

## **Distance Education in Botswana and Library Service: Matters Arising Since the Colonial Period for the Records**

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### **Abstract**

With the cross-border experience that began in Salisbury College in Southern Rhodesia and ended with the award of Elementary Teachers' Certificate (ETC) by the Education Department then based in Mahikeng, this paper submits that the History of open and distance learning (ODL) in Botswana predates the country's Independence in 1966. Using documentary sources, the first part of the paper provides an account of the peripatetic existence of distance education starting from the colonial period. The provision of distance education programmes at various stages in Botswana is articulated in response to how distance education has operated thus far in the country. The paper also points to the pedagogical methods utilised. The second part of the paper looks at the unquenchable thirst for education by Botswana in the face of limited programmes on offer in the country by distance delivery mode. This heralded the rush for cross-border distance education to satisfy the yearning. But then any academic programme of merit requires quality library service to enhance the learners' motivation, learning process and learning success. Using qualitative and quantitative research design, this study applies vital elements (management, facilities and equipment, resources and services) of standards/guidelines for distance learning library service designed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), to gauge library service to distance learners of four distance teaching institutions in Botswana. The results of the survey seem to evoke some tension between the beauty of the programme and the ugliness of not being able to significantly meet the information needs of the students in the programme. The library service offered to distance learners falls short of the expectation of the standards and the students were generally not satisfied. The paper identifies with the belief that both physical and virtual library service should be offered even as the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) is urged to apply a clear regulatory and quality assurance regime that entails all requirements for the approval and practice of tertiary level ODL programmes in Botswana.

### **Introduction**

A number of authors such as Mokaeya (1986), Akinpelu (1996), Mpinyane (1996) and Rathedi (1999) observe that distance learning is not a new phenomenon in Botswana. Though the experiment started before Independence, the real development of ODL in Botswana, like most African countries, dates back to late 1960s after the country obtained her Independence. Its introduction into the educational system of Botswana could be said to have experienced peripatetic existence as ODL developed in phases. Halpern (1965) asserts that on the eve of Independence, education in Botswana remained desperately underdeveloped far more than in any other country in British colonial Africa. Colclough and McCarthy (1980) confirm this assertion when they state that the highly deficient educational structure that Botswana inherited at Independence had negative effects on the socio-economic development of the independent country. These authors affirm that there was acute scarcity of skilled manpower. The attainment of Independence in 1966, therefore, heralded the arrival of developmental changes in many sectors including education. Alao and Kandjii-Murangi (1993) observe that the late 1960s and early 1970s saw steady modifications and redirection of the educational system to integrate and respond to the needs of Botswana.

Noticing the deplorable state of education and acute shortage of skilled manpower at Independence, it was only natural for the government of Botswana to clearly state what it intended to achieve in

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quantifiable terms in pursuit of its educational development. Therefore, the government came up with the following objectives in its national development plans (NDP) 1979-1984 and 1985-1991:

- To increase educational opportunities and to reduce inequalities of educational opportunities, so far as resources permit.
- To contribute to the balanced economic development of the country by seeking to satisfy manpower requirements for all sectors, emphasizing particularly the needs of rural development and employment generation.
- To promote personal qualities, such as respect for national ideals, self-reliance and concern for other people, and to encourage full development of individuals talents (Republic of Botswana 1979 and 1985)

In quest for the above objectives, a number of significant policies and programmes were put in place, among which was distance education. In terms of the problem statement of the paper it is noted that education by distance delivery mode is generally used to make higher education available to those who cannot register for full time conventional system. With distance education, geographical barriers appear inconsequential as students are no longer required to reside in places where their institutions are located, which may even be across national borders.

Irrespective of the mode of delivery, library service is known to be part of higher education programmes that add to the value and quality of learning. This accounts for the reason suggested by Williams *et al* (2011), Oladokun and Aina (2011), Association of College and Research Libraries (2008), Appleton (1997) and others that access to quality library and information services is a critical factor in any academic programme of merit. In ODL, many students are known to suffer from failure, low pass rate and discontinuance of participation in their programmes. A study cited by Cookson (1990) revealed some reasons on students drop out at the Open University in the United Kingdom. The study found that two-thirds of those who had dropped out indicated lack of adequate academic assistance as one of the main reasons. In a more recent study, Inkelaar and Simpson (2015) lament the problem of student retention and dropout as a fundamental problem at the heart of international distance education. In what was termed ‘distance education deficit’, Inkelaar and Simpson assert that graduation rates in distance higher education are low compared with full-time higher education. A brief review of literature and panoramic observations of distance teaching installations reveal inadequate provision of library and information service to distance learners in Botswana, when juxtaposed with the standards designed by library associations.

The structure of this paper is twofold. First, it seeks to establish the peripatetic existence of distance education in Botswana over the country’s five decades of existence, and link the various pedagogical methods adopted to the provision or lack of library service at each level. Second, it tries to find out the extent of library service to distance learners in four institutions in the country and provide insights to (adequately) meeting their information needs.

The main research question that the paper addresses is, do the current library services meet the information needs of distance learners in Botswana? As far as the methodology is concerned the research design for the study was both qualitative and quantitative, and the survey method was used. Documentary sources were used to trace the historical development of distance education in Botswana. The empirical element of the study was conducted using a questionnaire administered to the students of four identified institutions namely University of Derby (UD), The Management College of Southern Africa (MANCO-SA), University of South Africa (UNISA) and the University of Botswana (UB). These institutions had visible presence, recognised agents and organised occasional meetings with the students in Botswana. With 364 returned copies of the questionnaire, the study records 70.1% response rate. The operation of

library services to distance learners in Botswana was gauged using the following elements: management, facilities and equipment; resources and services- prescribed in the standards of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). Cross-tabulations and chi-square, non-parametric statistical significance tests were developed to test the relationship of one variable to groupings of others.

### **Historical Development of Open and Distance Learning in Botswana**

The ODL started about half a century ago in Botswana and came in phases as discussed below.

#### *Salisbury Correspondence College Experiment*

The first experiment of ODL began with cross-border/trans-national education began in the early 1960's when the then colonial Bechuanaland Protectorate administration made an agreement with the Rhodesian government to allow students from Botswana to enroll with Salisbury Correspondence College. According to Jones (1981) only 15 students who were all teachers were admitted for enrollment. Jones affirms that the students received their lessons through postal system and returned their assignments by the same system to Salisbury for marking.

After successful completion of their course with the Salisbury Correspondence College the students did their practical at Lobatse Teacher Training College. At the time this was the only college of its kind in Botswana. The scheme which operated between 1960 and 1965 concluded with the award of Elementary Teachers' Certificate (ETC) by the Department of Education then based in Mahikeng, South Africa, where colonial Botswana was administered from.

#### *Francistown Teachers Project*

In order to educate the large number of untrained teachers that characterised the Botswana educational system at Independence, distance education was introduced in the country between 1968 and 1973 (White, 1971). White contends that Francistown Teachers Project was a response to the enormous problem of untrained teachers in the primary school who constituted 47.9% of the primary school teachers in 1965.

Youngman (1991) notes that the project, which was proposed by a UNESCO consultant, was seen as a means of training teachers without removing them from the schools. Mokaeya (1986) adds that the method of teaching was mainly by printed materials supported by radio programmes and residential courses. Mokaeya affirmed that after three years of distance learning, 88% became qualified teachers by the time the programme ended in 1973.

#### *Botswana Extension College*

Botswana Extension College (BEC) came into being in 1973 –the year the Francistown Teachers Project was terminated. BEC came with a change of focus from training of teachers to provision of junior secondary school certificate courses as well as courses leading to general certificate of education (GCE 'O' levels). According to Perraton (1977), the College used a combination of correspondence, radio programmes and face-to-face modes of delivery. Located in Gaborone, the College made its contribution to education and manpower development by operating a wide range of courses. The College ceased functioning in 1978 when the external sources of funding was terminated.

#### *Department of Non Formal Education*

A new phase of ODL in the country was opened in October 1978 with the establishment of Department of Non Formal Education (DNFE) in the Ministry of Education, which incorporated the activities of BEC. The distance learning section of the DNFE focused on providing formal secondary school programmes at junior certificate and GCE 'O' levels at a distance. The modes of operating these programmes included the use

of print materials, radio programmes and occasional face-to-face tutoring and teaching methods. DNFE split with the formation of Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning in 1998.

#### *Upgrading Enrolled Nurses to Registered Nursing Through Distance Education*

Health care delivery service was another area that received the attention of government in Botswana immediately after Independence. Selelo-Kupe (1993) notes that since attaining Independence in 1966 Botswana gave recognition to the need to provide acceptable health care services to its people by producing a skillful, knowledgeable and talented nursing work force. In line with the recommendation of the USA Kellogg consultants appointed in 1990, the government issued a directive in 1993 that the training of enrolled nurses be discontinued and a new course that would ensure the upgrading of enrolled nursing (EN) to a more professional registered nursing (RN) be designed and implemented by distance delivery system. The programme used full time lecturers based at various study centres across the country, with occasional residential programmes. While the students depended on the assistance of the libraries at the study centres, health care delivery in Botswana received a boost.

#### *Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning*

Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) was established by the government of Botswana in December 1998. The establishment of BOCODOL signified the detachment of the Distance Education Unit from DNFE and ultimately connotes the opening of another significant chapter in the annals of ODL in Botswana. Primarily, courses are offered for the young members of the society who do not get the chance to complete their junior secondary certificate and 'O' level courses in regular schools.

The courses are taught with the use of print, audio-cassettes and supplemented with radio broadcasts and face-to-face contacts. BOCODOL has now assumed a new dimension, running courses at degree and higher degree (master's) levels (by distance) and aspiring to become a full-fledge university of open and distance learning in the country.

#### *Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Botswana*

About a decade before BOCODOL came into existence, an outreach arm –the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) of the UB –was instituted to ensure that distance education programmes were planned and well-coordinated at the tertiary level. Precisely, CCE came into being in 1987. At its inception, it was subsumed under the defunct Institute of Adult Education of the institution. It continued to operate under this arrangement until 1991 when the Institute of Adult Education was itself dissolved to emerge as Department of Adult Education and CCE also assumed a separate and autonomous status serving all faculties at UB.

The mandate of the CCE is to take the academic programmes and intellectual resources of UB to the grassroots level. In running its degree programmes, CCE uses print, videoconference facilities and occasional face-to-face method. Today, whilst BOCODOL programmes are expanding, ODL programmes of the UB are not, as more attention is concentrated on face-to-face programmes.

#### *Cross-border/Distance Education in Botswana*

Whilst distance education may not be a recent phenomenon in Botswana, the reality is that the programmes presently on offer by distance delivery mode in public institutions in the country are limited in scope. Many citizens who could not be served in what was available locally found options in other distance teaching institutions outside the country. Hence, a good number of people started enrolling for various certificate, diploma, degree and higher degree programmes with other universities outside Botswana. Among others places people enrolled with institutions in America, Australia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, United Kingdom and other European countries.

The corollary of this is that today in Botswana, many foreign distance teaching institutions operate

their courses side-by-side with the programmes that the UB and other institutions could offer by distance delivery mode, using digital, videoconferencing, print and occasional face-to-face methods.

### **Standards/Guidelines and Findings**

In a number of countries and library associations, guidelines and/or standards for distance learning library services are clearly articulated as a point of reference to institutional libraries offering distance learning programmes. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2008) crafted one of the famous standards for distance learning library services often used as a benchmark by several academic libraries. The philosophy of the guidelines, among others, assumes the precept that access to adequate library services and resources is essential for the attainment of superior academic skills in post-secondary education, regardless of where students, faculty, and programmes are located.

The standards provide information on management, facilities and equipment, resources and services that should be taken into consideration when an institution starts distance education. The provisions of the standards are provided below to gauge the service available to the students of the identified four distance teaching institutions in Botswana.

#### *Management*

In the management of library service the standards strongly advocate the cooperation and collaboration of the librarian-administrator with the teaching staff. Precisely, it requests for participation of the librarian in the curriculum development process and in course planning for distance learning to ensure that appropriate library resources and services are available (ACRL 2008). It also states that the librarian should work collaboratively with the teaching staff in distance-delivered programmes to integrate information literacy into courses and programmes in order to foster lifelong learning skills. As noted, three of the four institutions studied are cross border institutions whose programmes and curriculum were developed in the other countries, and did not have their own libraries in Botswana. If anything, they sought the collaboration of some libraries for their students in Botswana, as will be seen later. Thus, except for UB, whose librarian claimed during the interview to assist with supply of necessary materials in the writing of modules for distance learners, it is hard to see adequate collaboration in curriculum development. However, some efforts were noticeable in the integration of information literacy into the programmes.

The respondents were asked if their institutions provided them training on information literacy skills (ILS). With only 2 missing system, 192 (52.7%) respondents answered 'Yes', while 170 of them (46.7%) responded with 'No'. In determining how the training was received by those who said they were trained, a number of options were presented. The majority of the respondents (63.6%) indicated that they received their training through the module given to them. About 36.4% of them said they received the training through face-to-face teaching during orientation. Some 31.0% responded by saying they got their training through tutoring during residential sessions. Only 9.1% claimed they received the training by e-learning mode while 0.01% said the training was received from their previous institutions.

The relationships between the institutions of respondents and information skills training were cross-tabulated and Chi-square tests performed on the cross-tabulations. The test shows that the institution was significantly related to information skills training ( $X^2 = 32.870$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .05$ ). As noted in Table 1 below, the cross-tabulation of institutions and information skills training of distance learners shows that it was only at UB that more respondents than expected said 'yes' they received training on information skills; whereas in other institutions (cross-border – including UNISA, MANCOSA and UD) less respondents than expected said 'yes'. The conclusion, therefore, is that only UB provided information skills training for its students and that other (cross-border) institutions did not.

Ojedokun and Lumande (2005) suggest the teaching of the ILS programme in general and its in-

trodition with computing skills as a credit earning or fully-fledged course at UB. Oladokun (2006) shows the adaptation of the ILS programme for the distance learners of UB adding that during the occasional residential or study weekend session, librarians are given slots and deployed to the four study centres available across the country to provide tutorial lessons to distance learners in the same way as is done for other courses. He notes that this is the library’s attempt to bridge the gap with distance learners and bring a human face to the seemingly faceless system of education.

**Table 1: Institution. \* Did your institution provide training on information literacy skills?**

*Crosstab*

		Did your institution provide training on info literacy skills?				
			Yes	No	Total	% of Total
Institution	UB (Home-based)	Count	76(77.6%)	22(22.4%)	98	27.1
		Expected Count	52.0(53.1%)	46.0(46.9%)	98.0	27.1
	UNISA (Cross-border)	Count	67(42.7%)	90(57.3%)	157	43.4
		Expected Count	83.3(53.1%)	73.7(46.9%)	157.0	43.4
	MANCOSA (Cross-border)	Count	19(43.2%)	25(56.8%)	44	12.2
		Expected Count	23.3(53%)	20.7(47%)	44.0	12.2
	UD (Cross-border)	Count	30(47.6%)	33(52.4%)	63	17.4
		Expected Count	33.4(53%)	29.6(47%)	63.0	17.4
Total		Count	192(53%)	170(47%)	362	100
		Expected Count	192.0(53%)	170.0(47%)	362.0	100.0

**Facilities and Equipment**

The standards, as noted in ACRL (2008), specifically require suitable arrangements to be made on: access to facilities through agreements with a nonaffiliated library; a branch or satellite library; and online services, including Web-based virtual libraries, electronic communication tools, and course management software. It asserts that the originating institution must provide sufficient facilities, equipment, and communication tools to attain the objectives of the distance learning programs.

Apart from UB, which has two branch libraries across the country in addition to the main library at the Gaborone campus, none of the other institutions studied is known to have a library of its own for its distance learners in Botswana. The UB library also partners with a few technical college libraries in Maun, Selebi Phikwe and Jwaneng. The study revealed that the University of Derby students were allowed to use British Council library at the main mall in Gaborone. Other institutions have also attempted to establish partnerships with some libraries in the country. When asked during the interview the researcher had with the coordinators, one coordinator said the library of his institution (where he works fulltime) was just being put in place and that when ready it would be made available to distance learners of the institution. When asked about the distance of the location of the coalition library and the dispersal of students country-wide, one coordinator said the students who could not make it to where the library was located would be advised to make their own special arrangement with any library. One of the coordinators said she was moved with pity for the students and had, therefore, decided to establish a bookshop for them in the not too distant future.

With respect to online services, first, the respondents were asked if they had access to a computer with Internet facilities for online services. A total of 287 (78.8%) respondents answered in the affirmative whilst the remaining 77 respondents (21.2%) said they had no access to Internet facilities. The relationships between the location of respondents and access to computer with Internet facilities were cross-tabulated and Chi-square tests performed on the cross-tabulations. The test shows that location was significantly related to 'Access to computer with Internet facilities' ( $X^2 = 21.681$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Table 2 below shows the comparison of the observed with the expected counts and that more respondents in the city and town than expected said 'yes' to 'Having access to the computer with Internet facilities', while less respondents than expected said 'yes' in the village. The conclusion drawn is that there is a significant relationship between location and access to the Internet.

The findings obviously substantiate the fact that the village or rural area is shortchanged when the use and accessibility of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Botswana is considered. This consequently affects the learners located in the rural areas. Adequate arrangements have to be made on the provision of ICT facilities like the Internet in some strategic locations including the villages if distance learners working or living in such locations are to maximally benefit from ICTs.

**Table 2: Location and Access to computer with Internet facilities**

*Crosstab*

		Access to computer with internet facilities				
			Yes	No	Total	% of Total
Location	City	Observed Count	<b>187</b> (83.1%)	<b>38</b> (16.9%)	225	61.8
		Expected Count	<b>177.4</b> (78.8%)	<b>47.6</b> (21.2%)	225.0	61.8
	Town	Observed Count	<b>51</b> (87.9%)	<b>7</b> (12.1%)	58	15.9
		Expected Count	<b>45.7</b> (79.8%)	<b>12.3</b> (21.2%)	58.0	15.9
	Village	Observed Count	<b>49</b> (60.5%)	<b>32</b> (39.5%)	81	22.3
		Expected Count	<b>63.9</b> (78.9%)	<b>17.1</b> (21.1%)	81.0	22.3
Total		Observed Count	<b>287</b> (78.8%)	<b>77</b> (21.2%)	364	100
		Expected Count	<b>287.0</b> (78.8%)	<b>77.0</b> (21.2%)	364.0	100.0

A follow up question wanted to establish where respondents would have access to the Internet if the response was in the affirmative. Those that indicated they had access to the Internet at work and on their own computer made up to 45.6%, on their own machine at home (22.5%); at work on shared machine (20.9%); and at home on shared machine (6.3%). Others include: Internet café (6.0%); friend's office (0.3%) and other libraries (1.6%).

The relationships between institution of the respondent and access to computer with Internet facilities were cross-tabulated and Chi-square tests performed on the cross-tabulations. The test shows that institution was significantly related to access to computer with Internet facilities ( $X^2 = 13.359$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Table 3 below shows the cross-tabulation of the institution and the Internet accessibility by distance learners. Comparison of the observed with the expected counts shows that more respondents from all the cross-border institutions than expected said 'yes' to having access to computer with Internet facilities, while less respondents than expected said 'yes' at UB (home-based institution).

The conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between institution and access to the Internet. It can also be concluded that possibly because most of the cross-border institutions are involved in running postgraduate courses, the respondents from those institutions were much more gainfully employed and, therefore, had better opportunity to access computer with Internet facilities. A number of subsequent

tests revealed that accessibility of respondents to the Internet was facilitated mostly in their respective places of work.

**Table 3: Institution and Access to computer with Internet facilities**

*Crosstab*

		Access to computer with internet facilities				
			Yes	No	Total	% of Total
Institution	UB (Home-based)	Count	<b>66(67.3%)</b>	<b>32(32.7%)</b>	98	26.9
		Expected Count	<b>77.3(78.9%)</b>	<b>20.7(21.1%)</b>	98.0	26.9
	UNISA (Cross-border)	Count	<b>128(81%)</b>	<b>30(19%)</b>	158	43.4
		Expected Count	<b>124.6(78.9%)</b>	<b>33.4(21.1%)</b>	158.0	43.4
	MANCOSA (Cross-border)	Count	<b>36(80%)</b>	<b>9(20%)</b>	45	12.4
		Expected Count	<b>35.5(78.9%)</b>	<b>9.5(21.1%)</b>	45.0	12.4
	UD (Cross-border)	Count	<b>57(90.5%)</b>	<b>6(9.5%)</b>	63	17.3
		Expected Count	<b>49.7(78.9%)</b>	<b>13.3(21.1%)</b>	63	17.3
Total		Count	<b>287(78.8%)</b>	<b>77(21.2%)</b>	364	100
		Expected Count	<b>287.0(78.8%)</b>	<b>77.0(21.2%)</b>	364.0	100.0

During the interview, the coordinators believed that distance learners could not perform effectively if they did not have access to ICTs. One of the coordinators said 15 computers with Internet facilities were made available for the use of the learners she coordinates. One coordinator said his institution was planning to put up Internet café so that the students could have the accessibility to ICT, but they would have to pay for the service. Another coordinator said students of her institution used (full-text) e-journals. The use of email to send and receive assignments was also mentioned as evidence of use of ICTs by distance learners to meet their information needs.

### Resources and Services

ACRL (2008), in the standards, affirms that the originating institution must provide prompt and direct access to library materials in appropriate formats to meet all students' needs in fulfilling course assignments, and teaching and research needs. Among others, the guidelines consider the following services essential: reference assistance; online instructional and informational services in formats accessible to the greatest number of people, including those with disabilities; reliable, rapid, secure access to online resources; consultation services; and effective information literacy skills.

When asked to indicate their preferred information format from three options of *print*, *electronic* and *audio visual*, the majority of respondents 216 (59.3%) preferred print format, 123 respondents (33.7%) preferred electronic and 24 (6.6%) audio-visual. The results revealed that the distance learners in Botswana significantly preferred print information format. The reason that can be adduced to this choice is that the

distance learners have been using print format all their lives. Despite the new age of technology, print still appears as an information format that is more easily accessible than other formats. Unlike other formats, print requires no electricity which may not be significantly available in the homes of some of the students.

Respondents were asked to authenticate the available information resources in their location from the list made available to them. In the event that the list was not exhaustive, provision was made for them to add to the list. Out of the 364 respondents, the majority of them (76%) indicated that the Internet was available in their locations. Apart from the Internet, only 3 other information resources regrettably were said to be available by half or more of the total respondents. These included the email (60.9%), radio/television (59.6%); telephone (59.2%). In a descending order, other resources said to be available to respondents in their locations included photocopying (47.4%); library resources (47.1%); web search materials (38.8%); catalogue (28.4%); reference (27.8%) and lecturer (26.4%). 'Other' resources claimed by respondents to be available in their locations ranged from the libraries of some institutions like Botswana Public Service College, Bank of Botswana, British Council, and company to hospital libraries. Other libraries mentioned include Institute of Development Management and Institute of Health Science libraries, Maun and other Technical College libraries, MANCOSA online library, as well as 'office' and village libraries.

When asked how the respondents received library and information service, most of them (45.9%) from the list of options indicated 'buying their own materials' as the major source. In other words, quite a significant number of the respondents accessed information from materials (books) they bought on their own. Another 40.9% of the respondents also indicated that they 'personally travelled to their institution's library'. Those who indicated that they accessed or received library and information support through on-line or electronic supply amount to 32.7%; while 27.5% respondents accessed same through collaboration with some libraries and information centres. It is remarkable to note that 26.6% indicated that they received support service by asking for help from knowledgeable people around. Less than a quarter of the respondents (22.0%) indicated that they received the support service through direct supply by post from their institution's library. It is also important to note that quite a reasonable number (57%) indicated that their institutions did not provide them with adequate library support. Since they indicated that their institutions did not provide them with adequate information service, as a consequence, they accessed information resources and services through other libraries. As indicated, such libraries the distance learners used included the UB's main library –(40.7%) respondents, UB branch library (28.6%); public library (31.6%); colleges of education (Molepolole and Tonota) (8.5%); and other institution libraries within the country (9.6%).

The relationships of the institution with other libraries used by the respondents were cross-tabulated and Chi-square tests were performed on the cross-tabulations. The result shows that institution was significantly related to the UB main library ( $X^2 = 12.476$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .05$ ); UB branch library ( $X^2 = 13.662$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and public library ( $X^2 = 11.522$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .05$ ) as libraries used. Tables 4, 5 and 6 (below) provide further details, which among other things show that large number of cross-border students used or accessed information at the UB main and branch libraries. The UB library and its branches remain a significant and extensive adjunct to distance students (from various institutions) seeking to meet their information needs in Botswana. The UB library, unfortunately, is not widespread enough and can only be useful to the distance learners living around the limited locations in which the UB library facilities are situated. Though the public libraries are significant and more widespread, they hardly stock tertiary level materials.

**Table 4: Institution and other libraries used –UB main library**  
*Crosstab*

		Other libraries used - UB main library				
			Yes	No	Total	% of Total
Institution	UB (Home-based)	Count	<b>52</b> (53.1%)	<b>46</b> (46.9%)	98	26.9
		Expected Count	<b>39.8</b> (40.6%)	<b>58.2</b> (59.4%)	98.0	26.9
	UNISA (Cross-border)	Count	<b>50</b> (31.6%)	<b>108</b> (68.4%)	158	43.4
		Expected Count	<b>64.2</b> (40.6%)	<b>93.8</b> (59.4%)	158.0	43.4
	MANCOSA (Cross-border)	Count	<b>17</b> (37.8%)	<b>28</b> (62.2%)	45	12.4
		Expected Count	<b>18.3</b> (40.7%)	<b>26.7</b> (59.3)	45.0	12.4
	UD (Cross-border)	Count	<b>29</b> (46%)	<b>34</b> (54%)	63	17.3
		Expected Count	<b>25.6</b> (40.6%)	<b>37.4</b> (59.4%)	63.0	17.3
Total		Count	<b>148</b> (68.5%)	<b>216</b> (31.5%)	364	100
		Expected Count	<b>148.0</b> (68.5%)	<b>216.0</b> (31.5%)	364.0	100.0

**Table 5: Institution and other libraries used -UB branch library**  
*Crosstab*

		Other libraries used - UB branch library				
			Yes	No	Total	% of Total
Institution	UB (Home-based)	Count	<b>36</b> (36.7%)	<b>62</b> (63.3%)	98	26.9
		Expected Count	<b>28.0</b> (28.6%)	<b>70.0</b> (71.4%)	98.0	26.9
	UNISA (Cross-border)	Count	<b>51</b> (32.3%)	<b>107</b> (67.7%)	158	43.4
		Expected Count	<b>45.1</b> (28.5%)	<b>112.9</b> (71.5%)	158.0	43.4
	MANCOSA (Cross-border)	Count	<b>9</b> (20%)	<b>36</b> (80%)	45	12.4
		Expected Count	<b>12.9</b> (28.7%)	<b>32.1</b> (71.3%)	45.0	12.4
	UD (Cross-border)	Count	<b>8</b> (12.7%)	<b>55</b> (87.3%)	63	17.3
		Expected Count	<b>18.0</b> (28.6%)	<b>45.0</b> (71.4%)	63	17.3
Total		Count	<b>104</b> (28.6%)	<b>260</b> (71.4%)	364	100
		Expected Count	<b>104.0</b> (28.6%)	<b>260.0</b> (71.4%)	364	100.0

**Table 6: Institution and other libraries used –Public library**  
*Crosstab*

		Other libraries used - Public library				
			Yes	No	Total	% of Total
Institution	UB (Home-based)	Count	29(29.6%)	69(70.4%)	98	26.9
		Expected Count	31.0(31.6%)	67.0(68.4%)	98.0	26.9
	UNISA (Cross-border)	Count	63(39.9%)	95(60.1%)	158	43.4
		Expected Count	49.9(31.6%)	108.1(68.4%)	158.0	43.4
	MANCOSA (Cross-border)	Count	12(26.7%)	33(73.3%)	45	12.4
		Expected Count	14.2(31.6%)	30.8(68.4%)	45.0	12.4
	UD (Cross-border)	Count	11(17.5%)	52(82.5%)	63	17.3
		Expected Count	19.9(31.6%)	43.1(68.4%)	63	17.3
Total		Count	115(31.6%)	249(68.4%)	364	100
		Expected Count	115.0(31.6%)	249.0(68.4%)	364.0	100.0

In accessing information resources and services, it was expected that they would contact the library and/or subject librarians. On inquiring into how they contact the library or their subject librarian for assistance, the majority of respondents 193 (53%) indicated that they visited the library/subject librarian in person. Regrettably, about a third of the respondents 120 (33%) said that they maintained no contact either with the library or any subject librarian. Getting in touch with the library or subject librarian through email facilities attracted 73 (20.1%) respondents. Less than 5% made use of other options. In a descending order, writing/posting letter and getting in touch through facsimile had 16 (4.4%) respondents each; only 13 respondents (3.6%) claimed they used toll free telephone number; while only 12 (3.3%) used Short Message Service (SMS), often called text messaging, using cell/mobile phone. An insignificant few, 7 (1.9%) respondents, said that they left messages on telephone answering machines.

In order to determine the extent to which the information needs of distance learners are met, respondents were asked to indicate whether all, most, some or none of their information needs were met by the library resources available to them. Unfortunately, only 17 respondents (4.7%) indicated that *all* their information needs were met. Only about one third of the respondents 121 representing 33.2% indicated that *most* of their information needs were met. The majority of them 59.1% (n = 215) said only *some* of their information needs were met, while 11 (3.0%) said *none* of their information needs were met. With the established result, the position is that the information needs of the distance learners in Botswana were significantly unmet.

The overall result here seems to confirm the assertion by Hill *et al* (2013) that there is a large percentage of students who are unhappy about the services offered by their libraries, feeling a lack of support. Perhaps, it was also for this purpose that Williams *et al* (2011) suggest that shifting to electronic resources allows all students access, regardless of geographic location. They add that for distance students specifically, e-resources facilitate instant access. In an attempt to establish 'best practices' and link the traditional to modern system, Huwiler (2015) suggests that libraries have to be present both in the physical world as well as virtually, allowing the students to identify with their library. Williams *et al* (2011) note that the

aim is to create a place where students go for research, learning, and support. According to Huwiler, the challenge is to create this space for students who will likely never set foot in the brick-and-mortar library at their school.

### **Conclusion**

As the national development vision, Vision 2016, culminates in the commemoration of 50 years of Botswana's Independence the first pillar of the vision 'An Educated and Informed Nation' (Republic of Botswana 1997) can be made stronger. Though considerable investment has been made in education, some deficiencies still exist as noticed above and these are a hindrance to full realisation of the national vision.

The various developmental stages of ODL in Botswana since more than 50 years ago have been articulated in this study. Aside from the old practice, there is today quite a significant number of distance teaching institutions offering variety of courses and programmes to people in the country. But then there is palpable evidence of absence or near absence of quality library and information services to enhance distance learners motivation, learning process and learning success. Generally, the available library service in almost all the institutions surveyed falls far short of the standards. Needless to say, as distance learners go about their studies in their various scattered locations across the country, they do so with a great deal of challenge.

Accessibility to appropriate library and information resources and services should be able to reduce the effect of distance and isolation often experienced in this type of learning mode. Appropriate adherence to the tenets of the standards/guidelines would greatly provide a great relief to the students. The Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) (2001) in the UK notes that higher education in general, and library and information services in particular, should be working towards the provision of flexible, 'any time, any place' services for all their users. SCONUL further states that the needs and expectations of the distance learning student can best be summed up in one word: *access*.

SCONUL believes that the distance learning students will require timely access to information, space and help in a manner that matches their needs. It needs to be said that distance learners in Botswana deserve better treatment after registering and paying for their studies. In this regard, it is recommended that adequate literacy training be incorporated in the programmes on offer; the learners should be accorded access to appropriate physical and online library services on largely equitable basis with their traditional counterparts; UB library and other libraries can be formally approached for partnership and help. Finally, the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) should have a clear regulatory and quality assurance regime that entails all requirements (including effective library service) for the approval and practice of tertiary level open and distance education programmes in Botswana.

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