

Analysis of the Current Procurement Status of Original English-Language Print Books in “Double First-Class” Institutions and Countermeasure Research*

Cao Dan

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of the “Double First-Class” initiative, the acquisition of original English-language print books is of strategic importance for supporting the development of first-class disciplines. To understand the current state of acquisitions, optimize acquisition mechanisms, and improve collection quality, this study, based on acquisition data from “Double First-Class” institutions, employs statistical analysis and comparative research methods to conduct an in-depth analysis from six dimensions: institutional distribution, acquisition continuity, disciplinary structure, publishers’ disciplinary strengths, the proportion of new and older books, and acquisition reference information. The study finds that current acquisitions of original English-language print books face problems such as uneven distribution among purchasing institutions, prominent gaps in resource continuity, structural disciplinary imbalance, high concentration of publishers, and significant disparities in the quality of acquisition reference conditions. It is necessary to strengthen top-level design and optimize the funding allocation mechanism for “Double First-Class” discipline development; improve acquisition precision and reinforce disciplinary linkage effects; ensure quality control at the source of resource selection and build a discipline-oriented publishing matrix; and enhance in-depth content disclosure and quantitative evaluation of academic value. In this way, libraries can comprehensively improve acquisition efficiency and collection quality, providing solid English-language book resource support for the development of first-class disciplines.

Full Text

[Resources · Sharing]

Analysis of the Current Procurement Status of Original English-Language Print Books in “Double First-Class” Institutions and Countermeasure Research*

Cao Dan

Library of Beijing Vocational College of Transportation, Beijing, 100096

Abstract Against the backdrop of “Double First-Class” construction, the introduction of original English-language print books is of major strategic significance for supporting the development of first-class disciplines. In order to understand the current state of procurement, optimize procurement mechanisms, and improve collection quality, this study is based on procurement data from “Double First-Class” institutions and adopts statistical analysis and comparative research methods to conduct an in-depth analysis from six dimensions: institutional distribution, procurement continuity, disciplinary structure, publishers’

disciplinary strengths, proportions of new and old books, and procurement reference information. The study finds that current procurement of original English-language print books is characterized by uneven distribution among purchasing institutions, prominent gaps in resource continuity, structural imbalance across disciplines, high concentration among publishers, and marked disparities in the quality of procurement reference conditions. It is necessary to strengthen top-level design and optimize the mechanism for allocating funds for “Double First-Class” discipline construction; improve procurement precision and reinforce disciplinary linkage effects; control the source of resource selection and build a disciplinary publishing matrix; and enhance in-depth content disclosure and quantitative evaluation of academic value. In this way, libraries can comprehensively improve procurement efficiency and collection quality, thereby providing solid English-language book resource support for the development of first-class disciplines.

[Keywords] “Double First-Class” ; discipline construction; library procurement; original English-language print books; procurement status

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Introduction

“Double First-Class” construction is a major strategic decision for the development of China’s higher education. It is also an important measure for realizing the “Two Centenary Goals” and building China into a strong country in higher education[1]. Its policy orientation has gone through three stages: in 2015, the central authorities adopted the *Overall Plan for Coordinating the Promotion of World-Class Universities and First-Class Disciplines*, which clarified the overall objectives; in 2017, the *Implementation Measures for Coordinating the Promotion of World-Class Universities and First-Class Disciplines (Interim)* formulated feasibility evaluation standards; and in 2022, the *Several Opinions on Further Promoting the Construction of World-Class Universities and First-Class Disciplines* abolished the distinction between first-class institutions and first-class disciplines, guiding universities to focus their energy and priorities on discipline construction. These policies highlight a strategic deployment in which higher education work takes “disciplines” as the cornerstone and “Double First-Class” as the goal, driving overall development through key construction efforts. As centers of documentary information resources, university libraries must closely align their resource support and service innovation with the goals of “Double First-Class” construction and the needs of disciplinary development. As an important component of academic resources, original English-language print books have irreplaceable value in university library collection development

and in support for teaching and research. First, original English-language print books carry the world's most cutting-edge academic achievements, theoretical systems, and research paradigms. They can avoid information loss caused by translation, ensure that teachers and students accurately obtain "first-hand" information, and provide academic support for researchers conducting in-depth studies. Second, against the background of "Double First-Class" construction, original English-language print books can provide teachers and students with resource content that is synchronized with international standards, strengthen their professional language competence and ability to use international literature, and better support teaching and research.

However, because such books are highly specialized in content, have a limited audience, involve many publication types, and have high unit prices[2], and because they have also been severely affected by the wave of digitization, they have become a difficulty in university libraries' print procurement work. Should procurement of original English-language print books therefore be stopped? The conclusion reached by relevant studies is "no." First, in some foreign university libraries that have adopted a policy of "prioritizing subscriptions to electronic resources," book circulation has declined significantly because electronic resource coverage is insufficient, resources cannot be presented intuitively, and physical browsing is not possible[3]. Second, many foreign publishers, especially university presses, do not have plans to publish electronic academic books, and original English-language print books will not be completely replaced by electronic resources[4]. Third, electronic resources often face problems such as interruption of authorization, platform instability, or access restrictions, making continuous access to resources difficult. Therefore, whether from the perspective of building a diversified collection system, ensuring readers' reading experience, and maintaining the value of book editions, or from the perspective of responding to the risks of digital resources, original English-language print books remain necessary and important resources in university library procurement. Against this background, it is necessary to systematically sort out the current procurement status of original English-language print books in Chinese university libraries and to construct a

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Author Profile: Cao Dan, master's degree, assistant librarian; research interests: book procurement and research data preservation.

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Resource development mechanisms guided by disciplinary development needs and supported by data-driven approaches are not only a breakthrough for promoting the upgrading of library services, but also an inevitable requirement for

empowering “Double First-Class” construction and serving the national higher-education strategy.

As early as 1966, studies had already been conducted in the United States on the development of foreign-language collections in public libraries[5]. In 1993, pursuant to the *Library Services and Construction Act*, the U.S. Office of Higher Education in Washington required that dedicated national-level funding be provided for local libraries to purchase foreign-language materials[6]. In 2011, the Web of Science platform added the Book Citation Index, formally taking citation data for foreign-language books as a major reference basis for evaluating academic books[7]. Grover M L[8] released an assessment report on Brigham Young University’s foreign-language collections, analyzing the demand environment for foreign-language resources in terms of disciplines, the publishing industry, and the university, and proposing optimization of acquisition, cataloging, and processing workflows so as to make better use of foreign-language collection resources. Tatalovich R et al.[9] examined the relationship between book awards and use, concluding that award-winning books received more citation data. Kousha K et al.[10] found significant correlations among *Choice* book reviews, Google Book citation frequency, and the number of WorldCat holdings, which can be used to measure the value of books.

In recent years, research in China on the acquisition of foreign-language print books has become relatively extensive. Duan Jun et al.[4], taking the foreign-language book acquisition work of the National Library of China as an example, introduced different forms of procurement methods in response to the reality of uncertain funding. Lin Rushi et al.[11] proposed a project-management model for foreign-language book acquisition based on a controlled environment, covering the entire process from preparing title-selection lists to readers’ borrowing after the books enter the library. Chen Dai et al.[12], taking Shanghai Library as an example, studied the characteristics and development history of patron-driven acquisition for foreign-language books, and on that basis optimized the methods and processes of foreign-language book procurement. Zhong Jianfa et al.[13] analyzed the current state of resource development under special funding projects for the introduction of humanities and social-science books in universities, and, against the strategic background of the national “Double First-Class” initiative, proposed strategies for optimizing resource procurement. Fan Cuiling et al.[14] analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of existing resource-procurement models in domestic university libraries and constructed a five-level stepped procurement model. In 2022, Beijing Normal University Library published the “Final Report on the Empirical Study of CASHL Foreign-Language Book Guarantee Based on Core Bibliographies” [15], evaluating the guarantee status and collection quality of CASHL foreign-language book holdings according to indicators such as disciplinary distribution, key publishers, and publication year.

1 Common Difficulties in the Acquisition of English-Language Original Print Books by University Libraries

1.1 Structural imbalance in funding is the core contradiction

At present, the acquisition of English-language original print books by Chinese university libraries faces a dual funding predicament. On the one hand, due to digital development, readers' reading behaviors and resource needs have changed, causing a sharp decline in the use of print resources and directly leading to a widespread reduction in print-book acquisition budgets. According to data released by the Steering Committee for Academic Libraries of the Ministry of Education[16], in 2022 nearly 40% of universities nationwide reduced their print-acquisition budgets. For example, Sun Yat-sen University reduced its budget by approximately 20.34 million yuan, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications by approximately 10.10 million yuan, and 14 leading institutions including Zhejiang University each reduced their annual budgets by more than 5 million yuan. A survey of 13 key institutions in the CASHL Northwest region[17] found that 11 institutions had average annual acquisition budgets for English-language original print books of less than 200,000 yuan. Calculated at an average price of 800 yuan per volume, these institutions can purchase only 250 English-language original print books per year.

On the other hand, the allocation of special "Double First-Class" funds is imbalanced. Since 2017, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education have established the "Special Fund for Guiding the Construction of World-Class Universities (Disciplines) and Characteristic Development in Central Universities" [18], and provinces have also successively launched special funding plans in order to improve the development level of higher education. According to incomplete statistics, in 2023 the special "Double First-Class" funds of 47 central universities totaled 5.26 billion yuan, while those of 34 local universities totaled 1.98 billion yuan[19]; in 2024, the special "Double First-Class" funds of 44 central universities totaled 4.7 billion yuan, while those of 49 local universities totaled 3.2 billion yuan[20]. The average annual special funding for central universities exceeds 100 million yuan, and that for local universities exceeds 60 million yuan. However, among the institutions approved for the above special funds, only 10 central universities and 3 local universities have average annual acquisition expenditures on English-language original print books exceeding 300,000 yuan. It can thus be seen that although special "Double First-Class" funds are sufficient, the proportion invested in the acquisition of English-language original print books is extremely low. There is a structural imbalance in the use of special funds for disciplinary resource development, leaving libraries in the predicament of "even the cleverest housewife cannot cook without rice."

1.2 Insufficient efficiency in resource selection is the key bottleneck

The rapidly expanding publishing ecosystem and the lack of disciplinary backgrounds among acquisition librarians further constrain the precision of resource

procurement. Data released by the International Publishers Association in 2023[21] show that in 2022 there were 2,252 publishers in the United States, with approximately 3.3 million ISBN registrations; the United Kingdom had 10,969 publishers, with approximately 150,000 ISBN registrations. The *2023 Overview of English Academic Book Publishing*[22] shows that the annual global output of English print books is between 200,000 and 300,000 titles; in 2023, academic books alone exceeded 120,000 titles, involving more than 3,400 publishers. Judging from the selection platform of China Educational Publications Import and Export Corporation[23], as of September 17, 2025, more than 4.16 million English-language original print books were available for purchase, with an average annual increase of 80,000–110,000 titles. At the same time, English print books are expensive: the average price of a single volume in the social sciences is 545 yuan, while the average price of a single volume in science, engineering, and medicine is nearly 1,000 yuan[22], dozens of times higher than that of Chinese books. While massive bibliographic information offers more choices, it also creates difficulties for the precise acquisition of disciplinary resources. In addition, constrained by language ability, disciplinary background, and the inability to access physical books, acquisition librarians cannot gain an in-depth understanding of book content, making it difficult to judge academic value and easily resulting in a mismatch between book content and disciplinary needs. Therefore, how to achieve precise matching between massive resources and disciplinary needs through mechanism innovation under limited funding conditions, thereby maximizing acquisition efficiency, has become a common challenge facing university libraries.

1.3 International S&T Barriers Intensify the External Procurement Predicament

The sustained intensification of international S&T barriers has become an important external challenge for the procurement of English original-edition printed books in China. In recent years, developed countries led by the United States have progressively tightened their technological blockade against China. During the Trump and Biden administrations, the United States accused China of using cultural exchanges and technological cooperation to “steal” intellectual property, and on this basis strengthened controls over the export of Chinese technology and intellectual property rights^[24]. Studies^[25] have shown that, compared with 2014–2018, the proportion of jointly authored papers between China and the United States in 2019–2023 declined significantly in fields such as physics, biology, chemistry, materials science, and medicine; these are precisely the disciplinary areas on which the United States places particular emphasis. Restrictions on academic exchange have made cooperation and communication between Chinese universities and top international research institutions and scholars increasingly difficult, seriously affecting knowledge sharing and scientific and technological progress. Against this background, English original-edition printed books, as an important gateway for obtaining cutting-edge international scientific knowledge, face unprecedented obstacles in procurement. Acquiring high-

quality S&T books has become an important channel for breaking blockades and mastering core knowledge; however, practical difficulties such as restricted procurement channels, increasingly stringent review, and prolonged acquisition cycles have also made it an increasingly urgent challenge in acquisition work to precisely select key books that meet disciplinary development needs.

2 Analysis of the Current Procurement of English Original-Edition Printed Books in University Libraries

Only by understanding the current procurement situation of English original-edition printed books in the libraries of China's "Double First-Class" universities can libraries better support the development of first-class disciplines. The data for this study come from the book orders of a major Chinese book import and export company from January 2021 to March 2024, covering a total of 117,000 titles and 159,000 copies. This company is an important domestic book import and export enterprise, importing and exporting more than 800,000 types and over 20 million copies of publications annually, and serving more than 1,000 libraries and research institutes in China. The research subjects are 87 "Double First-Class" universities, accounting for 59% of all "Double First-Class" universities; among them are 33 "985 Project" universities, accounting for 85% of all "985 Project" universities. The sample thus basically covers most of China's high-level and leading universities, and the data are highly representative. This study does not consider the number of copies; for the same type of book at each university, only one copy is counted. In addition, this study concerns only the procurement status of English printed books, and does not involve e-books.

2.1 Concentration of Purchasing Institutions and Breaks in Resource Procurement by Year

2.1.1 Purchasing Institutions Show a Trend Toward Concentration

The procurement of English original-edition printed books by "Double First-Class" universities shows a significant "head concentration" effect. According to statistics, the top 11 universities by procurement volume purchased nearly 90,000 copies over three years, accounting for 57% of the total. "985 Project" universities dominate the top 10 in procurement volume; the top three universities purchased 15,000, 12,000, and 12,000 copies over three years, respectively. Nearly 70% of universities purchased fewer than 500 copies per year on average. Resource allocation thus shows an obvious "Matthew effect." This phenomenon also confirms the problem noted above: the allocation of "Double First-Class" special funds is uneven.

2.1.2 Procurement Years Reveal a Crisis of Discontinuity Analyzing procurement years helps reveal the continuity and guarantee rate of English original-edition printed book procurement. This study defines universities that purchased at least 100 copies each year during 2021-2023 as continuously purchasing institutions. The data show that among the 87 "Double First-Class"

universities, only 30 met the standard for continuous procurement, while 66% experienced resource discontinuities. Except for two universities whose procurement volumes continued to grow, the annual procurement volumes of the remaining universities all fluctuated. Among institutions with resource discontinuities, 25 universities purchased fewer than 100 copies for all three consecutive years, that is, they experienced a three-year gap; the numbers of universities with two-year and one-year gaps were both 16. The reasons for these gaps are as follows: on the one hand, under the impact of electronic resources and pressure on physical collections, English original-edition printed books—despite their high procurement cost and limited readership—are often given priority for reduction; on the other hand, because of constraints such as procurement timing and available selection range, the selection rate for procurable books is relatively low. In addition, some universities may choose other book import companies, which are not included within the scope of this study.

2.2 Structural Imbalance in the Layout of Disciplinary Resources

2.2.1 Structural Imbalance by Disciplinary Category After excluding approximately 5,000 books without classification numbers, the distribution of purchased books by first-level categories of the Chinese Library Classification is shown in Figure 1. Overall, the procurement of English original-edition printed books displays the characteristics of “strong humanities and social sciences, weak science and engineering, and marginalized biomedical and agricultural fields.” Humanities and social sciences rank steadily first, with a procurement volume of 100,115 copies, accounting for 65%, while biomedical and agricultural fields account for less than 10%. Demand for science and engineering resources is highly concentrated: Industrial Technology (T) purchased 22,425 copies over three years, accounting for 15%, and is the discipline with the highest procurement volume; however, Environmental Science and Safety Science (X), as well as Astronomy and Earth Science (P), each account for less than 2%, and Transportation (U) and Aeronautics and Astronautics (V) each account for less than 1%. Demand for humanities and social science resources is relatively balanced, with only Political Science and Law (D) showing relatively high demand, whereas demand for biomedical and agricultural resources is generally low. The reasons are, on the one hand, related to disciplinary publication volume: high publication volume inevitably leads to high procurement volume. According to statistics, among global English academic printed books published in 2023, Industrial Technology (T), Political Science and Law (D), and Literature (I) ranked in the top three, which is basically consistent with the actual procurement situation. On the other hand, the pattern is inseparable from the specific resource needs of disciplines. The humanities and social sciences are “literature-dependent” disciplines, and literature and information resources constitute a basic guarantee for their disciplinary development^[13]. Some science and engineering disciplines place greater emphasis on investment in experimental equipment, while biomedical and agricultural disciplines pay more attention to “valuing practice over theory,” thereby squeezing the budget for printed resources.

Judging from the TOP20 procurement volumes for second-level categories in the Chinese Library Classification, humanities and social sciences occupy 14 positions. Law (D9), with a procurement volume of 10,789 copies, ranks steadily first, far exceeding Literatures of Various Countries (I3/7), which ranks second with 7,540 copies. Automation Technology and Computer Technology (TP), with 7,037 copies, follows, and Mathematics (O1), with 5,361 copies, ranks closely behind; these are the top two second-level categories in science and engineering by demand. There are no biomedical or agricultural categories in the TOP20. Overall, resource procurement reflects an “emphasis...

a tendency in resource development toward “emphasizing the humanities over technology, and emphasizing fundamentals over applications.”

Figure text: In the bar chart, CLC first-level categories and volumes are grouped as follows:

- **Biomedical, medical, and agricultural sciences (9%)**
 - S Agricultural Sciences: 1,259
 - Q Biological Sciences: 5,637
 - R Medicine and Health: 6,809
- **Humanities and Social Sciences (65%)**
 - Z General Books: 31
 - A Marxism, Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory: 203
 - E Military Affairs: 535
 - H Language and Writing: 5,288
 - C General Social Sciences: 7,436
 - G Culture, Science, Education, and Sports: 7,824
 - J Art: 8,271
 - I Literature: 11,383
 - K History and Geography: 12,049
 - F Economics: 12,957
 - B Philosophy and Religion: 13,527
 - D Politics and Law: 20,611
- **Science and Engineering (26%)**
 - N General Natural Sciences: 349
 - V Aeronautics and Astronautics: 361
 - U Transportation: 765
 - P Astronomy and Earth Sciences: 2,326
 - X Environmental Science and Safety Science: 2,853
 - O Mathematical Sciences and Chemistry: 10,425
 - T Industrial Technology: 22,425

Figure 1. Distribution of the number of purchased books by CLC first-level category

2.2.2 Resource layouts present different types

Horizontal comparisons among institutions can reveal the disciplinary distribution characteristics of resources. By statistically examining the disciplinary emphases of institutions with high procurement volumes, two patterns of resource procurement emerge. First, a small number of leading institutions have broad resource coverage and no obvious disciplinary characteristics. For example, among Beijing Normal University's 12 high-procurement disciplines, 7 are first-class disciplines, accounting for 58%; among Wuhan University's 11 high-procurement disciplines, 5 are first-class disciplines, accounting for 45%. The disciplinary resources of the above institutions are dispersed and do not show a clear orientation toward first-class disciplines. In addition, among the 87 institutions, only 16 institutions (18%) allocated more than half of their purchased resources to first-class disciplines, indicating that the share of procurement volume for first-class disciplines is relatively low. Second, specialized institutions exhibit a discipline-focused procurement model, with resources concentrated in 1-2 advantageous disciplines and with obvious disciplinary characteristics. For example, institutions in politics and law, finance and economics, and medicine all have resource concentration levels of around 80%; music institutions have resource concentration levels as high as more than 90%.

2.2.3 Deviations in the implementation of discipline-based procurement policies

Sorting out institutional procurement from the perspective of longitudinal disciplinary comparison can reflect the level of support for English-language print-book resources in first-class disciplines. Because authoritative disciplinary mappings are lacking, the author, based on the principle of disciplinary classification, mapped the secondary category classification numbers of the Chinese Library Classification to first-class disciplines, and summarized the procurement volume and disciplinary proportion of first-class disciplines. The 22 first-class disciplines with relatively high procurement volumes were selected as samples to further analyze the distribution of the TOP5 institutions by procurement volume (see Table 1). The statistics show that, at present, "Double First-Class" institutions exhibit a clear deviation from the direction of their first-class discipline development in the procurement of English original print books. Among the 22 disciplines, only four—art theory, fine arts, music and dance, and crop science—have relatively high concentration among purchasing institutions. For example, in art theory, the highest share of a single institution's procurement is 41%, and in fine arts the highest is 44%. The remaining disciplines are dispersed, and the procurement volume of any single institution does not exceed 30% of the total for the discipline. In addition, according to the procurement share of institutions with first-class disciplines and institutions without first-class disciplines, for nearly half of the disciplines, the procurement proportion of institutions without first-class disciplines is higher than that of institutions with first-class disciplines. For example, in the three disciplines of art theory, physics, and soft-

ware engineering, the TOP5 institutions' first-class disciplines do not include the corresponding disciplines; in disciplines such as fine arts and world history, only one of the TOP5 institutions has the corresponding first-class discipline. The above results indicate that "Double First-Class" institutions show policy deviations in the procurement of English original print-book resources: disciplinary funds have not been fully transformed into the capacity to guarantee professional resources, and there is an institutional mismatch between resource allocation and disciplinary development strategies.

Table 1. Procurement distribution of TOP5 institutions for first-class disciplines corresponding to procurement volume

Major category	First-class discipline (mapped CLC classification numbers)	Institutions where it is a first-class discipline / institutions		Major category	First-class discipline (mapped CLC classification numbers)	Institutions where it is a first-class discipline / institutions	
		Institutions where it is a first-class discipline / institutions	Institutions where it is not a first-class discipline / institutions			Institutions where it is a first-class discipline / institutions	Institutions where it is not a first-class discipline / institutions
Humanities and Social Sciences	Philosophy (B)	4	1	Science and Engineering	Chemistry (O6)	3	2
	Public Administration (C93)	1	4		Mathematics (O1—O2)	4	1
	Political Science (D, excluding D9, DF)	4	1		Physics (O4)	0	5
	Law (D9, DF)	5	0		Materials Science and Engineering (TB3)	3	2

Major category	First-class discipline (mapped CLC classification numbers)	Institutions where it is a first-class discipline / institutions	Institutions where it is not a first-class discipline / institutions	Major category	First-class discipline (mapped CLC classification numbers)	Institutions where it is a first-class discipline / institutions	Institutions where it is not a first-class discipline / institutions
Humanities and Social Sciences	Applied and Economic Sciences (F0–F8, excluding F2)	4	1	Science and Engineering	Environmental Science and Engineering (X)	1	4
Humanities and Social Sciences	Foreign Languages and Literatures (H0, H3, I0, I1, I3/7)	4	1	Science and Engineering	Computer Science and Technology (TP1–TP3)	1	4
Humanities and Social Sciences	Art Theory (J0–J1)	0	5	Science and Engineering	Software Engineering (TP31–TP39)	0	5
Humanities and Social Sciences	Fine Arts (J2–J5)	1	4	Science and Engineering	Information and Communication Engineering (TN)	1	4

Major cate- gory	First- class disci- pline (mapped CLC classifi- cation num- bers)	Institutions where it is a first- class disci- pline / institu- tions	Institutions where it is not a first- class disci- pline / institu- tions	Major cate- gory	First- class disci- pline (mapped CLC classifi- cation num- bers)	Institutions where it is a first- class disci- pline / institu- tions	Institutions where it is not a first- class disci- pline / institu- tions
Humanities and Social Sci- ences	Music and Dance (J6–J7)	2	3	Biomedical Medi- cal, and Agri- cul- tural Sci- ences	Biology (Q)	1	4
Humanities and Social Sci- ences	World History (K1– K7)	1	4	Biomedical Medi- cal, and Agri- cul- tural Sci- ences	Basic Medicine (R3)	2	3
				Biomedical Medi- cal, and Agri- cul- tural Sci- ences	Pharmacy (R9)	4	1

Major cate- gory	First- class disci- pline (mapped CLC classifi- cation num- bers)	Institutions where it is a first- class disci- pline / institu- tions	Institutions where it is not a first- class disci- pline / institu- tions	Major cate- gory	First- class disci- pline (mapped CLC classifi- cation num- bers)	Institutions where it is a first- class disci- pline / institu- tions	Institutions where it is not a first- class disci- pline / institu- tions
				Biomedical, Crop Medi- Science cal, (S0–S7) and Agri- cul- tural Sci- ences		3	2

2.3 Publishers are centralized and disciplinary characteristics are significant

For ease of statistics, this study standardized publisher names and independently counted large publishers with significant influence, such as Routledge and CRC Press, rather than including them under the Taylor & Francis group.

group; the other sub-brands with relatively small influence were assigned to their parent publishing groups, such as assigning Wiley-VCH to Wiley and Chapman and Hall to CRC Press. Publisher names were standardized; for example, De|G Press and Walter de Gruyter GmbH were uniformly expressed as De Gruyter.

2.3.1 Highly Concentrated Publisher Purchasing

Among the more than 3,000 publishers surveyed this time, the top 16 publishers by purchasing volume accounted for 62% of the market share. Among them, Routledge (12%), Cambridge University Press (8%), Wiley (7%), and Oxford University Press (7%) formed the first tier, each with purchases exceeding 10,000 copies. At present, the procurement of English-language original-edition print book resources by universities is highly concentrated among a small number of major British and American academic publishers. This reflects the relatively high recognition of these publishers in the development of university library collections, but it also indirectly indicates that the purchasing share of small and medium-sized as well as specialized publishers is seriously insufficient.

2.3.2 Stratification of Publishers' Academic Value

The quantity and influence of high-quality books are important indicators for measuring the quality of a publisher. The ratio of the number of purchased titles to the number of published titles can, to a certain extent, reflect the market's recognition of the academic value of that publisher. Based on the print-book selection and procurement platform of a large book import company in China, the author obtained data on the average annual available publication catalogs of the top 16 publishers from 2021 to 2023, and plotted the ratio between the average annual number of purchased titles and the average annual number of published titles (see Figure 2). From 2021 to 2023, Routledge published an average of 11,545 titles per year, with an average annual purchased title count of 4,131; the ratio of average annual purchased titles to average annual published titles was 0.4. Springer published as many as 12,155 titles annually on average, with an average annual purchased title count of 2,026; the ratio between the two was 0.2. Although the above publishers may have a relatively low proportion of high-quality books due to factors such as e-books encroaching on market demand, high unit prices for print books, and an excessive proliferation of published titles, their large publication base can still ensure a relatively high purchasing volume. Wiley, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, and others each published fewer than 2,000 titles annually on average, with ratios of 1–1.5, making them publishers with relatively high recognition among libraries. Cengage Learning and Princeton University Press each published fewer than 400 titles annually on average, yet their ratios were 2.5 and 3.5, far higher than those of other publishers. This means that the overall quality of the titles published by these two publishers is very high and has long been favored and recognized by libraries. By contrast, Academic Press, Bloomsbury, IGI Global, and others may have relatively low print-book purchasing volumes due to factors such as low demand in their main subject areas or relatively poor product quality.

Figure 2 Comparison of the average annual number of published titles and the average annual number of purchased titles for the top 16 publishers by purchasing volume

2.3.3 Growth in Publisher Purchasing Highlights Disciplinary Demand

In 2022, the purchasing volume of many publishers showed negative growth, which corroborates the finding discussed above that the print-book procurement budgets of universities nationwide were generally reduced in that year. However, in 2023, with the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reopening of offline bidding, procurement, book fairs, and other activities, pent-up demand for print books was released in a concentrated manner, and the number of purchases increased significantly (see Table 2). The data show that from 2021 to 2023, Routledge, Oxford University Press,

Table 2 Distribution of Purchased Copies from 2021 to 2023 for the Top 16 Publishers by Purchasing Volume

Publisher	Purchasing volume — 2021	Purchasing volume — 2022	Purchasing volume — 2023	2023 relative to 2021 — Increase	2023 relative to 2021 — Growth rate	2021– 2023 share of pur- chases by dis- cipline —Hu- mani- ties and social sci- ences	2021– 2023 share of pur- chases by dis- cipline —Sci- ence and engi- neer- ing	2021– 2023 share of pur- chases by dis- cipline — Biomed- ical and agri- cul- tural
Routledge	5,077 copies	3,576 copies	7,300 copies	2,223 copies	44%	89%	9%	2%
Oxford Uni- ver- sity Press	2,692 copies	3,282 copies	4,361 copies	1,669 copies	62%	86%	9%	5%
Wiley	4,125 copies	3,408 copies	3,833 copies	−292 copies	−7%	22%	61%	17%
Cambridge Uni- ver- sity Press	3,579 copies	3,421 copies	3,752 copies	173 copies	5%	78%	19%	3%
Princeton Uni- ver- sity Press	901 copies	980 copies	2,541 copies	1,640 copies	182%	79%	16%	5%
Springer	2,426 copies	1,966 copies	2,384 copies	−42 copies	−2%	30%	55%	15%
CRC Press	2,354 copies	1,447 copies	2,374 copies	20 copies	1%	7%	77%	16%
Lexington Books	651 copies	543 copies	2,351 copies	1,700 copies	261%	96%	3%	1%
Bloomsbury	585 copies	685 copies	1,112 copies	527 copies	90%	93%	7%	0%

Publisher	Purchasing volume — 2021	Purchasing volume — 2022	Purchasing volume — 2023	2023 rela- tive to 2021 — In- crease	2023 rela- tive to 2021 — Growth rate	2021- 2023 share of pur- chases by dis- cipline —Hu- mani- ties and social sci- ences	2021- 2023 share of pur- chases by dis- cipline —Sci- ence and engi- neer- ing	2021- 2023 share of pur- chases by dis- cipline — Biomed- ical and agri- cul- tural
Elsevier	800 copies	744 copies	1,104 copies	304 copies	38%	2%	60%	38%
Academic Press	838 copies	430 copies	1,028 copies	190 copies	23%	9%	46%	45%
World Sci- en- tific	771 copies	667 copies	969 copies	198 copies	26%	24%	70%	6%
De Gruyter	833 copies	858 copies	889 copies	56 copies	7%	62%	36%	2%
Edward El- gar	612 copies	362 copies	871 copies	259 copies	42%	96%	4%	0%
Cengage Learning	626 copies	715 copies	776 copies	150 copies	24%	68%	27%	5%
IGI Global	477 copies	677 copies	725 copies	248 copies	52%	49%	48%	3%

For the four publishers including Princeton University Press and Lexington Books, the increases were all above 1,000 volumes; in 2023, the acquisition volumes of Princeton University Press, Edward Elgar, Academic Press, and Routledge doubled compared with the previous year, and Lexington Books showed a fourfold growth trend, indicating that the above publishers are generally valued by libraries. Further analysis of the proportional distribution by broad category in the 2021-2023 acquisition data for each publisher shows that, among the 16 publishers, 9 had humanities and social sciences books accounting for more than 60% of the publisher's total acquisitions over the three years. Among them, Lexington Books, Edward Elgar, and Bloomsbury reached proportions as high as over 90%, while Routledge and Oxford University Press were both

above 80%, indicating that demand for humanities and social sciences books is generally high. In science and engineering, the acquisitions of CRC Press and World Scientific accounted for 70% or more of each publisher's three-year total, while Wiley and Elsevier accounted for 60% or more. In biomedicine and agriculture, Academic Press and Elsevier accounted for relatively high proportions, while all other publishers were below 20%. Taken together with the above growth patterns, it can be concluded that, in the acquisition of original English-language print books by university libraries, demand is dominated by the humanities and social sciences, followed by science and engineering, with comparatively less demand in biomedicine and agriculture.

2.3.4 Even Distribution of Publishers' Subject Specializations

Analyzing the disciplinary characteristics of publishers helps construct a more precise knowledge map of academic resources and facilitates improved acquisition efficiency for libraries. By statistically examining acquisitions by first-level subject category among the top 16 publishers by acquisition volume (see Figure 3), it is found that different disciplines have their own advantageous publishers. In the humanities and social sciences, acquisition volume is mainly concentrated among three large academic publishers: Routledge, Oxford University Press, and Cambridge University Press. In addition, each discipline also has its own outstanding publishers. For example, in philosophy and religion (B), Princeton University Press and Lexington Books are relatively popular; in economics (F), books from Wiley, Springer, and Edward Elgar are favored. In science and engineering, acquisitions in industrial technology (T) far exceed those in other disciplines, with Wiley and CRC Press together accounting for 30% of total subject acquisitions; publishers such as Springer and Routledge also enjoy relatively high recognition. In mathematical sciences and chemistry (O), acquisitions are still led by Springer and Wiley. In biomedicine and agriculture, Wiley, Springer, and CRC Press have higher market popularity in biological sciences (Q); Wiley and Elsevier are advantageous publishers in medicine and health (R); while agricultural sciences (S) are mainly concentrated in Wiley and CRC Press, with overall acquisitions being relatively small.

Figure 3. Distribution of the number of titles by first-level subject category among the top 16 publishers by acquisition volume

2.4 Synchronous Growth of Timeliness and Classic Works

2.4.1 Coexistence of the 80/20 Rule and the Long-Tail Theory Price referred to literature published within the most recent five years as "current literature," and literature with a publication age of more than five years as "archival literature" [26]. Original English-language print books acquired from 2019 to 2024 accounted for 80% of the total, combining novelty of content with frontier knowledge and forming the main body of acquisitions. Among them, new books from 2023-2024 accounted for less than 15% of acquisitions due to the lack of reference data and the long acquisition cycle, which also reflects

the practical dilemma of insufficient screening efficiency for original English-language print book resources. Books published before 2019 accounted for about 20%, demonstrating a clear continuation of the classic long-tail phenomenon. After the accumulation of time, these classic books have gained the support of data such as awards, holdings, and citations, and can also continue...

circulation.

2.4.2 Coexistence of Classic Accumulation and Obsolescence-Driven Iteration

Publication date reflects both the timeliness of resources and their historical continuity. According to publication date, publishers can be divided into classic-inheritance types and timeliness-oriented types. As shown in Figure 4, among classic-inheritance publishers, represented by Princeton University Press, books published before 2019 account for 50% of its total purchased volume, and books published more than 15 years ago account for 25%. Their content tends to consist of foundational resources such as cultural classics and theoretical studies, which, after long-term validation, still maintain relatively high academic influence. For Cengage Learning, purchases of books published before 2019 account for 43% of all purchases; for Wiley, 22%; and for Cambridge University Press, 21%. This indicates that the above publishers have produced many classic works and have received sustained attention from university libraries.

Timeliness-oriented publishers can be divided into two categories. One category includes Springer, CRC Press, De Gruyter, Elsevier, World Scientific, and Academic Press, whose publishing cycles are synchronized with technological iteration and renewal; for these publishers, purchases of books from 2020–2021 all account for more than 50% of their total purchased volume. The other category includes Lexington Books, Edward Elgar, and Bloomsbury, which closely engage with cutting-edge social issues; for these publishers, purchases of books from 2022–2023 account for around 50% of total purchases. This shows that university libraries show a stronger preference for new titles from these publishers.

Figure 4. Distribution of publication dates for purchased books from the top 16 publishers by purchase volume

2.5 Significant Differences in the Strengths and Weaknesses of Procurement Reference Conditions

2.5.1 Insufficient Academic Reference Annotation Constrains the Presentation of Value

Academic reference information—such as book awards, author honors, author affiliations, project funding, and citation counts—is an important basis for reflecting the academic value of books and supporting literature procurement decisions. Judging from the current state of annotation, academic reference informa-

tion is presently insufficient. Most annotations only indicate award information for books. The awards involved include the Booker Prize, the National Book Award, the Hugo Award, the Pulitzer Prize, the *Choice* Outstanding Academic Titles, and other awards, as well as lists such as *The New York Times* Ten Best Books and Doody's Core Titles. Fewer than 3,000 titles are annotated as award-winning books.

At the same time, there are problems such as incomplete award annotation, nonstandard annotation formats, inconsistent descriptions of language, award names, and years, and lack of association among different editions and binding formats, making it difficult to reveal award information systematically. In addition, annotations concerning funding, citation counts, and authors' academic influence are even more generally lacking. Yet works by authors with high academic influence and works that have received support from major funds are precisely the focus of collection development. Therefore, existing academic reference information makes it difficult to present the academic value of books intuitively. The reasons are as follows: first, book import and export suppliers do not have the capacity to systematically organize and annotate academic reference information; second, acquisition librarians lack knowledge of core disciplinary awards and have not formed an awareness of resource 保障 for continuous procurement of key award-winning titles. Ultimately, this results in insufficient annotation of academic reference information and an inability to effectively support scientific and efficient literature procurement decisions.

2.5.2 International Holding Institutions Confirm Academic Value

Procurement based on holdings information is usually regarded as a high-quality academic-reference-oriented procurement model. The more holding institutions there are, the more strongly demand and collection value can be reflected; the higher the disciplinary ranking of the holding institutions, the more strongly academic value and disciplinary value can be demonstrated. According to statistics, there are about 27,000 titles with information on holding institutions, accounting for 23% of the total. To further evaluate the academic value of books from the perspective of the authority of holding institutions, the author compiled statistics on library

The holdings data contain the number of 2024 QS World University Top 20 institutions that hold each title. Among them, 2,275 titles (8%) are held by 10 or more Top 20 institutional libraries and may be regarded as core collection titles; their publishers are mainly Princeton University Press (51%) and Wiley (24%). A total of 11,311 titles (42%) are held by 3-9 Top 20 institutional libraries and are regarded as reference collection titles; their publishers are widely distributed, including Wiley (7%), Routledge (4%), Oxford University Press (4%), Princeton University Press (4%), and Cambridge University Press (3%). Another 13,334 titles (49%) are held by only 1-2 Top 20 institutional libraries and are regarded as general collection titles. Such books are mainly in emerging disciplines, niche research fields, or are of ordinary quality, and their purchase volume is relatively

small. The analysis shows that the number of holding institutions is positively correlated with publisher quality, and that counting the number of holding institutions is one effective method for verifying the academic value of books.

3 Procurement Strategies and Recommendations for Original English-Language Printed Books

3.1 Improve the funding mechanism and establish rigid allocation standards for special funds

The procurement of original English-language printed books cannot be separated from sufficient funding. As shown above, in recent years the print-book budgets of about 50% of universities have decreased; purchasing institutions have become increasingly concentrated; resource gaps are serious; and special funds for “Double First-Class” construction have been severely squeezed. The root causes lie in an imperfect funding mechanism for resource development and a shortage of funds. Therefore, top-level institutional constraints should be strengthened and independent budget items should be established. In particular, institutions with low purchase volumes (70%) should explicitly stipulate that 5%-7% of annual special funds be used for procuring original English-language printed books, so as to ensure the comprehensiveness of collection resources. Assessment indicators for the procurement of literature in first-class disciplines should be established and incorporated into the annual evaluation system. For disciplines that fail to meet the standards, budget adjustments should be implemented and the allocation ratio of special funds for the following year should be adjusted, in order to ensure the integrity and continuity of resources. Channels for socially shared resources should be expanded. The “Ex-book” household book-sharing mechanism[27] may be used as a reference: original English-language printed book resources held by public libraries, community libraries, and individuals can be incorporated into the sharing system of university libraries to expand resource coverage. Efforts should also be made to secure support from international funds. For example, in 2025, in order to promote cooperation and exchange among global cultural institutions, Louvre Abu Dhabi launched an institutional grant fund program[28]. Such programs can provide international cooperation and financial support for China’s “Double First-Class” universities that have established related disciplines such as art history, archaeology, and museum studies.

3.2 Conduct discipline-targeted procurement and strengthen the linkage effect of “Double First-Class” disciplines

Accurately matching book resources with readers’ needs is the primary goal of improving procurement effectiveness. The preceding analysis shows that China’s “Double First-Class” institutions have problems such as a disconnect between purchased resources and disciplinary strategies, as well as mismatches in disciplinary resources. For example, the first-class discipline at Ningbo University

is mechanics, but its purchase volume accounts for only 4% of the university's total; the first-class disciplines at Huazhong University of Science and Technology are all in science and engineering and medicine, yet the resources purchased for these two categories account for only 17%. This reflects that some universities do not pay sufficient attention to the actual resource needs for the development of first-class disciplines, and that their support mechanisms are incomplete; moreover, universities lack overall coordination in the layout of disciplinary resources, and have failed to form a combined force to support the coordinated development of disciplines. Therefore, first, the "visibility" and influence of discipline development in "Double First-Class" universities should be enhanced. The requirement of "precision-based disciplinary procurement and support for first-class discipline construction" should be incorporated into construction white papers, reasonable disciplinary resource support rates should be set for different institutions, disciplinary development planning should be guided, and the implementation of resource procurement should be supervised. Second, resource barriers should be broken down, and resource co-construction and sharing mechanisms should be further improved on the basis of discipline construction. Drawing on the practices of the North American Korean Studies resource consortium[29], five-year development plans can be formulated. Following the ideas of "region + disciplinary research" or "institution + disciplinary subdivision," disciplinary priorities can be refined, the systematic construction of multi-regional and multi-branch disciplinary resource systems can be promoted, and ultimately the co-construction and sharing of disciplinary resources can be realized.

3.3 Scientifically control resource sources and build a diversified and balanced collection resource system

At present, China's "Double First-Class" universities show a highly concentrated pattern in terms of publisher sources. Although large publishers have relatively high publication quality, they also have an obvious commercial orientation. Many obscure and niche yet academically crucial disciplinary and regional research works are often published by societies, associations, or small specialized publishers. Over time, this can easily weaken the diversity of disciplinary books and lead to an imbalance in collection structure. Readers' needs are also diversified; highly homogeneous collections cannot meet these long-tail needs, nor can they provide researchers with diverse perspectives, which is not conducive to academic development. Therefore, a "30/70 ratio" procurement strategy should be established: first, large publishers should serve as the core and niche publishers as supplements, giving equal emphasis to mainstream high-quality resources and distinctive resources. Second, resources should be concentrated around disciplines. Resources from excellent publishers within disciplinary fields should be purchased as a priority, while attention should also be paid to specialized publishers, societies, associations, and other niche publishers. By consulting experts and compiling statistics on publishers of highly cited, highly influential, and award-winning books, a discipline-based publisher matrix can be constructed.

Third, both frontier knowledge and classical inheritance should be taken into account. By comprehensively considering disciplinary knowledge characteristics and publisher characteristics, emphasis should be placed on identifying the classic and advantageous products of general publishers and the distinctive resources of specialized publishers, thereby constructing a diversified and balanced English-language collection resource system.

3.4 Strengthen content disclosure and rely on academic value to improve procurement efficiency

At present, the disclosure of English-language book content in China is insufficient, annotation coverage is incomplete, and it is difficult for new books to have comprehensive reference data within a short period of time. This easily creates “procurement blind spots” and leads to a serious insufficiency in resource screening efficiency. Therefore, first, a resource evaluation system should be constructed. In 2007, the digital resource evaluation indicator system jointly developed by the CALIS Administrative Center and Peking University[30] provided an important paradigmatic reference for evaluating the academic value of original English-language printed books. In light of the characteristics of original English-language printed books, a quantifiable and operable book resource evaluation system should be constructed, with disciplines as the unit, academic publication sources and academic value influence as the evaluation orientations, and coverage throughout the life cycle of book publication. Evaluation indicators may include publisher authority, author credibility, value of resource content, and academic

academic influence, institutional recognition, social feedback, and other dimensions; the evaluation objectives are more focused on the precise quantification of academic value, and the service targets are directly aimed at acquisition decision-makers and end readers. Second, hold recommendation meetings for core bibliographies of first-class disciplines; with the professional capabilities of publishers and import-export companies, deepen content disclosure and rapidly identify book content at the source of publication. Third, actively use local printing technology to enable offline preview of portions of key books, thereby further controlling book quality, optimizing the acquisition decision-making process, and improving acquisition efficiency.

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Analysis of the Current Status and Strategies for the Acquisition of Original English Printed Books in “Double First-Class” Universities

Cao Ran

Beijing Vocational College of Transport Library, Beijing, 100096

Abstract Against the background of the “Double First-Class” initiative, the acquisition of original English printed books holds significant strategic importance in supporting the development of first-class disciplines. To understand the current status of book procurement, optimize procurement mechanisms, and improve collection quality, this study, based on the acquisition data of “Double First-Class” universities, employs statistical analysis and comparative research to conduct an in-depth examination from six dimensions: university distribution, procurement sustainability, disciplinary structure, publishers’ disciplinary expertise, the proportion of new and old books, and procurement reference information. The study identifies several problems in the current acquisition of original English printed books, including uneven distribution among acquiring universities, prominent resource discontinuity, an imbalanced disciplinary structure, a high concentration of publishers, and significant disparities in the quality of procurement reference conditions. Accordingly, it is necessary to strengthen top-level design and optimize the funding allocation mechanism for “Double First-Class” discipline construction; improve procurement precision and enhance disciplinary linkage effects; rigorously control resource selection at the source and establish a disciplinary publishing matrix; and strengthen in-depth content revelation and quantitative evaluation of academic value. These measures aim to comprehensively enhance library procurement efficiency and collection quality, thereby providing a solid foundation of English book resources for the development of first-class disciplines.

Keywords “Double First-Class” ; Discipline development; Book acquisition; Original English printed books; Acquisition status

(Continued from p. 30)

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A Study on the Professionalization Process and Path of Teacher-Librarians in Australian Primary and Secondary Schools

Zhang Jie

Library of Suzhou Polytechnic University, Suzhou, 215104

Abstract As a key link connecting education and teaching with knowledge resources, the professional development of teacher-librarians is of great significance for promoting the improvement of education quality. Australia took an early start in building a professional team of primary and secondary school teacher-librarians, and its development process includes four core stages: Origin and Germination (1960-1979), Initial Professional Development (1980-2005), Institutionalization and Standardization (2006-2015), and Modernized Development (2016 to present). Australia's exploration in the professionalization of primary and secondary school teacher-librarians has culminated in the establishment of professional organizations, the issuance of specialized policy guidelines, and the promotion of professional talent training. In the future, China should fully encourage the construction of a professional system for primary and secondary school teacher-librarians, support the innovation of service models and the expansion of service areas, and drive the high-quality development of primary and secondary education in China.

Keywords Primary and secondary school teacher-librarians; Professionalization; Australia

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

Source: ChinaXiv. Machine translation. Verify with the original.