

Simple Management of University Library in the New Period

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Abstract

This paper mainly illustrates the concept of simple management. Internet age, as a new period, has multi-facet and deep influence on university students. The development of internet technology has posed new challenges for university library management to renew the old management patterns, and brings to management staff new problems in studying “people oriented” management theory. The simple management of university library means creating a new situation where the focus is on humanized design and humanized service. It is the inevitable demand of the time, since only in this way can management in 21st century be better practiced.

Key words: Simple management; The new period; University library; The idea of humanized service

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INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of communication and information technology in modern society, people are entering the age of internet, a new period with fierce competitions. University libraries have always been in the mainstream of automation, digitalization and networking. From the perspective of management, library should put people at the center of its focus, adopt the philosophy of humanized service and cultivate an atmosphere of

culture as well as cohesiveness. Management and simple management are two concepts that should be defined in terms of the management of library.

1. THE CONCEPT OF MANAGEMENT AND SIMPLE MANAGEMENT

It is not hard to understand the concept of management. Management (Chinese pinyin: Guanli) is actually the simple combination of Guan (directing) and Li (optimizing). “Guan (Directing)” focuses on changing people, their attitudes and their capabilities; while “Li (optimizing)” focuses on changing things, procedures and unreasonable practices (Song, 2012).

Simple management requires us to grasp the essence of things and solve the most basic problems in our practice without going against the rules and complicating things in order to deal with things properly and reach the best management. It pursues simplicity in management form but the depth and richness in management essence, thus requiring deep understanding and grasp of the rules of things. The core of simple management is to form a natural order where any group or organization can organize their work around one core so that when, what and how much of a task should be finished in each procedure can be already decided without the direction of managers. That is to say, a natural order is formed when a group or each position, each procedure and each person in the group knows what should be done at any given time. Simple management is a cost-efficient philosophy and management at its highest level. However, it should be noted that “simple” does not mean simplistic “reduction” or “abandonment”, it requires careful preparing, understanding, practicing and implementing. Only in this way, can “simple” become “efficient” and management become simple, concentrated and efficient.

To sum up, simple management is a new subject in “people-oriented” management theory. How university libraries can achieve simple management in the new period can be explained in the following two aspects.

2. THE SIMPLE MANAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IS A REPRESENTATION OF HUMANIZED DESIGN AND HUMANIZED SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

2.1 The Object of University Library Management Is a Great Number of Modern University Students and Faculties

With the development of modern science and technology, people have entered an internet age dominated by technology or tools. The internet has a multi-facet and deep influence on modern university students both materialistically and spiritually. They have a growing demand for both the amount and the speed of information. They create a real world in a virtual space where they can have “online dialogues”. With the wide application of internet technology in different fields in modern society, computer is becoming the main tool for social production and a main index for the development of productivity. It is bringing profound changes to the means of generating knowledge and material production (Gao, 2002). For example: In 1996, U.S. Department of Education defined technological quality as the ability to use computers and other technological means to improve study, efficiency and performance. Four objectives concerning technological qualities are listed to ensure all students and teachers can improve their computer skills and to help students obtain the necessary trainings. Meanwhile, students and teachers have modern multimedia computers in classrooms which are connected to “information highway”. Apparently, America was rapidly transforming from “a country on wheels” to “a country in cyber space”. Internet age requires more from management which is one of the means to improve productivity, and raises challenges to traditional university library management. The time is calling for changes in old management patterns to make way for management innovations.

According to *Library Regulations for Regular Institutions of Higher Education*, library is defined as an academic institution. In our study on the features of library, we take “intermediary” as its essential feature and “academic, educational and service” as its social features; its academic feature is also emphasized in analyzing the functions of library. In fact, serving readers should be the only goal, the purpose of work and the ultimate meaning for existence (Cheng & Wang, 2003).

In the past, traditional library management theories emphasized management system, means and patterns in university libraries while few studies have covered the management philosophy and service philosophy of libraries. Now, in the context of internet age in this new period, we must innovate our management ideas by establishing a perspective of internet management in order to solve the new problems brought by changing internet age, thus better serving teachers and students.

2.2 Humanized Design and Humanized Service Fully Exemplifies the Simple Management in University Libraries

To begin with, we need to understand what “humanized” and “humanized service” are:

First, “humanized” means, before providing service, we should take into consideration that our services are provided to people. Therefore, we should be careful and considerable enough to carry out services that can bring people with comforts and dignity.

Second, “humanized” also means taking into account of human weaknesses. For example, people tend to be lazy, so our services need to bring customers immediate satisfaction after they use it instead of troubling customers many times when problems can be solved in one visit. Meanwhile, we should know that people do not like losing faces (being disgraced), so we should provide services without embarrassing people.

Third, “humanized” means understanding differences in human nature. People have very complex personalities. Even the most basic personal characteristics can differ greatly: some people are outgoing, while others are introverted; some are rigid, while others are flexible; some tend to think more while others tend to feel more; some judge through their sensations while others follow their intuition. People do not stay the same all the time as robots, so the services provided to people should not stay the same all the time. Customized services should be provided to people based on their characteristics.

Fourth, “humanized” means respecting people’s self-defense, their privacy and their dislike of being backbitten.

To sum up, humanized service means being more humanized in workplaces and doing a better job. Humanized services, or humanized design in university libraries suggest that the purpose of librarian’s work is to serve all the students and staff in the university.

Humanized service in libraries is a kind of “people-oriented” service philosophy and means. Directed information and service are provided to readers wholeheartedly based on their knowledge structure, information requirements, behavioral patterns and psychological tendencies (Han, 2011).

Our university library is taken as an example as follows to illustrate how simple management is achieved by adopting humanized management as its philosophy and changing traditional management patterns.

a) University library service is provided to teachers and university students. In our library, four study lounges are available for students. Moreover, the areas for studying and reading can be found on each floor. The services provided by librarians fully exemplify humanized care for students and teachers, making them feel that the library is more spacious, quiet and warm home than a place just for borrowing books.

Our library is newly built with humanized design represented in its furniture selection and appearance, fully presenting a humanized philosophy. It is one of the major characteristics of the internet age to fulfill the needs of teachers and students. When approaching the building, teachers and students will immediately notice its openness, spaciousness and wholeness formed by floors and rooms. The color environment is elegant in the library as no color with strong contrast is used. The activity space, illumination, lights, temperature, humidity, ventilation and seats can all meet people's need for studying and reading. From an aesthetic perspective, the library allows people to feel closer to the environment. Meanwhile, managers of the library also make it easy and comfortable for teachers and students to borrow books. Sixty sets of characterized sofa and chairs, as well as five hundred pots of flowers are added in the west campus while the eastern campus is completely refurbished and equipped with brand new curtains. In halls and reading rooms of the library, artistic works and green plants such as calligraphy, pottery and bonsai are placed to make the environment more beautiful and harmonious. In their efforts to enhance service experience in office desks, managers renovate office chairs and desks, standardize language for services, add many pots of flowers and require reception personnel to treat all consulting teachers and students with enthusiasm and patience while providing quality and considerate services.

b) The form of service in the library is a reflection of the level of service in libraries. Therefore, to achieve humanized service, it is necessary to obtain and understand customers' demands and preferences, providing services that are customized and advanced. Humanizing forms of service means librarians should tailor the forms of services according to different needs of readers to, ultimately, provide simple and convenient services to readers.

With a daily flow of hundreds of thousands of teachers and students through the library, it is a big window for serving teachers and students. Therefore, the quality of service and work ethics in the library can directly influence university image. That is why managers of the library require their staff to fully understand that: The philosophy of humanized service respects and cares about teachers and students, with whom a kind, equal and harmonious service relationship should be built. In their direct and indirect service interaction with teachers and students, librarians should be enthusiastic, use appropriate language, and always serve with a smile. In answering questions, they should behave with

good manners, speak properly and exhibit their charm with skillful services. Meanwhile, librarian should use civilized language. "Using civilized language" is the art of language in humanized services. Librarians should answer every question that students ask, not dodge questions intentionally without offering an explanation and give correct answers to a promised time.

c) Humanized services are provided according to different needs of teachers and students. With the dual tasks of teaching and research, teachers need extensive and professional literature information. They require information in huge amount and with great precision. Therefore, for serving teachers, librarians should create pathways for feedbacks to track their service, provide different services to teachers from different professions and levels, and take as their objective to improve teachers' satisfaction with the library.

The services provided to students fall into the following two aspects: for freshmen and sophomores, we should first introduce to them the structure of library collection, information searching, online data selection and collection as well as online catalog searching. For juniors and seniors, librarians should provide them with comprehensive information concerning professional literature search, literature purchase and data connection, thus enabling them to improve their professional knowledge through reading documents and materials.

d) System-building: Our library has issued *Incentive Methods for Scientific Researches, Library of Jinan University*, set positions for equal competition as needed and established a complete system. Besides, library managers often enroll them in exchange programs and offer various conveniences to their research programs, in order to cultivate a group of high-quality talents who are good at using new knowledge to break new grounds.

In conclusion, based on the situation of the school, library management in the new period should change traditional management patterns and adopt simple management with the philosophy of humanized management so as to make clear its future objectives and directions and contribute to the development of library.

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