

The Effects of Inclusive Design and Community Resources that are Pertinent in an Individual's Life



Abstract

Modern libraries and community centers aim to be more inclusive with services and space offerings. This study considers the preferences in both library and community center designs, amenities and key features that guests hold as important to the overall environment. The goals were: to determine if there is a connection between different types of technology and users; To determine what type of resources are needed and used by the community; and to determine how to create a "Sense of Place" in a community center/library. The findings from this research confirm that community members feel that the resource and programs offered to a community is important. Technology and Wi-Fi were found to be essential to a library environment. Results from this study will guide the final design strategies for a combined library and community center with inclusive spaces, education opportunities, and community resources.

Methods

- Qualtrics Survey approved through the North Dakota State University Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- The questionnaire was distributed to various groups and organizations throughout North Dakota State University, the Fargo-Moorhead Communities via social media, and other interested groups using a web link.
- The questions in the survey focused on how users connect with different types of spaces within a library or community center, how their interaction affects the level of usage in these spaces, and how users interact with various resources.
- Questions consisted of Likert scale and closed-ended questions
- Survey responses were voluntary, and all participant responses were kept anonymous

Review of Literature

Social Inclusion



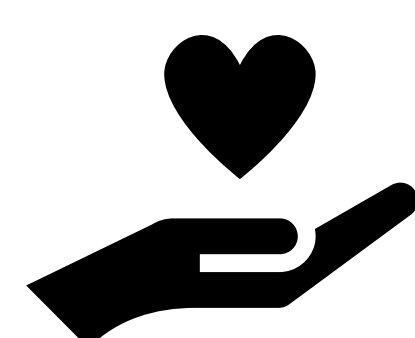
- Children & Adult share common experiences such as financial, physical, or cultural status/background (Stewart, M., Reutler, L., Makwarimba, E., Veenstra, G., Love, R., & Raphael, D. 2008).
- Social inclusion varies by the community (Stewart et al., 2008).
- Diversity, unity, & inclusion can be achieved through shared experiences and addressing the gap (Miriam Figueroa, 2021)

Technology Usage



- Technology Illiteracy: level of very reduced or nonexistent knowledge on the handling and use of tools, such as basic computer programs and Internet use (IGI Global, 2021)
- Communities & libraries have created programs that educate, create, and engage its members to interact with technology in a controlled setting (Servon & Nelson, 2001)

Sense of Place

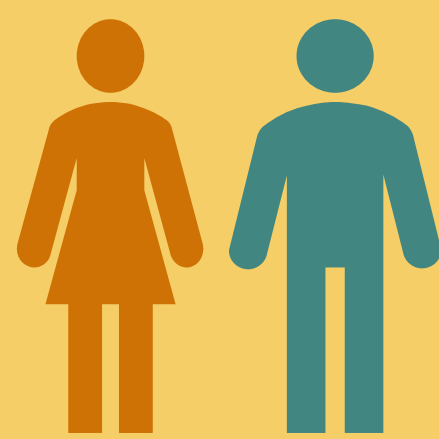


- Libraries have continued to adapt their place in a community for their needs (Wood, 2021)
- Third Place: an area where one spends time separate from home, work, or school (Wood, 2021)
- Libraries are a place of intersection between neutrality, information and social interactions (Wood, 2021)

Bibliography
 IGI Global. (2021). *What is Technology Illiteracy*. <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/technology-illiteracy/29517>
 Figueroa, Miriam. Personal Communication. (October 10, 2021)
 Servon, J. L., Nelson, K. M. (2001). Community centers: Narrowing the digital divide in low-income, urban communities. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 23(1), 279-290. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0735-2166.00089>
 Stewart, M., Reutler, L., Makwarimba, E., Veenstra, G., Love, R., & Raphael, D. (2008). Left out: Perspectives on social exclusion and inclusion across income groups. *Health Sociology Review*, 17(1), 78-94. <https://doi.org/10.5172/hsr.451.17.1.78>
 Wood, E. (2021). Libraries Full Circle: The Cross Section of Community, the Public Sphere, and Third Place. *Public Library Quarterly*, 40(2), 144-166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2020.1737491>

Participants

Results from the survey show a divide in Age, Gender, and Race among the 243 participants. Ranging from 18 to 65 years of age, participants were primarily female (67%). Race majority was White (82%) with American Indian (5%), Asian (3%), and African American following (3%).



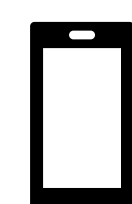
243 Total Participants
 Female: 139 (67%)
 Male: 57 (28%)
 Non-Binary: 4 (2%)

Technology

How often do participants interact with technology



82.7% Work Setting



95.1% Personal Usage

Results:

Social Inclusion & Design



- Participants are more likely to consider inclusive spaces (57.2%)
- Noted awareness for minority groups & their acceptance
- 41.9% found a Great Deal of importance for a LGBTQ+ communities
- 48.1% found a Great Deal of importance for a multi-cultural space

Community Center

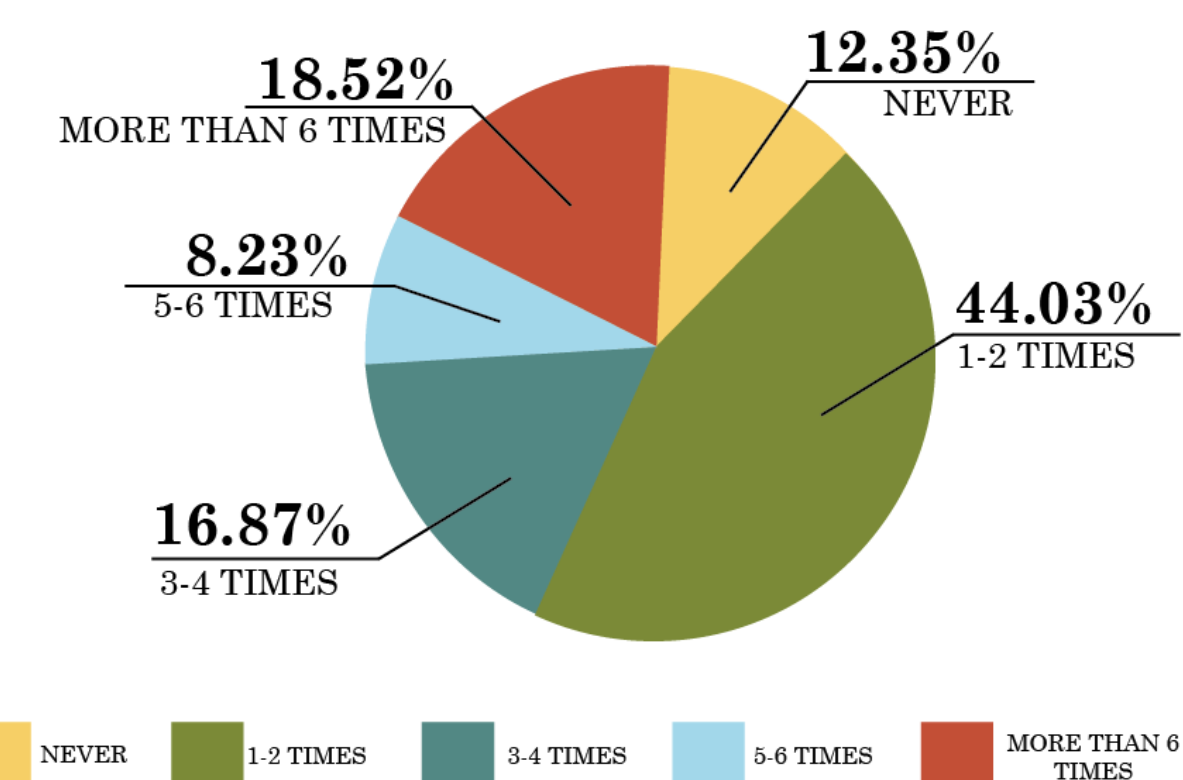
38.1% of participants found access to Community Resources of much importance



Resources includes access to:

- Entertainment
- Social Groups
- Education
- Government

Engagement in Community Events per Month



Library Features Ranked of Importance

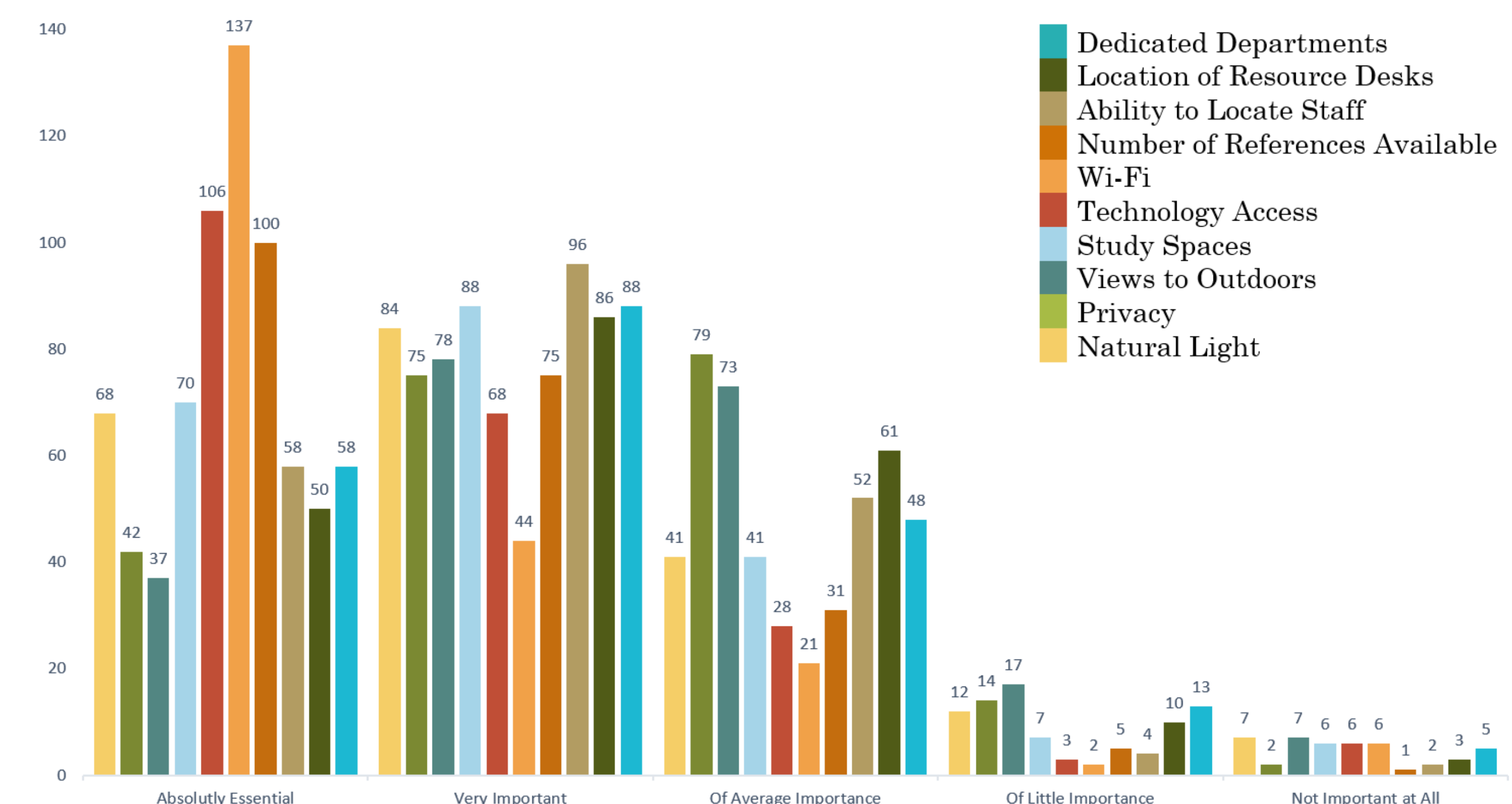
Library

Where do interior considerations rank within a library?
Average Importance

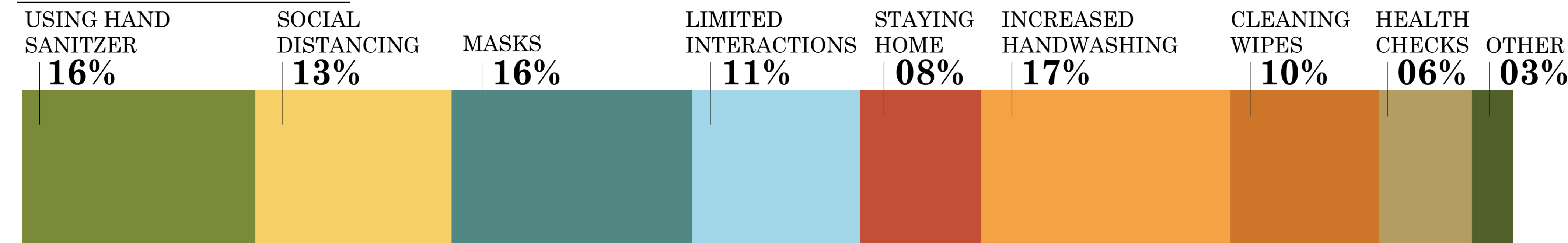
- Natural Light
- Privacy
- View to Outdoors

What resources are deemed essential within a library?

- Wi-Fi
- Technology Access
- # of Resources



COVID-19 Considerations



Participants were asked to select from an array of precautions regarding transmission of the virus. A common write in option included being vaccinated which 6.5% reported being so.

Discussion

The survey resulted in a better understanding of user preferences for library and community center environmental design along with resource offerings. This information is particularly relevant to the design ideas that can be generated for a successful library and community center. It remains to be further explored whether this would impact library displays and design strategies for wayfinding within libraries and community centers but does give the researchers something to consider.

- Technology and Wi-Fi are found to be essential to the library environment.
- Community resources are viewed as being highly important to the respondents of the survey.
- With the pandemic going on currently, participants have implemented the practices of social distancing, using hand sanitizer, limiting interactions with others and many other precautions.
- Providing materials to make spaces more accessible to non-English speaking visitors is important because it was discovered that a proportion of participants speak other languages besides English.