

**UDC 316.775.2**

LAPO P. M.

Nazarbayev University (Astana, The Republic of Kazakhstan), e-mail: piotr.lapo@nu.edu.kz,  
ORCID 0000-0003-0444-2810**About Social Communications of Nazarbayev University Library**

**Objective.** The purpose of the article is a systematic analysis of social communications of Nazarbayev University Library based on an analysis of the structure of the social communication as a system and the factors determining its formation and development. **Methods.** For a comprehensive analysis of such a complex phenomenon of social life as social communication, its interpretations in the Western and post-Soviet traditions, as well as such a concept in sociology as social space (social field), which defines the mission of the library as an institution of society are considered. **Results.** It is noted that the purpose and goals of social communication of an academic library are determined by the mission of the library as an institution of society in specific social time and space, as well as the mission of the university with which the library is affiliated. **Conclusions.** Typically, an academic library has three main areas of social communication: 1) the university community; 2) the professional library community at the national, regional, and international levels; 3) the public community with which the library interacts to popularize reading, promote universal values and ethical standards, develop critical thinking, media and information literacy (culture).

*Keywords:* academic librarianship; library; social communication; social functions of library; humanistic mission; history of librarianship

**Introduction**

In the Western tradition, the concept of “*social communication*” is primarily considered at the level of individuals and defines the individual’s use of verbal (spoken) and non-verbal (look, facial expression, gestures) language to communicate in social situations to share information about his/her feelings, thoughts, plans, etc. with other people and to create and develop relationships and cooperative partnerships with them. As for Western academic libraries, the term “*library social communications*” is generally used to summarize the media and social networks a library utilizes to inform its users about its resources, services, and events. The difference between the interpretation of the concept of “*social communication*” in the Western and post-Soviet traditions is reflected in such common concepts as “library mission” (a concept characteristic of the Western tradition and included in the post-Soviet library terminology only in the late 1990s) and “social library functions” (a concept characteristic of the Soviet and post-Soviet tradition, especially regarding a public library, and has not become popular in Western library terminology). It is reasonable to assume that the communication component of library activities in the West is considered based on serving, first, the individual and ensuring his/her rights, and serving, first, society and its interests, represented by state ideology, expressed in the form of the social functions of libraries in the Soviet and post-Soviet states. For example, Jesse H. Shera, a guru of the US librarianship, wrote: “Though the library serves mainly the individual, the ultimate objective is the betterment of society; therefore, the librarian must not only know the cognitive system of the individual, but also the communication network of society” (Shera, 1965). In the publications of Soviet school’s theorists of librarianship, “the communicative component of library activity is viewed through the prism of: a) the main social functions of the library; b) public purpose libraries; c) institutional characteristics of the library; d) communication processes occurring in various social fields; e) types of activities aimed at receiving and transmitting socially and professionally significant information” (Dolgoplova, 2020, Neshcheret, 2019). While Western libraries’ interpretation “social communication” is mostly social media used in library services, the post-

---

**LIBRARY SERVICES FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION SUPPORT**

---

Soviet libraries' interpretation of "social communication" is "movement of meanings in social time and space" (Sokolov, 2002).

The new role of the librarian and the mission of the library proclaimed by R. David Lankes can be considered as a noticeable stage in the convergence of the above-mentioned interpretations. "To be a librarian is not to be neutral, or passive, or waiting for a question. It is to be a radical positive change agent within your community" (Lankes, 2013). "A new mission for librarians: to improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in their communities" (Lankes, 2011). The approach proposed by R. David Lankes became an impetus for Western library practitioners to take a fresh look at their professional activities (Smith, 2019).

Historically, the library has acquired the qualities of a social and communication institution of society with the growing emergence of public, open for all, libraries. With the development of information and communication technologies and the increasingly aggressive competitive environment in the field of information services and computer social networks, the library is forced to devote more and more time and efforts to its development and improvement as a social and communication center and as a subject of social communication (Tueva, 2014). It is noted that the process of self-awareness and self-identification of libraries as a center of social communications and its functions in specific social time and space occurs over a long period of time. It is still a relevant subject for research, practical experiments, and innovations for the mass (public) library. As for the understanding of the academic library as a center of social communications, many theorists and practitioners of librarianship seem to have this issue initially clear - its purpose is to meet professional needs and requests from specialists of the institution with which it is affiliated. "Part of, or aligned with, institutions of higher education, academic libraries tend to acquire comprehensive collections, do little weeding of them over time, and seek to accelerate the pace of scholarly dialogue in research and teaching" (Lankes, 2011). At the same time, R. David Lankes notes, "Academic libraries, like all libraries, must shape themselves and their services to the specific communities they serve" (Lankes, 2011).

The purpose of this article is to study the social communications of Nazarbayev University Library and the factors influencing their formation and development.

### **Methods**

The methodological basis of the study is analytical methods, as well as literature review and theoretical principles set forth in the works of contemporary librarianship and social communication researchers. The systematic, structural functional, activity and institutional approach has been used in the study.

### **Results and Discussion**

Considering an academic library as one of the centers of social communications of students, teachers, and researchers of the university with which it is affiliated is a common view.

At the same time, to maintain the relevance of the library to a specific social time and space and to predict the actual future directions of the development of the library, it is also necessary to consider its immanent properties as an institution of society that has been performing certain social functions for four millennia. *Social space (social field)*, interpreted as a space providing the basics of life for individuals and social communities, a space for the formation, development, strengthening and preservation of their human potential, is considered today as an actual object of study in social sciences (Ivanov, 2015). In the structure of the social field specific zones or areas are distinguished: healthcare, medicine, education, culture, housing, and communal construction

---

**LIBRARY SERVICES FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION SUPPORT**


---

(in the aspect of housing and dacha construction), insurance, pension services, social protection, etc. In accordance with such the purpose of the social field as the formation, development, strengthening and preservation of its human potential the *mission of libraries in society* is “(1) to promote the development of human nature (his/her intellectual, spiritual, emotional, cultural, and esthetic intelligences) and (2) culture of interpersonal relations (the level of which determines the degree of sustainable development of society) (Lapo, 2021).

In a library as a communicative system, all levels and sides of its communications must be combined into a single structure. It is necessary to move from the description and analysis of the parts that make up the communication process - user service, modern information and communication technologies, the system of external relations with authorities and other information, documentation, and communication institutions to the structuring of all the main elements of communications for further modeling of the holistic structure of their relationships (Karaschuk, 2017). There is an established view of academic libraries as just information centers for study and research. But what distinguishes any library from an information center is that the library is as a unity of its three essences: 1) it is a cultural institution responsible for developing individual’s culture of reading, thinking, communication, media and information culture (literacy), legal culture (copyright, right to access information), etc. (specifically to university libraries: creating a culture of academic integrity, etc.); 2) it is an information center providing complete, reliable and relevant information to the user’s request and consulting information services; and 3) it is a social communication center creating a culture of interpersonal communication, dialogue and joint activities) (Lapo, 2021).

It should also be noted that depending on the role (mission) performed by a particular university, the social communications of its library may be different.

Nazarbayev University (NU), established in Astana, the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in 2010, is the country’s flagship academic institution with aspirations to become a global-level research university. Its mission is to be a model for higher education reform and modern research; to contribute to the establishment of Astana as an international knowledge, innovation, and medical hub; and to prepare students for a world of increased volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity<sup>1</sup>. Nazarbayev University is intended to become the engine of transformation of the higher education system in the country. NU leadership adheres to the view that a modern university must stimulate social change and is responsible for its students and the society in forming of which the university participates. NU seeks to engage more actively with society, taking a more analytical and critical approach to the context in which it operates, from which they receive their funds, and contribute to in turn. The university, as a social institution, instigates sustainable transformation, addresses social inequalities and ceases perpetuating and reproducing the very conditions underlying these challenges.

The NU mission and purpose define both the mission and role of its library, the important priorities of which are the promotion of best practices of the international and national librarianship and up-to-date technologies among Kazakhstani academic libraries and participation in the promotion of the NU values in the country and at the regional and international levels.

Speaking about NU Library as a social communication system, it can be highlight three of its main communication spaces. The first is, of course, primarily the NU academic community (its students, teachers, researchers, administrators, and staff). The communication of NU Library with the NU academic community is realized through the wide range of information and library services that the library offers to its users<sup>2</sup>. The library team is committed to constantly improving its

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://nu.edu.kz/about>

<sup>2</sup> <https://library.nu.edu.kz/wps/portal>

## LIBRARY SERVICES FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION SUPPORT

---

services providing physically and virtually. In June of 2023, the new Alma+Primo library services platform produced by Ex Libris company was implemented in the library. The NU Library devotes a lot of time and efforts to promoting academic integrity among students, with this activity's broader goal to develop moral and ethical values and attitudes among NU students. Since the library has a rich and unique collection of printed and electronic textbooks, scientific monographs and journals, the library's users are also researchers from a few universities and research centers in Astana. These users have the status of "temporary reader" and can use printed and electronic (network) information resources of the library only in its reading rooms. Temporary users visit the library usually during a year based on memorandum of understanding concluded between NU and the organization with which such library users are affiliated.

The second important communication space of NU Library is the library professional community, represented at the national, regional, and global levels. To realize its mission of sharing advanced international and national experience in the field of librarianship among academic librarians in Kazakhstan, NU Library annually holds the Eurasian Academic Libraries Conference (EALC) and the seminar-training "School of Library Technologies". Additionally, the library provides consulting services to other libraries and is used by them, as well as by students at Kazakhstani universities with library specialties for internships. At the national level, NU Library interacts with the Association of University Libraries of the Republic of Kazakhstan (ULAK)<sup>3</sup>. The Association was officially registered on October 22, 2012, but only last year it began to work actively as a united team of experts from various university libraries, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. On the Ministry's request, a working group was created under the ULAK auspices to develop a Program for the Modernization of Information and Library Provision for Higher Education in the country and a Roadmap for the implementation of the Program for 2022-2024. To implement the roadmap, 6 committees were created within the Association, including the Committee on Library Regulatory Documentation; the Committee on Library Education, Training and Advanced Training of Library Staff; the Committee on Information Resources and Access and others. A memorandum of cooperation between the Association and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education was signed in January 2023. NU Library staff took part in the working group to develop the above-mentioned documents and they are members of the Association's committees.

At the regional level NU Library actively collaborates with librarians and teachers of library disciplines at universities in Central Asia, as well as with the National Libraries of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. NU librarians regularly make presentations about their experience and achievements at the annual international conference "Central Asia: Internet and Information and Library Resources in Science, Education, Culture and Business"<sup>4</sup>, held by the National Library of Uzbekistan named Alisher Navoi in various cities of the country. Together with librarians and teachers of library disciplines from universities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, NU Library staff prepared project applications for the international Erasmus+ program and conduct activities to involve librarians in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals under the auspices of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

Partnership with the Scientific Library of the Ukrainian State University of Science and Technologies (Dnipro, Ukraine) in conducting international conferences in Astana (EALC) and in Dnipro (Ukraine International Conference "University Library at a new stage of social

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://ulark.kz/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.natlib.uz/bbs/content/94\\_519](https://www.natlib.uz/bbs/content/94_519)

communications development" – UniLibNSD) is also important professional communication of NU Library at the regional level.

Regarding the global level of interlibrary interaction, it should be noted that NU Library is a member of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). The library actively participates in various IFLA projects, for example, in the Library Map of the World<sup>5</sup>, publishing reports on its activities aimed at implementing the Sustainable Development Goals on the project website. NU librarians are regular participants in international conferences held in a few countries around the world.

The third important communication space of NU Library is public communities such as readers' clubs in Astana city which unite people with different professional backgrounds and ages. The library provides the readers' clubs with a venue to meet and discuss books they read. In cooperation with professors and students of the NU Graduate School of Education the library conducts literary events for children in Astana city and in Kazakhstan, usually for children from so called socially vulnerable families. The goal of the collaboration of NU Library with city reading clubs, and initiation, together with the NU Graduate School of Education, of events for children and dedicated to the International Day of Children's Literature, the implementation of projects to promote media and information literacy among librarians and students of secondary schools in Akmola region are aimed at the development of a cultural and enlightened society, in which citizens are critical thinkers and have a habit of reading high quality fiction. Such citizens can be considered as the hope and guarantee of a successful future for libraries and sustainable development of humanity.

### **Conclusions**

Social communication of an academic library should be a complete system, with different levels and areas of interaction. The purpose and goals of social communication of an academic library are determined by the mission of the library as an institution of society in specific social time and space, as well as the mission of the university with which the library is affiliated. Typically, an academic library has three main areas of social communication: 1) the university community; 2) the professional library community at the national, regional, and international levels; 3) the public community with which the library interacts to popularize reading, promote universal values and ethical standards, develop critical thinking, media and information literacy (culture).

Improving the quality of human potential of the country and region, development of the intellectual, spiritual, and emotional intelligence of people by providing high-quality and effective information and library services to students, teachers and researchers of Kazakhstani universities is seen as the ultimate goal of this direction of the NU Library activities.

### **REFERENCES**

- Dolgoplova, E. E. (2020). Kommunikativnaia sostavliaiushchaia deiatelnosti biblioteki kak obiekt nauchnogo izucheniia [Communicative aspect of library activity as an object of scientific study]. In *Libraries in the information society: preserving traditions and developing new technologies. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference* (pp. 363-374). Belarus Agricultural Library. Minsk, Belarus. doi: <https://doi.org/10.47612/978-985-884-010-5-2020-363-374> (in Russian)
- Ivanov, O. I. (2015). Sotsialnoe prostranstvo kak nauchnoe poniatie i kak obiekt ehmpiricheskogo izucheniia [Social space as a scientific concept and as an object of empirical study]. *Research*

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://librarymap.ifla.org/>

- Result. Social Studies and Humanities*, 1(3), 29-34. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18413/2408-932X-2015-1-3-29-34> (in Russian)
- Karaschuk, O. N. (2017). Libraries in the system of social-information communications. *Science and Education a New Dimension. Humanities and Social Sciences*, 24(146), 56-59. doi: <https://doi.org/10.31174/SEND-HS2017-146V24-13> (in English)
- Lankes, R. D. (2013, January 16). *Success through collaboration*. Retrieved from <https://davidlankes.org/success-through-collaboration/> (in English)
- Lankes, R. D. (2011). *The atlas of new librarianship*. Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press. (in English)
- Lapo, P. (2021). O roli biblioteki v formirovanii kultury intellekta studenta v sovremennom universitete: opyt biblioteki Nazarbaev Universiteta [On the role of the library in the formation of a student's intellectual culture in a modern university: The experience of Nazarbayev University Library]. *O`zbekiston Milliy Kutubxonasi*, 62-71. Retrieved from <https://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/5479> (in Russian)
- Neshcheret, M. Y. (2019). Sotsialnye funktsii publichnoi biblioteki v trudakh techestvennykh bibliotekovedov [Social functions of public library in the studies of domestic library scientists]. *Bibliotekovedenie [Russian Journal of Library Science]*, 68(1), 18-29. doi: <https://doi.org/10.25281/0869-608X-2019-68-1-18-29> (in Russian)
- Shera, J. H. (1965). The library as an agency of social communication. *Journal of Documentation*, 21(4), 241-243. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb026370> (in English)
- Smith, C. E. (2019). New librarianship in action: applying the framework to foster innovation in academic research libraries. *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Emerging Global Trends in University Library Development (ICEGTULD 2019)* (pp. 16-29). Retrieved from <http://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/3902> (in English)
- Sokolov, A. V. (2002). *Obshchaya teoriya sotsialnoy kommunikatsii* [General theory of social communication]. St. Petersburg, RF: Izdatelstvo Mikhailova V. A. (in Russian)
- Tueva, L. M. (2014). Biblioteka v kontekste sotsialnykh kommunikatsii [Library in the context of social communications]. *Vestnik Kemerovskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta Kultury i Iskusstv*, 27, 211-216. Retrieved from <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/biblioteka-v-kontekste-sotsialnykh-kommunikatsiy> (in Russian)

LAPO P. M.

Університет Назарбаєва (Астана, Республіка Казахстан), e-mail: [piotr.lapo@nu.edu.kz](mailto:piotr.lapo@nu.edu.kz),  
ORCID 0000-0003-0444-2810

## Про соціальні комунікації Бібліотеки Університету Назарбаєва

**Мета.** Метою статті є системний аналіз соціальних комунікацій бібліотеки Університету Назарбаєва на основі аналізу структури соціальної комунікації як системи та факторів, що визначають її формування й розвиток. **Методика.** Для всебічного аналізу такого складного явища суспільного життя, як соціальна комунікація, розглянуто її інтерпретації в західній та пострадянській традиціях, а також таке поняття в соціології, як соціальний простір (соціальне поле), що визначає місію бібліотеки як інституту суспільства. **Результати.** Зазначено, що мета і завдання соціальних комунікацій академічної бібліотеки визначаються місією бібліотеки як інституту суспільства в конкретному соціальному часі та просторі, а також місією університету, з яким бібліотека афілійована. **Висновки.** Зазвичай академічна бібліотека має три основні напрями соціальної комунікації: 1) університетська спільнота; 2) професійна бібліотечна спільнота на національному, регіональному та міжнародному рівнях; 3) громадськість, з якою бібліотека взаємодіє з метою

## LIBRARY SERVICES FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION SUPPORT

---

популяризації читання, просування загальнолюдських цінностей та етичних норм, розвитку критичного мислення, медіа- та інформаційної грамотності (культури).

*Ключові слова:* академічне бібліотекознавство; бібліотека; соціальна комунікація; соціальні функції бібліотеки; гуманістична місія; історія бібліотечної справи

Received: 13.08.2023

Accepted: 25.12.2023