

Stereotype Images of Librarian: Content Analysis

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Librarians have to face discrimination by faculty, users, and public. Various type of labels & images have become the recognition of librarian. The systematic literature was used to highlight the stereotype images of librarian, were framed and analyzed with the help of Pareto analysis. Theory of taxonomy is proposed and discussed. Findings revealed that “strictness” is a most observed and discussed as stereotype image in literature. The study also proposed to control and change the image of strictness, as according to the 20:80 rule of pareto analysis, solution of 20% problems ultimately will resolve rest of 80% problems. Likewise, 20% change of strictness in behavior can resolve other 80% problems.

1. Introduction

It has been long librarian have to face critique, satire and discrimination. Stereotype image has been imbedded in the mind of people. Librarians are considered responsible for this image. Librarian never accept the trends and continuously changing environment. Librarians always remained scared due to technology and innovation. Never accepted the changing roles. Time left behind librarians far, as librarian did not accept the change rather resist and bound themselves within the four walls. Neither updated library nor their personality. Still librarians have weak existence, no need for sympathy. Need to be updated, be skilled and knowledgeable. Higher studies are the need of time. It is well observed that further studies can improve communication, working skills. Improvement of services along with promotional strategies are very essential to remove the stereotype images of librarian. Proactive role of stakeholder, academicians and Government policies are required in this regard. Proper recognition of LIS profession not only national level but also international is necessary. Research productivity performing a pivot role, now librarians are researchers, IT oriented, manager, playing with IT gadgets in order to enhance the services and making it accessible for users.

Several Images stated in various publications with lot of variations but mostly with bad feelings. Librarian should evaluate the status of library and services on regular basis. Study also suggested that higher education for librarians is very important, awareness about computer applications, maintain good relation with clients can change the perception of public about the images of librarian. Time to time professional development programs are necessary for in service librarians in order to update with the latest technical trends of libraries (Petr & Aparac & Jelusic, 2002). Most of the librarian want to change the image and want to know that what we are and to be in future. Two reasons probed behind the stereotype one is reinforcement from library administrations and other is well constructed perceived image. Librarian will have to face the reality and should take it as a challenge (Mcmenemy & Luthmann, 2007)

1.1 Objective of the Study

- To highlight the stereotype images having bad impact on the profession of librarianship through a wide list of images and factors highlighted through systematic literature review.
- To analyzed the literature through pareto analysis to frame the stereotype images of librarian.
- To select & associate the relevant theory.
- To propose the literature to reduce and improve the better image of Librarian.

2. Methodology

Pragmatic lenses have been used, research method is mix-method, equal QUAN-QUAL, nature of the study is sequential explanatory. In-depth literature was reviewed and stereotype images were highlighted. Lists of stereotype images were prepared through systematic literature review. Literature Review resulted images affecting the perceptions about librarian. Highlighted themes were analyzed through the technique of Pareto analysis discussed in following section. On

the basis of rule of 20:80 rule of Pareto analysis relevant theory has been selected and associated. On the basis of theory, proposals have been suggested to eradicate the most vital and imbedded stereotype image “strictness”.

2.1 Preto Analysis

Vilfredo Pareto first time developed the technique of Pareto Analysis, which is used for selection of limited number of factors that indicates significant effect overall. It is also known as 20:80 rules which claims if 20% problems or task are resolved then you can overcome rest of 80% problems to generate the benefit. According to technique Pareto analysis, factors, issues, features (data) are sorted frequency of occurrence in descending order. Then total number of frequencies up to 100%. Few significant factors create impact on 80% occurrence whereas rest of factors are link to 20%. After that results are represented as chart called Pareto Chart.

2.2 Pareto Analysis of Stereotype Images of Librarian

Current study used pareto analysis to highlight the images responsible for stereotype behavior of librarian and identified the most prevalent image “strictness”. A number of authors highlighted the perception of different type of users either student, faculty and public about stereotype images of librarian. While literature review mostly literature indicated that librarian behaves like a policeman, commanding person and want to rule users.

Pareto analysis suggested that behavior of strictness of librarian created a knowledge gap between user and librarian. Users’ anxiety increased due to librarian attitude. Librarian have to develop a soft image instead of stereotype. Librarian will have to accept the technological challenge gracefully and should be ever ready to facilitate users. In this way rest of 80% perception can be develop or improve. Physical appentence also matters a lot, why librarians’ image is like an old woman, a roughly dressed up. Physical appearance matters a lot so librarian should be proper dressed up and be friendly.

Literature was reviewed from HEC recognized databases of information & management. Literature is searched from Science Direct, Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, Emerald and Wiley & Blackwell from 2001 – 2020. HEC databases relevant to library & information science were selected on the basis of impact factor. Selected databases mostly address general & sub discipline of library science. Detailed literature review that highlighted the stereotype image of librarian by using the tool of Pareto Analysis to highlight the vital stereotype image of librarian. Detailed information discussed in succeeding section. Phrases to retrieve the relevant articles were used as “stereotype image of librarian” “how librarian can improve bad image” “time to change the image of librarian” “perception of public about librarian” “why librarian do not change their stereotype image”.

Figure No 1: Flowchart of Study Selection

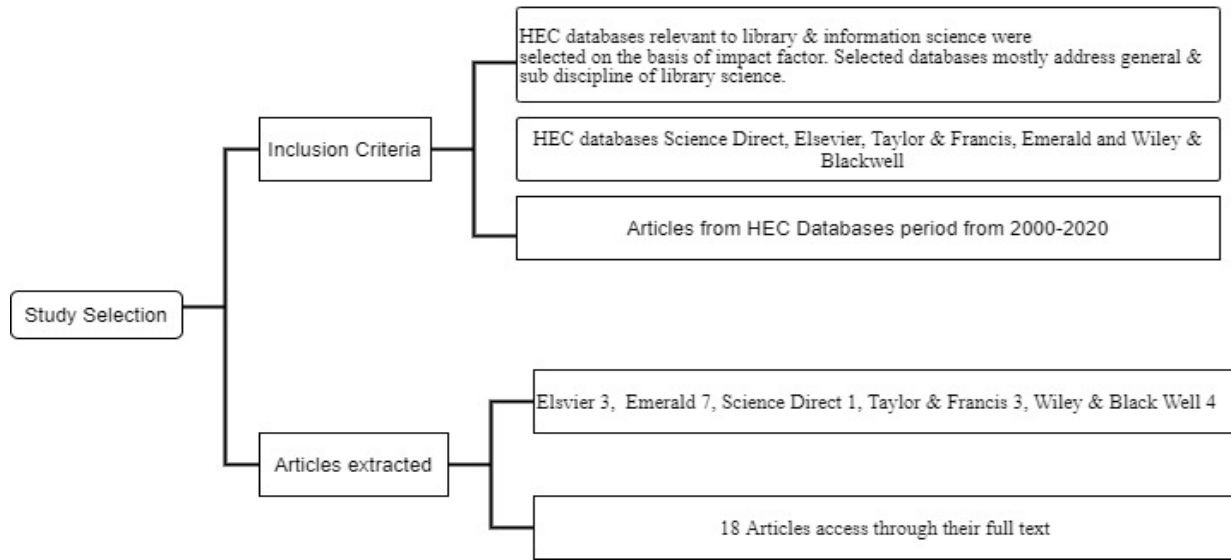


Table No 1: Stereotype Images of Librarian Highlighted through Systematic Literature Review

Sr. No	Author	Year	No. of Images	Images
1	Mills	2001	2	Dowdy, Frump in a bun
2	Pert	2002	10	Rigidly, controlling, rule bound people, wimps, stealy, serious, studious features, strict, staid, stuffy
3	Church	2002	4	Bookish, stuffy, reserved, technophobic
4	Dickinson	2003	4	Grin, grouchy, eccentric, drab spinsters
5	Ognar	2003	1	Holistic
6	Burgett	2004	3	Slim, spinsterish, Stern
7	Luthman	2007	4	Cardigan, tweed skirt, hair in bun, spectacles perched on nose
8	Balling	2008	5	Bogey, simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped
9	Majid	2008	14	Fussy, myopic, repressed, shy, introvert, insecure, strict, punctual, dull, helpful, intelligent, well-informed, conservative
10	Zlator	2009	4	Bespectacled, shushing Groups
11	Aho	2009 b	3	Eyeglasses, sensible shoes, shusher
12	Gall	2010	4	Fussy librarian, hair bun, tweedy intellectual, elbow patches
13	Carson	2014	5	An Old Woman, Hair tight in a bun, wearing glasses, a cardigan, a sensible
14	Miel	2014	3	Suspicious, mostly grumpy, dressed old fashioned
15	Jennings	2016	5	Glasses on Chains, sensible shoes, cardigan sweaters, enjoying shushing people, overprotective
16	Vissilakaki	2018	5	Old Maid, Policeman Librarian, Librarian as Parody, Inept Librarian, Hero Librarian
17	Hayes	2018	3	Baby Boomers, Generational X, Millennial

Table No 2: Most Highlighted Images of Librarian

Sr. No	Frequency of Images	Title of Images	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative %
1	14	Fussy, myopic, repressed, shy, introvert, insecure, strict, punctual, dull, helpful, intelligent, well-informed, conservative	14	18%
2	10	Rigidly, controlling, rule bound people, wimps, stealy, serious, studious features, strict, staid, stuffy	24	32%
3	5	Old Maid, Policeman Librarian, Librarian as Parody, Inept Librarian, Hero Librarian	29	38%
4	5	Glasses on Chains, sensible shoes, cardigan sweaters, enjoying shushing people, overprotective	34	45%
5	5	Bogey, simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped	39	51%
6	5	An Old Woman, Hair tight in a bun, wearing glasses, a cardigan, a sensible	44	58%
7	4	Grin, grouchy, eccentric, drab spinsters	48	63%
8	4	Fussy librarian, hair bun, tweedy intellectual, elbow patches	52	68%
9	4	Cardigan, tweed skirt, hair in bun, spectacles perched on nose	56	74%
10	4	Bookish, stuffy, reserved, technophobic	60	79%
11	4	Bspectacted, shushing Groups	64	84%
12	3	Suspicious, mostly grumpy, dressed old fashioned	67	88%
13	3	Slim, spinsterish, Stern	70	92%
14	3	Eyeglasses, sensible shoes, susher	73	96%
15	2	Dowdy, Frump in a bun	75	99%
16	1	Holistic	76	100%

Figure No 2: Pareto Chart

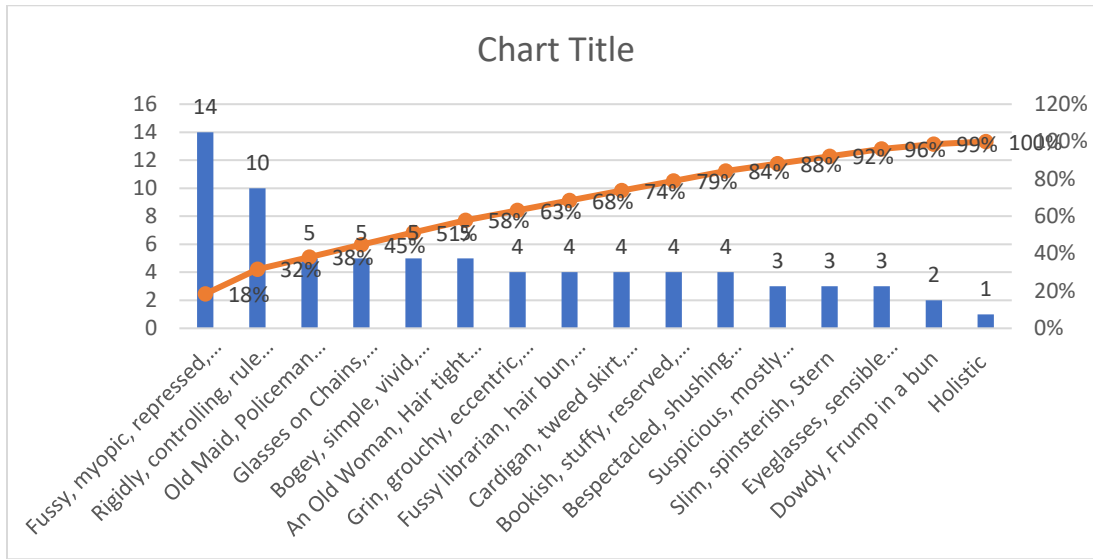
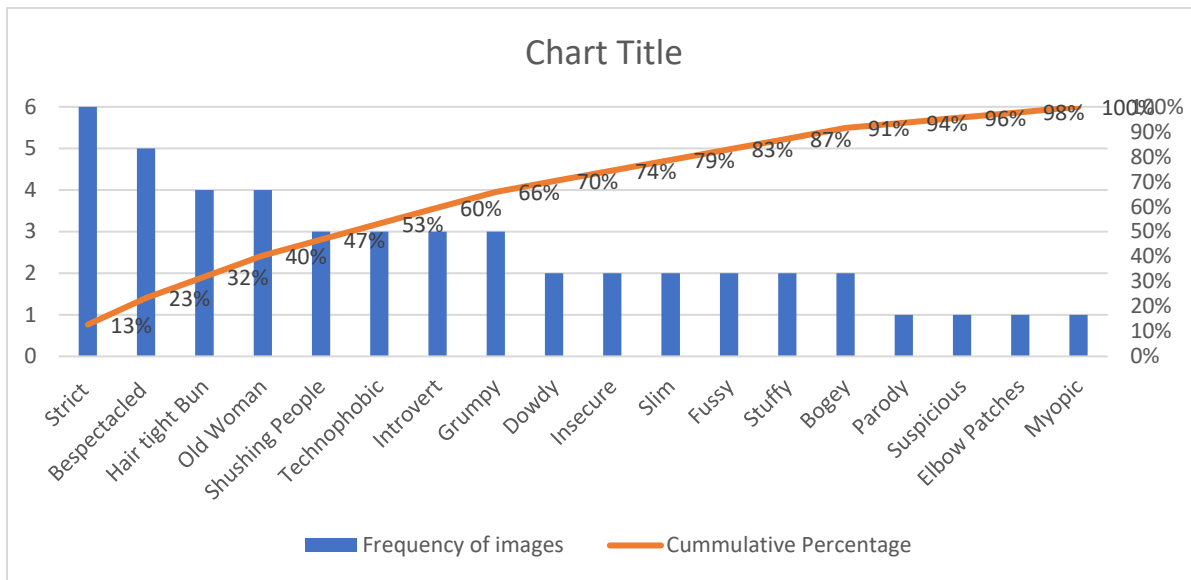


Table No 3: Cumulative Percentage of Main Stereotype Images of Librarianship

Sr. No	Frequency of Images	Title of Images	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative %
1.	Strict	6	6	13%
2.	Bspectacled	5	11	23%
3.	Hair tight Bun	4	15	32%
4.	Old Woman	4	19	40%
5.	Shushing People	3	22	47%
6.	Technophobic	3	25	53%
7.	Introvert	3	28	60%
8.	Grumpy	3	31	66%
9.	Dowdy	2	33	70%
10.	Insecure	2	35	74%
11.	Slim	2	37	79%
12.	Fussy	2	39	83%
13.	Stuffy	2	41	87%
14.	Bogey	1	42	91%
15.	Bogey	1	43	94%
16.	Parody	1	44	96%
17.	Suspicious	1	45	98%
18.	Elbow Patches	1	46	100%
19.	Myopic	1	47	13%

Figure No 3: Pareto Chart

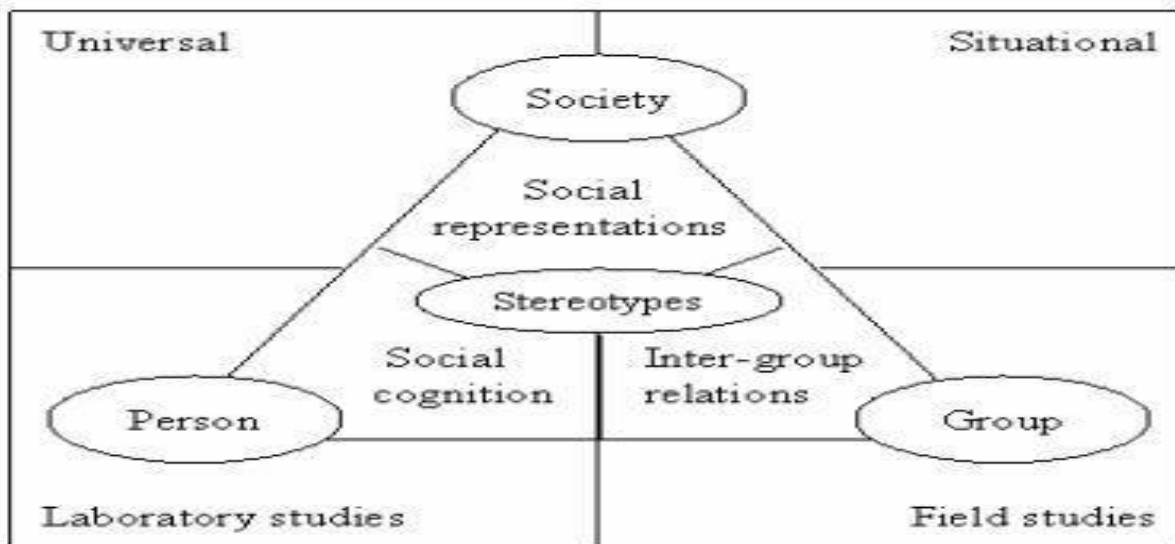


Literature showed that librarians’ most discussed stereotype image is strictness, police man, commanding people. According to observation of academics, students and other users, librarians mostly found as strict person during dealing. Librarian never passes a cool gesture for library users in order to relax whereas represented as a problematic & angry person with lot of irrelevant questions. strictly & angry behavior is a major cause of users’ library anxiety. Users feel reluctant to visit the library and that’s why their information need remains unfulfilled. 20/80% rule of Pareto analysis also showed that 20% literature highlighted the image of strictness. Strictness can be about library rules or library environment. Pareto analysis also suggested if 20% strict image of librarian is overcome then remaining 80% problems of stereotype image of librarian automatically will be resolved.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Current study attempts to highlight the stereotype image of librarian and proposed a model of taxonomy of role of stereotype. The model states that stereotype images came into being from different groups and individuals. Perception of individual may differ from group and society.

Figure No 4: Taxonomy of Role of Stereotype



It depends on personal observations. Librarians’ stereotype image can be classified according to individual, micro group and macro group. An individual always seeks and adopt the knowledge from social norms and societal opinions which are shaped due to certain perceptions. In this way individual adapt the groups’ perception and use the lens of groups to view the things critically and groups’ perceptions shaped according to societal lens and philosophy. The cycle of individual, group and society remain active always. The cycle interchanges vice versa as opinion of an individual become the way of thinking of micro group. A group’s opinion can be transferred as society’s opinion. Librarian’s stereotype image is established far away. With the time librarian remain unsuccessful to change the perception of society. If an individual find librarian as a skilled and willing worker who is not only cooperates but also behave like a lenient person then perception will automatically be changed, it will take time.

After technological revolution there are lots of opportunities need to be availed to change the past stereotype images. A new role model is required for entire change in libraries and library services. Environmental factors also played important role in development of librarians’ stereotype image. It is well practiced that librarian is responsible for peaceful and calm environment of library that’s why always put the finger on lips to shushing the users. Personality traits and perceptions performed a vital role. Librarians’ personality factor and cognition needs to be improved. Self-control behavior can change the perception of Individual, group and society.

Current study going to propose:

P1= Friendly Environment will positively improve Strict Library Environment

P1 a = Friedly and Kind Behavior of librarian will positively improve Users’ Perception

P1 b = Expertise of IT gadgets will positively overcome the Librarians' confused behavior.

P1 c = Elegant Physical appearance will positively change the impression of librarian

Current study is going to be proposed if a librarian either academic, special and public should be kind and nice to users. A study suggested that librarians should act like a Rockstar band to overcome the distance to access the users. Banding with users and maintain long term relation will be beneficial for library as well as for improvement of image of librarian. Banding with users is possible when the library services will be effective & operative to access the distance users. Library & librarian should be accessible to every users (Gall, 2010).

Actually, librarian is unable to justify between their commanding behavior and users 'need. Librarian should be user centered, if a user is served with friendly behavior and need of user will be fully satisfied then the perception of librarian can be changed but it will take time. Qualitative study suggested holistic approach and concept where librarian considered fully skilled, knowledgeable and well informed about technical trends necessary to fulfill the daily traditional task with efficiency. Librarian should be aware about the alternate solution of traditional problems. Again emphasis on to adopt the user centered approach (Ognar, 2003).

Study also suggested that higher education for librarians is very important, awareness about computer applications, maintain good relation with clients can change the perception of public about the images of librarian. Time to time professional development programs are necessary for in service librarians in order to update with the latest technical trends of libraries (Petr & Aparac-Jelusic, 2002) Qualitative study highlighted perceptions of academic librarian, public librarian about stereotype image. Few articles stated that librarian considers as old woman, wearing old fashioned dress whereas others elaborated as hard worker, intelligent, outspoken, technically well informed. Mostly shared that ready to help, eager to work. Likewise, study suggested to accept the transition from traditional to technical. Librarian have to adopt latest trends of technology (Church, 2002) Librarian have to accept the challenge of change from traditional to technical. Personality traits are also required to be changed or replaced with nice and kind traits.

4. Conclusion

Societal perceptions need to be changed. Images should to be replaced as dynamic person who is always ready to accept the challenges through converting into opportunities. Need of the time to be more responsive and extra responsibilities to some extent has to be full filled. Latest trends have to be adopted in order to improve image. The most highlighted stereotype image of librarian is "strictness" should be replaced with friendly, cooperative and ever ready to serve. Strict behavior of librarian can cause to increase the user's anxiety. The behavior will be harmful for both librarians vice versa users and ultimately for society. Societal perceptions can be changed with kind and friendly behavior. It's time to eradicate all type of threats either technical and traditional. Librarian is not a custodian and storekeeper, librarian now is an information officer, content manager, information organizer, information evaluator. Librarian can take a stance on any issue and can make strong and effective decisions. Librarian is a planner, manager, leader and an

authority. An entirely change world with latest trends, technology waiting in order to not only change the image but also perception of others.

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