

A Space For All: Supporting Social Inclusion Through Public Library Design

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Abstract

This research study focused on library patrons thoughts and opinions regarding healthy and comfortable design practices. The data collected will provide a better understanding of how a public library is perceived and what factors make it more appealing and inclusive to library patrons. We chose to focus this research study on the importance and impact of sustainability, social inclusion, and wayfinding.

After reviewing the data from the survey, it is evident that library patrons perceive sustainability, social inclusion, and wayfinding within a public library positively and are affected by healthy and comfortable interior environments.

This study confirms the importance of always creating interior spaces that are welcoming, comfortable, and safe in the built environment.

Review of Literature

Sustainability

Sustainability within the interior environment focuses on the health and wellbeing of each individual and the importance of environmentally conscious practices by incorporating biophilic design solutions to promote healthy living, inclusion, and equality. (Hoffman, 2020).

Social Inclusion

A socially responsible and inclusive environment is essential within the community. This can be included in the interior by providing spaces for individuals to learn, grow, and interact with other cultural practices to promote cross cultural integration (Datta, 2019)

Wayfinding

Wayfinding is highly beneficial as it allows libraries to be innovative while maintaining organization. Wayfinding also creates an inclusive environment as every individual is given the equal opportunity to comfortably navigate their surroundings (Chisita & Fombad, 2020).

Methodology

Methods

Qualitative data was collected through an online survey that consisted of 13 multiple choice and 5 Likert Scale questions pertaining to how a library environment is perceived.

Subjects

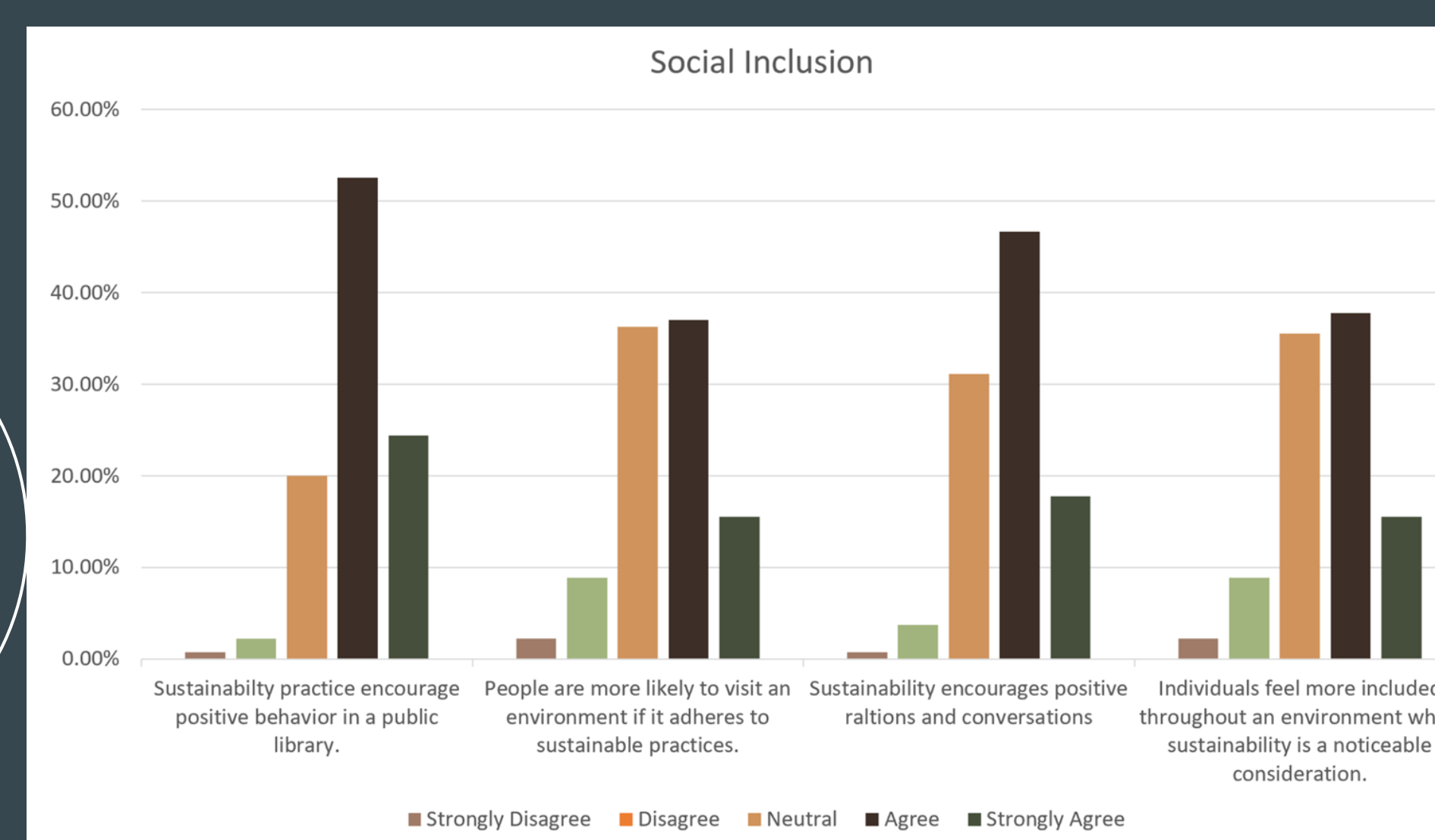
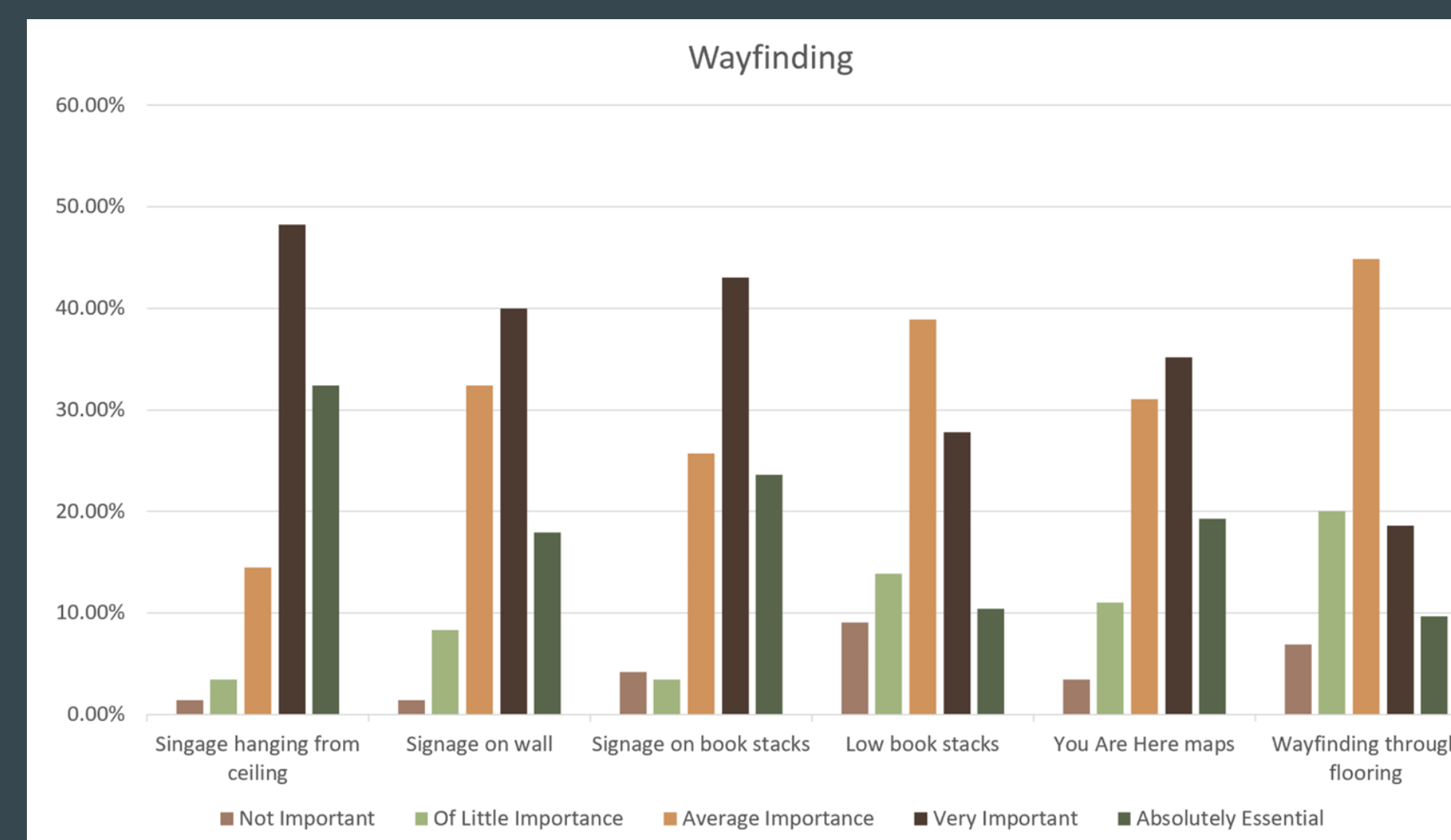
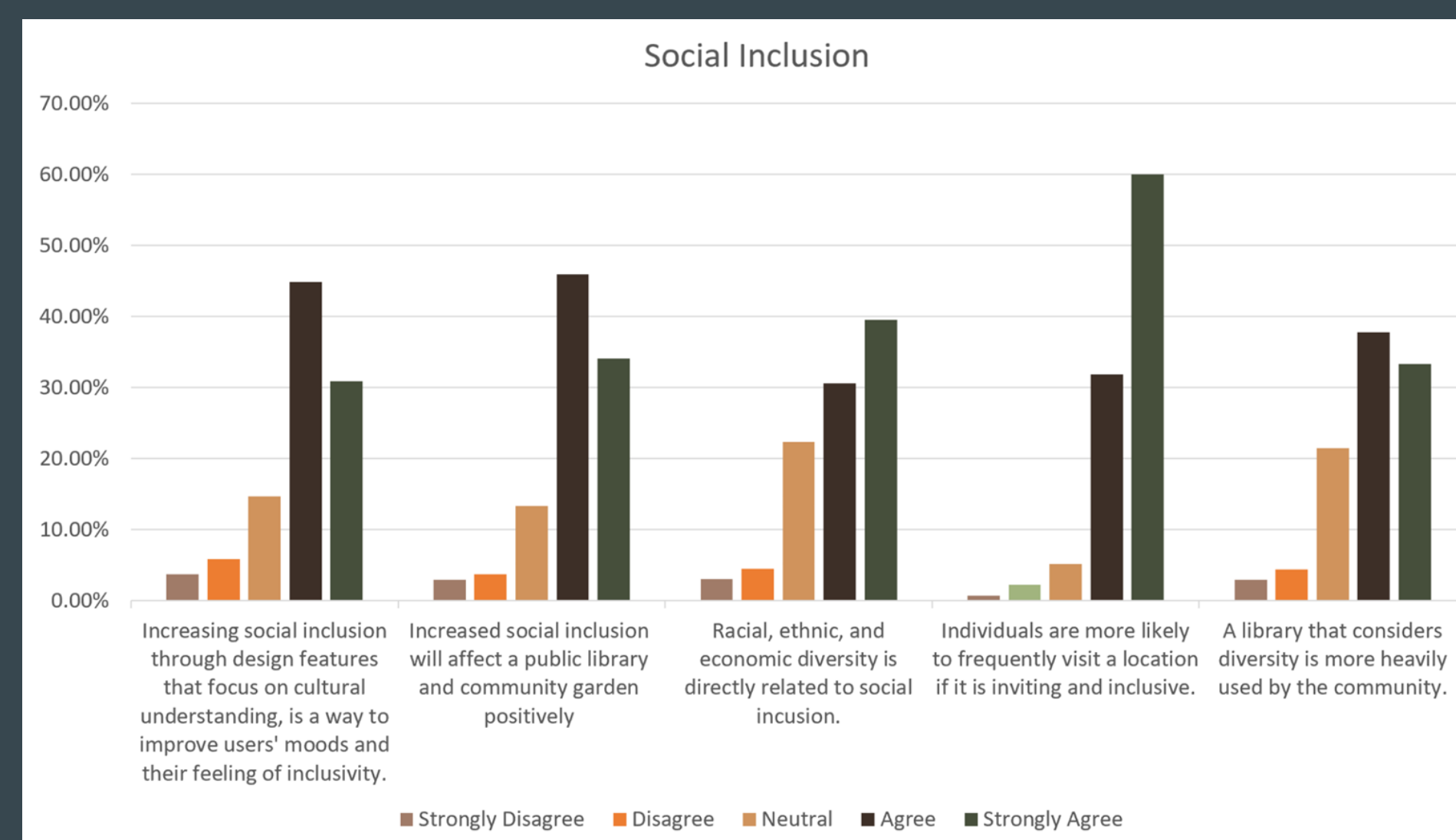
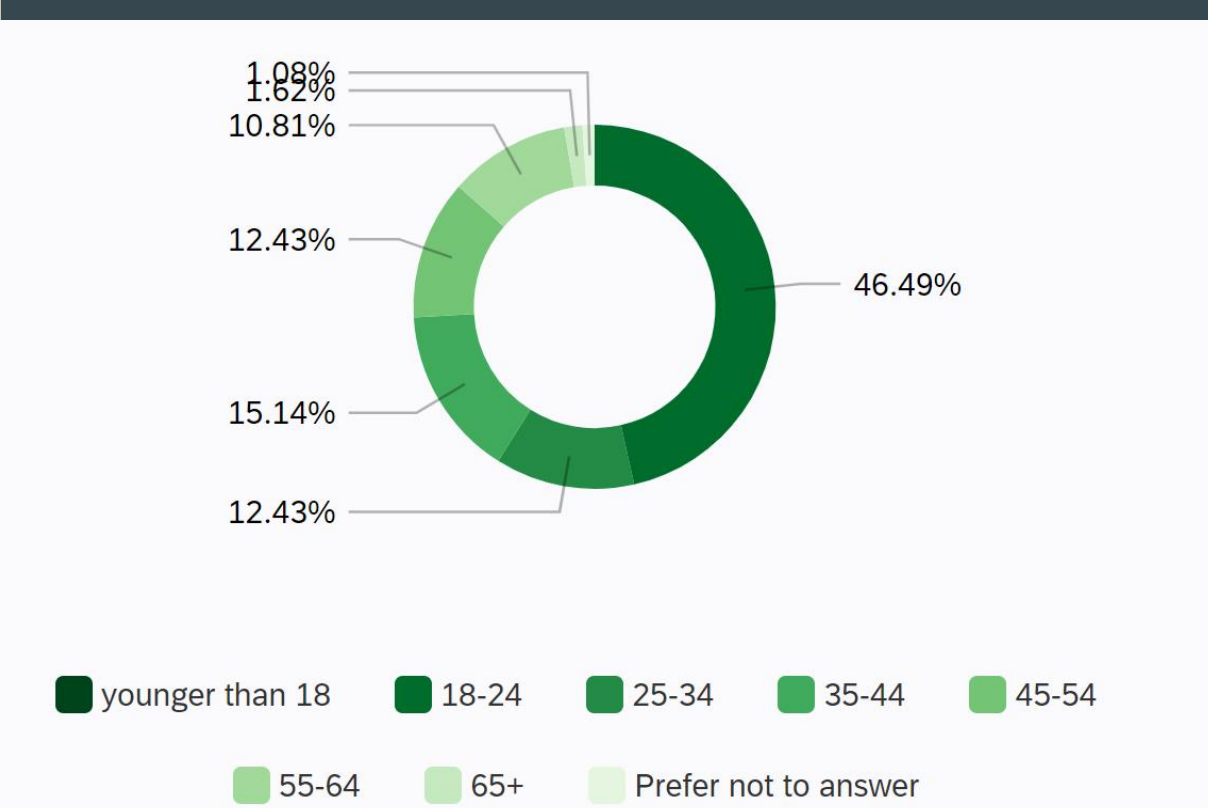
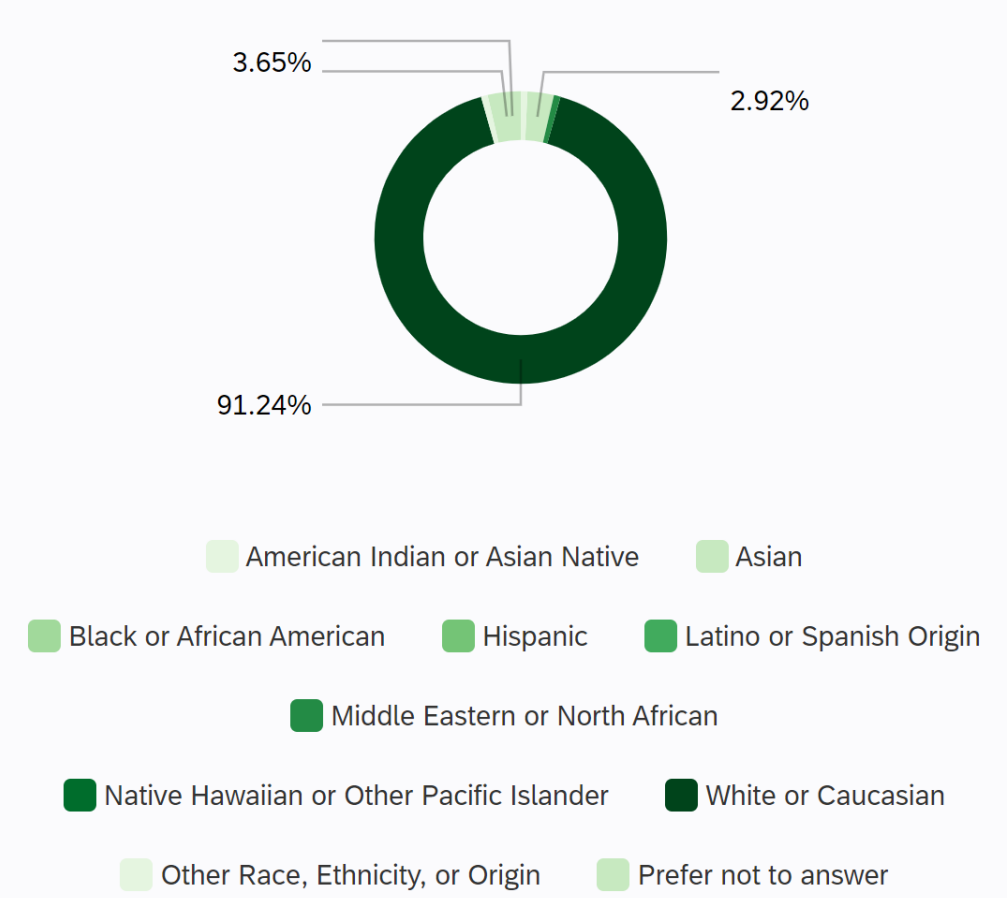
Participants of this survey were 18 years of age or older.

Procedures

This online survey was distributed through the NDSU Student and Faculty Listserv and personal social media and email accounts. The survey was available for 20 days.

Survey Results

Demographics



In this survey, 40% of participants displayed signage on walls an important aspect in the design of a library. 53% of participants also agree that sustainable practices in the interior environment encourage positive behavior. Lastly, 60% of individuals stated they are more likely to visit a public library if it is socially inclusive.

Conclusion

This research study demonstrated the importance of many aspects in a community building center such as a library. New findings were discovered that developed a better understanding and the role of sustainability, social inclusion, and wayfinding within a public library. Throughout our research we found that a considerable amount of participants were more willing to visit a library that incorporates green design and sustainability aspects, uses wayfinding techniques create a sense of comfort and inclusion, and includes activities and spaces dedicated to cultural integration. According to the research and survey results, it is evident that sustainability, wayfinding, and social inclusion have a significant positive impact on the interior environment and the each user of the space.

References:
 Chisita, C.T., & Fombad, M. (2020). Spatial configuring for wider access to public library services at the harare city library: Towards a new strategy for inclusivity. *Journal of Public Library Quarterly*, 40(3), 221-243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2020.1771936>
 Datta, R. (2019). Sustainability: Through cross-cultural community garden activities. *Journal of Justice and Sustainability*, 24(8), 762-776. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2019.1641073>
 Hoffman, A. (2020). Building on the inherent strengths of green space environments: Promoting trust, democracy, and resilience among ethnically diverse groups. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, 48(3), 210-224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2019.1625600>