

## **Demand-driven Service Innovation: Discovery and Analysis in Chinese Law Libraries**

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### **Abstract**

This article introduces readers to a new perspective on meeting library user needs. The author employs Kano theory to examine library user demands in Chinese law libraries and how law libraries in China have tried to meet user needs on three different levels. The Kano model was first introduced by Professor Noriaki Kano of Tokyo Rika University. The model was based on the assumption that customer needs are constantly changing and the question becomes how to meet library users' evolving demands. The article summarizes demands of Chinese law library patrons on three levels: basic needs, performance, and excitement demands. Currently, most Chinese academic law libraries meet the basic needs of library users, but they need to further enhance user satisfaction and promote the law libraries' status as a legal information center instead of merely a place to collect and house books.

### **THE KANO MODEL AND USER NEED DRIVEN**

The Kano Model, developed by Professor Noriaki Kano in the 1980s, is a product or service development theory around which we should design our products or services. It focuses on user needs, and determines which features we may want to include in a given product or service in order to ensure higher user satisfaction. The Kano Model can be summarized into two words: classify and prioritize. First, the Kano Model classifies customer needs into three main categories:

#### **1. Must-be need**

These attributes are taken for granted when fulfilled, but result in dissatisfaction when not fulfilled. An example of this would be a package of milk that leaks. Customers are dissatisfied when the package leaks, but when it does not leak the result is not an increase customer satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

#### **2. Expectation need**

These needs are not must-be attributes, but are expected attributes. If these needs are satisfied with improvement in their performance, customer satisfaction will increase. The better the performance, the happier the customer is. This kinds of needs is generally expressed by the customer. Gas mileage in a car is an example of an expectation need.<sup>2</sup>

#### **3. Excitement need**

These attributes are unexpected functions or services that make a user excited. The absence of the attribute does not cause dissatisfaction because the customers are unaware of these needs. If these needs are met, the product or service excites the customer. Meeting excitement needs will provide competitive advantages to the organization and the organization will find the opportunity to differentiate itself from its competition. For example, customers will not be dissatisfied if cars do not use solar energy, but they will be delighted if it is part of the specification.<sup>3</sup> See [Figure 1](#) below.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kano\\_model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kano_model), 2016/3/7.

<sup>2</sup> King, B. (1995) *Designing Products and Services that Customers Want*, Productivity Press, Portland, OR.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

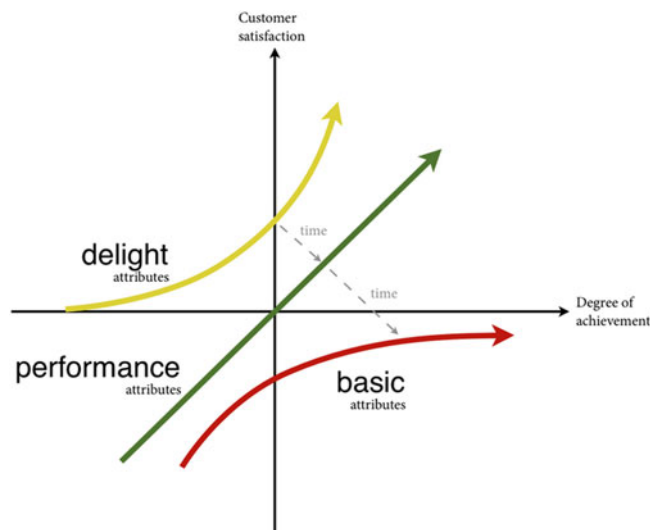


Figure 1. The Kano Model.<sup>4</sup>

Needs may alter categories as the product/service improves. The features garnering excitement today will become expected or basic features in the future. For example, mobile phone batteries were originally large and bulky with only a few hours of charge. Over time we have come to expect many more hours of battery life on slim lightweight phones. The battery attributes have had to change to keep up with customer expectations.<sup>5</sup> Further, the Kano Model provides an effective approach to prioritizing customer requirements and reflecting what customers want the most, then helping understand which customer requirements should be tackled first.

The first priority should be given to the must-be needs. Librarians should try their best to meet user needs because doing so results in the greatest user satisfaction. The second priority is meeting user expectations, and the more we offer additional and favored services or products to users, the more they are satisfied. The third and final priority is to meet (unexpected) excitement needs, because doing so will provide a competitive advantage to the organization, and the organization will better be able to differentiate itself from its competition and gain a loyal user base.

#### USER NEEDS ANALYSIS OF CHINESE LAW LIBRARY

Based on the above model, how are the user requirements of Chinese law libraries divided into Kano's three levels, and how does the law library meet these requirements?

1. **Must-be need:** law library functions or services that the user takes for granted. These kinds of needs principally include:
  - i. Legal information resources: usually law-dominated materials and some interdisciplinary resources.
  - ii. Physical space: clean and neat desks, a quiet environment where users can read printed books and journals.
  - iii. Format and convenience of the legal information – for example, both print and electronic formats, searching the printed literature by OPAC and the e-resources by specific databases, fixed service times and space.
  - iv. Consultation form and content: face to face/telephone/email, mainly about hours, circulation policies, and similar matters.

<sup>4</sup> Berger, C. et al. (1993) Kano's methods for understanding customer-defined quality. *Center for Quality Management Journal* (Fall), 3–35.

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kano\\_model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kano_model), 2016/3/7.

- v. Library employee qualification: at this level, book assistants can be the principal library worker; their main responsibility is the management of the books and periodicals, but they also answer simple questions like the library collections, lending terms and opening hours. No professional requirements.
- 2. Expectation need:** the functions or services are not the must-be attributes, but are expected by the user. The better the performance, the more satisfied the customer is.
- i. User participation in resource construction: basically realizing the transition from librarian-driven acquisition to the patron-driven acquisition. Library determines the direction of the resources construction according to the user's recommendations and preferences, such as foreign books, databases, e-book PDA\DDA, and others that may have a higher cost. In addition, the library uses big data technology to analyze the book-lending ratio, reading list, and database use statistics to find out the most popular resource and decide how to prioritize purchases.
  - ii. Two spaces coexistence: free and comfortable physical space, and convenient, personal privacy in virtual space. The physical space chiefly has a personal book shelf, such as that in the Zhejiang University Guanghua Law School Library; automatic circulation, scanning, and printing devices, WiFi; carrels with outlets, desk lamps, screens; and also discussion space; leisure space. Compared to physical space, virtual space reflects more personal preferences.
  - iii. Real time and mobile information use: such as mobile library and mobile phone\PAD and features such as 24/7 remote access.
  - iv. One-stop information retrieval: most law libraries have used the discovery system, such as the law school library of Tsinghua University, Peking University, and Renmin University.
  - v. Interactive consultation: QQ\Wechat consultation.
  - vi. Information literacy education: general information literacy education, like overview of library resources, and specific database training.
  - vii. Library employee qualification: as information commissioner, relatively high education level, like a master's degree, but still no special professional requirements.

Now, in Chinese law libraries, almost all of the must-be needs have been met. The basic expectation requirements have been fulfilled, so we should pay more attention to the excitement needs, even though it is not expressed or stated by the user.

- 3. Excitement need:** unexpected functions or services that make users excited. We will use Renmin University Law School Library as an example.
- i. Scientific research project of information retrieval service: meet the information retrieval requirements of scientific research project in its declaration, carrying out, and subsequent studies.
  - ii. Embedded legal research into specialized law courses: designing the key point of legal research teaching according to the content and request of each specific law course, currently involved in the following: economic law frontier (how to retrieve the foremost information for a given subject); comparative environmental law clinic (how to retrieve the relative information about U.S. and EU environmental law from the perspective of comparative law, such as legislative background, content, and characteristics); moot court (how to use legal research skill for a complete case analysis); legal methods and thesis writing (how to make use of information retrieval to complete a paper topic selection and its literature review); legal English (how to find the original legal English, such as cases and legislation).
  - iii. Literature support services in discipline construction: participation in the case database development of Center for Coordination and Innovation of Food Safety Governance; special literature shelf of Common Law Research Center; researcher achievements exhibition of Human Rights Research Center.
  - iv. General information literacy education to systematic legal research courses: student enthusiasm is not as high as we expected for general information literacy education. Designing different courses for different students, like legal research courses respectively for the research-based master/doctor and the practice-based master (Each are two credits).

How the excitement needs of Chinese law libraries are met: When excitement needs are met, it is really an unexpected and pleasant experience for our users. And it is surely worth a try.

## HOW TO FIND THE MOST VALUABLE NEEDS

Excitement need tends to be invisible. How does one define excitement needs, encourage a user to declare them, and innovate services on the basis of them. This will become the core competitive factor of a law library. Advice for librarians who want to pursue this model of service include:

1. Keep good relationships with users. For a law library, this is like opening a door to learn what the user is thinking and doing. The perfect state is to establish a partner or friend type relationship, then happily work with each other.
2. Participate actively in a user's research and teaching. Participating actively could help us know in which part of the research process librarians are most needed. Just being a good listener, taking part in the user's academic seminar, salon, and conference, may yield an unexpected harvest.
3. Make long-term professional reserves. Professional law librarians should be familiar with the characteristics of legal information and continually track its dynamic developments, and should pay close attention to other libraries or law libraries' service innovations. Next, law librarians should consider carefully whether these preparations are useful or not for the user's research and teaching. If they are, let the user know immediately.
4. Let users know what unexpected and exciting services your law library could provide. Before a user accepts our ideas or services, we need to communicate and discuss with them the details of how to make our services work in *their* research and teaching, then make any necessary corrections or adjustments. A painstaking and careful attitude could gain the user's trust and may encourage them to give important tasks to librarians.
5. Lock key users. When librarians carry out new and creative services for the first time, they should do so within the confines of their capabilities. This means that the service is not necessarily for every user, but specifically key users. Normally, some users who undertake the most scientific projects or are willing to engage in teaching reforms are the key users librarians should pursue in this regard.
6. User experience. This refers to when librarians begin to act after discussions with users. This is really when services begin, which may give the user unexpected satisfaction and excitement. Change in user attitudes can occur by providing a particular library service. Let them trust the law library and have dependence and positive feelings about the law library. Once surprised and satisfied, their expectations of the library will increase. This becomes a virtuous cycle: the higher the user's expectations, the better law library performance.
7. Feedback and evaluation. When the service concludes, we should look back on the whole process to find out the merits and the demerits of the experience. For the merits, summarize the parts that worked well and retain them; for the demerits, find out the reasons for the problem and improve on them.

## HOW TO MEET THE MOST VALUABLE NEEDS

After all, law library service is law subject service. The key is to develop high-quality law subject librarian teams. Presently, subject librarian professional quality in subject service is more and more prominent and is being strengthened. What qualifications should law subject librarians or law librarian have?

1. Law and library science degrees or significant training in these two backgrounds. These are the basic educational requirements for law librarians to help law faculty, staff, and students do library research, like creating webpages, writing guides, teaching legal research courses, and other library instruction. With the trend of expanding interdisciplinary work, legal research is becoming more and more problem-oriented, so law librarians should have additional degrees or training rather than simply law and library science.
2. At least be prepared to master an international language outside of one's mother tongue. Internationalization is deeper in all areas of law, like environmental law, intellectual property, food safety, e-commerce, anti-terrorism, and others. They all require a global legal perspective. Only with a universal foreign language can law librarians keep up with the development of today's legal environment.
3. Strong knowledge management ability. Except for information retrieval, searching and organization, law librarians should pay more attention to information technology developments and their

application, like information discovery, statistics, and analysis. Together with the law librarian's subject background and language abilities, all three of these working together could make fragmented information into systematic knowledge, which is more suitable for user requirements.

4. Be ready to absorb new knowledge. We are living in a world that changes every minute. So we must be aware and be curious. Librarians must accept and absorb new things around them. This is necessary preparation for librarians who want to be involved and creative when helping their users face challenges or solve problems.
5. Communication and teamwork. As legal research topics become broader and more complicated, more and more people and institutions are involved. Like an ever-increasing chain, from student, faculty, professor, librarian, to information publisher or servicer, or from law school, university, library, to law firm or court. As a member of the chain, law librarians play a vital role, and must learn to communicate and cooperate.

## CONCLUSION

Besides the abilities described above, what other attributes should a law librarian have? What role should a law librarian play in the near future? It is hard to say now: subject liaison, subject librarian, smart subject librarian, and who knows what else! At today's rate of change, all of these characters will also soon go out of style. Perhaps, though, there is one exception, the *super* law librarian. There really is no definition for this type of librarian. After we have the super law librarian, forming a law librarian team would become an easy job. But there is still a very long way to achieving the ideal library, It is not impossible to become one of the most popular law libraries, academic centers or innovation centers, as long as we are good at discerning and meeting our users' demands.