

A Study on Key Factors in Library Operations and the Path to Library Service Development from the Perspective of Readers

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the relationships among reader experiences, perceptions, impressions, and behavioral intentions in libraries. It analyzes the impact of library impressions, cognitive values, and experiences on reader behavioral intentions, revealing the reasons why readers choose libraries as their primary information providers. Important influencing dimensions and factors are identified, and targeted strategies are proposed for enhancing positive library impressions, creating a conducive spatial environment, and promoting positive word-of-mouth. These findings provide valuable insights and guidance for libraries to further improve their services.

1. Introduction

Readers are key factors in the development of library services, as their choices in information sources are decisive. In addition to readers' perceptions of the library's image^[1-2], their understanding and actual experience of library services also play a significant role in whether they choose the library as their primary information provider. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the elements that contribute to the construction of the library's image in the eyes of readers, as well as the relationship between the library's image and readers' perception of library value^[3], their library experience^[4], and their behavioral intentions. This understanding is essential for designing libraries that can meet readers' needs in information services and effectively enhance service quality.

This study primarily focuses on student readers, aged between 18 and 26 years, with a particular emphasis on the university student population. By constructing dimensions of "library image," "cognitive value," "experience," and "behavioral intention" of readers towards the library, the questionnaire content was designed accordingly. A survey was conducted to collect data from readers regarding the "library image," "cognitive value," and "behavioral intention." Additionally, interviews were conducted to understand readers' experiences in using library services, including their feelings during the experience, their perceptions of library services, and their willingness to use library services in the future. Through data analysis and interpretation, this research aims to reveal readers' evaluations, needs, and preferences regarding the library, providing evidence and suggestions for library improvement and enhancement. This study contributes to improving the quality of library services, meeting readers' needs, and fostering continued support and utilization of the library.

2. Library Image as Perceived by Readers

2.1. Perceptions and Significance of Library Image among Readers

During the formation of the library's image in the minds of readers, two key factors are functional attributes and psychological attributes. Functional attributes include the diverse and abundant information resources and knowledge acquisition methods provided by the library, which leads readers to recognize the library as a knowledge hub. Psychological attributes encompass the cleanliness of the library environment, the availability of seats, and the warmth of the atmosphere, all of which directly impact readers' usage experience and satisfaction.

Research surveys indicate that readers place a higher emphasis on psychological attributes compared to functional attributes, suggesting that they prioritize the comfort of the library environment, the friendliness of the atmosphere, and the convenience of facilities. Therefore, libraries should strive to provide a comfortable environment, a welcoming atmosphere, and convenient facilities to meet readers' needs for a pleasant experience. Furthermore, there are differences in the degree of importance and agreement among readers regarding different dimensions of the library's image. Apart from the dimension of "cost incurred to access library services," significant differences exist in the level of agreement and importance placed on other dimensions of the library's image. Specifically, readers have different perceptions and expectations regarding the facility conditions and service quality of the library, emphasizing the importance of facilities and services.

Therefore, in the management and decision-making of libraries, it is essential to consider the needs of readers regarding both functional and psychological attributes. Understanding readers' perceptions and expectations of the library's image can help optimize resource allocation and service strategies, thereby enhancing reader satisfaction and the quality of their user experience. It also allows for the correction of any stereotypical images that may have been previously associated with the library^[5-6].

2.2. Library Environments and Services: Key Influences on Reader Image and Behavior

As a knowledge service institution^[7], libraries have a significant impact on readers' library experience and subsequent behaviors through the interactive process between readers and the library. The physical environment and facilities of the library, the library atmosphere, service quality, and the richness of resources all play important roles.

Firstly, the physical environment and facilities of the library have a direct impact on readers' initial impression, which in turn affects their willingness to enter and stay in the library. A comfortable and modern library environment, well-maintained facilities, and a clean and organized spatial layout can leave a positive impression on readers, attracting them to voluntarily enter the library and spend more time there.

Secondly, the atmosphere created by the library, the ambiance, and the utilization of space also has a significant impact on readers' perception and evaluation of the library during the service process, which further influences their willingness to use the library again. A peaceful and welcoming learning atmosphere helps readers to focus on their studies and reading. Additionally, the library should provide flexible and diverse learning spaces to meet the needs of different readers, such as quiet reading areas, group discussion rooms, and maker spaces. If the atmosphere of the library is comfortable and pleasant, readers will enjoy the process of studying and exploring knowledge in the library and are more likely to choose the library's services again.

Furthermore, the friendly attitude and professional assistance of library staff, as well as the rich collection resources and an adequate number of copies provided by the library, also have a significant impact on readers' service experience, further influencing their willingness to continue using library services. Friendly staff attitude and high-quality service help build a good relationship with readers,

enhancing their trust and satisfaction with the library. The extensive and well-stocked collection resources available in the library, along with an adequate number of copies, can meet readers' reading needs and provide better learning and research support, thereby motivating readers to continue utilizing library services^[8].

3. Exploring the Relationships between Readers' Perceived Value, Library Experience, and Library Image in Libraries

3.1. The Impact of Readers' Perceived Value on the Image of the Library

There is a positive relationship of at least moderate strength between readers' "cognitive value" of the library and their perception of the library's image. When readers perceive higher cognitive value in the library, they tend to have a more positive perception of the functional attributes and psychological attributes in the library's image. Furthermore, readers' evaluations of various aspects of the library's cognition also influence their overall overview of the library. Specifically, when readers perceive higher cognitive value in the library's knowledge resources, information services, and academic support, they also tend to have a higher positive perception of the functional attributes (such as richness of knowledge resources, effectiveness of information services, etc.) and psychological attributes (such as a comfortable learning environment, friendly staff service, etc.) in the library's image. This implies that readers' cognitive value of the library is closely associated with the formation of their perception of the library's image.

3.2. The Influence of Readers' Library Experience on the Image of the Library

During the process of using library services, readers' library experience directly influences their perception of the library's image^[9]. The library experience is constructed through three aspects: perception, emotion, and knowledge creation. Firstly, in terms of perception experience, the library's environment and facilities leave a lasting impression on readers. Elegant architectural design, comfortable seating, advanced technological equipment, and a pleasant atmosphere create an enjoyable library space that influences readers' image of the library. Secondly, in terms of emotional experience, a quiet and focused atmosphere, along with friendly and enthusiastic library staff, make readers feel cared for, shaping a positive emotional experience. Lastly, in terms of knowledge creation experience, as a provider of knowledge resources, the library creates a unique experience for readers in reading, research, and academic activities. This experience satisfies readers' academic needs, strengthens their connection with the library, and forms a positive knowledge creation experience. In conclusion, readers' library experience, interwoven through the aspects of perception, emotion, and knowledge creation, shapes their perception of the library's image. This understanding is crucial for library managers. By providing diverse and enriching experiences, the library can enhance readers' image, promote their continued usage and support.

3.3. Relationship between Readers' Perceived Value and Library Experience

Reader's perceived value involves the concepts of cost and value. Cost refers to the resources readers invest in using library services, including time, effort, and money. Value refers to the benefits and satisfaction readers gain from library services. When readers perceive a high value in library services, they believe that the costs incurred are worthwhile. In other words, library services and resources are considered to have a higher value relative to the costs involved. This perceived value influences readers' expectations and evaluations of their library experience. Conversely, a low perceived value may lead to negative evaluations of the library experience and a reduced willingness

to use the library.

4. The Impact of “Library Image”, “Perceived Value”, and “Library Experience” on Readers' Behavioral Intentions

4.1. Influence of Library Image on Reader Satisfaction

Readers' cognitive value encompasses the concepts of costs and benefits. Costs refer to the resources readers need to invest in using library services, including time, effort, and money. Value refers to the benefits and satisfaction readers derive from library services. When readers perceive higher cognitive value in the library, they believe that the costs they incur are worthwhile. In other words, they perceive that the library's services and resources have a higher value relative to the costs they need to invest. This perception of cognitive value influences readers' expectations and evaluations of their library experience. Conversely, a lower perception of cognitive value may lead to negative evaluations of the library experience and a reduced willingness to use library services.

4.2. Readers' "Perceived Value" Influences Reader Reliance

There is a significant and at least moderate positive relationship between readers' cognitive value of the library and their behavioral intention to use library services. In other words, readers with higher cognitive value are more likely to have the intention to use the library's information services. This intention is reflected in various aspects, including considering the library as the preferred information provider, recommending library services to others, and investing time and resources in using library services continuously.

When readers perceive a higher cognitive value in the library, they view it as a trustworthy and valuable information provider. This perception stimulates their positive behavioral intentions towards the library, such as choosing the library as its preferred information source and being willing to recommend its high-quality services to others. Additionally, readers demonstrate their willingness to invest time and resources to continue using library services. This indicates their affirmation of the cognitive value provided by the library and their willingness to invest corresponding resources in order to gain more value and meet their information needs.

Therefore, library managers should focus on enhancing readers' cognitive value of the library to encourage them to actively utilize the library's information services and become advocates and supporters of the library.

4.3. Library Experience Influences Reader Engagement

Readers form their perceptions and ideas about the library based on their experiences in the library's usage environment and services, which in turn influence their subsequent behaviors and level of engagement with the library.

- **Satisfaction aspect:** When readers have a highly positive and satisfactory image and experience of the library, they are more inclined to recommend the library's environment and services to others. They actively share their positive experiences in the library, encouraging others to experience and utilize the library's information services.

- **Responsiveness aspect:** If readers encounter issues or have any feedback or suggestions while using the library, they choose to provide feedback to the library or share it with their friends and family^[10]. This feedback helps the library improve and optimize its services, enhancing reader satisfaction and experience.

- **Willingness aspect:** When readers have a highly positive image and experience of the library,

they are more willing to invest money, time, and other costs in using the library's services. This may include paying membership fees, purchasing tickets for library events or training courses. Readers perceive these services and resources as valuable for their learning, knowledge acquisition, and personal development, hence they are willing to pay for them.

- **Selection aspect:** When readers have a positive image of a nonprofit organization's library, they are more likely to choose a library at a different level within the same nonprofit organization to access information services. This may be because they have higher trust and expectations for that type of library, believing that these libraries can provide better services and resources.

In conclusion, libraries should focus on providing a good usage environment and services to create a positive library experience, thereby attracting reader participation and building long-term relationships. This will contribute to enhancing reader satisfaction, word-of-mouth communication, and their continued level of engagement with the library.

5. Pathways to Building Library Services

5.1. Promoting a Positive Image of the Library

In order to reduce negative perceptions and enhance a positive image of the library among readers, strategies can be developed in the following three areas:

- **Facilities and equipment:** The library should prioritize the maintenance of its buildings, furniture, and computer equipment to ensure they remain in optimal condition. It is essential to provide readers with stable internet connectivity and offer access to high-quality smart devices that cater to their diverse information needs. To uphold reader comfort and usability, the library should conduct regular inspections and updates of its furniture, guaranteeing both functionality and aesthetic appeal.

- **Convenience factors:** By gaining a deep understanding of the needs of its readers, the library can strategically design its facilities for convenience. Ample parking spaces and readily available charging stations should be provided to accommodate readers' parking and device-charging requirements. Flexibility in the library's opening hours, informed by insights gleaned from reader surveys and feedback, will help ensure that the library's schedule aligns seamlessly with readers' usage patterns and daily routines.

- **Improve overall atmosphere and seating congestion:** Elevating the overall ambiance of the library environment becomes paramount. This can be achieved through a commitment to cleanliness and a potential redesign of the available spaces to maximize reading areas. A consistent cleaning and organization regimen must be upheld, with a particular focus on maintaining neatly arranged book displays that facilitate easy access and borrowing. To mitigate seating congestion, the library could introduce an innovative seat reservation system, diligently monitor seat utilization, and proactively manage available seating to prevent any instances of overcrowding.

Therefore, in order to enhance the library's positive image, continuous efforts should be made to create an environment where readers have positive perceptions and experiences. This will establish the library as their preferred information service platform.

5.2. Creating a Favourable Library Climate and Enhancing Service Quality

Libraries should not only provide basic information services but also create a familiar and inclusive environment and atmosphere. Here are some specific strategies to enhance the quality of library services and meet readers' needs:

- **Listen to readers' voices:** The library should establish comprehensive feedback mechanisms that consistently gather readers' opinions and suggestions. Utilize a variety of methods, including

reader surveys, suggestion boxes, and online feedback platforms, to gain valuable insights into readers' needs and expectations. Swift and proactive responses, along with tangible improvements, will ensure that readers truly perceive their voices as valued and influential.

- **Provide personalized services:** By conducting surveys and engaging in open communication, the library can gain a deep understanding of individual readers' needs and preferences. Leveraging this knowledge, the library can offer tailored information services, such as personalized book recommendations and regular customized reading suggestions. The creation of specialized activities aligned with various reader interests will effectively cater to the diverse needs of distinct reader groups.

- **Strengthen information literacy education:** The library should proactively offer reader education courses and workshops, designed to empower readers with enhanced information literacy and retrieval skills. Through personalized guidance and support, readers can learn to navigate library resources more effectively. Addressing specific challenges readers encounter in locating information resources and providing one-on-one assistance will significantly contribute to their information-seeking proficiency.

- **Increase social and interactive elements:** To foster robust reader engagement, the library should organize a range of reader community events, including book clubs and discussions. These initiatives will promote meaningful communication and collaboration among readers. By cultivating an inclusive and interactive environment, readers will establish a genuine sense of belonging and forge deeper connections. Encouraging the sharing of reading experiences and book recommendations will create a positive atmosphere of reader interaction.

- **Enhance partnerships:** Collaborating with external institutions and organizations is pivotal for resource diversification and service expansion. By forming partnerships with schools, community organizations, and more, the library can develop a spectrum of educational programs and activities that enrich its service repertoire. These collaborations will amplify the library's influence and extend its reach within the community.

- **Continuously improve facilities and technology:** To ensure seamless and efficient library services, ongoing investment in modern facilities and advanced technologies is essential. Offering amenities like self-service book borrowing and returning systems, digital reading platforms, and robust wireless networks will significantly elevate the overall user experience. Regular assessments and updates of facilities will guarantee they consistently align with readers' evolving needs and expectations.

By implementing the above strategies, libraries can create an environment and atmosphere that readers love and feel a sense of belonging to. Additionally, providing high-quality information services that meet readers' needs and address their information retrieval challenges and difficulties will help enhance the quality of library services, attract more readers, and build a positive reputation.

5.3. Harnessing the Influence of Readers

Harnessing the influence of readers is an important strategy for enhancing the positive image and service quality of the library. Here are some specific strategies:

- **Provide sharing platforms:** To establish community discussion areas, online forums, or social media groups where readers can share their reading experiences and book recommendations, the library can create dedicated digital platforms that foster meaningful interactions among readers.

- **Invite readers to participate in event planning:** By involving readers in the planning and organization of events, such as having them as hosts for book clubs, guest speakers for lectures, or curators for exhibitions, the library can demonstrate its commitment to valuing the voices and contributions of its readers, thereby expanding their influence within the library community.

• **Encourage readers to write book reviews or reflections:** To stimulate interest among other readers and better understand their preferences and needs, the library can encourage readers to write book reviews or reflections by providing dedicated review boards or online platforms for sharing comments and opinions on reading materials.

• **Invite readers to participate in surveys and feedback:** By conducting regular reader surveys and soliciting feedback, the library can ensure that readers' voices are heard and gain valuable improvement suggestions to enhance library services and facilities.

• **Organize reader events and sharing sessions:** Hosting reader events and sharing sessions, such as author lectures, book-sharing sessions, and reader story contests, allows the library to encourage reader participation and create advocates who will spread positive word-of-mouth about the library's services and offerings.

By leveraging the influence of readers, the library can build closer reader relationships, increase reader engagement and a sense of belonging, and utilize the power of readers to promote library services, enhancing the positive image and service quality. These strategies establish a stronger connection with readers, making the library a beloved place for them.

6. Conclusion

This study investigates the influence of the library's image, perceived value, and user experience on readers' behavioral intentions to use library services. The findings reveal that the library's image significantly affects reader satisfaction, while the perceived value determines their dependency on the library. Additionally, the library experience has a significant impact on reader engagement. These research findings and recommendations provide valuable insights for library managers to optimize services and enhance reader satisfaction. Future research can explore additional influencing factors and conduct comparative studies among different types of libraries to deepen the understanding of readers' behavioral intentions, offering further guidance for service improvement and innovation in libraries.

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