

A Review of Integrative Service of Borrowing, Reading and Reference in University Library

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Abstract

The integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference in university libraries is convenient for teachers and students, because it facilitates their accessing to information resources and improves the information resource utilization. However, it has a number of disadvantages. In order to better implement the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference, it is necessary to take some measures to correct the deficiencies to conform to the requirements of the development of the times.

Key words: University library; Circulation borrowing; Reference consulting; Reader service

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INTRODUCTION

In the current era of knowledge-based economy, with the continuous development of information technology, teachers and students in universities have demands for information that are more urgent than ever before in the history. The sole purpose of university library is to better serve teachers and students. The integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference is an information service focusing on teachers and students. It facilitates their accessing to information and creates a very convenient learning and research environment with a large open space, open access system and open shelf. It

is only in this way can we constantly improve the service level of library and enhance the library information resource utilization.

The integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference means that the staff of library effectively use all kinds of internal and external resources to provide users with comprehensive and in-depth information services in the same room, including borrowing, reading, photocopying and reference consulting. The service in this mode has broken the barrier between circulation department, reading department and reference consulting and integrated them into an organic whole (Mai, 2007).

1. ADVANTAGES OF INTEGRATIVE SERVICE OF BORROWING, READING AND REFERENCE

1.1 Facilitate Teachers' and Students' Accessing to Information Resources

The big circulation, big reading and big reference are greatly convenient for teachers and students. All the books in library are open for direct browse and read to teachers and students. In the borrowing area there are reference librarians, and students can consult them and get timely answers when they have problems. The service in this mode has broken the barrier between the literatures of various disciplines and styles in different small rooms and formed a management mode that combines borrowing, reading and reference of different literature information and created a convenient learning and research environment for teachers and students. In addition, the number of daily visitors at the peak hours of the library of our university has reached 1000 person times. The integration of integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference can break the boundaries caused by the separation of "book keeping

area and borrowing area as well as book keeping area and reading area"; furthermore, the advisory librarians provide facility for teachers and students; the boundaries caused by the different reading rooms for teachers, graduate and undergraduate students have been broken, fully manifesting the principle of equality of reading between teachers and students, further enhancing the benign interaction between teachers and students and meeting their needs to the greatest extent.

1.2 Improve the Literature Resource Utilization

The information resource utilization is very low in traditional libraries, because they emphasize on the literature resource management and neglect the information needs of teachers and students. In present society, library's reader service must be based on the needs of teachers and students. Library must organize information resources, carry out information services, provide reading information and the latest literature information according to the features of teachers and students and know well about the latest knowledge movement. The integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference can facilitate teachers and students' accessing to information. For example, teachers and students will get timely help from the reference librarians in the borrowing area when they require novelty retrieval or information for key projects, and their problems can be resolved quickly. In addition, reference librarians provide service of retrieval, searching and literature transmission in the literature borrowing area to meet the needs of teachers and students to the greatest extent. In a traditional library where the borrowing and reference department are separated from the circulation department, students cannot get their problems resolved in a timely manner and their information requirements cannot be well fulfilled. For instance, many university students, especially the freshmen, have many complaints about the library because they always fail to get the literature information from the library for many times as they don't know exactly about the library service. The integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference makes a break with the practice of the traditional classification of stack rooms according to the carriers or readers. In this service mode, the literatures are placed in a big open space according to their contents, so it can avoid the scattered stack of the same material. It facilitates students' information querying and book reading and can quickly solve their problems, so it greatly increases the utilization of book information and reduces the book-refusing ratio.

1.3 Make Full Use of Human Resource to Promote Librarians' Own Development

In virtue of the implementation of the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference, a number of small stack rooms are combined into a big reading room

and only one librarian is required. The combination of circulation borrowing and reference consulting, greatly saving sources of manpower and material and the expenditure, fulfills the utmost value of the resources.

The implementation of the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference will promote librarians' own development. The librarians having junior job title and low educational attainment had been assigned to the circulation windows due to their low level of professional and theoretical library knowledge and network knowledge and low enthusiasm in working, all of which had affected the library service. The integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference has set higher demands on librarians' intellectual attainment and information skills. All librarians are required to strengthen their expertise learning and be armed with strong ability of computer operation, information retrieval and coordination and processing, so they can provide the in-depth information organizing and classifying during the physical contact with teachers and students, and then edit the information into a database, making contributions to the improvement in the efficiency of library.

2. DISADVANTAGES OF INTEGRATIVE SERVICE OF BORROWING, READING AND REFERENCE

The implementation of the service mode of big circulation, big reading and big reference fully embodies the person-oriented service principle and maximizes the information resource utilization and make library service convenient for teachers and students.

However, as a result of the open shelf system in the mode of big circulation, big reading and big reference and the large amount of book borrowing, the books on shelves are always taken, placed and inserted indiscriminately. For example: a student borrowed a book of the four great classical Chinese novels and put it indiscriminately on the shelf of literature class rather than at the original location after he finished reading it. Then, it is not easy to find this book in a short time on the shelf of literature class for another student who wants to borrow it; this is because the books in a library are a system, and they are placed in a certain location on the basis of certain laws in an orderly manner. If readers do not consciously follow the laws during the process of reading, they will not only destroy the orderliness of the books but, most importantly, hinder other readers' normal search and timely use of the books on the open shelves, which has a direct impact on the role of big circulation, big reading and big reference and greatly increase the workload of library staff (Xu, 2011). The integration of borrowing, reading and reference is a new efficient open service system. The problems and

disadvantages in the process of implementation are normal, and it is necessary to take some necessary measures to improve and enrich it during work. It is only in this way can library make better integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference and provide teachers and students with quality service.

3. NECESSARY MEASURES FOR INTEGRATIVE SERVICE OF BORROWING, READING AND REFERENCE

3.1 Make Reasonable Talent Allocation and Establish A High-Quality and Professional Library Contingent

The implementation of integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference firstly requires the reasonable allocation of human resource. Great emphasis should be laid on strengthening the allocation of human resource in the reference department. In the traditional service mode, the reference department, as an independent department, is separated from the circulation and borrowing department. Such an arrangement keeps students from getting help from reference librarians when they have problems. It is an impediment to students' effective information utilization and they cannot have their information requirements fulfilled. With the implementation of the integrative service of borrowing, returning, reading and reference consulting service, students can consult librarians at any time to solve problems in a timely fashion and access to information conveniently, quickly and accurately. For this reason, the reference department should arrange a number of high-quality academic librarians to provide enquiry service for teachers and students at any time and take part in deep services. The routine problems will be answered by the librarians of the literature library of various disciplines, and the deep ones by the consultants of the corresponding disciplines in the reference department. In peacetime these discipline advisory librarians should make the round of the literature library where they are responsible for to provide advisory services for the readers who have deeper information advisory needs. In addition, each discipline librarian should develop the secondary and tertiary information products with high quality and concise content with respect to the discipline they are responsible for, and these products should be promoted and available in the appropriate discipline literature library (Xu, 2010). In addition, library should attach importance to the training of personnel and make efforts to establish a composite professional library contingent. Library should organize staff to study library expertise in a variety of learning modes, such as offering expert lectures, on-the-job training in batch, study tours and visits at other universities to learn the advanced

experience in the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference. The librarians having junior job title and low educational attainment should improve their professional and theoretical knowledge on library and the expertise of various disciplines through full-time study, advanced study or other ways of study. The librarians having a certain degree of educational attainment should be encouraged to study for a graduate degree. In short, it is necessary to constantly enhance the quality of library staff to make them be competent to take part in the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference.

3.2 Establish A Sound Regulatory Framework and Follow the Principle of Unified Control to Improve Literature Resource Utilization

The appointment system and competitive post engagement system should be implemented in the library; the regulatory framework of the library should be established to clearly define the responsibilities and the scope of business of every position of the library staff; librarians should wear their personal tag at work. The reorganization of library human resource is the prime importance to the implementation of integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference.

Unified management and rational layout. We should break the traditional closed and semi-open shelf pattern and the separation of small stack rooms and set up a large reading area in order to create a large open learning and research space for teachers and students. It is favorable to improving the literature resource utilization.

3.3 Strengthen Stack Room Management: Reduce Random Stack Rate and Loss Rate

First, let teachers and students learn about the library structure and layout characteristics. Librarians shall improve their professional competence and ethics, help students quickly find the required literature, cultivate their civilized habit in borrowing books, strengthen the round of stack rooms and make efforts to sure the good order of stacks.

Second, we can arrange students to participate in the work-study program in a planned and purposive manner, assign them to different department to participate in and learn about the library management work and let them work with librarians in arranging books on shelf and the round of library. Through the publicity of the experiences in their classrooms and dormitories, more students will be formed about the work processes of the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference, and they will further understand and support the library work. Moreover, necessary penalty schedule should be established, and advanced detection equipment and the system of post responsibility should be adopted in the library. One-to-one service should be implemented in the hot book and new book shelves. An advanced photocopier should be applied

and it should maintain available to facilitate students' accessing to information resources and ensure that they can get the required literature information in the shortest possible time.

3.4 In Order to Better Implement the Integrative Service of Borrowing: Reading and Reference—It Is Necessary to Strengthen the Electronic Resource Building

The informatization in the present era has more urgent requirements about electronic literature in university library. As a consequence, it is a part of the central tasks of university library construction to enhance the reasonable configuration of electronic literature in the literature resource building, develop the development policy for electronic resources, integrate the electronic resources with the traditional resources and constantly deepen the literature resource building.

The integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference is designed to provide facilities for teachers and students and try to meet their demands. The library of our university has strengthened network resource building and made reasonable configuration of network resource building and the library collection; it has been focusing on the building and utilization of network information resources. In recent years, we have purchased electronic resources including a) EduChina digital library and Tsinghua Tongfang CNKI database, and b) CALIS Current Contents of Journal, ScienceDirect, which provide the latest academic research information for the study of students and researchers of teachers.

In the literature collection structure of a library, electronic resources, paper-based books and journals are 3 main resources of the literature materials. In the future, the electronic resource building will conform to the schooling philosophy of universities; more importantly, it can meet the research needs of teachers and students and provide the service to the maximum possible extent.

3.5 In Order to Implement the Integrative Service of Borrowing, Reading and Reference, Relationship Between the Libraries of Different Universities Should Be Strengthened to Share Library Resources

In the traditional literature resource building, universities build their own literature resource and collection system in a closed pattern and centering on the service for teaching and research. Universities strengthen their library resource building in accordance with their development orientation, specialties offered and teaching plan arrangements. In the present times, the resource building conforms to the schooling philosophy of universities; more importantly, it can meet the research needs of teachers and students and provide the service to the maximum possible extent.

3.6 In Order to Implement the Integrative Service of Borrowing, Reading and Reference, It Is Necessary to Strengthen the Relationship Between the Libraries of Different Universities to Share Library Resources

In the traditional literature resource building, universities build their own literature resource and collection system in a closed pattern and centering on the service for teaching and research. Universities strengthen their library resource building in accordance with their development orientation, specialties offered and teaching plan arrangements. In the present times, we should strengthen the relationship between the libraries of different universities to realize the sharing of library resources. By doing so, we can not only improve the utilization of the literature resource of our university, but also relieve the stress from the limited library funding and the shortage of premises, give play to the advantages of university libraries and provide teachers and students with a range of literature resources. The road of resource sharing, which complies with the needs of the times, has made a contribution to the construction and development of modern libraries and offered the advantageous conditions to implement the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference.

To sum up, the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference is convenient for teachers and students and improves the literature resource utilization. As a person-oriented mode of service, it can effectively play the role of library.

The implementation of the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference promotes staff's own development and make full use of the human resource.

Necessary measures should be taken to correct the problems and shortcomings occurring during the implementation of the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference for the constant perfection, plenitude and improvement.

In my opinion, as the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference is generally implemented in China, some necessary measures must be taken as followings in the future:

Make reasonable talent allocation and establish a high-quality and professional library contingent.

Establish a sound regulatory framework and follow the principle of unified control to improve literature resource utilization.

Strengthen stack room management; reduce random stack rate and loss rate.

Further enhance the electronic resource building

Strengthen the relationship between the libraries of different universities and set up scientific ideology to realize the sharing of library resources.

Realize the computerized management in borrowing service.

The integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference has set higher demands on librarians. Therefore,

librarians of different universities should increase their degree of knowledge by various means according to their own specific circumstances, such as on-the-job training, self-education, participating in library academic seminars and visiting other libraries, to fit them for the integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference.

It is only in this way can we provide better integrative service of borrowing, reading and reference, better meet the demands of teachers and students and promote the development of the library course.

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