

The Cooperation between Academia and Industry in Guangzhou Public Librarianship: Case of iSchool in Sun Yat-sen University

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Abstract

The cooperation between academia and industry is one of the characters of Guangzhou Pattern in the public librarianship development. Centered on Sun Yat-sen University, this paper enumerates all the cooperation projects regarding Guangzhou public librarianship since 2006, which covered the areas of first, personnel training, second, drafting, studying and promoting of *Guangzhou Public Library Regulation*, third, evidence based practice, and fourth, compiling of the *Complete Library of Canton*. Facilitated by the cooperation between academia and industry, the library practice, the education and the research of library science unified and developed the library profession with a strategic vision and in a professional way.

Keywords: Public Librarianship; Cooperation between Academia and Industry; Partnership; Sun Yat-sen University iSchool; Guangzhou Library

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1 Background

Guangdong public librarianship has been developing rapidly in the recent decade. Characterized by its "Government-dominated" feature, Guangzhou Pattern flourishes in varied forms, among which, the comprehensive in-depth cooperation between academia and industry is a significant driving force of the accelerated development of Guangzhou public librarianship. As the sole teaching unit with complete degree authorization from undergraduates to graduates in library science in the areas of Hong Kong, Macau and Southern China, Sun Yat-sen University (hereafter SYSU) iSchool has participated in a series of cooperation projects between academia and industry.

2 Projects of iSchool and Industry Partnership

Centered on Guangzhou public librarianship, SYSU iSchool has set up a series of cooperation projects in the last decade, which covered the area of personnel training, library legislation, classification of local documents, evidence-based practice, to name but a few.

2.1 Personnel Training

A series of programs have been launched by SYSU iSchool together with the library industry of Guangzhou, such as advanced training programs, lecture series, scientific research team building and joint postgraduates' project. In addition to normal bachelor, master and doctor program of Library Science, SYSU iSchool has been dedicated to exploring more flexible and diversified means, to cultivate talents for Guangzhou public librarianship.

SYSU iSchool has successfully held two Advanced Training Programs for Public Librarians in Guangzhou (hereafter advanced training programs), respectively from May 8th to July 6th (Pan, 2006), 2006 and from March 12th (Cheng, 2008) to May 31st, 2007. The advanced training programs were hosted by the Propaganda Department of the Committee of Guangzhou Municipal, undertaken by Department of Information Management (later the iSchool) of SYSU, co-organized by Bureau of Culture of Guangzhou Municipality, Guangzhou Library (hereafter GZL) and SYSU Libraries (hereafter SYSU Lib). 72 administrative staffs and business elites (32 from the first program, and 40 from the second) from the public libraries of Guangzhou participated in these two intensive off-job trainings.

In 2012, GZL, SYSU iSchool, Research Institute of Library and Information Science (hereafter RILIS) formally signed a three-year tripartite cooperation agreement, which aimed at developing comprehensive cooperation between iSchool and industry. One of the programs was the lecture series for the library staffs in Guangzhou held by SYSU. From 2012 and 2013, under the guideline of Personnel Training and

Service Development Consultation of Guangzhou Library, SYSU offered two kinds of training in the first phase. One was themed Latest Research and Practice Progress in Library Science and Relevant Specialty, targeting at all the staffs of GZL and the members of Library Society of Guangzhou. The other was a three-day basic knowledge training course with the theme of Basic Theory of Library Science and Related Field, for the new staff of GZL, especially those without the background of library science. The course taught the basic knowledge of information resources construction and sharing, information organization and description and information obtainment and application. In 2014 and 2015, SYSU continued to provide two sessions of the first kind of training. Besides the teachers of SYSU iSchool and the members of RILIS, the speakers of the lecture series were also well-known experts and scholars domestic and overseas.

In addition to the continuing education open to librarians, SYSU has built up six scientific research teams for GZL since 2012, including Multicultural Service Idea and Practice, Statistical Analysis and Investigation, Public Library Service System Construction, Digital Library Service, Special Groups Service and Minors' Service. These teams were built up for the projects of Multicultural Service Concept and Practice Research of Public Libraries and Scientific Research Teams Building for GZL.

In November 2014, SYSU iSchool signed the joint training agreement with China National Preservation and Conservation Center, GZL and SYSU Lib, in an effort to cultivate the Master of Library and Information Studies (hereafter MLIS) in the areas of Preservation and Conservation and Library Management and Service. In January 2014, the MLIS was approved to act as reform pilot. In April 2014, the design of the implementation scheme for the reform pilot and the expert argumentation were completed. In August 2015, the above two research areas began to enroll their first year students.

2.2 Drafting, Studying and Promoting *Guangzhou Public Library Regulation*

Guangzhou Public Library Regulation came into effect on May 1st, 2015. Since May 2006, when Professor Cheng Huanwen was appointed by the Propaganda Department of the Committee of Guangzhou Municipal to host the project of Regulation of Guangzhou Library Legislation Studies and the work on drafting *Guangzhou Library Regulation*, the constitution of *Guangzhou Public Library Regulation* went through ten years of ups and downs.

Guangzhou Public Library Regulation is the sixth library regulations and library legislation of local government in China. Different from the others before, the participation of academia and industry went throughout the entire drafting process. From research and drafting at the beginning of the legislation, to the project of Research and Promotion on *Guangzhou Public Library Regulation* hosted by Professor Pan Yantao after the promulgation and implementation of the regulation, the legislative process adopted the pattern of 'government commission, academia dominated, academia and industry follow-through'. All projects were hosted by the professors from SYSU, industry core characters, including Fang Jiazhong, the chief librarian of GZL, who formed project team with the teachers from SYSU.

2.3 Compiling the *Complete Library of Canton*

The *Complete Library of Canton* is a large series of local literatures with 4064 titles of publications and manuscripts about Canton, published in Canton or written by Cantonese before 1911, aimed at systematic collection, arrangement and conservation of the literatures and documents of Guangzhou, as well as the dissemination of the historic culture of Guangzhou (GZL, 2016). It is planned and organized by the Propaganda Department of the Committee of Guangzhou Municipal and the Department of Culture of Guangdong Province. SYSU iSchool participates in every part of the making. The members of the chief research bases of Guangzhou Encyclopedia Research Center (hereafter research center) established in 2012 are from academia and industry. The International Academic Seminar on Chinese Ancient Books Arrangement and Bibliography held in November 2012 and November 2014 are hosted by SYSU Lib and research center as well.

2.4 Evidence Based Practice Project of GZL

In December 2009 and April 2015, SYSU iSchool was appointed by GZL twice to formulate development plans, and compiled *Guangzhou Library Development Plan in 2010-2015* and *Guangzhou Library Development Plan in 2016-2020*.

Meanwhile, in order to evaluate the development plan, GZL entrusted SYSU in 2012-2013, 2014 and 2015, to investigate the service and the readers' reading behavior of urban public library. Besides, after taking in the suggestion from Professor Cheng Huanwen, GZL decided the multicultural services as one

of the library's main service ideas and cooperated with SYSU to carry out the research on Multicultural Service Idea and Practice of Public Libraries in 2012-2013, 2014 and 2015. What's more, combined its work with scientific research team building. Moreover, in order to coordinate with the promotion and study of *Guangzhou Public Library Regulation*, GZL entrusted SYSU to investigate the construction need and path of Guangzhou rural and sub-district libraries.

3 Cooperation Effect

3.1 Enrich Training Levels

The cooperation between iSchool and industry push forward the public libraries talents training work in Guangzhou. The multi-layered trainings are targeted at not only the designers, decision makers, constructors and managers of Guangzhou librarianship, but also the business elites and ordinary staff.

The objects of advanced training programs were the managers of librarianship. The course was designed in accordance with the development of Chinese librarianship and the academic development of library science, focusing on the discipline development frontier and the current situation of library development of Guangzhou, in an effort to foster trainees' professional qualities and comprehensive abilities.

Scientific research team cultivation focuses on the business elites of library work. As an applied course derived from specific occupation, the relationship between library science research and library practice has always been close, the library staffs also have always been an important member of library science research group. And, the cooperation with academics is considered more beneficial to the common development of library science academia and library professional practice, which can solve the disjunction problem being criticized for a long time among academic research and professional practice in a best way (Woods & Booth, 2013).

Public Library Management and Service Promotion lecture series face the broad library staff and include the course especially for new staff. The lecture series have the features of programmatic and systematic management, close integration with industry needs and academic frontier in content, which helps to upgrade the theoretical level and extent the knowledge of library staff very well.

The joint postgraduates' project with practice units has enhanced the relationship of MLIS and library and information practice. Speaking from the direction of reform in the professional degree, or from the cooperation with the new policy environment of national professional qualification, joint postgraduates' project should be a beneficial attempt which can bring hope to the current conundrum of linking the degree to professional qualification. Meanwhile, the project also helps reserving talents for public libraries.

3.2 Boost Library Legislation

The pattern of 'government commission, academia dominated, academia and industry follow-through' makes the modern library basic ideas shown in library law in a high level. These ideas have long been researched and proposed by academics, and approved and practiced by the industry. Take library rights as an example, although the local library regulations or library legislation before paid its concern to the library rights in different degrees, nevertheless, in the respect of the guarantee of library rights for the people, *Guangzhou Public Library Regulation* apparently reaches a higher level. *Guangzhou Public Library Regulation* explicitly pointed the rights of public library users in the laws and regulations for the first time in mainland China (Pan & Zhang, 2015).

3.3 Promote the Local Literature Work of Scientific and Ordering

As large local literature series, the editorial board members of the *Complete Library of Canton* come from both academia and industry, which play an important role in the previous research work, the determination of compilation method, the critical stage of compiling process and the promotion after completion. At the stage of master copies collection, academia and industry together formed a research group, carried out the census of Guangdong literature, developed an understanding of the collection, existence and disappearance, version source, authors' information, basic components, literature value, previous studies, compiling features of Guangdong documents and so on, and put forward the selection suggestion (Cheng, 2013). Therefore, the compilation of the *Complete Library of Canton* is the product of joints efforts of the government, library industry and library academia.

3.4 Ensure the Scientificity and Operability of Public Library Development

As an applied science from specific work, the relationship between library science and library practice has always been close, and also has always been the center of concern and criticism. In early twenty-first century, library profession began to advocate evidence-based practice. This is way emphasized on the serious use of scientific research (evidence) in order to improve the decision-making, and to find the best professional practice. The development of evidence-based practice project is beneficial to public library service performance evaluation, the location of development trend, which embodies the scientific nature of the modern public library construction.

4 Summary

In conclusion, no matter in talents cultivation, library legislation, or resources construction, or other areas, the universities with professional education of library science in Guangzhou, represented by SYSU, have cooperated with Guangzhou public library industry in the last decade, which conduces to the rapid development of Guangzhou librarianship.

In the cooperation between academia and industry, the strategic vision of both parties is reflected in their ideas that have led the development of the course and their decision to rely on the law to create a lawful environment. In the cooperation, taking high-level personnel training as essence, valuing the construction of lawful environment and centering on scientific research, are the path choices of the professional development of Guangzhou public library. In the process of cooperation, library practice, education and research achieved solidarity and unity, consciously completed the internal construction of library profession at a certain degree (Yu, 2005). Maybe, that's the root cause why the Guangzhou public librarianship has developed rapidly.

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