

Constructing a Refined Reading Service Philosophy to Facilitate Chinese-style Nationwide Reading Development

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Abstract

The report delivered by General Secretary Xi Jinping at the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China sets the direction with strategic vision and profound content, comprehensively summarizing the tremendous achievements made in the cause of the Party and the country, and outlining a grand blueprint for comprehensively advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization. The word “culture” appears 57 times in the report, fully demonstrating the Central Committee’s emphasis on cultural construction. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that to build a socialist cultural powerhouse, we must focus on raising the banner, gathering public support, cultivating new generations, promoting culture, and building image; develop a socialist culture that is oriented toward modernization, the world, and the future, and is national, scientific, and popular; stimulate the cultural innovation and creativity of the entire nation; and strengthen the spiritual power for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Deepening nationwide reading activities is an important measure to enhance the civilizational level of the entire society, and is of great significance for advancing cultural confidence and self-improvement, and forging new glories of socialist culture. In the new era and on the new journey, it is necessary to establish a refined reading philosophy and promote the development of nationwide reading activities that align with Chinese-style modernization.

Full Text

Introduction

The report delivered by General Secretary Xi Jinping at the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China provides strategic guidance and profound insights, comprehensively summarizing the tremendous achievements

of the Party and the nation while charting an ambitious blueprint for advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization. The term “culture” appears 57 times in the report, fully demonstrating the Party Central Committee’s emphasis on cultural development. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized the need to build a socialist cultural powerhouse by holding high the banner, rallying public support, cultivating new generations, promoting culture, and showcasing China’s image. He called for developing a socialist culture that is national, scientific, and popular, oriented toward modernization, the world, and the future, to stimulate the cultural innovation and creativity of the entire nation and strengthen the spiritual power for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Deepening nationwide reading initiatives constitutes a crucial measure for elevating societal civility and holds profound significance for advancing cultural self-confidence and self-improvement, as well as forging new glories for socialist culture. In this new era and on this new journey, we must establish a segmented reading service philosophy to promote the development of Chinese-style modernization in nationwide reading activities.

Segmented reading services represent a viable pathway for libraries to drive high-quality development in nationwide reading initiatives. Over the past decade, remarkable achievements have been made in promoting universal reading. The report to the 18th Party Congress first incorporated “launching nationwide reading activities” into China’s socialist cultural powerhouse construction. Since 2014, “nationwide reading” has been included in the Government Work Report for nine consecutive years. Nationwide reading has been protected by legislation, and emerging reading spaces such as urban reading rooms and book bars have continuously emerged, with the average number of books read per capita steadily increasing. However, current nationwide reading development still faces issues of imbalance and insufficiency. For instance, significant gaps exist between urban and rural areas and across regions in reading infrastructure development, while the quantity and quality of accessible reading resources and services vary considerably among different groups. The report to the 20th Party Congress points out that future efforts must deepen the development of nationwide reading activities, and segmented reading services offer a feasible developmental approach. The essence of segmented reading services lies in segmenting readers and reading materials, understanding the diverse reading needs of different populations and the content characteristics of various materials, and providing targeted reading services. This approach facilitates the equalization of reading services. Segmented reading services pay particular attention to populations who face difficulties accessing conventional reading services, focusing on how to enable these reader groups to conveniently and quickly access appropriate reading materials, thereby enhancing the accessibility of reading services. Upholding the principles of public welfare and fairness, library segmented reading services focus on developing reading infrastructure tailored to segmented readers and materials, ensuring that all citizens enjoy equal services and strengthening the inclusiveness of reading services.

Fundamental Principles

The fundamental principles of segmented reading services are maintaining a problem-oriented approach and upholding systematic thinking. A problem-oriented approach means proceeding from reality, focusing on new problems encountered in practice, and addressing the urgent needs and pressing concerns of the people. This involves tackling practical issues at the levels of reading promotion, guidance, and consultation, as well as resource provision, continuously answering Chinese, global, people's, and contemporary questions about reading services. Systematic thinking requires placing reading services within the broader context of nationwide reading, using segmented reading services to deepen and expand universal reading. Practically, reading services should not be confined to library operations but should broaden perspectives to encompass the entire reading process, including book publishing, library recommendation lists and reading guidance, media promotion of reading, and public reception of reading services. Theoretically, reading services must be understood systematically from an interdisciplinary perspective, integrating research findings from publishing science, library science, psychology, communication studies, and other disciplines to establish a systematic segmented reading service theory centered on reading.

Implementation Methods

The implementation method for segmented reading services involves infusing the segmentation philosophy throughout the entire reading service process. Previous reading services adopted a "broad-brush" approach, focusing primarily on certain groups, content, or resources. To promote "extensive reading," develop "universal reading," and build a "scholarly society," more comprehensive and refined reading services should be provided. Reading services involve multiple aspects, including material acquisition, bibliography recommendation, reading promotion, reading guidance, and reading consultation. The segmentation philosophy must permeate every aspect and process, supplying extensive reading content, extending reading environments beyond library walls, accommodating diverse reading populations, supporting varied reading methods, and covering multi-level service components.

Segmenting Reading Resources

Reading resources should be segmented by supporting new types of reading materials. With the development of information technology, reading resources now encompass not only paper books, newspapers, and journals that already dominate reading promotion and guidance, but also various non-book resources such as audio-visual materials, e-books, physical objects, and even visualized works based on book content. The understanding of reading resources should evolve from "book" to a more granular "text," enabling refined reading services for materials. Efforts should be made to discover thematically diverse reading content. The new era has witnessed the emergence of works reflecting people's

new lives and social changes, embodying the shared values that the people unconsciously practice daily and the latest trends in the sinicization of Marxism. In service provision, relevant segmented thematic content should be extracted and promoted through bibliography creation, book review writing, and storytelling to publicize these reading resources and promote new-era thought from multiple dimensions.

Segmenting Reading Methods

The expansion of reading resource types has necessitated updates to reading methods, making it essential to guide and support the public in adopting diverse reading approaches through a segmentation philosophy. Currently, the public primarily reads through silent reading, browsing text, and carefully reading certain chapters. In the future, we should leverage new technologies to promote and serve various reading methods, such as promoting audio reading materials to meet listening needs, creating visualized products of materials to meet distant reading needs, and establishing dedicated spaces to meet recitation needs. Reading is not only an individual behavior but also serves social communication functions. Library reading services should cater to community and book club group reading, using texts as nodes to connect different groups and content, fostering a social atmosphere that encourages reading, promotes interaction, and facilitates broad exchange.

Segmenting Reading Spaces

The ubiquitous presence of libraries and reading spaces is becoming a reality, with ubiquitous reading creating new spatial demands. To address this, reading spaces should be created for different scenarios at any time, integrating multiple media to enhance reading atmosphere, strengthening the convenient supply of reading content in public spaces, and constructing more accessible and fluid “reading micro-spaces.” This enables citizens to read any type or content of material in any space, at any time, and through any method. Various types of public reading spaces should be created based on reader needs, with strengthened reading infrastructure development and the creation of reading spaces aligned with regional development conditions, transforming reading spaces into urban and rural landscapes that citizens are willing to enter and participate in, thereby advancing the construction of a scholarly China.

Segmenting Reading Populations

Segmented reading services must attend to the reading needs of different groups, particularly the accessibility requirements of disadvantaged groups and their difficulties in obtaining equalized reading resources. In recent years, China has launched the “Digital Reading Promotion Project for the Blind” to advance reading services for visually impaired groups. On May 5, 2022, the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled officially entered into force in China,

opening a new chapter in reading services for visually impaired populations. In reading services, libraries should effectively utilize such treaties and programs to convert more reading materials into versions convenient for disadvantaged groups, such as using crowdsourcing models to transform library collections into audio books for visually impaired readers. Library reading services should benefit more segmented populations, including micro-groups and subcultural groups such as prisoners, patients, patient family members, and ethnic minority groups, highlighting the socialization of libraries through cooperation with various social organizations and groups to understand diverse social needs and ensure reading guidance and consultation services cover all different groups.

Segmenting Service Components

Targeted and personalized services should be developed across the entire chain of reading, including content supply, bibliography development, reading promotion, reading guidance, reading consultation, and reading publicity. In terms of content supply, libraries can coordinate various parties and innovate mechanisms to adapt classic resources within libraries and produce more outstanding works that strengthen people's spiritual power, responding to the reading characteristics of segmented readers. In reading promotion, libraries can continue to enhance their storytelling capabilities by telling good stories about China, Chinese libraries, and reading itself to attract more people into libraries. In reading services, a segmented perspective should be used to address disparities in reading services between urban and rural areas and across regions, promote the flow of book elements, document elements, and reading services between urban and rural areas, and provide more "extended services" to extend the reach of reading services to every corner of society.

Theoretical Framework

The philosophy of segmented reading services constitutes part of a reading system with Chinese characteristics. While advancing segmented reading service practices, we must also strengthen theoretical research on reading services, library reading guidance, and reading consultation to construct a Chinese-style academic and discourse system for library and information science.

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that the Chinese nation has advocated reading since ancient times, emphasizing the investigation of things to extend knowledge and the sincerity of intentions to rectify the heart. Reading inherits the enduring spirit of the Chinese nation and shapes the confident and self-reliant character of the Chinese people. As primary participants and promoters of nationwide reading, libraries must address problems encountered by the people in their reading processes through segmented reading services, promote the formation of a societal reading atmosphere, construct a new-era Chinese-style socialist spiritual civilization, and facilitate the coordinated development of material and spiritual civilization in Chinese-style modernization.

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

Source: ChinaXiv –Machine translation. Verify with original.