Public Libraries in Palestine: Reality and Solutions

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Abstract
This study examined the current status of 53 public libraries in Palestine established by both the municipalities and NGO's,in orderto find out the extent of the services provided by these libraries in the following areas: location, size, furniture, equipment, staff, users and resources. This study also aimed to identify the difficulties that hinder these libraries from performing their functions. The study used the survey method based on three questionnaires. The first one was sent to the director of each public library, while another survey was given to the clients and users of these libraries. The third survey was given to members of the general public who do not use libraries in order to gauge public awareness concerning libraries and to discern how to attract the public to come to libraries in order to find reading material. The researcher also visited some of these libraries to interview employees in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Palestinian public libraries. The results of this study will assist libraries to achieve a leading role in Palestinian society. This study was analyzed in collaboration with SPARK Consulting & Training Center.

المكتبات العامة الفلسطينية: حقيقتها ومستقبلها

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المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على واقع المكتبات العامة في فلسطين وعددها (53) مكتبة والتي تشرف عليها البلديات والمنظمات غير الحكومية، لغرض التعرف على هذه المكتبات والخدمات التي تقدمها من حيث: البناء، الموقع والحجم والأثاث والأجهزة والموظفين والمستخدمين والبرامج التي تستخدمها ومواردها . كما تهدف هذه الدراسة أيضا إلى كشف الصعوبات التي عملت على إعاقة عمل هذه المكتبات ومحاولة وضع الحلول المناسبة ومعالجتها . اعتمدت الدراسة منهجية المسح والزيارة الميدانية، ومقابلة مدراء المكتبات. وكذلك استخدم الباحث ثلاث استبانات لدراسة واقع المكتبات العامة في فلسطين : الاولى أرسلت إلى مدراء المكتبات العامة للتعرف على أبنية المكتبة ،تجهيزاتها، مقتنياتها وادارتها، فيما وجهت الاستبانة الثانية للرواد ومستخدمي هذه المكتبات لجمع البيانات لتقييم أدائها وخدماتها، وقد تم زيارة بعض هذه المكتبات ومقابلة موظفيها مما سمح بالاطلاع على جاهزية عمل هذه المكتبات وتحديد نقاط القوة والضعف في المكتبات العامة الفلسطينية، وأيضا من أجل الوصول الى نتائج تمكننا من العمل على دعم هذه المكتبات وتفعيل دورها الريادي في المجتمع الفلسطيني. أما الاستبانة الثالثة كانت موجهة لغير المستفيدين من خدمات المكتبات لمعرفة نسبة العازفين عن استخدامها والتعرف على أسباب عزوفهم بهدف ايجاد السبل الكفيلة بتشجيعهم على استخدام هذا النوع من المكتبات .

Introduction:

Public libraries represent the values of liberal democracy, open access to knowledge, and equality. Recent challenges to public library service have opened an international dialogue about what the public library means as an institution in society. The author Neil Gaiman recently referred to the public library as a place that is about freedom: freedom to read, freedom of communication (Gaiman, 2013). Debates about whether public libraries are valuable repositories of knowledge and social values or outdated and unnecessary have shown how the public library inspires a passionate response and is valued (or denigrated) as an institution **(Prewster,2014).**

Public libraries are local centers of information; they provide channels of knowledge and information to users. In addition, they promote literacy and the pure enjoyment of reading and constitute a place where people go to get information, whether for leisure, for study, or for work.

Public libraries lie at the heart of their communities. They help to create a sense of belonging and respond to the needs of the people who use them. They celebrate cultural diversity, and they help promote understanding between different cultural groups. Public libraries provide opportunities for lifelong learning. They help children and young people develop imagination and creativity, and they give adults the opportunity to learn about their cultural heritage, and about the arts, science, and technology **(Berryman,2005**).

The primary purpose of establishing a public library is to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the requirements of individuals and groups for education, information, and personal development. Moreover, public libraries have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas, and opinions.

Socially, the public library has an important role as a public space and meeting place. This is particularly important in communities where there are few places for people to meet. It is sometimes called "the drawing room of the community."Using the library for research and for finding information relatedto the user's education and leisure interests brings people into informal contact with other members of the community. Using the public library can be a positive social experience.

Historical Background

It is undoubtablethat Palestine has a longlegacy in libraries, starting in 1826 during the Ottoman era. In this period, libraries promoted the dissemination of cultural and political works, as well as the works of Palestinian religious leaders.

In the early 1950s, libraries were neglected due to the Israeli occupation which forcedmany Palestinians to leave their cities and villages in the famous calamity. In fact a large spectrum of libraries werevandalizedor destroyedat the hands of Israelis; such as the Sheikh As'adShuqairiLibrary in Acre, and the well knownAl-KhaldyehLibrary in Jaffa. Capricious Israeli policies transferred the most valuable and ancient articlesto Israeli libraries by labeling themass "abandoned property"**(Amit, 2008)**.

Family Libraries

Palestinian family libraries developed from the holdings of manuscripts and books which had been collected over many generations. These private collections were opened to the public, and they continued to be operated by members of the family

There are famous family libraries in Palestine such as the Budeiri Family Library, which went through a period of neglect, but since reopening with new management in 2003, the Budeiri family has been actively maintaining the collection, through preservation, acquisition, cataloging, and digitization initiatives. Also the Al-Khalidi Family Library was the most prominent family library in Palestine. The library holds the largest private collection of manuscripts in Jerusalem **(Bergan,2002).**Another family library is

The Iss'af Nashashibi Center for Culture and Literature which aims to be a resource for scholars throughout Palestine. **(Ghanem,2002).**

Political Background:

Many Palestinian libraries were robbed and destroyed by occupation gangs in 1948; and as a result, many public and private libraries have disappeared and are no longer open. Other libraries were captured and the best books belonging to these libraries were transferred to Israeli libraries. In brief, these libraries were destroyed and robbed in 1948: the Al-Khaldyeh Library in Jaffa, which was owned by a person called Al-Haj Raghib Al-Khaldi; the Darwish Aref al-Dabbagh Library in Jaffa, which had nearly thirty thousand volumes, including is the works of his brother, the poet Ibrahim al-Dabbagh; the Ajaj Noueihed Library, in Jerusalem; the Khalil Beidas Library, the Adil Jabr Library, and the Khalil Sakakini Library were robbed and transferred to the Hebrew University Library, as well as the Isaac Musa Husseini Library, which included nearly 4,000 books and manuscripts; the Mohammed Iss'af Nashashibi Library, in Jerusalem; the Sheikh Mohammed bin Mohammed al-Khalili Library, which contained 7,000 books and manuscripts at that time; the Assad Al-Shoqairee library in Acre, which contained a lot of rare Arabic books; in addition to other libraries **(Badil,2016).**

After the occupation by the Israeli forces in 1967, both private university libraries and public libraries faced confiscation and closure throughout the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. Occupation began during this time to fight Palestinian libraries by preventing the sale of books and the importation of books from abroad.

Public Libraries under the Palestinian Jurisdiction

Public libraries remarkably improved during the period from 1995 to 2000.Politicians had placed public libraries at the top of the list of essential items to be taken care of, while at the same time many non-governmental libraries were being established. This prosperity no longer existed after the beginning of the Second Intifada. Israeli military forces invaded the West Bank cities and robbed and closed some libraries, such as the Ramallah Municipality Library and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) Library. In Gaza, the situationismuch worse after three wars in 2009, 2012, and 2014.The destruction was indescribable, and many libraries have either been closed or destroyed. The Al-Maparrah Library isan illustrative example of Israeli brutality against public libraries.

According to the periodic report published by "PCBS": The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in 2010 **(PCBS,2010)**, thenumber of active public libraries in Palestine is 65,52 of which are located in the West Bank. The other 13 libraries are in the Gaza Strip. The majority are small libraries run by NGO's and international associations. None of these small libraries meet the international standards of the International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) or the standards of the Egyptian public libraries.

Table :1

Governorate	No. of Public Libraries 2010	No. of Public Libraries 2015
Jenin	7	7
Tubas	1	2
Tulkarem	9	3
Nablus	6	4
Qalqilya	2	1
Salfit	2	3
Ramallah	9	3
Jericho	1	2
Jerusalem	3	6
Bethlehem	5	10
Hebron	7	7
North Gaza	4	0
Gaza	2	2
Der Albalah	2	1
Khan Younis	3	1
Rafah	2	1
Total	65	53

Objective of the study

- This study will attempt to summaries the current situation in public libraries in Palestine to find out the power of its services and to explore the weakness.

To highlight the problems faced this types of libraries in this area to adapt a policy may helps the decision makers to find out away in developing & supporting the existence of tThis study will attempt

- To summarize the current situation in Palestinian public libraries to determine the quality of their services and to explore their weaknesses.
- To highlight the problems facing libraries in this area in order to help decision-makers to create policies which support the development of these libraries and their services.
- To explore the role played by Palestinian public libraries as a community information center.
- To determine the availability and the contribution of Palestinian public libraries in continuing self-education opportunities for children and youth.

- To clarify the role played by Palestinian public libraries in promoting the individual's ability to engage in lifelong learning.
- To determine the ability of Palestinian public libraries to encourage reading among all generations.
- To gauge the ability of Palestinian public libraries to support the community's cultural heritage.

Importance of the Study

This study derives its importance from the role played by public libraries in the Palestinian community in the following aspects:

1. According to my knowledge, this is the third study on this subject and the first one in the English Language in the twenty-first century. The study sought to identify the current reality of public libraries in Palestine in terms of their location, spaces and equipment, client and users, staff and services provided by employees in these libraries as well as the difficulties that prevent them from carrying out their duties.

2. This study provides accurate and current information to decision-makers about the status of public libraries in Palestine to assist them in planning the future development of these libraries.

3. This study identifies the role of public libraries in the Palestinian society.

4. This study determines whether these libraries achieve their goals or not.

Limitation of the Study

- The Study covers 24 public libraries in Palestine run and supported by 29 public libraries run by NGO's.
- This study was conducted by Hani Jaber in cooperation with SPARK Consulting & Training Centerin Nablus, Palestine, in August 2016.

Research Questions

The importance of this study lies in determining the availability of public libraries in Palestine and the role played in Palestinian society

1. Does the public libraries' infrastructure enable them to achieve their goals?

2. What is the current status of Palestinian public libraries, in terms of geographical distribution, availability of material, human resources, and services.

3. What reading materialdo they contain, and what technical procedures do theyfollow?

4.What services do the libraries provide, and what ages do they serve?

5.What role dopublic libraries play in cultural, social, and educational activities in Palestinian society, and what are theirimpact onsocietal development?

6.What difficulties dothese libraries face inaccomplishing their objectives?

Definitions:
- **Public Library**: A cultural institution which offers its services free of charge to all segments of society without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, or age. (**Gill,2001**).
- **PCBS**: The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics**.**
- **Library Collections:** Various types of reading material, including traditional and electronic materials, such as books, periodicals, reference works, and other e-materials available in the library.
- **Professional Librarian**: A librarian who works in a library and graduated with a degree in library science.
- **IFLA**: International Federation of Libraries Association.
- **NGO's:** Non-governmental organizations (**NGO's**) are not-for-profit organizations, independent from states and international governmental organizations. They are usually funded by donations, but some avoid formal funding altogether and are run primarily by volunteers.
- **Family Library**: A family library is a private collection which is purchased and maintained by a family in their residence.
- **Databases:** A data base is a collection of information which is organized so that it can easily be accessed, managed, and updated. Databases can be classified according to types of content: bibliographic, full-text, numeric, and images. Usually this term is used for e-Journals, e-Books, and other e-Resources in the library world.
- **Library Collection:** Developing andbuildingprint and other analogue library materials, throughpurchases, exchanges, gifts, and legal deposits, including e-resources.

Methodology

The general methodology used by the study:

A survey scheme, using different phases of implementation, including interviews, was used to achieve the objectives and deliver the outcomes of this study.

The survey team conducted field-visits of fifty-three libraries in different regions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip within the period from February to March 2016. The following table shows the surveyed libraries in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip:

Table:2Surveyed Libraries in Palestine

No.	Library	Governorates
1	**Municipal Public Library of Qabalan**	**Nablus**
2	**Municipal Public Library of Anabta**	**Tulkarem**
3	**Library of the Children's Resources Center**	**Ramallah**
4	**Municipal Public Library of Ramallah**	**Ramallah**
5	**Municipal Public Library of Al-Berieh**	**Ramallah**
6	**Municipal Public Library of Nablus**	**Nablus**
7	**Municipal Public Library of Hewara**	**Nablus**
8	**Municipal Public Library of Beet Foreek**	**Nablus**
9	**Municipal Public Library of Hebron**	**Hebron**

10	Municipal Public Library of Al-Oja	Jericho
11	Municipal Public Library of Jericho	Jericho
12	Municipal Public Library of Tamoon	Tubas
13	Library of Al-Shaheed Faisal Husseini	Jerusalem
14	Library of the Young Women's Leadership Association	Jerusalem
15	Library of Iss'af Al-Nashashibi	Jerusalem
16	Women's Association Library of Beit Safafa	Jerusalem
17	Municipal Public Library of Silwan	Jerusalem
18	Library of the Local Council of Toura Al Garbeyeh	Jenin
19	Municipal Public Library Jenin	Jenin
20	Municipal Public Library KoforRaa'e	Jenin
21	Municipal Public Library Arraba	Jenin
22	Municipal Public Library BaniNaim	Hebron
23	Library of the Children Happiness Center	Hebron
24	Cultural Club Library ofBitualla	Hebron
25	Library of Al-Khalidiya Family	Jerusalem
26	Library of Beit Jebrin Center/Hanthalah	Bethlehem
27	Library of Palestine Children's - Ibda' Center	Bethlehem
28	Library of Palestinian Children's Cultural Center	Bethlehem
29	Municipal Public Library of Beit Jala	Bethlehem
30	Library of Abdel-Qader Abu Nab'a Cultural Center	Salfeet
31	Municipal Public Library of Salfeet	Salfeet
32	Municipal Public Library of Bedea	Salfeet
33	Library of Selat Al-Daher Youth Club	Jenin
34	Library of Young Children of Faqqu'a	Jenin
35	Library of Zababdeh Charity Association	Jenin
36	Municipal Public Library of Dawha	Bethlehem
37	Library of the Pontifical Mission	Bethlehem
38	Municipal Public Library of Tulkarem	Tulkarem
39	Municipal Public Library of DeirGhusson	Tulkarem
40	Municipal Public Library of Battir	Bethlehem
41	Library of Dar Salah Council	Bethlehem
42	Library of Ghirass	Bethlehem
43	Library of Rowwad Association	Bethlehem
44	Municipal Public Library of Tubas	Tubas
45	Municipal Public Library of Khan Younes	Gaza
46	Municipal Public Library of Gaza	Gaza
47	Municipal Public Library of Nusairat/Shaheed Khaled Hussein	Gaza
48	Library of Red Crescent Society/Sheikh Ahmad ZakiJarrah Cultural Center	Gaza
49	Municipal Public Library of Rafah	Gaza
50	Municipal Public Library of Yatta	Hebron
51	Municipal Public Library of Tarqoumia	Hebron
52	Municipal Public Library of Tequa'	Hebron
53	Municipal Public Library of Qalqilya	Qalqilya

Study Instruments

To accomplish the goals of this study, the following instruments were used:

Three questionnaires were developed for this study to collect data about the public libraries in Palestine. The first questionnaire was prepared for users of library services. The second questionnaire was created for the directors of the public libraries in Palestine in order to discover the strengths and weaknesses of their services, staff, building, and collections. The final questionnaire was given to the public at large to see how much Palestinian society is interested in libraries and their activities. In order to establish the validity of this questionnaire, three researchers reviewed the proposed questionnaires. They modified 5 items and added2 items to the first questionnaire, and they dropped 1 item and added 2 to the second questionnaire.

All the questionnaires were written in the Arabic language.

Survey Tool

The questionnaire was divided into three main categories: library needs assessment survey, library user survey, and non-user survey.

A. Library Needs Assessment Survey:

The questionnaire in this category was designed to assess the requirements and needs of the targeted libraries and to build a robust and comprehensive database of public libraries in Palestine. Fifty-three libraries were surveyed and assessed according to the following categories:

1. General information about the library.
2. The current infrastructure and the administrative status.
3. The administrative processes.
4. The number of users utilizing the public library.
5. Accessibility of the location and information.
6. Library resources.
7. Recent library programs and activities.

B. Library User Perception Survey:

This questionnaire measured the level of satisfaction of library users with the services provided by the public libraries, including the following items:

1. General information about the user.
2. The frequency of visiting.
3. Physical accessibility.
4. Sources of information.
5. The main reasons for visiting the public library.
6. Availability of information.
7. Library Working Hours.
8. Amenities.
9.Other facilities (chairs, shelves, etc.).
10.The quality of advisory services.

C. Non-User Survey

To measure the perception of public library non-users, a questionnaire was disseminated and thirty respondents answered whether they were considered as users or non-users of the public library. The items of the questionnaire have been presented as follows:

1. General information of the respondent.
2. The possibility of utilizing public library resources.

3. The reasons why the non-users do not use the public library resources.
4. Suggestions and recommendations to motivate people toregularlyvisitpublic libraries.

Results and Analysis

The results are categorized to cover the results of the public libraries' assessment and public library user and non-users.

Public Libraries' Buildings
The study shows that the majority of Palestinian Public Libraries' (PPL's) buildings are owned by municipalities, whereas 19% of them are rented as shown in Figure 1:
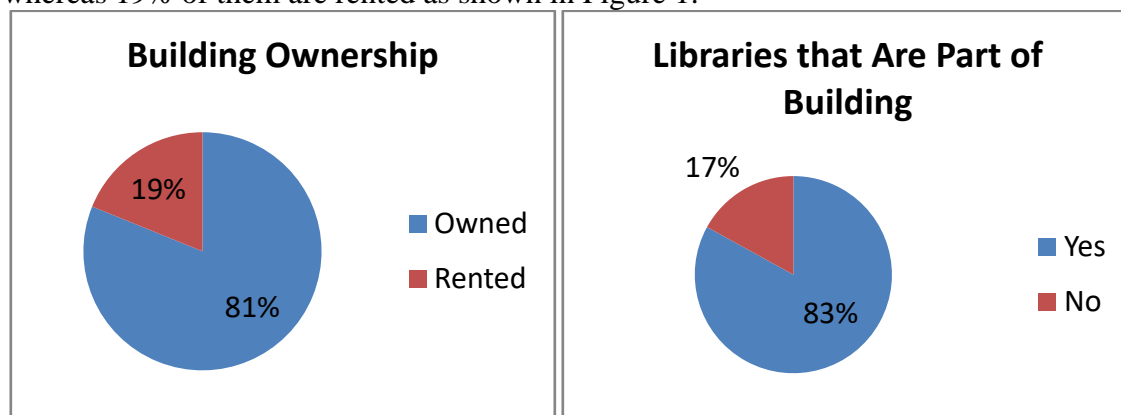
Figure 1: The Library Building:

However, only 17% of the public libraries have an independent building .This would affect plans for future expansion of libraries, since most of these buildings are not designed as libraries. This would also prevent the addition of new sections, departments, or spaces. Most of the libraries are located near the downtown, easy to access and with facilities for special needs.
Moreover, the spaces in the Palestinian public libraries do not match the international standards in terms of the number of users of these libraries.

Organization Structure
The organization structure of public libraries in Palestine suffers from issues which cannot be overlooked. About 50% of PPL's have neither organization structure nor job descriptions for staff. Hence, this leads to inefficiency inproviding services for users.In addition, the conflicts between the staff and the management are noticeable due to unclear responsibilities.

The following figures show the status of both organization structures and job descriptions of the public libraries in Palestine:

The following figures show the status of both; the organization structure and the job description of the public libraries in Palestine:
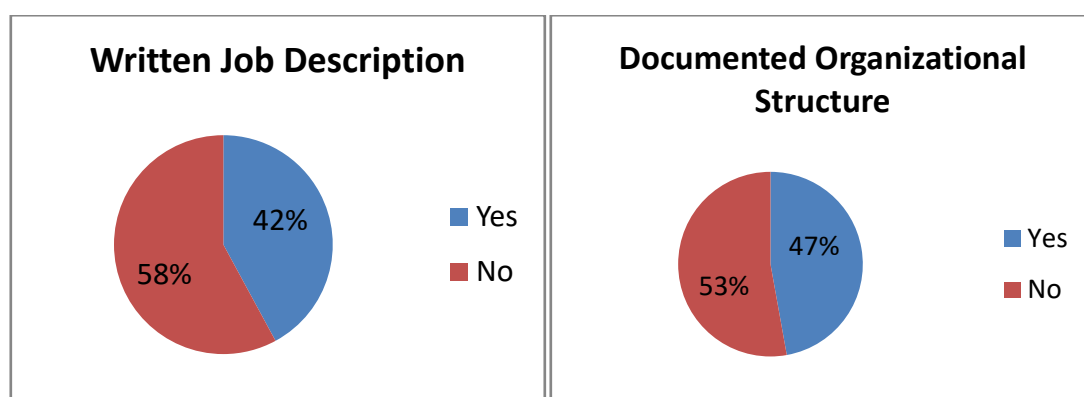
Figure 2: Status of the Organization Structure and the Job Description

Library Departments and Sections

While most PPL's have circulation, cataloging and acquisition, and referencedepartments, most of them lack departments for children's services, IT,and archiving. The small number of staff and the lack ofqualified employees in the libraries prevent the establishment of such departments.

Furthermore, a lack of promotion campaigns aimed towards children play a major role in this gap,as shown in the following figure:
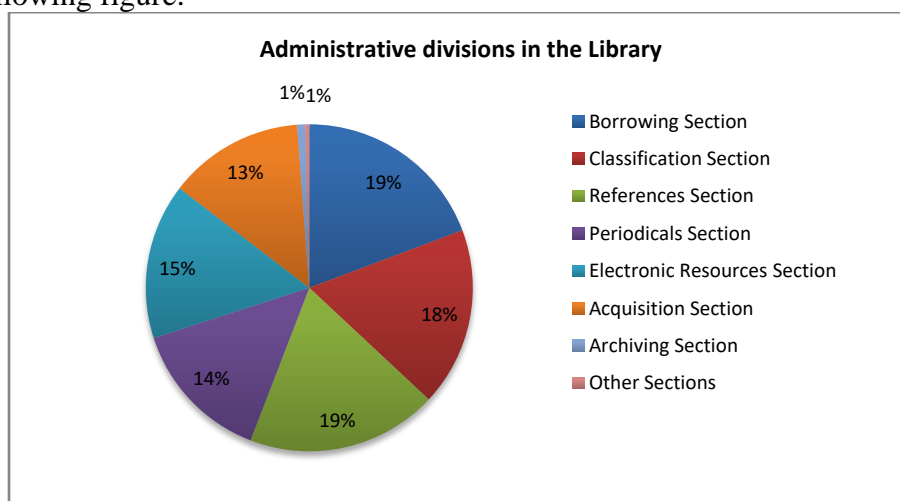
Figure 3: Administrative Divisions

The IT departments in the public libraries are either not existent or do not have up-to-datetechnological equipment. This is because of the constraints placed on the budget by the municipalities. Although some PPL's have an automated system, these systemsoften lack many vital functions, such as circulation, acquisition, and cataloging.

Indeed, only 30% of libraries have a computerized server in order to run the electronic services. In addition to that, even though 75% of libraries have internet services, only 5% of them have IT departments. This affects the quality of IT services provided by the library for both internal and external customers. What makes the situation worse; around 90% of libraries donot subscribe to updated regional or worldwide electronic databases, as shown in the following:
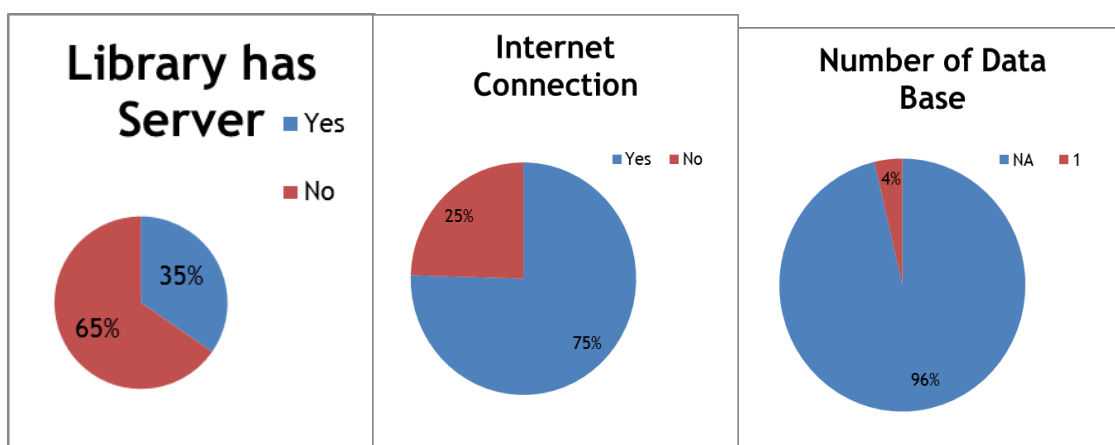
Figure:4

The vast majority of libraries utilize the DDC and LC classification systems. However, 20% of libraries depend on unknown classification systems. This indicates that most PPL's rely on international classification systems; DDC or LCLD, as using these systems provides a systematic way to smoothly organize the reading material being used and circulated. These systems also can be used to identify deficiencies and weaknesses in the library's holdings.
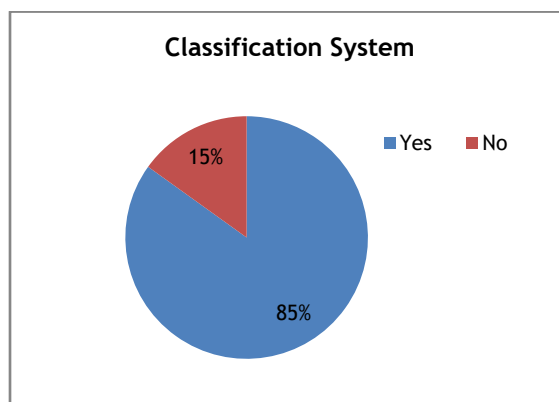

Figure:5

Unfortunately, 15% of the public librariesdepends on alocal classification system. This will lead to chaos in organizing the library collection process and cooperation with partners.

Reading Material

The study shows that the majority of Palestinian public libraries show the minimal endeavors in providing the traditional services of provision of circulation, references, and book services. Simultaneously they do not have electronic resources to provide.
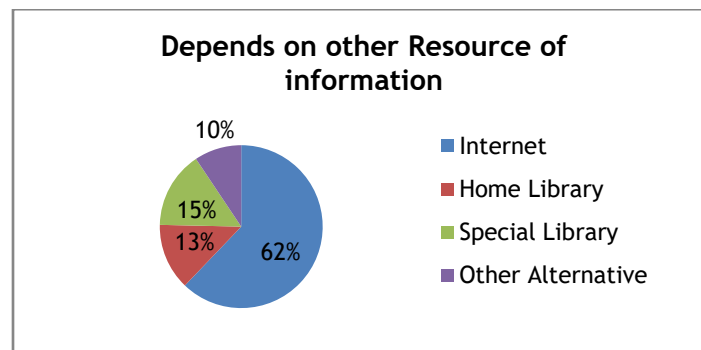
Figure:6

The audiovisual resources in the libraries are very few, due to the advent of modern technology and the use of the internet and electronic resources.

The statistics show that the availability of Braille books in these libraries is not sufficient. This is mainly because of the tendencyto ignore blind readers or the inability to provide adequate literaturewritten in Braille.
- The study shows that21% ofPPL's offer special facilities for special needs in theirlibraries, while the majority of them don't offer any type of access or services for those users. Also, the study shows that 32% of the public libraries in Palestine provide services for special needs.

Decision Making

The study shows that the majority of decisions emerge from the librarian: this indicates that the participation of the librarians in the decision-making process helps to share the responsibility and strengthens the governance principles in the institution.

On the other hand, many decisions come from the municipality administration outside the library; which leads to failure in taking the appropriate decisions and makes the library face serious issues with inability to continue its activities and services, especially in the context of competition.
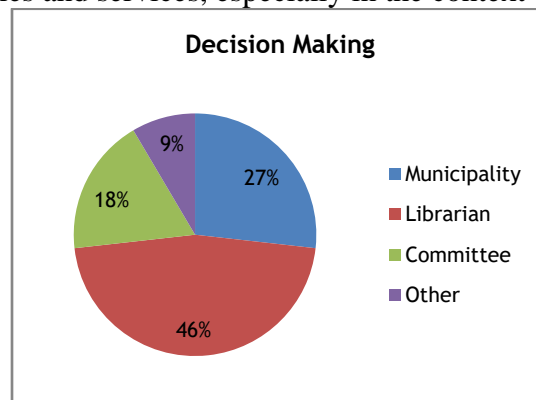

Figure:7

The following table illustrates the top eight scoring libraries that have been calculated according to the weight and the available standards scale of percentage 100% according to location, size, furniture, equipment, staff, users, resources, activities , Internet and electronic service.

Table: 3   Top Final Scores for Public Libraries

Number	Library Name	Total Score
1	**Municipal Public Library of Al-Berieh**	85%

		This is considered the most organized and most sophisticatedelectronicallyamongPalestinian public libraries. It is also the library with the most community participation. The municipality recognizes and understands the importance of the library's role. Administrative processes are fully computerized, and it has an online catalog which is lacking in similar libraries. It has a convenient location, and the availability of its collections of reading materials on its website differentiate it from other PPL's.	
	2	**Municipality Public Library of Nablus** This is considered the oldest public library operating in Palestine and the largest to date. Its collection is distinguished because it contains a variety of collections of books and archive materials from the Ottoman era through to the British mandate period and even up to more recent Jordanian rule and the Israeli occupation. It contains the largest number of professional staff and serves a large number of different ages and multi-cultural society. Also it has an outside courtyard where cultural activities are held.	85%
	3	**Municipality Public Library of Ramallah** This is the second oldest public library in Palestine, located in the middle of the city and close to public transportation which makes the siteeasily accessible toits users. It contains 40,000 books in Arabic and foreign languages. It is frequently used by a large number of members who are characterized by a high proportion of female participants (54%). The library administration is professional and highly-qualified. The library's director is the only director of a Palestinian public library who has a PhD in library science.	81%
	4	**Library of Iss'af Al-Nashashibi** The importance of this library comes from its location, being the only library in East Jerusalem. It serves Arab clients and works as a window to the people of Jerusalem, especially after the closure of Jerusalem Public Library and the confiscation of its reading materials and resources by the Israeli occupation. It aims to be a center of excellence in the production and dissemination of knowledge and a forum for dialogue and understanding between peoples and civilizations. Iss'af Al-NashashibiPublic Library contains a wide variety of rare books in different fields of knowledge and a rare collection	%80

	of old manuscripts.	
5	**Municipal Public Library of Salfit** Salfit Public Library is considered a small library, serving theSalfit area. The distinguished area in this library is the American Comer, which provides and supports the library with reading materials and equipment. The library offers various types of courses, including online courses for adults and children to encourage reading. It also provides a special hall to conduct seminars, meetings, lectures, workshops, courses, and exhibitions. It hosts social, political, and artistic activities, and it also provides photocopying services.	79%
6	**Municipal Public Library of Tulkarem** The Public Library of Tulkarem was re-opened in 1979 at a great location in the city. It is very close to Tulkaremschools, and this led to an increase in the number of its users. The children's department makes it unique in its services. It has a games library for special needs clients and also runsa project to encourage mothers to read and use the library with their children.	%79
7	**Municipal Public Library of Beit Jala** Beit JalaPublic Library is a new public library, with a nice independent building, established in 2009 with the support of the UNDP through the CHF program, which aims to promote democracy and peaceful co-existence and dissemination of knowledge and reading. It has a children's services department and a modern computer center.	%78

Libraries' Users:

Gender and Age
The statistics show that about 63% of the Library users in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are females, and 40% of library users are between the ages of 7 to 19 years old.
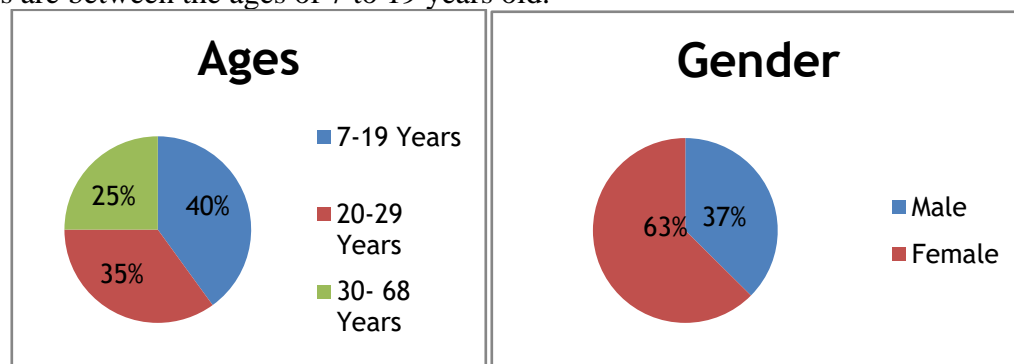

Figure:8   Gender & Age of Public Libraries Users

Users' Frequentation to Library

The rate of frequentation for the library users was determined by asking the users "How many times Do you Visits the Public Library?"About 38% of users visit the public library weekly. The reasons for visiting the libraries were about 29% for education and knowledge issues.
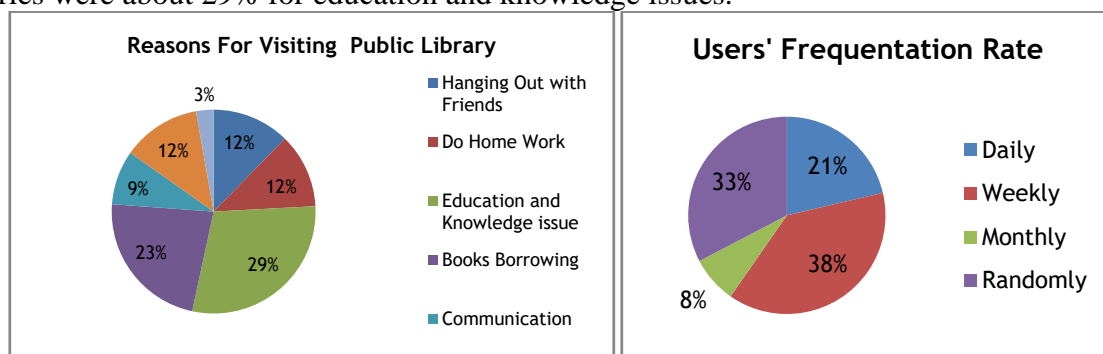
Reasons For Visiting Public Library

- Hanging Out with Friends 12%
- Do Home Work 12%
- Education and Knowledge issue 29%
- Books Borrowing 23%
- Communication 9%
- 12%
- 3%

Users' Frequentation Rate

- Daily 21%
- Weekly 38%
- Monthly 8%
- Randomly 33%

Figure:9When & Why users used the library.

Libraries Accessibility

Users were asked about the accessibility ofthe library, and 92% of them answered that it is easy to reach.

Library Easy to Reach
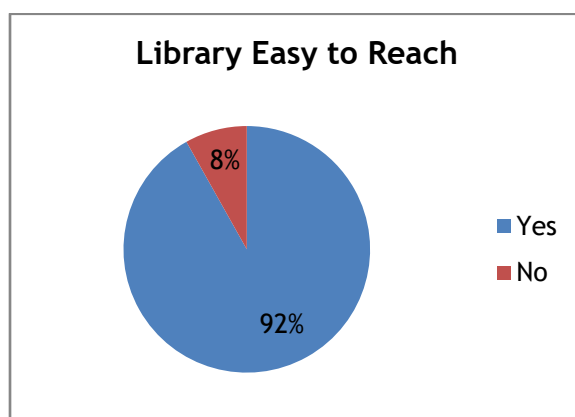
- Yes 92%
- No 8%

Figure:10Library Accessibility

Information Resources

71% of users do not depend only on the information resources, and about 62% of them use the internet as another source of information.
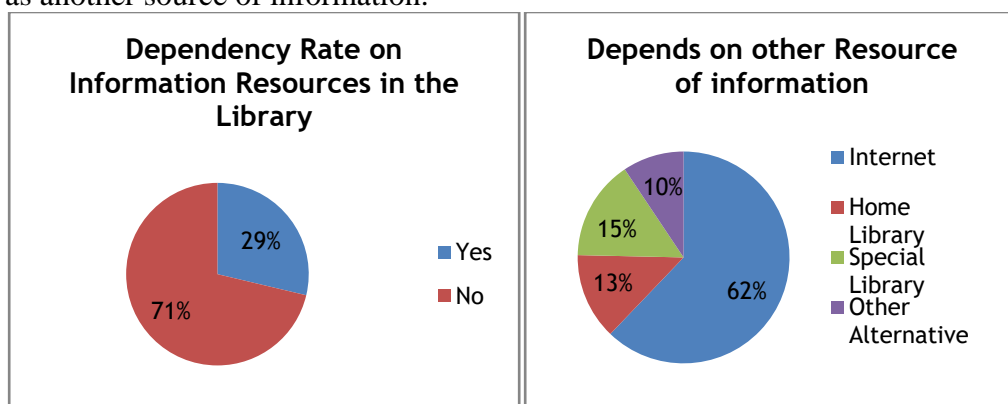
Dependency Rate on Information Resources in the Library

- Yes 29%
- No 71%

Depends on other Resource of information

- Internet 62%
- Home Library 13%
- Special Library 15%
- Other Alternative 10%

Figure: 11   Information Resources Dependency

42% of users were significantly satisfied withthe information resources available in the libraries. The most used source of information by the public users was books (47%).
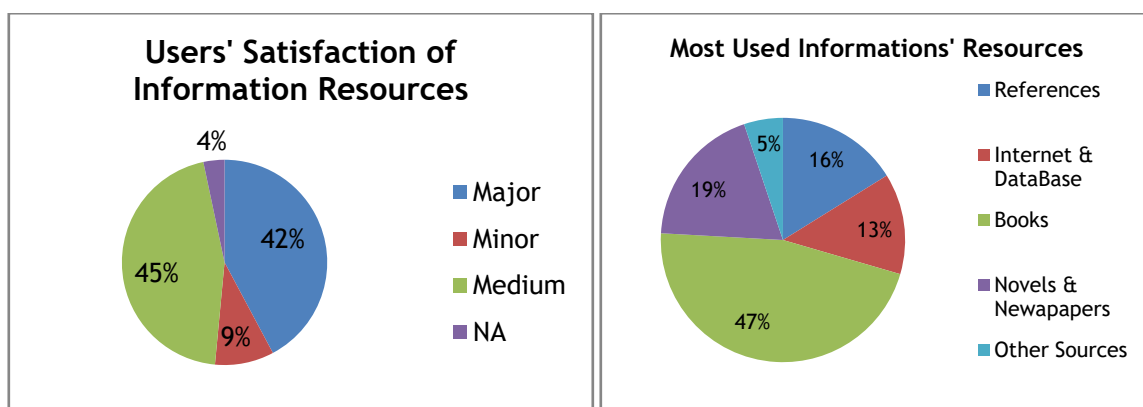
Figure: 12   Information Resources Usage

Working Time

Although most library users (86%) were satisfied with the operating hours of the public libraries, some thought that libraries be open during different times, suchas in the afternoon or evening, in order to give them time to visit the library.
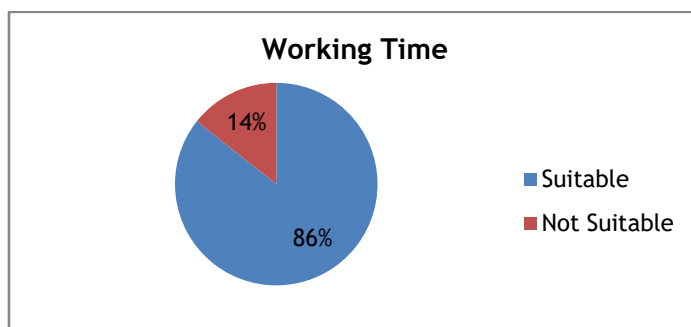

Figure: 13

Library's Interior Environment

90% of users admit that libraries are comfortable in general. 74% said that reading tables and seats are adequate, and 88% of them are satisfied with the shelf location in the libraries.
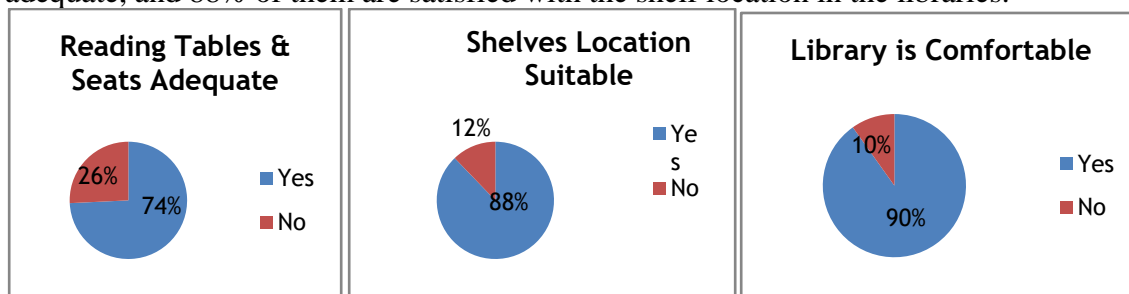

Figure :14

Library Staff:

About 61% of users said that staffs cooperation in the libraries is excellent, and 66% of them get help from the library instructors to find what they need.
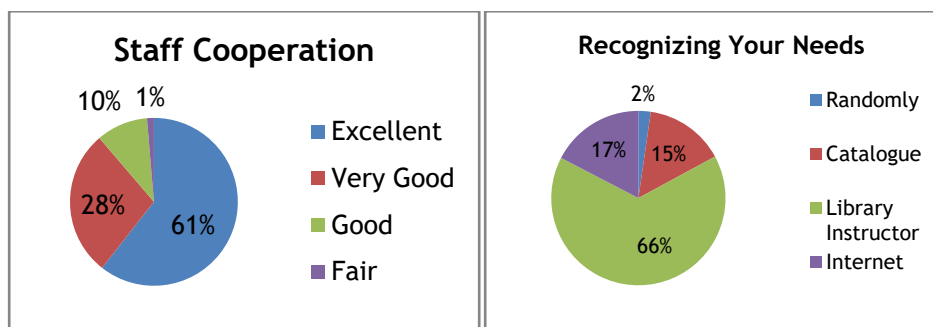
Figure: 15

Library's Activities Advertisements

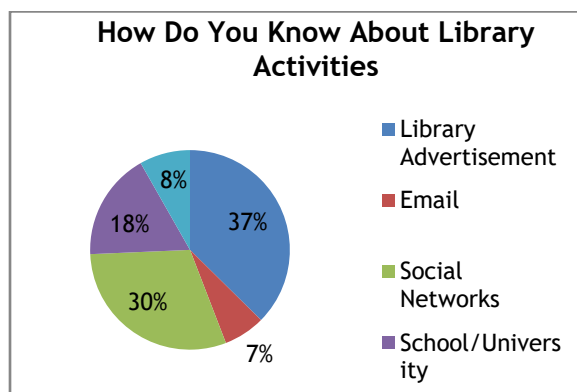37% of users know about library activities through library advertisements, and 30% of them via social networks.

Figure:16

Non-Users

This survey was implemented to gauge Palestinian society'sinterestin public libraries and their activities. The statistics show that 75%of Palestinians do not visit the library, and the reasons for not visiting the library were as follows:62% of them have no time to visit the library.
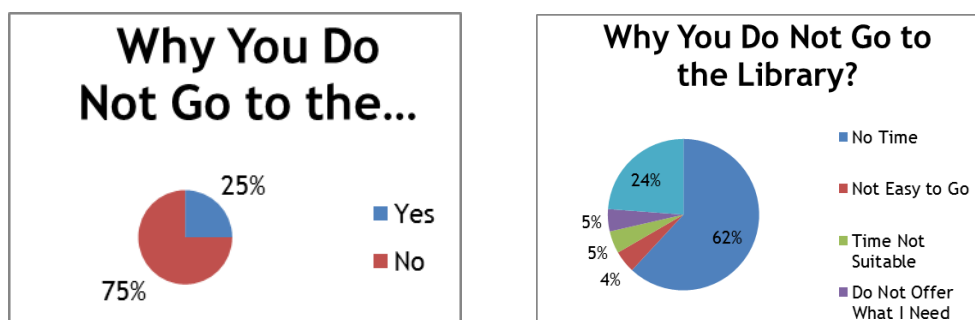

Figure:17

Palestinian people were asked to suggest some activities that may help to attract people to visit libraries, and about 35% of them suggested providing entertainment.
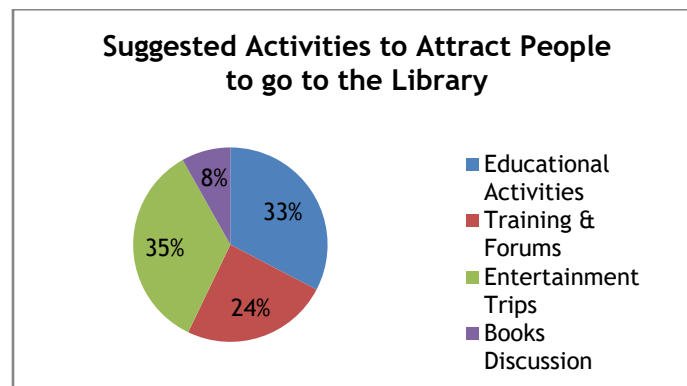
Suggested Activities to Attract People to go to the Library

- Educational Activities — 33%
- Training & Forums — 24%
- Entertainment Trips — 35%
- Books Discussion — 8%

Figure 18: Suggested Activities

Recommendations
1. Location, Building, and Equipment

- The public library buildings and spaces don'tmeet international standards and are not sufficient for client services and activities. Spaces must be planned in public library buildings according to the standards and sufficient for the anticipated number of users.
- Library furniture and equipment must be provided according to international standards in order to improve the quality of services.

2. Staff
- Professional and qualified librarians must be hired to meet the needs of each library according to the international standards.
- Professionals and non-professionals librarians must be provided with training workshops for the library staff, which develop their skills in the profession and the library services.

3. Library Collections
- Libraries must build traditional and non-traditional information and source collections in public libraries to meet the user's needs.
- Libraries should balance their collections and fill the deficiencies in their collections.
- They should subscribe toa number of periodicals.
- They should offer different services and sources for all ages and cultures, especially for children, youth, the elderly, and those with special needs.
- They should take into consideration the changing needs of the users of public libraries in regards to modern technology, online and electronic resources, and databases.
- The public library buildings and spaces have to be reconsidered in a way that allows the growth of services and activities according to the availability of the number of users.

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