

The Impact of Social Media on Reading Promotion: An Explanatory Framework

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Abstract: This paper explores the impact of social media on reading promotion, aiming to establish an explanatory framework for understanding the role and influence of this contemporary medium in modern reading initiatives. The research employs literature review, theoretical analysis, and framework construction. Firstly, a systematic review of existing literature on social media's role in reading promotion identifies key features in information dissemination, user interaction, and content generation. Subsequently, using communication theory and information ecology theory, the study deeply analyzes the mechanisms through which social media influences reading promotion, examining its potential in expanding readership, enhancing reader engagement, and fostering reading habits. The proposed explanatory framework considers the diversity and dynamic nature of social media, presenting a multi-level, multi-dimensional model that encompasses the functionalities of social media as a reading promotion platform, its ecological niche, and its role in cultural dissemination. Findings indicate that social media serves not only as a channel for disseminating reading content, but also as a crucial platform for building reading communities and enhancing reader participation. Its interactive and real-time features contribute to a dynamic, interactive reading ecosystem, effectively promoting widespread reading engagement. This theoretical framework provides a reference for future research and offers theoretical support and guidance for reading promotion practitioners utilizing social media.

Keywords: Social Media; Reading Promotion; Explanatory Framework; Communication Theory; Information Ecology

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

With the rapid development of information technology, social media has become an indispensable part of modern society. Whether for work, study or leisure, people are increasingly relying on social media for information acquisition and interaction. This trend also permeates the field of reading promotion. Traditional means of promoting reading, such as books, lectures and book fairs, although they still have their unique value, are gradually showing their limitations in attracting young readers and strengthening reader interaction. In contrast, social media has the advantages of diversity, wide coverage and instant interaction, which has injected new vitality and possibilities into the promotion of reading.

In the current era of information explosion, the importance of reading is not only reflected in the accumulation of personal knowledge and spiritual enrichment, but also the key factor to improve the quality of the whole people and social progress. Through social media platforms, it is more convenient to disseminate reading information, share reading experience, and even interact to generate new reading content, thus stimulating people's reading interest and forming a good reading atmosphere.

1.2 Research Objectives and Methods

The main purpose of this paper is to systematically explore the influence mechanism and action mode of social media in reading promotion by constructing an explanatory framework. The research methods mainly include literature review, theoretical analysis and model construction. By combing the existing relevant studies, we explore the multi-dimensional influence of social media on

reading promotion; Through theoretical analysis, the communication theory and information ecology theory are selected as the research basis. Finally, by constructing an explanatory framework, the theory is transformed into a structured and practical research result.

1.3 Review of Research Status at Home and Abroad

Over the past decade, there has been a growing body of research on social media and reading promotion. Foreign scholars mostly discuss the role and influence of social media from the perspectives of user behavior, content dissemination and technology impact. Typical studies, such as the social capital theory proposed by Ellison et al. (2007), point out that the interactive performance of social media platforms improves users' social connection and information acquisition ability. Wang (2013) showed that social media can significantly promote the formation of e-reading habits.

Domestic research focuses on the application and influence of social media in cultural communication. Li Xiaoyun (2015) analyzed the function of microblog in cultural communication and pointed out that its openness and interactive performance effectively promoted cultural content. Wang Wenjing (2018) found through empirical research that the wechat public platform can significantly improve the effect of teachers' reading guidance. These studies all show the potential and application value of social media in reading promotion, but they mostly focus on a specific platform or a specific function, and lack a systematic and comprehensive theoretical framework.

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1 Overview of Communication Theory

Communication theory, as an important branch of information communication research, provides a theoretical basis for understanding the role of social media in reading promotion. Communication theory includes information flow, information encoding and decoding, communication environment and so on. The communication model proposed by Lasswell (1948) divides the communication process into five stages: "Who says what, through what

channel, to whom, and what effect is achieved". This model provides a basic framework for understanding the spread of social media information.

The information theory model proposed by Shannon and Weaver (1949) focuses on elements such as information source, channel, information receiver and noise, and emphasizes the factors that may be interfered with in the process of information transmission. This model is particularly important in the context of social media, where information spreads quickly and widely, and is susceptible to interference by multiple factors.

2.2 Theoretical Analysis of Information Ecology

From the perspective of ecology, the theory of information ecology discusses the various elements of information system and their mutual relations. Nardi and O 'Day (1999) defined information ecosystem as a complex system composed of information, multiple individuals and their behaviors, information technology and information policies, etc. They emphasized that the interaction among various elements and the impact of environment on system operation should not be ignored.

Social media itself is an information ecosystem, including users, platforms, content, algorithms and other elements. Each element plays a different role in information dissemination and reading promotion, interweaving and influencing each other. Through the theory of information ecology, we can better understand the multiple functions of social media in reading promotion and its comprehensive effect on the reading ecosystem.

3. The Role of Social Media in Reading Promotion

3.1 Information Dissemination Function

A core function of social media platforms is information dissemination. This kind of communication not only has the characteristics of rapid and extensive, but also shows the trend of fragmentation and individuation. Through algorithmic recommendation and tag classification functions, social media can push content that conforms to users' reading preferences according to their interests and behavior habits. This precise content matching mechanism enhances the convenience and

pertinence of users' access to relevant information.

Compared with traditional media, the information dissemination of social media has more personalized characteristics. Users can further expand the dissemination of information through interactive behaviors such as liking, commenting and sharing. This "viral transmission" mode can greatly improve the efficiency and effect of reading promotion. Especially in the promotion of some hot events or themed books, social media can quickly aggregate a large amount of information and quickly spread to a wider audience through network nodes.

3.2 User Interaction Mechanism

Interactivity is another characteristic of social media. This kind of interaction is not only limited to one-way transmission of information, but also includes two-way or even multi-directional information exchange and feedback. On social media platforms, readers can directly interact with authors or other readers through comments, likes, tips and other functions. This form of interaction helps to enhance the reader's sense of participation and belonging, thus improving the initiative and continuity of reading.

By organizing online reading events, book clubs, or Q&A interactions, social media platforms can create a virtual reading community. These communities not only provide a stable platform for communication, but also increase the mutual influence and support among readers. According to the community theory proposed by McMillan and Chavis (1986), community belonging is closely related to members' participation and satisfaction. By enhancing readers' sense of belonging, reading community helps to realize the long-term mechanism of reading promotion.

3.3 Content Generation and Sharing

Social media platforms are not only information dissemination channels, but also important places for User Generated Content (UGC). Users can use the social media platform to create their own book reviews, reading notes, reading feelings and other content, and share it with their social network friends or the public. The existence of UGC makes reading promotion no longer rely on the traditional single channel, but forms a multi-

dimensional content communication structure.

With UGC, social media platforms can easily aggregate large amounts of personalized, segmented reading content. So as to meet the reading needs of different reader groups. In fact, the promotion of many best-selling books often relies on the promotion role of UGC, and readers' real evaluation and recommendation of books are sometimes more influential and persuasive than official publicity.

In addition, social media platforms also have the characteristics of content regeneration and secondary dissemination. Users can spread their own or others' reading content to a wider network space through sharing, forwarding and other means. The flow and interaction of content between different platforms has further expanded the coverage and influence of reading promotion.

4. The Impact of Social Media on Reading Behavior

4.1 Audience Expansion Analysis

The proliferation of social media platforms has broadened the audience reach for reading promotion. Unlike traditional methods, social media's global and instantaneous nature allows for extensive coverage. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have vast user bases encompassing diverse demographics. Through these channels, promoters can swiftly disseminate information to varied user groups, creating an expansive reading promotion network.

In China, platforms such as WeChat and Weibo are primary channels for reading promotion. WeChat's official accounts frequently share articles and book recommendations, attracting a wide readership. With over a billion daily active users (Tencent Holdings Ltd., 2020), the potential audience is massive. These platforms significantly enhance the reach of reading promotion, exposing many to reading materials and information.

Different age groups show varying levels of engagement and preferences on social media. Younger users prefer short video platforms like TikTok, while older users lean towards text and image-based platforms like WeChat and Weibo. These emerging channels not only expand the audience base but also diversify the forms and content of reading promotion.

4.2 Enhanced Reader Engagement

The interactive nature of social media significantly boosts reader engagement. Traditionally, readers were passive recipients, but on social media, they can actively participate through likes, comments, and shares. On WeChat, users can comment on articles and engage in discussions with authors and other readers, enriching their reading experience and fostering deeper interactions. Reading check-in activities have become popular on platforms like Weibo and Douban, attracting numerous participants. These activities range from simple daily reading logs to competitive reading marathons, allowing readers to showcase their reading progress and receive encouragement. Such high-engagement interaction effectively increases reading motivation.

Social media also offers DIY content opportunities, enabling readers to share their reading experiences and book recommendations through videos, images, and articles. User-generated content (UGC) often has a greater impact on social media, as it is perceived as more authentic and relatable, resonating with other readers.

4.3 Formation of Reading Habits

Social media's push mechanisms and community interactions help users develop reading habits. According to the Chinese Academy of Press and Publication, the comprehensive reading rate of adult citizens reached 81.3% in 2020 (Chinese Academy of Press and Publication, 2020). Social media's role in content delivery and recommendation is a significant factor in this.

Platforms use recommendation algorithms to maintain user interest by suggesting books and articles based on their reading history and behavior. For example, Toutiao's algorithm recommends relevant reading materials, reinforcing and deepening users' reading habits and interests.

Reading communities on social media also influence users' reading habits. By joining book clubs and reading groups, users gain access to abundant resources and are influenced by the communal reading atmosphere. Regular thematic discussions, book recommendations, and reading notes sharing in these communities encourage users to make reading a daily habit.

5. Construction of the Explanatory Framework

5.1 Principles of Framework Construction

The explanatory framework, grounded in communication theory and information ecology theory, analyzes information dissemination paths, user participation mechanisms, and content generation and sharing methods to form a comprehensive model of reading promotion's impact. This framework integrates the multilayered and multidimensional characteristics of social media, considering its importance and functions in reading promotion.

Key elements such as information sources, dissemination channels, audiences, and interaction mechanisms are dissected to understand their interplay and impact on reading promotion.

5.2 Multilayer Structure Analysis

The core of the explanatory framework is the multilayer structure analysis, dividing the impact of social media on reading promotion into macro, meso, and micro levels.

At the macro level, the overall trends and effects of reading promotion within the social media environment are examined. This includes global social media usage, platform-specific user structures, and their collective impact on reading promotion. For instance, reports by We Are Social and Hootsuite (2021) indicate over 4.5 billion social media users worldwide, highlighting its vast potential and influence.

The meso level focuses on specific platforms and community-based reading promotion activities. Different platforms have distinct functionalities and characteristics. For example, WeChat uses text, images, and videos to push content, while Weibo employs tags and topics for content categorization and promotion. This level aims to understand platform-specific features and their effective utilization in reading promotion.

The micro level delves into individual user behaviors on social media, including reading preferences, interactive behaviors, and UGC creation and dissemination. Understanding this level helps tailor precise user-centric promotion strategies.

5.3 Multidimensional Impact Mechanisms

The explanatory framework's multidimensional impact mechanism analysis provides a holistic understanding of social media's role in reading promotion. This dimension includes:

User Dimension: Analyzes user roles and behaviors in reading promotion. Social media users act as information receivers, transmitters, and creators. Burgess and Green's (2009) "participatory culture" theory posits that every user can contribute to content production and dissemination, providing a broad and diverse promotion base.

Content Dimension: Focuses on the production and dissemination of reading materials. High-quality, engaging content is crucial for maintaining user interest. Publishers and authors often share free chapters, short video introductions, and online book reviews to increase exposure and interest.

Technical Dimension: Explores the technical features and applications of social media platforms. Technologies like recommendation algorithms, data analytics, and user profiling enhance promotion efficiency. Algorithms can accurately push relevant books and articles based on user data, increasing engagement and readership.

6. Conclusion

This paper constructs an explanatory framework to systematically explore social media's impact on reading promotion. The study finds that social media's broad audience reach, strong interactivity, and rich content generation mechanisms bring significant positive effects to reading promotion. Social media's unique characteristics in information dissemination, user interaction, and content sharing effectively stimulate reading interest and habit formation.

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