

Utilization of Resources and Optimization of Services in Libraries

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Abstract: “Resource utilization” is the foundation of library services. This article analyzes the reasons of low utilization of library resources. Besides that, the existing resources are classified according to different genres. The methods of utilizing the existing resources in the library are also discussed. Based on the analysis, by optimizing the service patterns, the service reaches more targeted readers as well as improve the utilization rate of existing resources.

Keywords: Library; Resource utilization; Service

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1 Introduction

The development of “double first-class” and “double innovation” students requires a higher availability of resources, services, librarians, and management in university libraries. Based on this, the “General College Library Regulations” has been amended for the main function and tasks of the library, signifying that education and information services as the main function of the library.

The changes in the user’s preference and needs have led to improvement in the library’s role and business methods. From merely providing printed resources as the main items in the past to providing both printed and digital resources in recent times shows that the service content has changed from providing document borrowing services to providing digital content, which is given an equal emphasis. Based on this, the transformation of library services will be imperative.

However, the low utilization rate of informational resources in colleges and universities is mainly due to the following reasons. Firstly, the content of informational resources does not match the preference, type, and form of the user, and the

limited availability of resources in the library that the users need. Secondly, the library lacks resource advertising and the lack of backward recommendation method leads to low efficiency of resource recommendation and poor search results. This is because a large amount of resource information cannot be effectively used as it cannot be discovered by users. Thirdly, the library’s poor management of resources increases the difficulty for users to effectively obtain resources and the collection layout is not user friendly. Reasons such as disorganized library shelves, long processing cycles, outdated maintenance, unnecessary access restrictions as well as other factors often prevents users from efficiently finding the resources that they want. As a result, it reduces the utilization rate of resources and causes incompetent services quality, which in return affects the user’s experience. Therefore, poor user experience reduces the need of users to utilize the resources to a certain extent^[1].

Based on the collected feedback from some users, the author discusses about the measures taken by the library to improve service satisfaction and service methods according to user needs from several aspects.

2 Library Resources

2.1 Trend 1: The demand for the use of electronic resources shows a momentum of rapid growth of good library services

For instance, the decrease in the borrowing rate of paper books is accompanied by an increase in the number of browsing and downloading electronic resources. In comparison of different types of resources, there is a maximum utilization rate of existing electronic resources. On the other hand, library management must pay attention to the current needs of users and make corresponding countermeasures in time to provide users with high-quality services. At present, “user expectations” and “satisfaction” (the degree to which expectations are achieved) have been used to measure service quality^[2].

- With the requirements to develop “first-class standards” in various universities, the demand for foreign language databases will continue to increase, such as Elsevier, Web of Science, Nature Science etc. These databases are expensive and the number of users is relatively small. However, these often represent the research level of a school. Thus, the subject librarian of the library should fully study the characteristics of each database, identify potential users, and increase the number of users of the database, thereby increasing the utilization rate of the database and assisting the scientific research of the school.
- Library management can cooperate with database suppliers to carry out lectures on different forms of database utilization for lecturers, graduate students and some undergraduates, as shown in Table 1.

Through different forms and different subject lectures, more users will be more interested in using the database. At present, it is necessary for graduate students from 985 universities to publish papers in SCI journals, and some undergraduates who are enrolled in prestigious universities are also working hard to be part of their supervisor’s scientific research team, by collecting materials for

supervisors and even co-publishing papers with supervisors. Furthermore, more rules for undergraduate research whereby many professional undergraduates are required to translate a professional foreign language document in the upper levels. The library improves the utilization rate of the database by meeting the different needs of these different types of users.

- It can be aimed at the evaluation of scientific research performance that scientific research provides and influences the development plan of various disciplines, the excavation of potential dominant disciplines and the contribution of individuals or teams to the scientific research development of the university as well as similar institutions.

The comparison of scientific research provides and influences, the strong cooperation between the school and local and foreign institutions with other current issues. Besides that, the joint database supplier provides useful data for the personnel department, scientific research department, postgraduate department and other functional departments. Additionally, database suppliers provide support and services for central tasks such as administrative management, student training, scientific research, social services, cultural inheritance and innovation. For example, the number and trend of SCIE/SSCI papers produced by Zhongyuan Institute of Technology from 2002 to 2017^[3] are shown in Figure 1 and the top 10 disciplines of Zhongyuan Institute of Technology^[4] are shown in Figure 2.

In addition, users also analyze the Category Normalized Citation Impact (CNCI) values of these active disciplines to know the gap between these disciplines and the world average, and to identify active researchers and academic leaders, etc. Additionally, users can also identify the competitive universities’ scientific research outcomes, frequently discover the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, and formulate corresponding policies to provide decision-making basis for the allocation of funds.

The databases with high utilization rate of undergraduates in colleges and universities mainly include China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), Weipu Science and Technology Journals, Wanfang Data and PhD thesis, various examination databases (especially the fourth and sixth examinations, postgraduate entrance examination databases) and so on. At present, some schools have adopted the passing rate of the fourth and sixth grades and the passing rate of the postgraduate entrance examination as one of the indicators of the department assessment. Contrarily, the librarians can assist the teaching department by updating the books to promote high utilization rate of library database resources.

As users' reading habits change, they prefer to use various electronic resources available on mobile applications, such as Chaoxing Mobile Library, and inquiries about book collections can be made through the library's WeChat official account, etc., enabling more convenient use of library resources. The premise is that users are very familiar with these resources and know where to get them when they need them, or where to ask for help when they encounter problems. Thus, this requires the library to promote the resources in an overall way and at the same time carry out consultation services.

In order to promote the effective use of the above electronic resources, the electronic reading room can be used to carry out the following tasks:

- Carry out the search and guidance of electronic resources, mainly based on CNKI, Weipu Science and Technology Journals, Wanfang Data and Ph.D. thesis, CET-4 and CET-6, and English for postgraduate entrance examinations because the electronic reading room is prioritized for undergraduates. The overall search and consulting services are provided to encourage more users to familiarize with using these library resources.
- Provide guidance in using the school's Virtual Private Network (VPN) as the demand for library electronic resources

continues to rise in response to the needs of users to remotely use library electronic resources at home during winter and summer vacations. VPN usage training should be carried out and a special consultation channel other than the school information center should be added.

- Instruct users to search library collection data online and search collection data on the library's WeChat public platform.
- Focus on answering questions and carry out reader admission education, which can be aimed at any user, not limited to new students. Change the notion that the library is "a paradise for learning tyrants and a place for scumbags," the doors will be open to students of any grade and at any time who want to know about the library.

Table 1. Database of lecture topics that the library can carry out for different types of readers

| The lecture topics | Users |
|---|---|
| The characteristics of various foreign language databases in the library and the acquisition of professional papers | Teachers, graduate students, some undergraduates |
| Paper writing and submission | Young teachers, graduate students, some undergraduates |
| Analyze the scientific research output and influence of colleges and universities with scientometrics | Scientific research office, planning office, discipline office, graduate school, personnel office |
| Database utilization and subject service of university library | University subject librarians |

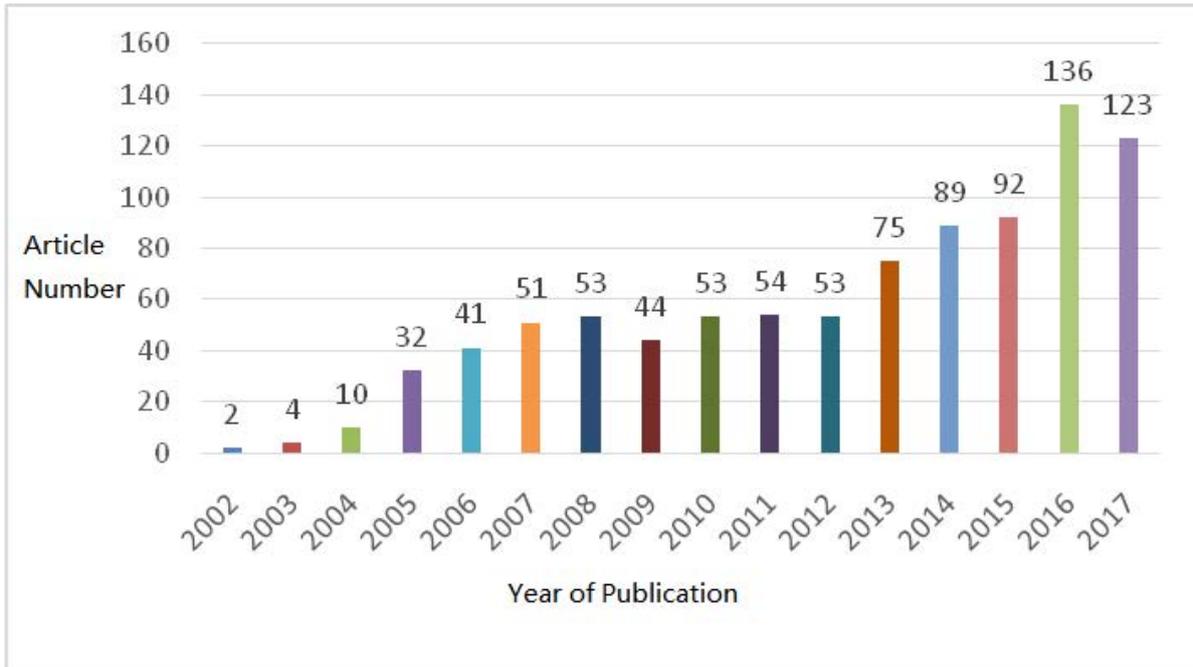


Figure 1. Number and trend of SCIE/SSCI paper output of Zhongyuan Institute of Technology (2002-2017)

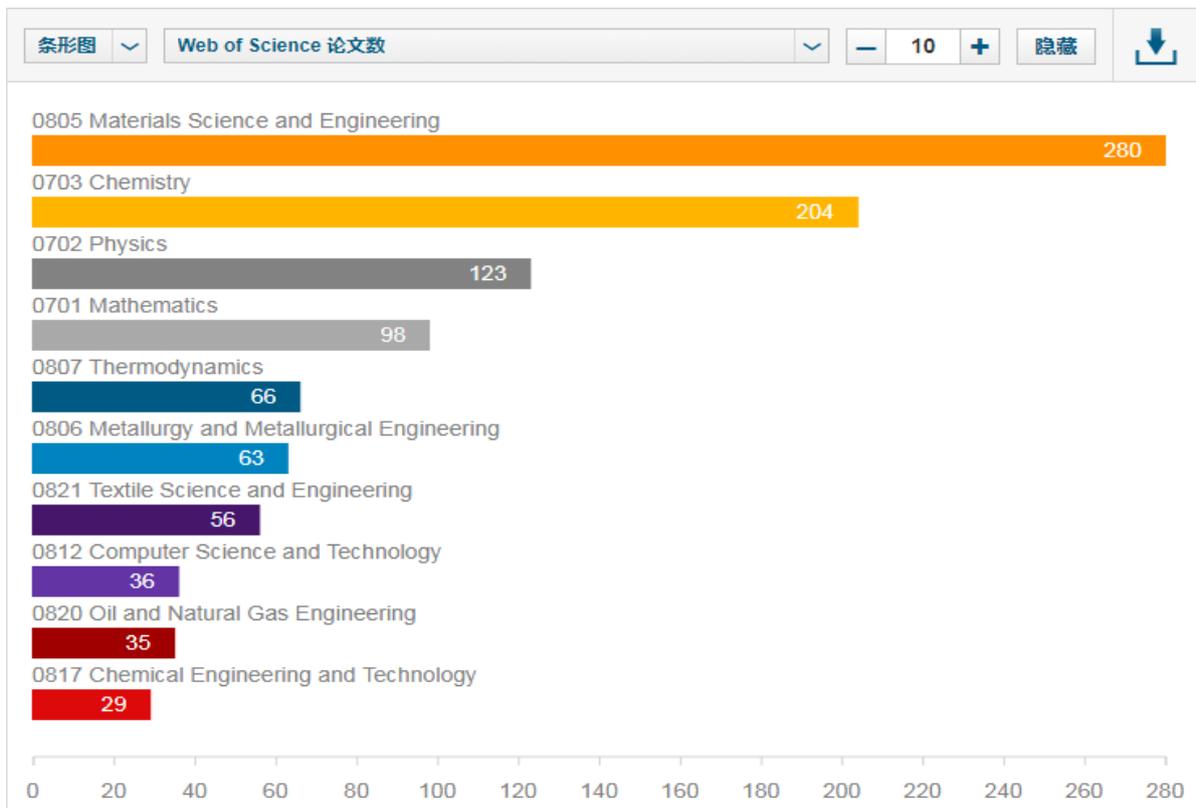


Figure 2. Top 10 active disciplines of Zhongyuan

2.2 Trend 2: The borrowing rate of paper books shows an outdated trend

As users' reading habits change, the reading of e-books has replaced that of paper-based books, making the borrowing rate of paper-based books in various libraries decrease. However, paper books and e-books have their own advantages and cannot be replaced by each other. At the same time, the management of paper books in the library is also developing in the direction of subject management, on-demand management, and user-led systems. Therefore, the library still needs to increase the publicity of paper books in the library to increase the utilization rate of paper books.

The library can take the following countermeasures to increase the number of paper books borrowed and maximize the utilization of book resources.

- Immediately spread the information of new books in the library through various methods. When new books are put into the library, users will be notified as soon as possible through various channels, especially potential users obtained through analysis of borrowing data.
- Intensify the publicity of user book recommendation method. At present, the library of Zhongyuan Institute of Technology has four different recommendation channels: filling out the paper recommendation list in each reading room and service hall, reader recommendation QQ group, online recommendation platform, and direct recommendation to the library's collection and editing department. Leave book information that users want to read, let users become participants in library resource development, and gradually form a user-led resource construction model.
- Optimize the book collection structure in the reading room, distinguish research and teaching books, and provide books for different types of users.
- Do a good job in the collection, sorting, and analysis of user data and log data, thereby attracting potential users.

2.2.1 Library service hours

Although the library's virtual service time is a 24×7 service model, many users still cannot use library resources during the three-month vacation during winter and summer vacations because many of the library users need to stay in Africa. The campus network environment uses library resources, and some users still do not use the school's VPN system, preventing them from using the library's electronic resources in a non-campus network environment.

To cope with this problem, the library can proactively open some roaming accounts during the holidays each year for users in need. In addition, it can increase usage of school VPN through multiple channels and increase the utilization rate of school electronic resources through these services.

2.2.2 In terms of space, provide users with as much convenience as possible

Most of the library space is occupied by books; therefore, a lack of space for library users which is the most common and annoying issue in library space planning. The library can take the following measures to provide users with space as much as possible.

- Reduce books, increase space, and provide enough reading seats. The author has done a statistic whereby the books with a high borrowing rate are concentrated of the latest books that have been on the shelves within 3-5 years. Many library shelves only display books that are 3-5 years old. Fewer books and more space have become a popular way to make space by removing bookshelves, as well as freeing up space also is conducive to book placement and easy for users to find it.
- The library can make signs with clear directional signs to facilitate readers to use various resources of the library.
- Librarians should keep the room clean, bright and comfortable.
- Keep the book on its actual location on shelves and collection records as consistent as possible so that readers can find them easily.

- In the Internet era, we can explore and improve the management mode of using WeChat groups and QQ groups to manage students in the library, with the purpose of “promoting discussions, reducing prejudice, and promoting understanding.”

3 Changing Concepts and Developing “Service Spirit”

Undoubtedly, to improve the above service measures, human resources are one of the important resources that cannot be ignored in the library. Mr. Wu Qingyou, the founder of Eslite Bookstore, said that “the highest state of service is to improve yourself and share with others.” It is precisely based on the undeniable pursuit of this maxim that at present, the Eslite Bookstore has become one of the must-visit attractions for tourists visiting Taiwan. In order for every librarian to gradually achieve this, higher requirements for librarians are needed. In addition, to be independent and self-conscious without reminders, it must be supported by a matching system to establish a system that can mobilize librarians. The guaranteed mechanism is to improve the job responsibilities and a long-term feedback and incentive mechanism are formed to stimulate a strong sense of self-

improvement among librarians. The “double first-class” development in colleges and universities requires library services to shift to subject services. Only by improving the professionalism of librarians can the management more deeply understand users’ resource needs and provide users with better subject services.

Disclosure statement

The author discloses no conflict of interest.

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