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Reflections on the Overall Design and Development Path for High-Quality Development of University Libraries (Postprint)

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Abstract

In the new era, university libraries shoulder new missions and responsibilities, and investigating the strategies and pathways for their high-quality development helps clarify strategic planning for future development and enhance their value and influence. This article employs systematic analysis to expound upon the significance of high-quality development of university libraries and to design the tasks and pathways for such development. The pathways for high-quality development of university libraries encompass three dimensions: transitioning from resource-driven to service-driven, and subsequently to innovation-led paradigms; shifting from traditional library capabilities to new library capabilities; and achieving the organic integration of academic research and operational research.

Full Text

Consideration on the Overall Design and Development Paths for High-Quality Development of Academic Libraries

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Abstract

In the new era, academic libraries must shoulder new missions and responsibilities. Exploring the pathways to high-quality development helps clarify strategic planning for the future of academic libraries and enhances their value and influence. This paper employs systematic analysis to elaborate on the significance of high-quality development for academic libraries and designs the tasks and pathways for achieving it. The path to high-quality development encompasses three dimensions: transitioning from resource-driven to service-driven and ultimately

to innovation-led development; shifting from traditional library capabilities to new library capabilities; and achieving organic integration of academic research and operational research.

Keywords: Academic Library; Librarianship; Library Service; High-Quality Development; Library Strategy

1. The Significance of High-Quality Development for Academic Libraries

High-quality development of academic libraries represents an intensive, connotation-driven growth model propelled by user demand and innovation leadership, with the fundamental measure being the contribution and service effectiveness to users. This signifies a transition from traditional library functions to a new phase of development. In the new era, academic libraries must clearly define their positioning and functions, establishing strategic plans that align with the times and meet user needs. As social knowledge exchange institutions, libraries must continuously improve themselves to match societal development needs, focusing on actual input-output effectiveness to realize their value and enhance social influence.

Currently, many academic libraries remain in traditional development models with limited cognition of their positioning and capabilities, insufficient attention to high-quality development, and continued focus on collection-based services. The primary contradiction has shifted from users' literature needs versus libraries' literature resources to users' demands for new services versus libraries' inadequate service capacity. The crux of failing to achieve high-quality development lies in not effectively implementing personalized, precise, and intelligent knowledge services through new models like network services and embedded services.

2. Overall Design Framework for High-Quality Development

2.1 Strengthening Comprehensive Party Leadership Every stage of development in China's academic library sector has been inseparable from the leadership of the Communist Party of China. Party leadership is the source of motivation for continuous library development. On April 25, 2022, during his inspection of Renmin University of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that the library's collection of red literature is precious red memory that must be carefully protected, gradually digitized to educate and inspire more people. He also called for strengthening the protection and restoration of ancient books using modern technology, deeply exploring the philosophical thoughts and humanistic spirit they contain, and promoting creative transformation and innovative development of excellent traditional Chinese culture. This expectation also serves as a driving force for academic library development.

2.2 Aligning with National Strategic Planning The 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and Long-Range Objectives Through 2035 explicitly requires building a high-quality education system. Academic libraries must align their high-quality development with national major strategic plans. Based on national priorities, they should continuously advance strategic planning and implementation, answer key questions about what work must be done and what problems must be solved, clarify relationships among various library elements, and transform plans into concrete actions. They must adhere to the path of socialist cultural development with Chinese characteristics, centering on raising flags, winning hearts and minds, educating new generations, promoting culture, and building a positive image.

Specific initiatives include participating in new academic communication systems such as preprint platforms. Preprints, as unpublished versions of papers before rigorous peer review, represent a new model of academic communication. The China Information Resource Management Preprint Platform (<http://lis.chinaxiv.org/server/lisindex.htm>), built by the National Science Library of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, has established management committees, advisory committees, and volunteer teams composed of experts in information resource management. Several domestic university libraries, including Tsinghua University Library, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences Library, Renmin University of China Library, and Zhejiang University Library, have incorporated preprint platforms into their collections. Peking University Library actively participates in the Peking University Journal Network (PKU-OAJ) 2.0, making positive contributions to expanding academic accumulation and knowledge innovation across various disciplines.

2.3 Meeting User Needs and Behaviors in the New Era Academic libraries must deeply implement a user-centered service philosophy that aligns with new era user needs and behaviors. The current information environment has undergone dramatic changes, and user needs are evolving accordingly. Many researchers now obtain scientific information primarily or exclusively through networks rather than through physical or digital libraries. For younger researchers, the basic perception is “if it’s not online, it doesn’t exist.” Libraries barely use databases and only occasionally use search engines. These signals pose greater challenges for libraries.

In the era where “good wine also fears a deep alley,” academic libraries must adapt to changes in user needs and behaviors, actively establish connections with campus and external users, and embed themselves in users’ teaching, research, and management processes to provide in-depth intelligence services. They must vigorously expand embedded subject services to support scientific and technological innovation, narrowing the gap between library resources and users to realize the “last mile” of library resource value.

2.4 Enhancing Think Tank Service Capabilities The construction of new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics is a national development strategy. As professional literature and information institutions within universities, academic libraries should respond to national needs, enhance think tank awareness, and fully leverage their advantages to provide resources, technical support, and effective services for think tank institutions and research. They should transform their disciplinary intelligence analysis capabilities into think tank research capabilities, crossing the gap from intelligence to think tank, and improving the actual effectiveness of think tank research to promote sustainable development.

Many domestic and foreign university libraries, including Peking University Library, Renmin University of China Library, Stanford University Library, Harvard University Library, Princeton University Library, and London School of Economics and Political Science Library, have conducted think tank-related construction and services, achieving positive results and providing valuable reference cases.

2.5 Promoting Smart Library Construction and Services Driven by IoT and artificial intelligence technologies, libraries are inevitably evolving from physical libraries to digital libraries, then to smart libraries, and ultimately to intelligent libraries. The core issue in smart library construction is smart services, with demand-driven capability testing being the basic principle. This requires libraries to create user-centered smart services through the organic integration of intelligent technology and human wisdom.

Academic libraries should not neglect in-person services due to the impact of digital network technologies. Physical libraries remain popular with many users. Libraries must provide three-dimensional services across networks, data, and physical spaces; diversified services including literature, information, data, and disciplinary services; and hierarchical services from documents to information to solutions, ultimately advancing to intelligent and smart services.

2.6 Forward-Looking Layout for Metaverse Libraries With discussions about the metaverse heating up across industries, exploring the relationship between the metaverse and libraries has become a hot topic in academic library research. While some view the metaverse as an inevitable outcome of technological development, libraries should rationally examine metaverse issues, avoid conceptual hype, and make calm, objective judgments about its future impact on libraries. They should think prospectively and plan ahead for possible metaverse library construction while focusing on current service priorities.

3. Development Paths for High-Quality Development

3.1 From Resource-Driven to Service-Driven to Innovation-Led The advancement path should start from user needs, transitioning from resource-driven to service-driven and ultimately to innovation-led development. Resource

guarantee is the foundation supporting all library services. Under this premise, libraries should first use digital and network means to build attractive physical spaces. They should then combine new user needs to provide personalized services embedded in users' real scenarios. On this basis, they should enhance intelligence functions, provide more in-depth systematic intelligence services, and ultimately transform intelligence services into think tank services, advancing from information provision to decision-making support. Under digital intelligence empowerment, knowledge services should evolve into intelligent and smart services, driving overall high-quality development.

3.2 From Traditional Library Capabilities to New Library Capabilities

Libraries must update their traditional roles in the digital age and continuously adapt to changes to support meaningful learning. IFLA's Global Vision Report emphasizes that libraries must evolve to meet changing user expectations. This requires transforming traditional capabilities such as reference consultation and information literacy education within libraries into new capabilities like knowledge organization, embedded services, and knowledge consulting. Intelligence research and analysis should advance to think tank research and services, ultimately driving the transformation from digital libraries and mobile libraries to smart and intelligent libraries.

3.3 Integration of Academic Research and Operational Research

High-quality development requires combining and coordinating academic research with operational research. Library work should not exclude academic research, as it would lose its theoretical foundation and development momentum. Conversely, academic research should be oriented toward user services, finding research topics in service practice and ultimately solving practical problems. Libraries should enhance staff research capabilities, cultivate expert librarians with research expertise and problem-solving abilities, and conduct forward-looking and reality-oriented research to meet user needs for new services. Research should be linked to services, and services should drive research innovation.

4. Conclusion

Academic library development requires resource guarantees, leadership attention, and the combined efforts of all elements. By focusing on high-quality development, clarifying its core, and building excellent library genes, libraries can promote better and faster development in the new era. If library professionals can face challenges directly, strengthen professional confidence, enhance professional capabilities, and actively respond to era changes, academic libraries will usher in their best era.

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