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Postprint: Research on Promoting Graded Reading for Children Based on the SICAS Model

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Abstract

As an important component of national reading promotion, children's graded reading promotion has received significant attention from government departments, cultural institutions, educational entities, and social organizations. Effectively implementing children's graded reading promotion bears on the future of the nation and its people. Applying the SICAS model to guide the development of children's graded reading promotion possesses both theoretical foundation and practical operability. This article, based on discussing the necessity of using the SICAS model to study children's graded reading promotion, introduces an application framework for children's graded reading promotion based on the SICAS model, summarizes the current status and achievements of domestic children's graded reading promotion from the perspective of this model, and analyzes existing problems and countermeasures. By building local brands to facilitate precise communication, enriching reading content and innovating promotion models, safeguarding platform development to ensure smooth two-way communication, strengthening scientific cooperation to amplify positive effects, and enhancing immersive experiences to foster active sharing, it thereby optimizes mutual perception, stimulates reader interest, promotes deep interaction, advances behavioral transformation, and ultimately opens up communication channels.

Full Text

Abstract

Children's graded reading promotion constitutes a vital component of national reading initiatives, drawing significant attention from government departments, cultural institutions, educational entities, and social organizations. Effective implementation of children's graded reading promotion bears profound implications for the future of the nation. The SICAS model offers both theoretical

grounding and practical operability for guiding these efforts. This paper first examines the necessity of applying the SICAS model to children's graded reading promotion research, then introduces an application framework for such promotion based on the model. From the SICAS perspective, it summarizes the current state and achievements of domestic children's graded reading promotion, analyzes existing problems, and proposes targeted countermeasures: building local brands with precise communication to optimize mutual perception; enriching reading content and innovating promotion models to stimulate interest; ensuring platform development and facilitating two-way communication to enhance deep interaction; strengthening scientific cooperation to expand positive effects and promote behavioral transformation; and creating immersive experiences to encourage active sharing and open communication channels.

Keywords: Children; Graded reading; Reading promotion; SICAS model

1. The Necessity of SICAS Model-Based Research on Children's Graded Reading Promotion

Children's reading represents the most fundamental and essential component of national reading initiatives, directly influencing national cultural literacy and cultural heritage preservation. Graded reading, which matches reading materials to children's age, cognitive development, and socialization characteristics, serves as a crucial method for improving reading quality and efficiency. As educational levels rise and awareness of reading's importance grows, children's graded reading has garnered increasing societal attention. However, current practices face significant challenges: age grading standards vary widely without unified criteria, and simply matching books to age groups proves unscientific. The critical question of how to promote reading based on children's actual reading levels and personalized needs while fostering healthy development remains inadequately addressed.

The SICAS model (Sense, Interest & Interactive, Connect & Communication, Action, Share) provides a robust theoretical framework for addressing these challenges. Originally developed for digital marketing, SICAS captures the evolution from unidirectional brand communication to multidimensional interaction, making it highly compatible with the complex, multi-stakeholder nature of children's graded reading promotion. The model enables systematic, stage-based management of promotion activities, allowing practitioners to follow a clear trajectory from mutual perception to interest stimulation, relationship building, behavior transformation, and sharing propagation. This approach significantly enhances promotion efficiency through distributed, multi-touchpoint, two-way pathways, providing both theoretical guidance and practical operability for children's graded reading promotion.

2. The SICAS Application Framework for Children's Graded Reading Promotion

The SICAS model's distinctive feature lies in incorporating user demand identification and behavior prediction while advocating dynamic management of consumer expectations. Its five stages align seamlessly with the children's graded reading promotion process:

Sense (Mutual Perception): Diverse promotion entities—including government departments (Education Ministry, Culture and Tourism Ministry, National Press and Publication Administration), cultural institutions (libraries, bookstores), educational subjects (teachers), and social organizations—must establish dynamic perception networks with children and their families. This requires understanding heterogeneous needs across different child groups and ensuring children rapidly perceive the value of graded reading services.

Interest & Interactive (Interest Stimulation): Sustained interest is key to attracting target readers. Immersive, interactive experiences can quickly establish connections between promoters and children, building deep communication channels that facilitate value coupling between brands and users.

Connect & Communication (Relationship Building): This stage emphasizes building relationships through diversified touchpoints, leveraging technology and user-generated content to create efficient reading pathways and enhance interaction rates.

Action (Behavior Transformation): The model guides conversion of interest into actual reading behavior, ensuring sustainable development through value realization and accompanying benefits like improved reading quality and habit formation.

Share (Sharing Propagation): This final stage focuses on encouraging children and their families to become advocates, expanding social influence through word-of-mouth and achieving the leap from perception to sharing.

The framework recognizes that children's graded reading promotion is a systematic social engineering project requiring multi-stakeholder collaboration. Current research disproportionately focuses on libraries, neglecting other vital entities like government agencies, publishers, and educational institutions. The SICAS model's emphasis on diversified subjects and dynamic user relationships provides a more comprehensive analytical lens for understanding and optimizing promotion practices.

[Figure 1: see original paper] The SICAS-based application framework for children's graded reading promotion

3. Current Status and Achievements of SICAS-Based Children's Graded Reading Promotion

3.1 Brand Building and Enhanced Perception

Significant progress has been made in establishing graded reading brands. Notable examples include “Disney I Can Read Myself” (the first Chinese graded reading series launched by Children’s Fun Publishing and People’s Posts & Telecommunications Press), “Little Sheep Goes Up the Mountain” (2019), and the “Chinese Graded Reading Library” jointly launched by Close to Mother Tongue and Guomai Culture. These brands have raised children’s awareness of graded reading materials. Additionally, libraries have developed their own promotion brands, such as Shenzhen Children’s Library’s “Parent-Child Reading Plan” and Jinling Library’s “Little Bee” series, which create recognizable identities for reading promotion services.

3.2 Integrating Fun Elements to Strengthen Attraction

Successful promotion incorporates engaging elements into both reading materials and activities. The National Library for Children and Young Adults has embedded its mascot into gamified services, integrating library skills and resource recommendations within games. Shanghai Baoshan District Gucun Experimental School uses reading passports where students earn stamps or stars for borrowing books and completing reading logs, with “Reading Champions” receiving awards. Public libraries employ game-based mechanics like point systems and 闯关 (challenge-based) activities to sustain interest. Publishers have also innovated; for example, Relay Press uses VR technology to immerse young military enthusiasts in historical weaponry and modern stealth aircraft, creating compelling reading experiences.

3.3 Building Reading Pathways to Enhance Interaction Rates

Both online and offline pathways have been established to facilitate interaction. Offline channels include brand reading clubs like Jinling Library’s “Little Bee” series and Chongqing Library’s “Little Water Drop English Reading Club,” which create long-term engagement mechanisms. Online platforms have expanded access significantly. Henan Library’s graded reading platform offers curated bookstores, reading ability tests, and adaptive learning systems. The National Library for Children and Young Adults has integrated a “Reading Aloud Cloud Platform” into mobile terminals, enabling children to upload and share reading clips. Shandong Aibushishu Digital Technology has developed interactive 3D books that display content from multiple perspectives with multimedia effects, making reading more engaging.

3.4 Joint Promotion to Enhance Conversion Rates

Multi-stakeholder collaboration has proven effective. Xiangyang Library and Xiangyang Xinhua Bookstore jointly organize summer reading activities for primary and secondary students, linking writers, schools, and communities to create a strong reading atmosphere. Wuhan Xinhua Bookstore’s “Writers into Campuses” program and Changjiang Literature & Art Press’s community reading initiatives demonstrate how coordinated efforts can expand service scope and improve resource utilization. These collaborations help transform reading awareness into actual behavior, increasing conversion rates and ensuring sustainable promotion.

4. Problems in SICAS-Based Children’s Graded Reading Promotion

4.1 Brand Building and Communication Bias Disturbing Perception

While various entities have established recognized brands, several issues persist. Many so-called Chinese graded reading series are merely translations of foreign classics with weak local attributes and insufficient originality. Brand communication often lacks clear positioning, with promoters failing to conduct audience segmentation research or precise brand feature promotion beforehand. This results in parents relying solely on word-of-mouth when selecting books, leading to poor outcomes. Some promoters misunderstand regional acceptance levels of graded reading, causing disruptions in promotion processes. The lack of adequate demand sensing creates confusion about brand identity and interferes with children’s perception of graded reading services.

4.2 Monotonous Content and Promotion Models Suppressing Interest

Despite exploring fun promotion models, significant problems remain. The 趣味性 (fun elements) in graded materials are often oversimplified, with most publications focusing narrowly on educational purposes and using only basic text summaries that quickly lose appeal. Promotion models are repetitive and monotonous, largely confined to offline parent-child reading sessions and book salons without substantial innovation. This creates fatigue among target audiences, diminishing their willingness to explore graded reading and suppressing their interest in sharing experiences.

4.3 Inefficient Platform Operation and Information Delivery Limiting Two-Way Interaction

Although promotion platforms have been established, operational inefficiencies persist. Platform management issues, outdated content, and unclear cooperation mechanisms among entities result in low information transmission efficiency between promoters and families. Most promotion activities follow one-way information delivery from institutions, with only simple Q&A interactions limiting

deeper engagement. For instance, Xiamen Children's Library's activity page provides announcements but lacks outcome displays, and its statistical reports only cover basic metrics like library card issuance and website clicks without detailed evaluation. This prevents sustained impact and fails to realize the true value of reading promotion.

4.4 Weak Immersive Experience and Active Sharing Hindering Normalized Propagation

Creating immersive experiences to encourage spontaneous sharing is crucial for sustainable promotion, yet current efforts are inadequate. Emerging technologies remain developmental, unable to provide comprehensive sensory immersion beyond visual and auditory experiences. Promotion activity sharing models are still exploratory, with reading interactions remaining superficial. Platforms like Swan Reading Network offer only simple Q&A between promoters and users, lacking deeper exchanges or stable spontaneous sharing communities. Without opinion leaders or established sharing mechanisms, users' participation is insufficient, and normalized communication channels remain blocked.

4.5 Weak Cooperation Mechanisms and Activity Effects Constraining Behavior Transformation

Multi-stakeholder joint promotion often focuses only on initial launch while neglecting medium- and long-term planning. Cooperation lacks normalized operation mechanisms, clear responsibility allocation, and evaluation systems, making it difficult to consolidate positive effects or improve negative ones. Insufficient consideration of entities like educational institutions and weak assessment mechanisms hinder later reflection and improvement. These limitations significantly restrict the transformation of children's reading behaviors into regular habits.

5. Countermeasures for SICAS-Based Children's Graded Reading Promotion

5.1 Build Local Brands with Precise Communication to Optimize Mutual Perception

Developing 本土化 (localized) graded reading brands is paramount. This requires using big data and distributed, multi-touchpoint analysis to understand Chinese children's genuine reading needs, then creating original brands that account for domestic linguistic differences, cognitive development patterns, and cultural contexts. Publishers should design complete reading guidance systems to accompany graded materials. Brand communication must be precisely targeted based on children's gender, age, reading ability, and personalized characteristics to match effective dissemination pathways and audiences. This precision optimizes mutual perception between promotion entities and families.

5.2 Enrich Reading Content and Innovate Promotion Models to Stimulate Interest

Successful promotion requires attractive, rich content that enhances text readability while incorporating engaging elements. Drawing on mature international grading standards and Ministry of Education guidelines, promoters should investigate contemporary children's interest points and reading needs at different developmental stages. They must explore the potential of emerging digital intelligence technologies in graded materials and promotion, strengthening the presence of fun elements. Innovation in promotion models is essential—collaborating with popular live-streaming platforms to leverage influencer traffic, developing personalized promotion patterns based on audience feedback, and continuously stimulating children's interest in graded reading services.

5.3 Ensure Platform Development and Facilitate Two-Way Communication to Enhance Deep Interaction

Reading promotion platforms are crucial connectors that require sustainable development through adequate investment, effective management, and reliable technology. Operators must balance platform construction with ongoing maintenance, ensuring timely content updates and efficient two-way information flow. Regular feedback collection through surveys and interviews should inform continuous improvement. Promoters should cultivate opinion leaders among children and parents, building stable sharing communities around popular media channels like Douyin. Increasing interaction frequency, ensuring clear information delivery, and providing valuable content deepen engagement and create virtuous cycles of communication.

5.4 Strengthen Scientific Cooperation to Expand Positive Effects and Promote Behavior Transformation

Establishing scientific, sustainable cooperation mechanisms is core to realizing value and expanding positive effects. This requires long-term planning from promotion initiation, developing clear, executable management norms that define each entity's responsibilities. Normalized operation mechanisms must ensure sustainable development, with timely evaluations to consolidate achievements and guide improvements. Libraries' rich experience, publishers' advantages in graded materials, and schools' educational expertise should be fully leveraged. Multi-channel cooperation, including with emerging media, can create synergistic effects that accelerate reading behavior transformation and habit formation.

5.5 Enhance Immersive Experience to Encourage Active Sharing and Open Communication Channels

While immersive technologies are still maturing, promoters can thoroughly study how graded materials align with immersive technologies, maximizing advantages while avoiding pitfalls. The goal is creating immersive experiences

that encourage spontaneous sharing and open normalized communication channels. Collecting online and offline feedback helps identify sharing triggers. Cultivating excellent opinion leaders and building sharing communities around media channels favored by contemporary children fosters active sharing habits. This community-centered approach radiates outward, expanding promotion reach and achieving sustainable, virtuous cycles of communication.

6. Conclusion

Children's graded reading promotion, as a foundational and fundamental component of national reading initiatives, receives high attention from government, cultural institutions, educators, and social organizations. Its effective implementation is crucial for cultivating children's reading habits, improving reading capabilities, and fostering respect for knowledge. The SICAS model's evolutionary trajectory—Sense, Interest & Interactive, Connect & Communication, Action, Share—aligns closely with the graded reading promotion process, offering valuable theoretical and practical guidance.

This paper has analyzed current practices, identified achievements, revealed problems, and proposed targeted countermeasures from the SICAS perspective. By optimizing mutual perception, stimulating interest, enhancing interaction, promoting behavior transformation, and opening communication channels, children's graded reading promotion can achieve more effective, sustainable outcomes. The framework provides a new perspective for future research and practice in this vital domain, contributing to the broader goal of building a reading-rich society.

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