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A Study on Classification-Guided Reading Promotion Models for Chinese Traditional Classics: Postprint

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Date: 2023-07-26T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] To better promote the reading of traditional Chinese classics, this study proposes a classified and guided approach to reading promotion, and develops targeted strategies for different categories based on this classification.

[Method/Process] The study defines the scope of traditional Chinese classics suitable for reading promotion, establishes a classification bibliography system grounded in reading promotion principles, and systematically reviews existing promotion models and case studies.

[Results/Conclusion] The study establishes an independent classification system for traditional Chinese classics based on reading promotion, proposes distinctive promotion models tailored to different reader groups, thereby fostering efficient and sustainable development of traditional Chinese classics reading promotion initiatives.

Full Text

Preamble

ChinaXiv Collaborative Journal, Volume 63, Issue 3, February 2019

Research on Classified Guidance Reading Promotion Models for Traditional Chinese Classics

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] To better promote reading of traditional Chinese classics, this paper proposes classified guidance for reading promotion of traditional Chinese classics and presents targeted promotion strategies for different categories. **[Method/Process]** The study defines the scope of traditional Chinese classics suitable for reading promotion, establishes a bibliographic classification system for traditional Chinese classics based on reading promotion needs, and reviews existing promotion models and cases. **[Result/Conclusion]** The research establishes a self-contained classification system for traditional Chinese classics grounded in reading promotion requirements, proposes distinctive promotion models for different reader groups, and facilitates efficient and sustainable development of traditional Chinese classics reading promotion.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese Classics; Classified Guidance; Reading Promotion Models

Classification Number: G252.1

DOI: 10.13266/j.issn.0252-3116.2019.03.009

Traditional classics hold significant value in China, constituting an essential component of the Chinese cultural system and representing one of the most profound forms of cultural soft power, thus receiving high-level attention from the Party and state. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has attached great importance to the inheritance and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture, emphasizing the need to build cultural confidence. In his 2017 report at the 19th National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping reiterated: “We must strengthen our cultural confidence, thoroughly explore the ideas, humanistic spirit, and moral norms contained in excellent traditional Chinese culture, and disseminate, inherit, and innovate them in accordance with the demands of our times, so that traditional Chinese culture can demonstrate its eternal charm and contemporary appeal.” As the primary carrier of traditional Chinese culture, classics have become a crucial focus for cultural inheritance and transmission. From the infiltration, inheritance, and development of traditional Chinese culture to the enhancement of national spirit, culture, and quality, all depend on the guidance of traditional classics that bear millennia of civilization. Moreover, the cultural, academic, and artifact values of traditional classics have prompted China to continuously increase its emphasis on them, intensifying research, preservation, and reading promotion efforts.

However, current promotion efforts face several challenges. First, most reading promotion remains at the theoretical level, with the majority of methods lacking universality and failing to meet the reading needs of most readers, resulting in insufficient reading depth and breadth. Second, services for traditional classics often mismatch the needs of different reader levels, with single promotion methods that have not formed standardized yet flexible reading promotion models, even producing extreme cases that distort Chinese studies or vilify traditional

culture. Therefore, this study follows the principle of “classified guidance” to research and standardize reading promotion methods for traditional classics, providing content-to-form coordinated promotion models that meet diverse group needs, thereby consolidating the foundation of excellent traditional Chinese culture and building firm cultural confidence.

2. Significance of Traditional Chinese Classics Reading Promotion

Over the past decade, China has made substantial progress in the digital preservation, restoration, cataloging, professional training, and utilization of traditional classics. Nevertheless, numerous pressing issues remain in reading promotion work.

2.1 Traditional Classics Promotion as a Top Priority in Reading Promotion

Classics embody China’s spirit and national soul, representing the historical memory, intellectual wisdom, and knowledge system of the Chinese nation, as well as its deepest spiritual pursuits. Effective reading promotion of traditional classics constitutes the foundation for achieving nationwide reading and an important means of building cultural confidence.

2.2 Building Classified Guidance Models to Standardize Promotion Processes

Traditional classics promotion must establish comprehensive methods that diversify approaches and pluralize models. Constructing standardized promotion models based on classified guidance enables different reader types to systematically and actively absorb the content embedded in classics, further regulating the current state of traditional classics promotion and eliminating extreme phenomena such as distorting Chinese studies, vilifying traditional culture, or worshipping foreign cultures.

2.3 Providing Differentiated Promotion Models in the New Era

Classifying classics content for different reading groups and developing differentiated promotion models not only vividly displays and transmits the content and ideas of classics to maximally and optimally meet the diverse reading needs of different social groups, but also provides references for comprehensive promotion models. This truly translates theoretical research into practical operations, enhancing the overall reading level of different groups.

3. Research Status and Problems in Traditional Chinese Classics Reading Promotion

3.1 Research Status

Both domestic and international communities attach great importance to the research, preservation, and promotion of traditional classics, achieving their value through extensive reading promotion. Libraries have accumulated rich experience in reading promotion, with branded activities such as dialogues between classics and drama, “Travel with a Book,” classic reading promotion, and micro-reading promotion gaining popularity among readers. In terms of methods, libraries employ approaches including living libraries, reading lectures, exhibitions, reading clubs, speech contests, reading essay competitions, famous works recitation, reading star awards, report meetings, themed forums, special displays, new book recommendations, book drifts, excellent book exhibitions, online competitions, music and film appreciation, visits, and academic seminars [2-3]. For example, Taiyuan Library innovates reading experiences through activities like movable type printing experiences and ancient book binding workshops [4]. From the perspective of promotion effectiveness, libraries establish short-term and long-term evaluation mechanisms [5] and utilize physical spaces through in-library, out-of-library, and online promotion models [6]. Additionally, cross-media promotion measures include creating reading toolkits and strengthening exchanges between libraries [7]. Internationally, Taiwan’s Center for Chinese Studies promotes classics through digital centers and international union catalogs of ancient Chinese books [8], while the U.S. library community has specialized committees for rare books and manuscripts focusing on access, preservation, and promotion [9]. British and American university libraries have also applied augmented reality technology for visual research and utilization of traditional classics [10].

3.2 Problems in Traditional Chinese Classics Reading Promotion

Current promotion efforts face concerning challenges. First, research based on public libraries reveals issues such as insufficient attention to ancient book promotion and weak awareness [11]. Second, surveys of university-based promotion show inadequate reading of traditional classics among college students. For instance, Chen Dongbiao’s research on science and engineering students’ reading habits proposed offering traditional culture courses and reading lists to improve cultural literacy [12].

To address this, the authors designed a questionnaire based on 44 selected books ranging from easy to difficult, from popular to profound, and from general to professional, targeting curriculum needs for K-12 students and extended reading needs for university students. On June 10, 2018, the survey was administered to library patrons at Chongqing University Library and Chongqing Jiaotong University Library. Within one day, 300 questionnaires were distributed, with 249 valid responses collected. The results reveal concerning reading levels of

traditional classics among university students, who have access to substantial library resources, suggesting even graver conditions among the general public.

Given that the survey was conducted at science and engineering universities, 231 respondents (92.77%) were science and engineering students, while only 18 (7.23%) were from humanities and social sciences. Regarding reading frequency, 40.96% had read traditional books within the past year (or longer), 26.1% within six months, 15.66% within one month, and only 17.27% within one week. When asked about the period when they most intensively engaged with traditional classics, 59.84% selected middle school, while preschool, primary school, and university accounted for 5.22%, 23.69%, and 9.24% respectively. Details are shown in .

In terms of classified guidance promotion, tiered and classified promotion models are common in public libraries but rare in university libraries. Yan Shan University Library stands out for its reading tracking of freshmen, identifying four types of reading cognition and key promotion targets, successfully cultivating solid reading habits that persist through graduation [13]. However, classified promotion models for traditional classics remain scarce in both university and public libraries. Evidence from public libraries' tiered promotion successes demonstrates that audience-specific, classified-material, and tiered promotion models achieve significantly better results than generic approaches. Therefore, classified promotion models for traditional classics warrant comprehensive implementation.

4. Classified Guidance Reading Promotion Models

4.1 Classification Systems for Reading Promotion

While the National Ancient Books Census Platform Classification uses six categories (Classics, History, Masters, Collections, Compendia, and New Learning), this system serves collection purposes rather than promotion needs. Libraries should classify traditional classics based on content, scale, difficulty level, and target audience to develop targeted promotion activities. Based on research findings and promotion practices, three classification systems can be constructed:

4.1.1 Classification by Reader Audience According to reading ability, comprehension, time availability, and energy investment, readers can be divided into five groups: children, K-12 students, university students, adults, and special groups.

(1) Children (ages 0-6): This group has limited reading volume, weak comprehension, and short attention spans. Selections should feature short, simple content with rhythmic language, preferably combined with illustrations and audio, such as 启蒙 books, simple poetry, and classic stories.

(2) K-12 Students (primary through high school): This group's comprehension, attention, and reading capacity gradually increase with grade level,

balancing in-class and extracurricular reading with large volumes and growing understanding. Recommendations should closely follow curricula, expanding scope and depth by grade. For example, when studying “Marching Song,” reading can extend to frontier poetry; when studying the *Analects* and “Encouraging Learning,” it can expand to non-textbook selections.

(3) University Students (undergraduate through doctoral): This group possesses independent comprehension abilities but faces challenges including small reading volume, fragmented time, and lack of reading motivation. Selections should broaden scope while emphasizing classics, such as *Renjian Cihua*, *Guwen Guanzhi*, *Records of the Grand Historian*, and Ming-Qing novels.

(4) Adults: This largest group shows enormous individual differences in reading volume, comprehension, time, and energy investment, with stark contrast between great demand and “inability to read despite desire.” Both “universal” and “specialized” approaches are needed, from profound works like *Instructions for Practical Living* to comprehensive content like *Commentaries on the Four Books* and accessible storytelling scripts.

(5) Special Groups: This refers to individuals with hearing, visual, physical, or intellectual disabilities who require significantly different content, conditions, and environments. Deaf individuals benefit from text and images, blind individuals from Braille, audiobooks, and storytelling, while those with physical disabilities need accommodations for their specific limitations.

4.1.2 Classification by Content Based on modern reading habits and the National Ancient Books Census Platform and Chinese Library Classification standards, traditional classics can be divided into five categories for promotion:

(1) Literature: Primarily comprising Collections, Classics, and Masters-Fiction categories, this represents the largest proportion of classics and recommended promotion titles. Proven promotion methods include recitation, themed exhibitions, expert lectures, film adaptations, and picture book versions.

(2) History: Mainly comprising the History category, these classics are vital sources for ancient Chinese history research. Promotion methods should distinguish between “history” and “records,” applying different approaches accordingly. For instance, promoting the *Twenty-Four Histories* differs significantly from promoting biographical works like *Biographies of Exemplary Women*.

(3) Politics, Military, and Law: Covering government documents, official positions, and military/legal texts in the History and Masters categories, these record the evolution of ancient Chinese governance and law, serving as both academic resources and references for modern legislation, such as the *Great Ming Code* and *Chronological Tables of Official Positions*.

(4) Religion: Primarily comprising religious texts in the Masters category, these require cautious promotion as religion’s significance has diminished with

social development.

(5) Specialized Subjects: Including arts, medicine, agriculture, science, and linguistics from various Masters subcategories. Promotion should target professional audiences most effectively.

4.1.3 Classification by Difficulty Level The principle of “from simple to difficult” is universal. Traditional classics feature archaic writing, grammar, and vertical formatting that differ greatly from modern texts. They can be classified into four difficulty levels: popular and easy, accessible to both refined and popular tastes, professional, and obscure.

(1) Popular and Easy: Featuring understandable content, fluent language, and clear structure, these are household names like Li Bai’s and Du Fu’s poetry, *Romance of the West Chamber*, *The Peony Pavilion*, the Four Great Classical Novels, and the *Analects* and *Mencius*.

(2) Accessible to Both Refined and Popular Tastes: With more profound ideas and broader scope, these have narrower audiences but remain valuable for both reading and research, such as the *Zizhi Tongjian* and *The Art of War*.

(3) Professional Classics: Summarizing industry experience with varying recognition, some like *Shuowen Jiezi* and *The Classic of Tea* are widely circulated, while obscure local gazetteers remain unknown.

(4) Obscure and Difficult: Characterized by esoteric content, 晦涩 writing, difficult characters, or severe fragmentation, these have minimal readership, exemplified by texts like Shui script classics whose difficult characters lead to declining utilization.

4.2 Classified Guidance Promotion Models

After classifying traditional Chinese classics by content, scale, difficulty, and audience, further analysis of each reader type yields corresponding promotion models. Specific cases illustrate how to promote different categories to different readers, integrating theory with practice for greater guidance and operability. Each category requires in-depth analysis of its characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, and feasibility to propose appropriate promotion methods with supporting cases. The overall framework is shown in [Figure 1: see original paper].

4.2.1 Offline Activity-Based Promotion Models Offline activities are the most common approach, including lectures, exhibitions, essay contests, reading clubs, book selection meetings, sharing sessions, recommendations, themed speeches, and debates based on traditional classics. These models offer advantages of easy implementation, accessibility, strong interactivity, high participation, and effective information reception. Limitations include fixed venues and times, though integration with multimedia technology continues to drive

development. The highly popular “Lecture Room” series exemplifies successful transformation of traditional classics lectures through new technology, making dry content engaging and driving peripheral product development.

4.2.2 Document Type-Based Promotion Models Utilizing traditional print media like newspapers and magazines as promotion platforms is another common model, ranging from specialized publications like *Ancient Books New Book Gazette* to regular newspaper columns. With the development of networks and social media, new promotion models relying on websites, Weibo, WeChat, and various apps have proliferated, including appreciation, recitation, and academic research websites themed on traditional classics, such as the “Chinese Classics Recitation Action” website hosted by the Ministry of Education and numerous library social media accounts. These models share a common foundation of interpreting documents and transforming reading methods. Additionally, databases like the Chinese Classics Database, Diaolong Chinese Ancient Books Database, and Ancient Books Library Database serve as important promotion platforms.

4.2.3 New Technology-Based Promotion Models [14] New technologies create opportunities for traditional classics promotion, with virtual reality-based reading promotion emerging as a hot topic. Realistic virtual reading environments facilitate reading behavior. For example, VR technology constructs immersive library virtual environments that significantly enhance reading experiences. Virtual libraries allow readers to enjoy reading anywhere with network access. These technologies provide favorable conditions and choices for reading behavior.

4.2.4 Multimedia and Other Promotion Models Multimedia offers immense information dissemination advantages through images, sound, video, and text, injecting vitality into traditional classics promotion. Variety shows like *Poetry and Book China* and *Chinese Character Congress* have become national sensations driving reading 热潮. Film and television adaptations of the Four Great Classical Novels and other classics are household names, while documentaries like *Chinese Clothing*, *Tang Dynasty Rhymes*, and *Gardens* allow audiences to appreciate the beauty of classics through cinematic aesthetics.

5. Classified Guidance Promotion Strategies for Different Groups

With the goal of “promoting traditional classics to the greatest extent and in optimal ways,” this research examines classification and classic bibliography construction for traditional classics based on reading promotion needs. Corresponding promotion plans and strategies should be developed for each classification, tightly integrating theory and practice to form flexible promotion process standards for traditional classics.

5.1 Strategies for Children

Promotion for preschool children should be brief, innovative, simple, and highly interactive, completing learning through entertainment. For example, the classic animation *Journey to the West for Children* uses cute character designs, simplified story structures, and enhanced visual appeal to make content accessible to young children. Early childhood education commonly combines text with music through rhythmic singing. “Card-based teaching” presents classics content on cards for interactive reading.

5.2 Strategies for K-12 Students

Promotion for K-12 students requires coordination among classrooms, schools, families, and society, extending from guided to independent reading. Increasing classics requirements in curricula can stimulate interest through “mandatory needs.” Recitation is a key focus, with more organized reading sessions and proper use of “reading booths.” Composer Gu Jianfen’s *New School Songs* series, with over 20 pieces, has entered numerous schools nationwide with high popularity. Additionally, children’s libraries in Shenzhen, Hangzhou, and Xiamen have implemented age-based tiered reading for those under 18, providing valuable references for classics promotion.

5.3 Strategies for University Students

University student promotion should guide participation, provide more reading channels, improve reading conditions, and fully utilize university libraries. Training student volunteers and establishing physical reading clubs are effective. New media promotion is essential, integrating Weibo, WeChat, email systems tied to student affairs, and book reviews in circulation systems. Extensions include producing audio-video content, static films related to classics, and innovatively combining book reviews with popular “bullet comments” to revitalize this format.

5.4 Strategies for Adults

Adult promotion should provide distinctive, clear-content reading methods that accommodate differences, allowing interested readers to select suitable classics while attracting unintentional readers to spontaneously engage. Precedents include national initiatives like “Nationwide Reading” and “Scholarly China” that guide social atmosphere. Fragmented reading should permeate classics reading throughout, with lengthy content requiring “fragmentation” to be completed in fragmented time, enhancing reading efficiency.

5.5 Strategies for Special Groups

Special group promotion requires “differential treatment” with specialized reading methods. For visually impaired individuals, produce Braille books and uti-

lize audio tools like the “Audio Digital Library” from the China Association of the Blind. For hearing-impaired individuals, translate content into sign language versions, use sign language and eye-tracking assistance, and employ “subtitles” and “image + subtitle” models. For physically disabled individuals, consider how missing limbs affect reading to provide reasonable accommodations.

Conclusion

Through systematic research on traditional Chinese classics content and reading promotion requirements, this study establishes a classification system and proposes distinctive promotion models for different reader groups. By establishing general paradigms alongside specific classified promotion, this research promotes efficient and sustainable development of traditional classics reading promotion. The classification guidance system, based on classics scale, difficulty, language, and audience, provides fundamental guidance for promotion activities, transforming traditional classics from obscure and elitist to accessible and popular, thereby fostering nationwide reading of traditional classics and enabling citizens to genuinely identify with and promote China’s excellent and time-honored national culture.

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Author Contributions

Wang Yanli: Literature collection, article writing

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A Study on the Modes of Reading Promotion of Traditional Chinese Classics Based on Classified Guidance

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Abstract: [Purpose/significance] This paper aims to enhance the reading promotion of traditional Chinese classics, proposes to offer specific guidance with respect to the different classifications of traditional Chinese classics, and presents targeted promotion strategies based on the aforementioned classifications. [Method/process] By studying and analyzing the existing promotion models of traditional Chinese classics as well as adopting the method of case study, this paper defines the scope of traditional Chinese classics appropriate for reading promotion and establishes a bibliographic classification system on the basis of reading promotion. [Result/conclusion] The result of this paper shall be a well-established autonomous classification system based on the reading promotion of traditional Chinese classics. Furthermore, promotion models with distinctive features are targeted at different reading groups. Overall, this paper contributes to the efficient and sustainable development of the reading promotion of traditional Chinese classics.

Keywords: Chinese classic; classified guidance on traditional; modes of reading promotion

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.