

Reading Needs of Self-Employed Individuals and the Construction of Grassroots Library Reading Service Systems in the Post-Print Era

Authors: Wu Jianhua, Li Xue, Jin Yiwen

Date: 2023-07-26T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study examines the construction status of grassroots library reading service systems by investigating the satisfaction of reading needs among self-employed individuals. [Method/Process] Through in-depth interviews with 30 self-employed individuals and surveys of surrounding grassroots libraries, their reading needs satisfaction was analyzed. [Results/Conclusion] Respondents fulfilled their reading needs via mobile reading devices, online bookstores, physical bookstores, and libraries, with mobile phones showing the highest usage rate and libraries the lowest. Community reading rooms lack independent reading spaces, have limited reading resources, no full-time management staff, and suffer from absent daily reading services. The reasons are twofold: district libraries cannot participate in the management of community reading rooms, and evaluations of district libraries fail to motivate community reading rooms to proactively fulfill their functions. Recommendations include: strengthening government-level coordination and enhancing the management authority of district and county libraries over community reading rooms; assisting community reading rooms in implementing standardized daily services; and incorporating community reading room service conditions and effectiveness into the evaluation indicator systems for both communities and district/county libraries.

Full Text

Preamble

Reading Needs of Self-Employed Individuals and the Construction of Grassroots Library Reading Service Systems

Wu Jianhua, Li Xue, Jin Yiwen

School of Information Management, Central China Normal University, Wuhan 430079

Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study investigates the satisfaction of reading needs among self-employed individuals to examine the construction status of grassroots library reading service systems. **[Method/Process]** Through in-depth interviews with 30 self-employed individuals and surveys of surrounding grassroots libraries, we analyzed how their reading needs are met. **[Results/Conclusions]** Respondents primarily satisfied their reading needs through mobile reading devices, online bookstores, physical bookstores, and libraries, with smartphones being the most frequently used medium and libraries the least. Community reading rooms lack independent reading spaces, have limited resources, no full-time management personnel, and absent daily reading services. The root causes are that district libraries cannot participate in community reading room management, and evaluations of district libraries fail to motivate community reading rooms to actively perform their functions. We recommend strengthening government-level coordination, enhancing the management functions of district/county libraries over community reading rooms, assisting community reading rooms in implementing standardized daily services, and incorporating community reading room service conditions and effectiveness into the evaluation index systems for both communities and district/county libraries.

Keywords: self-employed individuals; reading needs and satisfaction; grassroots library reading service system; uses and gratifications theory; media dependency theory

Introduction

In reading research, preschool children, students [1], library visitors [2], and reading-disadvantaged groups [3-4] have received considerable attention. Self-employed individuals, a group that emerged after China's reform and opening-up, occupy an important position in economic and social development, yet their reading needs have long been neglected. Statistics show that by the end of 2017, China had 65.7937 million self-employed households employing 142.253 million individuals [5], accounting for 33.7% of the labor force [6]. Since many residents engaged in individual labor have not completed industrial and commercial registration, the actual number is larger than reported [7]. Despite their significant position in China's social structure, few scholars have examined their cultural needs.

Grassroots libraries refer to libraries serving grassroots populations, including district/county public libraries and their service points, school libraries, trade union libraries, and private libraries [8-9]. The grassroots service points of district/county public libraries include township (street) comprehensive cultural

stations and village (community) reading rooms [10]. The public reading service system, as an important component of the public cultural service system, provides resource, technical, facility, and personnel support for implementing nationwide reading initiatives [11]. In 2015, the Chinese Library Association released indicator systems for scholarly cities (county-level) and scholarly communities to guide grassroots library reading service system construction [12]. Based on the guiding ideology of establishing a main-branch library system in the Public Library Law [10] and the conditions required for libraries to conduct reading services, we define the grassroots library reading service system as a service system composed of grassroots libraries' reading spaces, facilities, resources, personnel, services, and operational mechanisms. Developed countries have established relatively complete grassroots library reading service systems. Although China's grassroots libraries have developed rapidly in recent years, specialized research on grassroots library reading service systems remains lacking. Our literature search identified only one paper proposing that rural public reading service systems with grassroots libraries as the main body should be built during urbanization, but without in-depth research [13].

The grassroots library reading service system provides important guarantees for realizing citizens' reading rights and universal, equal reading services in public libraries. Are self-employed individuals, representing over one-third of the labor force, benefiting from this system? Conducting in-depth investigations into their reading needs and satisfaction pathways not only helps understand the role of grassroots library reading service systems in meeting people's reading needs but also provides scientific evidence for optimizing this system.

Theoretical Framework

Uses and Gratifications Theory and Media Dependency Theory

Both theories examine media's influence on individuals and society, sharing a continuous theoretical lineage. Uses and gratifications theory conceptualizes media contact behavior as a causal process, positing that under the influence of social conditions and individual characteristics, individuals develop media expectations that drive media contact to satisfy their needs. Media contact requires two conditions: first, the availability of specific media objects, such as radios or newspapers; second, media impressions. If media objects are unavailable, individuals turn to alternative satisfaction methods like chatting with others. Media impressions derive from previous media contact experiences—whether a particular medium can satisfy specific needs. Media contact may or may not satisfy needs, and individuals will subsequently modify their media impressions, which in turn influences future media expectations. The theory identifies four purposes for media use: (1) diversion, such as escaping daily life constraints, troubles, and releasing stress; (2) personal relationships, creating a sense of familiarity or friendship with program hosts or characters, and forming new social circles or harmonious interpersonal relationships through program discussions; (3) personal identity, providing references for self-evaluation and development,

learning methods to cope with reality, and reinforcing personal values; and (4) surveillance, obtaining various information about the living environment and understanding the external world [15-17]. Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper] intuitively describes the elements of mass communication behavior and their interrelationships according to uses and gratifications theory.

This theory has been widely applied in new media research, including games [18], social media Facebook [19], podcasts [20], and mobile social networking sites [21], as well as in reading research, such as magazine reading and advertising contact [22], reading motivations [23], mobile reading [24], and university library reading promotion activities [25] domestically and internationally.

Media dependency theory posits that media is a component of the “audience-media-society” system; individuals who habitually use a particular medium over the long term develop dependency on it. If many people in society depend on a certain medium, that medium holds important status and influence in society [15].

Survey Implementation

Our research team is located at Central China Normal University in Hongshan District, Wuhan, surrounded by many self-employed individuals from whom interviewees were selected. The investigation of self-employed individuals’ reading needs and satisfaction primarily employed in-depth interviews supplemented by field observations. Uses and gratifications theory and media dependency theory were mainly reflected in the interviews through questions about awareness, contact, and utilization of grassroots libraries, and the main media objects contacted to satisfy reading needs. Field visits investigated the construction status of grassroots library reading service systems in Hongshan District, focusing on reading spaces, resources, facilities, and services of Hongshan District Library and its community reading rooms.

Interviews with Self-Employed Individuals

The initial interview outline referenced studies by Li Xinxing [28] and Guo Qi [29], covering reading needs, reading cognition, reading behavior, reading education, and library awareness, contact, and utilization, comprising over 50 questions. As interviews progressed, the outline was continuously revised to focus on key issues. Interviews were conducted in two batches. The first batch was implemented by two interviewers from May 19-22, 2018, starting with self-employed individuals familiar to the interviewers near the university’s southeast gate and expanding outward, interviewing 15 individuals near the southeast, south, and west gates, yielding 15 transcripts [30]. The second batch was conducted by three interviewers from October 23-25, 2019, interviewing 15 individuals near the east and north gates, yielding another 15 transcripts [31].

Before interviews, participants were shown an informed consent form. All interviews were recorded, lasting between 15 and 103 minutes. Recordings were

transcribed using “iFlytek Hearing” software and manually proofread, producing over 120,000 words of interview data. Demographic information appears in Table 1. To protect privacy, real names were replaced with initials. Respondents 1-15 participated in the first batch, and respondents 16-30 in the second batch.

Table 1 shows more female respondents (10 male, 20 female), as most operated family businesses and women were more accessible during work breaks when they gathered to chat. Age groups included post-60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s generations. Education levels ranged from elementary school to master’s degree, with approximately half lacking higher education (technical secondary school or below).

Field Survey of Grassroots Libraries

To understand the construction status of Hongshan District’s grassroots library reading service system, our research team conducted a field survey at Hongshan District Library on January 2, 2019. The library was again rated as a first-level library in the sixth national public library evaluation [32], benefiting surrounding residents with its quality conditions and services and enjoying high popularity. Hongshan District has achieved 100% community reading room coverage. The district library delivers books to community reading rooms, which are managed daily by communities. However, utilization is low, with problems of merely going through inspection motions.

From October 24-28, 2019, our team conducted field surveys in eight communities around Central China Normal University in Hongshan District. We found two communities under renovation, one unit-type community without a reading room, and undelivered books from the district library still unpacked. The eight community reading rooms surveyed generally exhibited these problems [33]: (1) extremely limited space conditions, mostly sharing rooms with community activity centers, gyms, and science popularization rooms; (2) closed status as the norm; (3) far fewer books on shelves than reported; (4) all management personnel are community staff with only one having attended district library training; (5) minimal reading activities, generally notified by phone or social media groups on World Book Day with few participants; (6) extremely low utilization with almost no visitors most of the time; and (7) district libraries cannot participate in community reading room management.

Analysis of Reading Needs Satisfaction Among Respondents

We first summarize the reading behavior characteristics of interviewed self-employed individuals, then apply uses and gratifications theory and media dependency theory to analyze their reading needs satisfaction.

Reading Behavior Characteristics of Respondents

Analysis of interview data revealed the following characteristics:

- (1) **Diverse content types for reading needs.** The 30 respondents had varying content needs, including current affairs and law, professional skills, self-cultivation, communication, children's books, literature, and product advertisements. One respondent particularly enjoyed reading advertisements because they provided useful product information.
- (2) **Mobile devices as primary reading contact medium.** Almost all respondents emotionally preferred paper reading, but only three bookstore operators read paper books daily. Others read paper books at frequencies ranging from once every two days to once every two months. Kindle was popular among post-80s and 90s respondents, while post-60s and 70s knew little about it. All respondents used mobile phones daily, with LT using restroom breaks to read news on his phone.
- (3) **Higher-educated respondents prefer text-based media.** Respondent WBD, with a master's degree, believed watching videos and reading books were fundamentally different. TDD, a post-90s simple meal shop owner with a bachelor's degree, even considered watching videos not reading as it lacks a process of understanding and imagination. LSL, with technical secondary education, preferred listening to video lectures over reading books herself.
- (4) **Low library contact rate and complete unfamiliarity with grassroots libraries.** When asked about libraries, respondents mentioned distant Hubei Provincial Library, Guanggu Book City, and Xinhua Bookstore, not the nearby Hongshan District Library or community reading rooms. CS used to visit libraries for research during university but rarely goes now. TDD reads at home every night but seldom visits libraries. Only four college-educated women and one man take children to Hubei Provincial Library every other week.
- (5) **Generally low self-evaluation of reading with weak improvement intentions.** WBD, operating a bookstore, opened it to read freely during business hours. WGL, also operating a bookstore, reads daily. LYZ, running an optical shop for over 20 years, maintains good reading habits and will continue. JP, selling handmade accessories, enjoys reading and listening to books. UN, operating a used bookstore, plays online games during leisure time, believing himself too old to need reading improvement. Other respondents were generally dissatisfied with their reading status and acknowledged need for improvement, but lacked motivation, citing "no time" as the primary reason.

Reading Motivations of Respondents

According to uses and gratifications theory, people contact media to satisfy four psychological or social needs, or motivations: diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, and surveillance.

- (1) **Diversion.** Self-employed individuals work long hours and use reading for entertainment or to escape daily constraints and boredom. For example, they read news partly for information but more often for diversion, with many alternatives like games, chatting with neighbors, watching TV dramas, or playing basketball.
- (2) **Personal relationships.** This includes improving social skills, citing classics, and using books as social tools. LYZ's idea was representative: "Some books are read many times just to retell the plots to others. The first thing every morning is checking Tencent News to have topics for conversation."
- (3) **Personal identity.** First, learning to cope with reality, such as educating children. XH and LSL wanted to set examples for children, keep pace with them, and improve knowledge levels for the next generation. Second, reinforcing self-worth. Reading can win others' respect and self-respect. WBD won acclaim for outstanding performance in company poetry activities, believing reading's greatest benefit is broadening perspectives and providing multiple viewpoints. CWK was more direct: "Reading makes me handsome and makes me like myself."
- (4) **Surveillance.** Respondents had strong motivation to understand the external world, especially safety information. BHD said she most enjoyed reading news like the Didi (air hostess murder) case and would discuss it with her children.

Main Factors Influencing Respondents' Reading Needs

According to uses and gratifications theory, reading needs originate from dual influences of social conditions and individual characteristics. Notably, social conditions influencing respondents included family and school, but not libraries.

- (1) **Family environment.** Compared with economic conditions, parental class, or deliberate reading education, parents' reading habits most influenced children's reading behavior. WBD and CWK both had farmer fathers with poor economic conditions but significant reading influence. WBD recalled: "I've loved reading since childhood, influenced by my father. He was a farmer who memorized the Xinhua Dictionary and was cultured. Sometimes I didn't even understand what he talked about." CWK's parents loved reading but never managed their son's or grandson's reading, yet both generations love reading. TDD's grandmother liked reading *Zhiyin* and *Reader*, which she followed, using flowery language in compositions. CS was influenced by his grandfather: "My grandfather taught me

a lot about reading history... He would tell me that history has truth and falsehood, but he could summarize principles.”

- (2) **School education.** In sixth grade, WBD’s school held book exchange activities where each student had to bring six comic books, suddenly creating many comics to circulate. He also read many martial arts novels, influencing later reading: “What you read might be fragments... When you grow up, you trace back to find other books.”
- (3) **Individual characteristics.** Women tended to read communication, self-cultivation, children’s books, and product advertisements, while men preferred history and science fiction. Reading needs didn’t necessarily correlate with economic conditions. WBD believed: “It’s hard to say. When material conditions are poor... On one hand, you want to buy books but can’t, making them scarce; but conversely, this makes you cherish books more.” This reflects psychological characteristics’ influence.

Media Contact for Reading Needs Satisfaction

Media here includes print and electronic media. We examine media contact for reading needs satisfaction—obtaining information through written text symbols—categorizing media into mobile reading devices, online bookstores, physical bookstores, and libraries. Respondents contacted mobile reading devices most, then online and physical bookstores, with libraries having the lowest contact rate.

- (1) **Mobile reading devices.** Most popular among respondents, including smartphones, tablets, and Kindle readers, with smartphones being most common.
- (2) **Online bookstores.** Frequently contacted. LYZ, a post-70s individual, liked buying books online: “Basically online, Dangdang, because delivery is convenient now; no time for libraries.”
- (3) **Physical bookstores.** Familiar to most respondents but with decreasing contact rates. WGL knew bookstores but not libraries as a child because he needed to buy books for study. BHD visited bookstores to accompany her child buying books, appreciating the environment and atmosphere and hoping to visit more often.
- (4) **Libraries.** Respondents without higher education were unfamiliar with libraries. When asked about nearby libraries, several mentioned Central China Normal University Library, Hubei Provincial Library, and Wuhan University of Technology Library, with only one mentioning Hongshan District Library and none knowing about community reading rooms. The reason is that community reading rooms typically share space with neighborhood committee activity rooms, lack full-time librarians, remain closed as the norm, rarely hold activities, and most residents don’t know they

exist. Although Hongshan District Library isn't far, inconvenient transportation means most respondents don't know it exists.

Reasons for Low Library Contact Rates

Uses and gratifications theory posits that media contact requires two conditions: first, available media objects nearby; second, clear impressions that a medium can satisfy specific needs. Respondents extensively use phones because everyone has one and knows phones provide rich reading resources. Online bookstores also meet these conditions. Physical bookstores, though fewer, create clear impressions and thus media expectations.

Do libraries meet these conditions? (1) Libraries exist nearby but are unknown and inconvenient. The surveyed communities in Hongshan District, Wuhan, are less than 20 minutes by car or foot from the district library and nearest community reading room. However, respondents completely lacked awareness of these two media objects. When asked about nearby libraries, several mentioned university or provincial libraries, with only one mentioning Hongshan District Library and none knowing community reading rooms existed. Community reading rooms share space with other facilities, lack full-time staff, remain closed normally, rarely hold activities, and have extremely low utilization. Although Hongshan District Library is nearby, inconvenient transportation means most respondents are unaware.

- (2) Most respondents lack clear impressions that libraries can satisfy reading needs. XH said she had never heard that libraries offered free reading and activities. TDD and BHD thought libraries were bookstores. LSL believed libraries served only small groups. Some who knew libraries could only provide abstract descriptions like "quiet," "many books," "calming," with YP even considering libraries intimidating. Generally, higher-educated respondents had clearer library impressions, but only four women and one man regularly took children to libraries, while others stopped contacting libraries due to "no time" or "inconvenience." Other respondents either didn't understand libraries or considered them merely symbolic.

Thus, libraries don't fully meet the two conditions for media contact. For most respondents, despite nearby libraries, impressions are vague, even indistinguishable from Xinhua Bookstore or Guanggu Book City. Higher-educated respondents visited libraries during university but rarely now, mainly due to "no time" and "distance." Four college-educated women and one man take children to libraries every other week.

Problems in Grassroots Library Reading Service Systems and Development Strategies

Media dependency theory holds that individuals must habitually use libraries over the long term to develop dependency. If many people depend on libraries,

libraries naturally gain status and influence. Despite living in a provincial capital city center, our respondents had extremely low library contact rates when satisfying reading needs. This is understandable during their growth when only bookstores existed. However, it's remarkable that grassroots libraries fail to meet their reading needs today, with community reading room coverage at 100%. Therefore, analyzing problems in grassroots library reading service systems is necessary to improve service effectiveness and create conditions for people to develop media dependency on libraries.

Problems in Grassroots Library Reading Service Systems

We define the grassroots library reading service system as comprising six elements: reading space, facilities, resources, personnel, services, and operational mechanisms. Based on this definition and our investigation of self-employed individuals' reading needs satisfaction and Hongshan District Library and community reading rooms, we analyze existing problems.

Hongshan District Library is a first-level library, but spatial distance limits its quality space, facilities, resources, personnel, and services to benefiting only a few surrounding residents. Community reading rooms that can conveniently meet most residents' reading needs are the focus. Therefore, analysis emphasizes community reading rooms and Hongshan District Library's support, management, and guidance for community reading room services.

- (1) **Lack of independent reading space and limited facilities.** Community reading room space and facilities are provided by communities, lacking independent reading spaces and having only limited bookshelves and 桌椅.
- (2) **Insufficient reading resources.** Books are mainly delivered by district libraries without frequent updates, plus a few community-purchased and department-donated publications. Books on shelves far fewer than reported quantities.
- (3) **No full-time reading service professionals.** Community reading rooms have no full-time management or service personnel, all staffed by community workers with only one having attended district library training. Part-time staff cannot ensure normal opening hours and hold ideas contrary to the original purpose: young people have phones and computers and don't need community reading rooms; communities are places for handling affairs, not reading.
- (4) **Absent daily reading services.** Community reading rooms' posted hours coincide with community workers' office hours, but closed status is the norm due to space and personnel constraints, with no daily services provided. Among the eight community reading rooms surveyed during weekday office hours, only one was open [33]. Since interviewed self-employed individuals didn't know reading rooms existed, their reading

needs couldn't be satisfied. In fact, they had rich reading needs summarized in three aspects [30-31]: first, hoping for free book borrowing, returning, and reading places nearby (LYZ, WH, XH, LSY, CSQ); second, hoping for nearby places where children can not only read but also participate in activities that "capture children's attention" (XH, LYZ); third, hoping for reading guidance for themselves and children. CSQ doesn't know which books are good to buy; NM struggles to tutor children due to limited education; LYZ doesn't know what to buy when getting books for children.

- (5) **Operational mechanisms.** First, district libraries cannot participate in community reading room management. Community reading rooms are managed by communities, with space and facilities provided by communities and resources by district libraries, but district libraries have no authority over personnel or daily services. Second, under community-led management, evaluations of district libraries cannot motivate community reading rooms to actively perform functions. This misalignment between management 主体 and evaluation 客体 causes most community reading rooms to exist in name only.

This isn't an isolated case. Our summer research found that township reading rooms, street libraries, and rural book houses in Wangjiang County, Anhui; Chengdu, Sichuan; and Shahe City, Hebei had extremely low awareness and utilization rates [34-36]. Even in areas with better grassroots library reading service system conditions, such as Jiaxing, Zhejiang, problems existed like weak main-branch library management and lack of professional reading guidance personnel [37]. The investigation also found widespread falsification of records and inflated data reporting at grassroots service points.

Development Strategy Recommendations

China's grassroots library reading service system is experiencing rapid development from scratch. Timely identification and resolution of development problems helps optimize the system and improve service effectiveness. The key issues lie in management and operational mechanisms. We recommend the following strategies:

- (1) **Strengthen government-level coordination and enhance district/county library management over community reading rooms.** At the district/county government level, coordinate management functions between district/county libraries and communities over community libraries, allowing district/county libraries to intervene in personnel arrangements and daily management, aiming to permeate grassroots library reading services into people's daily lives.
- (2) **Help community reading rooms implement standardized daily services.** Community reading rooms must have full-time staff to conduct daily reading services. We anticipate a large professional talent gap.

To address this, the Chinese Library Association could entrust its Reading Promotion Committee to develop community library reading service guidelines based on theoretical research and experience summarization, then train community reading room staff by provincial, municipal, and district/county libraries, even dispatching experienced librarians to community reading rooms for on-site demonstrations and guidance.

- (3) **Incorporate community reading room service conditions and effectiveness into community and district/county library evaluation index systems.** Currently, most community reading rooms have limited conditions and cannot conduct meaningful reading services, so construction tasks remain heavy. To promote development, multi-party coordination is needed to formulate scientific and practical evaluation index systems for community reading room service conditions and effectiveness, specifying requirements for area, full-time staff, reading seats, resource types and quantities, and standardized daily services, incorporating these into community and district/county library evaluation systems, and even integrating urban and rural community reading room overall service effectiveness into civilized city and civilized countryside construction index systems.

Conclusion

This study examined grassroots library reading service system construction from the perspective of self-employed individuals' reading needs satisfaction. Through in-depth interviews with 30 self-employed individuals and field surveys of surrounding grassroots library service points, we analyzed respondents' reading behavior characteristics and needs satisfaction, identified major problems in grassroots library reading service systems, and proposed construction strategies.

Findings show respondents primarily satisfied reading needs through mobile reading devices, online bookstores, physical bookstores, and libraries, with smartphones most popular and libraries least popular. The fundamental reason for low library contact rates is the previous absence of libraries as media objects, while current community reading rooms aren't functioning. Direct causes include community reading rooms lacking independent reading spaces, limited facilities, insufficient resources, no full-time reading service professionals, and absent daily services. The key reason is that district libraries cannot participate in community reading room management, and district library evaluations cannot motivate community reading rooms to actively perform functions, creating a management-evaluation misalignment. We propose three recommendations: (1) strengthen government coordination and enhance district/county library management functions over community reading rooms; (2) help community reading rooms implement standardized daily services; and (3) incorporate community reading room service conditions and effectiveness into community and district/county library evaluation index

systems. The goal is to permeate grassroots library services into daily life, promoting media impressions and contact with libraries.

This study's limitation is that survey subjects were limited to self-employed individuals around one university and their surrounding grassroots libraries, with a small sample size lacking sufficient representativeness. Future research will conduct field surveys in more communities to provide evidence for grassroots library reading service system construction.

References

- [1] Wu Jianhua, Li Xue, He Xiuling. Knowledge mapping analysis of international and domestic reading research [J]. *Information Science*, 2018, 36(2): 159-164.
- [2] Wang Guihong. Research on basic patterns of public library users' reading needs and methods—A case study of Benxi City Library [J]. *Library Research*, 2016, 46(5): 72-75.
- [3] Wang Yingqi. Research on reading needs of rural reading-disadvantaged groups and library reading care strategies—A scan of foreign research [J]. *Journal of the National Library of China*, 2013, 22(6): 80-87.
- [4] Yan Min, Zheng Miao. Empirical research on reading needs of migrant workers in Dongguan [J]. *Library Science Research*, 2013(15): 71-76.
- [5] National Bureau of Statistics of China. National data [EB/OL]. [2019-01-29]. <http://data.stats.gov.cn/easyquery.htm?cn=C01&zxb=A040D&sj=2017>.
- [6] Research Group on Social Structure Changes in Contemporary China. Changes in China's occupational structure and social class structure 2000-2005 [J]. *Statistical Research*, 2008(2): 39-45.
- [7] Department of Population and Employment Statistics, National Bureau of Statistics. *China Population and Employment Statistical Yearbook* [M]. Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2017: 165.
- [8] Gong Jiaoteng. Positioning, reflection, and trends of grassroots libraries [J]. *Library Work and Research*, 2013(12): 4-9.
- [9] Wu Shushi. *Research on grassroots libraries in the Republic of China period* [M]. Beijing: National Library Press, 2017: 1.
- [10] Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. *Public Library Law of the People's Republic of China* [M]. Beijing: China Legal Publishing House, 2017: 3-9.
- [11] Xu Tongliang. Exploration of constructing China's public reading service system under the nationwide reading background [J]. *Library Forum*, 2014, 34(8): 28-35.

- [12] Chinese Library Association. Notice on releasing indicator systems for scholarly cities (county-level) and scholarly communities [EB/OL]. [2019-05-07]. <http://www.lsc.org.cn/contents/1129/9116.html>.
- [13] Xu Dan. Research on rural public reading service systems with grassroots libraries as the main body during urbanization [J]. *Information Recording Materials*, 2016, 17(4): 201-202.
- [14] McLuhan. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Revised Translation) [M]. Translated by He Daokuan. Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2011: 16-33.
- [15] Takeuchi Ikuo. *Sociology of Mass Communication* [M]. Translated by Zhang Guoliang. Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1989: 112.
- [16] Liu Jianyun, Qi Yuan, Wang Kun. *Introduction to Communication Studies* [M]. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2016: 313-315.
- [17] Katz E, Blumler JG, Gurevitch M. Uses and gratifications research [J]. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1973, 37(4): 509-523.
- [18] Vaterlaus JM, Frantz K, Robecker T. “Reliving my childhood dream of being a pokemon trainer”: An exploratory study of college student uses and gratifications related to pokemon go [J]. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 2019, 35(7): 596-604.
- [19] Hossain MA, Kim M, Jahan N. Can “Liking” behavior lead to usage intention on Facebook? Uses and gratifications theory perspective [J]. *Sustainability*, 2019, 11(4): 1-13.
- [20] Perks LG, Turner JS. Podcasts and productivity: A qualitative uses and gratifications study [J]. *Mass Communication and Society*, 2019, 22(1): 96-116.
- [21] Kim MJ, Lee C, Contractor NS. Seniors’ usage of mobile social network sites: Applying theories of innovation diffusion and uses and gratifications [J]. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2019, 90: 60-73.
- [22] Kim J, Lee J, Jo S, et al. Magazine reading experience and advertising engagement: Uses and gratifications perspective [J]. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 2015, 92(1): 179-202.
- [23] Woods RH, Skarratt-Williams K, Chan C, et al. Motivations for reading the Left Behind Book Series: Uses and gratifications analysis [J]. *Journal of Media and Religion*, 2016, 15(2): 63-77.
- [24] Li Wu. Analysis of college students’ mobile reading uses and gratifications—A Shanghai case study [J]. *Library and Information Service*, 2011, 55(14): 15-19.
- [25] Jiang Lan, Hou Jie. Empirical research on university library new media reading promotion from uses and gratifications theory perspective [J]. *Information Science*, 2019, 37(4): 125-129.
- [26] DeFleur, Ball-Rokeach. *Theories of Mass Communication* [M]. Translated by Du Liping. Beijing: Xinhua Press, 1990: 333-364.

- [27] Gong Xinqiong. Relationship, conflict, integration—Three dimensions for understanding media dependency theory [J]. *Contemporary Communication*, 2011(6): 28-30.
- [28] Li Xinxing. Research on evolution and countermeasures of national reading behavior in the digital age [D]. Wuhan: Wuhan University, 2013.
- [29] Guo Qi. Investigation and analysis of contemporary college students' reading ability [J]. *Library Work and Research*, 2009(5): 93-96.
- [30] Li Xue, Jin Yiwen. Compilation of interview data on reading needs and satisfaction of self-employed individuals around Central China Normal University (Part 1) [G]. Wuhan: Central China Normal University "Reading Behavior and Reading Service" Research Group, 2019.
- [31] Jin Yiwen, Wang Rong, Liu Xuemei. Compilation of interview data on reading needs and satisfaction of self-employed individuals around Central China Normal University (Part 2) [G]. Wuhan: Central China Normal University "Reading Behavior and Reading Service" Research Group, 2019.
- [32] Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Notice on releasing the list of first-level libraries in the sixth national evaluation of county-level and above public libraries [EB/OL]. [2019-11-06]. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2018-08/28/content_{5317052}.htm.
- [33] Zhou Yuqin, Xiao Longxiang, Guo Jing. Investigation report on construction and usage of community reading rooms around Central China Normal University [R]. Wuhan: Central China Normal University "Reading Behavior and Reading Service" Research Group, 2019.
- [34] Wang Rong. Investigation report on construction status and development trends of grassroots libraries in Wangjiang County [R]. Wuhan: Central China Normal University "Reading Behavior and Reading Service" Research Group, 2019.
- [35] Liu Xuemei. Investigation report on development status and trends of grassroots libraries in Chengdu City [R]. Wuhan: Central China Normal University "Reading Behavior and Reading Service" Research Group, 2019.
- [36] Guo Jing. Investigation report on construction status and development trends of grassroots libraries in Shahe City [R]. Wuhan: Central China Normal University "Reading Behavior and Reading Service" Research Group, 2019.
- [37] Zhou Yuqin. Investigation report on construction status and development trends of grassroots libraries in Wuzhen Town [R]. Wuhan: Central China Normal University "Reading Behavior and Reading Service" Research Group, 2019.

Author Contributions

Wu Jianhua: Proposed research ideas, designed research plan, organized survey research, drafted parts of the manuscript, revised final version.

Li Xue: Conducted interview surveys, transcribed and organized interview data, drafted parts of the manuscript.

Jin Yiwen: Conducted some interview surveys, transcribed and organized interview data.

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.