

An Approach to the Reorganization of University Libraries in the 21st Century *

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I. Introduction

University libraries are confronted with a new environment characterized by constantly accelerating change. What is different from the past is that change is no longer intermittent. It is constant, and its pace is accelerating.

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We call the modern society the information society. Computer and communication technologies have had increasingly dramatic effects, often changing the way we work and live. Simultaneously, these information technologies have affected organizations, facilitating the reorganization of their structures and changing their inputs and outputs. In short, the information technologies demand an epochal alteration of management strategy and organizational structure in organizations, including library organizations.

University libraries are no exception. The libraries are in a transition from collection-centered institutions to service-oriented institutions. This transition requires university libraries to enlarge their roles through a drastic change of existing systems. These days, the digital library technology permits customization, personalization, remote access, filtration, greater volumes of information, and much more. While the traditional and digital libraries will, no doubt, coexist for a generation or more, it is clear that traditional library organizations must begin to reengineer their services and processes to begin to take advantage of this quantum leap in services. The digital library will cause a radical change in the services, processes, skills, and structure of the library and the library staff.¹⁾

At the same time, the international network of information and exchange is increasing connections within and across disciplines and creating new forums in the university. The quest for scholarly information has been expanded significantly and is now coupled with desires for swift and better services. We also see a growing number of information providers outside libraries. University libraries are deeply involved in a global arena. Our perspectives and service programs must reflect this context. University libraries need to,

1) Richard T. Sweeney, "Leadership Skills in the Reengineered Library," *Library Administration & Management*, Vol. 11, No. 1(Winter 1997), p. 35.

among other tasks, provide all students with the information-seeking skills needed not only to be productive learners but also life-long learners and efficient contributors to intellectual, cultural, and social endeavors no matter where they will eventually work and live.

However, many Korean university libraries are not corresponding effectively with the information age since they are still tied down to the previous system, policy and tradition.

This study attempts to determine the organizational problems and to suggest a new organizational model of the university library in the information society. For the purpose of identifying the organizational problems, the data were collected from the Statistics on Libraries in Korea 1997 and the National University Library Review 1997 out of which the organizational patterns of 114 Korean university libraries have emerged.

II. Organizational Pattern of Korean University Libraries

The organization of the university libraries in Korea has scarcely changed during the last ten years or so because of the legal obstacles, the limitation of resources, and the lack of librarians' efforts. The university libraries have not been able to properly perform their function as an academic information system, even though there have been some innovations such as the introduction of computerized library systems, the movement to appoint a library associate directorship, and the integration of the libraries and

computing centers.

A typical Korean university library is organized around three key functional areas, i.e., acquisitions, technical services, circulation and reference services. If we assume the acquisition function as a part of technical services, ninety five (82.5%) of the 114 libraries studied are organized along traditional lines with separate technical services and public services.

The other major type of organizational structure is the non-functional boundary which is the basic principle of departmentalization based on other than function. Libraries often begin with a functional structure, but as they grow in complexity, specialization develops based on subject, material form, and user, etc. It shows that nineteen (16.7%) of the 114 libraries have the non-functional structures. Twelve (63.2%) of the nineteen libraries are organized by subject. Four others (21.1%) are organized by user, while the remaining three are organized according to material format. In particular, 4 university libraries in Korea integrated the libraries and computing centers partially or completely. This indicates that new technologies have opened up many new services options for libraries. Libraries and computing centers deal with the same commodity - information and delivering information. Together they could be a particularly productive team.

III. Problems of Traditional Library Organization

Departmentalization by function in a library has traditionally been based upon the transformational processes of acquiring, organizing, and circulating materials, with small overall administrative functions providing coordination. This arrangement has the advantage of specialization and the concentration of similar activities within a departmental unit. However, this structure also has a disadvantage. Since functional structure places emphasis upon expertise within functions or departments, it tends to overlook the overall organization's goal.

Since the 1970s, the bureaucratic organizations have received significant criticism from librarians. While the quality of library personnel has increased, the tasks in many jobs have remained dull and repetitive. Also, a majority of the library staff work behind the scene and do not participate in direct user services. This means that the organization as a whole tends to become less aware of the users - their needs, frustrations and satisfactions.

Many libraries have reached the conclusion that the existing organizational structure is unable to respond adequately to current and foreseeable external and internal problems. Some libraries have therefore been considering organizational changes in order to cope with these pressures and to create an organization thought to be more responsive.

As early as 1979, Michael Gorman suggested that the most efficient use of human resources in terms of professional librarians should be examined. Automation had downgraded a large share of library tasks typically carried out by professional librarians to those of the nonprofessional support staff

and/or a machine. He stated, "the division between reference librarian and cataloger, between service and bibliography is vulnerable to criticism in terms of small rewards for money spent, in terms of use of automation, and in terms of job satisfaction."² He indicated that a more appropriate and cost effective arrangement would be groups of librarians who would perform all professional activities (i.e., reference, cataloging, selection, bibliographic instruction, and collection development) focused around services, subjects, languages, or any combination of the three. The university libraries at the University of Illinois were drastically reorganized in this manner.³

William Miller also contends that "the line between public and technical services is now blurring" particularly in large university libraries. He feels that it is artificial to separate the two and, rather, emphasizes the connections between them.⁴ In 1985, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Office of Management Studies reported a survey on automation-based reorganization.⁵

The study revealed that twenty five libraries were integrating staff in many different ways including the concept of multiple roles as in a matrix organization (one individual responsible for performing three or more major functions); in 13 libraries, librarians held dual functions (half time spent in cataloging, half in reference); in 4 libraries, librarians were engaged in job

2) Michael Gorman, "Technical Services in an Automated Library," In *The Role of the Library in an Electronic Society* ed. by F. W. Lancaster (Urbana-Champaign : University of Illinois, Graduate School of Library Science, 1980), p. 45.

3) James W. Williams, "The Decentralization of Selected Technical Services at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign," *Technical Services Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4(Summer 1987), pp. 5-19.

4) William Miller, "Reference and the Other Technical Services in a Large University Library," In *Reference Service : A Perspective* ed. by Sul H. Lee (Ann Arbor, MI : Pierian Press, 1983), p. 32.

5) Association of Research Libraries, *Automation and Reorganization of Technical and Public Services* (Washington, D.C. : Systems and Procedures Exchange Center, Association of Research Libraries, Office of Management Studies, 1985), SPEC KIT 112.

rotation. While collection development or selection duties were those most commonly shared, a definite increase in technical services librarians spending time in reference service was noted.

In 1992, Lois J. Buttlar and Rajinder Garcha conducted a survey on organizational structuring in American academic libraries. The findings of the survey showed that sixty (65.2%) of the 93 libraries studied are organized along traditional lines with separate technical services and public services functions. However, thirty (32.6%) report some partial integration of these two functions; two others (2.2%) have no separation of technical and public services functions. Twenty one (22.6%) had undergone reorganization, integrating technical and public services functions, within the last five years; six had been reorganized from five to ten years ago, and two had integrated functions more than ten years ago.⁶⁾

The proposal for the reorganization of the Columbia University Libraries was the more innovative one.⁷⁾ The Columbia University Libraries were reorganized in general accord with a management study some years ago. The Libraries were restructured into three broad groupings : resources group, services group, and support group.

The resources group has charge of collection development and in-depth bibliographic and reference service. The services group consists of three subject centers and five distinctive collections (law, health science, Asian, architecture, and special collections). The three subject centers are the humanistic and historical studies center, the social science center, and the science and engineering information center. The support group is for business,

6) Lois J. Buttlar and Rajinder Garcha, "Organizational Structuring in Academic Libraries," *Journal of Library Administration*, Vol. 17, No. 3(1992), pp. 5-6.

7) Lowell A. Martin, *Organizational Structure of Libraries* (Lanham, MD : Scarecrow Press, 1996), p. 267.

records, processing, and preservation.

There were just a few innovative models in the library world to help us through these initial stages. While the business world embraced the various quality management principles, the nonprofit organizations have been slow to follow. However, internal environmental changes and customer needs are closing the gap between the nonprofit and the profit organizations.

Libraries, as currently organized, might for a while, make progress, but they will lose their advantage to other libraries or other enterprises bent on replacing library services with a whole new level of service value.

IV. New Organizational Model

1. Background

The idea of the new organizational model of the university library suggested in this paper mainly derived from the literature not only on learning organization but also on total quality management, reengineering, restructuring, and reorganization, etc. Therefore, the new model is a combination of many theories - all pointing to the goal of an organization focusing on customer needs.

Thomas Shaughnessy states that the most important reason for restructuring is the most abstract, namely, that libraries must be organized to deal with the extraordinary changes that are occurring in their environment. It is not simply the complexity of the changes - financial, technological, political, social

/demographic, and cultural - but also the accelerated pace of change.⁸⁾

It means that successful organizations are designed to encourage innovation and change. The characteristics of organizations have long been seen as associated with their innovativeness. Two aspects appear likely to be of particular importance to implementation of innovation; the degree to which an organization is organic rather than mechanistic (drawn from literature now dating back over 40 years to the work of Burns and Stalker) and the degree to which an organization appears to be a learning organization.⁹⁾

Tom Burns and G. M. Stalker described "mechanistic" systems as characterized by differentiation, a command hierarchy, vertical communication and centralized authority, and saw these systems as often appropriate to stable conditions. By contrast, they saw "organic" systems as characterized by an emphasis on the tasks of the firm as a whole, a lack of formal job definition, decentralized authority, and lateral as well as vertical communication.¹⁰⁾

In short, organizational structures can either inhibit or encourage creativity. Organic and extremely decentralized organizations, in which small project teams are found, foster an atmosphere in which new ideas and fast action can flourish. Bureaucratic organizations with strong lines of authority often prevent initiative and innovation.¹¹⁾

The learning organization culture is also styled to promote innovation and

8) Thomas W. Shaughnessy, "Lessons from Restructuring the Library," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* (July, 1996), p. 252.

9) Peter Clayton, *Implementation of Organizational Innovation* (New York : Academic Press, 1997), p. 5.

10) Tom Burns and G. M. Stalker, *The Management of Innovation* (London : Tavistock, 1966), pp. 119-122.

11) Joy Bryson, *Effective Library and Information Center Management* (Brookfield : Gower, 1990), p. 156.

creativity. It is designed to identify dysfunctional elements and correct them, not as special cases, but as part of the normal process of operation. The learning organization culture represents one very good answer to meeting the challenge of continued excellence in the face of constant change. It will enable the creation of organizations that constantly innovate and recreate themselves as the needs of the populations they serve change.

Peter Senge(1990), who popularized learning organizations in his book *The Fifth Discipline*, described them as places “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.” He suggests that ‘five new component technologies’ are gradually converging to innovative learning organizations. These technologies are systems thinking, personal mastery or “a special level of proficiency,” mental models “that influence how we understand the world and how we take action,” building shared vision, and team learning.¹²⁾

One advantage to learning organization theory as an approach to change is that it treats change as one of the normal ongoing characteristics of organizations rather than as an episodic bounded event occurring outside of organizational routines. In terms of quality improvement, such characteristics may be desirable since one can assume that customer needs and expectations are unlikely to remain stable over time. Thus, the quality-oriented library will need to assess customer needs not just once but continuously, and it will need to change regularly in response to those needs.

To convert existing organizations to learning organizations, librarians will

12) Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline : The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York : Doubleday, 1990), pp. 6-10.

need to see themselves more as leaders and less as practitioners. A common mistake library managers make is not properly identifying the real change. Too often change is defined as implementing a new technology. The technology is only the manifestation of change. The real change occurs in the minds of the librarians and the staff using the technology. One key to successfully approaching the creation of a learning organization is to understand the need to focus on the people. This focus on people within interrelated systems leads us to personal mastery.

Personal mastery means learning to expand our personal capacity to create the results we most desire, and creating an organizational environment which encourages all its members to develop themselves toward the goals and purposes they choose.¹³⁾ People with high levels of personal mastery are more committed. They take more initiative. They have a broader and deeper sense of responsibility in their work. They learn faster.¹⁴⁾

While traditional organizations require management systems that control people's behavior, learning organizations invest in improving the quality of thinking, the capacity for reflection and team learning, and the ability to develop shared visions and shared understandings of complex organizational issues. It is these capabilities that will allow learning organizations to be both more locally controlled and more well coordinated than their hierarchical predecessors.¹⁵⁾

Empowerment is only possible today in most organizations because of the effective use of information technology. It requires systematically redistributing four key ingredients throughout the organization, from the top downward :

13) Senge, 1994, p. 6.

14) Senge, 1990, p. 142.

15) *Ibid.*, p. 289.

(1) power, (2) information, (3) rewards, and (4) knowledge. This means that all staff become decision makers and therefore must be better informed. Empowerment also means that employee learning must be continuous, and it requires that each employee or team must be fully informed, knowledgeable, and skilled, and the work must be very well coordinated.¹⁶⁾

2. The Strategies for the New Model

In designing this new organizational model, the following strategies should be considered: First, university libraries in the 21st century need to be learning organizations. A learning organization is skilled at taking advantage of both formal and informal learning opportunities and changing its behavior and direction in response to what it learns. While this seems straightforward and easy, it takes effort to focus attention on learning, and then to turn that learning into change. And we need to monitor change and effectiveness constantly.

Therefore, the organization should build the infrastructure for personal mastery to adjust to the constant, and constantly accelerating change. Traditional training and formal education places the responsibility for knowledge transfer on the teacher while the learning organization places responsibility on the learner and the teams. In order to build the organizational culture for personal mastery, most of all, the leader should be a model. There is nothing more powerful he can do to encourage others in their quest for personal mastery than to be serious in his own quest.

16) Richard T. Sweeney, "Leadership Skills in the Reengineered Library," *Library Administration & Management*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Winter 1997), p. 33.

Second, delayering is a cornerstone in designing learning organizations. The organizational structure and the library leadership skills that are most needed now are those that empower each employee, reduce job categories, and work cross-functionally in order to increase decision making speed and increase the organization's responsiveness to its users.

Third, the university library should serve integrated information to user's needs. To achieve this end, the library will need to assess customer needs continuously, and it must have the organizational structure that allows more personnel to be involved with front-line activities focused towards services. It has become more important that strengthening the reference and user services, putting the reference services as the first line, both physically and organizationally, emphasizing value-added services based on knowledge and ability, on analysis, selection, and integration, and connecting it to all other services and tools in and outside the library.

Concurrently, the university library should change the work duty structure from process oriented to program oriented or field oriented, increasing work scope and professional responsibility, and increasing intellectual challenge and attraction of the work. It is ineffective, anti-professional to confine librarians to a simple mechanical procedure. It is recommended that each professional be assigned to a subject field conducting user research, resource development and reference services in the fields, while having opportunities joining different special tasks and programs(especially programs in service and system development).

Fourth, university libraries in the 21st century should increase collaboration and partnerships with other units on campus. Enhanced cooperation between the library and the campus computing center will provide significant opportunities for improvements in services. The main locus for the provision

of information content, however, should be the library. Because of the complementary relationships of academic computing, campus telecommunications centers, and libraries, some colleges and universities have questioned the appropriateness of their organizational structures, particularly when a significant investment in information systems, resources, and services is anticipated. For example, in USC(University of South California), this has led to the creation of a chief information service position under whose umbrella of responsibility these individual information units may be clustered. While it is not proposed as a new organizational model in this paper, this does indicate that there are strong complementary relationships between the library and campus computing services as a result of using information technology. It also suggests that we need to work more closely with people in the campus computing center to bring about improvements in services.

3. New Model

There are, of course, no proven models for organizing the next generation information infrastructure. A means of beginning, however, is to redesign around the ongoing and emerging functions that exist across the old division.

In the new organizational model of the university library, the four divisions - service division, service support division, technology support division, and coordination division - are proposed as the basic conceptual components of the university library in the 21st century. The framework of the new model is built on an application of the management principle of giving priority in an organization to the purpose for which the organization exists (services to users in this case) and arranging other divisions according

to the kind of contribution made.

In this model, the service division focuses much more on user service and is much less bound by inflexible rules. Every specialist in the service division must be a flexible generalist. This specialist should be able to see the entire process, the organization, and have some basic practical understanding of all the different tasks to compliment his special skills.

For example, the library of Chonnam National University in Korea placed thirteen librarians in the newly formed service division and put them in charge of 80 academic departments of the university when the library was reorganized in 1996. These librarians are expected, as their main duties, to execute a number of tasks that should contribute to the optimization of the information service in a given subject field of academic department, and by so doing, to satisfy the information needs of their users. As an example, this service division handles the selection of materials, cataloging and classification, reference, user training, on-line searching, documentary analysis, etc.

There are no line supervisors whose titles are identified with a functional responsibility such as head of acquisition, reference services, and technical services. Another major accomplishment of this model is that there is no longer any friction between the technical service division and the public service division. This kind of friction is unavoidable in the traditional model because each division has its own culture and often has conflicting visions of service to the client.

The service support division handles operations and activities internal to the library. This division handles all those tasks that support the service division. This may include accounting, personnel administration, bibliographic control, facilities management and the like.

The technology support division maintains the library automation system to

operate steadily and properly. It develops the library system by themselves or by cooperating with other libraries, so that the function of the library automation system can be enlarged continuously. This division, also, provides network information service that a library can provide through network and organize network information resources and create virtual library for users. It plans and implement database building and to make digital copy of the library collection. Today the services provided by library through network have not been the crucial parts of library services, as if it is just a supplement to traditional library services. But the network information service will play more important role along with the increase in numbers of networked library. This division especially needs the enhanced cooperation with the campus computing center.

The coordination division is extremely decentralized at the operational level. The staff members who are directly involved with the user assume total responsibility for day to day operations in their area. The coordination division plays two roles in operations. First, it assumes responsibility for the management and the coordination of the whole organization. Second, it plays the role of coordinator for collective interests, particularly at the resources allocation level and in developing minimal rules to coordinate the operation of the library.

V. The Steps to Reorganization

Any reorganization is complicated because current services must be

maintained while the infrastructure is being built to support the information needs of the 21st century.

If a library is considering such changes, what steps should it undergo in attempting a transformation? The first thing is to realize that a significant structural change will most likely be difficult and time-consuming. It is easy to discuss organizational change in the abstract, but when it comes to implementation, change is usually more difficult than expected.

The first is for the library to determine the organizational design that best matches the organization's strategy. Careful planning for the type of structure is important. At this stage, it is useful to gather data, especially on use patterns and user satisfaction.

The second step in any structural change is a consideration of whether the present employees will be able to work well in the proposed new structure. One part of this consideration concerns the personal style of the organization's managers. But it is not just top-level managers who will need help in adjusting to a new structure. Staff development needs to be provided to all employees to ready them for a new organizational structure. Much attention has to be paid to the human side of the organization. The staff development and training required to accomplish organizational transformation successfully requires a large amount of both monetary and time investment.

The third step is to develop the strategy of how to move from the current configuration to the new one. This is the implementation stage of the process. Unless employees understand the reasons for the change, any change is unlikely to be effective.

There is a critical need throughout the entire process beginning from the very start, for effective communication. This communication needs to be both external, for the academic library is part of a larger organization that needs

to be informed about the proposed changes, and internal. If employees are not kept well informed about proposed changes, rumors will be rampant. Changes in organizational structure can be very threatening; good communication keeps everyone informed and helps to alleviate employee anxiety.

The process has been expensive. It has taken an enormous amount of time, in total length and in staff weeks of effort. It has required consistency and constancy of vision over a span of several years.

Finally a method of assessment has to be built into the process so it can be ascertained whether or not the new structure is successful. This assessment should attempt to pinpoint the things that are working well and the things that still need to be changed. Reorganization needs to be viewed as an iterative process. Typically everything does not work well with the first reorganization attempt; some things need to be fine-tuned and mistakes corrected.

VI. Conclusion

To face the coming challenges of the 21st century, academic librarians will need to acquire more perspectives and new competencies. No one would deny that this is both an exciting and challenging time to be in the field of librarianship. But this is also a time that necessitates innovative ways of thinking about services, collections, information access, and also the roles as librarians.

This article discussed the issues of library reorganization by analysing the changes taken place or taking place in libraries in an age of technology and put forward ideas about reorganization.

The four division - service division, service support division, technology support division, and coordination division - are proposed as the basic conceptual components of the university libraries in the 21st century.

The service division focuses on integrated user services. Those librarians in this division are expected to execute a number of tasks that should contribute to the optimization of the information service in a given subject field of academic department. The service support division handles all those tasks that support the service division. The technology support division maintains the library automation system to operate steadily and properly. This division, also, provides network information services and create virtual library for users. The coordination division assumes responsibility for the management and the coordination of the whole organization.

However, there is no right or wrong structure for every service or process. It should be noted that modes of structure reorganization are various due to the different organizations and structures in different libraries. To find an optional organization from which is most advantageous for the library's development, all factors, such as the library's task, object, faculties and working process should be taken into consideration. Moreover, as the environment in which the library exists is changing from time to time, the structure reorganization of the library will correspondingly be a continuous process.

Our success and the successes of our organizations will depend on our ability to change and adapt. Success in an environment that is in constant flux and that expects dynamic responses will require individuals comfortable with personal change and organizations capable of learning innovation.

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21세기의 대학도서관 재조직화에 대한 연구

홍 현 진 * · 이 병 목 **

〈국문초록〉

21세기를 맞이하여 대학도서관은 정보기술의 도입, 업무내용의 변화, 이용자의 요구변화 등 급격하게 변화하는 새로운 환경에 직면해있다. 본 연구는 한국의 대학도서관 조직구조의 현황에 대한 분석과 함께 다양한 조직이론들과 정보환경의 변화에 기초해서 도서관 조직을 활성화시키기 위한 개념적인 조직모델을 제시하고자 한다. 한국의 대학 도서관들은 거의 10년 동안 법적인 제약과 조직내외의 환경적인 한계 등으로 인해 전산화시스템의 도입, 도서관부관장의 임명, 그리고 도서관과 컴퓨터 센터와의 통합시도와 같은 약간의 변화외에는 거의 변화가 없었다.

전형적인 한국의 대학도서관은 수서, 기술서비스, 열람과 참고봉사 부문으로 조직되었다. 여기서 수서 기능을 기술서비스의 부문으로 간주한다면, 본 연구의 대상인 대학도서관 114개관 중 95개관(82.5%)이 전통적인 도서관조직의 형태인 기술서비스와 공공서비스 부문으로 조직된 것으로 나타났다.

본 연구에서는 전통적인 도서관조직의 문제점들을 극복할 수 있는 21세기의 개념적인 대학도서관 조직모델로서, 네 가지 부문 - 서비스부문, 서비스지원부문, 기술지원부문, 그리고 통합·조정부문 -을 대학도서관의 개념적인 기본 구성요소로써 제안하였다.

그러나 모든 도서관의 서비스나 업무과정에 대해 적합한 이상적인 조직구조는 없으며, 조직의 재조직과정은 도서관의 형태와 목적, 업무과정에 따라 매우 다양하다. 따라서 도서관의 재조직화는 환경의 변화에 따라 끊임없는 과정이 될 것이며, 도서관조직의 성공은 이러한 변화에 적응할 수 있는 개인과 조직의 역량에 달려있다고 하겠다.

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