PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES:
AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION USING Q METHODOLOGY

A thesis submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences
of Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

by
Peng Chen
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Thesis written by

Peng Chen

B.A., Renmin University of China, 1993
M.A., Renmin University of China, 1999

Approved by

Steven Brown, Ph.D. ______________, Advisor

Steven Hook, Ph.D. ______________, Chair, Department of Political Science

John R.D. Stalvey, Ph.D. ______________, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The public library plays several vital roles in American people’s lives. Today, people of different ages, ethnicities, abilities, and socioeconomic statuses can access public libraries across the country. A survey conducted by the American Library Association (ALA) indicates that 63% of interviewees have public library cards, and 66% of the general population visited or used public library services at least one time during 2006 (ALA, 2006a). These numbers are close to or slightly higher than the voting rate in the election of November 2004, namely 63.8%, which is the highest turnout since 1992 (U.S. Census, 2006). Considering this high participation rate, the public library is worth extensive study as a public institution.

Another reason I initiated this study is that Ohio has an excellent public library system, one of the best in the United States. In 1997, John Berry, Editor-in-Chief of the Library Journal, visited Ohio and concluded, “if you want to watch academic and public librarians at work creating the future … be sure to take a look at Ohio” (Hill, 2003, p. 2). Hennen’s American Public Library Rating (HAPLR), a nationwide ranking based on circulation, reference service, staffing, materials, hours open and funding levels, claims, “Ohio retains its place at the head of state-by-state ranking…in the seven HAPLR ratings since 1999, over 20% of the top 10 slots for each population category went to Ohio libraries” (Hennen, 2006, p. 41). As a resident of Ohio and a patron of the Ohio Public
Library Network, I have had many opportunities to observe how public libraries in Ohio function and how they have been changing.

There is a vast literature on studies that use survey research methods in attempts to measure public attitudes on public library missions and usages. These surveys usually focus on two perspectives. First, surveys such as the Public Library Inquiry in 1948, the National Household Education Survey in 1991 and 1996, the 1998 Gallup Survey, the 2006 ALA Survey, and the 2006 Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) report emphasize the use of the public library at the national level and aim to provide general information and seek the correlative relationship between respondents’ opinions and attitudes with their economic, social and political characteristics. Second, survey studies by others such as Allen (2003), Estabrook and Lakner (2000), Heim and Wallace (1990) and Schontz, Parker and Parker (2004) have focused on particular patron groups or services in public libraries. However, the main purposes of all these surveys were to discover descriptive characteristics based on proportions of the population such as how many patrons visit public libraries, how many books circulate, or how many patrons believe that libraries should provide more internet services.

However, as White (1983) has stated, whether or not an individual uses the public library depends not on the library alone, but on the impact of other factors as well. Raber (1995) gave a more specific explanation and pointed out that “libraries manifest cultural characteristics, patterned ways of thinking and feeling about organization in terms of what [the organization] does and how it does it. Philosophies, professional values, assumptions, beliefs, expectation, attitudes, and norms all provide and define the meaning
of the experience” (p. 51). Gorman (2000) also discusses library values that are rooted in history and held at present. He argues that “we must always bear in mind that what is happening to libraries is a result of what is happening to social life, social organization, and global economic trends” (p. 3). Thus, in addition to the answers from the above surveys, we also need to know the main motivations that lead patrons to visit public libraries, and how they think about the public libraries. This study provides a preliminary approach to answering these questions.

Q methodology is a useful approach systematically to explore subjectivity questions in patrons’ minds. Five decades ago, the inventor of Q methodology, William Stephenson, conducted research to study the “image” of the public library (Stephenson, 1962). He attempted to provide a philosophy for the “ideal” use of public libraries based on how they matter to people in some fundamental sense. Stephenson sought for underlying reasons, of a basic nature, as to why libraries should have this or that set of objectives (p. 3). Since Stephenson, no further research has followed this approach, but dramatic changes have come about during the past 50 years. Public libraries now face new problems and patrons express more expectations of libraries today. These problems and expectations triggered this study.

I have three major purposes in undertaking this study. First, people’s information-seeking behavior and choices in the use of public libraries will be examined. This phase of the study will include a review of the literature concerning the history of American public libraries and the changes in their missions, an examination of the technological challenges facing public libraries, and appraisal of the financial pressures
encountered in meeting patrons’ demands. Second, Q methodology will be introduced as a method for analyzing and identifying opinions, values, and positions concerning public libraries. Third, results will be presented based on the application of Q methodology to 33 individuals who are comprised of ordinary patrons, librarians, and faculties in a library science department. Discussion will focus on consensus and conflict among perceptions and the practical implications of the findings.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following review of literature contains four sections. The first section gives the general definition of a public library and the reasons people choose to use or not to use the public library. For the second part, I review the public library from three standpoints—specifically, the function of the public library as a result of economic growth and cultural accumulation, as a service to provide information, and as an institution of public goods. Meanwhile I assert that at present public libraries face three challenges: mission identification, new information and technological innovation, and financial pressure. All three considerations will help us in collecting the Q statements.

Definition and Use of Public Libraries

Two compatible definitions of public libraries are given as follows. One is from a practical viewpoint, the other from a theoretical perspective. Both predicate that public libraries should be supported by public funds and be free to users.

In the Public Libraries in the United States: Fiscal Year 2004, issued by the U.S. Department of Education, the definition of a public library is given as:

A public library is an entity that is established under state enabling laws or regulations to serve a community, district, or region, and that provides at least the following: (1) an organized collection of printed or other library materials, or a combination thereof; (2) paid staff; (3) an established schedule in which services of the staff are available to the public; (4) the facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff, and schedule; and (5) that is supported in whole or in part with public funds. (p. 2)
Rubin (2004) summarizes the following essential characteristics for American public libraries: (1) supported by taxes, (2) governed by a board, (3) open to all, (4) voluntary, (5) established by state law, and (6) providing services without charge to the user.

Based on the above criteria, the *National Center for Education Statistics*, the most authoritative survey, states that there were 9,198 central public libraries and 7,503 branches across the United States in 2005. These libraries attracted more than one billion patrons and provided remarkable services every year (See Table 1).

### Table 1. Population and Number of Public Library Patrons, Services and Annual Growth Rate 1995-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total library visits</th>
<th>Reference transactions</th>
<th>Total circulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>266,557,000</td>
<td>981,566,093</td>
<td>278,204,076</td>
<td>1,609,871,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>282,434,000</td>
<td>1,146,284,425</td>
<td>291,476,441</td>
<td>1,713,969,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>294,131,000</td>
<td>1,359,858,000</td>
<td>302,513,000</td>
<td>2,062,961,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Growth Rate</td>
<td>1.05%</td>
<td>2.98%</td>
<td>1.81%</td>
<td>2.19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Public Libraries in the United States*, various issues.

Besides the objective numbers provided by each public library to generate the national level statistics as shown above, many surveys reveal why people visit public libraries in the States. Three nationwide surveys provided some comparable results during the 1990s. They are the 1996 National Household Education Survey (NHES) conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, which targeted 56,000 households on various topics including public library use; the 1998 Gallup survey commissioned by ALA based on a randomly selected national sample of 1,000 adults; and the 1998 Clarion University survey (CU) of 3,255 adults (1,057 usable). Although different strategies,
purposes, and questions are used in the respective surveys, they still provide some parallel information. Table 2 contains some selected results from the three surveys.

**Table 2. Main Activities and Purposes of Patrons Visit Public Libraries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>NHES</th>
<th>ALA</th>
<th>CU</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to borrow books</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for phone access to information/reference services.</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to attend meetings or programs</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for enjoyment or hobbies</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for school or class assignments</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for information for personal use</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to attend a program or activity for children Age 6-12</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Meanwhile, most people say public libraries provide them great services. The ALA (2006b) investigation in 1996 shows that 40% of the respondents indicated that they would rate the public library “at the top of the list” of tax-supported agencies. A 2003 statewide survey in Ohio reveals that 86.7% of respondents give local public libraries excellent or good ratings. Compared with the numbers for road and highway maintenance (42.6%), local public schools (43.7%) and Ohio’s State Legislature (23.6%), the percentage for libraries is remarkable (Casey Communication, 2003). Another survey conducted in New York City in 2000 indicates that more than 82% of respondents claim public libraries provide good or excellent services. The comparable numbers for other public services are 50% for public education, 55% for police and public safety, 68% for fire protection, 58% for sanitation, 57% for mass transit, and 71% for parks and
recreation (Muzzio & Ryzin, 2000). The latest survey conducted by the ALA in 2006 shows that 70% of respondents are satisfied with public library services. Meanwhile, in the Public Agenda survey 76% of interviewees grade public libraries with excellent and good job.

In attempts to give more objective estimation of the benefits of public libraries, some scholars have tried to use cost-benefit analysis to determine what economic benefits have derived from libraries. Newhouse and Alexander (1972), two Rand researchers, examined the Beverly Hills Library and found that the benefit each dollar generated or the benefit-cost ratio varied significantly among different classes of books. Mysteries, preschool and young adult fiction, psychology, and art techniques had the highest benefit-cost ratios in the library. Holt and Elliott (1998) utilized cost-benefit analysis (CBA) including consumer surplus, contingent valuation, and opportunity cost methodologies to explore how well the St. Louis Public Library served the public. They found that users obtained more than $4 in benefits for each $1 spent in the library. A survey conducted by Clarion University in 2000 found that 18% of interviewees indicated that they thought the benefit “in terms of dollars” they received each time they used the public library was less than $20; 19% thought the value was between $20 and $40; and 15% believed the value was over $40. The rest of the respondents, 48%, did not give an answer (Vaverk, 2000). Sumson, Hawkins and Morris (2002) have developed a model to demonstrate the economic benefit from books borrowed. They state that “promoting the traditional role of the public library to maximize book loans has obvious benefit for the individual reader—but, more importantly, it leads to greater economic efficiency” (p. 678). A team from
Florida State University conducted research to identify and describe the economic impacts and benefits of Florida public libraries and found that “the economic impacts and benefits received from Florida's public libraries are numerous, varied, and complex.” That study found that libraries benefit not only the patrons’ financial well-being, but also the local business and community economy (McClure, Fraser, Nelson & Robbins, 2001, p. viii). In a recent study required by nine public libraries in Ohio’s four southwestern counties, the researchers estimated that for $1 expended on library operations, the public receives about $2.56 in direct quantifiable benefits (Levin, Driscoll & Fleeter, 2006).

When examining what factors influence the use of public libraries, Parker and Paisley (1965) claimed that the public library circulation had correlation with the education levels of female users, community population, circulation from the fiction collection, and community income level. Paisley (1968), Allen (1969), Crane (1971), and Martyn (1974) found that three variables affected the use of the public library: awareness, perceived accessibility, and perceived easiness of use. Holtmann, Tabasz, and Kruse (1976) used an econometric model and found that income, travel and parking time influenced public library use. Zweizig (1977) developed a model that demonstrated that library use behavior is not only a function of the characteristics of the patrons, such as educational level and reading habits, but also a function of the characteristics of the library as perceived by the patrons. D’Elia (1980) improved Zweizig’s model and discovered that patrons’ use frequency and intensity were most strongly related to their degree of involvement in adult education activities, their reading activities, and their degree of awareness of special library programs. However, all the variables measured in
the above studies account for only between 18% and 33% of the total variance in library use; thus a considerable percentage of the reasons for library use variation remain unidentified. To find other reasons, Van House (1983) addressed the fact that public libraries do not charge users, but they do impose non-monetary costs, and that the major cost of using the library is the patron’s time. He developed a conceptual model of library use based on time allocation theory and argued “the cost of library use is a direct function of the time required” (p. 382). James (1985) examined the relationship between local economic conditions, such as unemployment and inflation rates, and the use of public libraries. The study suggests that there was no significant relationship between the use of the library and the local economy.

The above studies bring to light the fact that many factors or variables function in public library usage. In this study, I will focus on three directions that people pursue to think about public libraries. The following section presents a brief review of the development of American the public library and changes in its missions.

An Institution of Economic Growth and Cultural Accumulation

The German economist, Adolph Wagner, observed that, when industrialized economies experience rising standards of living, then pressure grows to increase education and related programs (Marlow, 1995). Harris and Johnson (1984) summarized three preconditions for library establishment and growth. First are social conditions, such as urbanization, stability of home life, and availability of leisure time. Second are economic conditions, such as availability of resources to support libraries. Third are
political conditions. Unstable political situations bring only disaster for libraries. Harris and Johnson also pointed out particular factors that have led to the rapid growth of modern American libraries. These factors include (1) enormous natural resources, (2) rapidly increasing population, (3) industrialization, and (4) faith in democracy.

Rubin (2004) states that the original mission of libraries was to maintain records archives. With economic growth and culture advance, libraries have performed more and more missions, including religious, scholarly, educational, humanistic, and public services purposes. Due to these diverse missions, people classified libraries’ functions and launched special libraries for business and industry, academic libraries for support of teaching and research, school libraries for school curricula, and public libraries for serving the public.

There is still a debate on when and where the first public library in the U.S. was established, but all accept that the Boston Public Library (BPL), founded in 1854, was the first major public library established as a municipal institution supported by taxation. One of the main reasons for establishing and maintaining the BPL stated in the report of the BPL, was that the “prosperous and liberal city extend some reasonable amount of aid to the foundation and support of a noble public library … as the means of completing our system of public education” (BPL, 1852, p. 8). In 1849, John Prescott Bigelow, the mayor of Boston, proposed granting $1,000 to fund the public library project. The fund was the first gift from the government and was received in August 1850 (Whitehill, 1956). During the first five and half months following the opening of the BPL on May 2, 1854, there were 6590 registered patrons and several thousand visitors of no record. In
the same period, patrons borrowed 35,389 volumes (Wadlin, 1911). By 1854, the Boston Public Library possessed 16,221 books and pamphlets (Whitehill, 1956).

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the American economy experienced remarkable changes, transforming itself from an agricultural into an industrial economy. Walton and Rockoff (1998) state, “the census of 1890 reported manufacturing output greater in dollar value than farm output, and by 1900, the annual value of manufactures was more than twice that of agricultural products” (p. 373). Accompanying this industrial and economic progress, social and political transformations expanded across the country. People realized that “the welfare of society now depended on an educated population, one with the skills and knowledge needed to keep both industry and government running” (Faragher et al., 1999, p. 366). Many communities set agendas to develop public libraries, and they were economically prosperous enough to allocate public funds for these cultural institutions.

Citizens of these municipalities across the country followed the Boston pattern and set up public libraries to serve their own residents. In 1876, the National Bureau of Education statistics showed that there were 188 public libraries in 11 states, divided among the different states as follows: Massachusetts, 127; Illinois, 14; New Hampshire, 13; Ohio, 9; Maine, 8; Vermont, Connecticut, and Wisconsin, 4 each (Green, 1972). In the same year, the American Library Association (ALA) was founded. The creation of the ALA established a national and professional stage for people who were concerned with library issues. In 1897, according to the report issued by the National Bureau of
Education, the number of public libraries reporting 1,000 or more volumes was 4,026; the number reporting fewer than 1,000 volumes but not fewer than 300 was 3,167.

For the United States, Andrew Carnegie’s generous donation was another substantial stimulation for the establishment of public libraries. He donated more than $41 million to 1,412 communities for the construction of 1,679 libraries throughout the country between 1898 and 1919. With Carnegie grants, Ohio built a total of 105 public libraries in 77 communities. The total amount of grant money received from the Carnegie “free library” program in Ohio was $2,871,483. This number ranked third behind New York and Pennsylvania among all the United States (Bobinski, 1969).

Ohio’s first library, Putnam Family Library in Belpre, dated back to 1796 and served the neighborhood, and borrowers needed to buy shares in the library. In 1817, Ohio passed a general law to support the incorporation of library companies and schools. The 1850 census recorded 65 public libraries in Ohio and the collections amounted to 65,703 volumes. In 1853, the Ohio School Library Act passed and that meant the start of the free public library movement in Ohio. The Cincinnati and Dayton Public Libraries were the first two libraries opened to the public after the act was issued. In 1869, a law was passed permitting municipalities to levy taxes to support public libraries and reading rooms. The law stimulated many cities to establish new public libraries in their areas. Later, the Ohio Library Association, founded in 1895, also played a catalytic role in assisting the expansion of library services in the state (Melinda, 2003).

The twentieth century witnessed public libraries’ expansion of administrative entities and branches, expansion of service for communities, and the initiation of more
and broader missions. However, because the U.S. Bureau of Education changed its methods for collecting data during the first several decades of the previous century, it is hard to give consistent statistics to outline the process of the development of public libraries in the U.S. (Schick 1971). A substitute way I adopted was to find the founding years of public libraries listed in the American Libraries Directory 2007 and then to illustrate the time distribution of the formation of Ohio public libraries as shown in Figure 1. Although through the past two centuries, some libraries formed and expired, districts changed, and administration incorporations and separations occurred, the figure still delineates that in the period from 1880 to 1940 there was a golden age of Ohio public library development. That period is also the time when Ohio shifted toward industrialization. Knepper (2003) pointed out that “from the end of the Civil War to the end of World War I Ohio was one of the chief players in America’s industrial growth. Location, natural resources, cheap energy, unrivaled transportation, and a plentiful labor supply made Ohio industry competitive” (p. 300). The increasing economic resources were the financial basis for library establishment and development. Besides the economic factor, Shera (1949) and McCook (2004) also suggested that scholarship, local pride, universal education, self-education, and vocational influence all played roles in shaping the public library in the U.S. In sum, as Shera concluded, “it cannot be said that the public library began on a specific date, at a certain town, as the result of a particular cause. A multiplicity of forces, accumulating over a long period of time, converged to shape this new library form” (p. 200).
Throughout the development of American public libraries, the libraries’ missions have changed and diversified. Du Mont (1977) argued that public library goals were not consistent in the past, nor were they well defined in the 1970s. The initial purpose of the establishment of the creation of the BPL, the members of the committee understood that “there was a direct connection between knowledge and virtue” and “the future of a democratic republic is directly dependent upon the education of its citizenry, and the library is an important element in the educational process” (Harris, 1976, p. 227). At that time, the main groups of citizens who needed to receive education were new immigrants. During the 1920s, the ALA embraced the libraries’ efforts in adult education. In the 1930s, facing Nazi and fascist threats, the public library’s role was redefined as a “guardian of the people’s right to know.” In the post-war period, the ALA developed and released a series of reports about how public libraries plan and identify their goals and
missions. Table 3 shows the summary of missions that the ALA and the Public Library Association (PLA) promoted at various times. For the twenty-first century, Gorman (2000) summarizes eight central or “core” values of librarianship. They are the library as place, stewardship, service, intellectual freedom, rationalism, literacy and learning, equity of access to recorded knowledge and information, and privacy and democracy.

In 2006, the PLA started a new national discussion designed to identify the core services of public libraries now and into the future. In the discussion the PLA aimed to find the answers or part of the answers to the question of what core services are offered by public libraries. Although the final report has not been released, some new service responses, such as technology, self-service, gaming, and immigrant services, attracted many participants to discuss, on the PLA blog website, what might be added in the core services list.

However, can all these diverse missions be achieved by public libraries today? The answers from the real world are dubious. On January 2, 2007, the *Washington Post* published a front-page story titled *Hello, Grisham—So Long, Hemingway?* According to the story, Fairfax County Public Library took classics, such as Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, off the shelves and discarded them because no patrons had borrowed these great works within the previous two years and the library needed space for current best-sellers, tapes, and DVDs (“Hello, Grisham,” 2007). The author mentions that the same scenario has also appeared in other public libraries. This story raises a debate that ushers us back to a consideration of the fundamental missions of the public library.
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<td><strong>Recommended by</strong></td>
<td>The public library in the United States; the general report of the Public Library Inquiry</td>
<td>American Library Association (ALA)</td>
<td>American Library Association (ALA)</td>
<td>Public Library Association (PLA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roles of Public Libraries</strong></td>
<td>Fields of knowledge and interest to which a public library should devote its resource:</td>
<td>A public library should provide a community with:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Public affairs; citizenship</td>
<td>1. Community Activities Center</td>
<td>1. Basic literacy</td>
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<td>2. Vocations</td>
<td>2. Community Information Center</td>
<td>2. Business and career information</td>
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<td>3. Aesthetic appreciation</td>
<td>3. Formal Education Support Center</td>
<td>3. Commons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Reference Library</td>
<td>7. Current topics and titles</td>
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<td>8. Research Center</td>
<td>8. Formal learning support</td>
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<td>9. General information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10. Government information</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11. Information literacy</td>
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<td>12. Lifelong learning</td>
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<td>13. Local history and genealogy</td>
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In fact, scholars have noticed that because of public pressure, library service objectives have gradually changed from promoting education to providing recreation (Du Mont, 1977). They also claimed that public libraries could not take on too many responsibilities simultaneously. There must be a list of priorities for public libraries given various times and places. Harris and Johnson (1984) stated, “the development of public libraries in America was at times a mindless and careless process; at others, it was accompanied by a consistent attempt to systematize and articulate both philosophy and practice.” These dual processes result in the role of the public library as a “panacea for most of the country’s social ills: crime, disease, illiteracy, prostitution, intemperance, and the reckless” (p. 231). Martin (1983) argues that it is ineffective for the public library to attempt to play so many conflicting roles simultaneously. He suggests that to amend the situation is to prioritize periodically which roles the librarians will pay more attention to. A survey conducted by D’Elia and Rodger (1991) aimed to help identify what roles the St. Paul Public Library should play in its community. They found that different demographic groups of users identify the importance of such roles differently. Raber (1995) claimed that public libraries have their own organizational cultures. These diverse cultures reflect very different professional ideologies, strategies and epistemologies. During the implementation process and among the ALA’s or PLA’s promoted missions and goals, such diverse cultures may conflict with each other.

Raber (1996) also examined three discontents—social activism, conservativism, and populism—as to the purpose of public libraries. Social activists argue that “the public library is necessarily an instrument of politics. If its mission is not actively directed
toward social reform, it will be used by dominant political forces as an instrument of social control.” In this view, “the primary social responsibility of libraries is to meet the information needs of marginal peoples and to break the cycles of oppression and exclusion created and sustained by the lack of access to information” (p. 225). Conservatives oppose social services and entertainment as valid goals for public libraries. They believe that public library service should act for “serious readers of any class for whom the education purpose of libraries is central.” However, populists hold the opposite opinion. They advocate that public libraries should “make the most wanted library materials readily available to the greatest possible number of community residents, as well as to serve as an access point to the most needed information” (p. 226).

Nonetheless, the missions of public libraries will not be left only to the library science experts, administrators and librarians, who need to incorporate public preferences and needs.

Such will be the focus in the body of this thesis.

A Service to Provide Information

The Economic Classification Policy Committee (ECPC) of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) developed the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to classify industry and business patterns. According to the NAICS, libraries, including the public library, belong to the information industry. The main categories of the information industry defined by the NAICS include publishing, motion
picture and sound recording, broadcasting and telecommunications, information services, and data processing. Libraries comprise only a very small portion of the whole industry. For example, in 2002, there were 7,268,800 paid employees working in the information industries according to the NAICS (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). In the meantime, the number of paid staff working in 8,986 public libraries was 136,249 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004), only 1.9%.

Unlike private businesses, most public libraries cannot generate enough revenue to support themselves. Substantial supportive revenue comes from governmental appropriations. In 2004, the total revenue of information sector services was $955 billion (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). In the same year, the public library received $8.4 billion from local, state and federal governments, equaling 8.8% of total industry revenue. From a macro analysis, the above two calculated results show that a relatively small proportion of information industry employees manage comparably large amounts of funds in providing information to the public.

From the information demand side, I am considering the data at a micro-level first. Specifically, how much time does an individual spend acquiring information products and how much money does he or she spend in purchasing information products? Table 4 shows the hours and dollars that Americans spend on information products. Although the data are not directly relevant to public libraries, by taking into account the numbers, we can conclude that people obtain substantial information from TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and the internet.
There are more detailed statistics verifying that people obtain dominant amounts of information from a variety of channels other than the public library. For example,

**Table 4. U.S. Information Product Usage and Consumer Spending 2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Hours per person per year</th>
<th>Consumer spending per person per year (dollar)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>television</td>
<td>1,659</td>
<td>283.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>radio</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recorded music</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>51.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daily newspapers</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>50.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer magazines</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>47.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer books</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>95.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home videos</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>115.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video games</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>32.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer Internet</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>57.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>3,543</td>
<td>817.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2008*, Table No.1098

Table 5 indicates that the percentages of public library acquisition expenditures on books were less than 3% of the whole American book publishing industry sales from 1985 to 2005. In addition, there were an estimated 23,000 video rental specialty stores in the U.S. plus another 4,100 non-specialists, mostly supermarkets and drugstores, that also rent videos as a regular part of their businesses. This number was nearly three times that of public libraries. One report from the Video Software Dealers Association indicates consumers spent $24.3 billion buying and renting DVDs and VHS cassettes in 2005. In the same year, the total cost to American public libraries of audio and video materials was $67.6 million, less than 1% of the aforementioned individual purchase and rental amounts. On average, a given household purchased 18 DVDs and 5 VHS cassettes and rented 23 DVDs and 10 cassettes in 2005 (Video Software Dealers Association, 2006). Considering that each household borrowed only 0.3 video items from the public library in
the same time period, the prior numbers are substantial. Furthermore, since the late 1990s, web based bookstores, such as Amazon.com, Ebay.com, and BN.com have developed rapidly. The fleet store Amazon’s average annual book sale growth was 14% from 2001 to 2005 and the total sales were $3.05 billion in 2005 (Morris Rosenthal, 2007). All those new and fast growth information technologies have challenged the position of the public library.

Table 5. Public Library Expenditures on Books vs. Book Publishing Industry Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>A: Public library acquisition expenditures on books</th>
<th>B: Book publishing industry sales</th>
<th>A/B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>382,736,238</td>
<td>7,039,400,000</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>575,506,884</td>
<td>9,878,500,000</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>854,203,736</td>
<td>15,437,600,000</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>816,714,530</td>
<td>19,947,000,000</td>
<td>1.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,095,792,757</td>
<td>25,322,700,000</td>
<td>1.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>874,982,155</td>
<td>25,067,676,000</td>
<td>1.52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As early as the 1960s, Parker (1963) conducted research and found that when television was widely adopted during the 1950s, public library circulation declined by about one book per person per year. Since the 1960s, film collections have become a highly used resource. Many librarians even predicted that the library 16mm film service would not be phased out by 2001 (Palmer, 1982). In the 1980s, videocassettes became an important part of public library collections and services and that service brought about an increase of the number of patrons. Although Lettner (1985) argued that no evidence indicates that videos stimulate visitors’ interest in traditional library services (Lettner, 1985), videos and now DVDs have brought about extensive changes in patrons’ habits
and purposes in using public libraries. Today, entertainment services make up a vital part of the function of public libraries (See Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Growth Trend in Collection Materials 1992-2004](image)

Source: As derived from data in *Public Libraries in the United States*, various issues.

Currently, with the internet integrating itself into people’s daily lives, many internet services and resources seem to compete directly with those traditionally provided by public libraries. Consider reference services as an example. The Ohio Statewide Library Futures survey indicates that 22.8% of respondents would first choose the internet when they needed information and answers to problems in 1998, but in 2003, the number rose to 40.3%. Meanwhile, the library declined from 24.3% to 12.4% as the first source to call or visit. Coffman and McGlamery (2000) notice that the number of reference queries answered by librarians was not growing strongly and even declined in some years in the late 1990s. In January, 2007, statistics show that Americans conducted 6.9 billion searches online, and the annual growth rate in search query volume remained strong with a 26% increase since the same month a year before (comScore, 2007).
Compare that number to the 302 million reference questions answered by the staff in all 9,198 U.S. public libraries during the 12 months of 2005. Public libraries provided only a tiny portion of reference services.

Besides reference services, Rubin (2004) discussed other profound impacts in which the internet technology appears as a vital force. These impacts include the library’s physical environment, online catalog, the library’s collection and preservation, organization structure, and financial situations. He summarized by stating, “There is no doubt that the concept of the library is changing—some say it is in transition from ‘collection to connection.’ The extent to which this transition will actually occur and its impact on library services is yet to be fully determined” (p. 116).

The future of public libraries seems ambiguous, but one thing is obvious: librarians and patrons both redefine and restructure public library services. This thesis will attempt to discover what people think of the interactive relationship between the internet and the public library under different conditions, such as library mission adjustment and financial pressure, which need to be considered simultaneously.

A Public Good

Today, American public libraries are funded mainly by tax revenues and provide services at no charge to the patron. Most ordinary citizens have taken public libraries for granted as one of the essential public services provided by local government. Broadly speaking, no charge is one of the criteria of public goods. A more accurate definition of public goods is given as “goods with benefits that cannot be withheld from those who do
not pay and are shared by large groups of consumers” (Hyman, 2005, p. 141). However, historically, American library services were not public goods until the 1850s. The social library and the circulating library were two predecessors of the public library. They both charged borrowing fees and were different in the emphases of their collections and in operational manners. The social library comprises members who develop collections based on their common interests. The members had to contribute funds to the library voluntarily. The circulating library collected popular books and rented them out for profit (Rubin, 2004; McCook, 2004).

How did these “private” libraries become “public free” libraries? Kinnucan, Ferguson and Estabrook (1998) discussed the issue of user’s fees in public libraries and identified two main factors that influence public opinion on the funding of public libraries. One is political orientation; the other is economic self-interest. Ohio’s case could provide most of the aspects of the former factor. The following section outlines some important legislation regarding public libraries in Ohio. Behind each legislative act, politicians, citizens and library patrons, library staff, and library friend organizations have all been involved in the political process.

As found in the earliest historical record, Colonel Israel Putnam created the first library service in Ohio in 1796. He organized a company of shareholders, and each share was worth $10. Prior to 1850, around 187 libraries were established throughout Ohio (Faries, 1961). They were all “social,” “subscription,” or “association” libraries that required patrons to pay a membership fee or a fee for borrowing books. Wolcott (1953) said historical records showed that during the 1830s, the first circulating library in
Sandusky, Ohio, charged 2-cents a week for books and a fine of 1-cent a day was imposed for failure to return on time. Somerville (1962) described the first library in Mentor. In 1819, Mentor established an association library requiring a fee of $2.50 from each member. Havron (1969) examined library service in Crawford County and found that a women’s association created the earliest library there. Each member of the association paid $1.00 and the fee for honorary membership was $10.00. These records document that free public libraries did not originate from the beginning of library services. Moreover, these records show that all libraries faced funding demands from the moment of their establishment. To operate these libraries, fees for membership varied from $2.50 to $10.00 a share during the 1800s (Faries, 1961).

As previously mentioned, during the period of library development, the Ohio state government gradually became involved in public library issues. In 1817, the Ohio General Assembly passed a separate act for the incorporation of public libraries but provided no financial support. At the same time, the General Assembly approved funds to found and support a State Library that served only members of the legislature and governmental officials. In 1853, the legislature passed the School Act, making it possible to use tax money to create and support school libraries; however, these first tax-supported libraries did not serve out-of-school patrons. To receive support, some of the subscription libraries merged into public school libraries.

After the Civil War there was a renewed interest and activity in cultural affairs. Two important events happened at the turn of the last century in Ohio. The Ohio Library Association was organized in 1895 and the Ohio State Library began to serve the public
in 1896. These events were part of the nationwide public libraries movement. In 1876, library advocates organized the American Library Association and published the first issue of a major journal, *Library Journal*. The formation of interest groups and the process of policy diffusion prompted the Ohio legislature to take more action to support public libraries.

In 1869, the Ohio legislature authorized municipalities to open and maintain free libraries and reading rooms (Faries, 1961). In the following several years, the Ohio legislature passed laws for libraries to be established and maintained under one of the four local taxing authorities—the municipality, township, school district, or county. Many Ohio cities were encouraged to take advantage of these laws. This legislation also made it possible for communities to apply for Carnegie grants in the early 1900s. According to Carnegie’s terms, cities that planned to apply for the grants were required to provide the site and furnish at least 10% of the amount of the gift per year to maintain the library.

Between 1910 and 1930, the General Assembly passed various pieces of legislation to allow levying real estate taxes to support public libraries. In 1933, Senator Frank E. Whittemore introduced revised legislation allowing the use of the proceeds of the local intangible tax for Ohio public libraries. The intangible personal property tax was levied on an individual's holdings of intangible assets, mainly stocks and bonds. Many village councils and boards of education in small communities could then start to apply for county funds and establish public libraries. From 1934 to 1947, the number of libraries in Ohio increased from 197 to 280. In 1947, the legislature ended the rapidly
expanding base of public libraries to guarantee enough funding for established libraries. This attempt caused a decline in the number of public libraries from 280 to 250 in 1970.

In 1972, Ohio imposed personal income tax upon the adjusted gross income of each resident of Ohio and of each nonresident who earns or receives income in Ohio. This dramatic tax system reform led the 115th Ohio General Assembly to pass Amended Substitute House Bill 291 (Am. Sub. H.B. 291) in 1983. The bill created a “Library and Local Government Support Fund” (LLGSF) to be funded with 6.3% of receipts of personal income tax. The Ohio Department of Taxation concluded that 6.3% was necessary to equal the intangibles tax revenue that would been allocated to public libraries under the old bill. The new bill guaranteed that government would support public libraries and determined the amount of the funding. Ohio became the only state to support public libraries mainly using the state budget rather than local budgets as do other states. The LLGSF fund is the watershed event in Ohio public library history. Since then, Ohio public libraries have received stable, increasing funding from the state government and this funding helped Ohio establish a preeminent public library system in the United States. The journey from fee to free in Ohio supports Garceau’s (1949) argument: “Public [library] at every level is a political process, operating within a matrix of political forces, adjusting to and building on dynamic political change in the community” (p. 239). As Allen (2003) also pointed out, “Public library information services are likely to be influenced by the articulate voices of well-organized pressure groups within their communities and that the resulting services might tend towards the uncontroversial and
politically correct. Once the political process identifies a service that will be offered, this service is supplied whether or not it is heavily demanded or used” (p. 416).

The above discussion demonstrates that, from historical experience, public library services are not necessarily treated and provided as public goods; and, as I have previously mentioned, nowadays most channels from which people receive information belong to the private market. Theoretically, scholars also cannot give a lucid classification for the public library. Giacoma (1989) discusses whether libraries and their services are public goods from several different aspects. From economic perspectives, he adopts non-excludable and nonrival as two criteria for identifying public goods. He argues that because public libraries provide both materials and information, they could be treated as either private goods or public goods. Savas (2000) classifies library services as toll goods, meaning exclusion is possible and people can jointly consume the services. Moreover, unlike other public services, such as education, fire and police departments, and public health service, the public library is not a mandated service for any community. In most places, people create, support, and maintain a public library in their community because they wish it.

However, the strength and extent of support vary across the country and that makes services provided in each state diverse and unequal. Table 6 illustrates several main indicators of rank across the states and the differences between Ohio, the best, and lesser states. Political influence in budgeting decisions, as we have seen in Ohio, is the main reason for differences among states.
Table 6. The Highest and The Lowest Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Highest Ranking</th>
<th>Lowest Ranking</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>library visits per capita</td>
<td>Ohio / 7.23</td>
<td>Mississippi / 2.85</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total paid FTE staff per 25,000 population</td>
<td>Ohio / 21.62</td>
<td>Tennessee / 7.97</td>
<td>13.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total operating expenditures per capita</td>
<td>Ohio / 61.41</td>
<td>Mississippi / 14.51</td>
<td>46.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video materials per 1000 population</td>
<td>Ohio / 344.19</td>
<td>Georgia / 56.72</td>
<td>287.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circulation transactions per capita</td>
<td>Ohio /15.03</td>
<td>Mississippi / 3.17</td>
<td>11.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: As derived from data in *Public Libraries in the United States: Fiscal Year 2005*, U.S. Department of Education

Although the political orientation factor plays a vital role in free public library progress, the other factor, economic self-interest, proposed by Kinnucan et al. (1998), also functions in public attitudes on funding public libraries, especially when people suffer economic recessions (Michael, 2002; G.F, 2003) and are concerned about cost savings in public services. Figure 3 illustrates that the growth rates of funding from governments changed in accordance with national economic cycles. Even in Ohio, which has a strong and very well organized public library lobbying group, three events have shaken the personal income tax base that is the only revenue source of the LLGSF. First, from 1985 to 1999, Ohio suffered a net out-migration of more than 300,000 residents. Second, from 1999 to 2003, Ohio lost a total of 244,000 jobs (Niquette, 2004). Third, the personal income growth rate declined from 5.5% in 1998 to 2.5% in 2003. In addition, Ohio has jumped to the fifth heaviest state-local tax burden among the 50 states in 2007 from fourteenth in 2000. One report by the Tax Foundation shows that, in 2007, all state and local taxes as a percentage of income has reached 12.4% in Ohio (Tax Foundation,
2008). Although the public library interest groups exerted a great deal of effort, in response to the deteriorating state economy and the budget crisis, the LLGSF was frozen in 2002 and has remained frozen or reduced in every subsequent biennial budget.

![Figure 3. U.S. GDP and Government Funding on Public Libraries Percent Change from Preceding Year](image)

Source: As derived from data in *The Bureau of Economic Analysis* (BEA); *Public Libraries in the United States: Various Versions*, U.S. Department of Education

Besides influencing the budget decision-making process, citizens can also express their viewpoints by direct voting. In fact, government funding is only used for library operations and not for constructing new facilities or renovating older buildings. When a public library needs renovation or expansion, the greater part of necessary funds comes from taxes or bonds, and the library needs to put such issues on the ballot on Election Day. According to *Library Journal* statistics, the nationwide passing rates of operating and library building referenda both show declining trends (See Figure 4). A survey showed that the public was evenly split on how to pay for library services in hard times: specifically, 44% of respondents favored increasing taxes, while 41% favored charging user fees if their local library needed extra funds to maintain operation (Library Research
Center, UIUC, 1991). Other studies showed that higher income taxpayers tend to advocate library issues and pay the same or a greater portion of their incomes to sustain the public libraries than do low-income individuals, but poorer people use the library much less (Weaver and Weaver, 1979; White, 1983). In addition, a survey indicated that compared with other public services, such as police and public schools, the public library has less capability to obtain an equitable share of the tax dollar (Library Research Center, UIUC, 1995).

![Figure 4. Percentage Pass for Public Library Referenda](image)


The decline of enthusiasm in support of public libraries has also appeared in Ohio. From 1987 to 2002, there was a total of 68 referenda for public library building construction or renovation in Ohio; 52 ballots won and 16 failed. In addition, 38 referenda for public library operating funds were listed and 31 passed. The average pass rate is 80% for both types of referenda. Compared with the national level, this is a high rate. However, in recent years, Ohio public libraries have faced a tough environment for their referenda. For example, in the Akron area, four local public libraries—specifically,
the Akron-Summit County Public Library, the Stark County Library District, the Louisville Public Library, and the Portage County Library—put out ballots to raise funds on Election Day in March 2, 2004. Unfortunately, three out of the four ballots failed. Even though the Akron-Summit County Public Library won the ballot, there were still 48.5% of voters who went against the bill. Moreover, only 7 of 14 library levies passed on the November ballot in 2003. “This is the worst we’ve done,” the Ohio Library Council (OLC) Government Relations Director Lynda Murray commented disappointedly, adding, “we usually pass our levies at a rate of 75 to 80%” (“Referenda Roundup 2003”, 2004, p. 22).

Furthermore, there was an inverse movement when Ohio and other states aimed to increase governmental financial support for public libraries. Since the 1970s, privatizing federal, state, and local public services has become a policy in the United States and in the world. The main motivation for privatization is to reduce costs and improve services. Many public services, such as transportation, social services, parks and recreations, public safety and state police, sewage, and trash collection and even corrections services are now provided by private companies rather than governmental agencies. The methods and forms of privatization vary, including user fees, contracting out, sales to private businesses, and vouchers. (Donahue, 1989; Savas, 2000; Hodge, 2000). Brudney and Fernandez (2005) stated that, according to the 1998 American State Administrators Project (ASAP) survey, more than 70% of state agency directors report that their agencies contracted out services. The ASAP also asked the directors to indicate the percentage of their agencies’ budgets allocated to contractors. Among the respondents, 16.8% of the
agencies reported contracting out 40% of their budgets or more. Meanwhile, empirical studies indicate that as microeconomic theory and public choice theory claim, privatization brings cost savings for public services. Savas (2000) states that several countries’ studies found “savings averages of about 25% for the same level and quality of service, after taking into account the cost of administering and monitoring the contract” (p. 147). O’Looney (1998) estimates that “most economic studies of privatization can cite a 10 to 20% economic saving” (p. 8).

The privatization movement stimulated some public libraries to contract out their services to solve financial crises in the 1990s. In 1997, California’s Riverside County Library System signed a contract with the Library System and Services LLC (LSSI), a Maryland based private company, to manage library operations. Martin (2000) found that both the staff and patrons of the library system appeared to agree that the library services improved during the first privatized years. Although the library only privatized and outsourced the management functions and the assets still belonged to Riverside County, the LSSI will decide what materials the library may purchase and what services they may provide, which, in other words, are the core services the patrons want. Martin’s report concludes, “in general, there is no evidence that outsourcing per se has had a negative impact on library services and management” (p. 55). In 2006, The Jackson-Madison County Library in Tennessee signed a contract with the LSSI as well. According to information from the LSSI website, more than 50 libraries are now managed by that private company.
Due to the fact that public libraries are not profit making organizations, it is hard accurately to estimate cost and benefit. Baker and Lancaster (1991) argue that management effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and cost-benefit are three levels needed to evaluate library service for patrons (Baker and Lancaster, 1991). For the effectiveness level only we need to consider how well a service satisfies its users. For example, studies indicate that, on average, public library reference staff answer 50 to 62% of questions correctly (Hernon and McClure, 1986). The cost-effectiveness method focuses on the internal operation efficiency of libraries. A cost-benefit evaluation measures input and output and should determine what benefits are derived from libraries. All the above discussions suggest that as people are increasing concerned with cost savings and other financial pressures, the economic self-interest factor will have a more and more important influence in public library issues. Nevertheless, there is no generally accepted objective method to evaluate the economic performance of public libraries. Different people make their own judgments and hold diverse opinions on the public library. For instance, a survey showed “a significantly greater proportion of library directors than of public officials rated the public library ‘higher’ or ‘much higher’ in value compared to other community services, particularly on [the question] ‘return to the community for the tax dollars spent’” (University of Illinois, 1995, p. i). Durning (1999) argued that Q methodology could be employed by policy analysts to define the meaning of non-efficiency criteria. In this study, such subjective judgments and opinions leave much space to be explored by Q methodology.
Since the above three factors and public involvement have been seen to incorporate the values and preferences of the public in the decision-making process, we need systematic techniques to reveal and analyze participant perspectives.
CHAPTER III

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Many methods can be used to study perspectives about public libraries, such as surveys, brief or intensive interviews, experiments, and observations in natural settings. Q methodology is a quantitative means for examining human subjectivity (Stephenson, 1953; Brown, 1980, 1993; McKeown and Thomas, 1998), although it has affinities with qualitative methods (Brown, 2008; Watts and Stenner, 2005; Stenner, Watts, and Worrell, 2007). It was originally introduced by William Stephenson, a British physicist and psychologist, in a letter to the editor of *Nature* in 1935. Q methodology “was designed to assist in the orderly examination of human subjectivity” (Brown, 1980, p. 5). The aim of Q methodology is to reveal patterns of subjectivity within and across populations.

Unlike R methodology, which is “a generalized reference to the application of Pearson’s product-moment correlation, \( r \), to the study of trait relationships” (Brown, 1980, p. 9), Q methodology is employed to identify existing patterns among individuals. Q methodology and R methodology are fundamentally distinct from each other. R methodology explores the relationships among objective variables (Brown, 1997) and results in the correlation and factoring of traits. For example, Japzon and Gong (2005) employ correlation and regression analysis and find “the percentages of the population made up of Asians and whites had significant positive correlations with circulation per capita” (p. 454). The population numbers of Asians and whites and the circulation numbers, as the main variables, are objective in character.
In Q methodology, “variables are the people performing the Q-sorts, not Q-sample statements” (McKeown and Thomas, 1998, p. 17). Q methodology studies patterns of subjective perspective across participants rather than patterns across variables. Thus, Q methodology reveals correlations and factors among persons, and R methodology reveals correlations and factors among traits. In Q methodology, the correlations are based on the assumption that “persons significantly associated with a given factor … share a common perspective” (p. 17).

Brown summarized the transition from R to Q as follows: “from something passive (getting a score), to something active (giving a score); from the objective expression of something inhering in the subject, to the subjective representation of impression by the subject; from an occurrence (event), to a process (operant)” (Brown, 1972, p. 75).

Q samples

The core concept of Q methodology is that of “concourse” (Stephenson, 1978), which “refers to a set of subjective communications on any topic” (Brown, 2005, p. 199). Concourse is operationalized as a collection of statements being expressed on a particular topic; in this research, the topic is the public library. The participants in a Q research project are told to respond to a set of statements. An individual’s response to any one of the statements will be considered in relation to all the rest of the statements as whole. In this study, more than 150 statements were collected from diverse sources, including library science textbooks, professional journals, media, and librarians’ direct
communications. These samples are mainly “ready-made,” which means they were “drawn from various sources,” but several of the statements are “naturalistic,” which means they were “taken from respondents’ oral or written communications” (McKeown and Thomas, 1998, p. 25). This set of statements is called the concourse. I sent these statements to two public library directors, two professors in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University, and one librarian at a public library, who reviewed and made helpful comments on the original statements. Three of them also provided supplementary statements. From the 158 improved statements, I selected $N = 36$ (the Q sample) that may enable interviewees to express their opinions and be manageable for the interview.

To select the representative statements and avoid under- or oversampled statements, I employed a structured sampling technique and designed a theoretical framework that includes four basic categories: (1) mission priority, (2) censorship vs. free expression, (3) technological challenge, and (4) financial solution (See Table 7).

In the mission priority category, I focus on the fundamental mission of the public library. Initially, public libraries were expected to play an important role in uplifting citizens’ educational and moral levels; however, today, most patrons visit public libraries only for fun and entertainment. I used the following Q statements to reflect the change and conflict in the mission of the public library:

(6) The mission of the public library is to assist self-improvement and the search for truth.

(31) The mission of the public library is to support the education and socialization needs of society.
Table 7. Q Statement Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Categories</th>
<th>Numbers of Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) mission priority</td>
<td>3 (pro education), 3(pro entertainment); 1 (pro service to whole society), 1 (pro service to the poor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) censorship vs. free expression</td>
<td>2 (pro censorship), 2 (pro free expression)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) technological challenge</td>
<td>5 (pro internet replacement of libraries), 7 (anti internet replacement of libraries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D) financial solution</td>
<td>5 (pro taxes), 5 (pro fees charge); 2 (resource allocation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(26) The value of reading (literacy) is more important than that of visual entertainment. Thus more library resources should be allocated to reading materials.

(13) The mission of the public library is to satisfy the popular taste of the public.

(5) Under pressure from the public, service objectives should be changed from promoting education to providing recreation.

(21) The public library should serve both as a community information center and an entertainment center.

Besides that, I selected two statements to reveal who should be served by public libraries—all the members of society or the economically disadvantaged:

(30) The goals of the library as a social institution are to benefit the members of society and the society as a whole.

(10) The public library should provide materials and services to the economically disadvantaged.

In the censorship vs. free expression category, I adopted a systematic bias approach to selecting statements. I chose two statements to reflect support for censorship in public libraries and two others to represent the position favoring free expression:
(9) The best way to combat a bad idea is to produce a better idea, and the only alternative to censorship is free expression. Thus the public library has no obligation to censor materials.

(33) In order to make good citizens, the library must provide a variety of ideas. Thus materials that are considered heinous and patently false may be part of the collection.

(23) Good reading leads to good conduct; bad reading leads to unacceptable conduct.

(2) Public libraries should install some filtering software that blocks access to material that is not “good” on the internet.

The third category focuses on technological challenges. I selected seven statements to reflect the traditional tasks of public libraries and the dubious idea that the internet could replace the public library. Five statements argued that the internet would play increasingly greater roles in patrons’ lives and threaten the destiny of public libraries:

(11) The mission of the public library is to maintain a records archive.

(29) Through value-added functions (such as making information more accessible, accuracy, updating, and formatting), librarians increase the usefulness of the information.

(17) Librarians will become the expert navigators for information seekers of the future.

(27) If libraries can afford to offer just one service, they should provide books.

(16) Search engines, such as Google and Yahoo, have their own commercial purposes which lead to results not as accurate and reliable as those provided by librarians.

(3) The library is a member of a much larger structure: the “information infrastructure,” but the library is the foundation and without it the rest of the structure would collapse.
(14) People increasingly rely on Google and Yahoo to find information and are very happy with the results they get, but most are far from experts at searching, and are unaware of how search engines operate.

(1) Technology makes certain functions much easier for information-seekers to perform, essentially eliminating the need for librarians as intermediaries.

(25) Rather than visiting the library, seekers of information will first look to the internet, newspapers, their own books, and friends and neighbors.

(18) You don't need public libraries because everything is available on the internet.

(36) If libraries can afford to offer just one service, they should provide computers to access the internet.

(32) Public libraries should provide internet access for those who do not own a computer.

In the financial solution category, I selected five statements to represent the proponents' viewpoints on using taxes to support public library services, and another five statements that advocated charging fees for library services:

(22) Government’s involvement will interfere with the ability of the market mechanism to allocate resources to the optimum production of goods and services.

(28) Fiscal pressure has led libraries to act as businesses, and the business approach will produce some beneficial results.

(7) Fees encourage management improvements such as increased productivity, better time management, and better organization and control. Therefore, public libraries should charge fees.

(15) Fees encourage efficient use of public resources. Those who benefit from a given service should pay for its associated costs.

(12) The library has enough money now, so I would like to vote no on the local library levy on next Election Day.

(24) Library services are a public good. Free access is a fundamental right of each citizen in a democratic society.
(19) To participate fully in a democratic society, citizens must be informed and aware, regardless of their ability to pay for needed information.

(35) Libraries provide good value in return for the taxes I pay for them.

(8) The social benefits for library services are difficult to measure; therefore a fee cannot efficiently be assigned.

(20) I will vote yes on the local library levy on next Election Day because the library helps kids.

In addition, I selected two statements to explore how resources of libraries should be allocated:

(34) Library resources should be devoted to those individuals who are its most likely users.

(4) Public libraries should reach out to those groups who have not taken advantage of this tax-supported resource.

The 36 statements were randomly ordered and each typed on a single card. Then they were presented to respondents, who are also called the person sample.

Person Samples

R methodology is based on the law of large numbers, which means if we are interested in estimating the average values of characteristics of a population, we need to choose a sufficiently large sample. For Q method, we aimed to identify the discoursed patterns within the society and “it is rarely necessary in work of this kind to obtain large numbers of each type; five or six persons loaded significantly on a factor are normally sufficient to produce highly reliable factor scores” (Brown, 1980, p. 67).
The person samples were chosen from various interests (library patrons, librarians, library experts, and general citizens). A P sample designed frame illustrates the categories that I used for the selection of interviewees (See Table 8).

Table 8. P-Set Structure for Public Library Use Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Effects</th>
<th>Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Sex</td>
<td>(a) Male    (b) Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Age</td>
<td>(a) Young   (b) Middle   (c) Elderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Education</td>
<td>(a) No college (b) College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Interests</td>
<td>(a) Patrons (b) Librarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) Computer experts (b) Computer users (c) Never use computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) Have kids under 16 (b) No kids or kids above 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The design for this survey was reviewed and approved by the Kent State University Human Subjects Review Board in 2007. All participants in the survey signed a consent form that explains the study to them. The Q sorts were conducted in June 2007. There were 33 respondents in the survey, 19 of whom were female. Twenty-seven respondents were white, one was African-American, and five were Asians. The respondents ranged in age from 19 to 80, including 1 under 20, 7 between 20 and 29, 9 between 30 and 39, 6 between 40 and 49, 5 between 50 and 59, and 4 over 60. Twenty-six participants had received a college education. Thirty-two respondents had public library cards. Five of the participants were librarians and the rest were library patrons.
Twelve of the participants have children below age 16. Five had no experience in using computers and internet.

All interviewees were asked to read and rank-order the collection of statements to reflect their personal values and beliefs about public libraries. Q-sample statements were typed on cards. The participants are asked to rank the 36 statements from most agree (+4) to most disagree (−4) in a quasi-normal distribution. The scale from +4 to −4 aims to measure interviewees’ levels of disagreement or agreement on the subjects with the score of zero indicating indifference. All statements are subjective and there are no right or wrong answers. The participants also answered a few questionnaire items about their background: gender, age, use of public libraries, and what they considered to be the main purposes of public libraries.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

The PQMethod 2.11 software program (Schmolck & Atkinson, 2002) was employed to analyze the 33 Q sorts in this research. To identify factors, the centroid method and a varimax rotation were used. Statistical analysis produced three discourses, with 8 persons loading purely and significantly ($p<.01$) on Factor A, 12 persons loading on Factor B, and 5 person loading on Factor C.

In the following discussion, I refer to these factors as Librarians, Mature Patrons, and Young Patrons, respectively. These findings reveal that the participants’ occupations and how they use the library are critical variables to be considered regarding their opinions about the public library. Inferences about demographics such as occupation are necessarily tentative in Q methodology, which relies on respondent samples that are too small for reliable estimates of population parameters. Although it is possible to verify demographic correlates with a more extensive survey (Brown, 2002), the apparent connections make sense in the current context and the labels above are therefore adopted as a convenient way of referring to the three factors. These results are obvious and understandable; however, the opinions, which are shared and diverse among the groups, are critical discoveries for this study. The factor loadings for the participants in this research are shown in Appendix B.

The following three areas will be examined in the subsequent sections of the discussion:
• Statements that distinguish the groups.
• Discussion regarding the three factors individually.
• A comparative analysis of the three factors and a discussion regarding the similarities among them.

Distinguishing Statements

The following selected statements demonstrate that the three groups presented possess their own diverse opinions on the same statements in the Q sample. These statements can be used as criteria to identify respondents according to their factor groups. The bolded numbers below indicate which factor scores differ significantly from the others. As a point of departure, statements 35, 12, and 20 suggest the following:

• Factor A embraces more financial support for Public Libraries.
• Factor C reacts negatively to levy increases.
• Factor B produces neither a positive nor a negative response.

In this study, financial considerations (to be discussed further in the Factor A and B sections below) could be a watershed dividing respondents’ positions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(35) Libraries provide a good value in return for the taxes I pay for them.

−3 −1 +3 (12) The library has enough money now, so I would like to vote no on the local library levy on next Election Day.

+2 −1 −4 (20) I will vote yes on the local library levy on next Election Day because the library helps kids.

Another obvious gap is about whether libraries should filter information. Factor A believes that readers have the capability to make right judgments (no. 23) and advocates
for intellectual freedom (nos. 33, 9, and 2), as stated in the following page from the ALA website (retrieved from http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/basics/intellectual.cfm):

Intellectual freedom is the basis for our democratic system. We expect our people to be self-governors. But to do so responsibly, our citizenry must be well-informed. Libraries provide the ideas and information, in a variety of formats, to allow people to inform themselves.

However, Factor B gives the opposite scores to these statements. It believes that public libraries should provide correct, clean, safe and good quality materials to patrons. One respondent said that “I borrow books from library. A good book is just like a friend. Who wants a bad person with you?” Meanwhile, Factor C appears to hold a similar attitude to Factor A on this statement. Factor C represents young patrons, who are typically curious, adventuresome, and like to challenge rules, routines, and authority (no. 22); moreover, they tend to be individualistic (no. 30) and utilitarian (no. 28). These characteristics of youth help us to understand why they also assert intellectual freedom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>(23) Good reading leads to good conduct; bad reading leads to unacceptable conduct.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>−4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| (33) In order to make good citizens, the library must provide a variety of ideas. Thus materials that are considered heinous and patently false may be part of the collection. |
|---|---|---|
| +4 | −4 | +3 |

| (9) The best way to combat a bad idea is to produce a better idea, and the only alternative to censorship is free expression. Thus the public library has no obligation to censor materials. |
|---|---|---|
| +2 | −3 | +4 |

| (2) Public libraries should install some filtering software that blocks access to material that is not “good” on the internet. |
|---|---|---|
| −2 | +3 | −4 |

| (22) Government’s involvement will interfere with the ability of the market mechanism to allocate resources to the optimum production of goods and services. |
|---|---|---|
| −2 | 0 | +4 |
The goals of the library as a social institution are to benefit the members of society and the society as a whole.

Fiscal pressure has led libraries to act as businesses, and the business approach will produce some beneficial results.

Compared with Factor C, Factor B’s reactions appear traditional (nos. 23 and 27), responsible (nos. 2, 33 and 9), and motivational (no. 6).

<table>
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<th>A</th>
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<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(23) Good reading leads to good conduct; bad reading leads to unacceptable conduct.

(27) If libraries can afford to offer just one service, they should provide books.

(2) Public libraries should install some filtering software that blocks access to material that is not “good” on the internet.

(33) In order to make good citizens, the library must provide a variety of ideas. Thus materials that are considered heinous and patently false may be part of the collection.

(9) The best way to combat a bad idea is to produce a better idea, and the only alternative to censorship is free expression. Thus the public library has no obligation to censor materials.

(6) The mission of the public library is to assist self-improvement and the search for truth.

The above statements provide quick test criteria to identify and classify patrons’ preferences and tendencies. These divergences are based on patrons’ occupations, personal experiences, and financial situations. All these features will be discussed in the following sections.
Description and Interpretation of the Three Factors

The following is a detailed discussion of the three factors separately. For each factor, I will discuss statements which were given the highest scores. The discussion will focus on the following aspects: mission priority, intellectual freedom, and financial consideration. The statements about technological challenge will be reserved to the last section of this chapter.

Factor A: Librarians

Five librarians, one library science scholar and one family member of a librarian participated in this study, and all of them are associated with Factor A. One participant who worked as teacher for 40 years is also included in the Factor A group. This factor gives prominence to the following two statements, which deal with financial matters:

<table>
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<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(35) Libraries provide good value in return for the taxes I pay for them.

−3 −1 +3 (12) The library has enough money now, so I would like to vote no on the local library levy on next Election Day.

Since the decline in economic growth from 2001 and the shrinking of state budgets, public libraries are suffering budget cuts nationwide. For example, Ohio libraries used to receive an abundance of support during the 1990s; however, the public library system experienced budget cuts and budget freezes from 2002 to 2007. Oder (2004) points out that the financial situation may not be any worse than it was in the early 1990s, but that public libraries are nonetheless hurting due to budget cuts. The financial pressure has forced librarians to seek new revenue, which has included fundraising and new levy elections. Moreover, librarians have realized that their roles are changing. In the
past, their primary role was to provide service to communities. Today, raising funds has become part of their job. They have to win financial support to maintain and develop the libraries. Thus, librarians are becoming more proactive and politically aware in advocating for their libraries (Kuzyk, 2008). These two reasons are responsible for making funding the top priority for librarians, who must justify that the libraries provide services worthy of taxpayers’ and patrons’ support. Another authoritative and comprehensive report issued by the Library Action Committee of the Book and Periodical Council, Canada, discusses the importance of public libraries to Canada, such as supporting Canadian culture, the democratic society, literacy, children and students, the local economy and businesses, etc. However, the report, like the findings in this study, discusses the financial situation as leading the list of librarians’ concerns as well (Fitch & Warner, 1998).

Although the media report many stories about budget cuts to public libraries, American public libraries have enjoyed some great success in reducing the negative influence on their services. Potts and Roper (1995) compare American and British practice and strategies for raising funds for public libraries. They find that, guided and organized by the ALA, American libraries have adapted various methods, such as government grants, endowment funds, donations, friends of library groups, special events, etc., and have raised substantial funds. They conclude that British public libraries should learn some of their peer’s lessons.

Factor A also strongly agrees with the following statements that are related to some of the fundamental values and missions of public libraries.
In order to make good citizens, the library must provide a variety of ideas. Thus materials that are considered heinous and patently false may be part of the collection.

The public library should provide materials and services to the economically disadvantaged.

The goals of the library as a social institution are to benefit the members of society and the society as a whole.

To participate fully in a democratic society, citizens must be informed and aware, regardless of their ability to pay for needed information.

The public library should serve both as a community information center and an entertainment center.

Statements 33 (+4) and 30 (+3) address ultimate goals that library professionals specifically pursue, i.e., in terms of what services are to be provided and to whom. They emphasize that libraries should maintain an extensive collection and that it should be provided for society as a whole. Statements 10 (+3) and 19 (+3) indicate that librarians should also provide services to economically disadvantage patrons. Although these broad and benevolent expressions obtained high scores, librarians have to make tradeoffs among basic specific functions due to the scarcity of budgetary resources.

With regard to the library’s role and mission, D’Elia and Rodger (1994) examine three urban public library systems and conclude that “there appears to be three fundamental roles of the library in the community: educational support, provision of information, and recreation” (p. 143). Harris (1973) states that American public librarians face the dilemma between education and popularization and argues that the education function of the library conflicts with its recreational role. Martin states that “public
libraries suffered from having attempted too much, from an ‘overload of good works’” (Williams, 1988, p.130). Ring (1994) and Shearer (1993) point out that satisfying popular demands is an unfortunate trend because it results in the loss of the “true” mission of the public library. This study reveals that librarians have accepted this fact; i.e., they agree that “the public library should serve both as a community information center and an entertainment center” (no. 21). At the same time, the education function received lower scores, as seen in the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>−1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>−1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(6) The mission of the public library is to assist self-improvement and the search for truth.

(31) The mission of the public library is to support the education and socialization needs of society

(26) The value of reading (literacy) is more important than that of visual entertainment. Thus more library resources should be allocated to reading materials.

However, patrons who cluster around Factors B and C all disagree with the trend toward popularization. As the following statements indicate, Factors B and C give the highest negative scores to statements 13 and 5. This unexpected result appears ironic. It appears that librarians expend effort working on something that their patrons do not want. Nevertheless, how can we explain the finding of increased borrowing of entertainment materials? This question requires further study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>−3</td>
<td>−3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−1</td>
<td>−4</td>
<td>−3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(13) The mission of the public library is to satisfy the popular taste of the public.

(5) Under pressure from the public, service objectives should be changed from promoting education to providing recreation.
Subsequently, the following statements received the highest negative scores for Factor A:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>−4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td></td>
<td>(23) Good reading leads to good conduct; bad reading leads to unacceptable conduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−4</td>
<td>−3</td>
<td>−3</td>
<td></td>
<td>(18) You don't need public libraries because everything is available on the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−3</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td>−1</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Technology makes certain functions much easier for information-seekers to perform, essentially eliminating the need for librarians as intermediaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−3</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td>−3</td>
<td></td>
<td>(36) If libraries can afford to offer just one service, they should provide computers to access the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−3</td>
<td>−1</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td></td>
<td>(15) Fees encourage efficient use of public resources. Those who benefit from a given service should pay for its associated costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−3</td>
<td>−1</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td></td>
<td>(12) The library has enough money now, so I would like to vote no on the local library levy on next Election Day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement 23 (−4) is consistent with statement 33 (+4) which has been discussed. Although Factor A participants believe that libraries face a shortage of funding (no. 12), they do not advocate charging fees. Statement 15 (−3) reveals that public librarians would not like to set up a relationship between the cost and benefit occurring when the services are provided. They believe that the market mechanism has weaknesses and needs the government’s involvement (no. 22). They also doubt that a business approach would bring positive results or improve efficiency (nos. 28 and 7).
A   B   C
−2   0   +4  (22) Government’s involvement will interfere with the ability of the market mechanism to allocate resources to the optimum production of goods and services.

−1   −1   +3  (28) Fiscal pressure has led libraries to act as businesses, and the business approach will produce some beneficial results.

−2   −3   0   (7) Fees encourage management improvements such as increased productivity, better time management, and better organization and control. Therefore, public libraries should charge fees.

In summary, as professionals providing an information service to the public, Factor A’s respondents comply with fundamental public library missions, such as free services to all, intellectual freedom, and assistance for poor patrons. However, they accept that public librarians need to make some compromises, as indicated in the educational statement, under the financial pressure which they are struggling to reduce.

**Factor B: Mature Patrons**

Twelve respondents are associated exclusively with Factor B and they share some common demographic characteristics, such as being married, having achieved higher levels of education, and income stability. In detail, six respondents work in business companies, two work for a church, one works in a kindergarten, and the three remaining are doctoral students with a computer or a business major. The average age of this group is approximately 40 years. They all have library cards and nine of them (75%) said they visited public libraries during the past six months. This result is close to a national survey finding that argues that “those ages 35 to 44 are the most likely to be library users; the poll indicated that 74 percent of them visited a library last year” (ALA, 2007).
With higher educations, rich life experiences, and professional and family responsibilities, respondents associated with Factor B reveal that they cherish the following values represented and provide by public libraries:

- Equality, being informed, public access (no. 19)
- Benefits to all, and concern for others (nos. 30 and 31)
- Self-improvement, learning, meaning, and wisdom (no. 6)
- Education and family (nos. 2 and 31)

A | B | C
--- | --- | ---
+3 | +4 | 0

(19) To participate fully in a democratic society, citizens must be informed and aware, regardless of their ability to pay for needed information.

+3 | +3 | 0

(30) The goals of the library as a social institution are to benefit the members of society and the society as a whole.

+1 | +3 | −1

(31) The mission of the public library is to support the education and socialization needs of society.

0 | +3 | −1

(6) The mission of the public library is to assist self-improvement and the search for truth.

−2 | +3 | −4

(2) Public libraries should install some filtering software that blocks access to material that is not “good” on the internet.

Based on the general values mentioned above, Factor B favors traditional services provided by public libraries. These services include printing books and educating children. Scrogham (2006) states that “the library as a place for books and reading remains fixed in its tradition and in the public’s image of the library” (p. 9). He argues this awareness of public libraries will continue in the future. One important study conducted by the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) finds that borrowing print
books is the library service used most and that “books” is the library brand (OCLC, 2006). Another national study issued by Public Agenda, an independent organization, also finds that the public values the library’s traditional services, such as having enough books for children (Public Agenda, 2006). These arguments are supported by Factor B as in statement 27 which is given the extreme positive score. In short conversations with respondents, they agree that the primary reason they go to a library is to borrow or read books.

<table>
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<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>−1</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(27) If libraries can afford to offer just one service, they should provide books.

In general, it appears as though public libraries are not following the tradition completely. The statistics show that from 1992 to 2005, the average growth rates of collections on printing materials, audio, and video were 1.8%, 4.8%, and 14.8%, respectively. In addition, the percentage of public library acquisition expenditures on books in their total expenditures has decreased from 67.47% in 1997 to 40.14% in 2007; meanwhile, the same number of audio-visual materials has growth from 0.54% to 9.47%. Although the non-print materials substantially increased during the past 10 years, there was no evidence indicating that patrons complain about this trend. One respondent commented, “if there were no books I wanted, it is not the libraries’ fault. I could get it from the local bookstore or order from the internet.”

Factor B advocates that public libraries should perform educational functions instead of entertainment functions (nos. 5 and 13). Lee (1966) discussed the educational object of the public library, pointing out that the American public library was initially
established to serve adults who could read and who had the incentive to do so. In the next two centuries, people believed that a public library existed because education should never stop when people stopped going to school. Then with the rapid increase in the educational level of the adult population, public libraries gradually switched from emphasis on assisting adults to children. Lee mentions that the educational object was not always the primary objective and that the recreation and reference objectives sometime obtained more support. However, the library’s educational role has been integrated into the community’s system of public education. Lee’s argument provides a reasonable explanation for this study from the standpoint of library history. Moreover, the ALA (2006) survey indicates that 32% of respondents use the public library for educational purposes, 26% for entertainment, 6% for information on health issues, and 5% for U.S. or local news or information. Factor B’s responses on this matter are as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
A & B & C \\
-1 & -4 & -3 \\
0 & -3 & -3
\end{array}
\]

(5) Under pressure from the public, service objectives should be changed from promoting education to providing recreation.

(13) The mission of the public library is to satisfy the popular taste of the public.

Another trait of Factor B is that it calls for the selection of library materials (no. 2) and it supports the view that libraries have an obligation to censor materials (nos. 9 and 33). These two arguments are noticeably at odds with both Factor A and Factor C.

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
A & B & C \\
-2 & +3 & -4 \\
+2 & -3 & +4
\end{array}
\]

(2) Public libraries should install some filtering software that blocks access to material that is not “good” on the internet.

(9) The best way to combat a bad idea is to produce a better idea, and the only alternative to censorship is free expression. Thus the public
library has no obligation to censor materials.

+4  −4  +3  (33) In order to make good citizens, the library must provide a variety of ideas. Thus materials that are considered heinous and patently false may be part of the collection.

A partial explanation for this position could come from the respondents’ characteristics. The National Center for Research in Vocational Education summarizes the following adult characteristics (NCRVE, 1987):

- Adults have a broad, rich experience.
- Adults are much more likely to reject new information that contradicts their beliefs.
- They perceive themselves to be doers, using previous learning to achieve success as worker, parents, etc.

Considering Factor B’s respondents’ backgrounds and the above features, their attitudes are understandable. As adult respondents, they have accumulated and established their values and attitudes toward study, work, family, friendship, life, and other things. Moreover, they usually believe their values are right and do not like to be challenged (no. 23). Because this is not a study about censorship, further studies need to be conducted in order to gain more understanding about Factor B’s attitudes towards intellectual freedom.

\[ \text{A} \quad \text{B} \quad \text{C} \]
\[ −4 \quad +1 \quad −2 \]  (23) Good reading leads to good conduct; bad reading leads to unacceptable conduct.

Eight out of 12 Factor B respondents own their homes. This means they will pay a property tax, which is one financial resource for public libraries. Examining their
responses regarding the financial aspect, we found that Factor B did not display strong support for paying taxes to support public libraries (nos. 35, 12, and 20).

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
A & B & C \\
+4 & 0 & -1 \\
-3 & -1 & +3 \\
+2 & -1 & -4 \\
\end{array}
\]

(35) Libraries provide good value in return for the taxes I pay for them.

(12) The library has enough money now, so I would like to vote no on the local library levy on next Election Day.

(20) I will vote yes on the local library levy on next Election Day because the library helps kids.

There are two reasons to believe that this reaction is rational and expected. First, Lowery (1985) discusses public opinion on the tax issue and points out:

Two goals can be ascertained from the long history of opinion analysis. First, taxpayers favor low taxes. This preference has little or nothing to do with their demands for public services. In essence, opinions on taxes are independent of opinions on services. Second, the distribution of opinion on tax preferences indicates that the public favors tax “certainty.” (p. 77)

In addition, Allen (2003) examined public opinion and the funding of public libraries and reached the same conclusion, that positive opinions about public library services seems to have no influence on public library funding.

Second, Ohio’s state and local tax burden rose from among the national’s lowest in the 1970s to highest at present. Its state/local tax burden percentage ranked fifth highest in the nation in 2007 and taxpayers pay $4,597 per capita in state and local taxes (Tax Foundation, 2008). Under this stressing circumstance, the above statements cannot expect to receive positive high scores.

Although Factor B’s responses are not positive for librarians, they do not oppose the levying of taxes for public libraries. Actually, one survey finds that public libraries receive the highest grades for public community institutions, which included the library,
police department, school, local media, and local government. In addition, compared with other public institutions, the public hardly criticizes libraries for wasting taxpayer dollars (Public Agenda, 2007). More important, Factor B disapproves of charging fees on public library services (no. 7) and it doubts that public libraries will improve their efficiency by the business approach (nos. 28 and 15). This attitude is entirely opposite to the other group of patrons which we will discuss in next section. The following supports the above:

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<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7) Fees encourage management improvements such as increased productivity, better time management, and better organization and control. Therefore, public libraries should charge fees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+3</td>
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</table>

(28) Fiscal pressure has led libraries to act as businesses, and the business approach will produce some beneficial results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(15) Fees encourage efficient use of public resources. Those who benefit from a given service should pay for its associated costs.

Overall, Factor B supports the position that people should access information equally and that libraries should serve the whole society as well as perform more educational functions. It also emphasizes the quality and content of the library collection materials. Although Factor B does not show a strong positive attitude toward financial support, it disagrees with charging fees as well as the market approach to solving financial problems.

**Factor C: Young Patrons**

Five out of the 33 respondents were involved in Factor C. All are unmarried, three had temporary jobs and two were in college, and the average age is 24. According to the
ALA (2007) survey, 68% of respondents from 18 to 24 years old visit libraries and this number is 6% less than mature patron respondents. Factor C’s respondents usually finished the Q sort process faster than the other two factors’ respondents. They also seemed to have full confidence in their decisions.

Young adults are more inclined to rebel against parental authority and to seek autonomy and a separate identity (Carnegie Corporation, 1995). The young respondents expose this feature in our study. Factor C gives 14 out of 36 statements opposite scores to both Factor A and B; 3 statements against Factor B and 6 statements against Factor A. For Factor C, my first concern is what young adults want from the public libraries. Statements 26 (+3), 5 (−3), and 27 (+2) indicate that Factor C believes public libraries should be an educational institute. Considering that young adults spend much of their leisure time at their own or a friend’s home, sports facility, mall, video arcade, concerts, etc., we can understand why they do not place public libraries high on their list of entertainment venues.

A    B    C
−1    +1    +3 (26) The value of reading (literacy) is more important than that of visual entertainment. Thus more library resources should be allocated to reading materials.

−1    −4    −3 (5) Under pressure from the public, service objectives should be changed from promoting education to providing recreation.

−1    +4    +2 (27) If libraries can afford to offer just one service, they should provide books.

Although Factor C’s attitude on the mission of public libraries seems satisfactory to librarians, it also brings challenges. Jones (1998) points out that the school experience
is not pleasant for many young adults because schools are run by adults with lots of rules. Moreover, the library’s important priority is promoting reading, but young adults prefer to stop reading after their classes in school. These contradictions lead young adults to reduce their visits to public libraries. It also could be a partial explanation as to why Factor C gives lower scores to statements 6 (−1) and 31 (−1), which explicitly express that the public library is a place for self-improvement and education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(6) The mission of the public library is to assist self-improvement and the search for truth.

+1  +3  −1  (31) The mission of the public library is to support the education and socialization needs of society.

The 2003 Gallup Youth Survey found that young people's favorite ways to spend an evening included hanging out with friends or family (34%); watching television, movies, or sports (19%); playing video games (8%); reading (3%); and using the internet or computer (1%). The friends, family members, and media are the main channels through which they obtain information. Therefore, Factor C does not believe that public libraries play an important part in the information infrastructure. The following supports the above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>−2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) The library is a member of a much larger structure: the “information infrastructure;” but the library is the foundation; and without it the rest of the structure would collapse.

Factor C assigns high scores to statements about intellectual freedom (nos. 9, 33, and 2). The attitude is compatible with Factor A’s. However, Factor A’s opinion on intellectual freedom stems from librarians’ professional responsibilities whereas Factor
C’s reactions mostly come from its respondents’ innate character traits. Woodworth (1979) states that in America the child “is generally protected by parents, librarians, teachers, and other adults from materials that adults perceive as being too advanced, too concerned with sex, too questioning of adult authority and too controversial in general,” and that “the young adult age group is wedged between the pressures on the child and the latitude allowed the adult” and that they “seem forever to struggle against both individual and group adult restraints in their attempts to define themselves and to make their places” (p. 51). Thus, when children growth up and escape from parental restrictions, they have a strong motivation to seek autonomic lives, including intellectual freedom.

In fact, intellectual freedom is a broad subject. ALA mentions that library collections could be challenged from many aspects, including political content, sexual expression, or language offensive to people’s racial, cultural, and religious beliefs. Even when advocating for freedom of collections, librarians restrict themselves to certain narrow categories of collections, such as materials related to obscenity, child pornography, defamation, etc. The following supports what mentioned above:

A B C
+2 −3 +4 (9) The best way to combat a bad idea is to produce a better idea, and the only alternative to censorship is free expression. Thus the public library has no obligation to censor materials.

+4 −4 +3 (33) In order to make good citizens, the library must provide a variety of ideas. Thus materials that are considered heinous and patently false may be part of the collection.

−2 +3 −4 (2) Public libraries should install some filtering software that blocks access to material that is not “good” on the internet.
In the 2005 Taxpayer Attitude Survey conducted by the IRS, 96% of respondents completely and mostly agree that paying their fair share of taxes is every American’s civic duty (IRS, 2005). However, Factor C’s respondents express an extremely negative attitude (nos. 12 and 20) about supporting public libraries. The following supports the above:

<p>| | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(12) The library has enough money now, so I would like to vote no on the local library levy on next Election Day.

(20) I will vote yes on the local library levy on next Election Day because the library helps kids.

According to my observation, the five Factor C respondents do not own their own homes and they all earn low incomes. This means that they do not need to pay taxes and have little experience with paying taxes. Eriksen and Fallan (1996) argue that knowledge about tax law is important for preferences and attitudes toward taxation. Their experiment finds that respondents consider their own tax evasion as more serious and that perceived fairness in taxation increased with the increase in tax knowledge. Therefore, the lack of knowledge and experience of taxation could be part of the explanation for the Factor C responses.

Another possible reason could be that public library services do not satisfy young adults (no. 35), who used to be defined by librarians as "problem people" or as having "problem behaviors" (Smith, 1994). Chelton (1997) finds that although the majority of patrons in his study were young adults, only 13% of all public librarians provide services directly to the youth. He claims that “there seems to be a disconnect between the actual
users [young adults] of public libraries and the appropriateness of what public libraries offer them in terms of serious and trained staff” (p. 108).

(35) Libraries provide good value in return for the taxes I pay for them.

Factor C’s respondents are youthful and just beginning their career. They have less experience but more ambition. They believe in achieving success by individual effort in a free and competitive market (nos. 19, 22, and 28). However, when they emphasize personal endeavor and need (nos. 32 and 34), they pay less attention to the whole society and to other groups of people (nos. 30, 10, and 4).

(19) To participate fully in a democratic society, citizens must be informed and aware, regardless of their ability to pay for needed information.

(22) Government’s involvement will interfere with the ability of the market mechanism to allocate resources to the optimum production of goods and services.

(28) Fiscal pressure has led libraries to act as businesses, and the business approach will produce some beneficial results.

(32) Public libraries should provide internet access for those who do not own a computer.

(34) Library resources should be devoted to those individuals who are its most likely users.

(30) The goals of the library as a social institution are to benefit the members of society and the society as a whole.

(10) The public library should provide materials and services to the economically disadvantaged.

(4) Public libraries should reach out to those groups who have not taken advantage of this tax-supported resource.
In general, Factor C respondents express many attitudes which are opposite to either Factor A or B respondents in our study. They treat public libraries as educational institutions but they go there with reluctance to do research and homework. Even though they do not pay taxes, they show a strong aversion to taxes as a means of support for public libraries. Other statements indicate they lack social responsibility and feel less responsibility for other people.

Areas of Consensus

To this point we have examined the main differences between and among Factors A, B, and C, but they also share various opinions in common. In this regard, for instance, the three factors demonstrate the same attitude toward the statements about technological challenges. Even Factor C, which holds many views that are contrary to those of Factor A and B, agrees with the other two factors on this issue.

All factors assert that the internet cannot replace public libraries (nos. 18, 1, and 36). Other national surveys also confirm this viewpoint. In the ALA (2006) survey, 92% respondents think that public libraries will still be needed in the future. The Public Agenda (2007) survey finds that the public and opinion leaders suggest several areas where public libraries have potential to do even more in the future. Such areas are services for teens and ready access to information. The OCLC (2005) survey finds that 22% of respondents will increase public library use in the future and that 61% will maintain current levels of usage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>−4</td>
<td>−3</td>
<td>−3 (18) You don't need public libraries because everything is available on the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−3</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td>−1 (1) Technology makes certain functions much easier for information-seekers to perform, essentially eliminating the need for librarians as intermediaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−3</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td>−3 (36) If libraries can afford to offer just one service, they should provide computers to access the internet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Herring (2001) lists 10 reasons to explain why the internet is not a substitute for public libraries. His reasons include the following: not everything is on the internet, there are no cataloging services, there is no quality control, some important things which are not in pure text (i.e., tables, footnotes and graphs) are missing, and not much on the internet is more than 15 years old. Coffman and McGlamery (2000) pointed out that the answers from internet search engines can be biased by commercial concerns and that this can reduce information accuracy and reliability. Personal experience also tells us that public libraries and search engines can be complementary. We can understand that a person becoming interested in a book or a topic from the internet may go to a library to find more information related to that book or topic. Rodger, D’Elia, and Jorgense (2001) conducted a survey and ranked the main reasons why people choose to use public libraries or the internet, and these are summarized in Table 9.
Table 9. Main Reasons of Public Library and Internet Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why people choose to use the public library</th>
<th>Why people choose to use the internet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ease of use</td>
<td>ease of getting there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low cost</td>
<td>time to get there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>availability of paper copy</td>
<td>availability (hours of access)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accuracy of information</td>
<td>range of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helpfulness of librarians</td>
<td>expectation of finding what is sought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protection of user privacy</td>
<td>immediately obtain information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>currency of the information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enjoyment of browsing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ability to work alone</td>
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</table>


The authors proposed three possible scenarios that could lead to competitive outcomes between internet and public library use:

- First, just as radio stations changed programming to survive under the pressure of television technology, librarians in public libraries will continue to provide services, but their missions will change considerably.
- Second, the public library and the internet will coexist, like the movie industry and the home-video industry both succeed today.
- Third, as the automobile replaced the horse and wagon, the internet will substitute for the public library eventually.

Our study seems support the first and second scenario (nos. 18 and 1, supra).

From the seeking-information aspect, Factors B and C both express the view that they will check other channels instead of libraries (no. 25). Their answers are supported by Chen and Hernon (1982), who surveyed the information-seeking experiences of
individuals from all American communities and ranked (based on frequency) respondents’ sources for information: the respondents’ own experience; a friend, neighbor, or relative; a newspaper, magazine or book; a store, company or business; a co-worker; a professional (e.g., doctor or lawyer); the government; TV or radio; and the library. Chen and Hernon concluded that “respondents tended to use interpersonal providers of information over institutional and mass media channels” (p. 63). Savolainen (1995) offered and tested a framework for everyday information seeking and found that the respondents use various information sources and channels to find the answers to their questions, but that they select the most easily available and accessible sources. His conclusion is consistent with Chen and Hernon’s findings that both workers and teachers prefer informal sources, mainly personal communication. The latest survey finds that 84% of respondents use search engines to begin an information search (OCLC, 2006).

The following supports the above:

A  B  C
0 +2 +2 (25) Rather than visiting the library, seekers of information will first look to the internet, newspapers, their own books, and friends and neighbors.

Although the public library is not Factor B’s or C’s first place to seek information, the respondents tend to believe that public libraries can provide reliable, useful, and complementary information (nos. 29 and 14). The OCLC (2006) survey finds that 88% of respondents indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of information provided by librarians and the number for search engines is 89%. D’Elia et al. (2002) developed a consumer model of American adults and have found that the public library and internet are used by the public in a complementary way as the
information providers. Moreover, the D’Elia et al. (2007) study indicates that youth use both the public library and internet and that youth reduce their use of the public library as a source of personal information, but still use the library for school work or for recreation. The following statement supports the above:

\[ A \quad B \quad C \]
\[ +2 \quad +2 \quad +2 \]

(29) Through value-added functions (such as making information more accessible, accuracy, updating, and formatting), librarians increase the usefulness of the information.

As patrons, Factors B and C also share similar sentiments with respect to the following statements, which indicate that some patrons still expect the public library to perform various basic functions in the digital world.

\[ A \quad B \quad C \]
\[ 0 \quad -3 \quad -3 \]

(13) The mission of the public library is to satisfy the popular taste of the public.

-1 +1 +1 (11) The mission of the public library is to maintain a records archive.

-1 +4 +2 (27) If libraries can afford to offer just one service, they should provide books.

On the whole, both librarians and patrons believe that the public library will exist and continue providing services in the future. Patrons look to librarians for authoritative answers and libraries for traditional tasks. Thus, librarians are facing how to balance their resources between traditional services and the emerging information demands of the internet age.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

After serving Americans for more than 250 years, public libraries have been integrated into people’s daily lives. Today, the public library performs multiple functions, such as education, recreation, access to information, etc. Due to the limitation of resources, these functions could conflict with each other. To identify the top priority missions of public libraries for different types of people is the first task of this study. The second purpose is to examine people’s attitude toward financial support for public libraries. The third concern is with the technological challenge from the internet.

Q methodology has proved adaptable for examining people’s perceptions about the above three aspects. As Durning (1999) points out, “Q-methodology has quantitative rigor but solidly reflects a subjectivist epistemology” (p. 407). Thirty-six statements were selected from professional books and media. Thirty-three persons, including librarians and patrons, participated in this research. Three statistically significant factors were extracted by factor analysis using the PQMethod software.

All respondents in this study support the view that public libraries will continue providing services in the digitized future even though some functions will have been replaced by the internet. They believe that public libraries could provide more accessible, accurate, reliable, and authoritative information. Books are still the brand of the library. Meanwhile, the library has played a vital role in patrons’ communities. It
provides various services, such as programs for children, literacy services, a place for quiet study and meeting places, etc. for patrons.

A majority of Factor A’s respondents are public librarians. They believe that the public library should provide wide-ranging services to all patrons. These services include access to information, entertainment, and education. They emphasize that the public library should be free to the public and should attend in particular to the informational needs of weak and marginal groups in society. Moreover, they advocate intellectual freedom in the library materials collection. Their ambitious goals and the deteriorating economic environment generate financial pressure for public librarians, and obtaining financial support from the public has become the top priority on the agenda of public libraries.

Two patterns among patrons were revealed by the Q analysis, referred to as Mature and Young patrons, both of whom believe that public libraries should provide traditional services, such as education and reading, instead of attempting to satisfy the popular taste of the public. However, increasing popular library collections is the main means to attract more visitors for public libraries. Librarians have gradually invested more resources in recreational materials and there is no evidence indicating that patrons complain about this trend. Factor B’s respondents favored selectivity in the collection of materials; contrarily, the young patrons who defined Factor C support libraries’ collection of varied materials. Regarding financial support, as the main taxpayer group, Factor B did not show strong agreement on tax levies, and it also doubts that market mechanisms will
solve the problem. However, Factor C holds the opposite attitude: It is unwilling to pay taxes and emphasizes individual effort and a business approach.

Although this is a small-sample study, many of the findings are consistent with several nationwide surveys, and further questions emerge from the findings:

- How do librarians balance limited resources between traditional services and new web-based information services?
- Why do patrons say that they like books and reading, but then borrow more video and audio materials?
- How will librarians attract and obtain financial support from young patrons in the future?
- Does the concept of intellectual freedom have the same meanings to librarians as it does to young patrons?

Today, the public library is not just a records archive. For the American public at least, it means many different things and in some instances is quite special. As respondents in one survey said, if their public library were closed, they would feel “that something essential and important has been lost, affecting the whole community” (Public Agenda, 2006, p. 11). Some of these meaning have been revealed in this study, but other meanings are still in patrons’ minds and remain to be revealed in future studies.
Appendix A: Factor Q-Sort Scores for Statements, $N=36$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>(1) Technology makes certain functions much easier for information-seekers to perform, essentially eliminating the need for librarians as intermediaries.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>(2) Public libraries should install some filtering software that blocks access to material that is not “good” on the internet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>(3) The library is a member of a much larger structure: the “information infrastructure;” but the library is the foundation; and without it the rest of the structure would collapse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>(4) Public libraries should reach out to those groups who have not taken advantage of this tax-supported resource.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>(5) Under pressure from the public, service objectives should be changed from promoting education to providing recreation.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>(6) The mission of the public library is to assist self-improvement and the search for truth.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(7) Fees encourage management improvements such as increased productivity, better time management, and better organization and control. Therefore, public libraries should charge fees.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>(8) The social benefits for library services are difficult to measure; therefore a fee cannot efficiently be assigned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>+2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>(9) The best way to combat a bad idea is to produce a better idea, and the only alternative to censorship is free expression. Thus the public library has no obligation to censor materials.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(10) The public library should provide materials and services to the economically disadvantaged.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>(11) The mission of the public library is to maintain a records archive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>(12) The library has enough money now, so I would like to vote no on the local library levy on next Election Day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>(13) The mission of the public library is to satisfy the popular taste of the public.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
(14) People increasingly rely on Google and Yahoo to find information and are very happy with the results they get, but most are far from experts at searching, and are unaware of how search engines operate.

(15) Fees encourage efficient use of public resources. Those who benefit from a given service should pay for its associated costs.

(16) Search engines, such as Google and Yahoo, have their own commercial purposes which lead to results not as accurate and reliable as those provided by librarians.

(17) Librarians will become the expert navigators for information seekers of the future.

(18) You don't need public libraries because everything is available on the internet.

(19) To participate fully in a democratic society, citizens must be informed and aware, regardless of their ability to pay for needed information.

(20) I will vote yes on the local library levy on next Election Day because the library helps kids.

(21) The public library should serve both as a community information center and an entertainment center.

(22) Government’s involvement will interfere with the ability of the market mechanism to allocate resources to the optimum production of goods and services.

(23) Good reading leads to good conduct; bad reading leads to unacceptable conduct.

(24) Library services are a public good. Free access is a fundamental right of each citizen in a democratic society.

(25) Rather than visiting the library, seekers of information will first look to the internet, newspapers, their own books, and friends and neighbors.

(26) The value of reading (literacy) is more important than that of visual entertainment. Thus more library resources should be allocated to
reading materials.

−1   +4   +2  (27) If libraries can afford to offer just one service, they should provide books.

−1  −1   +3  (28) Fiscal pressure has led libraries to act as businesses, and the business approach will produce some beneficial results.

+2   +2   +2  (29) Through value-added functions (such as making information more accessible, accuracy, updating, and formatting), librarians increase the usefulness of the information.

+3   +3   0   (30) The goals of the library as a social institution are to benefit the members of society and the society as a whole.

+1   +3  −1   (31) The mission of the public library is to support the education and socialization needs of society.

0   +2   +1   (32) Public libraries should provide internet access for those who do not own a computer.

+4  −4   +3  (33) In order to make good citizens, the library must provide a variety of ideas. Thus materials that are considered heinous and patently false may be part of the collection.

−2  −1   +1  (34) Library resources should be devoted to those individuals who are its most likely users.

+4   0  −1   (35) Libraries provide a good value in return for the taxes I pay for them.

−3  −2  −3  (36) If libraries can afford to offer just one service, they should provide computers to access the internet.
Appendix B: Participants’ Factor Loadings and Demographic Data, $n=33$.

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Note: Loadings in boldface significant ($p<.01$).
Appendix C: Q Score Sheet

Most disagree                  Most agree
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4

Interviewer __________________________

Name ______________________________ Date __________________

(Optional)  Age _______  Sex ________

Do you have a public library card?
Yes     No

Did you visit a public library in past 6 months?
Yes     No

What are your main purposes in visiting the public libraries?
Borrow books  Ask questions  Attend adults’ programs
Attend kids’ programs  Borrow DVD, videotapes  Access Internet

Have you ever voted for any public library issues in past elections?
Yes     No

What is the highest level of education you have completed?
Less than high school  High school  Some college  2-year
college degree  4-year college degree  Above master’s degree
REFERENCES


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Casey Communications (2003). Ohio Statewide Library Futures.


