

# Comparative Study of Provincial National Reading Strategic Plans During the 13th Five-Year Plan Period: A Textual Analysis of 9 National Reading Strategic Plans (Postprint)

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## Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study conducts a textual analysis of nine provincial-level national reading strategic plans during China's 13th Five-Year Plan period, exploring existing deficiencies in current provincial national reading strategic plans, aiming to provide references for formulating future 14th Five-Year Plan national reading strategic plans, and enriching theoretical research on national reading strategic planning.

[Method/Process] Employing literature research and web survey methods, this paper analyzes and compares the textual content of nine provincial national reading strategic plans from five aspects: theoretical guidance, basic principles, main objectives, key tasks, and safeguard measures of national reading strategic plans during the 13th Five-Year Plan period.

[Results/Conclusions] When formulating 14th Five-Year Plan national reading strategic plans in the future, attention should be paid to: emphasizing top-level design of national reading strategic plans; supplementing provisions on preparatory work for national reading; adopting flexible formulation of national reading indicators; developing supporting implementation measures for key tasks in national reading strategic plans; and specifying provisions on safeguard funds for national reading.

## Full Text

### Preamble

**A Comparative Study of Provincial Nationwide Reading Strategic Planning During the 13th Five-Year Plan Period: Textual Analysis Based on Nine Nationwide Reading Strategic Plans**

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## Abstract

**[Purpose/Significance]** This paper conducts a textual analysis of nine provincial nationwide reading strategic plans from China's 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020), exploring existing deficiencies in provincial reading strategic planning to provide reference for formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan nationwide reading strategic plans while enriching theoretical research on reading strategic planning. **[Method/Process]** Using literature research and network investigation methods, this paper analyzes and compares the textual content of nine provincial nationwide reading strategic plans across five dimensions: theoretical guidance, basic principles, main objectives, key tasks, and safeguard measures. **[Result/Conclusion]** Future 14th Five-Year Plan nationwide reading strategic planning should: emphasize top-level design; include provisions on preparatory work for nationwide reading; adopt flexible reading indicators; implement supporting measures for key tasks; and specify funding guarantees in concrete terms.

**Keywords:** 13th Five-Year Plan; nationwide reading; strategic planning; textual analysis

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## 1. Introduction

“Nationwide reading” refers to creating a favorable reading atmosphere, environment, and ethos across society to enhance reading enthusiasm among all members and achieve equal access to reading resources and conditions [1]. In 1995, UNESCO designated April 23 as “World Book Day,” proposing that “everyone should have access to books everywhere.” In 2006, China's General Administration of Press and Publication, together with multiple ministries, issued the “Proposal on Launching Nationwide Reading Activities.” In 2011, the Sixth Plenary Session of the 17th CPC Central Committee first included “launching nationwide reading activities” in its plenary resolution. In 2014, “advocating nationwide reading” was first written into China's Government Work Report. The 13th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development (2016-2020) listed the “nationwide reading” project as a major cultural initiative, elevating nationwide reading to a national strategic priority.

Nationwide reading has received consistent attention from the state and government, and remains a focal point for academic research. Major research themes include: (1) **Current status of nationwide reading:** Xu Jianhua et al. conducted literature surveys and analysis of nationwide reading theory and prac-

tice in China [2]. (2) **Evaluation standards:** Xia Lixin et al. constructed an evaluation system from organizational, resource, and user dimensions [3]; Li Ya et al. analyzed China's "scholarly society" indicator systems and proposed optimization strategies [4]; Xu Tongliang examined public reading service evaluation and constructed an indicator system [5]. (3) **Reading promotion:** Xu Yan analyzed the necessity of "public book reviews" and "librarian reviews" for promoting nationwide reading [6]; Mo Qiyi et al. summarized cases of celebrity involvement in reading promotion and recommended applying "celebrity effects" [7]. (4) **Reading behavior and habits:** Wang Yuguang emphasized the importance of good reading habits for individuals, families, and society, advocating for reading as a lifestyle [8]; Nie Zhenning promoted cultivating reading interest through fragmented digital reading [9]; Hu Rong and Zhu Qinghua explored mobile reading service upgrades [10]; Yang Chen et al. studied new media reading ecology reconstruction [11]. (5) **Libraries and reading promotion:** Fan Bingsi noted that library reading promotion both contributes to and differs from nationwide reading [12]; Wu Xi emphasized libraries as main actors in nationwide reading activities, summarizing how libraries should achieve "guidance," "training," "assistance," and "service" goals [13]. (6) **Promotion mechanisms:** Wang Lei et al. proposed incentive strategies for nationwide reading activities [14]. (7) **Legislation:** Luo Jinzeng compared local nationwide reading regulations and summarized legislative insights [15].

China has long prioritized nationwide reading. The earliest national policy can be traced to 1997 when nine ministries including the Central Propaganda Department issued the "Notice on Implementing the 'Knowledge Project' Nationwide," launching a knowledge project to "advocate nationwide reading and build a reading society" [16]. In 2006, eleven ministries jointly issued the "Proposal on Launching Nationwide Reading Activities," and the "National Cultural Development Outline for the 11th Five-Year Plan" made "actively promoting a reading society" a key cultural development task [17]. In December 2007, the Central Propaganda Department and General Administration of Press and Publication issued the "Notice on Conscientiously Carrying Out 2008 Nationwide Reading Activities," providing macro guidance for local reading work. In April 2010, the Central Propaganda Department, Central Civilization Office, and General Administration of Press and Publication issued the "2010 Nationwide Reading Activity Plan," offering ideological guidance for local work. On April 20, 2011, the General Administration of Press and Publication released the "Press and Publication Industry Development Plan for the 12th Five-Year Plan," which first listed the "nationwide reading project" as a public service construction initiative. In 2012, "launching nationwide reading activities" was written into the 18th CPC National Congress report as a key point in building a socialist cultural powerhouse. Since 2014, "nationwide reading" has been included in the State Council's Government Work Report for six consecutive years, demonstrating high-level commitment. In December 2016, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television officially released the "Nationwide Reading Development Plan for the 13th Five-Year Plan Period,"

China's first national-level reading strategic plan [18], providing the foundation for national and local reading work.

Existing literature reveals that while nationwide reading research is rich and abundant, studies specifically on reading strategic planning are limited, focusing mainly on public libraries rather than provincial government-level planning. The 13th Five-Year Plan period represents a crucial stage for China's nationwide reading development and cultural powerhouse construction. Provinces have formulated and released their own reading strategic plans with broad coverage and significant implementation efforts. To enrich existing research and promote reading work development, this paper compares nine provincial nationwide reading strategic plans from the 13th Five-Year Plan period, summarizing insights to inform future 14th Five-Year Plan provincial planning.

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## 2. Overview of Provincial Nationwide Reading Strategic Planning During the 13th Five-Year Plan Period

### 2.1 Macro Background for Provincial Plan Release

China's government has consistently prioritized nationwide reading. The earliest national policy dates to 1997 when nine ministries issued the "Notice on Implementing the 'Knowledge Project' Nationwide" [16]. In 2006, eleven ministries issued the "Proposal on Launching Nationwide Reading Activities," and the "National Cultural Development Outline for the 11th Five-Year Plan" included reading promotion as a key task [17]. In December 2007, the Central Propaganda Department and General Administration of Press and Publication issued the "Notice on Conscientiously Carrying Out 2008 Nationwide Reading Activities." In April 2010, the Central Propaganda Department, Central Civilization Office, and General Administration of Press and Publication issued the "2010 Nationwide Reading Activity Plan." On April 20, 2011, the General Administration of Press and Publication released the "Press and Publication Industry Development Plan for the 12th Five-Year Plan," which first listed the "nationwide reading project" as a public service construction initiative. In 2012, "launching nationwide reading activities" was written into the 18th CPC National Congress report. Since 2014, "nationwide reading" has been included in the State Council's Government Work Report for six consecutive years. In December 2016, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television officially released the "Nationwide Reading Development Plan for the 13th Five-Year Plan Period," China's first national-level reading strategic plan [18].

### 2.2 Overview of Provincial Strategic Plans

Using network surveys and literature research, this study investigated provincial (including autonomous regions and municipalities) nationwide reading strategic

planning documents from mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan). As of November 30, 2018, 14 provincial reading strategic plans had been issued during the 13th Five-Year Plan period, with nine publicly releasing full texts online. These nine plans represent 64% of all provincial plans and cover North, East, Central, South, and Northeast China, providing representative coverage. presents the publication overview of these nine plans.

Notably, Inner Mongolia was the first province to issue a reading strategic plan, preceding the national plan. Except for Inner Mongolia and Hubei, which issued plans in the first year of the 13th Five-Year Plan period, the remaining seven provinces released their plans in the second year. Issuing bodies primarily include press, publication, radio, film and television bureaus; provincial government general offices; and nationwide reading leading groups. This paper provides detailed analysis and comparative study of these nine provincial plans.

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### 3. Comparative Analysis of Provincial Nationwide Reading Strategic Planning Content

Provincial 13th Five-Year Plan reading strategic plans provided guidance for local reading work development, with each province formulating plans suited to its actual conditions. Based on textual analysis of the nine plans, this section compares them across five dimensions: theoretical guidance, basic principles, main objectives, key tasks, and safeguard measures.

#### 3.1 Theoretical Guidance for Reading Strategic Planning

Theoretical guidance provides correct direction for strategic planning. Except for Jilin Province, all eight plans included theoretical guidance at the beginning. The main theoretical guidance can be summarized as: (1) Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Three Represents, Scientific Development Concept, spirit of the 18th CPC National Congress and the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Plenary Sessions of the 18th CPC Central Committee, and important speeches by General Secretary Xi Jinping during inspections of the province; (2) Except for Inner Mongolia and Hubei, which released plans before the national plan, the other six plans used the “National Nationwide Reading Development Plan for the 13th Five-Year Plan Period” as guidance; (3) Each province issued its “National Economic and Social Development 13th Five-Year Plan Outline”; (4) Policies on public cultural services issued by the CPC Central Committee or provinces themselves. For example, Inner Mongolia and Hubei incorporated the spirit of the “Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of Modern Public Cultural Service Systems” [19-20]; Guangxi, Jiangsu, and Fujian based their plans on the “Public Cultural Service Guarantee Law of the People’s Republic of China” [21-23]; and Anhui used its “Anhui Province Cultural Reform and Development Outline for the 13th Five-Year Plan Period” as a basis [24].

### 3.2 Basic Principles of Reading Strategic Planning

Except for Jilin and Hubei, the other seven plans established basic principles based on local conditions. These can be summarized as: (1) **Government leadership with social participation**: All seven plans emphasized this principle. For example, Jiangxi’s “Action Plan for Promoting Nationwide Reading (2017-2020)” stipulated both “strengthening government responsibility” and “guiding active social participation,” emphasizing coordinated consideration [25]. (2) **Categorized guidance with prioritized guarantees**: All seven plans listed this principle, providing reading guidance based on different groups’ actual needs, particularly emphasizing children’s reading promotion to provide both equal and personalized services. Guangxi’s plan specifically highlighted attention to “basic reading needs of rural left-behind children, children of migrant workers, and children from impoverished families” [21]. (3) **People-oriented with quality supply**: Jiangsu, Anhui, and Inner Mongolia proposed that reading services should be oriented toward the masses and grassroots, emphasizing equalized public service systems. Fujian, Hainan, Jiangxi, and Guangxi proposed creating more quality reading projects to form long-term mechanisms.

### 3.3 Main Objectives of Reading Strategic Planning

Clear objectives provide purpose and focus for planning. All nine plans specified main objectives, divided into macro objectives and specific indicators.

**3.3.1 Macro Objectives** Macro objectives can be summarized as: (1) Creating a stronger reading atmosphere with the concept of nationwide reading deeply rooted in people’s hearts; (2) Improving reading infrastructure and organizational mechanisms; (3) Enriching reading activity formats and expanding brand influence. Plans also set different objectives based on local conditions. For example, Hubei emphasized “establishing a complete supporting policy and regulatory system for nationwide reading” [20], while Anhui stressed “implementing major publishing projects and strengthening quality reading content supply” based on its distinctive culture [24].

**3.3.2 Specific Indicators** Specific reading indicators enhance work effectiveness and operability. The nine plans specified four main indicators: comprehensive reading rate, digital reading rate, annual per capita book reading volume, and annual per capita e-book reading volume. shows the comparison.

Regarding comprehensive reading rate, seven plans (excluding Jilin and Hainan) included requirements, with Inner Mongolia and Fujian setting general rather than specific targets. For digital reading rate, annual per capita book reading volume, and annual per capita e-book reading volume, Inner Mongolia, Jilin, and Hainan made no provisions, while Jiangsu and Fujian vaguely stated they should “rank among the nation’s top.” Such vague provisions reduce guidance effectiveness. Anhui’s plan used interval-based elastic indicators (e.g., 6-6.82 books for adults), making targets more flexible and achievable.

### 3.4 Key Tasks of Reading Strategic Planning

All nine plans detailed key tasks, which can be summarized into eight aspects, though emphasis varied by province.

**3.4.1 Hosting Major Nationwide Reading Activities** All nine plans emphasized hosting influential reading activities and creating regional brands to mobilize participation and expand social impact. Implementation focused on: (1) **“Scholarly [Place Name]” series brands**: All plans mentioned developing “Scholarly” series activities to create regional reading brands with specific requirements (see ). (2) **Thematic reading activities**: Two main forms were specified—organizing reading activities around major anniversaries (e.g., Jilin’s plan for the 40th anniversary of reform and opening-up) and conducting regular ongoing activities like lectures, book fairs, and reading exchanges.

**3.4.2 Strengthening Quality Reading Content Supply** Except for Jilin and Hubei, seven plans included this as a key task: (1) **Leading excellent publication creation**: All seven emphasized creating and publishing works promoting Chinese traditional culture and socialist culture. (2) **Strengthening book recommendation**: Recommending both popular works and authoritative 精品 books for different groups. (3) **Purifying reading environment**: Strengthening governance to resist vulgar publications. Specific indicators are shown in .

**3.4.3 Improving Nationwide Reading Infrastructure** Infrastructure is fundamental for reading work and a key element of standardization [27]. Except for Jilin, eight plans specified requirements for infrastructure development, focusing on public library services, various book houses (workers’ book houses, rural book houses, community book houses), urban-rural electronic newspaper columns/screens, and support for physical bookstores. Jiangsu’s plan centered on its “Scholarly” series to create new reading spaces.

**3.4.4 Promoting Reading at the Grassroots Level** Except for Jiangsu, Hainan, and Hubei, six plans addressed grassroots promotion: (1) **“Seven Entries” activities**: Implementing reading activities in communities, families, schools, rural areas, military camps, enterprises, and government agencies. (2) **Public welfare activities**: Conducting various benefit activities like Anhui’s free book coupons and Guangxi’s book donation campaigns.

**3.4.5 Enhancing Digital Reading Service Capacity** Except for Jiangsu and Jilin, seven plans addressed digital services: (1) Building comprehensive public digital reading service systems for barrier-free resource sharing. (2) Improving digital reading facilities and promotion, such as digitalizing rural book houses and building electronic reading rooms. (3) Strengthening digital content

management. (4) Developing regional digital platforms, like Jiangxi’s “Scholarly Jiangxi” platform and Guangxi’s “Bagui Scholarly” platform.

**3.4.6 Increasing Nationwide Reading Promotion** Except for Inner Mongolia, eight plans emphasized promotion: (1) Leveraging both traditional print media and new media (WeChat, Weibo, apps). (2) Cultivating reading promotion groups to enhance professionalism. (3) Recognizing advanced units and individuals. Additional methods included using film and television (Jilin) and creating reading ambassadors (Anhui).

**3.4.7 Safeguarding Reading Rights of Vulnerable Groups** Reading levels and rights of vulnerable groups reflect a nation’s cultural development and are vital to cultural strategy and people’s livelihood [28]. Except for Jilin and Inner Mongolia, seven plans addressed this, focusing on children, elderly, disabled, migrant workers, and low-income urban residents. Children’s reading emphasized rural left-behind children, impoverished families, and migrant workers’ children. Support methods included book donations and targeted reading activities.

**3.4.8 Encouraging Multi-party Collaborative Participation** All nine plans mentioned broad social participation, but only Inner Mongolia, Jiangsu, Fujian, and Hubei detailed this as a key task: (1) Building top-down reading promotion teams including officials, experts, university students, and book lovers. (2) Encouraging various reading organizations, including professional promotion organizations and private reading clubs.

### 3.5 Safeguard Measures for Reading Strategic Planning

Safeguard measures affect successful implementation and sustained effectiveness. All nine plans detailed measures: (1) **Strengthening organizational leadership:** All plans prioritized this, emphasizing government leadership and coordination among departments, guidance groups, and civil organizations. (2) **Providing policy guarantees:** All plans promoted legalization through reading policies and regulations. Jilin, Fujian, Anhui, and Hubei specifically proposed implementing local “Nationwide Reading Promotion Regulations.” (3) **Establishing evaluation mechanisms:** Except for Jilin, eight plans required evaluation systems. Anhui, Jiangsu, and Fujian proposed developing “scholarly society” indicator systems and conducting regular surveys. (4) **Increasing funding:** Except for Jilin, eight plans mentioned increasing funding, but Fujian, Jiangsu, and Jiangxi had overly general provisions. Only Hubei and Hainan specified three funding sources: government budgets, reading foundations, and social donations. Only Hubei, Inner Mongolia, and Guangxi detailed fund usage.

## 4. Recommendations for Provincial Nationwide Reading Strategic Planning in the 14th Five-Year Plan Period

The nine provincial plans have promoted nationwide reading development, but comparative analysis reveals deficiencies. Future 14th Five-Year Plan planning should address the following:

### 4.1 Emphasize Top-Level Design of Reading Strategic Planning

Top-level design provides overall guidance and macro-control to ensure clear direction and operability. During the 13th Five-Year Plan period, some provinces formulated plans based on previous work, but overall, few provinces developed plans, and even fewer publicly released full texts, indicating insufficient top-level design awareness at the provincial level.

For the 14th Five-Year Plan period, provinces should: (1) **Ensure scientific design**: Understand local reading work progress, summarize experiences, and employ diverse theories and tools (strategic management, SWOT, 5W1H, modeling, surveys). (2) **Ensure coordination**: Balance internal reading work elements while integrating with national political, economic, and cultural policies. (3) **Ensure specificity**: While being holistic, maintain practical operability with specific objectives and tasks. Provinces should also strengthen plan publicity and reporting to enhance public understanding and participation.

### 4.2 Include Provisions on Preparatory Work for Nationwide Reading

Adequate preparation ensures good beginnings and solid foundations for implementation and evaluation. However, the nine plans all lacked provisions on preparatory work, focusing only on implementation and evaluation. Preparatory work is equally important for securing personnel, materials, and financial support.

For the 14th Five-Year Plan, provincial planning should include preparatory work provisions: (1) **Analyze overall reading conditions**: Use the annual “National Reading Survey Report” by China Press and Publication Research Institute to understand reading habits, gaps, and needs for targeted guidance. (2) **Plan resource allocation**: Ensure adequate materials, personnel, and funding with detailed division of labor and responsibilities. (3) **Anticipate contingencies**: Predict potential disruptions and prepare solutions to avoid work interruptions.

### 4.3 Adopt Flexible Reading Indicators

Seven of the nine plans specified concrete reading indicators, but most were too general, using vague statements like “ranking among the nation’s top.” While some provinces set specific numbers, fixed indicators can be overly rigid.

For the 14th Five-Year Plan, provincial planning should: (1) **Specify concrete**

**indicators:** Detail comprehensive reading rate, digital reading rate, annual per capita book reading volume, and annual per capita e-book reading volume rather than using macro summaries. (2) **Use interval-based elastic indicators:** Follow Anhui's example of setting ranges (e.g., 6-6.82 books) to allow flexibility. (3) **Base indicators on actual conditions:** Set achievable targets based on 13th Five-Year Plan reading data rather than blindly pursuing high targets.

#### 4.4 Implement Supporting Measures for Key Tasks

All nine plans detailed key tasks but lacked supervision mechanisms. Key tasks included major activities, content supply, infrastructure, grassroots promotion, digital services, publicity, vulnerable group protection, and multi-party participation.

For the 14th Five-Year Plan, provinces should: (1) **Highlight key tasks:** Identify weaknesses from 13th Five-Year Plan implementation and innovate accordingly. (2) **Develop supporting specific plans:** Create feasible, diverse construction projects for key tasks. (3) **Supervise implementation:** Establish three-tier supervision—top-down oversight by higher-level reading departments, parallel supervision among implementing departments, and social supervision by the public to promote participation and improvement.

#### 4.5 Specify Funding Guarantees in Concrete Terms

Funding is crucial for long-term stability. Eight plans mentioned increasing funding, but most had general descriptions. Only a few specified funding sources (government budgets, foundations, donations) or usage, and none addressed supervision, allocation ratios, or budgeting, potentially affecting reasonable fund arrangement.

For the 14th Five-Year Plan, provincial planning should: (1) **Clarify funding sources:** Specify the three main channels and adopt measures to ensure adequate, stable funding. (2) **Specify fund usage:** Detail purposes and allocate reasonable proportions for publicity, training, activities, and rewards. (3) **Supervise fund use:** Add supervision provisions to identify and correct discrepancies between actual use and budgets promptly.

Nationwide reading is vital for national quality and spiritual outlook. Strategic planning provides overall direction, and well-designed plans facilitate successful implementation. This comparative analysis of nine provincial 13th Five-Year Plan reading strategic plans offers recommendations for the 14th Five-Year Plan to inform future planning and advance nationwide reading work.

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### Author Contributions

Yan Beini: Conceived the research topic and structure, designed the study, and revised the manuscript. Li Xiaoxu: Collected and organized data, and drafted the manuscript.

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

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