The Influence of the Nationwide Reading Activity on Lifelong Learning

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Keywords: Lifelong Learning, Nationwide Reading, Effective Means, Benefits.

Abstract. Reading is the most direct way of acquiring knowledge among the various ways of lifelong learning. It has a deep influence on not only the individual development but also the future of a country and the fate of a nation. Besides cultivating the culture accomplishment, reading helps the whole society uphold high moral and ethical standards for membership. With the development of society and economy and the improvement of national humanistic quality, reading is of great significance for people. In recent years, the nationwide reading activity conducted by the Chinese government plays a very important role in improving national quality and promoting social development. Over the years, by recording and keeping historic memories, books especially the classics express deep concern about the issues of human development, and provide people with great enlightenment at the same time. Obviously, the government plays a leading role in nationwide reading, collaboratively developing paper and digital literature resources with different sectors of the society in order to satisfy the national reading demands. What’s more, reading can help people develop social cognition while cultivating their rational thinking and innovative thinking, thus to elevate humanistic quality which has great practical significance in every country.

Introduction

Learning is the essential way for human beings to cognize nature and society, thus to develop and perfect themselves. Only by constant learning, people can embrace new knowledge and enhance their creative abilities in response to the emerging challenges of all the ages. From childhood to adulthood and old age, learning will accompany and influence one’s life all the time, which is also the requirement of the continuously developing and changing world. Learning has been a basic human activity since the dawn of humanity. It is obvious that people cannot recognize and reconstruct nature if they don’t do some learning, let alone how to adapt to the society. Further more, they will not achieve any great accomplishment without seriously acquiring more knowledge. Except for the acquirement of certain knowledge and skills, the importance of learning also lies in getting people to flourish intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, interpersonally and intra-personally which helps to form a more perfect world. Based on this understanding, people always take learning as an eternal theme, reiterating the importance of learning and constantly exploring the scientific method of learning. At the same time, they have realized the fact that life is an endless journey of learning and practice.

Lifelong learning is the ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development, but also self-sustainability, as well as competitiveness and employability.[1] It’s never too old to learn. There is no destination for the pursuit of knowledge in the finite lifetime. Because of the rapidly changing world today, a lot of new situations and problems have come up, and the knowledge update has speeded up a lot. In this case, people must consider learning as the way of life instead of the power to know in order to adapt to the constantly changing world. Well goes an English proverb, “Live and learn”. Lifelong learning not only helps people overcome the difficulties and solve the new problems in the work, but also meets the needs of survival and development and brings them more opportunities to continually upgrade their talents and
abilities for the realization of self-perfection. What’s more, lifelong learning contributes to keep a positive attitude and an active spiritual life which provides people a better quality of life.

In the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Learning The treasure within), lifelong learning is taken as the heartbeat of society. The report defines the concept of learning throughout life as one of the keys to the twenty-first century which goes beyond the traditional distinction between initial and continuing education and meets the challenges posed by a rapidly changing world. And it also states that the only way of satisfying it is for each individual to learn how to learn, which includes four pillars of lifelong learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. Among the various ways of lifelong learning, the most direct way of acquiring knowledge is to read books. So in one sense, reading is a good way of learning throughout life, and learning to know is learning to read.

Significance of Reading

With the development of society and the improvement of humanity quality, reading has a greater impact on social activities. The civilization of a country, from a global perspective, not only depends on the external forms such as engineering construction and environmental quality, but also the inner qualities of national etiquette and cultural literacy. As a result, it is an essential way of building a learning society and encouraging nationwide reading in order to enhance the cultural and ethical quality as well as the social development. However, most people are busy working, and the lack of reading has already become a prominent problem of modern society, which is also a common problem that every country faces with. At present, a lot of western countries have put forward policy proposals and assessments for the purpose of national reading situation. And at the same time, countries all over the world begin to lay emphasis on advocating reading a lot of classical masterpieces, thus to prevent the deficiency in humanistic spirit which results from the rapid development of science and technology.

In China, the nationwide reading activity has once again become a hot topic in the twenty-first century. Once in a special interview from Russian TV, President Xi Jinping honestly said that reading had become an important way of his life, and he directly cited three benefits that reading helped people keep an active mind, enlighten wisdom and foster noble spirit. Premier Li Keqiang has also included nationwide reading in the government work report for three consecutive years, and he considered the increasing rate of nationwide reading as a significant sign of social progress and civilization improvement. Meanwhile, he proposed that reading be taken as a way of life, and its combination of work could not only increase developing innovative power but enhance social moral strength as well.

It is obvious that the nationwide reading activity plays an important role in cultivating humanistic spirits, improving national quality as well as promoting the development of society. Besides the cultural accomplishment, reading helps the whole society uphold high moral and ethical standards for membership. Lifelong learning, especially reading, not only provides a big influence on individual development but also the future of a country and the fate of a nation.

Effective Means of Reading

Reading contributes to the comprehensive quality of people, which upgrades the level of civilization accordingly. That’s because reading can nourish people’s mind, stimulate the imagination and broaden their horizons, which is of great significance to perfect the national humanistic quality.

Good Leadership of the Government. It is cheerful that, in recent years, the Chinese government has been taking the nationwide reading very seriously and endeavoring to brings its leading role into full play. That’s because reading brings benefits to individuals and families, countries and people, as well as the whole society and humankind. To improve the national reading situation, the Chinese government has made a series of big efforts.
After joining the International Reading Association, the government pays relatively high levels of attention to the nationwide reading activity, calling for active contributions of all regions and organizations to promote the culture of reading and build communities of interconnected readers. Nowadays, a lot of reading activities with distinctive features are carried out in every city, including essay-writing competitions, professional lectures, classical masterpieces recitation, digital reading platforms, BookCrossing, and reading experience of new media, etc. Besides, some other activities are also organized such as public reading month, reading festival, and Recommendation of worth-reading books for readers, etc. The nationwide reading gradually extend its influence deep into the country, and has already become a national activity.

Under the joint effort of both the government and the community groups, the situation of nationwide reading has achieved a good effect. However, for the purpose of pushing China a world power of reading, there is still a long way to go. With the rapid economic growth in modern society, the life of people getting more and more fast-paced under great stress. Most of the time, people get busy solving livelihood problems and engaging in social activities. Occassionally, if they have free time, they often choose travel and entertainment for relaxation, and so it’s difficult to sit quietly reading a book at leisure time.

Compared with the developed countries, people in our country are still reading at a low level, but the government has already paid full attention to it recent years, and is still working enough hard to make all the people seriously view reading and learning as a way of life and responsibility of working, thus to improve the national quality and social progress.

Diversification of Classic Resources. In addition, the diversification of classic resources helps meet the needs of all levels of readers. For more than ten years, the implementation and research of nationwide reading gradually developed but still not optimistic, which also needs to intensify efforts to seek a better method to promote a better and faster development of nationwide reading. Generally speaking, the reading experience can be made according to different age groups and various forms. For example, the elderly are valuable wealth to the country and society, who can maintain the best state of mind to improve the quality of life by reading. Children are the future and hope of the country, as well as the prospective builders and successors of the society. Reading from young age can inspire their interest and help them form good habits which is beneficial during their lifetime.

Except for reading books, digital reading devices have become another way of reading. When people want to get information, they firstly think of the computers and mobile phones. In the era of information explosion, the super ability of the internet really saves people a lot of time, and the mode of audio-visual combination and transmission attracts people take delight in accepting it. So according to the survey, people spend more and more time watching TV or surfing the internet, the traditional reading time has been compressed rather limited. Based on the national reading status, there is a rapid increase in the number of digital reading in our country, and the price of e-books is rising correspondingly. In order to keep pace with the times, reading resources especially the digital ones solve the problems of insufficient appeal to traditional terms of content and typesetting. Furthermore, the various ways of reading provide more reading choice for reader from all levels of the society, and relative authorities are aiming to develop better books both traditionally and digitally. Hence, it is sure that reading resources with their rich contents and new forms will get more favor of all ages.

Benefits of Reading

The love of reading benefits people throughout their life. As a matter of fact, reading not only helps people develop their rational thinking and social cognition, but also improve their creative thinking and humanistic quality.

Helping People Develop Rational Thinking and Social Cognition. Books are the carrier of knowledge, the crystallization of wisdom, and the ladder of human progress.[4] In the traditional concept of the Chinese nation, reading has always been a good way of cultivating morality from the green to the learned, from the mediocre to the prominent, and from the disappointed to the successful
man. Actually, reading not only promotes people a long-term development but also a quiet conscious mind, which makes our spiritual life colorful.

In the new era under the influence of “fast-food culture”, people are less interested in reading, and the activity of nationwide reading makes up the defects in the proportion of reading their life. Maugham once said that “To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for yourself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life.”[5] we can easily find that there are usually correct cultural and valuable conceptions in literature. Thus, for each problem people encounters in different periods, reading will be of great help to find the solution to it.

It is believed that people constantly get culture edification through reading, awakening self-consciousness and construct a good spirit world at the same time. Moreover, reading helps people’s individual vision gradually develop from narrow to wide, from single to experienced, which makes people who have different life experience get different life revelation. Today, the rational thinking and social cognition is the essential quality for everyone. With the help of reading, people get the experience of cognizing the world to understand the experience that books transfer to them, and then question or identity, cultivating the quality of adapting the social culture and humanistic quality.

**Helping People Improve Creative Thinking and Humanistic Quality.** Reading influences the cultivation and taste of a person, and nationwide reading is really a matter of prime importance about the future of a country and a nation which has enhanced its energy strategy to the level of national long-term development strategy.

In this high-tech information age, all kinds of knowledge updates quickly, so the life and work of people are facing with new problems and challenges. As a means of expanding the horizon and understanding the world, reading constantly helps people update their knowledge and improve and enhance themselves. Particularly, the literary classics imply multiple themes and meanings, from which people can touch the variety of characters and ever-changing plots and stories. Classical Masterpieces are the most excellent works inherited and developed from the tradition, and they are able to exist through the test of history. In these works, authors objectively record and keep historic memories through rich and substantial written materials, thus to express their thinking about the issue of human development. Therefore, the meaningful classical masterpieces have been offering great enlightenment to everyone in the world over the years.

The process of reading is also the process of development of imagination, inevitably leads to the development of innovative ability. In addition, the classics are very good examples in the forms and contents. Reading is able to influence on the accurate and regular expression of language, and improves the pragmatic competence as well. What’s more, the eternal themes and classical images in the enduring classics are the preservation of life experience of the social models in the specific times. And that in essence says, classical literary masterpieces represent dialogues between the traditional and the contemporary, which is an effective way to the development of the social inheritance.

Reading is the spiritual sustenance of mankind and maintain social progress the driving force of sustainable development. Even in the present era, we live in an era of rapid change where pressures and challenges co-exist, we must not forget our purpose and keep in mind the premise of reading, because reading relates to the humanistic quality, life perfection, social harmony and direction of the national culture and cohesion.

**Conclusion**

Reading is an important work of lifelong learning, which brings a great influence and charisma and undertakes the important task of promoting national humanity quality. At the same time, the combination of reading classics and digital technology, network media can better adapt to the personalized, diversified learning needs of a new generation of readers. Although reading is hard to produce immediate benefits, it contributes to expanding horizon, cultivating rational thinking and social morality in the human heart. From the perspective of the long-term development of life,
lifelong learning is beneficial to the long-term development of individuals and society, and also the human cultural heritage as well.

Acknowledgement

This research was financially supported by The Program of Economic and Social Development of Liaoning Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences Circles in 2017 (Grant No. 2017lslktn-003) and The Program of Research of Higher Education for the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan of Liaoning Higher Education Society in 2016 (Grant No. GHYB160134).

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