

# Research on the Innovation of Reading Promotion Service Model of University Library Based on Readers' Characteristics

—Taking the Library of Heilongjiang Bayi Agricultural University (HLAU) as an Example

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## Abstract

Based on the practical experience of reading promotion in the library of HLAU in recent years, this paper analyzes the reasons for the bottleneck of reading promotion in university libraries, expounds the problems that need to be solved urgently in the promotion of reading from the theoretical basis, student resources, financial support and leadership attention and proposes future development trends and directions, thus providing an effective way of reading promotion for the libraries of agricultural colleges and universities.

## Keywords

University Library, Service Innovation, Reading Promotion

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## 1. Introduction

Reading is the fundamental way for people to accept education, develop wisdom and obtain information. In other words, reading is power. The survey found that college students with zero annual reading volume accounted for 6%, and college students with 1 - 4 books per year accounted for 54.3%. The reading atmosphere in current campus is low. Students who do not read or seldom study occupy a certain proportion. The reading time of various readings (including paper books, e-books, online articles, etc.) is 35.36% in 0 - 1 hours, 40.26% in 1 - 2 hours, and 24.37% in more than 2 hours. Information acquisition is "fragmented" and lacks systematic reading and learning. Only 18.28% of college students choose to read

paper books, 25.96% of college students read e-books, and other students choose to read WeChat, Weibo, forums, blogs and other articles [1]. The impact of digital electronic books on the reading hall is growing. In this case, how to promote campus reading in University Libraries is not only the problem that university library should face in the process of development, but also an important issue for colleges and universities to think about in terms of cultural education.

Another survey found that most students' reading motivation is utilitarian. Among them, 30% read for various exams, 42.5% read for coursework and dissertations, and read for interest. Accounted for 17.2%, only 10.3% read to expand the knowledge horizon. It can be seen that students read the professional bibliography to complete their studies. Other time reading is mainly to meet the needs of the exam. What should be studied in the professional course? What should the teacher ask for? The purpose is very clear [2].

As an agricultural college, the school discipline setting and talent training direction of Heilongjiang Bayi Agricultural University (hereinafter referred to as "HLAU") determine that the work of reading promotion not only has the common features of general university libraries, but also provides necessary support for general knowledge education. HLAU Library makes full use of its internal and external resources and facilities, takes "reading promotion" as the starting point for the library to enter the "activity era" on the basis of deeply understanding and accurately grasping the new situation, new environment and new changes that the library undertakings are facing, and proposes "active service" on the basis of lending service and subject service. Various reading promotion activities have been carried out with innovative ideas, and remarkable results have been achieved. This paper explores the way and direction of the reading promotion innovation in agricultural university libraries and provides guidance for other agricultural university libraries and public libraries in agricultural cities in reading promotion and cultural construction.

## 2. Reading Promotion Service Model of HLAU Library

### 2.1. Institutional Implementation of Regular Activities

HLAU Library carries out fixed theme activities in five time periods each year, which is reading culture festival activities in April, graduation season activities in June and reader service month activities in October respectively, and day-reading activities during the summer and summer vacation. Each activity has several sub-activities for each theme, which has been carried out for 7 consecutive years. The content of the activity keeps pace with the times and changes with the times and trend.

The activities of *Reading Salon* and *Living Library* are held once a month. *Reading Salon* has been running for 6 consecutive years, with a total of 34 issues. *Living Library* has been running for 5 consecutive years, with a total of 50 issues.

A classic movie is played, a lecture is implemented and a book is recommended once a week. A total of 514 movies have been played systematically for

12 consecutive years. The activity of *Wang Zhen's Lecture* has been carried out for 7 consecutive years, with a total of 194 lectures. In recent years, 376 books have been recommended through various channels.

## 2.2. Innovative Implementation of Special Activities

**WeChat public platform mobile service.** WeChat public account service was launched in October 2013. WeChat platform has launched good book recommendation, daily reading, postgraduate station, information push and other sectors.

**Living Library.** In October 2013, Heilongjiang Province took the lead in carrying out the activity of "Living Library". In recent years, it has carried out a number of inter-lending activities of "Living Library" with Daqing Library.

**Classic masterpiece interpretation contest.** A classic masterpiece interpretation contest on the classic reading problem was held in April 2015. Each of the participating organizations chooses a part of the classic masterpieces. The reader creates works according to his own understanding of the work, and combines the essence of the recommended book with the main theme through artistic processing and live performances.

**Masters' study.** A interview and exchange activity on reading was held in April 2017, which is a kind of activity for free participation of teachers and students, interactive communication between famous teachers and masters, and real-time questions from the audience.

**Reading cosplay.** For book recommendation issues, combined with the previous experience in the interpretation of classic masterpieces, the activity of reading cosplay was held in October 2017. That is, the participant chooses one character of his/her favorite books, and then introduces the book in a role-playing manner, and introduce his/her reading comprehension and learning at the same time.

**Reading partners 21 days of reading activities.** In October 2017, for students with poor reading habits, three guidance teachers led the students to complete certain reading assignments every day in the form of team reading, and then scored according to certain criteria.

**Reading assistance contest, Teacher-student reading activity.** In April 2018, a marathon assistance contest was launched for the reading of the whole school. As a reading ambassador, the contestant promotes reading to CU members at all levels around him/her, aiming to make all the teachers and students of the whole university read a book together by helping readers read and issuing reading cards.

## 2.3. Humanized Implementation of Social Activities

**Giving full play to the advantages of agricultural institutions to help agricultural production.** On the issue of rural cultural construction, digital resources such as the WeChat public platform are utilized to promote reading ac-

tivities by cooperating with local public libraries. Twelve categories of books, such as planting, breeding, processing, epidemic prevention, agricultural machinery, civil engineering and agricultural products sales, have been selected and given to Daxing Township Government of Zhaoyuan County, which basically meets the basic needs of local farmers in the process of agricultural production and sales of agricultural products.

**Giving full play to the advantages of university resources to promote the development of urban reading culture.** The school library is committed to relying on its own resources to promote personalized reading activities for the public. The activity of “Living Library” has aroused social concern after being reported by the Daqing media. Sixteen parents have contacted the library and take their children to participate in the activity. There are 7 socially-loving people who volunteer to join the volunteer team of “Living Library”. Many primary and secondary schools in Daqing organize students to visit the library for cultural exchanges in reading.

#### **2.4. Attaching Importance to the Publicity of Reading Promotion**

While planning and organizing activities, the social impact of activities shall always be focused and the function of social and cultural inheritance in universities shall also be emphasized. As the venue for the first “Living Library” activity in Daqing City, several media, such as Daqing TV Station, Daqing Daily, Daqing Evening News, has reported the activity repeatedly in detail, which has received extensive attention from Daqing citizens. The activity has aroused positive response in society. Daqing TV Station reported the activities of “love Inheritance and Leaving Books on Campus”, “Youth Invitational Interview, Passing Youth Positive Energy” and “Competition on Reviewing the Classic and Tasting Masterwork” in detail. Daqing Daily and Daqing Website reported the story of Zhou Yaqiang who is a volunteer of “Living Library”. In addition to that, Media, such as Beidahuang Daily, Northeast Network, Beidahuang Network, also reported the reading promotion activities of our library. Through the contending reporting of mainstream media, our reading promotion activities have an extensive social impact in Daqing City, Heilongjiang District and even Heilongjiang Province.

#### **2.5. Setting up a Full-Time Reading Promotion Agency**

Reading promotion is based on the knowledge structure and comprehensive ability of the librarian. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a full-time reading promotion structure to complete this work. In March 2017, HLAU Library set up the Ministry of Cultural Construction, which is mainly responsible for reader association guidance and management, library space environment transformation, maintenance and management of the school history museum, and compilation and research of various historical records. The head of the Department has years of experience in student work and exerts its ability of innovation and

coordination fully in the process of planning and implementation of activities. The Ministry of Cultural Construction is under the direct leadership of the curator, who is responsible for organizing and implementing the reading promotion work of libraries and developing a reading promotion program suitable for our students.

### **3. Bottlenecks in Reading Promotion of University Libraries**

#### **3.1. Lack of Theoretical Basis**

As an important branch of Library Science, reading is inseparable from library science, but library science's study on reading and reading promotion is in an awkward position. In the vast discipline of library science, there is no place for reading, reading promotion or reading studies and there are few studies on its systematic basic theory. Therefore, it is difficult to find a more detailed basic theory [3]. In recent years, the emphasis on theoretical study on reading promotion has changed. Reading and reading promotion has finally become an important field in the field of library science in China. Due to the lack of theoretical research and as high quality academic papers are rare and difficult to be included in core journals, the librarians engaged in reading promotion work are not highly motivated. The lack of basic study on reading promotion has become one of the main bottlenecks for librarians to consciously develop reading promotion services, improve the internal quality of reading promotion and develop reading promotion generally.

#### **3.2. Lack of Student Resources**

As the resource sharing service center, information intelligence research center, learning and academic activities center and cultural literacy activity center of the university, university library is the key basic platform for school construction and provides strong support for school education and teaching. University libraries have the advantages of resources and platforms, but lack the foundation of students. Although the current reading promotion activities are rich in content and varied in form, there are very few college students who volunteer to participate in actively. The pre-planning, mid-term promotion, post-reward of reading promotion takes a lot of energy from the librarians and a lot of money from the library. However, the actual effect is not as good as the campus cultural activities organized by the Youth League Committee. The reason includes the following: firstly, the students participating in activities has the intention of "utilitarian"; secondly, the publicity of library activities is not as strong as that of the school League Committee; thirdly, the library lacks the right to restrict students rigidly; fourthly, the students themselves are not interested in reading. Therefore, most schools need to take advantage of students from other departments during reading promotion.

#### **3.3. Lack of Financial Support**

In 2011, Lowry pointed out that the ever-shrinking budget is the "new normal"

of university libraries. An article entitled *The 2012 State of America's Libraries: a Report from the American Library Association* published on the magazine *American Libraries* of American Library Association (ALA) in 2012 listed stagnant budgets and unsustainable expenditures as one of the most important issues to be solved in American university libraries [4]. Like the difficulties faced by American libraries, university libraries in China also encountered financial difficulties. The contradiction between the decrease of funds and the increase of literature purchase cost are urgently needed to be resolved. In case of financial constraints, most university libraries spend more money on resource construction and discipline services, but ignore the support for reading promotion. At the same time, the support of relevant departments for the subjects on reading promotion needs to be improved.

### **3.4. Lack of Leadership Attention**

As an emerging business in the library industry, reading promotion shows that the teachers at the grassroots level have enthusiasm for work, while the upper leadership is not well designed. Most leaders focus on lending services, discipline services and resource development to ensure the normal opening of the library and smooth running of the teaching and scientific research work of the school. The importance and necessity of reading promotion are often neglected. Some leaders believe that organizing activities is the work of the school league committee and students and the reading promotion of the library is just the icing on the cake, is of little importance and not essential. It is not often to promote library reading promotion to school-wide reading activities. Fewer school leaders participated in these activities personally. The activities designed for the whole school is even less.

## **4. The Development Trend of Reading Promotion in University Libraries**

### **4.1. "1 + N" Reading Promotion Model**

"1" is to take the students who love reading and are willing to take part in reading promotion activities as the main body, set up a special activity group for them and release activity information in the group timely, so that they can drive the students around to participate in the activity. Most schools are vigorous in activities by the advantage of the students' affairs division and the school league committee during reading promotion. The activities are of scale and quality, but lack coherence and no inheritance. Most of the students are passive participants and the audience also comes with a mission, without real commitment to the activity itself. The library did not really accumulate student resources after the activity. The activity can be more fluent in the process of reading promotion only by discovering and cultivating a group of their own loyal fans.

#### **4.2. Giving Full Play to the Guidance Role of Counselors and Class Teachers**

During the Reader Service Month in 2017, HLAU Library invited teachers, counselors, librarians and graduates to participate in activities in the role of reading promoters for the first time. They influence and infect everyone around us with practical actions and rich experience, which plays a role as a model leader and constantly arouses readers' enthusiasm for reading, thus to promote students to develop good reading habits and expand the dissemination and influence of reading promotion activities by connecting the point to an area. In addition, the reading promoters' program led by the class teacher is carried out at the School of Economics and Management. During the self-study of the pilot class every night, the class teacher organizes the whole class to study. After nearly two years of experiments, the overall reading atmosphere of the pilot class is better than that of other classes. The proportion of students playing games is lower than that of other classes by 32.42%. The learning performance of the class and the passing rate of CET-4 and CET-6 are increased by 6.37%.

#### **4.3. Giving Full Play to the Influence of Student Society**

The Library Reader Association is a community organization that students spontaneously organize on a voluntary basis and conduct their own reading promotion activities in accordance with the regulations. The Reader Association is not only the main participant in library activities, but also acts as an emissary of reading promotion for University and even off-campus students, which not only creates a good reading atmosphere for yourself, also plays a leading role in influencing, spreading, and infecting people who love reading, thus sharing their reading ideas with the students around you [5]. The Readers Association has become an important promoter of library reading promotion activities.

#### **4.4. Establishing a Humanized Reward Mechanism**

It is not enough to carry out the reading promotion work smoothly only by colorful activities. The effective awards and prizes set are like an invisible hand, which affects the development of activities. Rationalized and humanized awards setting is often more attractive to readers than the activities themselves. Too many awards will reduce the authority of activities. If the prize is set too high, it will increase the cost of the activity and reduce the number of activities. In addition to relying on the sponsorship of the database vendors, HLAU Library transfers prizes from physical rewards to existing resources of the library under tight funds. For example, the training room, the computer desk, and the exclusive study table shall be set up as the first, second and third prizes of the activity. After a test of 4 activities, better results have been achieved. It aims to attract readers with prizes, keep the readers with the activity itself, and expand reader engagement with effective interactive communication.

#### 4.5. Improving the Space Transformation of the Library

Reading promotion work is actually the forefront work of the library. It is to attract, retain and expand the use of various library services for readers through reading promotion. In addition to the above ways to attract readers, at present, the more popular and effective way is to carry out the space reconstruction of the library to provide a variety of personalized use space for readers. HLAU Library has transformed the second floor into a self-service reading area for readers to study, built a new teacher training area for 50 persons, changed the 108-seat conference room into a student academic activity center, completed the construction demonstration of intelligent training center, vacated 10 small houses and rebuild them into seminar rooms for students' academic activities and opened the existing meeting venues for student activities. At the same time, it will explore and build an organization and management system to guide and coordinate various academic activities so as to provide relevant services effectively.

Mr. Zhu Yongxin, Deputy Secretary General of the CPPCC National Committee and the famous reading advocate, pointed out that a school without reading cannot have a real education. The library can be built into a cultural communication base and a humanistic training base for the school only by giving full play to the advantages of library resources, talents and functions, in-depth development of various reading promotion activities, focusing on the second classroom construction of students and the basic requirements of talent cultivation in Colleges and universities, carrying out related reading promotion activities, integrating with the school talent training system, improving students' cultural accomplishment in an all-round way and promoting the construction of campus culture deeply.

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#### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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