

Original Paper

Construction and Application Practice of the Digital Platform for Red Education of the Young Pioneers of China

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Abstract

The survey found that there is a shortage of red education and extracurricular reading among Chinese primary school students, who play video games and watch cartoons more than watch red inspirational books and movies outside of class, and lack ambitious ideals and learning motivation. To improve this situation, the research group built a digital platform for red education for Chinese children and youth and conducted a one-semester after-school reading comparison experiment among 427 elementary school students in Hangzhou LX Primary School. The post-experimental measurement found that the students in the experimental group enjoyed the “read red books + watch red movies” activity for one hour a day, and their reading time and quantity of red books/films increased significantly, their time spent playing video games and watching cartoons decreased by 46% per day, and their knowledge of Chinese revolutionary history and socialist core values, patriotic consciousness, ideal beliefs, and enthusiasm for learning also improved. Their knowledge of Chinese revolutionary history and core socialist values, patriotic consciousness, ideal beliefs, and enthusiasm for learning have also been greatly improved, and their total scores in the final exams of four courses, namely Chinese, mathematics, moral character, and English, have increased by 12% compared with those before the experiment. In contrast, in the control group, which did not carry out the reading activity and maintained the original learning and living condition, the above post-test indicators did not change significantly from the pre-test. Therefore, the experiment shows that this digital reading model has a positive effect on the cultivation of qualified communist successors, and provides experience and reference for the cultivation and education of Chinese elementary school students.

Keywords

Chinese elementary school students, red education, digital platform construction, reading experiment

1. Introduction

The period of adolescence and childhood is a critical period for the cultivation of reading habits and an important period for the initial formation of life perspectives, and the history of a person's spiritual development is the history of his or her reading (Zhu, 2014). Reading is the most direct and effective way to learn, which can promote the formation of three views and ideal beliefs, determine the future development of children, and the spiritual realm of a nation depends on the reading level of this nation (Li, 2021). What we read and what we believe in at the elementary school level is directly related to who we train and for whom we train. What kind of people should be nurtured? How to train people (Wu, 2021)? Children need not only fairy tales, but also ideals and beliefs (Li, 2020).

Ideals and beliefs are the goal of one's future development, and the source of spiritual power for a nation and a country to keep moving forward, which is related to the learning motivation and healthy growth of children and youth, as well as the realization of the "Chinese dream" of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Wang, 2018).

However, a survey of more than 30,000 primary and secondary school students in 30 provinces found that the current values and ideals education of Chinese children and youth is not optimistic, with nearly 70% of students spending less than one hour a day reading outside of class and mainly reading anime and crossover books, enthusiastically playing Honor Of Kings video games and watching sissy star-catching programs, lacking ideals and learning motivation (Zhang et al., 2022; Zhou, 2021), and rarely coming into contact with red. Few of them have watched books and movies and have seen excellent movies and videos about the centennial of the founding of the Party, such as *The Age of Awakening*, *A Hundred Refined Steels*, *Ideals Shine in China*, and *Merit* (Wang, 2021). This situation is especially serious for tens of millions of left-behind migrant children, who lack parental companionship and useful extracurricular reading, have poor learning initiatives and poor grades, are addicted to watching cartoons and playing video games, have serious school bullying and anorexic dropouts, have little legal awareness, and commit 70% of all crimes committed by minors, with an increasing trend (Han et al., 2020). Instead of studying industry elites and anti-epidemic heroes, they are eager to raise millions of dollars online to customize exclusive patterned planes to go for the birthday of South Korean insulting sissy stars, which is a major failure of youth values and ideals education (Central Committee of Communist Youth League of China, 2021).

In order to improve this situation, the research group has built a digital platform for red education for Chinese children and teenagers, selected red books and movies that promote socialist core values, and plans to carry out the experiment of "one hour of red digital reading every day", using the mode of "reading red books + watching red movies and videos" to carry out education on the history of the Chinese revolution, ideals and beliefs and socialist core values for Chinese children and teenagers. "We

hope to promote the establishment of socialist core values and patriotic consciousness through red reading, to make up for the shortage of useful reading outside the classroom, to fasten the buttons of life, to establish the ambition to study hard for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, to improve self-confidence and initiative in learning, and to promote academic and vocational development. Promote academic and career development, and become the pillar of China's efforts to achieve the second century goal—the modernization of the country.

Digital reading, including e-books, movies and short videos, is the mainstream reading mode in the current mobile network era and is popular among the youth of “Generation Z” (Cui & Pan, 2021). The Young Pioneers of China is a group organization of Chinese children and youth, a school for children and youth to learn socialism and communism with Chinese characteristics, and a preparatory team for building socialism and communism (Teng, 2022).

The core values of socialism are: wealth and strength, democracy, civilization, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, rule of law, patriotism, respect for work, honesty and friendliness. Although the Chinese and Western social systems and values are different, the education and training methods for youth are similar. Western countries have also been educating their own values and patriotism to their youth through various ways such as churches, scouts and young marines organizations to train their successors (Xu & Li, 2021).

2. China's Children and Youth Red Education Digital Platform Construction

Red education refers to the education of life outlook and ideal beliefs with the theme of Chinese revolutionary history, socialist core values and patriotism, which is the way to cultivate qualified socialist successors to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Wang, 2021).

The digital platform is a public welfare red education website, with columns such as “introduction to the history of the Chinese revolution, red book reading, red film and television appreciation, red songs, strong pioneers, my Chinese dream, telling the Chinese story in the world language, and international comparison of the Covid-19 prevention and control.

(1) **The History of the Chinese Revolution** section selects relevant articles that briefly introduce the history of the Chinese Revolution and the process of the founding of New China.

(2) **Red Books** section selected more than 200 red electronic comic strips, animation and outstanding electronic books recommended by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China for extracurricular use in primary and secondary schools to promote the core socialist values, including the fight against the new epidemic, the history of the Chinese Revolution and the introduction of heroic figures, including China's War on the Epidemic, Fight against the Epidemic, War on the Epidemic, Xi Jinping and the People Together, Xi Jinping's Expectations for Children and Youth, Xi Jinping's Seven Years as a Youth, The Red Star Shines in China, Readings of Idiom Stories on Socialist Core Values, The Long March, The Little Red Army, Study for the Rise of China, Two Little Eight Roads, Young Mao Zedong, Young Deng Xiaoping, Little Soldier Zhang Ga, Liu Hulan, Dong Cunrui, War to Resist

US Aggression and Aid Korea, Huang Jiguang, Lei Feng, How Steel is Made”, 100 Stories of Scientists, Yuan Longping, Tu Youyou, East Wind Express—Protect the Country, Yue Fei Biography, etc., the reading amount reaches ten million words, basically online free e-books basically free ebooks online.

(3) **The Red TV and Film** section has selected 20 outstanding TV series of about 700 episodes in the centenary of the founding of the Party, including The Age of Awakening, A Hundred Refined Steels, Ideals Shine in China, Merit, Just Like a Classmate, The Founding of the Nation, Crossing the Yalu River, The Mountains are So Beautiful, Glory and Dream, Our New Era, Made in China, Bugler in Position, Red Flag Drain, The One Step for a Thousand Years, The Age of Speed, etc. The main content is to show the history and achievements of China’s revolution and reform and opening up, these red film and television programs can be watched for free at CCTV Network Center.

Reading red classic masterpieces is an effective way to understand learning and passing on the development of Chinese culture and patriotic education. Students in the early grades of elementary school have limited literacy and do not yet have the ability to read the original classics directly, but historical classics and red revolutionary comic books can be a good solution to this problem. A volume of comic books usually has 100-200 pages of pictures, with more than 100 words per page, a volume of 1-2 million words, the proportion of pictures to words is 1:1, and the stories are presented in a simple and concise manner, which has a better educational function and is loved by children and adolescents, and is conducive to cultivating good habits of active reading (Fan, 2019). Excellent TV series are vivid and lively real-life long-form comic strips, which are more favored by children (Wang, 2018). Through reading red comic strips and watching red films and TV series, it is an innovative attempt to educate children about red in a silent way is an innovative attempt of Civic Education path.

(4) **The red songs section** selects 100 influential red songs from various periods in China, such as International Anthem, National Anthem: March of the Volunteer Army, Yellow River Cantata, Daggers to the heads of the devils, Chinese People’s Volunteer Army Anthem, Chinese People’s Liberation Army Anthem, Chinese Pioneer Brigade Song: We are the successors of communism, Great China, Me and My Motherland, Five Star Red Flag, Love My China and so on, which are excellent carriers to promote the spirit of Chinese revolution and patriotism, as well as excellent forms to promote socialist core values.

(5) **Pioneers of a Strong Nation** section selects relevant articles to introduce labor imitations and outstanding entrepreneurs of socialist construction in all walks of life, setting modern role models for children.

(6) **My Chinese Dream column** shows the ambitious ideals and good achievements of the outstanding young pioneers in the country who have studied hard.

(7) **The Telling China’s Story in World Languages** section selects several short videos in major world languages such as English, French and German that tell the great achievements of China’s reform and opening up, so that children can firmly establish the four self-confidences and learn the world languages.

(8) **The novel coronavirus pneumonia prevention and control international comparison** section selects dozens of short international videos for the novel coronavirus pneumonia Prevention and Control International Comparison to let children know the superiority of socialism and the pride of being Chinese.

3. Red Reading Experimental Design

3.1 Experimental Plan

A total of 10 classes of 427 elementary school students in Grade 2-6 (2 parallel classes in each of grades) were selected for the reading experiment at LX Elementary School in Hangzhou, China. Among them, 213 students from 5 classes in each grade were randomly selected as the experimental group, and 214 students from the remaining 5 classes were the control group.

The experimental group carried out “red digital reading for one hour a day” after school in the mode of “reading red books + watching red movies”, while the control group maintained the original learning and living condition without red reading activities. Before and after the experiment, the whole group was surveyed and analyzed by interviewing 10% of the randomly selected respondents.

3.2 Experimental Research Questions

- (1) What are the changes in reading, core socialist values, ideal beliefs, study habits and academic performance of the experimental subjects before and after the Red Digital Reading experiment? What was the extent of the changes?
- (2) Can this red reading discussion tutoring model promote good reading habits, ambitious ideals, awareness of core socialist values and academic achievement among elementary school students?
- (3) What do students, parents and teachers think of this red digital education model?

3.3 Red Digital Reading Mode

In the mode of “reading red books + watching red movies”, the experiment of “one hour of red digital reading per day” is carried out to cultivate the ambitious ideals and core socialist values of the experimental subjects.

The subject group worked closely with LX Primary School to jointly develop a daily experimental plan for red digital reading, with red reading online instructors rotated by subject group members, and pioneer team counselors at the experimental school responsible for offline guidance to encourage students in the experimental group to focus on red digital reading for one hour and organize discussion through the classroom big screen during the hosting period of 3:30-5:30 pm every day. Meanwhile, students read online at home during weekends and holidays, and the platform will record the content and length of reading, and will also recruit college student volunteers to conduct 1-2 hours of red reading tutoring on the red education platform every day. On average, the experimental subjects will be guided to read 1 red comic book (1-2 million words) or enjoy and discuss 1 red TV series every day, and the amount of reading can be increased during weekends and holidays. 200 red comic books (more than 2 million words) and 100 red TV series are planned to be read in 6 months of a semester.

3.4 Experimental Test Content and Tools

(1) Extra-curricular reading and study life

The Questionnaire on Extracurricular Reading and Learning Life of Elementary School Students (32 questions in 8 dimensions) and the Interview Outline on Extracurricular Reading and Learning Life of Elementary School Students (8 topics) were prepared to investigate and understand the basic personal information, extracurricular reading, socialist core values, ideal beliefs, learning motivation, learning habits, independent learning ability and academic performance of the experimental subjects before and after they participated in the Red Digital Reading Experiment. The questionnaire was tested and modified by experts. The survey questionnaire passed the trial and expert revision, and the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.86.

(2) Learning attitude and academic performance

Longitudinal evaluation was conducted based on the school final exam scores and academic performance of the experimental subjects before and after the experiment, as well as cross-sectional comparative evaluation with the control group.

4. Experimental Results and Analysis

(1) Situation of Red Reading

Through the questionnaire and interview survey before and after the experiment, we found that the students in the experimental group and the control group had poor extracurricular reading before the experiment, and the average daily extracurricular reading time was only 0.2 hours or so, mainly reading paper animation books mainly on their own, and the average daily reading volume was only about 3,000 Chinese characters; but the average time spent playing video games and watching cartoons was about 2.3 hours every day, and they basically did not watch red movies and TV. The understanding and awareness of Chinese revolutionary history and socialist core values are also poor, and the patriotic consciousness and learning enthusiasm are very general, and they also basically do not have clear ideals and beliefs in life pursuit, and the total score of the final exam of the four courses of Chinese, mathematics, character and English in the last semester is about 327 on average, and there is no significant difference between the two groups.

During the experimental period, the average daily extracurricular red book reading time of the experimental group was 0.93 hours, and the reading amount reached 18 thousand Chinese characters, which were 3.4 times and 5 times higher than before the experiment; meanwhile, the average daily time of playing video games and watching cartoons of the experimental group was reduced to 1.24 hours, which was 46% less, and instead, the average daily time of watching red movies and TV was 1.3 hours; the average red book reading amount in the 6-month experimental period reached 3,240 thousand Chinese characters, and 180 red movies/episodes watched, which was 6 times and 18 times more than before the experiment, and also learned an average of 7 theme songs through red movies/episodes.

Through the silent inculcation of this large amount of red digital reading, the experimental group's

understanding of the history of the Chinese revolution, socialist core values and extracurricular reading also changed from “poor” to “good”, improving by two grades and developing good reading habits. They have also initially formed their personal ideals and beliefs. Influenced by the red movie, some students plan to study hard to become a scientist like Tu Youyou and develop an effective vaccine so that people around the world will not be infested by viruses such as the novel coronavirus; some students want to become excellent teachers like Zhang Guimei and train more talents for national construction; some students want to become the People’s Liberation Army to defend the motherland and the people, etc. In the final exam at the end of the experiment, the total score of the four courses of Chinese, Mathematics, moral character and English was 366 on average, which was 12% higher than before the experiment. 12% higher than before the experiment. It can be seen that through the red reading experiment, the students’ patriotic consciousness, ideal beliefs, learning attitude and academic achievement of the experimental group have been significantly improved.

In contrast, the relevant above-mentioned indexes in the control group did not change significantly from the pre-experimental period. The detailed data are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Red Reading, Ideal Beliefs, and Academic Performance of the Experimental Subjects before and after the Experiment

Survey test items	Pre-test		Significance	Post-test		
	Experimental Classes N=213 people	Control class N=214 people		Experimental Classes N=213 people	Control class N=214 people	Significance
Reading Materials	Anime Books	Anime Books		Red picture book/ films	Anime Books	
Reading Mode	A	A		B	A	
Daily reading time outside of class (hours)	0.21	0.22	.247	0.93	0.22	.000
The percentage of increase				338.10%	0	.000
Average daily reading amount (thousand Chinese characters)	3	3	.741	18	3	.000
Percentage of increase				500.00%	0	.000
Daily time to watch red film and television (hours)	0	0		1.3	0	.000

Daily time to watch cartoons and play video games per day (hours)	2.31	2.29	.253	1.24	2.30	.000
Percentage of reduction				46.32%	0	
Reading amount of extracurricular book in 6 months (thousand Chinese characters)	540	540	.316	3240	540	.000
Percentage of increase				500%	0	.000
Watching amount of red film and TV dramas in 6 months (episodes/dramas)	0	0	.971	180	0	.000
Percentage of increase				18,000%	0	.000
Status of extracurricular reading	Poor	Poor		Better	Poor	
Comprehension level of reading content	General	General		Better	General	
^① Degree of improvement				1 level		
Number of red songs that students can sing	5	5		12	5	
Percentage of increase				140%	0	
Knowledge of Chinese revolutionary history	Poor	Poor		Better	Poor	
Degree of improvement				2 levels	0	
Awareness of socialist core values	Poor	Poor		Better	Poor	
Degree of improvement				2 levels	0	
Patriotic Awareness	Average	Average		Better	Average	
Degree of improvement				1 level	0	
Learning Motivation	Average	Average		Better	Average	
Degree of improvement				1 level	0	
Status of ideals and beliefs	Unclear	Unclear		Preliminary Formation	Unclear	
^② Final exam results (points out of 400)	326.86	327.13	.283	366.31	331.74	.000
Percentage of increase				12.07%	1.41%	.000

Note. A: Independent reading of regular paper books; B: Digital reading of red picture books/films.

① The degree of improvement is divided into 3 grades: good, average and poor; ②The final examination results include 4 courses of Chinese, mathematics, moral character and English.

(2) Acceptance of the reading model by students, teachers and parents in the experimental group

Meanwhile, through questionnaires and group interview surveys, we found that students in the experimental group had a high level of recognition and support for the red digital reading model, with 87%, 97%, and 79% of students liking red picture books, movies, and songs, respectively; all teachers and parents also approved of this red reading education model. Detailed data are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Attitudes of Students, Teachers, and Parents in the Experimental Group toward This Reading Model

Survey Items	Number (people)	Percent (%)
Students who like red picture books (total number N=213)	185	86.85
Students who like red films and TV (N=213)	207	97.18
Students who like red songs (N=213)	168	78.87
Students who would like to continue using this digital reading model in the future (N=213)	209	98.12
Parents who approved the model (N=70)	70	100.00
Teachers who endorsed the model (N=10)	10	100.00

5. Conclusion

(1) The pre-test found that the students in the experimental group and the control group had lower reading time and reading amount outside of class, but the average time spent playing video games and watching cartoons was about 2.3 hours per day, they basically did not watch red films and TV, and their understanding and awareness of the history of the Chinese revolution and socialist core values was also poor, their patriotic consciousness and learning motivation were very average, and they also basically did not have a clear ideal belief in life pursuit, the total score of the final exam of four courses, Chinese, mathematics, moral character and English, was about 327 on average, and there was no significant difference between the two groups.

(2) Post-experimental survey found that: the students in the experimental group liked the activity of “reading red books + watching red movies” for one hour a day, their reading time and reading amount of red books/films increased significantly, their time spent on playing video games and watching cartoons decreased by 46% every day, their knowledge of Chinese revolutionary history and socialist core values, their patriotic awareness, ideal beliefs and enthusiasm for learning also improved significantly. Their knowledge of Chinese revolutionary history and socialist core values, patriotic awareness, ideal beliefs, and enthusiasm for learning have also been greatly improved, and their total

scores on the final exams of four courses - Chinese, mathematics, moral character, and English - have increased by 12% compared to the pre-experimental period, and their good reading habits and ambitious ideals have initially formed. In contrast, the control group, which did not carry out this reading activity and maintained the original learning and living condition, did not have significant changes in the above post-test indicators compared to the pre-test.

(3) Therefore, the experiment shows that “one hour of red digital reading per day” has a positive effect on the cultivation of Chinese children and youth into qualified successors of communism, and provides experience and reference for the cultivation and education of Chinese children and youth.

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