

Reimaginar las bibliotecas tunecinas : Espacios públicos para compartir conocimientos

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Reimagining Tunisian Libraries: Public Spaces for Knowledge Sharing

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora el papel de las bibliotecas en Túnez como espacios públicos para el intercambio de conocimientos y la participación comunitaria. A pesar de su importancia histórica, enfrentan desafíos. El estudio utilizó métodos mixtos para evaluar las necesidades de los usuarios sobre diseño y funcionalidad. Los resultados mostraron el deseo de convertir las bibliotecas en espacios dinámicos para la colaboración. Los elementos clave incluyen asientos flexibles, tecnología y zonas para eventos. Los obstáculos son limitaciones presupuestarias y la percepción de las bibliotecas como entornos solitarios. Las recomendaciones destacan la participación de las partes interesadas y la financiación innovadora, reimaginando las bibliotecas como espacios que mejoran el bienestar comunitario.

Palabras claves: Diseño de bibliotecas, participación de la comunidad, necesidades de los usuarios, percepciones culturales

ABSTRACT

This article explored the critical role of libraries in Tunisia as public spaces for knowledge sharing and community engagement. Despite their historical significance, many faced challenges. The study used mixed methods to assess user needs regarding library design and functionality. Findings revealed a strong desire for libraries to become dynamic, multifunctional spaces for collaboration and creativity. Key design elements included flexible seating, technology integration, and community areas for events. Barriers to change included budget constraints and perceptions of libraries as solitary environments. Recommendations emphasized stakeholder engagement and innovative funding. The article illustrated the potential for reimagining libraries as vibrant spaces that enhance community well-being, advocating for a user-centered approach to design.

Keywords: library design, community engagement, user needs, cultural perceptions

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INTRODUCCIÓN

Libraries have historically served as vital institutions in Tunisia, facilitating access to information and promoting literacy and education throughout the country. From the ancient libraries of Carthage to the modern public libraries scattered across urban and rural areas, these spaces have been instrumental in shaping cultural and intellectual life. However, as Tunisia faces socio-economic challenges and rapid technological advancements, many libraries struggle to maintain their relevance. Factors such as budget constraints, shifts in user behavior, and the rise of digital information sources have led to declining patronage and an urgent need for reevaluation. The traditional role of libraries as mere repositories of books is increasingly inadequate in a society that values collaboration, innovation, and community **engagement. Today's library users seek spaces** that not only provide access to information but also foster social interaction, creativity, and collaborative learning. This shift in user expectations necessitates a transformation in how libraries are designed and operated. Understanding the contemporary landscape of knowledge sharing is crucial. Knowledge sharing encompasses the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences among individuals, contributing to personal and collective growth. Libraries have the unique potential to act as facilitators of this exchange by creating environments conducive to learning and interaction. In this context, public libraries can evolve into multifunctional spaces that accommodate diverse activities, ranging from workshops and community events to quiet study areas and collaborative projects. To realize this vision, libraries in Tunisia must prioritize user engagement in their design and operational strategies. This involves actively soliciting feedback from community members to understand their needs and preferences. Engaging users in the design process not only enhances the usability of library spaces but also fosters a sense of ownership and investment in these public institutions. Further-

more, the implementation of flexible design elements, such as movable furniture, technology zones, and multi-purpose rooms, can significantly improve the functionality of libraries, making them adaptable to various activities and user groups.

This article seeks to investigate how Tunisian libraries can reimagine their roles as public spaces that prioritize knowledge sharing. Through a mixed-methods approach, this study will assess user needs and preferences, highlighting the importance of creating environments that reflect the diverse interests of the community. By examining successful case studies internationally, this research aims to identify best practices and actionable recommendations for enhancing library design in Tunisia. The transformation of libraries into vibrant public spaces is essential for their survival and relevance in the modern era. By fostering environments that encourage knowledge sharing and community interaction, Tunisian libraries can reclaim their position as vital resources that support lifelong learning and cultural exchange.

The evolution of libraries from traditional book repositories to dynamic community hubs reflects broader societal changes and the need for institutions to remain relevant in an increasingly digital world. This literature review examines key themes in library design, user engagement, innovative practices, and the specific context of Tunisian libraries, providing a comprehensive understanding of how these spaces can be reimaged. Libraries have historically been seen as sanctuaries of knowledge, but contemporary scholarship advocates for a multifaceted role that extends beyond mere information access. In their work, (LANKES *et al.*, 2016) emphasizes that libraries are not just places to find information but are pivotal in creating knowledge through community engagement. This perspective aligns with the concept of libraries as "learning commons," where collaborative learning and social interaction are

prioritized. In Tunisia, this shift is particularly significant in light of the country's socio-political landscape. Post-revolution, there has been a renewed emphasis on civic engagement and community development. Libraries can play a crucial role in this context by serving as venues for public discourse, cultural exchange, and social activism (SKOT-HANSEN *et al.*, 2013).

The literature on user-centered design underscores the necessity of tailoring library spaces to meet the diverse needs of users. A seminal work by (VAKKARI; TALJA, 2006) discusses the importance of understanding user behaviors and expectations to create effective library environments. This approach advocates involving users in the design process, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs addressed. In the Tunisian context, user-centered design can help libraries **become more responsive to the community's specific cultural and social dynamics** (ADETAYO *et al.*, 2023). Libraries that offer flexible layouts and multifunctional spaces can better accommodate these preferences, fostering a more engaging and supportive environment.

Internationally, libraries are undergoing significant transformations, incorporating design innovations that enhance usability and community interaction. The rise of the "library as place" concept emphasizes the importance of physical space in fostering community connections. Notable examples include the Central Library in Seattle, which features open spaces, technology centers, and areas designed for group collaboration. These elements not only attract users but also facilitate a wide range of activities, from workshops to public discussions. In Tunisia, there are promising developments, yet many libraries still adhere to outdated models. Research by (MKADMI; BSIR, 2024) highlights the need for Tunisian libraries to adopt modern design strategies, such as integrating technology hubs, creating informal gathering areas, and utilizing adaptable furniture. These innovations can significantly enhance user experience and promote a culture of knowledge sharing.

While the potential for transformation exists, several barriers hinder the progress of Tunisian libraries. Financial limitations are a primary concern, as many libraries operate with constrained budgets that restrict their ability to implement design changes and acquire new technologies. In their research, (YOUSSEF, 2024) emphasizes that funding for public libraries has lagged behind the increasing demands for modernization. Cultural perceptions also play a critical role in shaping library usage. Many people still view libraries as quiet, solitary spaces primarily meant for reading. This perception can deter potential users who seek interactive and collaborative environments. Additionally, a lack of training for library staff in modern service delivery and user engagement strategies further complicates efforts for reform (TAIT *et al.*, 2016).

Examining successful library transformations can provide valuable insights for Tunisian libraries. The transformation of the Toronto Public Library, for instance, into a community-centric space demonstrates how libraries can adapt to meet user needs. This library features interactive spaces, community programming, and technology labs, making it a vibrant hub for various activities. However, broader systemic changes are necessary to scale these efforts across the country. Research by (LEE, 2024) suggests that fostering partnerships between libraries, educational institutions, and local governments could enhance resource sharing and support innovative programming.

This literature review highlights the multifaceted role libraries can play in society, emphasizing the need for user-centered design, innovative practices, and the adaptability of library spaces. It underscores the importance of addressing financial, cultural, and operational barriers to creating libraries that genuinely serve their communities. As Tunisia navigates the complexities of modern society, reimagining libraries as vibrant public spaces for knowledge sharing is not only desirable but essential for fostering a culture of learning and engagement. The subsequent sections of this

article will detail the research methodology, present findings from user surveys and interviews, and discuss the implications for library design and community engagement strategies in Tunisia.

METHOD

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to investigate the needs and preferences of library users in Tunisia, seeking to uncover actionable strategies that can transform libraries into lively public spaces for knowledge exchange. By integrating qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, the research offers a comprehensive understanding of user perspectives. The research design incorporates a sequential explanatory approach, where qualitative data collection follows an initial quantitative phase. This structure allows qualitative findings to contextualize the quantitative results, providing a robust framework for understanding user needs.

Qualitative data were gathered through 30 semi-structured interviews lasting 45 to 60 minutes, focusing on participants' perceptions of library facilities and desired features. Additionally, three focus group discussions with 20 participants explored themes such as technology integration and community engagement. For quantitative data, an online survey consisting of 25 questions was distributed, yielding 300 responses. The survey assessed user demographics, library usage frequency, and preferences for library features, complemented by pilot testing to refine the questions. Participants were recruited through collaborations with local libraries, targeted social media campaigns, and partnerships with educational institutions, ensuring diverse representation.

This methodology outlines a rigorous framework for examining library user needs in Tunisia. By combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, the study aims to provide actionable insights for transforming libraries into inclusive public spaces that foster knowledge sharing and community engagement. The subsequent sections will present findings derived from this methodology, offering practical recommendations for enhancing library services in Tunisia.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive overview of the needs and preferences of library users in Tunisia, based on data collected through a mixed-methods approach involving interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The results reveal significant trends regarding user demographics, usage patterns, desired features, and perceptions of library spaces. This section presents the key findings in detail, supported by explanatory tables and visualizations.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The survey collected responses from 300 individuals, showcasing a diverse demographic profile (Table 1).

Demographic Variable		Percentage (%)
Age Group	18-24	45
	25-34	30
	35-44	15
	45 and above	10
Education Level	High School	20
	Undergraduate	35
	Graduate	45
Library Usage Frequency	Daily	20
	Weekly	50
	Monthly	20
	Rarely	10

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents
Source: Prepared by the Author (2025).

Among the respondents, a significant portion (45%) were aged 18-24, indicating strong engagement from younger users, particularly university students. The next largest group comprised those aged 25-34 (30%), followed by respondents aged 35-44 (15%) and those aged 45 and above (10%). In

terms of educational background, the respondents displayed considerable variation. Approximately 20% had completed high school, while 35% held undergraduate degrees and 45% possessed graduate degrees. This distribution suggests a well-educated user base, likely shaping their expectations and preferences regarding library services. Library usage patterns were particularly noteworthy, with half of the respondents (50%) indicating that they visit the library on a weekly basis. Additionally, 20% reported daily visits, another 20% visited monthly, and 10% visited rarely. These findings underscore the regular utilization of libraries by a significant portion of the community, highlighting their importance as vital public resources.

PREFERRED LIBRARY FEATURES

The survey evaluated the importance of various library features using a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important), revealing clear preferences among users (Figure 1). Collaborative spaces received the highest rating, averaging 4.5, as respondents emphasized the need for areas that facilitate group work and community engagement. Quiet study areas followed closely, with an average rating of 4.2, reflecting a strong desire for designated zones that support individual study and concentration. Technology access garnered an average rating of 4.0, with many respondents highlighting the necessity of computer stations, Wi-Fi access, and technology labs to enhance their learning experience. Community events were also favored, receiving an average rating of 4.3, indicating that respondents are keen on libraries hosting workshops, lectures, and cultural events to foster community interaction. While book collections remained important, this feature received a lower average rating of 3.8, suggesting that, although users value physical books, their focus is increasingly shifting towards collaborative and interactive spaces.

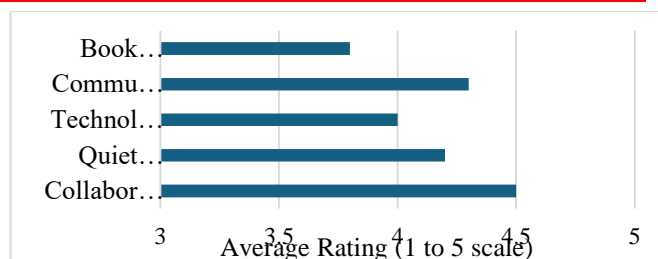


Figure 1: Importance Ratings of Library Features

Source: Prepared by the Author (2025).

QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS FROM INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The qualitative data collected from interviews and focus groups offered valuable insights into user experiences and expectations. Participants frequently emphasized the need for libraries to modernize their facilities and services, highlighting the importance of integrating technology and creating flexible spaces that can adapt to various activities, such as workshops and community gatherings. Respondents articulated that libraries should function as community hubs. Many shared anecdotes about successful community programs and expressed a desire for libraries to facilitate social connections and cultural exchange through events and collaborative initiatives. Several barriers to library usage were identified, including limited opening hours, outdated collections, and a lack of awareness about available resources. Participants noted that improving the promotion of library services could significantly enhance community engagement and usage rates. Concerns regarding safety and accessibility within library spaces were also prevalent. Participants highlighted the necessity for well-lit areas, clear signage, and ADA-compliant facilities to ensure that all community members, including those with disabilities, feel welcome and secure in library environments.

STATISTICAL RELATIONSHIPS AND TRENDS

The quantitative analysis revealed significant correlations between demographic factors and preferences for library features. A chi-square test indicated a notable relationship ($p < 0.05$) between age and interest in technology labs, with younger

users (ages 18-24) showing a higher preference for such facilities compared to older age groups (Table 2).

Demographic Variable	Preferred Feature	Correlation (p-value)
Age (18-24)	Technology Access	< 0.05
Education Level	Collaborative Spaces	< 0.01
Frequency of Use	Community Events	< 0.05

Table 2. Relationships Between Demographics and Library Preferences
Source: Prepared by the Author (2025).

This suggests a generational divide in technological engagement. Additionally, the analysis showed that respondents with higher education levels were more likely to prioritize collaborative spaces. This trend indicates that graduate students and professionals seek environments that foster group work and networking opportunities. Furthermore, users who visit libraries more frequently expressed a strong desire for community events. Among daily users, 75% rated community events as very important, compared to only 50% of those who visit rarely. This highlights the correlation between library engagement and interest in community programming.

SYNTHESIS

The findings of this study underscore the evolving role of libraries in Tunisia as essential community resources that foster collaboration, learning, and cultural engagement. Users express a clear preference for modern, adaptable spaces that incorporate technology and support both individual and group activities. These insights provide a foundation for actionable recommendations aimed at transforming libraries into inclusive environ-

ments that meet the diverse needs of their communities. The subsequent sections will discuss these recommendations in detail, outlining strategies for enhancing library services and facilities in Tunisia.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide critical insights into the evolving role of libraries in Tunisia, highlighting their potential as dynamic spaces that foster community engagement, learning, and collaboration. This discussion interprets the results in relation to existing literature, explores their implications for library services, and offers recommendations for enhancing library facilities to better meet user needs.

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The demographic profile of respondents reveals significant engagement from younger users, particularly those aged 18-24, who comprise 45% of the survey population. This trend mirrors global patterns observed in library usage, where younger individuals increasingly seek libraries not only for traditional resources but as spaces for collabo-

ration and access to technology. The high educational attainment among respondents 45% holding graduate degrees suggests that libraries in Tunisia must adapt their services to cater to an academically inclined audience, focusing on resources that support higher education and professional development. The preferences for library features underscore a pronounced demand for collaborative spaces, which received an average importance rating of 4.5. This finding aligns with research indicating a shift in user expectations towards environments that facilitate group activities and technological engagement. As libraries transition from traditional book repositories to community hubs, the design of physical spaces must reflect this shift, incorporating flexible layouts that can accommodate various activities, from group study sessions to community events.

THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES AS COMMUNITY HUBS

Qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups revealed a strong desire among users for libraries to function as community hubs. Participants emphasized the importance of community events and social connections fostered by libraries, which aligns with the concept of libraries as "third places." These are welcoming environments outside of home and work where community members can gather, interact, and engage in cultural activities. The potential for libraries hosting workshops, lectures, and cultural events is significant. By offering programs that enrich the community, libraries can attract a diverse user base. For instance, partnerships with local artists, educators, and organizations could facilitate workshops that appeal to different demographics, ensuring that libraries remain relevant and integral to community life.

ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO LIBRARY USAGE

Despite the positive reception of library services, the study identified several barriers hindering participation. Respondents cited limited opening hours, outdated collections, and a lack of awareness about available resources as significant obstacles. These barriers echo findings from similar studies, indicating that libraries must adapt to

the changing needs of their communities by expanding access and effectively promoting their services. To mitigate these challenges, libraries could consider extending their operating hours to accommodate users with varying schedules, particularly students and working professionals. For example, later evening hours and weekend access could significantly increase foot traffic. Furthermore, conducting outreach initiatives and targeted marketing campaigns can raise awareness about library programs and resources, utilizing social media and community events to reach younger audiences.

IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Concerns regarding safety and accessibility within library spaces were prevalent among participants. Ensuring a safe and welcoming environment is crucial for fostering community engagement. Recommendations for libraries include prioritizing well-lit areas, clear signage, and ADA-compliant facilities to enhance accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, integrating security measures, such as surveillance cameras and trained personnel, can help create a more secure atmosphere, encouraging more users to visit.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

Based on the findings, several actionable recommendations emerge for enhancing library services and facilities in Tunisia. Libraries should invest in redesigning their physical spaces to incorporate flexible layouts, collaborative areas, and technology labs. This could involve movable furniture, group study rooms, and dedicated technology zones tailored to the needs of different user groups. Emphasizing aesthetic appeal, such as incorporating natural light and comfortable seating, could further enrich the user experience. Developing a robust calendar of community events, including workshops, lectures, and cultural programs, is essential. Collaborating with local organizations, schools, and cultural institutions can enhance program offerings and attract diverse audiences. For instance, hosting local author readings or cultural festivals could entice community members

who may not typically visit the library. Implementing targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness about library services is crucial. Utilizing social media platforms, email newsletters, and partnerships with local businesses can effectively reach younger demographics and inform them about the variety of resources available. Engaging storytelling and visually appealing content can make library services more relatable and attractive. Conducting assessments of library facilities to identify areas for improvement regarding safety and accessibility should be a priority. Ensuring compliance with ADA standards and enhancing security measures will create a more inviting environment for all users. Community feedback can be instrumental in pinpointing specific accessibility challenges faced by individuals.

Finally, libraries should prioritize the integration of technology into their services by providing access to computers, high-speed internet, and training sessions on digital literacy. This approach will not only meet the needs of tech-savvy users but also support those who may require assistance in navigating digital resources. Offering workshops on digital skills, such as coding or online research, can empower users and enhance their overall library experience.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study provides valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. The sample size, while statistically significant, may not fully represent the diverse populations across all regions of Tunisia. Future research could expand the geographical scope to include rural areas and smaller towns, providing a more comprehensive understanding of library usage patterns. Additionally, longitudinal studies examining changes in library usage and community engagement over time would offer deeper insights into the effectiveness of implemented changes and programming. Exploring the impact of specific events and initiatives on user engagement could provide valuable data for library administrators.

SYNTHESIS

The findings from this study underscore the critical role of libraries in Tunisia as community hubs that facilitate learning, collaboration, and cultural exchange. By understanding user needs and addressing barriers to access, libraries can transform into vibrant spaces that meet the evolving demands of their communities. The recommendations presented here aim to guide library administrators in enhancing services and facilities, ultimately fostering greater community engagement and ensuring that libraries remain relevant in the digital age. By embracing these changes, libraries can better serve their communities and strengthen their position as invaluable resources in the fabric of Tunisian society.

CASE STUDIES

This section presents three detailed case studies of successful library initiatives from international contexts. These examples illustrate innovative practices that have effectively enhanced library services, increased community engagement, and addressed user needs. Each case study provides insights into the strategies employed, outcomes achieved, and lessons learned, offering valuable guidance for libraries in Tunisia and beyond.

- CASE STUDY 1: THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY (NYPL), USA

The New York Public Library (NYPL) is one of the largest public libraries in the United States, boasting a collection of over 50 million items. It serves a diverse population across 88 locations, offering a wide range of resources, programs, and services to meet community needs. In response to the growing demand for digital resources and online access, NYPL implemented a comprehensive digital strategy aimed at enhancing user engagement and accessibility. This initiative focused on expanding digital collections and improving online user experience. The library has digitized thousands of rare books, manuscripts, and historical documents, making them accessible to users worldwide. This project not only preserves cultu-

ral heritage but also increases public access to valuable resources (DIGITAL RESEARCH STRATEGY 2021–24 | THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, [s. d.]). Additionally, NYPL developed a robust online catalog that allows users to easily search for and access digital materials, featuring advanced search tools, personalized recommendations, and a mobile-friendly interface (MANAGING DIGITAL SERVICES AT NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY | NEW RELIC, 2024). The library also expanded its offerings of virtual programs, including author talks, educational workshops, and cultural events, reaching audiences far beyond New York City and engaging users of all ages and backgrounds. The digital strategy resulted in a remarkable increase in online engagement, with a reported 300% rise in digital resource usage during the first year of implementation. The virtual programs attracted thousands of participants from around the globe. Furthermore, the digitization efforts have made previously inaccessible materials available to researchers, students, and the general public, democratizing access to information (DIGITAL RESEARCH PROJECTS | THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, [s. d.]). Key takeaways from this initiative include the importance of a user-centric approach in developing online platforms, which significantly enhances engagement and satisfaction. Continuous feedback from users is crucial for refining services. Additionally, collaboration with technology partners and educational institutions can enhance digital initiatives and broaden outreach.

• CASE STUDY 2: THE BRITISH LIBRARY, UNITED KINGDOM

The British Library, the national library of the United Kingdom, houses over 170 million items, including books, manuscripts, maps, and sound recordings. It serves as a major research institution and cultural hub, attracting millions of visitors each year. In 2015, the British Library launched the Living Knowledge Network, which aimed to enhance collaboration among libraries across the UK and promote public engagement with library resources. This initiative established partnerships with local libraries to share resources and develop

joint programming, including co-hosting events, sharing digital collections, and providing training for local library staff. The British Library also created community engagement programs that cater to diverse interests, such as storytelling sessions, art workshops, and heritage projects. These programs were designed to attract a wide audience and promote cultural exchange. Additionally, the Living Knowledge Network focused on making digital resources accessible to partner libraries, enabling them to offer a broader range of materials without incurring significant costs. The initiative resulted in increased access to library resources across the UK, with partner libraries reporting a 40% rise in the usage of digital collections (THE LIVING KNOWLEDGE NETWORK, 2016). Collaborative programming fostered stronger relationships between libraries and their communities, enhancing local engagement and participation. Key lessons from this initiative include the value of collaboration, as building networks between libraries enhances resource sharing and community impact. Collaborative efforts can lead to more varied and engaging programming. Furthermore, understanding and responding to community interests is crucial for increasing participation and fostering loyalty to library services (LIVING KNOWLEDGE: THE BRITISH LIBRARY 2015 – 2023 | BLUESYEMRE, [s. d.]).

• CASE STUDY 3 : THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ARCHIVES NATIONALES DU QUÉBEC (BANQ), CANADA

The Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) serves as both a library and an archival institution in Canada, responsible for preserving the province's documentary heritage. With multiple locations, BAnQ provides a wealth of resources and programs to the public. In 2018, BAnQ launched a digital strategy aimed at enhancing access to its collections and improving user engagement through technology. This involved extensive digitization projects to convert physical collections into digital formats, focusing on rare books, historical documents, and audiovisual materials. Collaboration with local universities and institutions ensured a broad representation of Quebec's heritage (GOVERNMENT OF CANADA,

2022). The library developed an interactive online platform that allows users to explore digital collections, participate in virtual exhibitions, and engage with educational resources. Designed to be user-friendly and accessible on various devices, the platform enhances the overall user experience. Additionally, BAnQ regularly hosts workshops and events to promote digital literacy, encouraging users to engage with digital tools and resources. Topics covered include digital storytelling, online research skills, and preservation techniques. Since the launch of the digital strategy, BAnQ has experienced a 150% increase in online visitors and a notable rise in participation in digital literacy workshops. The digitization of Quebec's cultural heritage has fostered greater awareness and appreciation of local history among users, cultivating a sense of pride in community heritage. Key lessons from this initiative highlight the importance of offering educational opportunities related to digital resources, which can significantly enhance user engagement and promote skill development. Furthermore, ensuring that digital resources are accessible to all users, including those with disabilities, is essential for maximizing community impact.

• SYNTHESIS

The international case studies presented here illustrate successful library initiatives that have effectively enhanced services and increased community engagement. By embracing digital transformation, fostering collaboration, and tailoring programs to meet user needs, these libraries have evolved into vital resources that foster learning, cultural exchange, and community connection. These examples serve as valuable models for libraries in Tunisia, offering insights and strategies that can be adapted to local contexts. As libraries continue to navigate the challenges of the digital age, the lessons learned from these case studies will be instrumental in shaping future library services and initiatives globally.

CONCLUSIONES

This study provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving role of libraries in Tunisia, underscoring their significance as community hubs that foster learning, collaboration, and cultural exchange. The findings reveal a clear demand for libraries to adapt their services to meet the diverse needs of their users, particularly in the context of increasing digital engagement and community involvement. The demographic analysis indicates a strong engagement from younger users, particularly those aged 18-24, who represent a significant portion of library patrons. This trend highlights the necessity for libraries to focus on features that appeal to younger audiences, such as collaborative spaces, technology access, and engaging programming. Additionally, the high educational attainment of users suggests an expectation for libraries to provide advanced resources that support both academic and professional development.

Qualitative insights gathered from interviews and focus groups further emphasize the desire for libraries to serve as community hubs. Respondents expressed a strong preference for libraries hosting events and programs that foster social connections and cultural exchange, aligning with the concept of libraries as "third places" welcoming environments where community members can gather and engage in meaningful activities beyond traditional library functions. However, despite the positive engagement with library services, several barriers were identified, including limited opening hours, outdated collections, and a lack of awareness about available resources. Addressing these barriers is crucial for enhancing participation and ensuring that libraries remain relevant in the communities they serve. Expanding access through longer opening hours, targeted marketing, and outreach initiatives will help attract a broader audience and increase library utilization.

The successful international models presented, including initiatives from the New York Public Library, the British Library, and the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, offer valuable insights into best practices. These examples demonstrate the effectiveness of digital transformation, community outreach, and collaborative programming in enhancing library services. By learning from these models, Tunisian libraries can implement similar strategies that are tailored to their local contexts, effectively bridging the gap between traditional library roles and contemporary community needs. Based on the findings and insights from the case studies, several actionable recommendations emerge for enhancing library services and facilities in Tunisia. Libraries should consider investing in creating flexible and adaptable spaces that accommodate various activities, from collaborative work to individual study. The incorporation of technology zones and comfortable seating can significantly enhance the user experience. Additionally, developing a robust calendar of events that reflects community interests is essential. Collaborating with local organizations and institutions can amplify resources and create a diverse range of programming that attracts different demographics.

Implementing targeted outreach initiatives to raise awareness about library services is also crucial. Utilizing social media platforms and engaging storytelling can effectively reach younger audiences and inform them about available resources. Moreover, libraries must prioritize creating welcoming and safe environments for all users. Conducting assessments to ensure compliance with accessibility standards and enhancing security measures will foster a sense of safety and inclusiveness. Furthermore, prioritizing technology access and digital literacy training is essential for meeting the needs of modern library users. Providing workshops on digital skills and ensuring robust internet access can empower users and enhance their library experience.

As libraries in Tunisia navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age, understanding user needs and adapting to changing

demographics will be crucial for their success. By embracing innovative practices and learning from successful international models, Tunisian libraries can transform into vibrant community hubs that not only provide access to information but also foster cultural exchange and collaboration. The findings of this study lay a solid foundation for future research and development in library services. Continued exploration of user needs, community engagement strategies, and technological integration will ensure that libraries remain vital resources in the cultural and educational landscape of Tunisia. By committing to these principles, libraries can enhance their impact and relevance, ultimately serving as essential pillars of their communities.

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