# MODELLING READING AWARENESS AND LEARNING HABIT THROUGH UNIVERSITY'S LIBRARY THEME-BASED EXHIBITIONS

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## ABSTRACT

From the perspectives of many, exhibitions are meant for museums and art galleries, but it can also be used as a tool for libraries to impart knowledge and learning process can be derived from displays of permanent collections or temporary exhibitions, the specimens or the interactive apparatus. The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of library users, who are students at a university, on organizing theme-based exhibitions around the setting in the library which would help to foster learning. This will boost the number of visitors to the libraries since the global digital revolution has affected both the traditional forms of disseminating knowledge and the

frequency of visits to the library. The data for this study was collected from students of Universiti Utara Malaysia. A mixed method approach was employed consisting of a survey and focus group discussion. The study revealed two vital findings which are: (i) positive perception on the library as a place to impart knowledge, foster learning and on theme-based exhibitions as means to impart knowledge and foster learning and ii) the themes proposed are education, business and economics, technology, health care and wellness and lastly, trade and investment. The findings provide useful information for library management and ideas for improving the university's library services. The findings also offer valuable insights for an integrated framework for developing theme-based exhibition design for libraries which could be an alternative form of communication between the library and its users.

**Keywords:** Exhibition, library exhibition, library user, theme-based exhibition, university library.

## INTRODUCTION

In ancient societies, libraries were used as cornerstones of academia and intellectual life. More than merely repositories, libraries have historically been places for learning, sharing, and discussion—multi-purpose hubs of knowledge and intellectual exchange. Today, especially in academic institutions like Universiti Utara Malaysia, libraries do not only provide reference materials but also create spaces for idea exchange, debate, and exploration of new knowledge. However, in the face of the digital revolution, university libraries face challenges in adapting traditional knowledge-sharing practices to meet the needs of modern students and faculty.

**The Impact of Digital Revolution on Libraries**

The digital age has transformed how knowledge is accessed, challenging libraries to revolutionize themselves with increasingly digital-centric preferences among students. Once bustling centers of academic life, libraries now struggle to maintain their appeal as physical spaces. Rather than being frequented for reference and research, libraries are often reduced to quiet study spots, with many

physical books left untouched. This decline in engagement suggests that libraries must explore innovative ways to reignite interest among their users.

**Revitalizing Libraries Through Theme-Based Exhibitions**

One promising iinovative approach is to draw inspiration from museums, which have long used exhibitions to educate and engage visitors. Exhibitions in a library context could serve as dynamic learning tools, presenting curated themes that connect directly with students' interests. This idea of "theme-based exhibitions" does not only attract students to the library but can also create a lively atmosphere that fosters learning and exploration.

Most museums would frequently update their displays to sustain visitor interest, and similar practices in libraries could help re-engage the academic community. Exhibitions on topics relevant to students—such as mental health, digital culture, sustainable living, or career development—could create a more vibrant and interactive experience. Additionally, inviting guest speakers and organizing competitions,activities around exhibition themes could deepen engagement, promoting both active learning and cultural enrichment.

Thus, this study intends to explore the subject of fostering learning for the users and visitors of the library through theme-based exhibitions within the library setting. The idea of theme-based exhibition was inspired from museums which often encouraged visitors to engage with the museum through a series of exhibitions organized on a regular basis. Apart from visits to learn about the displayed themed artifacts, the various activities held around the regularly changing themes serves to inform, educate and add fun to the learning aspect for the visitors. It is apparent that the library's function is to support teaching, learning, research and other academic programs of the university. Specifically, in this case, the idea is to engage and support the learning of all users through a series of exhibitions that the library could organize. Exhibitions on various interesting subjects and themes of students' interests can be organized to attract the students, who are the main users of the library. In trying to do so, this study utilized a mixed method research approach, using a survey and focus group discussions which explored the users' views towards organizing theme-based exhibitions

within the setting in the library. The outcome of this study would be beneficial for the library's management to continue foster learning by organizing various theme-based exhibitions that would appeal to the users, especially the students. This research will function as a catalyst for the library to provide better service and encourage its users to visit the library.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Role of University Libraries in the 21st Century

The role of university libraries has undergone profound transformations since their establishment alongside universities in the 1600s and 1700s. Initially, libraries served as intellectual hubs, offering essential scholarly resources to students and faculty. Over time, they have become key facilitators of academic growth, supporting research, intellectual exploration, and the dissemination of knowledge. However, with the rise of digital resources and the increasing preference for virtual platforms, the traditional, physical library has experienced a decline in usage and relevance, especially among students. While the library once represented a focal point for scholarly activity, today it often functions primarily as a study space during exams rather than a dynamic venue for learning and engagement (Beals, 2007; Fouracre, 2015). This shift has led scholars to explore strategies to revitalize university libraries, making them more engaging and accessible in the digital age.

### Decline in Library Engagement and the Digital Shift

The transition from physical to digital resources has had a substantial impact on library engagement. As digital tools and materials become increasingly integrated into academic life, students have come to rely more on online platforms for research and learning. The traditional library, with its printed books and journals, often struggles to compete with the immediacy and accessibility of digital content. This change has been linked to a decline in the perceived relevance of the library, particularly in its traditional function as a place of active learning and intellectual engagement (Fouracre, 2015). Students, who are increasingly immersed in digital culture, may find physical libraries

less appealing due to their reliance on outdated technologies and the lack of interactive, user-friendly resources.

Studies have suggested that one contributing factor to this decline is the lack of engaging presentation and accessibility of materials in physical library spaces. Libraries often struggle to attract students because they fail to offer a stimulating environment that speaks to the digital-savvy generation (Beals, 2007). Consequently, there is a growing need to rethink the role of libraries, emphasizing innovation and creativity to reintegrate them into students' academic lives.

## Innovative Strategies for Library Engagement

In response to these challenges, several scholars have proposed innovative strategies to revitalize the role of university libraries. One such strategy is the promotion of recreational reading services within the library environment. Research by Gallik (1999) demonstrates the positive relationship between pleasure reading and academic success. Gallik's study found that students who engaged in recreational reading tended to have higher grade-point averages, suggesting that fostering a culture of pleasure reading could significantly enhance students' academic performance. This connection between recreational reading and academic achievement underscores the potential of university libraries to serve not only as academic research centers but also as spaces that encourage reading for enjoyment. Encouraging students to read for pleasure may help reverse the decline in recreational reading habits, which often start to wane during the middle school years (Gallik, 1999).

## Library Exhibitions as a Catalyst for Engagement

Another effective strategy proposed in the literature is the integration of thematic exhibitions within university libraries. The concept of exhibitions in academic libraries has gained traction in recent years, particularly in Western contexts, where libraries such as the Bodleian Library and the British Library have successfully used exhibitions to attract a wider audience (Fouracre, 2015). Exhibitions can provide students with an immersive, educational experience that goes beyond the traditional functions of the library, fostering cultural awareness and intellectual curiosity. Beals (2007) highlights the educational benefits

of art exhibitions in university libraries, noting that they provide students with opportunities to engage with cultural and artistic works that may not be available through their standard academic materials. Such exhibitions also serve as a platform for community engagement, creating a space where students, faculty, and the broader public can interact with the library in a meaningful way.

Research by Fralin and Rogers (2019) further supports the value of exhibitions in university libraries, particularly at Virginia Tech's library system. Their study revealed that exhibitions could create an "experience of discovery," benefiting both contributors and visitors by transforming the library into a more interactive, stimulating environment. By offering themed exhibitions that align with academic subjects or current events, libraries can create a dynamic learning experience that encourages students to visit the library regularly and engage with its resources in new ways.

Despite these successes in Western academic libraries, exhibitions remain relatively uncommon in Malaysia, indicating a potential area for growth in local academic institutions. The examples from British and American libraries underscore the viability of this approach and suggest that Malaysian libraries could adopt similar strategies to engage students more effectively.

**Creating an Interactive and Welcoming Space for Learning**

Beyond boosting visitation, theme-based exhibitions present an opportunity to address broader social issues. For instance, an exhibition on cyberbullying could provide resources for mental health, while a display on environmental sustainability could promote eco-conscious habits. Such exhibitions provide a dual benefit: they raise awareness on critical issues and encourage students to explore resources that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Moreover, the research revealed that users appreciate exhibitions that are interactive, featuring activities and spaces designed for collaboration and conversation. For example, creating "noise zones" within exhibitions allows for informal discussions and group activities, making the library a more flexible space that aligns with students' varied study and social needs.

**Toward a Library of the Future**

With insights from this study, the library at Universiti Utara Malaysia can continue developing an environment that appeals to modern students. By embracing theme-based exhibitions, libraries can transition from being silent study halls to becoming vibrant centers of learning, reflection, and engagement. This approach not only aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by ensuring accessible education but also promotes lifelong learning among young adults.

While digital technology has altered how students engage with information, libraries can adapt by creating interactive, theme-based exhibitions that attract and educate students. Embracing such initiatives will likely welcome more users and new visitors to the library premise.

The digital era has significantly shifted the way younger generations engage with information and leisure activities, favoring online platforms, social media, and virtual spaces over traditional settings like libraries. For many students, the allure of digital interaction—from gaming and streaming to social networking—has replaced the physical library experience, relegating it to a seldom-visited relic of academia. As a result, university libraries must reinvent themselves to maintain relevance and appeal to today's digitally immersed youth.

One promising approach is the introduction of theme-based exhibitions that transform library spaces into dynamic environments for exploration, discussion, and discovery. Much like museum exhibitions, these thematic displays could highlight topics that resonate with students, such as budget travel, extreme sports, mental health, and cyberbullying, combining education with social engagement. By organizing exhibitions and events around these themes, libraries could foster an atmosphere of active learning, encouraging students to visit and interact with the materials. Through such innovative initiatives, this study aims to explore how thematic exhibitions might revitalize university libraries as vibrant hubs for knowledge and inquiry, addressing questions of engagement, visitor appeal, and how these exhibitions could cultivate stronger reading habits among students.

**Theoretical and Practical Implications**

The literature indicates that the incorporation of exhibitions and recreational reading services within university libraries can

significantly enhance student engagement and academic success. By reimagining the library as not only a place for research but also a venue for leisure and cultural enrichment, libraries can better cater to the evolving needs of a digitally inclined student body. The introduction of themed exhibitions and the promotion of recreational reading can help bridge the gap between traditional library functions and the demands of a modern, digital-centric student population. Furthermore, these strategies can position the library as a space for both learning and relaxation, fostering a more balanced and holistic academic experience for students.

University libraries are at a crossroads in the 21st century, facing the challenge of remaining relevant in an increasingly digital world. While the shift to digital resources has led to a decline in the traditional use of physical libraries, innovative strategies such as recreational reading services and thematic exhibitions offer promising solutions to enhance student engagement. By embracing these approaches, libraries can transform into vibrant, multifunctional spaces that support both academic and personal growth. As the literature demonstrates, the integration of these strategies not only benefits students academically but also contributes to the broader educational mission of the university. As libraries continue to evolve, it will be essential to create environments that foster both learning and leisure, ensuring their continued relevance in the digital age.

The role of university libraries has evolved significantly since the 1600s and 1700s, when they first gained prominence alongside the establishment of universities. Historically, libraries have functioned as intellectual centers, providing essential resources and supporting academic growth through access to vast collections of scholarly materials. However, with the rapid shift to digital resources in the 21st century, the traditional physical library has experienced a noticeable decline in usage, often serving merely as a study space during exams rather than a place of active learning and engagement. Researchers suggest that this decline may be due, in part, to a lack of engaging presentation and accessibility of materials, which has made libraries less appealing to students immersed in digital culture.

To counteract this trend, scholars advocate for innovative strategies such as recreational reading services and themed exhibitions within

library spaces. Recreational reading has been shown to positively impact academic performance, as Gallik (1999) found in his study linking pleasure reading time with higher grade-point averages among college students. Gallik's work highlights the formative role of early reading habits, suggesting that libraries could play a pivotal role in reigniting students' interest in reading for pleasure during their college years. Furthermore, studies by Fouracre (2015) and Beals (2007) demonstrate the potential of library exhibitions in boosting library attendance and engaging users by offering culturally enriching experiences that go beyond conventional academic resources. Fouracre's research on exhibitions in prominent British libraries, such as the Bodleian and British Library, emphasizes the effectiveness of exhibitions in attracting a broader audience, while Beals emphasizes the educational value of art exhibitions within university libraries in fostering cultural awareness among students.

Additional support for exhibitions as a method to enhance library engagement comes from Fralin and Rogers (2019), who examined the role of exhibitions at Virginia Tech's university libraries. Their findings suggest that themed exhibitions can create an experience of discovery, benefiting both contributors and visitors by making the library space more interactive and informative. Despite the success of these initiatives in Western contexts, theme-based library exhibitions remain relatively uncommon in Malaysia, indicating a potential area for growth in local academic libraries.

Overall, the literature reveals a strong foundation for incorporating thematic exhibitions and recreational reading services within university libraries as a means of enhancing student engagement and academic success. By embracing these approaches, libraries can transform into vibrant hubs for both learning and leisure, meeting the evolving needs of a digitally inclined student body.

University libraries are often intimidating and confusing, especially for new users. A student's level of comfort and familiarity with the library is a factor that is considered critical to academic success. Therefore, it is useful to position the library as a place not only to study and conduct research, but also as a place to relax and to enjoy leisure reading. In his study of both first-year students and those in upper-level writing classes, Gallik (1999) links recreational reading with

academic achievement, finding a positive relationship between grade-point average and pleasure reading time. He states that recreational reading habits are formed fairly early in life and have been shown to decline during the middle school years. It is unknown whether this is a permanent drop, the implication being that it may be possible to reverse this trend during the college or young adult years. A study by Fouracre (2015), meanwhile, investigated the increase in the size and scope of libraries' exhibitions of 5 academic libraries and found that these exhibitions succeeded in engaging more users to frequent the libraries, illustrating the fact that it manages to attract the wider public. Beals (2007) who looked at placing arts exhibitions in university libraries concluded that by organizing and holding exhibitions in the library as a site, it aids in the development of cultural awareness and education of the students' community. Researchers such as Simor (1991) also advocate the displaying of exhibitions in the library as a means to educate and inform the university's library users. Although both Simor (1991) and Beals (2007) explore using arts exhibitions in academic libraries to attract and educate the library users, it is proven a success. The review of literature has revealed that library exhibitions are not common in Malaysia, but have seen a noticeable increase in the size and scope of exhibitions among libraries in Britain and Europe. As an example, Fouracre (2015) investigated five academic libraries: the Bodleian Library, British Library, Royal College of Physicians Library, Royal Society Library and Wellcome Library and found growth in their involvement in exhibitions. Fralin and Rogers (2019) investigated exhibitions at the university libraries at Virginia Tech, United States. They found that exhibitions provide a new experience of serendipity in libraries. While such work is unique, it can provide valuable experiences both for the contributors and for the creators of these exhibitions, as well as those who see and interact with them.

## METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a mixed method approach that serves twofold purposes: 1) to investigate library users' views towards theme-based exhibitions in a university library setting as means to foster learning, and 2) to know their perspectives on the choice of theme that should be exhibited by the library. A total of 111 library users took part in this research (N=111). The respondents comprised of students from

a graduate school of Universiti Utara Malaysia. The respondents consisted of both male and female students ranging from 28 to 45 years old. The data collection process involved two phases. In the first phase, a survey using questionnaire was conducted. The survey was performed via Google form which was launched in February 2020 and lasted for one month. The questionnaire was adapted based on literature on adaptations from various sources such as Allen (1993) and The Monash Support Experience Questionnaire (MSEQ). Before the launch of the survey a pilot study was conducted with a sample of 30 respondents. The result of the pilot study confirmed that the instrument is fit to be used. The questionnaire was also verified by an expert for its reliability and validity. In the second phase, qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions to gauge participants' views on the subject matter. The focus group discussions were conducted involving five respondents. The qualitative data supplemented the preceding quantitative data gathered from the first phase. The qualitative results were not only able to ascertain respondents' views towards theme-based exhibitions in a university library setting, but also provided suggestions to address the perceived concerns. Finally, the quantitative data was descriptively analyzed using SPSS statistical software, whereas the qualitative data from the focus group were analyzed based on thematic analysis. Both findings were then corroborated to derive the final results. The combination of both quantitative and qualitative research designs gave context to the study's findings and provided greater confidence in the study's conclusions as supported by prior scholars (e.g Gephart, 2004; Saunders et al., 2012).
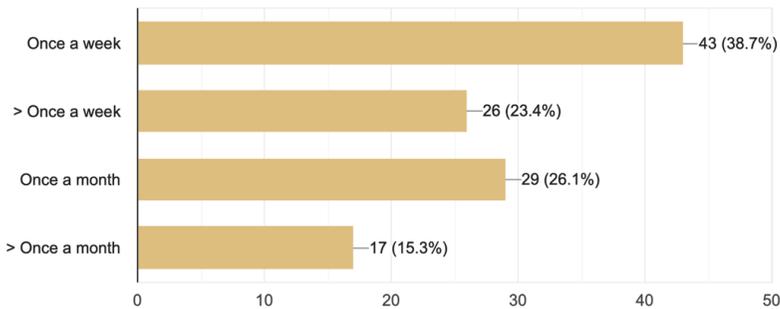
## FINDINGS

The feedback from the survey recorded a total of 118 responses from different demographic profiles. Out of the 118 respondents, 7 responses were discarded due to incomplete or incorrect responses. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the respondents were females, whilst the age group with the majority of respondents was more than 30 years old bracket and 85% of the respondents were in the Master's program.

The first vital finding illustrated the frequency of visits to the library by the Universiti Utara Malaysia's students. Figure 1 exhibited that

the most students claimed they visit once a week with 38.7% and the second highest with 26.1% or 29 people would visit the library once a month, while the third is less that once a month with 26 people or 23.4%. This illustrated that most students do visit the university's library quite often, making it all of the 111 respondents.

**Figure 1**

*The Number of Visits to the University's Library by UUM's Students*



The finding as depicted in Figure 2 revealed various reasons for the students visit to the library with finding books and articles to be their main activity, whilst studying in comfortable study spaces and studying in groups where the library is the most suitable place to do so, rank second and third as their reasons.

**Figure 2**

*Reasons Library Users Visit the University's Library*
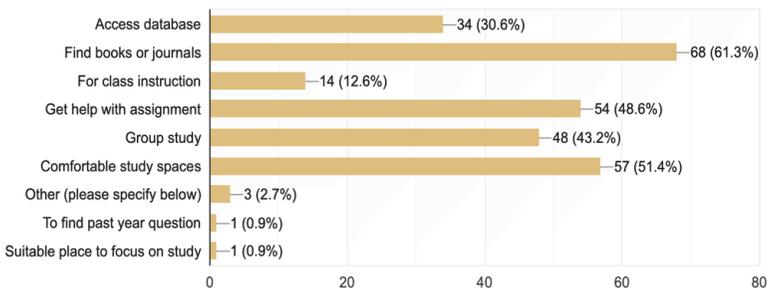


As for views on library's sevices and facilities, most visitors recorded positively on the quality of services provided by the library, marking

a 44.1% or 49 people for excellent services and good services with 45 people or 40.5%. The following figure illustrated this.
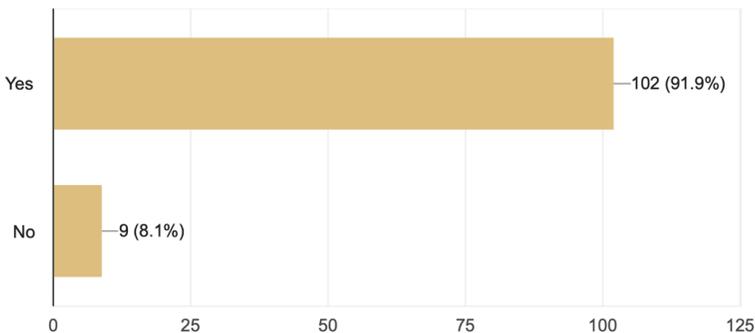
**Figure 3**

*Satisfaction on the Quality of Services Provided by the Library*
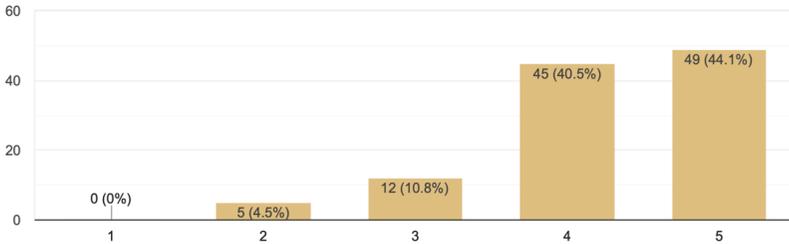


Almost all of the respondents (91.9%) claimed that the library should have a permanent exhibition space (Figure 4). As depicted in Figure 5, most of the respondents (81.1%) were of the opinion that the purpose of exhibitions should be for educational purposes while 58.6% for promotion of collections. The majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the library should organize exhibitions based on the theme of education (65.8%), followed by 55.9% suggested hobbies such as scuba diving and extreme sports and 54.1% for the theme travelling and food and beverages and the fifth theme with 46.8% is technology (Figure 6).
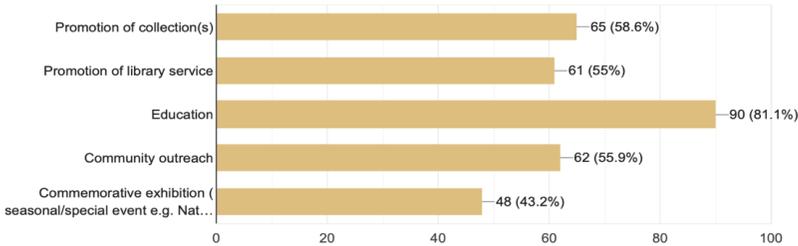
**Figure 4**

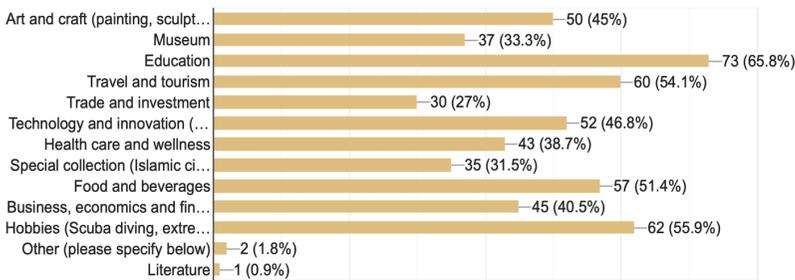*Views on Having A Permanent Exhibition Space*

**Figure 5**

*Purpose of Exhibition Space in the University's Library*



**Figure 6**

*Theme-Based Exhibitions Based on Interest of the University's Users*



These findings were supported by the focus group discussions where all of the respondents viewed the initiative of organizing exhibitions in the setting of a physical library is a positive effort. The respondents were of the opinion that the use of the library space for exhibitions would inspire learning and having theme-based exhibitions would help to improve the liveliness of the library. As a result, students would be attracted to visit the library and use the facilities at the library. This implies that learning could be fostered by means of exhibitions. Some of the respondents also implied that exhibitions are also helpful in developing interest in the respective themes among the library users and visitors. The respondents claimed that a theme would garner interest and excitement among learners which would certainly be inviting. This finding is consistent with Fouracre (2015) where it was found that library exhibitions not only increased the number of users to the library, but also attracts the wider public.

It can be established that theme-based exhibition is a unique-medium of fostering learning which echoes with Pedretti (2004). The study

discovered a unique way of attracting the public while creating effective learning environments for teaching and learning about science through creating issues-based exhibitions. The theme-based exhibition enhanced learning by personalizing subject matter, evoking emotion, stimulating dialogue and debate, and promoting reflexivity (Pedretti, 2004). When questioned about respondents' views on organizing thematic activities within the physical library setting, the respondents strongly agreed that theme-based exhibitions could offer visitors a different atmosphere and provide a unique learning experience that would encourage students to visit the library. This is particularly important especially when today's generation prefers to stay in-door, within the comfort of their room, too engrossed with their gadgets. Approximately 45% of the respondents were of the opinion that the library should hold an exhibition once a month, followed by 42.3% of the respondents suggested the library should hold the exhibition once every 3 months. This is depicted in Figure 4. Figure 4: The frequency of library exhibitions. The survey also probed the respondents about their opinion on the duration of a particular exhibition. As illustrated in Figure 5, approximately 56.8% of the respondents suggested that the library's exhibition should last for between 1 week to 1 month and, 36% suggested that the exhibitions should last for less than 1 week. 276 e- Figure 5: Duration of the exhibition The findings from the focus group equally offered several suggestions which include making the exhibitions available to the public, organizing exhibitions based on the theme of gaming, creating a noise-zone space for gaming activities and creating a space for relaxations. All in all, the findings revealed three important outcomes: i) Library users' positive perception on the library as a place to foster learning, ii) library users' positive perception on the functions of library exhibitions to foster learning, and (iii) library users' positive perception on theme-based exhibitions as means to foster learning.

**Positive User Perception of Theme-Based Exhibitions**

Research conducted at Universiti Utara Malaysia used surveys and focus group discussions to gauge library users' perspectives on theme-based exhibitions. The findings indicate a strong, positive response: many students expressed that such exhibitions could make libraries more appealing and encourage them to visit regularly. Most participants also saw the value in exhibitions for educational purposes,

suggesting themes such as technology, art, and economics to reflect their academic and personal interests.

A significant number of participants also highlighted that regular, thematic exhibitions could cultivate a unique learning environment within the library, making it a place where students feel both inspired and welcome. The idea is not only to draw students to the library but also to support their academic success by making learning engaging and accessible.

## Implementing Themed Exhibitions Within Academic Libraries As A Way To Foster Learning And Increase Library Engagement

The study's findings reveal strong support among library users for implementing themed exhibitions within academic libraries as a way to foster learning and increase library engagement. The findings are summarized in several key insights:

**Library as a Learning Space**: The study found that 57.7% of respondents strongly agreed that the library inspires study and learning, while only 1.8% disagreed. This reinforces the perception of the library as a conducive environment for academic pursuits.

**Desire for Permanent Exhibition Spaces**: A substantial majority (91.9%) of respondents expressed support for a permanent exhibition space within the library. This response aligns with the idea that exhibitions could transform the library into a more dynamic, visually engaging space.

**Educational Purpose of Exhibitions**: When asked about the purpose of library exhibitions, 81.1% of respondents believed that exhibitions should primarily serve educational objectives, while 58.6% suggested they could also help promote the library's collection. This indicates a preference for exhibitions that directly contribute to learning rather than purely aesthetic or promotional displays.

**Preferred Exhibition Themes**: Respondents suggested multiple themes for exhibitions, including education (highest preference), technology and innovation (61.3%), art and craft, and business, economics, and finance (59.5%). These themes reflect a diverse range of interests that would appeal to a broad audience, particularly if tied to academic and professional fields.

**Frequency and Duration of Exhibitions**: Regarding the frequency of exhibitions, 45% of respondents preferred monthly exhibitions, while 42.3% suggested every three months. In terms of duration, 56.8% recommended exhibitions last from one week to one month, with 36% preferring a duration of less than one week.

The focus group discussions reinforced these findings, with participants noting that themed exhibitions could help invigorate the library, create a lively learning environment, and encourage students to make better use of library facilities. Some respondents also noted that themed exhibitions could generate interest in specific subjects among library users, consistent with Fouracre's (2015) finding that library exhibitions increase engagement and attract a wider audience.

## DISCUSSION

The study's results confirm the potential of themed exhibitions in university libraries as a way to foster a unique and engaging learning atmosphere. Consistent with prior research by Fouracre (2015) and Pedretti (2004), themed exhibitions offer a meaningful opportunity for libraries to move beyond traditional roles. These exhibitions, by focusing on specific subjects like education, technology, and the arts, could evoke curiosity, promote interdisciplinary learning, and enhance the library's appeal to a digitally inclined generation.

**Educational Engagement**: The findings align with Pedretti's (2004) study on exhibitions as educational tools, which demonstrated how exhibitions on social and scientific issues could stimulate dialogue, evoke emotions, and encourage reflection. In this study, library users also recognized the role of exhibitions in fostering an interactive and emotionally engaging learning environment. This suggests that themed exhibitions, carefully curated around topics that resonate with students, could encourage more frequent visits and active participation.

**Enhancing Library Appeal**: In response to the trend of students preferring to stay indoors with digital gadgets, themed exhibitions may provide a physical draw that brings students back into the library. By creating a distinctive learning experience, exhibitions could offer

a counterbalance to digital isolation and encourage students to explore academic resources in a communal setting.

**Logistics of Exhibitions**: The study indicates a preference for regular exhibitions, with a notable interest in monthly or quarterly events. This finding suggests that while themed exhibitions could be effective, they need to be varied and renewed periodically to maintain interest. Exhibitions lasting from one week to one month appear optimal, providing sufficient time for students to engage with each theme without overstaying its relevance.

To sum, this study highlights three significant outcomes: (i) library users view the library as a space, such as exhibition area that fosters learning, and (ii) they advocate for exhibitions that are educational, engaging, and regularly refreshed. These findings suggest that, with thoughtful curation, themed exhibitions could become an essential part of revitalizing academic libraries, encouraging more students to utilize library resources, and promoting a culture of continuous learning.

Exhibitions in academic libraries include many different approaches ranging from the display of rare items to promoting reading materials based on the theme of the exhibition. This study investigated library users' views on organizing thematic exhibitions around the setting in the library which would foster learning and help to promote interest to visit the library.

## CONCLUSION

Libraries as important resources for achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) must provide relevant and adequate information to the public in an accessible way. However, the library which once used to be a vibrant place, full of research and discussion has lost its appeal. With the turn of the century marking the massive use of the internet where everything is available online, the library has to keep up with the changes that have taken place. Exhibition is one form of activities in the spectrum of possible library programs that could overcome this problem and help continue to foster learning among the library users. It is the intention of the present study to

promote the use of a library by engaging library users in regularly held exhibitions by using materials and books available from the library. This study has uncovered positive views among library users towards organizing theme-based exhibitions around the setting of a library. By understanding library users' perceptions and views, the findings provide useful input for attracting visitors to the library and give ideas for improving the university's library services. The findings also offer valuable insights for development of an integrated framework on theme-based exhibition design for libraries. This study proves that practices from the museum sector can be used by libraries. Museums use exhibitions as a way to communicate with their visitors and so does libraries. Theme-based exhibitions would entice visitors to the library. Apart from imparting and fostering knowledge, it is a form of communication between the library and its users. This paper argues for further research into library exhibitions issues. Exhibitions can be a valid and valuable communication tool for libraries, but more research is needed if they are to benefit fully from them, especially if they are also using exhibitions for public outreach.

This research looks at the a new innovative way of utilizing library to attract more visitors and at the same time to boost its transparency to the university's staff members and students so that many more will see the library as a place that transcends more than its traditional role as the storage of resources.

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