Research on Service Mode of University Library during Public Health Emergencies

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Abstract: The sudden occurrence of public health incidents has seriously affected people’s production, life and work. Due to the impact of public health incidents, library services have shortened the opening hours and limited the number of people entering the library. In severe cases, individual libraries have temporarily closed their premises and launched online network services. Especially, how to do a good job in library service has become an important task for colleges and universities under the condition of meeting readers’ needs and ensuring readers’ personal health and safety during public health events. At the same time, it also poses new challenges for library service. This thesis analyzes the problems reflected in public health events and explores the service model of university libraries during public health events.

Keywords: public health events, universities, libraries, reading promotion, management services

1. Introduction

Public health incidents have seriously affected people’s production, life and work. As a university library and a gathering place for university staff, how to provide services for readers while ensuring personal health and safety, in such a special period, library work is facing unprecedented challenges.

2. Service modes of university libraries during public health events

As the “second classroom” of the school, the library attracts many students who like learning and reading to the library. During the period of public health events, university libraries, as crowded places, are at greater risk of infection. In order to ensure the health and safety of readers, universities strictly implement the relevant epidemic prevention requirements. During the serious period of public health incidents, some schools closed and libraries closed. Later, with the gradual weakening of public health events, the library gradually implemented some measures such as partial opening and people flow restriction. Then, after the opening up, ensuring the personal safety of library readers has become a new task of the library. How to minimize the risk of infection and meet readers’ access needs at the same time and whether the library service model needs to find another way has become a problem that university libraries need to think about during the period of special public health events.

In the special period when the library is closed, the most commonly used service mode of colleges and universities is to use the Internet to strengthen the promotion of anti-epidemic special resources, meanwhile, to increase the promotion of online digital resources. It is also used to expand online service functions, add online delivery of documents, increase online knowledge quiz, competitions, lectures other contents, formulate various emergency plans, and implement emergency drills.

After the library resumed its opening, it was opened in an orderly and appropriate manner by an appointment to enter the library and limiting the peak flow. In the museum, books disinfection equipment and temperature measuring instrument are added. A series of requirements are put forward readers and librarians, such as sweeping the place code, diligent disinfection, “one-meter line”, not gathering, not getting together, wearing masks, diligent ventilation, diligent hand washing, advocating book lending and reading, and minimizing the number of readers in the library.
3. Face the problems faced by university libraries during public health events

3.1 The emergency response capability needs to be improved when there are public health emergencies

In the period of public health events, the acquisition, analysis, utilization and release of information and intelligence are essential qualities for librarians. In the contemporary digital age, there are shortcomings in the daily work of the library on how to strengthen the librarian’s emergency ability and deal with sudden challenges. For example, university libraries have no plans for readers’ psychological counseling and information publicity in disaster education and emergency services, and their emergency response, planning, early warning, response and coordination abilities are not systematically planned, which has a certain disconnect, thus affecting the response speed in the period of special public health events and failing to provide service support for readers at the first time\(^1\). Therefore, it is necessary to comprehensively improve librarians’ information literacy and comprehensive ability to face public safety emergencies, so that librarians can deal with public safety emergencies calmly and orderly. Of course, we should also strengthen risk prevention and control and safety awareness on weekdays, always take readers as the center and do a good job in service.

3.2 Online services increased during public health events, and professionals and technical support need to be followed up

During the public health incident, due to the advocacy of not gathering and not getting together, the library carries out more online services than usual. For example, readers want to be solved at the first time when they encounter the situation that the network is not smooth and the webpage can’t be opened. If they are not teachers in network information, they can't give accurate operation methods, which may take a long time to find a teacher who can solve the problem. At the same time, because there are many people asking questions at the same time during the use period, due to the limited number of professionals, it may not be possible to reply in time.

3.3 The platform for information sharing and open access has not yet been established

In the special period of public health events with high utilization rate of digital resources, information sharing can not only relieve the pressure of staff, but also provide great convenience for readers. According to the reality, some digital resources or learning information did achieve open access during public health events. University libraries have always been advocates and practitioners of open access, but the open access resources include government open information, some contents agreed by publishers and database distributors, and most of them are open education resources. After public health events, the amount of open access information may be reduced. Therefore, building a fully open access platform and making it long-term will bring more knowledge and broader space to readers' inquiry and achieve maximum subject satisfaction.

3.4 Lack of historical witness of public health events

With the end of public health events, this period will eventually become history, and libraries can collect pictures, words, articles and deeds from the society when relevant public health events occur. Conditional can set up a special pavilion, this special historical record. According to the investigation, Jingzhou Library and Xiamen Library have collected all kinds of anti-epidemic materials for the society, but as university libraries, there are few documents collected during the anti-epidemic period. As the pillars of the future country, college students can guide the navigation mark of future life, establish a correct outlook on life and values, convey great love and warm the world with their hearts and feelings through the outstanding figures, advanced deeds and noble moral sentiments recorded in these special periods\(^2\).

To sum up, libraries need to constantly improve their service methods during public health events and explore more diverse service models to meet unexpected needs.
4. Suggestions on library service mode during public health events

4.1 Improve ideological understanding and strengthen social education functions

As the “three pillars” of the school, the library should first raise awareness ideologically. In the special period of public health events, the functions of the library are not only the functions of preserving human cultural heritage, developing information resources, participating in social education, etc. As a gathering place for school personnel, it is also an important task to build a defense line for campus public health events, effectively implement the prevention and control of public health events, and effectively safeguard the safety of teachers and students and campus stability. It requires a deep understanding of the seriousness and complexity of the prevention and control of public health events with a high sense of responsibility. The library should actively undertake to guide and help readers to establish a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values, and comprehensively analyze and formulate relevant measures with a scientific attitude, so as to realize the responsibility of strengthening ideological and political education and serving and educating people. Through online publicity, popular science videos, news reports, etc., readers’ ability to identify the authenticity of online information should be strengthened. In particular, news reports of public health incidents should be promptly reminded, and rumors should not be believed or spread, so as to avoid unnecessary panic, which is not conducive to physical and mental health and social stability.

4.2 Formulate emergency plans to improve the ability of timely response, organization and handling

In the event of an emergency, university libraries assume many roles, not only as managers but also as implementers. It is necessary to predict emergencies and formulate reasonable emergency plans. If any abnormal situation is found during the public health incident, it should be reported in time, and emergency response should be done well, so that emergency response capability can run through the whole process. This requires that librarians should strengthen their crisis awareness and improve their ability to deal with emergencies, so that they can organize and deal with emergencies in an orderly manner and effectively implement the prevention and control mechanism.

4.3 Improve the professional ability of librarians and cultivate compound talents

According to the statistics, when the online service of university libraries increased obviously and the professionals were in short supply during the public health incident, the allocation of personnel and the addition of online service personnel required librarians to have network professional knowledge, have certain practical technical operation skills, and be familiar with the types and conditions of digital resources in the library, as well as the inquiry and use methods of various digital resources. Of course, all these require smooth network transmission. Judging from the actual use, more readers usually don’t pay attention to more library resources, so naturally they will use less. When using online services, there will be all kinds of questions, which will cause a lot of consulting work and bring some pressure. This is not only a shortcoming of service during public health events, but also reflects whether the publicity of library network resources is in place. How to use library network resources is a long-term work plan, which can let readers know and master the use of various network digital resources and will greatly improve the efficiency of readers’ access to materials. What’s more, it is equipped with professional network delivery service talents and builds a “one-to-one” service platform to continuously improve the library’s ability to serve readers and improve the utilization rate of remote resources. It is necessary for the development of libraries to cultivate versatile librarians who can adapt to professional librarians in any position.

4.4 Expand service content and innovate diversified resource service mode

4.4.1 Integrating resources and realizing cross-database retrieval

University libraries often have a large number of different digital resources, and each resource needs to be searched and queried separately. Can all resources be integrated into a query platform through technical operation to realize cross-database query, which is more convenient for readers to query.

4.4.2 Implementation of multi-platform search mechanism

With the development of science, electronic products such as mobile phones have become
indispensable supplies. In order to adapt to the development of the times, university libraries have realized the functions of mobile phone and tablet query and download in addition to computer query, and downloaded and read through web pages and app clients, QQ, WeChat, FTP, interlibrary loan, document delivery, etc., so as to realize all kinds of resource query without time and place restrictions [3]. In this way, readers can find the required information without leaving home. Thus, the phenomenon of library personnel gathering and getting together is put an end to, and the probability of infection is greatly reduced.

4.4.3 Ensure network services and ensure smooth access to digital resources

In order to fully guarantee the digital resource service of the library and realize the online service of the library, in order to ensure the accessibility of readers' resources, it is necessary to arrange special personnel to be on duty, equip with software and hardware equipment in time, and eliminate the network faults in time to ensure the normal operation of the network service.

4.4.4 Establish an appointment service to reduce the risk probability

Book reservation is implemented for paper books. Readers can reserve related books according to the reservation system, and they can pick them up at the service desk after being notified by the staff, thus reducing the time of staying in the library, realizing non-contact lending and minimizing the risk probability. It not only meets the needs of readers for paper books, but also ensures personal health and safety.

4.4.5 Establish a reader training system and promote the resources in the subject field

It is important to set up a training team with professionals as members and make a good training plan and formulate training courses according to the facts, including resource publicity, preschool education and online training. During the period of public health events, readers can be trained in the library resources by means of videos, images, words, etc. through the library website, WeChat official account and Weibo. At the same time, update resources and use training in time.

Meanwhile, it is also vital to establish a long-term mechanism, adhere to it for a long time, and achieve “accurate” service for personalized and specialized needs. The members of the training team will analyze and study the direction of readers' resource needs, especially the frontier information of professional disciplines, according to disciplines and hobbies, and push targeted resources to readers in need in time.

4.4.6 Establish the webpage and exhibition hall of major public events to transmit positive energy

As a school education place, the library collects relevant public event materials, sets up a major public event exhibition hall in the library website, and displays advanced deeds and figures through painting, writing, photos and videos. You can also set up a special question bank for major public events, and use network resources to record representative bits and pieces during public health events, showing the speed and strength of China.

You can also set up a public health event broadcast channel to broadcast the news during the period, so that the public can read the control situation of public health events at the first time and reduce the deviation of network information. As college students, through understanding public health events, we should firmly overcome our determination, cultivate the brave national spirit of China, cast the indestructible spirit of China, and become the pillars of the future country.

4.4.7 Strengthen the construction of paper books on public health events

In order to truly record the determination and confidence of the people of China in the period of major public events, the library, as a data preservation and recording institution, should do a good job in collecting, sorting and preserving the literature resources. These materials can come from policies at all levels, news reports on the development of public health events, various comments, and various materials, picture books, photo albums and so on published by relevant departments [4]. The collection and preservation of these materials will be a witness to the future history, and also a powerful basis for guiding China's positive energy.

4.4.8 The orderly recovery in the post-public health event period

During the public health incident, it has a far-reaching impact on all walks of life. Library readers have also changed their original reading habits and learning methods, and their services have also changed from offline to online, and from paper books to digital resources. During major public events, it seems that people have become accustomed to searching for resources on the Internet without leaving
home, forcing readers to pay attention to library electronic resources once again, and the amount of browsing and downloading library web pages has increased significantly compared with previous years. Then, after the public health incident, will readers continue to walk into the library to read paper books? This is the key point that the library should pay attention to in the post-public health event period. Under the strict normalization requirements of public health event prevention and control. In order to attract more readers, the library should work hard from the reading environment, atmosphere, software and hardware of the library, do a good job in book promotion and new book recommendation, and rekindle the charm of books by holding a series of reading activities.

5. Conclusion

During the public health incident, all walks of life actively resisted the “war” and resolutely guaranteed people's health and safety. Libraries in colleges and universities have closed or restricted their opening hours, but the online service has never stopped. In such a battlefield without smoke, they should try their best to serve readers and protect their health. All departments of the library should work together to create an orderly and good environment for the prevention and control of public health incidents and the service for readers, and give full play to their social functions. With the continuous development of society, libraries should continuously strengthen their capacity building, enhance their risk awareness and actively integrate into social development.

References