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LIBRARY USERS' NEEDS
IN RELATION TO THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: The subject of my master thesis is the research of the users' needs in some of the public libraries in the Republic of Macedonia. Every library exists to serve the needs of its community. This work is pointed towards the fundamental elements and aspects of satisfying the users through variety of services in the public libraries, as well as the impact of the new information-communication technology that has entered through the big door in the libraries in Macedonia.

The research is based on a survey of users and potential users of library services. This work includes users and potential users of the services and the information sources in the public libraries with wide range of professional background: pupils, students, employed users, academic professionals, unemployed users or retired users. The study covers survey participants with different views and different needs and expectations from a library use. The survey questionnaire incorporates questions about different aspects of the participants' needs and expectations covering different needs, behavior, information resources, and desired functions for services, retrieval and interfaces in libraries. The results are obtained through statistical analyses and clustering methods.

Their result statements of the users should give a direction to which the libraries should act in the future for a more efficient satisfaction of the users' needs. As libraries entered the new century, they are encountering numerous developments that present both

challenges and opportunities. Some of the key developments include: a user-centered orientation, a team-based work environment, steady or diminishing resources, and more pervasive technology.

The results are aimed to induce other subsequent researches relating the needs and the expectations of the users and present a starting point for the future generations, which would show interest for this kind of analyses in the sphere of the librarianship. This work should picture the present condition of the public librarianship in Macedonia and public library users in the information society, where the innovations of the communication technology play a major role.

The overall objective of the study is to assess the efficiency of the public libraries in relation with the users' needs, including the selection and the adequacy of the library stock, use of the library and its services by the actual and potential users, as well as their users' expectations and behavior.

The study employed descriptive as well explorative research design without proposing any hypothesis for testing. Both primary and secondary data were used, but primary data were mainly used to analyze the present knowledge and behavior.

The work assumes a particular importance because, until now, no evaluation had been made of the library users' needs at the public libraries in Macedonia; therefore the purpose of this research was therefore to fill the gap as there is an ever growing need to evaluate the direction of changes the users' needs and preferences. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were made, typical of social science research. The results obtained will certainly help to improve the usability of the public libraries.

It should be considered here, in what extent the traditional library has retained its position, or in what degree the new technology has left a place for the classic library and the traditional way of working in the age of information society.

Naslov: Bibliotečne potrebe uporabnikov v zvezi z družbenim

Ključne besede: biblioteka, potrebe, uporabniki, zadovoljevanje potreb, bibliotečne usluge.

Izveček: Predmet mojega magistrskega dela je raziskava za potrebe uporabnikov na nekaterih javnih knjižnic v Republiki Makedoniji. Vsaka knjižnica obstaja zato, da služi potrebe svojih skupnosti. To delo je usmerjeno proti temeljnih elementov in vidikov

zadovoljstvo uporabnikov storitev javnih knjižnic, kot tudi vpliv nove informacijsko-komunikacijske tehnologije, ki je vstopil skozi velika vrata v knjižnicah v Makedoniji.

Raziskava temelji na anketi uporabnikov in potencialnih uporabnikov storitev knjižnice. To delo vključuje uporabnike in potencialne uporabnike storitev in informacijskih virov v splošnih knjižnicah s številnimi strokovnimi izkušnjami: dijaki, študentje, zaposleni uporabnike, akademski strokovnjaki, brezposelnim uporabnike ali upokojeni uporabnike. Študija zajema anketirancev z različnimi pogledi in različnimi potrebami in pričakovanji iz knjižnice uporabe. Vprašalnik vsebuje vprašanja o različnih vidikih udeležencev potrebe in pričakovanja, ki pokrivajo različne potrebe, vedenje, informacijske vire in želene funkcije za storitve, iskanje in vmesniki v knjižnicah. Rezultati so pridobljeni s statističnimi analizami in povezovanjem metod.

Njihove izjave, rezultati uporabnikom mora dati smer, ki naj bi knjižnice deluje tudi v prihodnje za učinkovitejšo zadovoljstvo uporabnikov. Kot knjižnice vstopil v novo stoletje, se srečujejo številne dogodke, ki predstavljajo tako izzive in priložnosti. Nekatere izmed ključnih dogodkov vključujejo: uporabniško usmerjen usmerjenost, je ekipa, ki temelji delovno okolje, stalno ali zmanjševanja sredstev, in bolj prodorno tehnologijo.

Rezultati so namenjeni za pospeševanje drugih kasnejših raziskav, ki se nanašajo na potrebe in pričakovanja uporabnikov ter predstaviti izhodišča za prihodnje generacije, ki bi pokazali zanimanje za tovrstne analize na področju bibliotekarstvom. To delo bi moralo predstavljam sedanje stanje javnega knjižničarstva v Makedoniji in javnih uporabnikov knjižnic v informacijski družbi, kjer so novosti komunikacijske tehnologije igrajo pomembno vlogo.

Splošni cilj študije je oceniti učinkovitost javnih knjižnic v zvezi s potrebami uporabnikov, vključno z izborom in ustreznost knjižnične zaloge, uporabo knjižnice in njenih storitev, ki jih dejanskih in potencialnih uporabnikov, pa tudi kot uporabniških pričakovanj in vedenja. Študija zaposleni opisna in izkoriščevalskega raziskovalnega modela ni predlagala nobenih hipotez za testiranje. Tako na primarni in sekundarni podatki so bili uporabljeni, vendar so osnovni podatki, so bili v glavnem uporablja za analizo sedanjega znanja in vedenja.

Delo prevzame poseben pomen, ker do sedaj ni bila narejena ocena knjižnica potreb uporabnikov na javnih knjižnicah v Makedoniji in namen raziskave je bil torej za zapolnitev vrzeli, saj je vse večja potreba po oceni Smer gibanja potrebe uporabnikov in

preference. Obe kvantitativnih in kvalitativnih pristopov so bile narejene, značilne za socialne raziskave nosti. Dobljeni rezultati bodo zagotovo pomagali izboljšati uporabnost javnih knjižnic.

Treba je upoštevati, v kolikšni meri je tradicionalna knjižnica ohranila svoj položaj, ali v kolikšni meri je nova tehnologija pustil prostor za klasične knjižnice in tradicionalnega načina dela v času informacijske družbe.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The research in the library and information science (LIS) has a practical need. It's aim is to create new scientific sources in the development of the librarian activity as a profession or as a discipline. (Powell & Baker & Mika, 2002).

The main purpose for library existence is systematic collection, organization, preservation, dissemination of knowledge and information. Information is the primary source in today's social system. We live in a knowledge-based economy, which requires continuous learning how to codify information and need to gain competence to that use information. Libraries play an important role in information literacy. The rapid development of digital technologies resulted in fast growth of information sources and causes information overload. As access to information becomes easier and cheaper, one needs to get educated how to arrive to good quality information; one has to learn how to select relevant and discard irrelevant information. The modern libraries and librarians play an important role in providing information literacy to the community.

Today's public libraries are not just buildings that only collect, lend and give library material for usage, but they also acquire (more and more) new techniques and skills, as well as technological development and new realizations of the social knowledge. However, user is the one who stays in the focus of their work and interest. The library enables him, on a most suitable manner, to have a direct access to all kinds of knowledge and information. (Vidak, 2003.)

The dramatic changes in the technology and the society, as a whole, have a significant impact on the libraries and their instruction programs. These changes have created new conditions that urged users to learn how to become efficient, effective and independent in their researching of information.

Today's public library enables its users extended services: to lend and use books and other library material (periodicals, journals, and electronic sources), information-referral services; research through libraries catalogues internet searching, interlibrary loan and

many other library services. The modern library can be viewed as a cultural and educational institution, which carries out its informational activities for the community. Modern libraries has an extended role in the society; in addition to providing resources for research, libraries are expected to be sustainable institutions that offer informational, educational, cultural scientific-research programs that would satisfy the wider needs of the citizens (Karadžoska, 2004).

Today, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) urges openness to information activities and programs:

- IFLA encourages all governments to support the unhindered flow of Internet accessible information via libraries and information services and to oppose any attempts to censor or inhibit access.
- IFLA urges the library community and decision makers at national and local levels to develop strategies, policies, and plans that implement the principles expressed in this Manifesto.

The libraries operate in the society and for the society. Unfortunately, the public libraries still keep their conservative attitude, which can be seen in collecting, storing and keeping the overall knowledge and ideas, presenting the library as an irreplaceable place for the collective memory of the country and tradition. The other attitude that gives us image of the library as a medium for expansion and growth; place for meetings and idea exchanging, or simply as a place for intellectual potential, is still not fully developed for our public libraries.

Libraries in the Republic of Macedonia show high level of sensitivity towards their community, in the first place towards the citizen-user. Their primary goal is to satisfy the needs and demands of their users. The role of the public libraries in the Republic of Macedonia is a significant one, because they "... spread education and continually satisfy cultural and other needs, spread cultural, scientific and other activities and develop interactive communication with the users..." (*Zakon za bibliotekite 66/04. Art. 3*).

The subject of this research are the public libraries, and everywhere in the text where the word *library* is used, it refers to this type of library.

1.1. REASONS FOR RESEARCH

This research should show how the new technology and the new time influence the users' needs, their requirements and expectations from the library as an information institution. In order to examine the real picture of users' needs, we are faced with several problems: space and finances. There will also be taken into consideration the need of implementing new contents in the library's program.

The number of users of library services in Macedonia, in relation with the total number of inhabitants, is relatively low. Karadžoska (2004), who gives a review of 14 libraries in Macedonia for the total number of users compared to the number of inhabitants in 2004. The library in Štip with 44 000 inhabitants had 1 870 users of library services (4.3%); Bitola with 77 464 had 4 400 users (5.7%), Kavadarci with 29000 inhabitants – 2 200 users (7.6%) and Strumica with 43 868 inhabitants – 2 000 users (4.6%). Today, despite the general growth of population, there is no evidence of substantial increasing in the number of users of library services. Thus, Štip is a city with total number of 47796 inhabitants has 3 572 users (7,47%), Bitola with 95 386 inhabitants – 10 767 users (11,29%), Kavadarci 3 874 inhabitants– 2 158 users (5,57%) and Strumica with 54 676 inhabitants has 2 800 users (5,12%).

Despite the technical development and advancement that dominates in all spheres of the human activities, some of the public libraries in the Republic of Macedonia are facing basic problems like space, trained personal and finances. For example, the Public library "Grigor Prlicev" in Ohrid operates in 250 m². Six years ago, this library had 500m² on disposal, but due to the changed conditions the space was significantly decreased. With the previous space, the library enabled an open access to its stock, but in the current conditions

there is a closed access and account service. This was reflected in the behaviour of the users, whose reactions were mostly noticed in their visits and their interest for the library stock. The adult library users have a need to look into the books and with a help from the librarian to make their selection. The younger user population is limited on publications for school needs and free literature. Some of these users find the source of Internet as more convenient option. The same situation is noticed in the public library in Tetovo. The spatial problem needs to be overcome as soon as possible. In such conditions as they are presented, the public libraries in Macedonia make efforts to meet the demands of their users, through practicality in the internal organization of the space, arrangement of the library stock and similar adjustments. This issue is also addressed to the Ministry of Culture with requests and project ideas to find some appropriate solutions.

1.2. SUBJECT OF RESEARCH

This research concerns the needs of contemporary library users in several of the public libraries in Macedonia, and the need for changes in the library services and organization. The research is based on a survey performed in five libraries in the Republic of Macedonia: Public library "Grigor Prlicev", Ohrid; Public library "Koco Racin", Tetovo; Public Library "Borka Taleski", Prilep; Public Library "Goce Delcev", Gevgelija and Public library "Braka Miladinovci", Struga. Progress in science and technology requires libraries to provide variety of additional and innovative services to users. In order to decide what kind of new services should be implemented, libraries should determine what those needs are on regular basis. One way to achieve this task is to have feedback by library users, which can be further analyzed and evaluated.

This work is a result of realization of the primary goal – it is concentrated on the users and their needs; the use of the library services in five libraries in the Republic of Macedonia: Public library "Grigor Prlicev", Ohrid; Public Library "Koco Racin", Tetovo; Public Library "Borka Taleski", Prilep; Public Library "Goce Delcev", Gevgelija and Public Library "Braka Miladinovci", Struga. Every library makes annual reports with

statistical data for the library stock, frequency of visits, number of users, (dis)satisfaction of users' needs, etc.

With this research it is attempted to show how the traditional library complements it's working with the new technology and how the function of today's librarianship influence the users' needs. This research should also show at which category of users the changes in the library service are most noticed.

The research is best considered as a process of solving the problems through planned, systematically collected analyses and data interpretation (Powell, 1997).

A major objective of the study is to evaluate the library and information services of the public libraries in the Republic of Macedonia, in order:

- To discover the types of library and information services required by users;
- To elicit opinions about services offered by the library;
- To elicit opinions about the problems faced by users;
- To collect opinions about the adequacy of information resources and their use.

1.3. PURPOSE AND GOAL OF THE RESEARCH

The goal and purpose of this work is to provide research of the needs of users and asses the available services in public libraries in Macedonia, in order to suggest needs changes in technical-technological development, which has given its reflection in library activity, too.

Considering the mission and the tasks of public libraries in Macedonia, in accordance with the Law for library activity in the Republic of Macedonia, objectives of this research are to:

- determine the reasons for coming and using the services in the library;

- examine the satisfaction with the services, activities and contents offered by the libraries;
- find out suggestions from users for improving the work of the library.

There are users, for whom the library is like their “second home”, and that makes the institution of library obliged to be better organized, to provide high quality information, to instill confidence among its users, to be a place where they can study with pleasure, to express their thoughts and ideas, and feel almost like home.

The preliminary research indicates low membership in the Macedonian libraries, most likely, due to the lack of pro activities to keep public informed on the new services and changes and lack of enthusiasm which results into low interest of library services.

There can be various reasons for the small number of users of library services: space, educational activities, informative events, lack of finances, lack of human recourses, technique service etc. But when we take into account the analysis it would appear that human factor, continual development and motivation of the library staff are essential factors for better service offerings.

1.4. HYPOTHESES

Considering the object and purpose of the research, I offer the following hypotheses:

To serve library users more effectively, contemporary public libraries in the Republic of Macedonia should be able to identify and analyse what their community needs are and at the same time be flexible in changing policies to fulfil those needs. At the same times, the public libraries need to promote and market their services in order to increase usage and gain local authorities to support and sponsor the libraries. Action programme organised for the first time aimed at marketing public libraries and their services, focused and gaining local authorities for supporting their libraries.

My hypothesis is based on the premise that all organizations are social groups that adapt as necessary so that the organization can survive in the time of fast-changing era (Scott, 2003; Baum, 2002). In this changing process, the following facts should be taken into consideration:

- The libraries' membership is low and linguistically non diverse.
- The needs of the library users are constantly changing and are changing and are closely dependent on the complex structure and changes in the society.
- The librarians are change agents that are expected to meet the goals of a contemporary library user.

1.5. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in my work, consists of questionnaire, statistic analysis, observation and overall analysis. The questionnaire consists of twenty questions relevant to the public libraries. Most of the questions are multiple choices, however few of the questions allow fill in space for suggestions.

The research questionnaires were distributed in five libraries in Macedonia during October 2011. Of total distributed 200 survey questionnaires, 178 were received back. In each library were delivered after 40 questionnaires.

As mentioned, in order to evaluate and determine the library usage and the satisfaction of the library users I've used the quantitative method, i.e. method of survey. The questionnaire used in the survey was structured such that would allow statistic analysis and interpretation of the results. The advantage of this method is the fact that it allows relatively short time period and relatively low budget. It is important to note that my research comprises of those users who were randomly met in the library at the moment when the survey was being done.

The main disadvantage of this approach is the failure to include users who have special needs of the library or users who use distance library services. Questions used in the survey were detailed enough to ensure precision, but short and clear enough for quick reading and answering.

Using surveys to analyze the users' needs, from user perspective allows perceiving the level of development of the libraries in Macedonia and the future direction into their development, with the technical achievements in the library service.

I would like to point out that the primary reason for using this questionnaire for my research was the economic advantage; namely, this method enabled me in a relatively short period of time to collect significant number of relevant responses without using any finances.

2. THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

The librarianship, over the history, has shown its strong side of endurance and development. Libraries have been faced with the need of acceptance for new challenges of technological and scientific development. However, the thing that is permanently and inseparably connected throughout the history in the library existence is the book - unchanged, worthy and consistent partner to its users.

The library is a cultural, educational and information institution, which follows generally-accepted goals of the public; selects, supplies and professionally processes, systematizes and loans library material to the public; and through organized functions affords various services to the active and potential users (Tadić, n.d.).

According to the opinion of M. Gorman, "The librarianship is a profession defined with services", and the value of library services shows itself in the everyday practice, focused on the satisfaction of users' needs.

What is a library? Although we live in contemporary, scientific society, the public still has not come to know the real definition of *library*. Insufficiently clarified function of the library is perceived as a natural stereotype of cold, dark building with an enormous number of books that “must be read”. However, today’s libraries are everything, but dark rooms.

These days the library represents a multimedia environment of its community, temple of knowledge and community events.

However, recently there is a shift in the role that library plays in the society. The library has a strong social role: it is becoming a place to gain, seek, provide and create information, to inspire and be inspired. As a result, changes in the society influence changes in the library. Social changes, whether they are sociological, political, economic or technological, change the needs and demands of the community and society in general. Historically observed, all cultural-historical events have substantially influenced the forming of the library, its nature and relevance, the structure and establishment of its funds, the way of organizing particular functions and its users. All this affects the changes in the library; the offer of its sections and the services, because the user becomes different, has different needs and demands with which he addresses to the library and that is why the library must change itself and keep pace with the society.

The general development of the information society is pushing reevaluation of the institutions that work with information. Libraries have been identified as one of the leading institutions in open access to information, which is curtail to democratic information development. The changes come mostly under the influence of new technologies and new way of managing the libraries, as a substantial element in the creation and successful realization of the tasks that one library has assigned to itself.

Increased usage of Internet in the libraries allows users prompt and multilevel access to information, documents from all scientific fields, as well as to available sources on the net.

The influence of information technology (IT), introduction of computer (PC) in the library, birth of information society, as a new period of human history and the creation of global information society radically has been changing the entire library activity. Libraries, especially public libraries, have an important role in those changes.

The time of computer in library can be divided in two periods: automation in the libraries – computers enable efficiency in lending, cataloging and online searching. The second period in this process is the digitalization of the library material, library collections saved in digital form (Gorman, 2003). Another main factor that results in transformation of libraries is the changes in users' needs. One of the reasons for changes in users' needs is the new role of education that requires more and more independent learning and acting.

The result of those changes is the new shape of the libraries as information centers; so-called “virtual libraries” ready to answer to the numerous needs of the users (Petrovski, 1996).

Brophy (1995) presents a serious attempt to define the place of the library and to anticipate the reaction of new conditions in near future “as an information intermediary inside the community”.

The modern library becomes a place where all kinds of information can be found. The introduction of computerization in the working of libraries has enabled a quick access to every data we want to acquire. Thanks to the web information service in DLP (Denver Public Library), they can reach users who have never stepped into the library (EBSCO, 2005). Yet there are still people that are not aware of the new role of the library and do not know what the library could do for them.

The web page of the library and the on-line catalogues too, to some degree, present a medium of communication between the library and the library users. In addition to web page creation, more and more libraries are joining other network; facebook, linkedin, twitter and others. It is unavoidable that modern libraries should furthermore use all means

that are on disposal— such as the public media (electronic and printed), billboards and other promotional materials.

2.1. THE USER AND THE LIBRARY

Again, we need to keep in mind that the library is not a passive middleman in the triangle *book – library – user*; on the contrary, it is an active carrier of knowledge and information.

“Information is a message that is used in the communication process, in order to present collection of data or ideas. The main purpose is to decrease the uncertainty, moreover to increase the knowledge of the receiver” (Sečić, 1998).

The library exists and acts for the users. But who are the users of a library today? Have the library users' needs changed in the last two decades? Is there a difference in the type, quality and extent of services today, compared to yesterday? It is inevitable to consider and resolve these and other questions that are inevitable to be considered and resolved, if we aim to get a more efficient and more professional view of the librarianship as a substantial element of human existence.

Today more and more attention is paid to the needs of users. They have demands for complete information and technological services. The libraries are organized according to the users' needs so that they fulfill their goals and tasks in the best and most professional manner. It is quite interesting to follow the changes that become in the information society. They reflect the users' needs and the way of seeking information, the reading, as well as the speed of adjustment to the new electronic information sources. The sensitive nature of these changes is closely connected with the status, education, social environment and age of the users. Therefore, when the needs of library users are analyzed it is necessary to take into consideration more aspects. In this process, one thing should be taken into consideration – the majority of people are dependent on the accessibility to accurate and useful information.

In the research of library needs, we are faced with another problem: most of the users are not aware of their library needs. This problem does not come from an inappropriate organization of the libraries, but from the inappropriate culture, educational and information politics. In resolving this problem the libraries should have as good as possible successful marketing so the good services will always find their users (Sečić, 1998).

The average adults – user of libraries is quite different compared with the children and youth. For this population, the percentage is substantially higher. Basic reason for this difference is the fact that pupils and students are obliged to read, in order to answer on the demands of their education.

In Macedonia, we have the following condition of the users and the library usage for 2010: Ohrid (5,17%); Tetovo (7,44%); Prilep (7,84%); Gevgelija (4,95%); Struga (6,78%). These data does not meet the expectations, because the membership is not on an enviable level, considering the transformation of the libraries and the higher financial investment in the technical equipment and preparations for automation.

World researches have other indicators for the users and their needs. Scandinavian countries have incorporated other activities in order to gain popularity; they offer different programs and events with rich initiatives and creative methods in order to meet the needs of the users and the community, in a more successful way. Frederiksberg Public Library and the National Gallery of Denmark, with their developing program have enabled their users to make a contribution in the creation of art. That is one-year exciting project, realized with the support of the Danish Agency for Culture. The user takes part in the work and gives his contribution to the platform of the library. The project unifies the libraries as disseminators of mediums and the museums as intermediaries of the visualization. The Norwegian project *Wining, dining – and reading – on a Caribbean cruiser* refers to library on a ship. It is estimated that on the ship with its 3.600 passengers and 1.200 employees, four in ten passengers use the ship's library. The most successful project seems to be *The whole school readers' project*, which has an interesting ritual; namely every day in the same time from 9.45 to 10.15 o'clock, during one week, the students aged 6 to 16 are

interested for reading spend time in the library. During that time, while the students, teachers and the whole school personnel read books, the ship stands still.

These are some examples of public libraries, which bring ideas for *benchmarking* libraries; their purpose is to adjust their services, to encourage and create habits for reading, to organize events for a popularization of the books, and in the same time popularize their community.

In order to meet the changing needs and expectations of their users, the libraries hastily include systems that enable access to the contents and services through the web pages. In the short period of existence of the *web*, most of our public libraries have substantially advanced, and with the help of the web they have enabled access to the big wide range of information services, which earlier were accessible only with a personal visit to the library.

However, despite this advancement, the web pages of many libraries still maintain physical and functional organization of a traditional library. The web pages of the libraries are organized mainly around the function of the library or the existent data storing. For the skillful web users who are not acquainted with the traditional method of library organization, our web pages are not transparent and they do not meet their needs for searching specific information (Maloney, 2004).

2.2. THE NEEDS OF USERS

The library user has an important role in the creating of the service. The user values the quality of the service. The satisfaction of library users is a function of the quality of information products received, the quality of information system and library services provided to access those information product. Therefore, satisfaction is a function of three main sources— quality of the information product, the information system and the services that make the information product available. Therefore, good quality service is the one in which the difference between the information and the need can be perceived. The purpose

of every service is the uniqueness. The extent and depth of library services depends on the size of the library and the community, in which the library acts.

To be able to meet the needs of their users, libraries should first identify the needs and then to specify further strategic priorities for acting. Identifying users' needs means their satisfying user's needs, more precisely said, meeting their requirements, with a purpose to retain the loyalty towards users and at the same time to expand their number.

When the library hears the needs of its users, it adjusts the services according to their needs; the users talk about the library service and in the same time they promote the library.

Needs for freedom of access to information, the library internet and information services involve:

- Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual both to hold and express opinions and to seek and receive information; it is the basis of democracy; and it is at the core of library service.
- Freedom of access to information, regardless of medium and frontiers, is a central responsibility of the library and information profession.
- The provision of unhindered access to the Internet by libraries and information services supports communities and individuals to attain freedom, prosperity and development.
- Connect people with global information resources and the ideas and creative works they seek
- Make available the richness of human expression and cultural diversity.

These days we talk more about users' needs that are connected with the new technology and the novelties it brings along. It can be said that the users have *information needs*.

2.3. USER BEHAVIOUR

Allen Bryce in "Information tasks", 1996 talks about the information needs, where as a first element of this main model is the analysis of the needs. The information tasks, goals and demands are presented as information needs in the process of solving the problem. There are three steps for solution of the problem, beginning by:

1. recognition of the problem;
2. identification of the alternative possibilities for action;
3. evaluation of the alternatives and choosing the way of action.

This focus presumes that people search for information because they need it. The main model presents the user in the center of the information system. A first element of this model is the analysis of the need, which requires development and understanding of the goals and assignments. Moreover, the required information, when analyzed, becomes a sort of solution (Allen, B. 1996). In a way, people who search and use the information have a need to be understood in different perspectives. As an example, we can refer to the role of a driver who needs information for a specific direction. It is questioned what he needs the required direction for. We could assume that maybe he is a foreigner, maybe a business agent who should meet a client, or a traveler who has never passed there. In situations like these, very important role has the behavior of the person who is motivated to satisfy the need of certain information.

The library puts efforts to meet the needs of its users, to reach the population that does not or cannot use its services (Sečić, 2006). The public library serves users of heterogeneous population of all ages, education levels, social and cultural environments. The interests for each of them are different. The interest of the user is closely connected to his behavior in the library. Besides the prescribed rules and norms for behaving of the users and employees in the library, there are also unwritten rules with which the needs of the users can be identified. Here we talk about psychological and sociological factors that discover the users' needs. The people perceive the specific situations differently, because their knowledge differs. It is very interesting to observe the behavior of the users in

different situations. When one user appears alone as an individual, he shows one behavior in the searching of information; when there are two – other, and when in a group – the social environment influences the behavior of user. The way in which the user seeks information, in order to satisfy a certain need, differs in all three situations –namely, the individuals can rely on their own knowledge of the specific sphere, and when a group is in a question, then the influence and the behavior can be combined. For the user, the main model is when the user is in the center of the information system. First element of this model is the analysis of the need, which seeks development and understanding of the goals and tasks.

2.4. USER TYPOLOGY

It is important to establish who uses and who does not use the library service. It is also necessary to collect analyses data that identifies those needs of individuals and groups within the community that can be met by the public library (IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines, 2010, p. 37).

It is very important to know the types of users because depending on type of users librarians can:

- Turn their perception from individual expressed needs to the rights for all particular needs / the rights of all.
- Better understand the needs of concrete users.
- Conduct actions and create services.

Gernot Wersing was one of the information scientists who have worked with a sociological foundation for information science (Vilar, 2009/10). According to him user type is determined by a numerous information needs, not by a number of persons. Depending on the type, librarians conduct actions and create services. Library users can be person or organization. They need information. Here are several types of users:

- *Potential user*: the services could suit his/her information needs, could be useful for him/her, but does not use information institution /services; often does not know that information / services exists; even if he knows of its existence, he is not aware what kind of services it offers.
- *Anticipated user*: has access to information services, knows that it exists and what it offers, but does not use it.
- *Real user*: the one who uses information service.
- *User who benefits*: from the information service.

William Katz, in his work “Information to reference work”, divides the users in four basic types. First group is consisted by those users who put orientation-related questions. These are questions from the type of: “Where are the catalogues?”, “Where is the reading room?”, and similar questions like that. These kinds of questions require no professional knowledge, and that is why they are not recorded in the library statistics.

Second group users are the users who seek information based on facts. Most of them seek short, fast and concise answer.

The largest group of users, who seek help, comprises those users whose demands for information are not equable, whose answers require more specific researching on the literature for the specific need. This is actually bibliographic information.

The last group is consisted of users who have a need to research. These are users who need to do specific search that can merge into real research.

If we observe how the users use the information services, we can understand what is the best way to group them. By the grouping we get a category of *potential users* – those who have a real benefit of using the library, but they are not aware that the library exists; *incidental users* – the library and its sections are accessible to them, but they do not use them; *actual users* – they use the services and information sections; *satisfied users* – they really benefit from the information they get. Therefore, the librarian gets a feedback (Sečić, 1998).

The young users belong to the category of adult users (high-school and university students). It is evident that the most of the libraries have not developed adequate services for this specific group (Kirćanski, M. 2008). And they have expectations, unconsciously they want something that is characterized as new and modern.

Adjusting the user to the modern library is a multi phase process, based on the constitutive principles of the traditional library. The main steps in forming the user of modern library relate to the first contact of the user with the library and getting information of the library services and methods that are used to meet the needs of the users (Chesca, n.d.).

The acceptance and crossing from traditional to modern user of library services still depends on the specific characteristics of the users, in accordance with their age, knowledge level and the aspiration of the library to provide him with an access to the new techniques of a modern library.

The researcher O. Obanewa has classified library users in four groups: general readers, creative readers, students with more advanced ages, and individuals with special interests (Stan, E. L. & Stan, D. n.d.). He explains these groups in details. For instance, general readers are those who read for information and training (they consult newspapers, encyclopedias, general works and documents related to them). Creative readers read news, magazines, fiction and fantastic. Students with more advanced ages consult manuals and reference works. The last group of users consists of individuals with special interests, including here scientists, doctors, engineers, students and college graduates.

3. LIBRARY SERVICES

The public library must provide services based on an analysis of the library and information needs of the local community. In planning services, clear priorities must be established and a strategy should be developed for service provision in the medium to long term. Services should be developed for identified target groups and only provided if such groups exist in the local community. The services of the library should not be subject to

any form of ideological, political, religious or commercial pressure. Services must be able to adjust and develop to reflect changes in society, for example, variations in family structures, employment patterns, demographic changes, cultural diversity and methods of communication. They should take account of traditional cultures as well as new technologies, for example, support for oral methods of communication as well as making use of information and communication technology. In some countries the services that the public library must provide are defined in library legislation (IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines, 2010, p. 37).

3.1. MEASUREMENT OF LIBRARY SERVICES

If we want to have a precise estimate how the percentage of using the library and library services varies, we should gather statistics on a regular basis. The author points out that it is very important to accumulate statistical data consistently and precisely, so to be used in more activities, like supporting some management decisions, benchmarking with other libraries and as justification for getting financial support (Jilovski, 2005).

The statistical analysis presents the size of the library in a given period of time, but it also provides data that can be used for a comparison and help at the process of planning. The data for one or more libraries, accumulated during a longer period of time, are often used for an illustration of the changes and stability of the library.

The development of offers or the extent and depth of the library services depends on the size of the library and the community in which the library acts. The library services depend on the collections which the library has on disposal, as on the space, equipment and professional qualifications of the library staff. Every library should make efforts to enable its users to have access to the whole library material, regardless of the size of the space that is available. Giving services should not be limited on the library building. If the access to the library is disabled, then the library should directly approach the user with printed materials, to use the information and communication technology (IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines, 2010).

The indicators of efficiency of researching the users' needs and degree of satisfaction with the services and offers can be used to follow the development of the library. In order to determine the tasks and goals of the library, all of the programs and services should be evaluated on a regular basis; if and how they are accomplished; if they can be adjusted to the changed requirements; if they should be improved, refocused or reshaped (Aparac-Jelušić, 1997).

In his work *The library in twenty first century*, Peter Brophy (2005) explains the new library services in the information society, presuming that the best outcome comes from the efforts of the libraries to put the using of information in context of their work. The author uses the term "information" in broad meaning, in the frames of local community's needs, interpreting those needs as international, national, regional and local priorities.

Bringing forward the idea of modern library in 21 century, the author considers that the users are conservative; regardless of the time and the information-technology equipped libraries, most of them see their goal of coming to the library in borrowing books, as a most frequently used library service.

It is acknowledged that public libraries provide great value to their communities. Value is often defined by what materials and services libraries provide to the communities. In the past public libraries primarily offered access to printed information, and served as a public social and physical meeting place in the community. In the digitized age the role and value the public libraries has become enhanced by the advent of new information technologies (IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines, 2010, p. 17)

3.2. EXPERIENCES FROM SIMILAR WORLD RESEARCHES

The library has an important role in the human development. David McMenemy (2007) gives a review on the public libraries in Great Britain, focusing on the economic aspect of the existence of libraries, leaving out the intellectual and social foundations of the existence. He underlines that the public libraries are not just bookstores with shelves, filled

with books. The role of the library is very significant in the inciting of book-reading; being a major player in the positive influence of the books.

Analyzing the strategic and long-range plans of 73 public libraries in USA, A. Pacios (2007) has singled out a list of preferential public libraries in USA, according to their specifics and needs at the onset of the third millennium. The first five priorities show a connection between the needs of the society, giving services to satisfy those needs and involving the required resources for their realization. The author defines these priorities more precisely in percent, as following: collections and sources (79%), continual studying (50%), buildings, installations and equipment (46%), human resources (41%) and library management (40%). The research of Pacios has showed that the primary expectation of every public library is to be provided with the newest titles, with subjects of various materials, format, language and more copies, in order to follow the needs of their users.

Collections should reflect the social change and diversity: multiethnic and tolerant multicultural programs in the community. As a second priority of the library is to enable continual studying for the entire life that will bring to expansion of personal, social, professional knowledge, competence and skills of users. The third priority is seeking new users – the library space and technical equipment should be a center for social life, center that will enable development of all kinds of activities and events. The fourth priority, not less important than others, puts accent on human resources and their high level of influence on the services. Libraries should have highly-qualified librarians, offering various library services that meet users' needs in general. The fifth priority is the tendency of the librarians to involve different techniques for improvement and enhancement of the working and also their efficiency, too. The author emphasizes that the technique of benchmarking is important technique that enables the library to make comparison of its working with the best practices in other libraries and in that manner to adjust its working to the specific situations. She also insists that the management of the finances should follow the needs of the library, which must find its own sources of finance, through sale of books, collaborations, fundraising, finding sponsors, donors and so on.

Hiller, in his work *Assessing user needs, satisfaction and library performance at the University of Washington Libraries* (2001), puts an accent on the users' needs, their satisfaction and the priorities of the libraries. The research has been conducted at the libraries of the University of Washington. Researches like this and similar ones were done every third year, starting from 1992. There have been collected 2749 answers with the questionnaires. These researches are very valuable, but expensive and very time-consuming for designing and analyzing.

The author views the user in the academic library as a tool for assessment of the quality of the services that the library offers, through the satisfaction of its users. The rapid changes in the library services and operations, the requests for internal institutional responsibility and the evaluation by the external agential accreditations have contributed to the further development and implementation of the researches.

Lyons and Holmes (2008), in their paperwork *Making Incremental Improvements to Public Library-Comparative Statistical Practices*, punctuate that the statistical results only explain but do not go into details about proceeding of the libraries in the interpretation of operative statistics. There is a question as if the data are just numbers that serve to compare with other libraries; individual indicators for achievements in working or they are only left on the paper as annual reports of the library. It is of great importance how quickly the library takes measures in adjustment with its mission, goals and assignments, in order to meet the expectations, defined during the researches.

Suki (2011) has done a research for the (dis)satisfaction of the users in the public libraries in Malaysia. A self-administrated questionnaire was randomly distributed to 99 users who were dissatisfied from the services in Labuan Public Library. The users have accented that the library service is free, but some of the users were dissatisfied by the behavior of the personnel or the person responsible for the department. The opinions of users, no matter if they are positive or negative, should be used as a powerful resource for managing the library in bringing strategic and tactical decisions in the future.

Of the 99 participants, with 95% response rate, 45 were males (45.5%) and 54 were females (54.5%); 48 participants (48.5%) were between the age of 15 and 20, and 37(37.4%) participants were between the age of 21 and 25. For the level of education, 36 participants (36.4%) were SPM/O-Level holders, forty-five participants (45.45%) held higher qualifications, up to Degree level.

The analysis of reliability is done to help the researcher to determine whether the data collected are reliable or not. This study shows that library users in the Federal Territory of Labuan, even if dissatisfied with the service, are reluctant to complain because they perceive the service to be free. On the other hand, if their dissatisfaction with the service is caused by the library or its staff, they might complain to a third party. Loyal users are also less likely to report a complaint to the authorities but to a third party only. Librarians can unveil their users' needs and preferences through daily observations and should be ready to change and improve after receiving complaints from the users, thus moving toward the goal of serving them effectively and efficiently.

Sofče Marković (2004), in his article for *The development of the librarianship and the information science*, talks about the library experience in Denmark. The credit for the development of the librarianship in Denmark goes to the Royal School of Library and Information Science, as one of the top institutions in the sphere of the librarianship. The biggest library in Denmark is the Royal Library. It unites the old Royal library and the new building of Black Diamond, as a new architectonic solution. There is a travelator (moving walkway) in the library, which leads to the bridge-construction that separates the *Department for borrowing* from the *Department for information*.

In order to be able to function successfully, in an adjustment with the users' needs, requirements and expectations, every library should have its own mission and goals. The mission of the libraries in Macedonia is to create possibilities for all citizens to read, learn, be informed, develop and enhance their own personal, cultural, mental and democratic potentials, to meet and use new information technologies, in order to be able to fill their time creatively, qualitatively and freely. The library gives support for the social and cultural life in the cities of Macedonia, including there, all the marginalized meetings of

the citizens. The main purpose, of course, is the movement of Macedonian literature and cultural values; and at the same time enhancement of the values in multicultural society.

3.3. USER RESEARCHES

One of the difficulties faced by researchers in the field of user studies is the distinction between information needs, demands, wants, and use. As a result, a number of user studies which have seemed to be of information needs have actually been of information use. Line defined information needs as “what an individual ought to have for his work, his research and his edification”. Among the earliest researchers to use observation in the study of information needs were Line and his colleagues. In this study, questionnaires and interviews were also used. The three methods prove useful and provide useful crosschecks. Line's study, INFROSS (Investigation into Information Requirements of the Social Sciences), is one of the major studies of social scientists' information needs. It is significant because it lays the foundations for research on information needs. Unfortunately, with the advances of technology, some of the detailed content of the studies has become obsolete (Kamarudin, 2001).

There have been many debates about what need is. A. Green identifies four conclusions about the concept of need:

- Need is always instrumental: directed towards reaching a certain goal;
- Needs are usually contestable or negotiable;
- Need is related to the concept of urgency; moral element;
- People are not necessarily aware of their needs (Vilar, 2009/10).

Information need is often understood in information science as evolving from a vague awareness of something missing and as culminating in locating information that contributes to understanding and meaning. Information need is described as an anomalous state of knowledge or a gap in individual's knowledge in sense-making situations. Wilson

points out that there must be an attendant motive when a person experiences an information need (Kamarudin, 2001).

The opinion of users should be of great importance for all libraries. It is the starter and the indicator of the real image for the library. Following the opinions of users would lead the library to a valued feedback of its working and improving the same.

To be successful in fulfilling its goals the public library service must be fully accessible to all its customers. Customer is the term used primarily throughout the Guidelines to optimize consideration of public library non-users as potential customers. Also implicit in the term customer, individuals have expressed wants and needs to be identified and met. Customers ultimately have the choice of participating in public library service offered – or not. Therefore, any limitation of access, whether deliberate or accidental, will reduce the ability of the public library to fully achieve its primary mission and role of meeting the library and information needs of the community served. The following are important elements in delivering an effective public library service (IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines, 2010, pp. 35-36):

- identifying potential customers;
- analyzing customers' needs;
- developing services to groups and individuals;
- introducing customer care policies;
- promoting library use education;
- co-operating and sharing resources;
- developing electronic networks;
- ensuring access to services;
- providing library buildings.

The individual assessment of the library gives a local image for the users' needs and the success of the library work. The author Suzy Szasz Palmer, in her work *In our visitors' footsteps: using a "visitor experience". Project to assess services and facilities at the Library of Virginia*, analyzes the research in the state library in Virginia and illustrates the

user experience and the assessment of services, based on the user feedback. The frame of this research has included few questions: How to manage the evaluation of different services and to give a complex image of enormous state archives? How to approach ourselves from the process of evaluating concrete users to the process of improving the services and satisfying the needs? The author has interviewed the internal and external collaborators, representatives of the focus group with total 42 respondents of the focus group and has visited other libraries for a comparison. The results received by the users have showed their suggestions as priorities: navigation, better signalization, user-service relation, marketing of the library. Further on, the author has concluded that the library, enhancing its capacity, must look constantly for better ways of support to the needs and interest of the actual users, and at the same time to attract new visitors and potential members.

What the user thinks about the library and books is a significant indicator for the librarian to consider the user behavior towards the library, in general. This behavior gives the estimation of the ups and downs of the library services. The statistic indicators and researches on the users are stimulation more for every library and library staff to create and form a library suited for its users.

Concerning the problem of accumulation and procession of data for libraries, UNESCO designs forms for statistical analysis of the data. On this way, efforts are made for advancements of the library activity all around the world. In Macedonia, starting from 1953, there is a systematic collecting of statistical data for the libraries, performed on every third year.

4. RESEARCH

4.1. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Of the most questions librarians ask themselves and seek to answer is the question of how the library succeeds to meet the needs of its users, following the new wave of

information technology especially in the area of the library activity. The rise of the Internet initiated the changes in library work directing more on electronic data sources and a growing number of services aided with new information technology, library catalogs, library use and monitoring of their activities by means of a web page, using overbuilding of library stock in electronic form via of the Internet, and so on. Precisely those changes initiated me wonder what is happening to the needs of users in correlation to these changes. Namely, I want to feel the pulse of the users as they are prepared, educated or aware of what the library and the library service can offer.

The collaboration between the librarian and the user is the key point for achieving success in the realization of the needs of users. How new technology contributes to this relationship continue to nurture or the librarian lead to the distancing of the user is also a question of thinking. The prospective customers I see them as a parameter for the quality of library service. Using the results of this research a study, I expect to get approximate picture of the needs of users and thus to evaluate the relationship librarian-service-user.

4.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

Users' needs are never static, thus the answer to this question is perpetually changing. The libraries should conduct surveys and determine users' satisfaction on regular basis. To be able to identify and analyze the community needs libraries should have updated information to the following questions:

RQ1: For which category of users are the library needs more essential?

H11: pupils

H12: students

H13: pensioners

H14: employees

H15: distance users.

RQ2: What services and information sources do they use for satisfying their needs?

HI6: Borrowing books

HI7: Reading room

HI8: Journal collections

HI9: Databases

HI10: Need of a certain information.

RQ3: How do the users come to the needful information?

HI11: Professional help

HI12: Researching on your own

HI13: Catalogues

RQ4: Do the users use the web page of the library?

HI14: Always

HI15: Sometimes

HI16: Never

To serve library users more effectively, contemporary public libraries in the Republic of Macedonia should be able to identify and analyse what their community needs are and at the same time be flexible in changing policies to fulfil those needs. Librarians and library staff should examine the criteria of users' needs.

Also the results of this study may provide insight for the education of the users the use of the on-line communication and thus to note the quantity of information that users seek and that which librarians offer. The information gained from the survey results should be used for implementing requested changes in order to keep users satisfied.

4.3. INSTRUMENT

. The questionnaire was composed of twenty questions. The questions were adjusted to this research; to gather data for library visits, needs and expectations of library users, their satisfaction, suggestions for improvement of existing services, difficulties etc. The type of the questions was mainly closed-ended with forced-choice answers and open-ended, where users could give and describe their opinions and attitudes to particular questions.

Questionnaire seeks to see:

- For which category of users are the library needs more essential and what is the relative participation of each user category?
- How often do the users visit the library, what is their frequency and the need of public service?
- What services and information sources do they use for satisfying their needs?
- How do the users come to the needful information and in what level does the offered material satisfy their needs?
- Is professional help necessary for satisfying the users' needs?
- How does the new technical-technological development influence the needs for library services?
- Do the users use the web page of the library?
- In what level do the users use OPAC, databases and Internet researching?
- What is the level of satisfaction regarding the assistance from the library staff and what do the users expect about it?
- What do the users suggest for improvement of the library service?

The survey respondents got the questionnaire in paper format. They were accidental visitors of the libraries, users who visited the libraries at the moment when the survey was being implemented.

The survey was anonymous. Computer-based statistical data analysis was made in *MS Excel*.

5. RESULTS

This research contains five research questions. The defined hypotheses are aimed to support or refute the need of users for the library service; to develop a strategy for improvement and implementation of new databases and in the same time to improve the spatial conditions.

RQ1: For which category of users are the library needs more essential?

The most numerous user group of respondents are the pupils, the least numerous one - the unemployed users. This confirms the fact that the pupils more and more come to the public libraries for their school needs, compared with the school libraries. Is this an indicator that the pupils despite their school obligations show interest for other kind of literature, or that the school libraries do not have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the pupils (H1)? The visits of the remained user categories show that the public libraries are institutions opened for mutual collaboration with all users of the public libraries.

The access from distance is not some new phenomenon for the libraries – the library staff had also communicated before with its users through a correspondence or telephone. From today's point of view, the distant users are individuals who have an access to the electronic sources of the public library from any place, regardless of the physical distance from the library (H15). The librarian should be able to recognize the different subgroups of distant users. Namely, the user who lives in nearness of the library is in different situation than the one who is hundred kilometers away from the library building. Similarly, the user who had never before used electronic sources of information has different needs and expectations than the one who had already used them. This means that the library should consider all the specific characteristics for each subgroup in order to approach them properly; otherwise it will fail to meet their demands.

RQ2: What services and information sources do they use for satisfying their needs?

There are various reasons for coming to the library. The number of those who visit the library to get certain information is very small, which lead us to consideration that the users are not used to refer to the library for this kind of service; maybe they see the library as a traditional institution where they can only borrow books or they use other sources of information (H10). What should be done to make the users accept the library as an institution which transforms itself in information center? The interest for researching through the available databases is limited to a certain category of users. From one point of view it is optimistic for the library service in the implementation of the new library technology, but from the other one it imposes an obligation for education and organization of training courses for the users, with a purpose to explain them the changes in the librarianship and to make those changes more approachable (H9).

RQ3: How do the users come to the needful information?

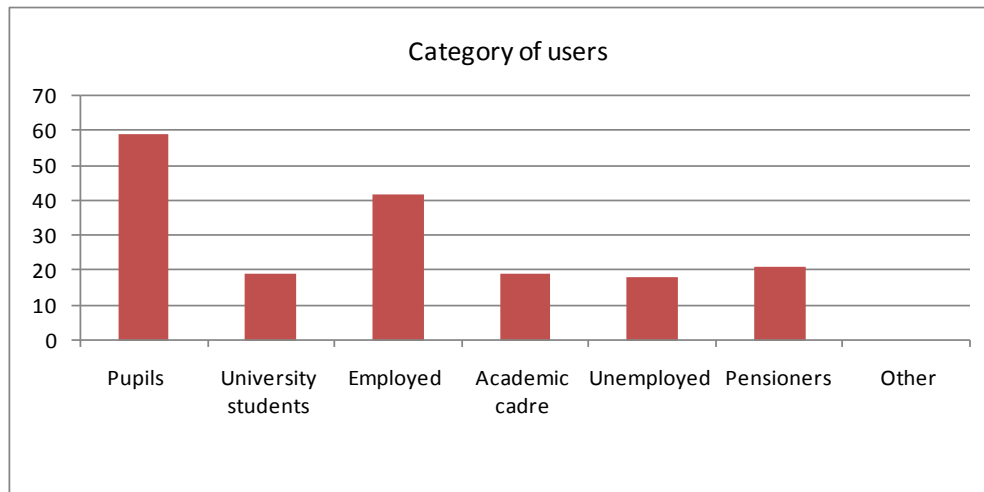
This research question is to give a picture how many users know how to use their new ways of searching; whether they need help from the library staff. However if there is such a need it points to the need for greater education, training organizing targeted to users. Besides the prominent hypotheses, users in their statements indicate a need on the Internet, new databases, using Cobiss Opac.

RQ4: Do the users use the web page of the library?

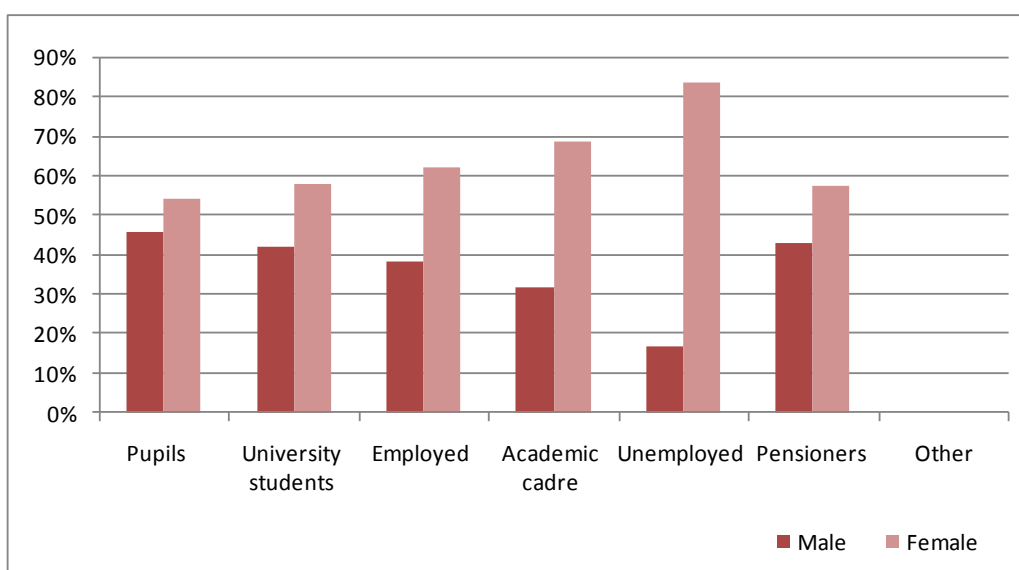
The purpose of this research question is to find out how many users know and use the web page of your library. I wanted to figure out what is the percentage of users who know how to get to the required information faster and simpler way. Also see which category of beneficiaries is more dominant in satisfying their needs in this way. Hypothesis only confirm my dilemma about the likelihood of the beginnings of this way of getting to the requested data by users.

The results are obtained through statistical analyses and clustering methods. The data has been analyzed using frequency and percentage for each question used in the questionnaire. The results are represented in graphs and charts given in Picture 1 to Picture 57.

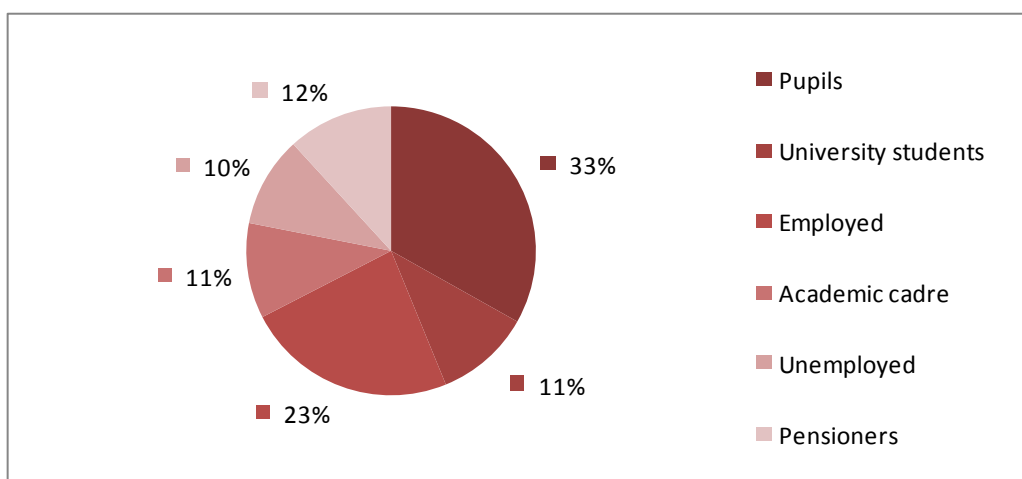
The research included all categories of users. Pupils comprise the largest user group of the respondents 59 (32 %), out of which 46% are males and 54 % are females; the number of employed users is 42 (24%), 38% males and 62% females; pensioners 21 (12%). Here is also the percent of male respondents smaller 43%, compared with the female respondents 57%. The number of respondents is equally distributed between the categories of university students and academic cadre 19 or 11% of the total number of survey respondents. Of the university students 42% are males and 58% are females and the gender distribution of the academic cadre is 32% males and 68% females. The number of the unemployed users is 18 (10%), with 17% males and 83% females. *Picture 1, 2 and 3.*



Picture 1



Picture2

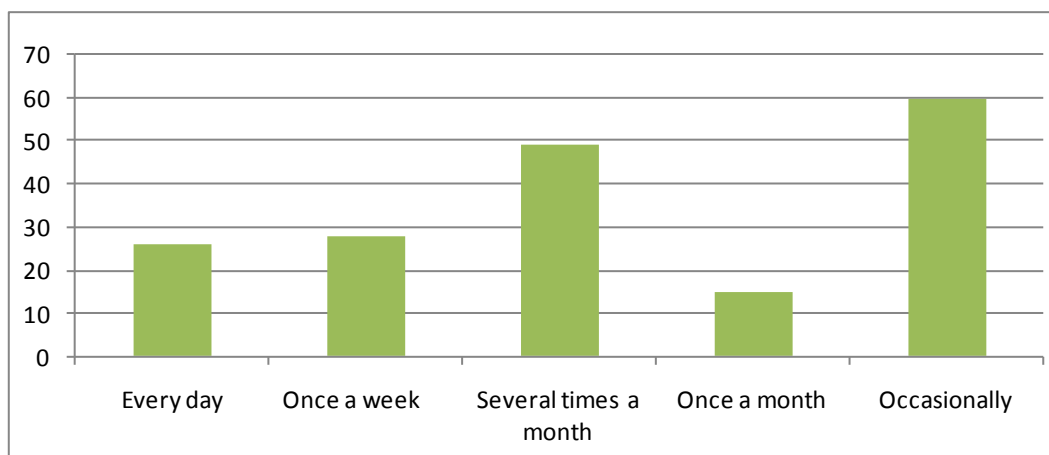


Picture3

5.1. FREQUENCY OF VISITING THE LIBRARY

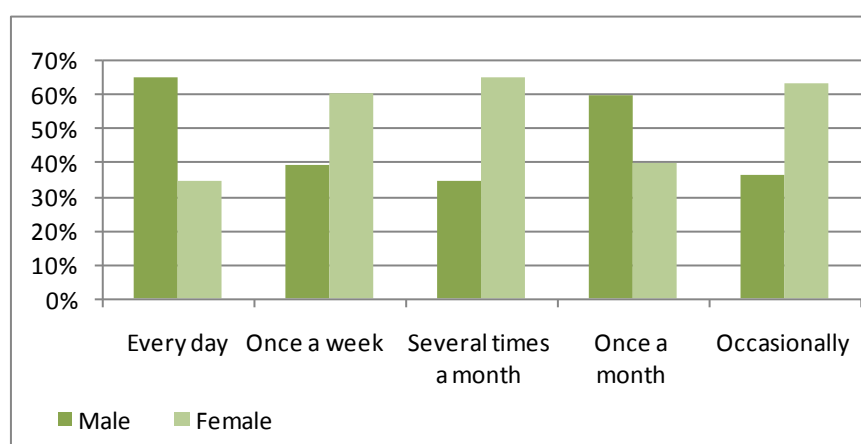
For the question “*How often do you visit the library?*” the respondents had five options to choose from: every day, every week, several times a month, once a month and occasionally. From the results we can see that the most of the respondents come to the library *occasionally*, 60 from total of 178, or 33%. Forty-nine respondents (28%) visit the

library *several times a month*. The frequency of visit is shown on the following chart, *Picture 4*.



Picture4

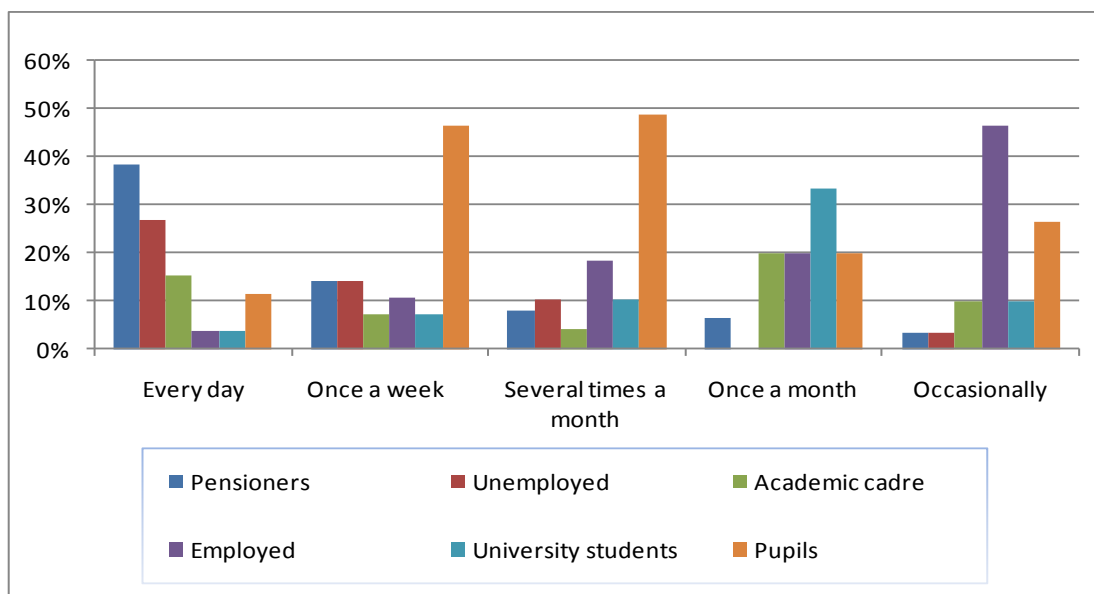
In the most chosen answers *occasionally* and *several times a month*, we can notice the difference between males and females –37% with 63% and 35% with 65%, respectively. *Picture 5*. The number of respondents who answered that they visit the library *every day*, *once a week* or *once a month* is smaller.



Picture5

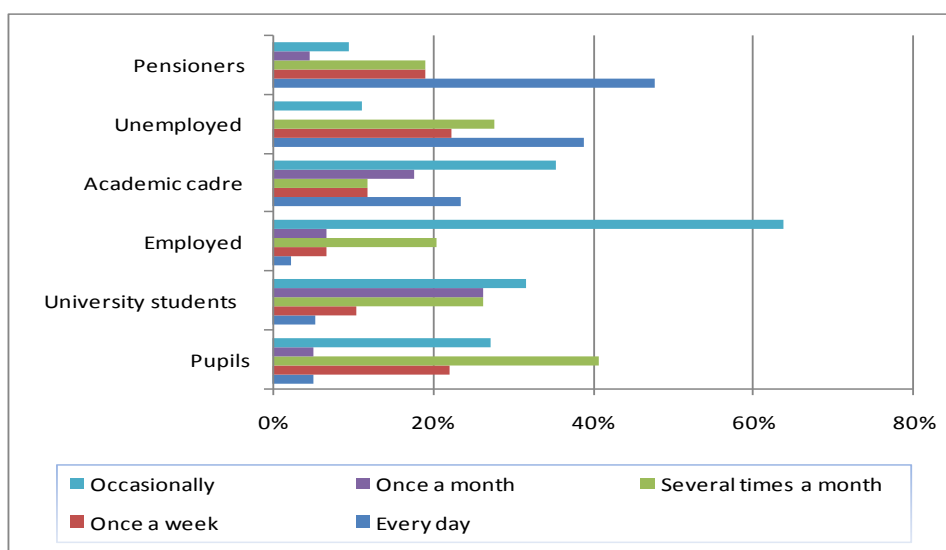
Structurally analyzing the answers we can come to the following results: visiting library *every day* is surprisingly mostly recognized at the pensioners with 38%; *several*

times a month and once a week at the pupils (49% and 46% respectively); the most chosen answer *occasionally* is highly noticed at the employed users (47%). *Picture 6.*



Picture 6

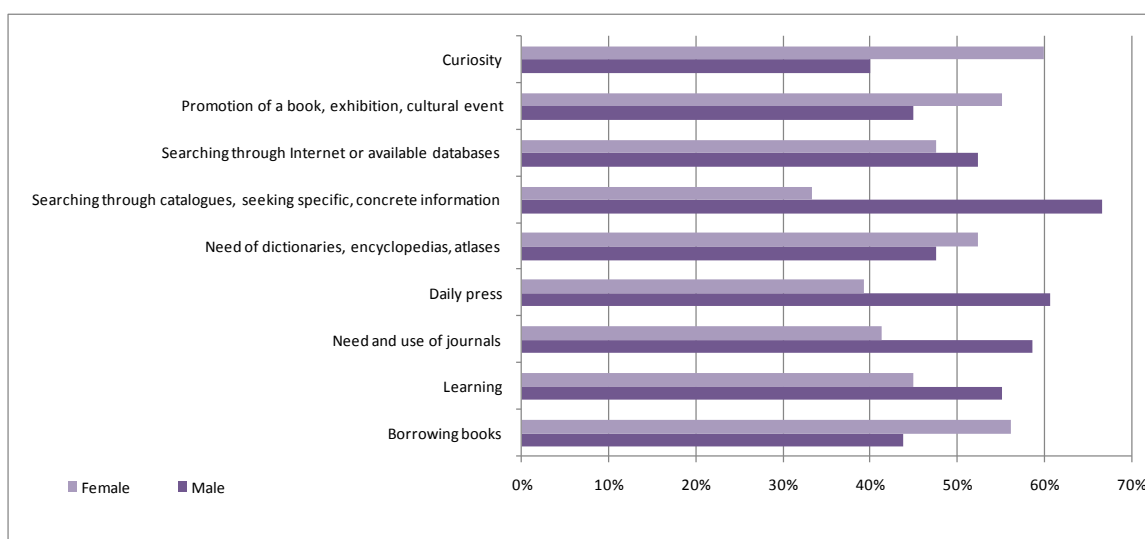
From the other point of view, according to the category of users – majority of pupils visit the library *several times a month* (41%); most of the employed users (62%), university students (32%) and academic cadre (35%) visit the library *occasionally*; the pensioners and unemployed people mostly (48% and 39% respectively) visit the library *every day*.



Picture 7

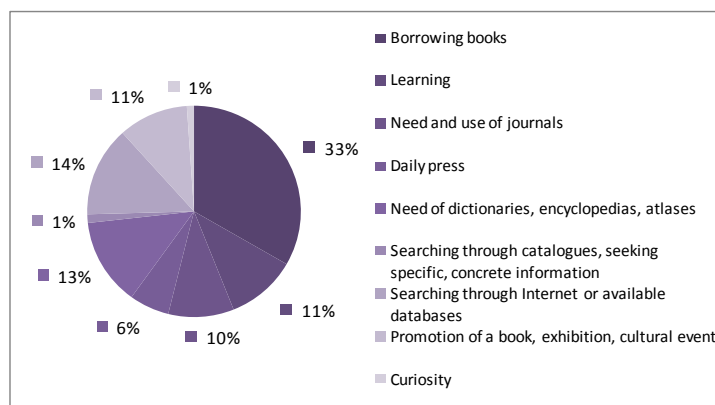
5.2. REASONS FOR VISITING THE LIBRARY

On the question of *reasons for coming to the library* the respondents had multiple-choice. The results clearly show that the biggest reason for coming to the library is *borrowing books*. Here, female-male representation is 56% with 44%. On the following chart (*Picture 8*) it can be seen how the gender distribution differs for the specific needs. For example, male respondents show higher percent of interest for some of the given segments, as for the need of *daily press* (61%).



Picture8

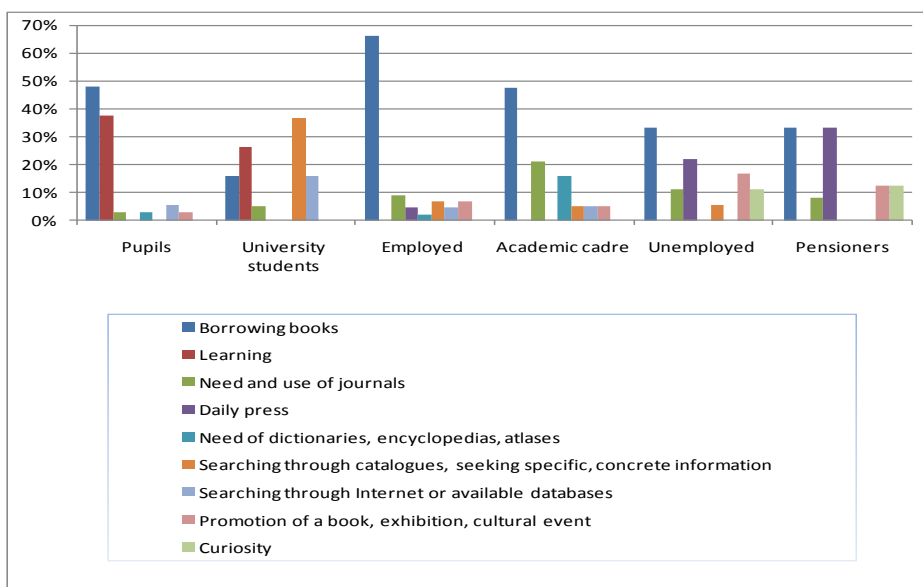
According to the results, of all the respondents who use the library for *learning* 55% are males, and 45% females. As it is expected this percent is higher at the users who belong to the category of pupils 38% and university students 26%. It is understandable that this percent is lowest at the pensioners. *Picture 9*.



Picture9

The need of using *dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases* is more dominant at the female respondents 52%. Taking into account the category of users, this need is recognized at the academic cadre with 16% and pupils with 3%.

For *promotions of books and other culture activities* the gender distribution is as follows: 55% females and 45% males. According to the category of users, employed users, unemployed users and pensioners take equal part at this need (6%). However, that is 17% of all the unemployed respondents and 13% of all the pensioners, who support the library at activities like these. *Picture 10.*

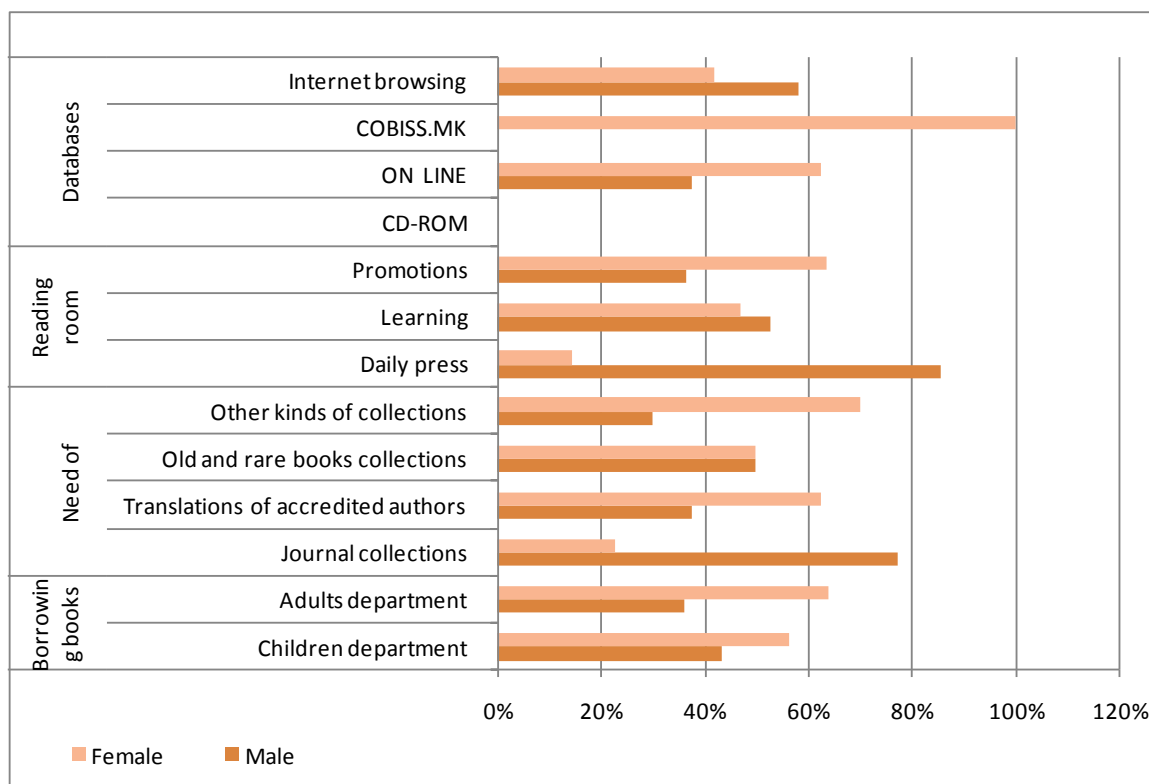


Picture10

There are more male respondents for the need of *catalogues, searching specific, concrete information* 67% and *searching through Internet or available databases* 52%. These results show that male users more frequently use these sources of information. University students have shown themselves as the most skillful ones at the *need of catalogues* and *Internet researching* with interest of 37% and 16% respectively.

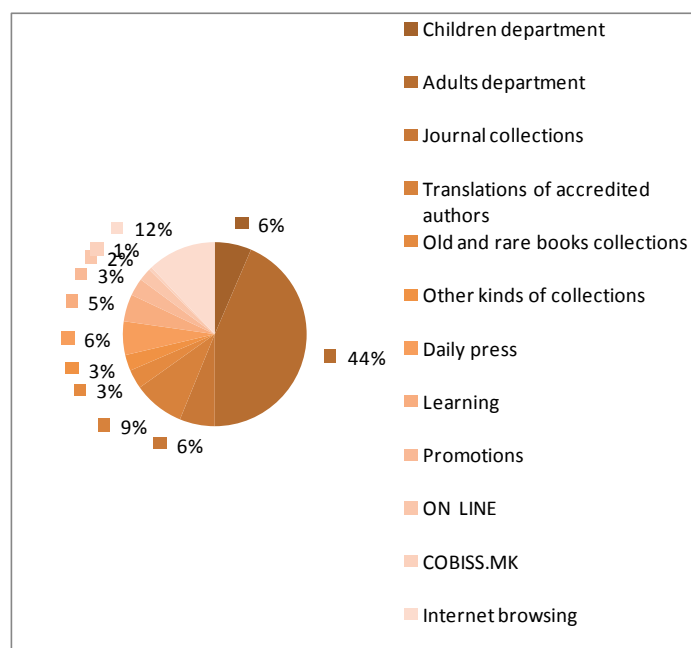
5.3. SATISFYING USER NEEDS

As our research shows, there is an ongoing need for public libraries to improve their services. That's way it is necessary to become more aware of users' needs. In order to examine the relation to *the services and sources of information that the users use*, the respondents were given a multiple choice questioner. As possible answers were offered *borrowing books in children and adults department, need of collections, reading rooms and databases*. The results showed that the *adults department* is more frequently used. *Picture 11* shows that need of *journal collections* is highly noticed at male respondents (77%). This might have to do with the choice of respondents in this research. For the results of *the translations of accredited authors* we have 63% are females and 38% males.



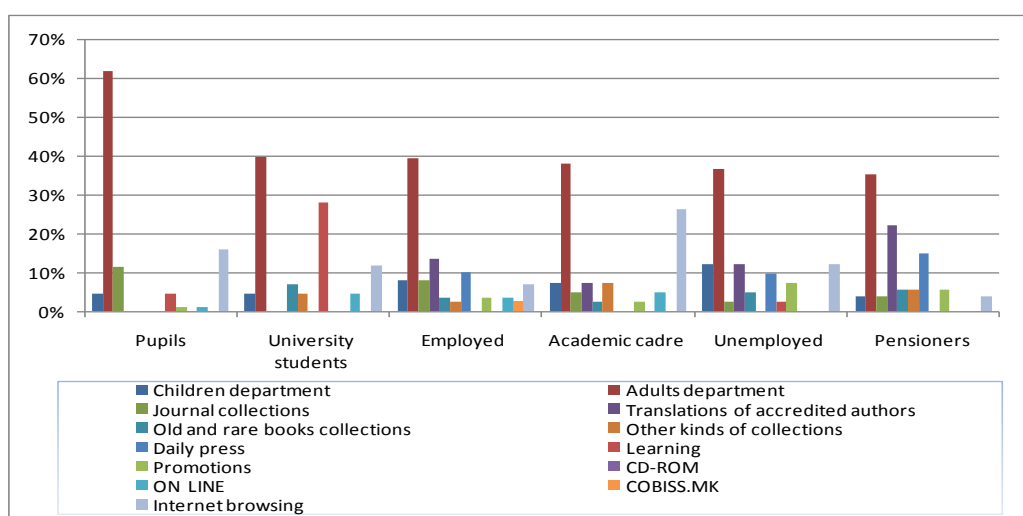
Picture 11

The diversity of interest for the different departments, collections, reading-rooms and databases is shown on *Picture 12*. The reading room is more frequently used for *daily press* at most is used by the male respondents 86%, whereas for the purpose of *learning* this percent is lowered on 53%. Female respondents show more interest activities like *promotion* where they represent with 64% participation.



Picture12

Taking into account the category of respondents, the *adults department* is used by 62% of the pupils, 40% of the university students, 39% of the employed users and 35% of the pensioners. The interest for *the translations of accredited authors* is as following: 22% of the pensioners, 13% of the employed users, 12% of the unemployed users and 7% of the academic cadre. *Picture 13.*



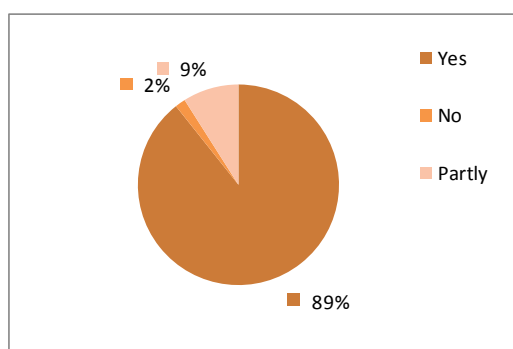
Picture13

The libraries offer relatively small number of materials and *databases* for research. It is not surprising that the interest of the respondents is very small. The percent of using the databases in the libraries is very small; according to this research it is 3.16%. The majority of the respondents appear not to have knowledge of its existence and most of them have ignored this question.

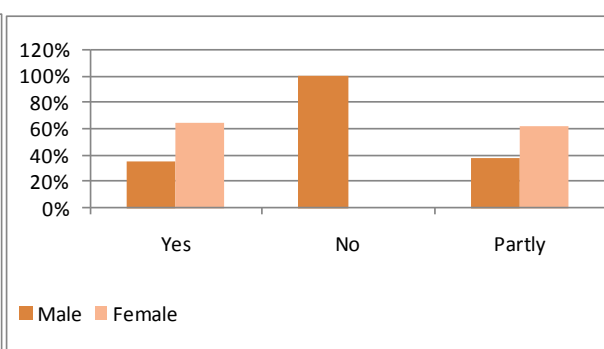
To satisfy their needs at the library, some of the users also use the *Internet* as a source of information: 26% of the academic cadre, 16% of the pupils, 12% of the university students and the unemployed users, 7% of the employed users and only 4% of the pensioners. The interest for the database *Cobiss.mk* is at lowest level, only 2% of the employed users. That means the users do not have the necessary knowledge and understanding of what COBISS presents and the possibilities it offers. Researching through COBISS is also a novelty in the most of the libraries, which are not yet automated.

5.4. FINDING THE REQUIRED INFORMATION

Did you find today the information you were looking for in the library? Having in mind the high percentage of given answers for this question, we have a relevant estimation of user information satisfaction. *Picture 14*. Most of the respondents replied affirmatively to this question (89%). From those 64% are females and 34% males. Respondents who have partly found what they were looking for; present 9% of all respondents with gender distribution 63% females and 37% males. *Picture 15*.

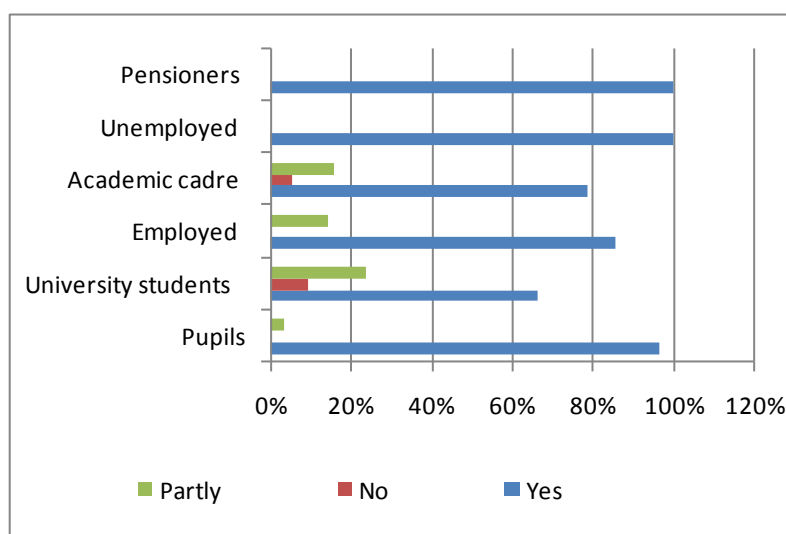


Picture14



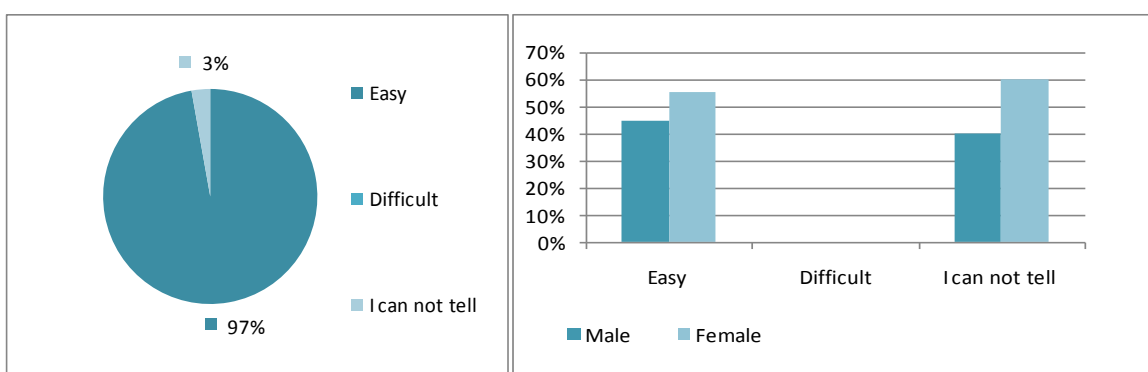
Picture 15

According to the category of users, all of the unemployed users and pensioners responded affirmatively searching the required information, whereas pupils answered 97%, and university students 67%. Additional results show that partially are satisfied 24% of the students, 16% of the academic cadre, 14% of the employed users and 3% of the pupils. *Picture 16.*



Picture16

On the next question attempts to find out which analyzes if it is easy or not for the users to get the information they need in the library. The results are as follows: 173 respondents answered that they have come easily to the required information, 5 of the respondents are reserved in answering. The visual presentation of these results in percentages can be viewed on *Picture 17.*

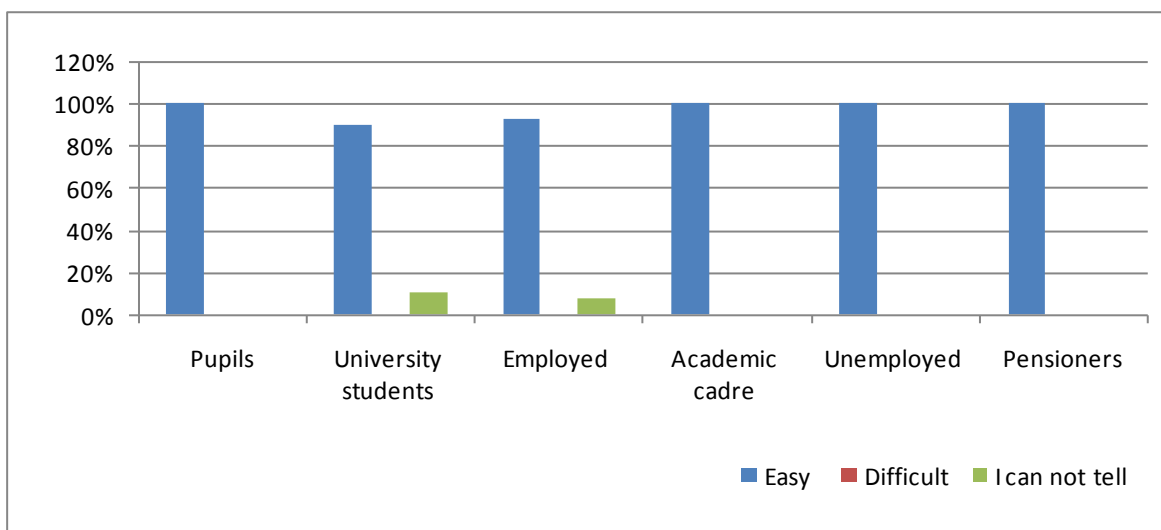


Picture 17

Picture 18

Female respondents have 55% participation in those who answered that getting information in library is easy, with 45% participation by male respondents. From the reserved ones 60% are females and 40% males. *Picture 18.*

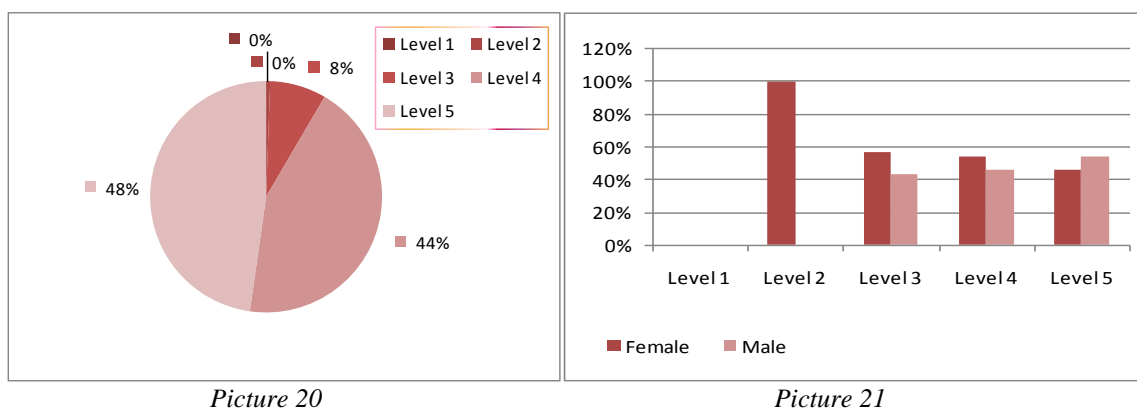
In accordance with the category of users, there is a high level of satisfaction among the pupils, academic cadre, unemployed users and pensioners with 100% affirmative answer, employed users with 93% and university students with 89%. The remaining 11% of the university students and 7% of the employed users are reserved. *Picture 19.*



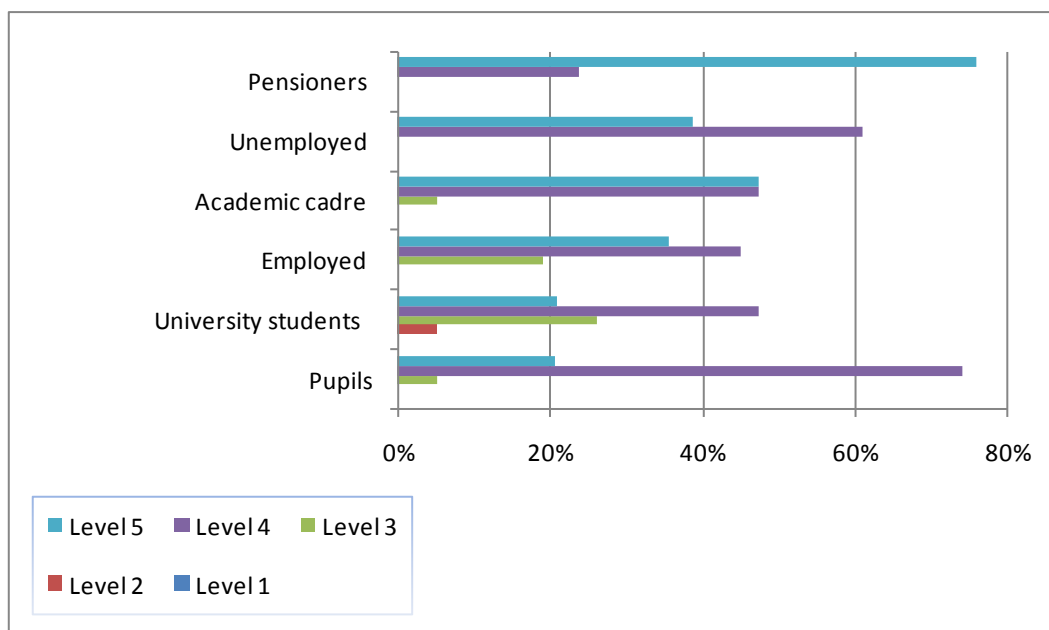
Picture 19

5.5. USER SATISFACTION WITH THE OFFERED MATERIAL

On the level from 1 to 5 the respondents estimated the extent to which the offered material in libraries meets their needs. A total of 178 respondents evaluated the services of the public libraries. The results are as follows: most of the respondents gave the grade 5; from them 54% are males and 46% females. From those who gave grade 4 – 54% are females and 46% are males; level 3 – 57% females and 43% males. Only one female university student has given an estimation of level 2. *Pictures 20 and 21.*



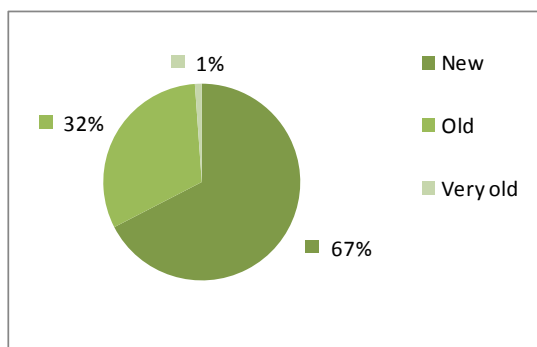
From the point of the category of users – estimation of level 5 was given by 76% of the pensioners, 47% of the academic cadre, 39% of the unemployed users, 36% of the employed users and 21% of both pupils and students. *Picture 22.*



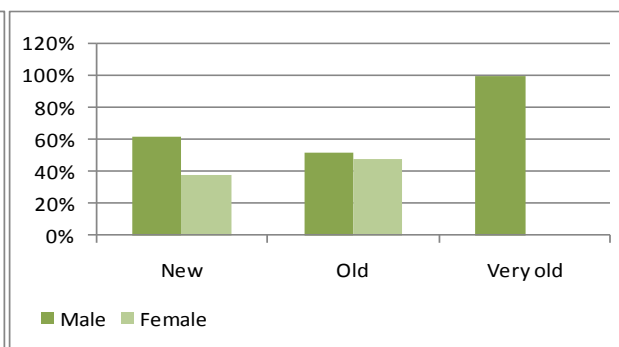
Picture 22

From the chart it can be seen that 74% of the pupils and 61% of the unemployed users have given an estimation of level 4. If this has a relation with a situation of needs that are connected with the school obligations of the students and the free activities of the unemployed users, is something that should be considered further on.

The question concerning wants and interests of the users to borrow and use books in their library is also closely connected to the condition of the books, their physical appearance and usability. There are different annotations for the condition of the books, if they are new, old or very old, depending from the users' needs and interests. Most of the respondents (67%) noted that the books are *new*, out of which 62% are males and 38% are females. There are 32% of the respondents who answered that the books in the library are *old*, with 52% males and 48% females. Two pensioners noted that the books are *very old*, but probably this is due to the specific requirements of the users, who look for materials that they need for a realization of their own works or have needs connected with older publications. *Pictures 23 and 24.*

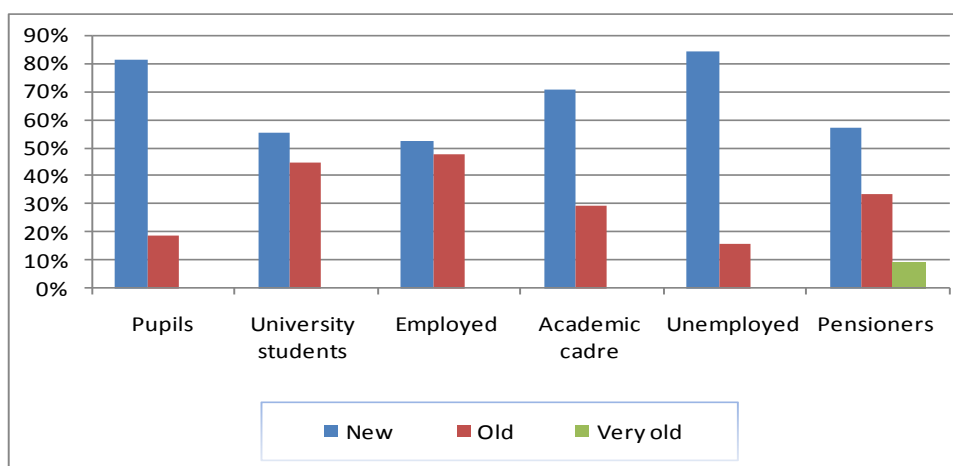


Picture 23



Picture 24

Next chart (*Picture 25*) for the category of users shows that 84% of the unemployed users, 81% of the pupils, 71% of the academic cadre and 57% of the pensioners noted that the books in the library are *new*. These results show that the libraries make efforts to follow the publishing houses or to realize the program of managing with the library stock.

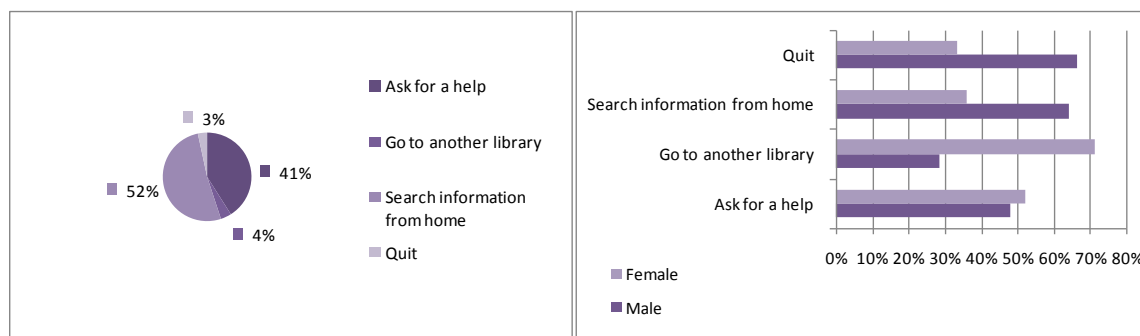


Picture 25

The next question refers to the reaction of users that have not found what they were looking for: the results are shown on *Picture 26*.

The interest to continue with searching by *asking for a help* is presented with 41% of the respondents. Female respondents are 52% and male respondents 48%. Most of the

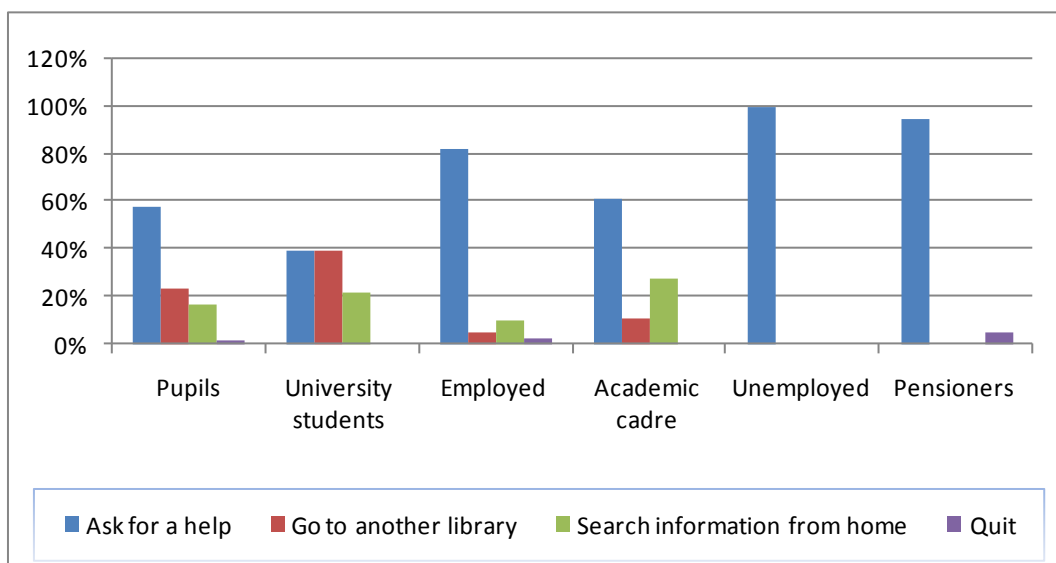
users *go to another library* (52%) out of which 71% are females. Small number of respondents *search information from home* (4%) or *quit* (3%). *Picture 27.*



Picture 26

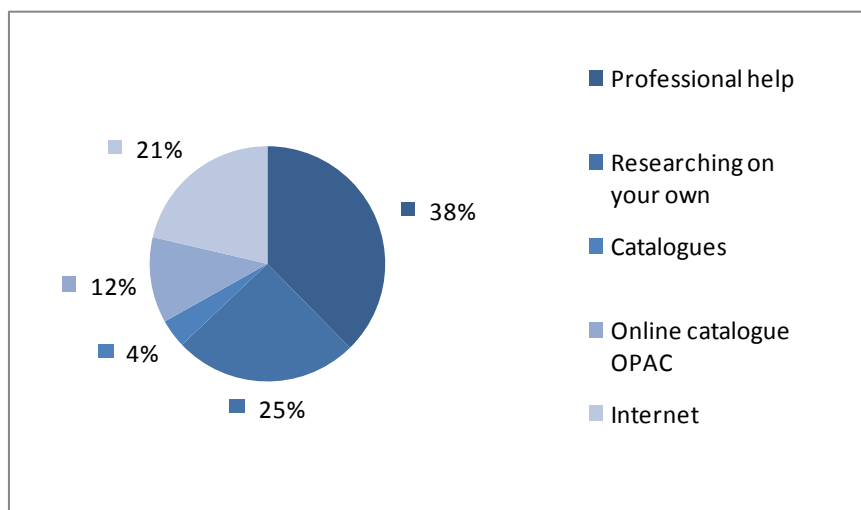
Picture 27

According to the category of users it is noticed that at most all of the unemployed respondents and 95% of the pensioners *ask for a help*. The other categories are presented with 82% of the employed respondents, 61% of the academic cadre, 58% of the pupils and 39% of the university students. *Picture 28.* The small number of respondents who *quit* is distributed as following: 5% of the pensioners, 3% of the employed users and 2% of the pupils. It is supposed that in these cases the respondents did not have enough will or motivation to continue with the searching of information.



Picture 28

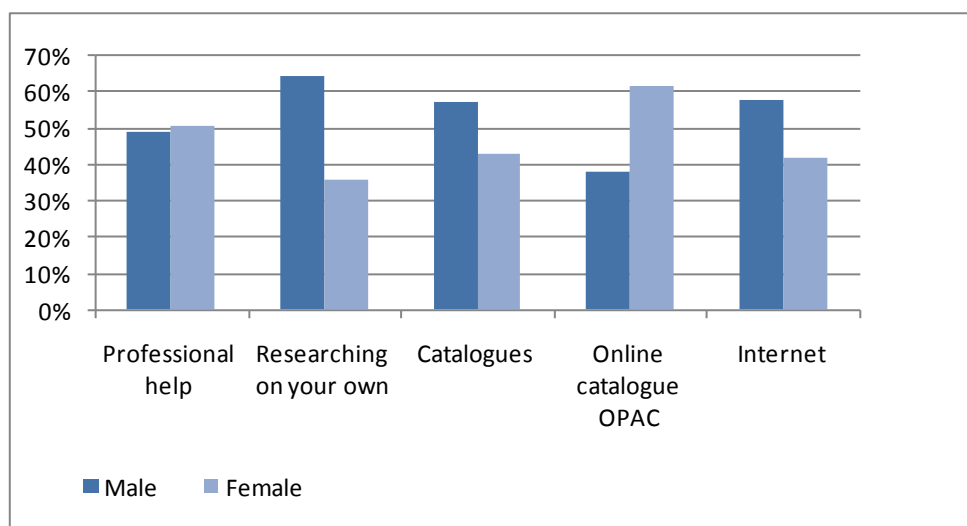
The next question refers to how users react when they need help; to whom they address their requirements. *Picture 29.*



Picture 29

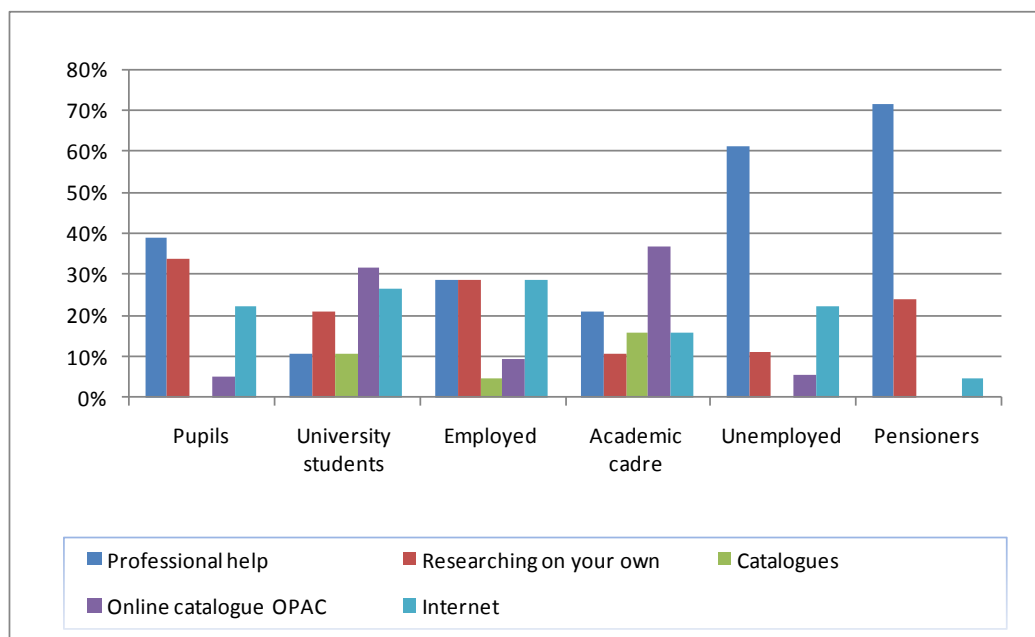
From those who look for a *professional help* 51% belong to the female population and 49% to the male respondents. From the users who satisfy their needs with a *researching on their own* 64% are males and 36% females. The gender distribution for the

next two options – *using of the catalogues* and *using of the online catalogue OPAC* is as following: males 57% and 38% respectively, females 43% and 62% respectively. Concerning the usage of *Internet* there are more male respondents (58%). *Picture 30.*



Picture 30

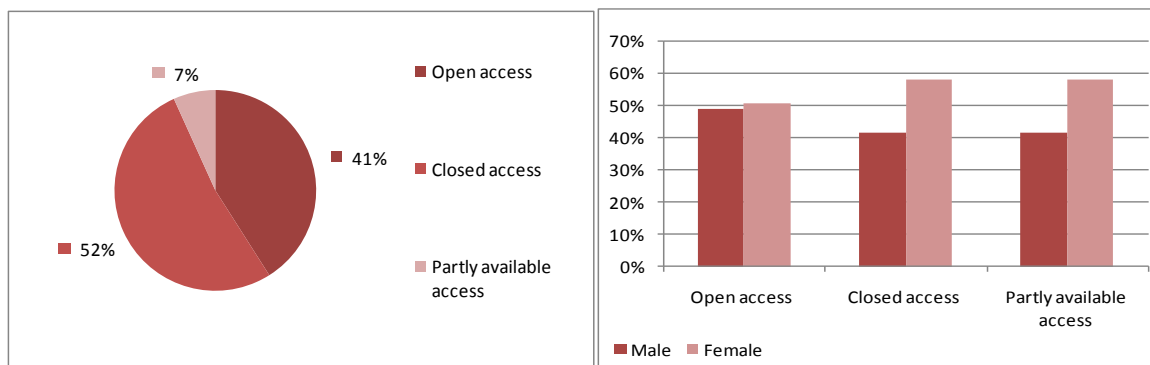
In the overall results the majority of the respondents do not have any difficulties in satisfying their needs. For this research, it is of a great importance to examine what kind of help the users will need and from whom they can get it from. The graphic presentation of the answers to this question represents the categories of users which will gives more clear view: *professional help* is required by 71% of the pensioners, 61% of the unemployed users, 39% of the pupils, and 11% of the university students. *Picture 31.*



Picture 31

We can see from the chart that at most 39% of the pupils and at least 11% of the academic cadre and the unemployed people research on their own. The *online catalogue OPAC* is used mostly by the academic cadre (37%) and university students (32%); pensioners do not use it at all and also there is small percent of pupils (5%) and unemployed users (6%) that are aware of its existence. With small variations in the percentages, almost all categories of users use the *Internet* equally. As expected, we find an exception with the group of pensioners who use this feature it with very small percentage of 5%.

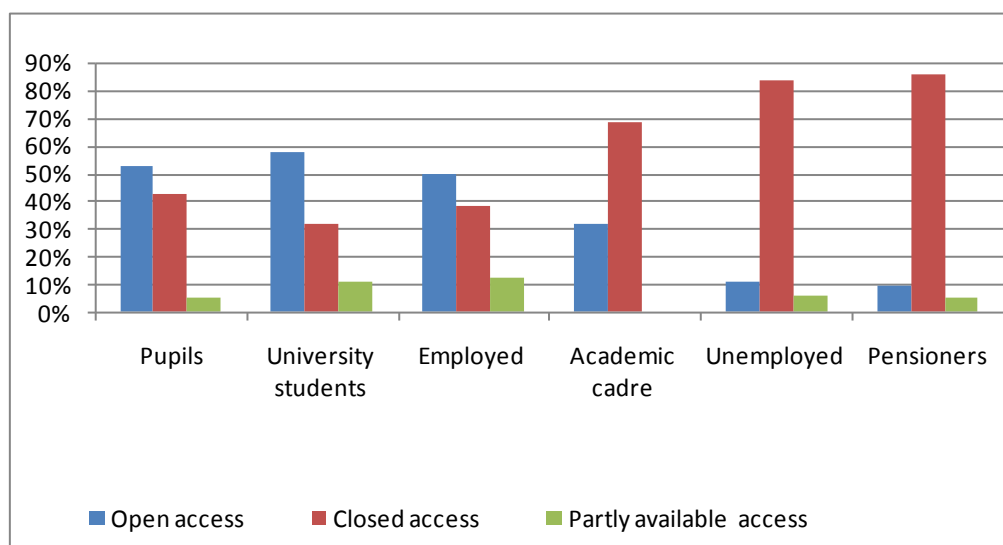
In most of the Macedonian libraries, the library stock is not always accessible for the users; the service is done via counter system. This situation gives a limited access and in some way limited possibilities and services for the users. There were given total of 178 answers to the next question (*How do you estimate the accessibility to the library stock of your library*). The three options for answers were distributed as following: 41% for *open access* (51% females with 49% males), 52% for *closed access* (58% females with 42% males) and 7% for *partly available access* (58% females with 42% males). *Pictures 32 and 33.*



Picture 32

Picture 33

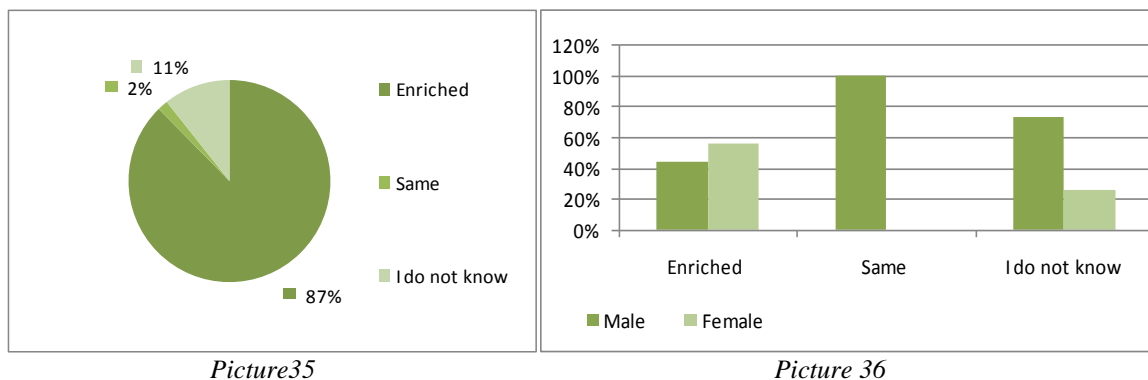
According to the category of users – some of them have declared that the access to the fund is available, others have declared that is not available. In reality, the access to the fund depends on the internal organization of the space, where the library stock is located, as well as on the management system of the library. *Picture 34.*



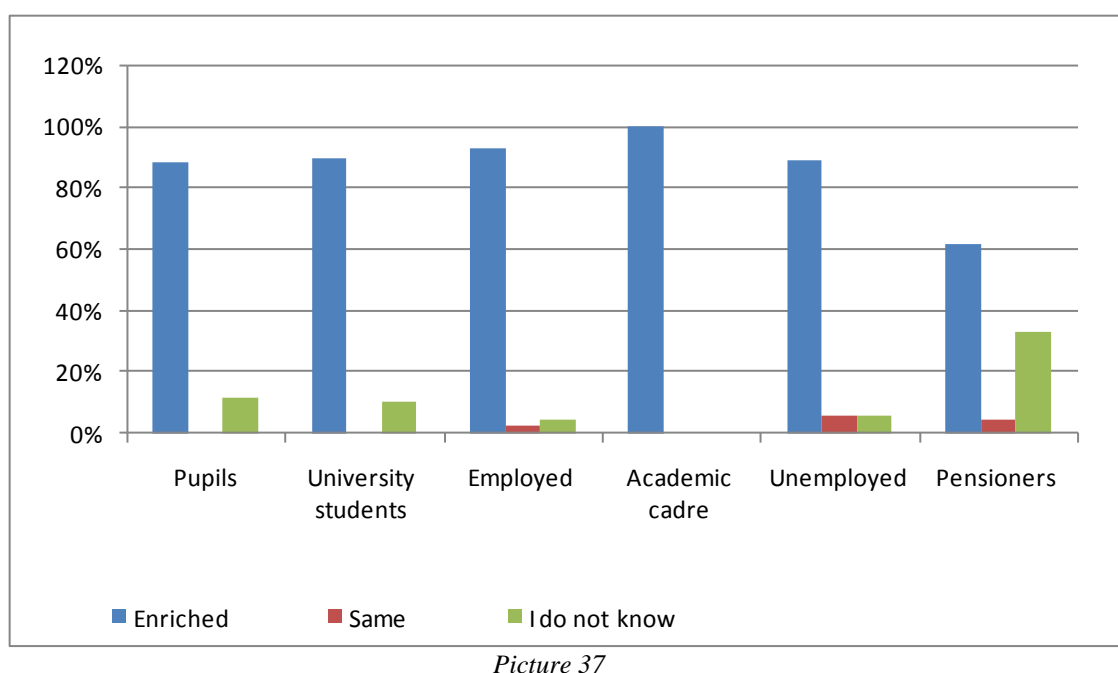
Picture 34

With the next question the respondents had a possibility to make comparison of the offered books material in the last five years. Very high percent (87%) of the respondents have characterized estimated the material as *enriched*, out of which 56% are females and 44% are males. There are only three male respondents out of 75, who estimated the fund as

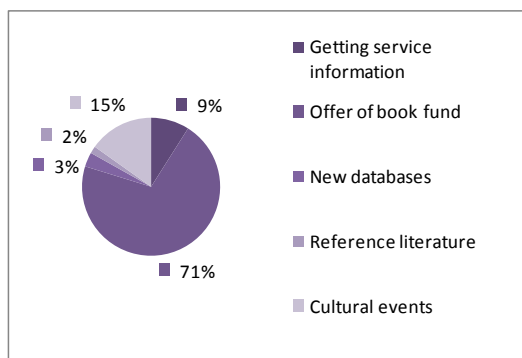
same and there are 11% of the respondents (74% females and 26% males) who *could not give the estimation. Pictures 35 and 36.*



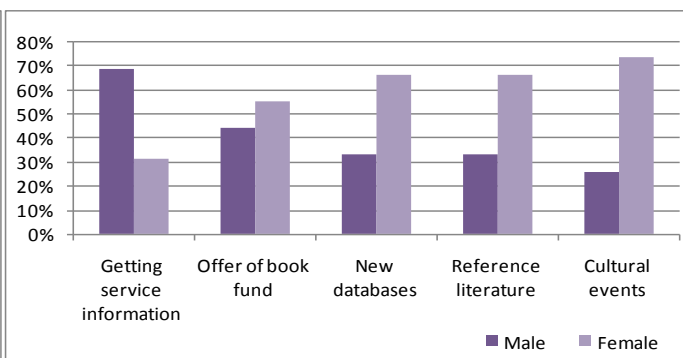
The graphic representation of the answers that represents according to the category of respondents can be seen on *Picture 37*. All of the academic cadre have noted that the fund is *enriched* and also a very high percent of the other categories. At the pensioners we have just a slightly smaller percent (62%). However, there are 33% of them who do not know if the library stock is enriched; and for 5% of the pensioners the fund is unchanged. Obviously, there is a great part of the pensioners who mostly come to the library for reading the daily press or for the promotions. *Picture 37.*



The next question is about the changes in the working of libraries. This is of particular interest to the library and the work of management team to consider how and where to pay attention during the realization of the program of the institution. Namely, the importance of this question is to be in touch with the users for the purpose of more successful and more efficient realization of their expectations. The majority of the respondents (71%) have considered that mostly the changes mostly took place in *the offer of the library stock* (females - 56%, males – 44%). Changes at *cultural events* are noted by 15% of the respondents (females – 74%, males 26%). The complete review of the distribution of answers connected to this question is presented on *Pictures 38 and 39*.

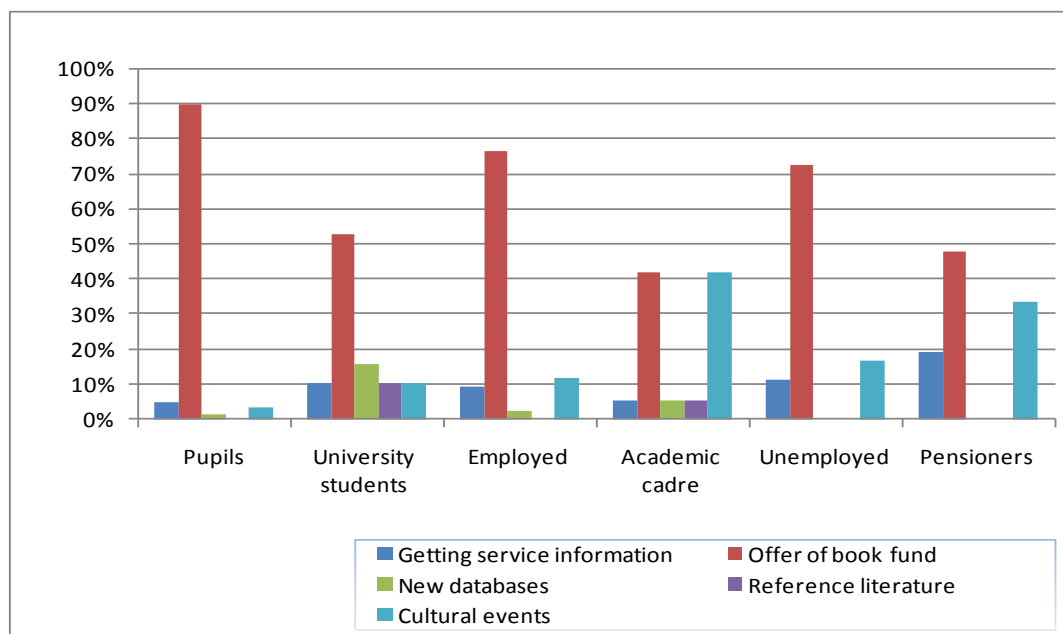


Picture38



Picture 39

According to the category of users – 90% of the pupils, 76% of the employed users, 72% of the unemployed users have considered the changes in *the library stock*; however but at these categories there is no consideration of changes in the reference literature. Only 11% of the university students and 5% of the academic cadre suggest changes in the offer of *the reference literature*. 42% of the academic cadre and 33% of the pensioners has recommended change of cultural manifestations and events. *Picture 40*.

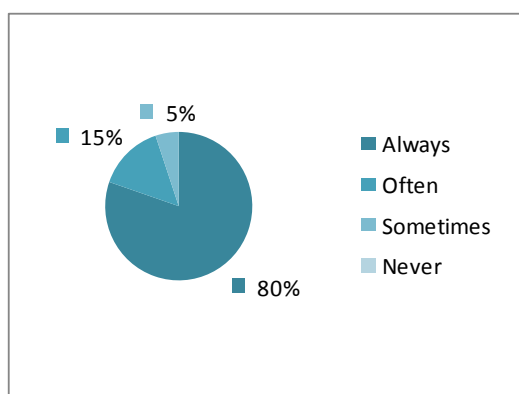


Picture 40

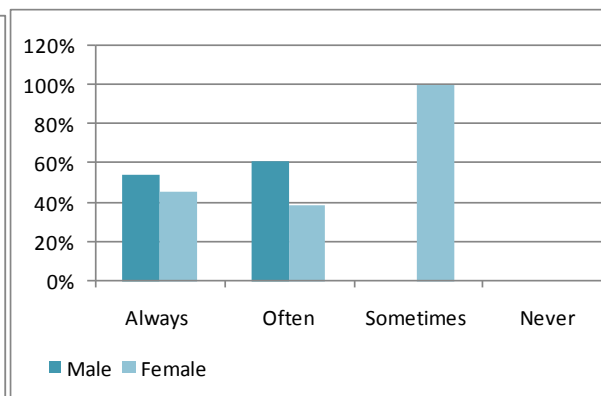
5.6. THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARIAN IN SATISFYING USER NEEDS

In the attempt to make the information more available for the user, important role has the behavior of the librarian in the information service has an important role, actually, one has to examine the relation librarian-user, the direct communication of the librarian with the user has many specifics, coming from the skills and knowledge of the librarian (Karadžoska, 2004).

Consequently, we are obliged to pose the question: *Does the service of the librarian help you in satisfying your needs?* The answers to this question are presented on *Picture 41*. It can be seen that 80% of the respondents are very satisfied, stating that the librarian *always* helps them; for the other options the percents are smaller – 15% with answer *often* and 5% with answer *sometimes*. There is no respondent that has declared that *never* for getting help from the librarian. This question refers to the personal experience of the respondents at the communication with the librarians and their readiness to help the users. The gender distribution for the different answers can be seen on *Picture 42*.

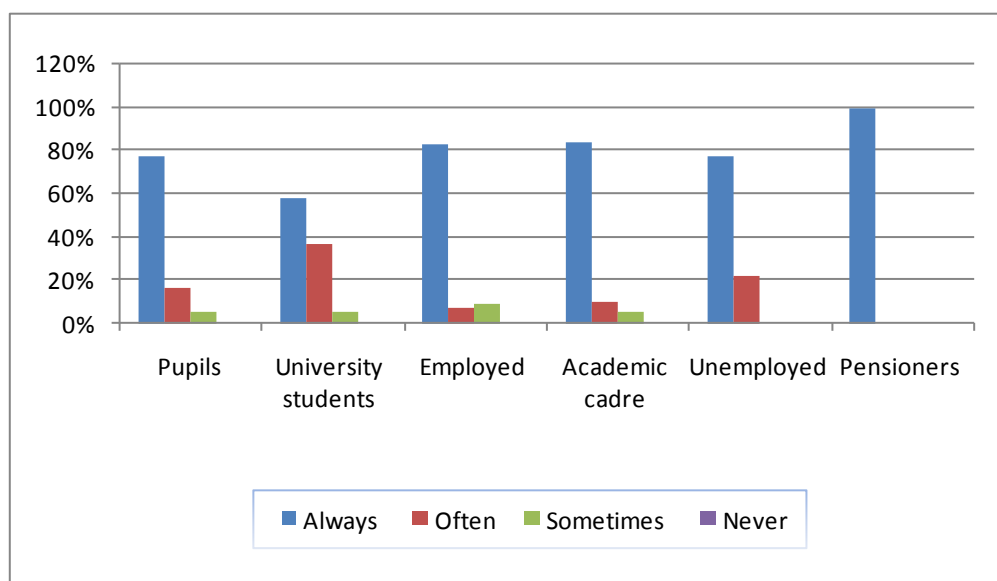


Picture 41



Picture 42

The distribution of the answers according to the category of users is presented on *Picture 43*. Relatively high percent of all categories has answered with *always*. There are 37% of the university students and 22% of the unemployed users, who have answered with *often*. For the answer *sometimes* the percent at all categories is very small.

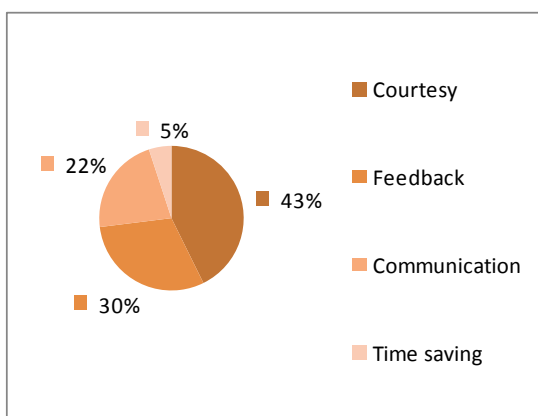


Picture 43

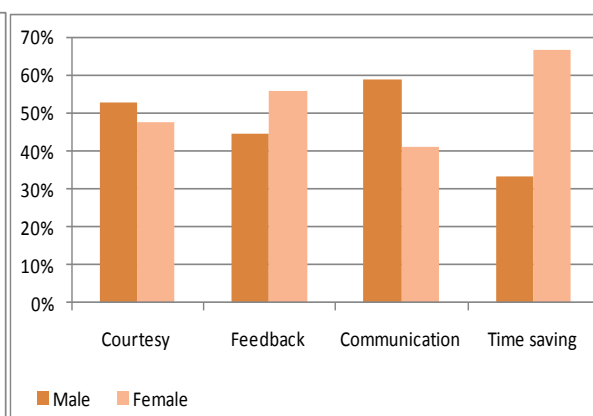
Of particular interest for this research is the consideration to the relation and communication between the librarian and the user. The following question examines how the users estimate the act of communicating with the librarian. The research shows that the biggest percent has the option of *courtesy* 43%, followed by then the option

of feedback 30%, communication 22% and the smallest percent of 5% for the option of time-saving. *Picture 44.*

According to the gender, male respondents have the highest percent in the answer for communication 59%, and the female respondents showed highest percent in the answer referring to for time-saving 67%. *Picture 45.*

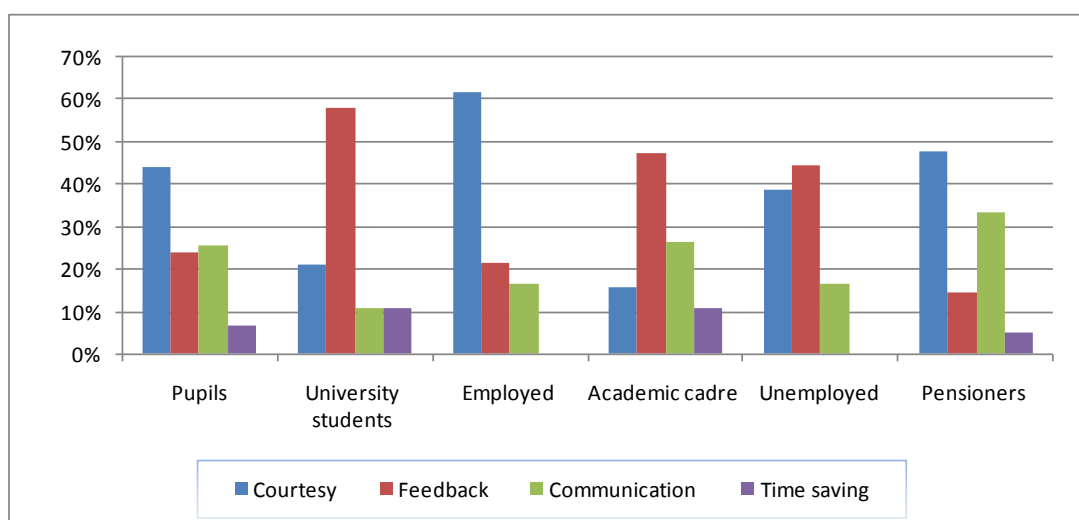


Picture 44



Picture 45

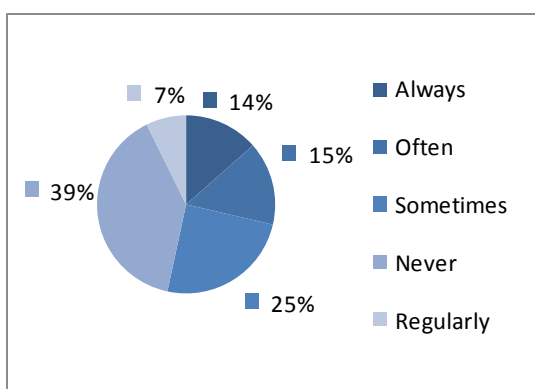
According to the category of users the estimation is given on *Picture 46*, where it can be seen that the employed respondents are the ones that mostly pay attention to the courtesy (62%). The time-saving has the smallest percent at all categories of respondents. In general, the courtesy and the feedback have a notable higher percent at all categories. That shows what the users expect and appreciate at the service of a librarian.



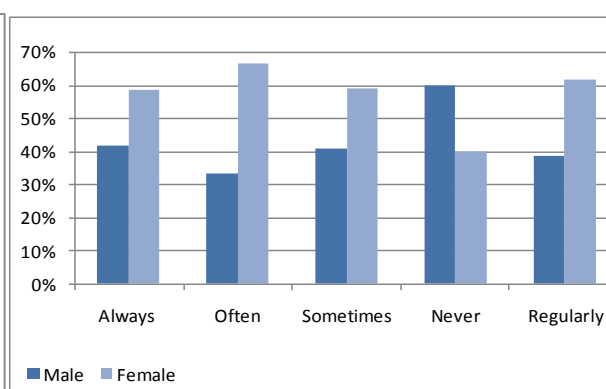
Picture 46

5.7. USING THE WEB PAGE OF THE LIBRARY

The next research question was: *How often do you use the web page of your library when you search for an information?* The results have showed us that the majority of the respondents do not use the web page of the library. There are 39% of the respondents who *never* use the web page of the library (60% males, 40% females). There is a small percent of users who use it *often* 15%, *regularly* 7% or *always* 14%. *Pictures 46 and 47.*

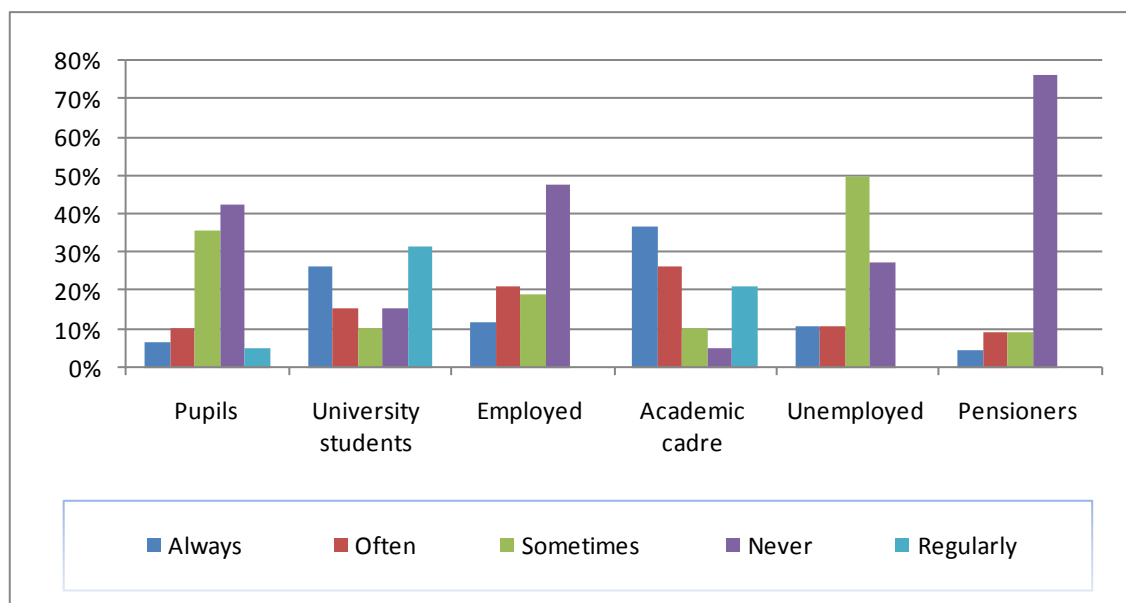


Picture46



Picture 47

The category of academic cadre is the most interested one for using the web page of the library (37% with answer *always*), the pensioners are the least interested (5% with answer *always*). The answer *sometimes* is noted by 50% of the unemployed respondents and 10% of the pensioners. The web page of the library is *never* used by 76% of the pensioners, 48% of the employed respondents, and 42% of the pupils. Visiting the web page on a regular basis is noted by 32% of the university students. *Picture 48.*

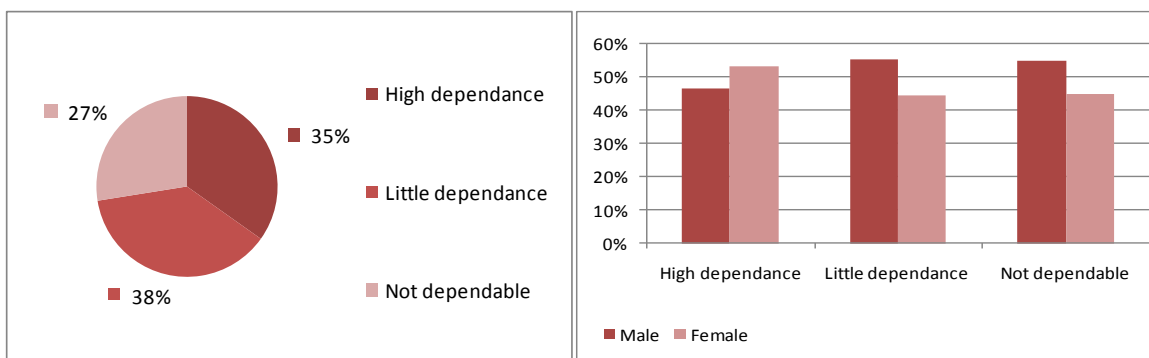


Picture 48

5.8. THE ROLE OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGY

In regard to the question concerning the interest of the new technology *Are your needs dependable on the new technology in the library service?* the respondents had three short options. Here, the respondents were asked to give their opinion on how the new time and the new technology in the libraries influence the way on which the library needs are satisfied.

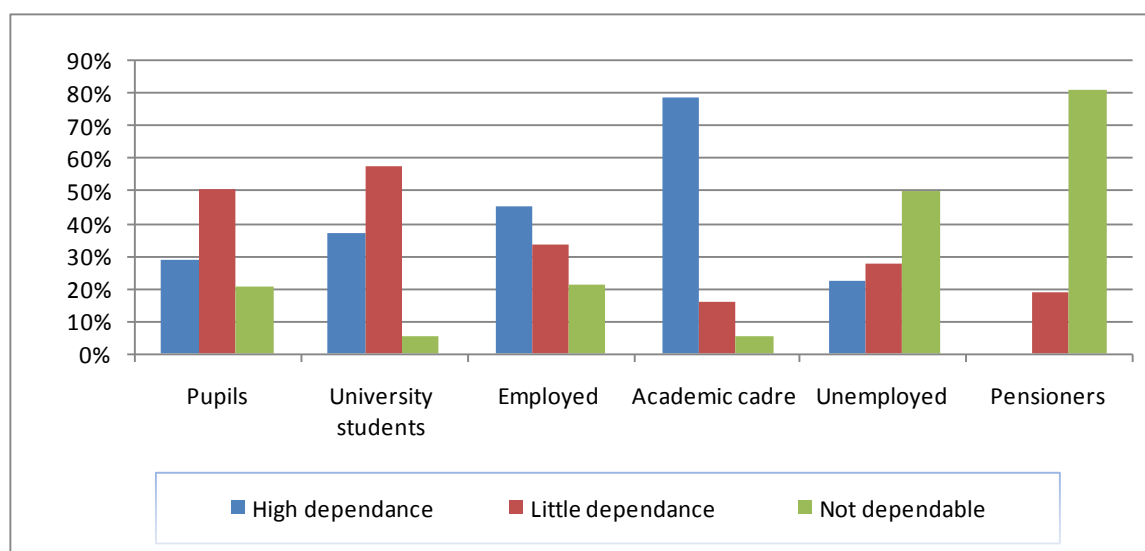
Of total 178 respondents 35% see *high dependence* on the new technology, 38% see *small dependence* and 27% see *no technological dependence*. *Picture 49*. There are no significant differences in the gender distribution of the answers. *Picture 50*. The results show that the increase in information available on the Web has affected information seeking behavior.



Picture49

Picture 50

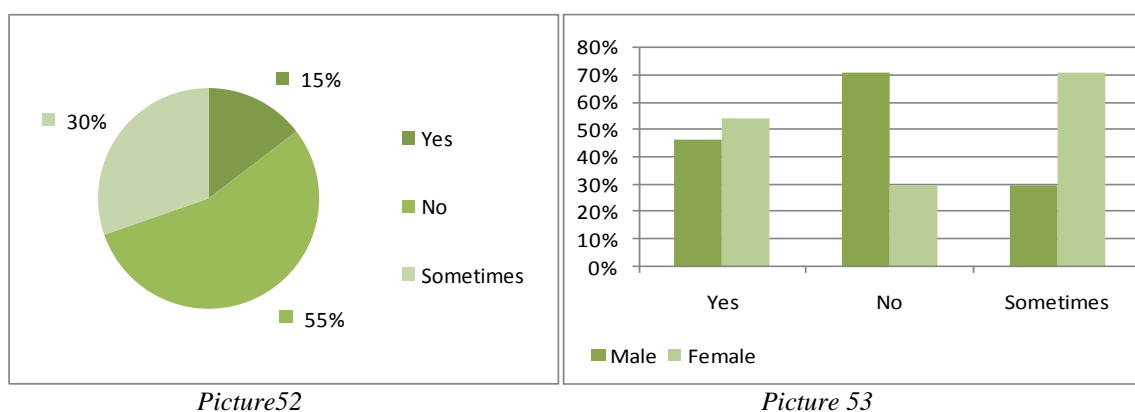
According to the category of users, for 79% of the academic cadre the library needs are *highly dependable* on the new technology; for 81% of the pensioners the library needs are *not dependable* at all; *little dependence* is seen by 58% of the university students and 51% of the pupils. *Picture 51.*



Picture 51

In the era of information and knowledge revolution, this question affects every category of users of the library services. It discovers a new dimension, in a way of open possibilities of the new time and the new technology for the users. But the way in which every category considers and absorbs the possibilities dependent on the individual interest, capacity and need.

When we asked the question: *Do you use the online catalogue (OPAC) for your library needs?* One can notice that the use of the online catalogue OPAC by the library users is very limited. There are many of the respondents that are not even aware of what OPAC is. Most of the libraries in Macedonia have improved their services with the automation and the necessary equipment, but they not have successfully informed their users about the implemented changes and programs. Many libraries instructions ad explanations of the way OPAC is used, but still the number of users who are informed about the self-using of this program is very small. On *Picture 52* is presented the interest of the respondents to use OPAC.

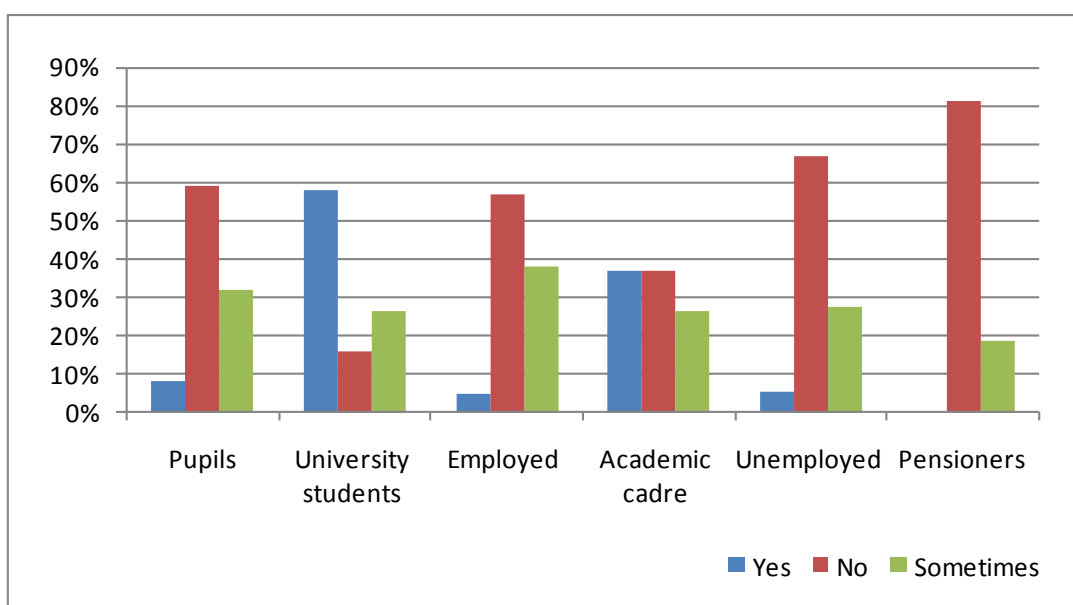


On *Picture 53* we can see that the female users are more interested to use the online catalogue. From those users who have answered positively on this question 54% are females; the higher percent (70%) of those who use OPAC *sometimes* belongs to females, too. On the basis of these results it can be concluded that the female population is more informed about the way of using this program.

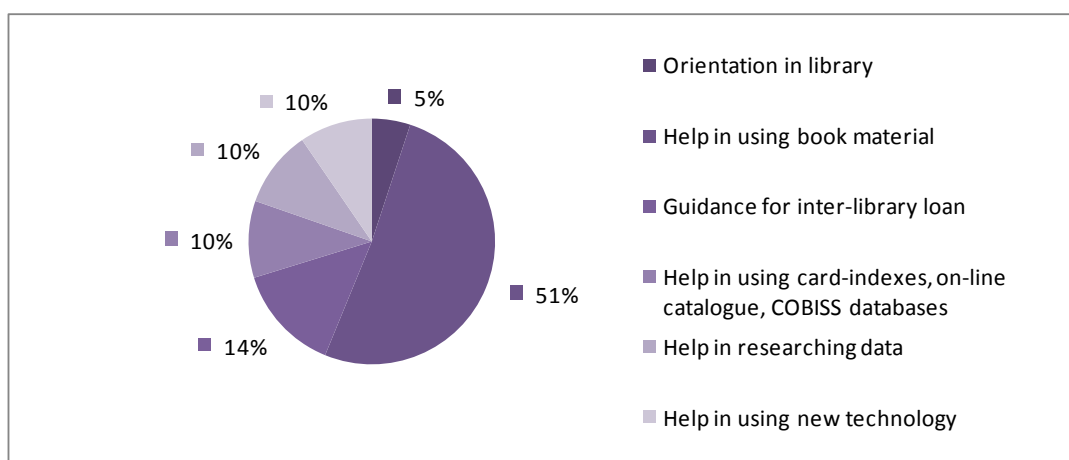
As categories of users which are already familiar with this database and find it for useful are the university students (58%) and the academic cadre (37%). Only 5% of the employed users have answered positively on this question. The online catalogue OPAC has never been used by 81% of the pensioners, 67% of the unemployed users and 59% of the pupils; it is *sometimes* used by 38% of the employed users and 19% of the pensioners. *Picture 54.*

However, these data is very useful in taking steps toward the creating of a next generation library.

What kind of assistance do you expect from the librarians for a more efficient need-satisfaction? The behavior of the librarians and the help they offer to the users plays a very important role. Hence, this question should be an important indicator of the user's expectations about the services offered by the librarian in the library. The majority of the respondents (51%) have a need of *help in using the book material*; only 5% of the respondents needs a help with *orientation in the library*. *Picture 55.*



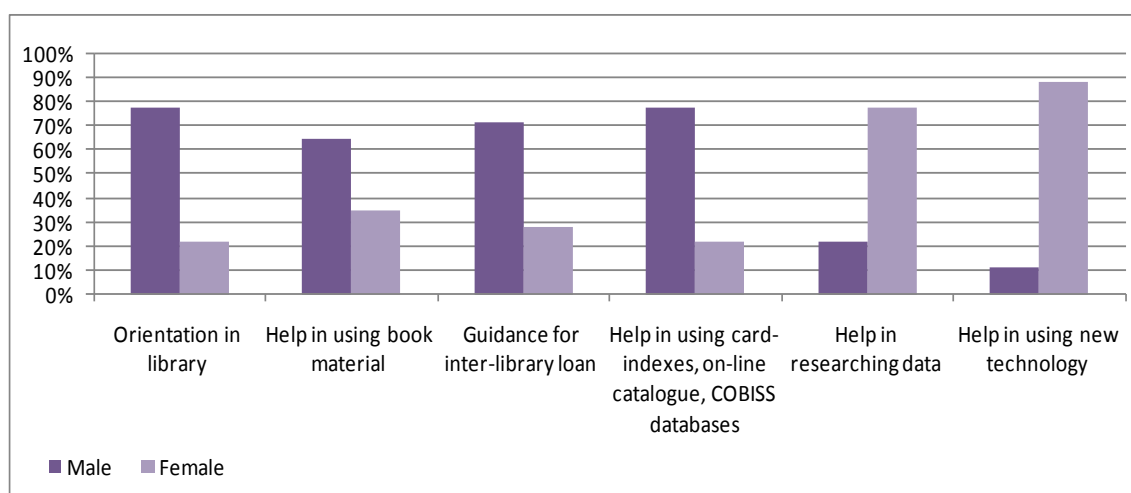
Picture 54



Picture 55

The graph representing on *Picture 55*, shows that 15% of the respondents would like to know more about *guidance for inter-library loan*, the service that the library offers to them for an optimal realization of the users' needs.

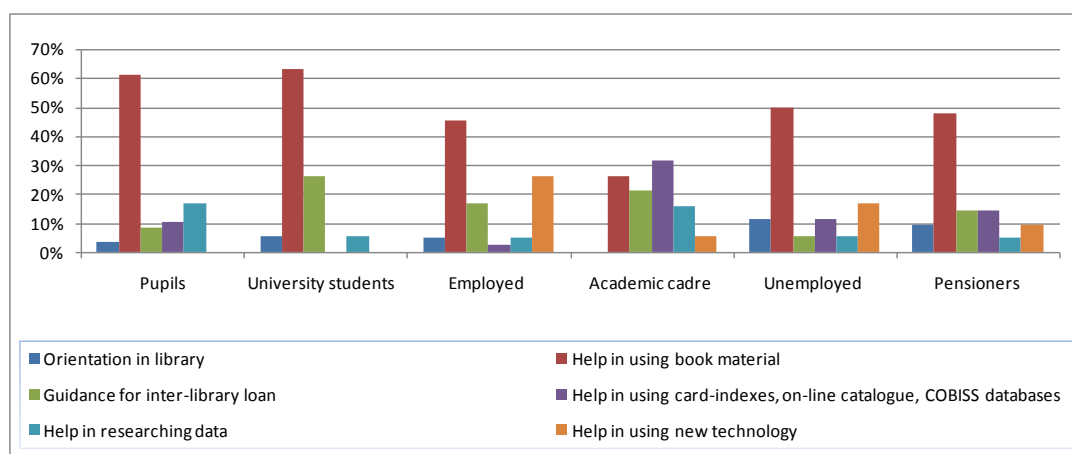
Females are the majority of respondents (88%) who need a *help in using new technology*. This shows that the female population has more (or admits to have more) difficulties or insufficient knowledge for the new technology in the library. They are also the majority of those who require *help in researching data* (78%). We can notice the majority of male respondents (78%) for *orientation in library* and *need of using card-indexes, on-line catalogue, COBISS database* are male. *Picture56*.



Picture 56

From the aspect of category of users 63% of the university students and 61% of the pupils have showed a need of *help in using the book material*. The same categories of users have not showed a need of help in using the new technology. The employed respondents have expressed their need of *help in using the new technology* with 26%; the university students with 26% and the academic cadre with 21% need guidance for *inter-library loan*. The need of *help in using card-indexes, on-line catalogue, COBISS database* is expressed mostly at the academic cadre with 32%, but with only 2% at the employed users. The *help of researching data* is required by 17% of the pupils, 16% of the academic cadre, 6% of the unemployed users and 5% of the university students, the employed users and the

pensioners. Such percentage could result from two different situations; difficulties in researching data are overcome for certain category of users (category of university students), or certain category of users does not have interest or need to research data at all (category of pensioners). *Picture 57.*



Picture 57

5.9. SUGGESTIONS BY THE USERS

What kind of library material would you like to have on disposal in your library; for which categories do you think that there is a lack of literary material in your library?

During the survey, the users had a possibility to express their suggestions and ideas about the usage of all library resources. The various suggestions are dependent on the user's gender and profession, as well as on the individual attitude and interest. Additionally, the respondents were given an option to suggest changes and list specific needs for their libraries. Interestingly, the majority of respondents gave almost the same or similar suggestions to the library. Namely, the users were asked to write their suggestions about the fields of literature, other kinds of literature that they would like to be on a disposal in the library, professional books, availableness and so on. From the results we can notice the following:

- The most of the respondents require professional literature predominantly in the fields of psychology and religion. It is interesting that not many respondents require literature in the field of political and natural sciences.
- The most noticeable requirements were the opens for literature in German language, school-books publications and bestsellers from the world literature.
- Additionally, some users expressed need for newer and more available encyclopedic publications, dictionaries and vocabularies.
- The availability of the library fund is important to the respondents – they suggest open access to the library stock.

Most of the respondents gave suggestions connected with the membership fees in the libraries. They suggest free membership for all users, easier access to the new publications of recognized publishing houses, better and more enhanced computer equipment, as well as more efficient inter-library loan. And the most prominent suggestion is the need and requirement of bigger and better arranged space in the libraries, as well as more creative and innovative events and activities that will help develop the role of the future-generation libraries in Macedonia.

6. DISCUSSION

According to the findings, it would appear that most of the users have same or similar reasons to visit the public libraries: borrowing books, reading journals, communication with the librarian, reading-room, promotion of books, using Internet, inter-library loan.

Out of total 200 questionnaires, 178 were filled out; a result that emphasizes the need of help by qualified librarians or their instruction for a more complete picture of this survey. The respondents answered individually, but there were not complete answers, which shows a small interest for participation and more completed answers. It is interesting that only few respondents have given their comments about the library fund and their satisfaction, in general.

During the composing of the questionnaire we were faced with the following problems: the absence of coordination in services, departments and reading-rooms in all libraries. In particular, this problem was magnified in the libraries where the access to the fund is closed, where only one reading-room works, and where the same space is used for all the different occasions. The problem with the space is present in several of the libraries that were included in this research. Therefore, the questions were composed in a way to be related with the common departments and services, which are shared by most of the libraries.

The research shows that the most of the respondents expressed high level of satisfaction on the already offered services and contents. Some of them give their own suggestions for improvement. The politeness of the librarians ranked highest as a reason for satisfaction. Contrary, the main reason for dissatisfaction was a long waiting period for inter-library loan. Good percentage of the users has not visited the web page of the library indicated need of guidance, instructions and promotion of the service and events.

The research has showed that the users have a need of modern technique in the libraries. The conditions of the public libraries in Macedonia are not same for all of them. Besides the space, which is one of the most important elements for implementation of the new technique, there is also the library staff, which should follow all news, visit courses and trainings in order to be able to help the users in the realizing of their needs. The majority of users have had an occasion and chance to visit other libraries, which enables them to make comparison with the offering of their home library.

The number of members in all five libraries shows us a small number of users at annual level and moderate number of daily visits.

The needs of the information society and the developing scientific strategy confront the libraries in Macedonia with new, specific assignments and challenges. There is an obvious need of users for the library service; to develop a strategy for improvement and implementation of new databases, to improve the spatial conditions and library stock and to market the existing services, events and changes: The implementation of the

communication technology in the libraries enables the users to research the Internet and databases.

The users' needs in the age of information society show upward trend, which is a witness of a new hearing (needful and inevitable) in the sphere of modern technology. Still, this wave captures the category of users, who grow up, develop themselves and have a need of personal and professional advancements. There is a category of users who have no connection to these changes, for example at a part of the unemployed users; it can be assumed that it is a result of insufficient interest or motivation and personal attitudes.

The data analysis of the questionnaires indicates that the need of library for the pensioners, as a special category of users, is connected to the promotions, daily press and the need of collections of books and journals.

The most numerous categories of users in this research are the pupils 32%; their needs of the library are connected with their school requirements - borrowing books and researching through the Internet.

The using of the reading-room in every library is different. It is connected with the space and specific purpose of the reading-room. For example, in the Public library "Grigor Prlicev", Ohrid, the reading-room is a place for promotions, reading daily press, further on serves as a reading-room for students, and there is also placed the department of native publications and the rare library fund. The reading-rooms are mostly used for daily press, reading and promotions.

The analysis has showed that the employed and unemployed respondents as separate categories of users have different view of the library in realizing of their needs. Namely, the employed users use all services of the library and they look for more sophisticated services for their needs, collections of books and journals and dictionaries. It seems that this category of users makes efforts to follow the new time and to be in step with the new technology in order to achieve personal developments.

The technical equipment of the libraries in Macedonia, using the web connection and automation, which is in final phase, should approach the library to all categories of users, becoming inseparable part of their daily life. In that way, the libraries should strive for a complete realization of this process, to adjust their services with the users' needs, to attract as more users as possible and to retain the current ones.

The public library is a community center that provides knowledge and information to its users and community members. A successful library is a dynamic organization that partners with the other community organizations in order to meet the varied and changing needs of its users. Due to the impact of information technology libraries need to be more alert to fulfill the needs of their users. In the age of Information and Communication Technology libraries are faced with the following challenges: budget cuts, increased user base, rapid growth of stock, increased costs, networking demands.

For the public libraries to survive the competition we have the following recommendations:

- Increased number of visits and demands of different services can bring the library closer to its mission – place of meetings for all generations of users; enrichment and enhancement of the cultural life;
- Enhancement of technical equipment in the libraries, network connections between them, data automation, with which the library would reach all kinds of users and educational institutions;
- The needs of users to keep a pace with the social and technological development in the sphere of library activity i.e. their function in the public libraries in Macedonia.
- Implementation of marketing techniques to understand the needs of their users and to plan effectively to meet their needs and requirements.

Libraries should consider the category of non-users of services, to attract potential users. Need to discover who they are, to touch them and to take steps to bring them to the library. Their attraction can be realized in different ways, such as organizing courses for

computers, reading children bedtime tales, language courses, educational lectures from different areas, and similar content.

7. CONCLUSION

The major objective of library or information system is to satisfy the information needs of its users. This study covers analysis of the users' needs in certain public libraries in the Republic of Macedonia. The analysis of the results has indicated that the needs of the users are very diverse. Similarly, frequency of library use differs for different category of users. For example; pupils have the highest rate on library use and are dominant and the most frequent users. Their library need is mostly seen in borrowing books. The change in the needs of the library users in accordance with the new technology is mostly noticed at the academic cadre, the students and the pupils. It is an indicator that these categories of users express their needs of the library in all its segments. They are real part of the information society and have demands from the library service to adjust and implement all novelties, which contribute for a more efficient satisfying of their needs. Exactly these users exceed the classical border of the traditional library and move it forward as information institution.

Fundamental objective of traditional libraries in Macedonia has always been and will be to satisfy the information needs of their users. With increase in availability of information and the increase in the volume of publication, users are faced with the need to master the new complexity in the methods by which information is organized and disseminated. The new interfaces open multiple ways of accessing and presenting the information and, due to the digitization of libraries; they can view the documents in different formats in the electronic information environment, requiring only few mouse clicks. Needless to say, the electronic resources have created many advantages for the users, easing for them, considerably, the learning process. At the same time, the increasing technology has created need for building more intensive interactivity between the user and the library. Librarians are increasingly expected customize the service, to assist and educate each user. If the traditional library is based on observing the new technologies for

establishment of collective calls, the modern libraries in Macedonia are going through the process of implementation of the referential data through electronic sources.

The most frequent users in the researched libraries are those users that are interested to read the daily press and to be present on some cultural manifestations and events. Research shows that the academic cadre and the students mostly use the method of browsing through the databases. In this context, the pupils are the primary users of the Internet. Regretfully, the survey does not give a complete picture of the users' needs. One of the disadvantages of this research is that the number of the respondents is defined and there is not equal representation of every category of users. Also, this survey does not include potential and long-distance users. The results indicate obvious existence of some deficiency at both sides: the users and the library service. The users are showing obvious signs of insufficient motivation or the monotony in the way of satisfying their needs. Most of their responses are connected with the space of some public libraries. Probably the limited space and the system of counter service play their role in the request of the users for quick service limited expectations. On the other hand, the librarians are aware of this situation and they make efforts to improve this condition. Regretfully, the librarians have very limited possibilities to take the matter in their hands (due to lack of finances, space and human recourses).

The research shows that the Macedonian libraries have very small number of members per capita. The increasing of technology, gives an excellent opportunity to attract new users and attract membership. The Internet allows to offer new, innovative services to those users who are not available to visit the library physically or do not want to use the library in traditional sense. The libraries are faced with several fundamental questions; what should they do in order to attract more and more users, to have as many as possible visits and in what manner we should meet the growing expectations and requirements of the users.

Macedonian libraries should reexamine if they do the work in a good professional manner and if they follow all new trends in this field. Through different activities, questioners, suggestion boxes and comment they should find out if the public is truly aware of the work and services they offer? The survey results indicate that users are under

assumption that the libraries are still only a place for borrowing books. It is evident that there are many people who do not know what the library can do for them, thus libraries should take advantage of the public relations and promotion.

With regards to marketing and public relation, it is recommended that public libraries should promote their activities through journal, bulletin board, and library web sites. Library web sites can cover information about the library, its activities, collections, online databases and methods of access. It is also recommended to incorporate the news which is interesting to the users. Suggestions for future research are related to the limitation of this study.

Additionally, it should be interesting to investigate if the libraries are sustainable and even more, if there is an economic justification for the existence of the libraries on a local and a national level. There are many other questions, which should be answered. This research is only an attempt to initiate suggestions and to enhance the motivation for their additional future research. The research for the needs of users in the libraries in Macedonia will give data for easier decision making, considering the expectations and views of the users. The weight of the research is directed towards collecting data, opinions and information that would help to evaluate the working of the libraries, on the one hand, and what needs the users have, on the other hand. The goal is the libraries in Macedonia to become modern public services, always accessible and improved with technological and human resources, achieving the standards of other European libraries.

The traditional library in Macedonia exists alongside with the automation and the new technology. But the libraries in 21 century could change very fast and keep their significance in the information society, as a society of long-life learning.

New trends in the world lead to a transformation of the libraries in multicultural centers (social, informational and cultural). In this way the library becomes a center for information exchange and establishment of communication of the most various kinds.

The libraries depend on their users and they are in a close relation of collaboration; therefore it is necessary to show more understanding of actual and future needs of the users, to satisfy the requirements and to overcome their expectations. To achieve that, it is unavoidable for the librarians to follow the new occurrences in the information conditions around them, to improve their previously acquired knowledge and to gain new skills.

The realized research for users' needs in the public libraries, in the development of the new information age, as well as the data analysis should have practical value and to represent a good foundation for the libraries to take on activities and greater obligations in the sphere of their working.

We could only hope that the economic development of the Republic of Macedonia would enable the library users to develop their needs for library services on a greater educational level in an adjustment and correlation with the using of the services in a higher degree of information literacy at all ages of users.

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9. APPENDIX

SURVEY ON USERS AND THEIR NEEDS IN SOME OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN MACEDONIA

Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please fulfill this anonymous questionnaire, with which we would like to get information on your needs and their satisfaction, when you visit the library.

The acquired data will be an indicator for the library's condition, the level of quality of the library service, its organization and the extent to which the library, with its collections and services, meet your needs.

It is useful to see the library through the prism of its users!

1. In which category of users do you belong?

- Pupils and high-school students
- University students
- Employed
- Academic cadre
- Unemployed
- Pensioners
- Other, describe: _____

Library _____

- Gender: male ___ female ___

2. How often do you visit the library?

- Every day
- Once a week
- Several times a month
- Once a month
- Occasionally

3. Please state your reason for coming to the library?

- Borrowing books

- Learning
- Need and use of journals
- Daily press
- Need of dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases
- Searching through catalogues, seeking specific, concrete information
- Searching through Internet or available databases
- Promotion of a book, exhibition, cultural event
- Curiosity

4. For satisfying your needs, what services and information sources do you use?

(Check those answers that correspond to your needs)

- Borrowing books in:
 - Children department
 - Adults department
- Need of:
 - Journal collections
 - Translations of accredited authors (Project of Government of the Republic of Macedonia)
 - Old and rare books collections
 - Other kinds of collections
- Reading room
 - For daily press
 - For learning
 - For promotions
- Databases
 - CD-ROM
 - ON LINE
 - COBISS.MK
 - Internet browsing

5. Did you find today the information you were looking for in the library?

- Yes
- No
- Partly

6. According to you, getting the information you need in your library is:

- Easy
- Difficult
- I cannot tell

7. In what extent does the offered material meet your needs and demands?

1

2

3

4

5

(does not satisfy)

(does satisfy)

(Please encircle a number)

8. The books in the library mostly are:

- New
- Old
- Very old

9. If you cannot find what you are looking for, then you:

- Ask for a help
- Go to another library
- Search information from home
- Quit

10. When you need help, usually you get it by:

- Professional help
- Researching on your own
- Catalogues
- Online catalogue OPAC
- Internet

11. How do you estimate the accessibility to the library stock of your library?

- Open access
- Closed access
- Partly available access

12. Make a comparison of the offered book material for the last five years.

- Enriched
- Same
- I do not know

13. Please state where you feel at most the changes in satisfying your needs.

- Getting service information
- Offer of library stock
- New databases
- Reference literature
- Cultural events

14. Does the service of the librarian help you in satisfying your needs?

- Always
- Often
- Sometime
- Never

15. Your satisfaction on the communication with the librarian, when you have a need of the services in library, you estimate with:

- Courtesy
- Feedback
- Communication
- Time saving

16. How often do you use the web page of your library when you search for an information?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
- Regularly

17. Are your needs dependable on the new technology in library service?
(using on-line databases, Internet, CD-ROM)

- A lot
- A little
- Not dependable

18. Do you use the online catalogue (OPAC) for your library needs?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

19. What kind of help do you expect from the librarians for a more efficient need-satisfying?

- Orientation in library
- Help in using book material
- Guidance for inter-library loan
- Help in using card-indexes, on-line catalogue, COBISS databases
- Help in researching data
- Help in using new technology

20. What kind of library material would you like to have on disposal in your library; for which categories do you think that there is a lack of literary material?

(Type of magazines, literature, professional literature, literature on foreign language, what language...)

Thank you for the collaboration!

Statement of authorship

I hereby declare that the proposed masters thesis is in its entirety my own author work and that the used sources and literature are referenced in accordance with international standards and valid legislation.

Ljubljana, December 2012

Mariche Bozdoganova
(signature)

Statement of the candidate

With my signature I MARICHE BOZDOGANOVA declare that the content of the masters thesis in printed and electronic form is identical and that it can be published on faculty's website.

Date: December 21th, 2012.

Candidate's signature: