	16%
Audio / music cds	103	13%	55%
Printed music	44	6%	23%
Internet files	62	8%	33%
e-journals	34	4%	18%
DVDs	114	15%	61%
Data files	24	3%	13%
Comic books	63	8%	34%
Other	8	1%	4%
Reviews	1		
Food	1		
Game cds	1		
I am satisfied	1		
Ancient writings	1		
Commented poetry	1		
Big photos of animals, drawings, …	1		
Newspapers, reviews in foreign languages	1		

N = 751; Respondents: 185

Table 4-57. Supports to be made available in the library - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% Distr. On Supports from Table 4-56
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Printed books	33	9%	41	11%	10%
cd-roms	41	12%	40	11%	11%
VHS	43	12%	41	11%	11%
Databases	20	6%	5	2%	3%
Printed periodicals	11	3%	20	5%	4%
Audio / music cds	44	12%	55	14%	13%
Printed music	20	6%	22	6%	6%
Internet files	30	8%	31	8%	8%
e-journals	18	5%	16	4%	4%
DVDs	52	14%	58	15%	15%
Data files	12	3%	12	3%	3%
Comic books	32	9%	29	8%	8%
Other	3	1%	5	2%	1%
Reviews			1		
Food	1				
Game cds	1				
I am satisfied			1		
Ancient writings			1		
Commented poetry	1				
Big photos of animals, drawings, …			1		
Newspapers, reviews in foreign languages			1		

N = 734 (359+375); Respondents: 185

Table 4-58. Supports to be made available in the library – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% Distr. On Supports from Table 4-56
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Printed books	56	10%	20	10%	10%
cd-roms	63	11%	19	10%	11%
VHS	66	12%	19	10%	11%
Databases	16	3%	9	5%	3%
Printed periodicals	17	3%	14	7%	4%
Audio / music cds	78	14%	25	13%	13%
Printed music	34	6%	10	5%	6%
Internet files	45	8%	17	9%	8%
e-journals	24	4%	10	5%	4%
DVDs	85	15%	29	15%	15%
Data files	17	3%	7	4%	3%
Comic books	51	9%	12	6%	8%
Other	5	1%	3	2%	1%
Reviews	1				
Food	1				
Game cds	1				
I am satisfied	1				
Ancient writings	1				
Commented poetry			1		
Big photos of animals, drawings, …			1		
Newspapers, reviews in foreign languages			1		

N = 751 (557+194); Respondents: 185

Table 4-59. Supports to be made available in the library – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% Distr. On Supports from Table 4-56
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Printed books	43	10%	30	11%	10%
cd-roms	52	12%	26	9%	11%
VHS	43	10%	38	13%	11%
Databases	16	4%	8	3%	3%
Printed periodicals	19	4%	11	4%	4%
Audio / music cds	61	14%	35	12%	13%
Printed music	30	7%	12	4%	6%
Internet files	34	8%	25	9%	8%
e-journals	16	4%	16	6%	4%
DVDs	52	12%	53	18%	15%
Data files	17	4%	6	2%	3%
Comic books	37	9%	22	8%	8%
Other	6	1%	2	1%	1%
Reviews			1		
Food	1				
Game cds	1				
I am satisfied	1				
Ancient writings	1				
Commented poetry	1				
Big photos of animals, drawings, …			1		
Newspapers, reviews in foreign languages	1				

N = 710 (426+284); Respondents: 185

Q12: What do you expect to be allowed to do in the library?

191 respondents (99%) answered the question.

Table 4-60. Activities allowed in the library

Activities category	No. of answers	Percentage
Studying	163	39%
Finding up-to-date information	121	29%
Meeting people	66	16%
Attending to some cultural event	53	13%
Other (sub-categories included)	15	3%
- finding and reading books	7	
- doing various activities	1	
- finding some ancient books	1	
- dwelling there in my free time	1	
- historical information	1	
- deepening my knowledge	1	
- nothing	1	
- attending specific seminars	1	
- sleeping	1	

N = 418; Respondents: 191

Table 4-61. Activities allowed in the library - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-60
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Studying	68	40%	92	38%	39%
Finding up-to-date information	51	30%	67	28%	29%
Meeting people	23	14%	42	18%	16%
Attending to some cultural event	18	11%	34	14%	13%
Other (sub-categories included)	9	5%	6	2%	3%
- finding and reading books	3		4		
- doing various activities	1				
- finding some ancient books			1		
- dwelling there in my free time	1				
- historical information	1				
- deepening my knowledge			1		
- nothing	1				
- attending specific seminars	1				
- sleeping	1				

N = 410 (169+241); Respondents: 191

Table 4-62. Activities allowed in the library – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-60
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Studying	120	39%	43	39%	39%
Finding up-to-date information	85	28%	36	32%	29%
Meeting people	52	17%	14	12%	16%
Attending to some cultural event	39	13%	14	12%	13%
Other (sub-categories included)	9	3%	5	5%	3%
- finding and reading books	6				
- doing various activities	1				
- finding some ancient books	1				
- dwelling there in my free time	1				
- historical information			1		
- deepening my knowledge			1		
- nothing			1		
- attending specific seminars			1		
- sleeping			1		

N = 417 (305+112); Respondents: 190

Table 4-63. Activities allowed in the library – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-60
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Studying	67	33%	73	40%	39%
Finding up-to-date information	48	24%	50	27%	29%
Meeting people	38	19%	30	16%	16%
Attending to some cultural event	40	20%	24	13%	13%
Other (sub-categories included)	8	4%	7	4%	3%
- finding and reading books	3		4		
- doing various activities			1		
- finding some ancient books	1				
- dwelling there in my free time	1				
- historical information	1				
- deepening my knowledge			1		
- nothing			1		
- attending specific seminars	1				
- sleeping	1				

N = 385 (201+184); Respondents: 190

Q13: What is a library?

Respondents were asked to choose freely from a list of 4 definitions, without prescribing if the choice should have been one or more.

189 respondents (98%) answered the question.

Table 4-64. Number of definitions deemed applying

No. of definitions	No. of answers	Percentage
None	0	0%
1	147	78%
2	29	15%
3	8	4%
4	5	3%

N = 189

Table 4-65. Definitions chosen by respondents

Definition of library	No. of answers	Percentage
A place where books are collected and preserved	59	24%
The whole of services and activities related to book collection	48	19%
The whole of activities and services carried out to users' satisfaction	73	29%
A place where to borrow books	69	28%

N = 249; Respondents: 189

Table 4-66. Definitions chosen by respondents - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-65
	No.	%	No.	%	%
A place where books are collected and preserved	27	25%	31	23%	24%
The whole of services and activities related to book collection	20	18%	26	20%	19%
The whole of activities and services carried out to users' satisfaction	33	30%	39	29%	29%
A place where to borrow books	30	27%	37	28%	28%

N = 243 (110+133); Respondents: 189

Table 4-67. Definitions chosen by respondents – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-65
	No.	%	No.	%	%
A place where books are collected and preserved	47	26%	12	18%	24%
The whole of services and activities related to book collection	34	18%	14	21%	19%
The whole of activities and services carried out to users' satisfaction	44	24%	29	44%	29%
A place where to borrow books	58	32%	11	17%	28%

N = 249 (183+66); Respondents: 189

Table 4-68. Definitions chosen by respondents – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-65
	No.	%	No.	%	%
A place where books are collected and preserved	32	25%	25	24%	24%
The whole of services and activities related to book collection	23	18%	21	20%	19%
The whole of activities and services carried out to users' satisfaction	39	30%	30	28%	29%
A place where to borrow books	36	27%	29	28%	28%

N = 235 (130+105); Respondents: 189

Q14: How would you define a library?

Respondents were asked to answer freely to this question.

177 respondents (92%) answered the question. Table shows that the vast majority of respondents (48%) felt the library as a place for studying, doing research or reading.

Table 4-69. Free definition of library

Macro-categories	No. of total answers	% on total answers	% of respondents who found category relevant
A place where to study / do research	82	21%	46%
A place for finding information and cultural development	62	16%	35%
A place for reading / books	88	23%	50%
A place for relaxing, entertainment, meeting with friends	75	19%	42%
No answer	15	4%	8%
A place where I find useful services	47	12%	27%
A place with plenty of resources	21	5%	12%

N = 390; Respondents: 177

Table 4-70. Definitions chosen by respondents - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% on Answers from Table 4-69
	No.	%	No.	%	%
A place where to study / do research	27	16%	53	24%	21%
A place for finding information and cultural development	29	18%	33	15%	16%
A place for reading / books	47	29%	41	18%	23%
A place for relaxing, entertainment, meeting with friends	26	16%	47	21%	19%
No answer	8	5%	7	3%	4%
A place where I find useful services	18	11%	28	13%	12%
A place with plenty of resources	8	5%	13	6%	5%

N = 385 (163+222); Respondents: 177

Table 4-71. Definitions chosen by respondents – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% on Answers from Table 4-69
	No.	%	No.	%	%
A place where to study / do research	60	22%	18	19%	21%
A place for finding information and cultural development	38	13%	21	22%	16%
A place for reading / books	73	26%	14	15%	23%
A place for relaxing, entertainment, meeting with friends	57	21%	13	13%	19%
No answer	9	3%	6	6%	4%
A place where I find useful services	27	10%	17	18%	12%
A place with plenty of resources	14	5%	7	7%	5%

N = 374 (278+96); Respondents: 177

Table 4-72. Definitions chosen by respondents – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% on Answers from Table 4-69
	No.	%	No.	%	%
A place where to study / do research	43	22%	37	21%	21%
A place for finding information and cultural development	30	15%	31	17%	16%
A place for reading / books	45	23%	42	23%	23%
A place for relaxing, entertainment, meeting with friends	42	21%	30	17%	19%
No answer	6	3%	8	4%	4%
A place where I find useful services	23	11%	22	12%	12%
A place with plenty of resources	10	5%	10	6%	5%

N = 379 (199+180); Respondents: 177

Q15: How would your ideal library be like?

164 respondents (85%) answered the question.

Table 4-73. Free definition of library

Macro-categories	No. of total answers	% on total answers	% of respondents who found category relevant
With printed resources	76	23%	46%
As it is now	39	12%	24%
With rooms reserved for specific purposes	78	24%	48%
With multimedia resources	21	6%	13%
No answer	28	9%	17%
With more services and activities	33	10%	20%
With a new setting	8	2%	5%
Don't know, no idea	7	2%	4%
Place for studying	17	5%	10%
Place for socialization	16	5%	10%
I am not interested	1	0%	1%

N = 324; Respondents: 164

Table 4-74. Definitions chosen by respondents - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% on Answers from Table 4-73
	No.	%	No.	%	%
With printed resources	31	22%	44	24%	23%
As it is now	16	12%	21	12%	12%
With rooms reserved for specific purposes	38	27%	40	22%	24%
With multimedia resources	14	10%	7	4%	6%
No answer	14	10%	14	8%	9%
With more services and activities	12	9%	21	11%	10%
With a new setting	4	3%	4	2%	2%
Don't know, no idea	3	2%	3	1%	2%
Place for studying	0	0%	4	2%	5%
Place for socialization	7	5%	22	12%	5%
I am not interested	0	0%	0	0%	0%

N = 317 (127+180); Respondents: 164

Table 4-75. Definitions chosen by respondents – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% on Answers from Table 4-73
	No.	%	No.	%	%
With printed resources	62	26%	12	15%	23%
As it is now	27	11%	9	11%	12%
With rooms reserved for specific purposes	58	25%	19	24%	24%
With multimedia resources	17	7%	3	4%	6%
No answer	16	7%	11	14%	9%
With more services and activities	25	11%	7	9%	10%
With a new setting	5	2%	3	4%	2%
Don't know, no idea	4	2%	2	3%	2%
Place for studying	2	1%	2	3%	5%
Place for socialization	19	8%	10	13%	5%
I am not interested	0	0%	0	0%	0%

N = 313 (235+78); Respondents: 164

Table 4-76. Definitions chosen by respondents – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% on Answers from Table 4-73
	No.	%	No.	%	%
With printed resources	46	27%	21	20%	23%
As it is now	22	13%	14	10%	12%
With rooms reserved for specific purposes	42	24%	36	26%	24%
With multimedia resources	11	6%	10	7%	6%
No answer	11	6%	15	11%	9%
With more services and activities	19	11%	14	10%	10%
With a new setting	5	3%	3	2%	2%
Don't know, no idea	2	1%	4	3%	2%
Place for studying	2	1%	2	1%	5%
Place for socialization	14	8%	14	10%	5%
I am not interested	0	0%	0	0%	0%

N = 317 (174+133); Respondents: 164

Q16: Would you like to be informed about one or more of the following subjects?

Respondents were allowed to respond with multiple choice.

191 respondents (99%) answered the question.

Table 4-77. Number of subjects ticked by respondents

Number	No. of answers	Percentage
1	56	29%
2	74	39%
3	43	23%
4	12	6%
5	6	3%
6	0	0%

N = 191

Table 4-78. Subjects identified as potential useful for lessons

Subjects for lessons	No. of respondents who identified benefit	% on total answers	% of respondents who identified benefit
How to do research alone with all resources available	113	27%	59%
How books are shelved	56	14%	29%
Library history	40	10%	21%
How to do research on the Internet	104	25%	54%
How to do research saving time	94	23%	49%
Other (sub-subjects included)	5*	1%	4%
- how to write a book / literary genres	1		
- books for young people	1		
- how can you ask so stupid questions?	1		
- I am not interested	1		
- which services does the library offer?	1		
- nothing in particular	1		

N = 412; Respondents: 191

*Of the total of 7 answers, one respondent did not specify the subject and two gave insignificant answers (no subject proposed for lessons). These answers were not counted in the % total and in the following tables, although reported.

Table 4-79. Definitions chosen by respondents - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% on Answers from Table 4-78
	No.	%	No.	%	%
How to do research alone with all resources available	51	28%	57	28%	27%
How books are shelved	26	14%	30	13%	13%
Library history	21	11%	18	8%	10%
How to do research on the Internet	44	24%	59	26%	25%
How to do research saving time	42	23%	52	23%	23%
Other (sub-subjects included)	0	0%	4	2%	2%
- how to write a book / literary genres				1	
- books for young people				1	
- how can you ask so stupid questions?	1				
- I am not interested	1				
- which services does the library offer?				1	
- nothing in particular				1	

N = 404 (184+220); Respondents: 191

Table 4-80. Definitions chosen by respondents – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% on Answers from Table 4-78
	No.	%	No.	%	%
How to do research alone with all resources available	84	27%	29	30%	27%
How books are shelved	42	13%	14	14%	13%
Library history	37	12%	3	3%	10%
How to do research on the Internet	88	28%	16	16%	25%
How to do research saving time	63	20%	31	32%	23%
Other (sub-subjects included)	1	0%	3	4%	2%
- how to write a book / literary genres	1				
- books for young people			1		
- how can you ask so stupid questions?			1		
- I am not interested			1		
- which services does the library offer?			1		
- nothing in particular			1		

N = 412 (313+97); Respondents: 191

Table 4-81. Definitions chosen by respondents – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% on Answers from Table 4-78
	No.	%	No.	%	%
How to do research alone with all resources available	65	29%	41	25%	27%
How books are shelved	34	15%	22	13%	13%
Library history	21	9%	17	10%	10%
How to do research on the Internet	57	25%	43	26%	25%
How to do research saving time	47	21%	42	25%	23%
Other (sub-subjects included)	2	1%	2	1%	2%
- how to write a book / literary genres	1				
- books for young people			1		
- how can you ask so stupid questions?			1		
- I am not interested			1		
- which services does the library offer?	1				
- nothing in particular			1		

N = 373 (206+167); Respondents: 191

Q17a: Do you think you will visit the library in future?

Respondents were invited to respond with yes or no, and give reasons in their own words. 188 respondents (98%) answered the question.

Table 4-82. Prospective library users (self-definition)

Answer	No. of answers	Percentage
Yes	180	96%
No	8	4%

N = 188

Table 4-83. Prospective library users (self-definition)– by sex

Actual library users	Male subjects		Female subjects		% on Table 4-82
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes	74	90%	102	100%	96%
No	8	10%	0	0%	4%

N = 184

Table 4-84. Prospective library users (self-definition)– by age group

Actual library users	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% on Table 4-82
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes	131	96%	49	94%	96%
No	5	4%	3	6%	4%

N = 188

Table 4-85. Prospective library users (self-definition)– by location

Actual library users	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% on Table 4-82
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes	91	96%	80	95%	96%
No	4	4%	4	5%	4%

N = 179

Q17b: Why? (YES Answer to Q17)

Table 4-86 shows that there was also less agreement among respondents as to what constituted the main reason for coming to the library in future. The most common concern was the possibility of studying (89 answers) and reading and borrowing books (71 answers), but a consistent part of respondents thought it to be a pleasant and interesting place (66 answers).

Table 4-86. Perceived reasons for future users, identified by respondents

Macro-categories: Reasons for coming to the library in future	No. of answers	% of answers
For studying and information purposes	89	33%
Because it is a pleasant and interesting place where to spend free time	66	25%
It is a useful place	36	13%
For reading and borrowing books	71	26%
No answer	7	3%
For attending some activity / course	1	0%

N = 270; Respondents: 180

Table 4-87. Perceived reasons for future users, identified by respondents - by sex

Frequency rate category	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-86
	No.	%	No.	%	%
For studying and information purposes	38	37%	49	30%	33%
Because it is a pleasant and interesting place where to spend free time	18	17%	47	29%	25%
It is a useful place	13	12%	23	14%	13%
For reading and borrowing books	33	32%	38	24%	26%
No answer	2	2%	4	3%	3%
For attending some activity / course	0	0%	1	0%	0%

N = 266 (104+162); Respondents: 180

Table 4-88. Perceived reasons for future users, identified by respondents – by age group

Frequency rate category	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-86
	No.	%	No.	%	%
For studying and information purposes	65	34%	19	30%	33%
Because it is a pleasant and interesting place where to spend free time	46	24%	16	25%	25%
It is a useful place	23	12%	12	19%	13%
For reading and borrowing books	54	28%	15	23%	26%
No answer	4	2%	2	3%	3%
For attending some activity / course	1	0%	0	0%	0%

N = 257 (193+64); Respondents: 180

Table 4-89. Perceived reasons for future users, identified by respondents – by location

Frequency rate category	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-86
	No.	%	No.	%	%
For studying and information purposes	43	31%	42	35%	33%
Because it is a pleasant and interesting place where to spend free time	35	25%	28	23%	25%
It is a useful place	22	16%	13	11%	13%
For reading and borrowing books	37	26%	33	28%	26%
No answer	2	1%	4	3%	3%
For attending some activity / course	1	1%	0	0%	0%

N = 260 (140+120); Respondents: 180

Q17c: Why? (NO Answer to Q17)

Following Tables give data on prospective Non-Users of the library.

Table 4-90. Perceived reasons for future non-users, identified by respondents

Macro-categories: Reasons for not coming to the library in future	No. of answers	% of answers
Absence of interest	5	62%
Absence of feeling of importance	2	25%
Absence of time	1	13%

N = 8; Respondents: 8.

Table 4-91. Perceived reasons for future non-users, identified by respondents – by sex

Actual library users	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-90
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Absence of interest	5	62%	0	0%	62%
Absence of feeling of importance	2	25%	0	0%	25%
Absence of time	1	13%	0	0%	13%

N = 8

Table 4-92. Perceived reasons for future non-users, identified by respondents – by age group

Actual library users	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-90
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Absence of interest	2	40%	2	100%	62%
Absence of feeling of importance	2	40%	0	0%	25%
Absence of time	1	20%	0	0%	13%

N = 7

Table 4-93. Perceived reasons for future non-users, identified by respondents– by location

Actual library users	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-90
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Absence of interest	3	75%	2	50%	62%
Absence of feeling of importance	1	25%	1	25%	25%
Absence of time	0	0%	1	25%	13%

N = 8

Q18: Which services are to be developed in the library in future?

143 respondents (74%) answered the question.

Table 4-94. Services to be developed in future as identified by respondents

Macro-categories	No. of answers	% on answers
No answer	49	20%
Acquisition, fruition and loan of multimedia	30	12%
Development of technologies, Internet	46	18%
Reference, information, educational services	27	11%
Acquisition, fruition and loan of printed materials	17	7%
Free time services and activities	21	8%
I don't know	6	2%
Services for the users	13	5%
Just as they are now, they are sufficient	37	15%

N = 252; Respondents: 143

Table 4-95. Services to be developed in future as identified by respondents – by sex

Actual library users	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-94
	No.	%	No.	%	%
No answer	19	17%	28	22%	20%
Acquisition, fruition and loan of multimedia	19	17%	11	8%	12%
Development of technologies, Internet	24	21%	21	16%	18%
Reference, information, educational services	13	12%	14	11%	11%
Acquisition, fruition and loan of printed materials	6	5%	10	8%	7%
Free time services and activities	10	9%	11	8%	8%
I don't know	3	2%	2	2%	2%
Services for the users	4	4%	9	7%	5%
Just as they are now, they are sufficient	14	13%	25	18%	15%

N = 240 (109+131); Respondents: 143

Table 4-96. Services to be developed in future as identified by respondents – by age group

Actual library users	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-94
	No.	%	No.	%	%
No answer	30	18%	15	22%	20%
Acquisition, fruition and loan of multimedia	24	14%	6	9%	12%
Development of technologies, Internet	35	21%	10	15%	18%
Reference, information, educational services	21	12%	5	7%	11%
Acquisition, fruition and loan of printed materials	11	7%	5	7%	7%
Free time services and activities	12	7%	8	12%	8%
I don't know	3	2%	2	3%	2%
Services for the users	5	3%	8	12%	5%
Just as they are now, they are sufficient	28	16%	9	13%	15%

N = 237 (169+68); Respondents: 143

Table 4-97. Services to be developed in future as identified by respondents – by location

Actual library users	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-94
	No.	%	No.	%	%
No answer	22	18%	24	20%	20%
Acquisition, fruition and loan of multimedia	14	12%	16	14%	12%
Development of technologies, Internet	19	16%	26	22%	18%
Reference, information, educational services	14	12%	12	10%	11%
Acquisition, fruition and loan of printed materials	8	7%	8	7%	7%
Free time services and activities	9	8%	12	10%	8%
I don't know	4	3%	0	0%	2%
Services for the users	6	5%	7	6%	5%
Just as they are now, they are sufficient	23	19%	13	11%	15%

N = 237 (119+118); Respondents: 143

Q19: In the end, would you say that the library is important for you?

14 respondents didn't answer the question. So, 178 (93%) did. Some of the respondents gave more than one answer. The number of total answers registered is higher than the number of respondents because answers have been categorised and some have been doubled.

Table 4-98. Importance of library for self-development

Answer	No. of answers	Percentage
Yes, it is because…	202	90%
No, but it could be if…	19	8%
No, it is not because…	4	2%

N = 225; Respondents: 178.

Table 4-99. Importance of library for self-development– by sex

Actual library users	Male subjects		Female subjects		% on Table 4-98
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes, it is because…	87	90%	111	92%	90%
No, but it could be if…	6	6%	10	8%	8%
No, it is not because…	4	4%	0	0%	2%

N = 218 (97+121); Respondents: 178

Table 4-100. Importance of library for self-development– by age group

Actual library users	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% on Table 4-98
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes, it is because…	150	93%	48	86%	90%
No, but it could be if…	11	7%	5	9%	8%
No, it is not because…	1	0%	3	5%	2%

N = 218 (162+56); Respondents: 178

Table 4-101. Importance of library for self-development– by location

Actual library users	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% on Table 4-98
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Yes, it is because…	106	90%	89	94%	90%
No, but it could be if…	9	7%	5	5%	8%
No, it is not because…	3	3%	1	1%	2%

N = 213 (118+95); Respondents: 178

Q19a: Yes, it is because…

The reasons for the importance (19a) of the library have been identified as follows.

Table 4-102. Reasons for importance (19a) identified by respondents

Macro-categories	No. of answers	% of answers
For studying, information, cultural development	91	42%
It is a pleasant place	32	15%
For reading	11	5%
For meeting friends / socialization	8	4%
For the services offered	60	28%
No answer	14	6%

N = 216

Table 4-103. Reasons for importance, identified by respondents – by sex

Actual library users	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-102
	No.	%	No.	%	%
For studying, information, cultural development	46	50%	43	36%	42%
It is a pleasant place	11	12%	21	18%	15%
For reading	6	7%	5	4%	5%
For meeting friends / socialization	0	0%	8	7%	4%
For the services offered	24	26%	34	28%	28%
No answer	5	5%	8	7%	6%

N = 211 (92+119)

Table 4-104. Reasons for importance, identified by respondents – by age group

Actual library users	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-102
	No.	%	No.	%	%
For studying, information, cultural development	70	45%	17	35%	42%
It is a pleasant place	22	14%	9	19%	15%
For reading	10	6%	1	2%	5%
For meeting friends / socialization	8	5%	0	0%	4%
For the services offered	40	26%	15	31%	28%
No answer	6	4%	6	13%	6%

N = 204 (156+48)

Table 4-105. Reasons for importance, identified by respondents– by location

Actual library users	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-102
	No.	%	No.	%	%
For studying, information, cultural development	45	41%	43	44%	42%
It is a pleasant place	17	16%	14	14%	15%
For reading	6	5%	5	5%	5%
For meeting friends / socialization	8	7%	0	0%	4%
For the services offered	30	27%	27	28%	28%
No answer	4	4%	9	9%	6%

N = 208 (110+98)

Q19b: No, but it could be if…

Reasons for possible importance (19b) of the library have been identified as follows.

Table 4-106. Reasons for possible importance (19b) identified by respondents

Macro-categories	No. of answers	% of answers
Materials and services are updated	9	47%
It is used for studying	4	21%
It is used for reading and free time	6	32%

N = 19

Table 4-107. Reasons for possible importance, identified by respondents – by sex

Actual library users	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-106
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Materials and services are updated	4	50%	5	50%	47%
It is used for studying	4	50%	0	0%	21%
It is used for reading and free time	0	0%	5	50%	32%

N = 18 (8+10)

Table 4-108. Reasons for possible importance, identified by respondents – by age group

Actual library users	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-106
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Materials and services are updated	7	64%	2	40%	47%
It is used for studying	2	18%	0	0%	21%
It is used for reading and free time	2	18%	3	60%	32%

N = 16 (11+5)

Table 4-109. Reasons for possible importance, identified by respondents– by location

Actual library users	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-106
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Materials and services are updated	7	78%	2	40%	47%
It is used for studying	1	11%	1	20%	21%
It is used for reading and free time	1	11%	2	40%	32%

N = 14 (9+5)

Q19c: No, it is not important because…

Reasons of no importance (19c) of the library have been justified as follows.

Table 4-110. Reasons for absence of importance (19c) identified by respondents

Macro-categories	No. of answers	% of answers
It is not interesting	2	50%
I can't find what I need	1	25%
I have no time to go in	1	25%

N = 4

Table 4-111. Reasons for absence of importance, identified by respondents – by sex

Actual library users	Male subjects		Female subjects		% of Table 4-110
	No.	%	No.	%	%
It is not interesting	2	50%	0	0%	50%
I can't find what I need	1	25%	0	0%	25%
I have no time to go in	1	25%	0	0%	25%

N = 4 (4+0)

Table 4-112. Reasons for absence of importance, identified by respondents – by age group

Actual library users	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% of Table 4-110
	No.	%	No.	%	%
It is not interesting	0	0%	2	67%	50%
I can't find what I need	1	100%	0	0%	25%
I have no time to go in	0	0%	1	33%	25%

N = 4 (1+3)

Table 4-113. Reasons for absence of importance, identified by respondents– by location

Actual library users	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% of Table 4-110
	No.	%	No.	%	%
It is not interesting	2	67%	0	0%	50%
I can't find what I need	1	33%	0	0%	25%
I have no time to go in	0	0%	1	100%	25%

N = 4 (3+1)

Q20: Last question: which of the following activities would you like that the library would organise?

Respondents were invited to answer ticking all boxes they considered appropriate.

181 respondents (94%) answered the question.

Table 4-114. Activities to be organised by the library

Activity	No. of answers	% of total answers	% of respondents for whom activity was significant
"Friends of the library" group	68	13%	38%
Guided tours to the library services	30	6%	17%
Guided tours to specific library sections	26	5%	14%
Readings	75	14%	41%
Meetings with authors	86	16%	48%
Meetings with discipline experts	50	9%	28%
Bibliographic exhibits	42	8%	23%
Arts exhibits / other exhibits	67	12%	37%
Courses, activities to do in spare time	81	15%	45%
Other (sub-activities included)	15	3%	8%
- help in finding books	1		
- computer courses	1		
- table football matches	1		
- readings in foreign languages	1		
- meeting singers	1		
- nothing in particular	3		
- watching VHS	1		
- reading evenings	1		
- photography courses	1		
- various courses	2		
- drawing	1		
- guide to the Books with a capital B	1		

N = 540; Respondents: 181

Table 4-115. Activities to be organised by the library, identified by respondents – by sex

Actual library users	Male subjects		Female subjects		% on Answers of Table 4-114
	No.	%	No.	%	%
"Friends of the library" group	26	11%	41	14%	13%
Guided tours to the library services	22	9%	6	2%	6%
Guided tours to specific library sections	17	7%	8	3%	5%
Readings	29	12%	44	15%	14%
Meetings with authors	35	15%	49	18%	16%
Meetings with discipline experts	24	10%	26	9%	9%
Bibliographic exhibits	20	8%	21	7%	8%
Arts exhibits / other exhibits	27	11%	37	13%	12%
Courses, activities to do in the spare time	32	14%	47	16%	15%
Other (sub-activities included)	7	3%	8	3%	3%
- help in finding books	1				
- computer courses	1				
- table football matches	1				
- readings in foreign languages			1		
- meeting singers			1		
- nothing in particular	2		1		
- watching VHS	1				
- reading evenings			1		
- photography courses			1		
- various courses			2		
- drawing			1		
- guide to the Books with a capital B	1				

N = 526 (239+287); Respondents: 181

Table 4-116. Activities to be organised by the library, identified by respondents – by age group

Actual library users	11-14-year old subjects		15-19-year old subjects		% on Answers of Table 4-114
	No.	%	No.	%	%
"Friends of the library" group	53	13%	15	11%	13%
Guided tours to the library services	26	7%	4	3%	6%
Guided tours to specific library sections	23	6%	3	2%	5%
Readings	61	15%	14	10%	14%
Meetings with authors	61	15%	25	18%	16%
Meetings with discipline experts	27	7%	23	16%	9%
Bibliographic exhibits	31	8%	11	8%	8%
Arts exhibits / other exhibits	44	11%	23	16%	12%
Courses, activities to do in the spare time	61	15%	20	14%	15%
Other (sub-activities included)	13	3%	2	1%	3%
- help in finding books	1				
- computer courses	1				
- table football matches	1				
- readings in foreign languages	1				
- meeting singers	1				
- nothing in particular	2		1		
- watching VHS	1				
- reading evenings	1				
- photography courses	1				
- various courses	2				
- drawing	1				
- guide to the Books with a capital B			1		

N = 540 (400+140); Respondents: 181

Table 4-117. Activities to be organised by the library, identified by respondents– by location

Actual library users	Subjects living in centre		Subjects living in surroundings		% on Answers of Table 4-114
	No.	%	No.	%	%
"Friends of the library" group	42	14%	25	11%	13%
Guided tours to the library services	19	6%	8	4%	6%
Guided tours to specific library sections	16	5%	9	5%	5%
Readings	35	12%	35	16%	14%
Meetings with authors	46	17%	36	16%	16%
Meetings with discipline experts	23	8%	25	11%	9%
Bibliographic exhibits	24	8%	15	7%	8%
Arts exhibits / other exhibits	34	12%	27	12%	12%
Courses, activities to do in the spare time	47	16%	31	14%	15%
Other (sub-activities included)	7	2%	8	4%	3%
- help in finding books			1		
- computer courses			1		
- table football matches	1				
- readings in foreign languages	1				
- meeting singers	1				
- nothing in particular	1		2		
- watching VHS	1				
- reading evenings			1		
- photography courses	1				
- various courses	1		1		
- drawing			1		
- guide to the Books with a capital B	1				

N = 512 (293+219); Respondents: 181

APPENDIX 5

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUPS TRANSCRIPTS

Methodological note

Only two of the five in-depth interviews and focus groups transcribed below have been taped, that is No. 1 and 2. The Nos. 3 to 5 have not been recorded, due to different reasons: No. 3 to grant the maximum of confidentiality to minors and their parents, and Nos. 4 and 5 due to the particular conditions in which the interviews were taken (on a professional trip).

Each question – marked with a "Q" followed by the proper cardinal number (e.g., "Q**1**") – is followed by an answer ("R**1**"). The different respondents have been identified by low case letters (e.g., "R**1a**", R**1b**", etc.). For the same respondent, a single letter (e.g. "R…**a**") is corresponding throughout the entire transcription.

Subjects have been identified through age, sex and place of residence.

Below, the actual questions asked to the subjects have been reported, which may slightly differ from the correspondent scheme.

For a quick overview, the questions have been marked in boldface characters.

The complete scheme of the questions is to be found in Appendix 3.

5.1. Adult's Interview

Subject: 34 years, female, Ala.

Q1 Do you visit the library?

R1 Yes.

Q2 What do you think about it?

R2 I would say it is a positive experience.

Q3 Do you have children who visit it?

R3 Yes.

Q4 Which is the thing they most appreciate in the library?

R4 They consider it a meeting place, first of all. Furthermore, a place where they can go and do homework with their friends without having their mother bothering around, so I see they go there with pleasure. Also because of the materials they find to do homework. But more or less… at home… books, and the Internet… they have everything… but they are really at their ease there, they go almost too often!

Q5 Do you know of children who don't visit the library? Do you guess a reason?

R5 Yes. Well, at home they all have more materials compared to some years ago; they are also lazier. My children are very autonomous and they can go out alone, but other children have to be accompanied [by parents] and it is more difficult. Parents can have other things to do.

Q6 Which is the most important thing in the library?

R6 The most important thing is the loan of books, because you could never buy all books a library has. At home you can have the Internet, and also some books.

Q7 Which is the least important thing in the library?

R7 I don't know. Perhaps the Internet.

Q8 Which are the services to be developed in future?

R8 Book readings, reading promotion, an information service as a guide to book choice. I think that reading promotion is the most important thing. In a library with plenty of materials, young people need to know about the choices and books should be better promoted. It is not sufficient to be attracted from a cover or a volume, as the adult thinks. They also need to be advised about which books are most suitable for their age, because often they come home with some book that they cannot read and they must bring it back and search for something easier. It is frustrating to them. There should be a more accurate service to guide them to choose the right books. It is frustrating to them.

Q9 Is the library important for the young generations? Why?

R9 Yes, definitely. But the reason is difficult to explain. It is more a meeting place, a place that stimulates curiosity and reading, a beautiful and safe place with a positive effect [on children].

Q10 How would you define a library [for children and young adults]?

R10 Please help me!!! Well, a place filled with things and people, where it is possible to get in touch with anything you don't know. A place where they [=children] can do homework, be quiet, or chat with friends and get in touch with bigger children. For the little children it could be a place where to play.

Q11 Is the library a socially useful place?

R11 Yes, definitely.

Q12 How would you react if the resources of the library would drop or the library would be closed?

R12 Self-management conducted by parents. [The library] must be opened, so either with an association or through purposeful petitions on the Administrators… it must be certainly opened.

Q13 Did you have positive experiences in the library?

R13 It is difficult to say but… [the library] is very well stocked, you find everything you need there. There are many services. The place is beautiful and welcoming.

Q14 Did you have negative experiences in the library?

R14 Some parents feel uneasy when they come to find research materials for their children, they feel abandoned, they would ask for more help, but they are almost frightened from the place and would like that you opened the book on the right page for them.

Q15 In which way would you enhance library visits?

R15 Children should meet together and talk about [services and materials]. Experiences could be done in co-operation with schools, such as introducing a book to other school friends.

Q16 Which strategies would you adopt?

R16 Meeting with peers and information exchange between them.

Q17 Would you participate actively in the social activities of the library? How?

R17 It would be difficult to participate because there are many activities for parents. It is really difficult, there are too much things to do in the evenings.

Q18 Would you like to suggest something else?

R18 Children need something which gets them more acquainted with reading. Perhaps a little review created by themselves with book presentations could involve them actively and reach also classmates. I think also reading contests could be a positive experience, to stimulate the participants to give more and more. A local Children's Literature Prize could also be started to show different literary genres to children.

5.2.Librarian's Interview 1

Subject: 36 years, female, resident and working as a librarian in a county village of about 2.500 people.

Q1 Do adolescents visit the library?

R1 Yes.

Q2 Do you offer specific services in the library?

R2 A young adult's section, bibliographies, book presentations, readings.

Q3 Do you have children who visit it?

R3 No.

[Due to the answer to Q3, Q4 and Q5 have been not asked to the subject].

Q6 Which is the most important thing in a children's and YA library?

R6 Reading promotion.

Q7 Which is the least important thing?

R7 I don't know. Perhaps, when they grow up and are about 11-12 years old, they don't consider the books for their age, but want to pick up directly from the adults' reading section.

Q8 Which are the services to be developed in future for this age group?

R8 The ones already cited. Then I think the visibility of the section should be improved and updated. It is important to develop an agenda of events for them. But it is normally very difficult to reach them.

Q9 Is the library important for the young generations? Why?

R9 Yes, it is first of all a meeting place, then a place where they can read.

Q10 How would you define a library [for children and young adults]?

R10 It is a difficult task, I must think about it a minute. I should find something sounding attractive to them.

Q11 Is the library a useful place for this age group?

R11 Yes, it is useful for school research assignments, for reading. And it is also a safe place for them.

Q12 If it would not be considered as such, how could it become useful?

R12 Through a peer-to-peer information action, finding some kind of hidden advertisement.

Q13 Did you organise activities for young adults in the library which gave positive results?

R13 Yes, particularly an experience of advice service for middle school students, to help them choose their educational future.

Q14 Any negative experience to report?

R14 No.

Q15 In which way would you enhance library visits by young adults?

R15 With all strategies already explained.

Q16 If you could talk to the Administrators, what would you ask for the library, considering the development of services for young adults?

R16 More space for them, to be used with no strict rule of silence.

Q17 Would you let young adults participate actively in the social activities of the library? How?

R17 If I had more space, I would like to create with some of them a structured project, which they would be in charge of and bring to conclusion.

Q18 Would you like to emphasise some aspects, or suggest something else?

R18 I would like to organise a library on the model of the German "Dreigeteilte Bibliothek" but not by physical areas: I would like to have "time areas", that is, in the morning activities for children. In the afternoon, for every other user. In the evenings, alternatively for adults and young adults. Also a collection development following the educational development of users from their early years to adulthood would be interesting.

5.3.Librarian's Interview 2

Subject: 44 years, male, resident and working as a librarian in a regional district of about 40.000 people.

Q1 Do adolescents visit the library?

R1 Yes.

Q2 Do you offer specific services in the library?

R2 Only a young adult's section, and some YA magazines. We don't try to reach them with specific events.

Q3 Do you have children who visit it?

R3 Yes, a boy.

Q4 What do you think he appreciates most about the library?

R4 The possibility of navigating the Internet at zero costs.

[Q5 NOT ASKED].

Q6 Which is the most important thing in a children's and YA library?

R6 To be allowed to browse freely among all sections of the library.

Q7 Which is the least important thing?

R7 I have noticed that magazines and newspapers aren't attractive for them.

Q8 Which are the services to be developed in future for this age group?

R8 A dedicated space to be used in a more informal way.

Q9 Is the library important for the young generations? Why?

R9 No, I don't think they look at it as an important place. It doesn't seem to be essential, they look for places where they can stay together without strict rules. The library is not such a place and, moreover, it is used for activities related with the school, it is a substitute for the lack of organisation of the school libraries.

Q10 How would you define a library [for children and young adults]?

R10 I would define it more as an Information Centre, a Young Adults Centre, rather then a library.

Q11 Is the library a useful place for this age group?

R11 Yes, it is, but it is too heavily connected with school activities.

Q12 If it would not be considered as such, how could it become useful?

R12 It could become and be perceived as a more useful place if it would be related to a general public and independent from school activities. I would see it more like a commercial store, a "literary salon", where the atmosphere is informal and activities not too structured from the beginning. A place where one can have services and places for entertainment, with no tables and chairs similar to those in the schoolrooms, but welcoming armchairs and sofas.

Q13 Did you organise activities for young adults in the library which gave positive results?

R13 Yes. They particularly appreciated an information and reference service with tips and tricks to find what they need for school, to enhance their freedom and independence in searching activities.

Q14 Any negative experience to report?

R14 Yes, up and now some subjects are disturbing others and must be discouraged or invited to go away.

Q15 In which way would you enhance library visits by young adults?

R15 With more informal areas for a use not related to school activities. If they get the idea that they are in a place similar to a schoolroom, it is no good. It is a wrong message.

Q16 If you could talk to the Administrators, what would you ask for the library, considering the development of services for young adults?

R16 I would foster more connection between the activities of the social services with those of the library, in order to better organise work in both sectors. Moreover, a better co-operation with the educational institutions in the area would be welcomed.

Q17 Would you let young adults participate actively in the social activities of the library? How?

R17 Yes, but not directly through the library. The social services staff and educators in general are better prepared than librarians for this task, they have a wider approach, not restricted to activities done within schools.

Q18 Would you like to emphasise some aspects, or suggest something else?

R18 I have read in a Swiss professional magazine that according to a sociological analysis, the reading interest among young adults drops consistently. This seems not to be related to school frequency, but to other factors. Perhaps it is a condition to be accepted as such, without bothering too much on trying and bring them into the library. They can read anywhere else.

5.4.Adults' Focus Group Interview

5 Respondents: 42 to 51 years, 4 female, 1 male(e), Ala. 2 educators, 3 parents.

Q1 Do you visit the library?

R1a-e Yes.

Q2 What do you think about it?

R2a It is a very good service.

R2b People are at your disposal.

R2c Yes, but you could do more, sometimes I cannot find what I need. But anyway, you phone when reserved books are back. How do you manage with the new acquisitions?

R2d I am very satisfied, there is the ILL service.

R2e The comparison with other places is certainly positive.

Q3 Do you have children who visit it?

R3a-e Yes.

Q4 Which is the thing they most appreciate in the library?

R4a They find what they need and it is a meeting point for them, even if they don't search for anything in particular.

R4b Some of them go with parents, it's okay.

R4c They appreciate the books.

R4d They come to do homework and research assignments.

R4e They also come for attending events.

Q5 Do you know of children who don't visit the library? Do you guess a reason?

R5a Yes. Well, if they are little children, it is because they don't love reading, if they are grown up, they go because of the school, but it is not sufficient to go there to love reading. It is something you have inside. I have two children, completely different one from another. One was used to read everything, one just one genre and it is a pity. At home there are lots of books but they have a different attitude to them. Some classmates refuse the books as physical object, they cannot bear to live with them around.

R5b It is a matter of parents, of family, and moreover of the example they have from home and the personal disposition. I have two children and have always accompanied them both to the library since they were very little, in the corner where there are big books. Some children might love reading but their parents don't bring them to the library, so they don't visit it afterwards.

R5c But there is the school…

R5b School visits are not sufficient, also parents should bring the children to the library and to borrow books, or let them stay there for the afternoon… It must be an entertaining experience, because what the school does can be also rejected.

Even if you love the experience, and the teacher is okay if she can bring and motivate them to go.

R5d Moreover, the activities are done in co-operation with the library staff!

R5b Yes, of course, but if you come on your own, freely, it is a different way to visit the library, considering it as a meeting place, a recreational and not too serious place. It would be an amusing and independent way to go there, different than to go there with the class.

R5a But the book lover doesn't like to go to the library and read, he stays at home because silence is essential, it [=reading, the book] is his world, what he puts in it…

R5d Yes, it is true, but he goes and picks one up. You have so much books there among which you can choose!

R5a Yes. My daughter has never gone to the library to read, only to choose a book. But anyway, until middle school children have more freedom in choosing their readings and so they can nurture this passion. I have noticed that my children from the college ahead have lost this passion because teachers force them to read some books and so, just because they must, they loose the sense of amusement. My daughter has been reading for 15 years and now she reads no more. Someone should ask if the college can have a role in this case of reverse tendency of absence of interest in reading by a book lover.

R5e It is a matter of saturation, one is already done with homework that he/she doesn't necessarily spend his/her free time more on books. Even if there are moments for amusing reading, not only studying time.

R5c It is a personal matter, my nephew has read some of the books in the lists and he liked them very much.

R5d Yes, I have also read some books from my daughter's booklist.

R5a I have done the same.

R5c I have an experience with a young adult living in my street. I tried to bring him to the library when he was younger but he hasn't developed an attachment to the library. He doesn't like reading, I don't know if it is because at home they don't regard reading as a habit…

R5d I like to buy books, rather than borrow them, and if I like them most, then I lend them to my friends or to my daughter.

R5b I also like to retain books, and not give them back!

R5e Some young adults are not easily involved in reading not because of a fault of the library, but because in their age reading is not part of their main interests. They prefer sport activities and music, because reading can mean involvement, it is not only an entertainment. For some reading means effort and, furthermore, not being accustomed to it or not being trained. The more one reads, the more one would read. So, the less one reads, the less one would read. You say, the family can do much, but it isn't as easy as you say. Parents are usually at work in the afternoon, the only moment they could have to bring children to the library would be on Saturdays, but the library is closed, as well on Monday

mornings, on Sundays – the personnel could take shifts. If parents are at work when the library is open, they can't have the time to go there with the children.

Q6 Which is the most important thing in the library?

R6a It is difficult to tell.

R6e The Internet and music for young adults, certainly.

R6c User friendliness and care, the service, the relationship between librarians and users.

R6b A careful choice of materials, books.

R6d The atmosphere one feels in going inside it.

R6b The presence of professionals, it is important to know that there is someone who can help you at finding what you need.

Q7 Which is the least important thing in the library?

R7a I don't know.

R7e I would say paperbacks. I mean, it is important that there are high-quality materials, so I think it is not important to have low cost editions just to say there are also these in the library. A selection of the supports and contents is very important.

Q8 Which are the services to be developed in future?

R8c The music and video section.

R8b Painting courses, exhibitions, books on painting. We are so near to the MART![1]

R8d More events, cultural evenings, which should be intensified.

R8a Events and exhibits should be organised for families, not just for age groups like now.

R8e And the age group after middle school should be considered. For instance, comic book courses with famous artists should be organised. Adolescents change their passions and interests every 6 months, but they should be attracted through events to which also adults would take part.

Q9 Is the library important for the young generations? Why?

R9a Yes, definitely.

R9b It is a place which can substitute other situations, but it should be bigger and more like a Cultural Centre. The building is not so big and it could have a little theatre inside it.

R9c The library should also have a social role.

R9b It should be an aggregation centre.

Q10 How would you define a library [for children and young adults]?

R10b A cultural centre, where you can read, watch some movie, with a room where you can read and another where you can talk and discuss things.

R10c Also a recent law has introduced the concept of libraries as place for aggregation and culture.[2]

R10a Traditionally, I think about the library as a reading place, but it cannot be only this, for the attention of adolescents towards this place is important…

R10b Yes, but one cannot forget about books.

R10e The library shall have a space for reading, but also other rooms dedicated to other activities.

Q11 Is the library a socially useful place?

R11a-e Yes.

Q12 How would you react if the resources of the library would drop or the library would be closed?

R12a It would be very painful, yes, very sad.

R12e It would be conceivable only in case of a catastrophe!

R12c A reduction of the resources for the library would mean a risk of cuts for all cultural activities!

R12e The reaction would be an action, a sit-in, a permanent presence of readers in front of the library. Surely some kind of very noticeable action, as strong as the loss of a library would mean.

R12a It would be unbelievable!

R12c [The library] is important!

R12e But, just a moment, we have all expressed the same opinion, perhaps the question is not correctly made, there should be an alternative…

Q12b Okay, so what would you do with the resources normally assigned to the library if you didn't care about it?

R12e Okay, well… I think the answer would be to give them to some associations, like sports circles or whatsoever… Okay. I got it.

Q13 Did you have positive experiences in the library?

R13d Well, when you are looking for information, you find helpful personnel.

R13e If one suggests something the personnel is ready to respond to requests, such as using spaces, or prepare bibliographies.

Q14 Did you have negative experiences in the library?

R14b The personnel always changing. One gets used to it, but is happier to find a skilled and trustworthy person that you already met before. I also find difficult to find books about painting or music.

R14e I haven't been able to find my own book!

R14d But the change in the personnel sometimes is compensated by abilities and personal disposition.

Q15 In which way would you enhance library visits?

R15e Offering chocolates, gadgets…

R15b Well, through what we said before…

R15a The school could be the provider of a connection, but it depends on the teachers. There are some of them who invite students to visit the library autonomously. Some of them should be forced perhaps… Anyway, it is more difficult that parents can have the time to convince the children to go… The school can have thousands of inputs to give them to make reading a joyful activity. School seems to me the best and easiest path to follow.

R15c The school can also enhance the use of the library through some initiatives.

R15b There should be more activities, courses, etc. also outside school hours, something to make in the free time.

R15d Initiative should be taken with families, so we all can have part in events.

R15e I don't know who could be targeted, but it would be good if there was a course on writing skills, on writing a book, on calligraphy, writing style, because writing is difficult… And also computer courses, web design courses would be very useful.

Q16 If you could have the chance to speak with the Administrators, what would you tell them?

R16b Everything we have said.

R16e Listening to the requests of the librarians, because I don't know if the quality of the services offered is granted by sufficient personnel or not.

R16c Library opened on Saturday afternoons!

R16b More space with little theatre, more and bigger rooms.

R16a Activities should be organised in adequate hours. Opening hours should be prolonged.

R16d The personnel should be adequate in number.

Q17 Would you participate actively in the social activities of the library? How?

R17e Yes of course, we do it!

R17b With readings for children, we could.

R17d Well, one should consider how much time one should invest in these activities. It is alarming in one sense, because the time available is not much.

Q18 Would you like to sum up the most important things we said?

R18b There should be more books. And updated.

R18e The library should be opened on Saturday afternoons.

R18c Also the selection of the books is important.

5.5.Young Adults' Focus Group Interview

3 Respondents: 15 to 18 years, 1 female (b), 2 males, Ala.

Q1 Do you visit the library?

R1a Yes.

R1b Yes, also the one in Rovereto.[3]

R1c No, I don't. I would go there if there would be an adequate atmosphere for reading.

Q2 What do you think about it?

R2a It is a more quiet place than home where I can study. And I can find many materials.

R2b It is quiet.

Q3 Do you have friends who visit it?

R3b Yes.

R3a,c No.

Q4 Which is the thing they most appreciate in the library?

R4b The quiet, it is an adequate place for reading, studying together. They find good level materials.

R4a The Internet. Books to get information on subjects of interest.

R4c The Internet.

Q5 Do you have friends who don't visit the library? Do you guess a reason?

R5c Yes. They find the library is too strongly connected with studying and school. Some of them reckon that it would be an excessive mental effort to go.

R5a Most of them think about going out, entertaining oneself, playing or listening to music, doing sports. It is more usual to do some physical activities at this age.

Q6 Did any people have a role in determining your habit [to go / not to go to the library]?

R6b The teachers who have assigned various homework and research topics. We were almost forced to go, because we didn't have an encyclopaedia at home.

R6c The friends, the "circle": if the group leader boasts against the library, and you want to be part of that particular group, you must follow their rules and so if they don't go to the library, you shall not go there either, or, you don't tell them.

R6a For me, it has been the family. When you grow up in a place where you must be informed to survive… It is a challenge between generations, between brothers and sisters.

R6b Also the courses and activities organised by the library, if interesting.

Q7 What else has conditioned your image of the library?

R7b In a positive sense, the movies in the library park in summer. You don't only think about books.

R7a,c Nothing else.

Q8 Is the library important for the young generations? Why?

R8b Yes.

R8c Yes. It means knowledge. It is an opportunity for students. But it is sacrificed, overshadowed, and overthrown by the television and especially by the so-called trash TV programmes.

R8a It depends from one young adults' group to another. The real interest in the library is different and dominated by the attitude of the group leader. If you want to change something, you have to change the mind of the group leaders.

Q9 Suppose now, you should encourage a friend to visit the library. How would you invite him?

R9b I would tell him it is a quiet place with useful information, where he can find materials to satisfy his curiosities and gain knowledge. Where he can read newspapers.

R9a It is difficult to tell.

R9c I should think about something that would not foster the relationship library = studying = school. At the same time, I would give a message that not only the Playstation is important in life.

R9b I would enhance a direct participation.

R9a Perhaps with an invitation to a literary happening. Creating a sort of 'Literary Room' where young adults can talk about books, films, other topics.

R9b It would be easier with a movie or TV evening.

Q10 Is the library a socially useful place?

R10b Yes, it is a meeting place and you can exchange opinions.

R10c It is an information centre.

R10a It is a place where you can forget the "logic of the consumer", you can freely choose with no pressure.

Q11 Did you have positive experiences in the library?

R11a Yes. It is well stocked. You can have copies, use the PC, find help.

R11b It is a meeting place.

R11c There is no communication outside it. Some advertisement is needed.

Q12 Did you have negative experiences in the library?

R12c Some confusion sometimes, it is then when I can't find anything.

Q13 Would you participate actively to the library activities?

R13a Only in a group.

R13b I would like to do film discussions, and some suggestions.

R13a It would be possible only in a calm atmosphere, during summer time.

R13c The atmosphere should be sincere and nobody should shall predominate over the others and there should be a complete absence of cultural stereotypes. Everyone should be able to express an opinion without being negatively judged for it.

Q14 How would you redefine the library spaces?

R14a Children should be separated from adults.

R14b The garden should be used more than now. Also the garden is important.

R14c There should be a sound-proof room, where to play music.

R14a And also a room for discussions, study groups, a mini-bar.

R14c The place should be more like a cultural centre.

Q15 Suppose you would have the chance to talk to the Administrators. What would you ask them for the library?

R15c First of all we should be in a big group, and ask for a way to make young people closer to a building that is seen as a "boring palace" and towards which there is no interest…

R15a Well, when one is 18 then he begins to be interested again…

R15c Anyway, it is worth trying without fear of possible consequences…

Q16 What would you say it is most important, among all things we said?

R16c Finding a strong way to promote the library among young adults.

R16b Removing the idea that the library is a boring place, and promoting the idea that it is a place where one can develop new interests and discover new things.

R16a Promoting the idea that culture is transgressive.

Q17 Did we forget anything? Do you have something to add?

R17c The library should contact young adults' group leaders.

R17a Culture is transgression, not institution. This is important for them to know.

R17c Adolescents defend themselves behaving like little birds in the nest. They stay there and wait.

R17b Interesting events should be promoted.

R17c The library should have a modern image. Young adults energies could be used for library events.

R17a There should be an open space where young adults could decide about some forms of participation such as study or research groups.

References

[1] MART = Museo di Arte Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, in particular the new building in Rovereto (20 km in the north from Ala), which as a Cultural Centre includes the Contemporary Art Museum, a Theatre-Auditorium and the City Library.

[2] The law referred to is still under discussion in the Province of Trento.

[3] The City Library in Rovereto opened in a new building in November 2003 as part of the cited MART. Opening times and organisation of services were completely revisited for the occasion. This library is opened from 9.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. and attracts all students that after school time must do homework with friends. Almost all students from Ala go to Rovereto to complete their education after middle school.