

Investigation on the Effect of Popularizing of National Reading Activities in Literary Society Construction Process of Huai'an

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Abstract:

National reading activities are important means to promote national competitiveness and cultural soft power. In recent years some achievements of national reading activities have been made and literary society is gradually forming in Huai'an. However, the shortcomings and problems still exist, restricting the comprehensive promotion of literary society. Based on the questionnaire survey, the public's reading level, public's evaluation of reading service facilities, and public's evaluation of reading activities have been analyzed and discussed. The findings are as follows. (1) The national reading activity in Huai'an has shown a positive phenomenon compared with the past. (2) With the increasing popularity of electronic media, digital reading has become the main reading form of the local residents. (3) There is a significant gap of reading levels between urban and rural areas, the reading rate, average daily reading time, utilization rate of public reading facilities, awareness rate of reading activities and reading participation rate of urban residents is far outnumber the rural residents. (4) The frequency and length of reading are positively correlated with educational background. (5) The difference of occupations has a great influence on the reading activities. Among all occupations, the comprehensive reading rate of teachers and students is the highest, and students read for the highest amount of time, and the reading participation rate of public official is the highest. (6) The utilization rate of reading service facilities, participation rate of reading activities and overall reading quality needs to be improved in future.

Key words: national reading activities, reading rate, reading time, reading forms, evaluation of reading activities

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1. Introduction

Reading is an important way for human beings to acquire knowledge, become capable and grow, and an important channel for improving national quality. The Chinese government attaches great importance to national reading. Since 2014, the policy of "promoting national reading and building a literary society" has been included in the government work report for

eight consecutive years. In recent years, all parts of the country and various departments have actively carried out reading promotion activities with distinct themes, rich content and various forms. The national reading activities has gradually gained popularity and reading atmosphere is increasingly strong. According to the national reading survey conducted by the Chinese Academy of Press and Publication, the comprehensive reading rate of Chinese adults from 2016 to 2020, including books, newspapers and digital publications, rose from 79.9% to 81.3%, and the reading rate of adult books rose from 58.4% to 59.3%. The exposure rate of digital reading methods (online reading, mobile reading, e-reader reading, Pad reading, etc.) increased from 64.0% to 79.4%^[1,2]. It can be seen that the frequency and way of reading have undergone some positive changes with the development and progress of the times.

Under the guidance of the "Literary China", a number of regional reading activities have been created across the country in the form of reading festivals, reading months, reading weeks, reading days and good book recommendations to actively build a local model of national reading. Among them, Literary China-Beijing Reading Season^[3], Literary China-Shanghai Week^[4], Literary Jingchu -Cultural Hubei^[5] and other national reading brands have been cultivated, attracting more and more residents to participate in reading activities. At the same time, the theoretical and practical research on the construction of "Literary society" began to appear. Chinese Academy of Press and Publication (2019)^[6] established a social index system of literary society by investigating residents' reading rate, reading amount, reading concept, popularity, utilization and satisfaction of reading public services. Zhang Zhang (2016)^[7] summarized the background and research status of the construction of literary city, analyzed the role of public library in the construction of literary city, and put forward specific strategies for public library to promote literary city from the perspective of index application. In addition, different scholars analyzed the status quo and problems of carrying out national reading and building literary cities based on different cities, such as Puyang City, Zhang Limin (2017)^[8]; Li Haiyan (2017)^[9]; Suzhou, Wang Xiaozhou (2018)^[10]; Xi'an, Sun Yang (2018)^[11]; Zhu Xiaohang (2021)^[12]; Xihu District, Hangzhou, Shan Hua (2021)^[13].

In recent years, the government of Huai'an City have carried out diversified and serialized reading activities for the whole people, and made some achievements in the establishment of literary city. However, compared with other cities in Jiangsu, especially several big cities in southern Jiangsu, Huai'an still has a certain gap, which is mainly reflected in the small number of model cities of scholarly cities and weak brand influence. In addition, until now no scholars have carried out a comprehensive and systematic study on the national reading situation of the whole people in Huai'an. Therefore, based on the questionnaire survey, this paper investigates and analyzes the effect of the national reading promotion activity of "Literary Huai'an", including the evaluation of residents' reading level, reading service facilities and reading activities, hoping to find the shortcomings and problems existing in Huai'an at present and provide reference for the future construction of literary city.

2. Purpose of the Investigation

According to the Decision of Promoting National Reading by the People's Congress of Jiangsu Province and the deployment of the construction of the “literary cities”, the Office of “National Reading Activities” of Jiangsu Province carries out the evaluation and selection of the demonstration cities (counties and urban areas) of the “literary cities” of Jiangsu Province every two years, and three times have been carried out so far.

According to the Index system of “literary cities” in Jiangsu Province, the evaluation indexes are divided into 4 first level indexes including reading facilities and services, reading promotion activities, national reading guarantee, and residents' reading level, 13 second level indicators and 41 third level indicators. There are three kinds of assessment methods including materials review and fields assessment mainly for the construction of reading facilities, the development of reading activities and the national reading guarantee, and reading status survey mainly for the reading level of residents.

Therefore, referring to the Index system of “literary cities” in Jiangsu Province, a questionnaire is designed, and several questionnaire surveys in various areas of Huai'an have been conducted, so as to comprehensively know the reading status of residents in Huai'an, analyze their reading behaviors, preferences and effectiveness, and evaluate the status quo of public reading services, which provides reference for Huai'an government and relevant departments to promote the construction of “a Literary city” and accelerate the construction of modern public reading service system.

3. Survey design and organization

3.1 Questionnaire design

This questionnaire is divided into four parts. The first part is to measure the basic information of the respondents, including gender, age, education background, occupation, etc. The second part is to test the public's reading level. The third part is to test the public's evaluation of reading service facilities, and the fourth part is to test the public's evaluation of reading activities.

3.2 Survey organization

(1) Respondents: The citizens aged 18-75 who have lived in Huai'an city for more than one year.

(2) Survey time: This survey was carried out for three times, respectively in May, July and September of 2022.

(3) Sample size: A total of 1050 questionnaires were issued, and 1000 valid questionnaires were collected. With reference to the urbanization rate of Huai'an city (65.7%), the ratio of urban and rural samples in this survey is 7:3.

4. Main structure of the survey sample

4.1 Gender composition

In all valid samples, male accounted for 51.6%, female accounted for 48.4%, which is quite close to the gender ratio of Huai'an in the 7th national census bulletin of Jiangsu Province.

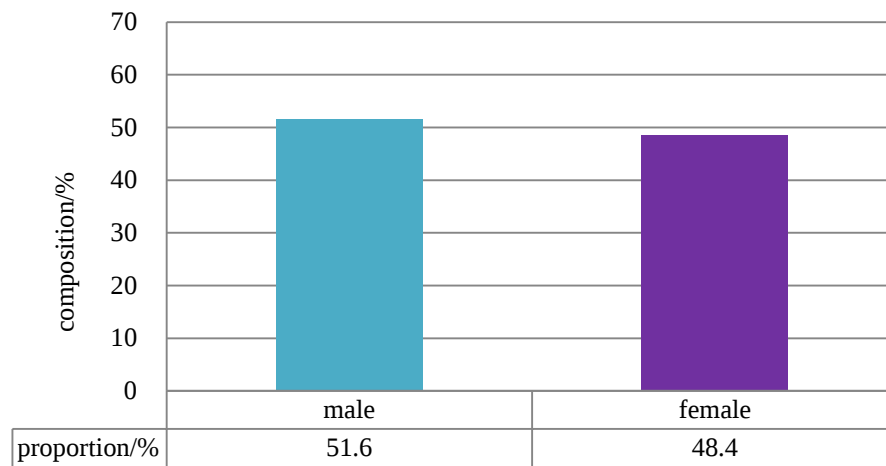


Figure1. Gender composition

4.2 Age composition

According to the distribution diagram of age composition of the respondents in Figure 2, the age range of this survey is wide, mainly distributed from 18 to 55 years old, which is also very consistent with the main subject of national reading.

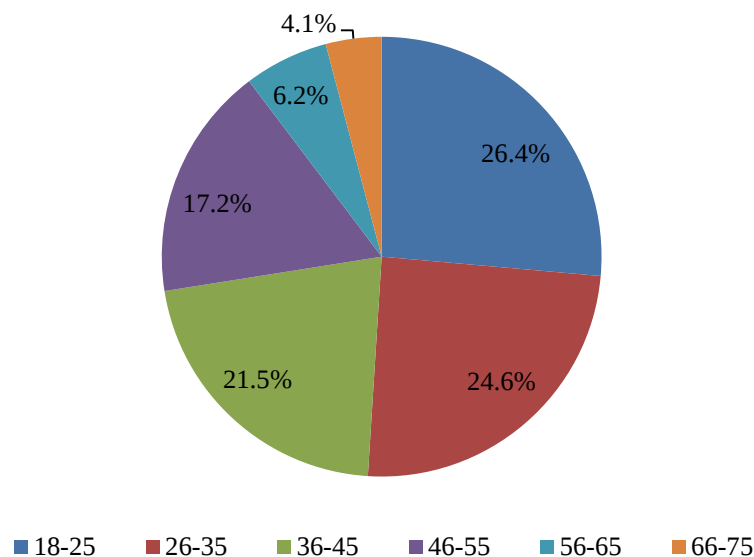


Figure 2. Age composition of respondents

4.3 Educational Level Composition

According to the distribution of education level of the respondents in Figure 3, the educational background of the respondents is mainly high school, accounting for more than 40%, followed by university and Junior middle school. And a small number of respondents have postgraduate degrees, mainly distributed in the 26-35 and 36-45 age groups, while those with primary school degrees are mainly older than 60 years old.

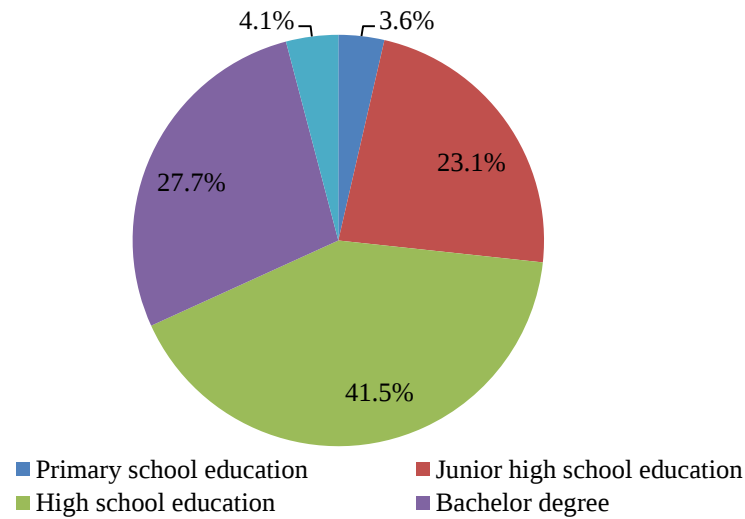


Figure 3. Education levels of respondents

4.4 Composition of employment status

According to the distribution chart of employment status of the survey subjects in Figure 4, the main occupations of the survey subjects are general staff, workers, service personnel, self-employed individual and agricultural personnel.

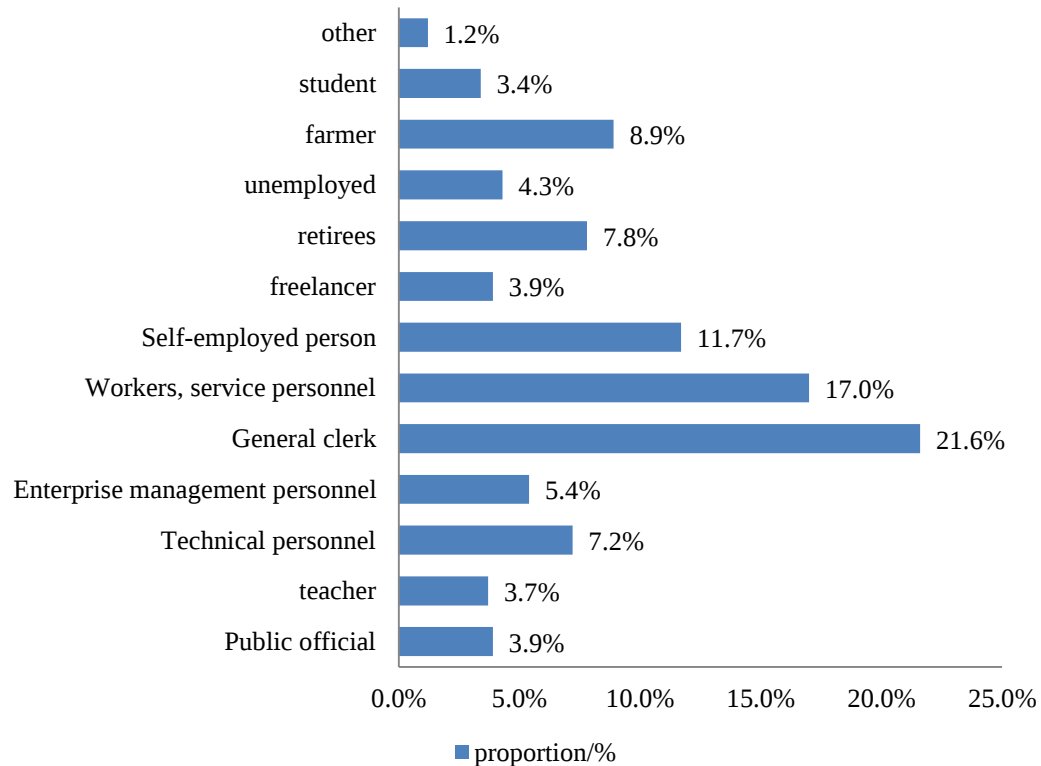


Figure 4. Employment status of respondents

5. Survey results and analysis

5.1 Comprehensive reading rate of residents

The comprehensive reading rate of residents refers to the proportion of permanent residents aged 18-75 in the total population who read books, newspapers, periodicals and other paper publications and digital publications (Computer, mobile phone, handheld reader, CD, etc.). It reflects the proportion of the total reading population and mainly reflects the reading participation of residents. Calculation formula: Comprehensive reading rate = the number of people aged 18-75 who have effective reading behavior (including reading paper publications and digital publications)/the number of people surveyed $\times 100\%$.

According to the survey, the comprehensive reading rate of Huai'an residents is 87.8%, an increase of 3.23 percent compared with 84.57% last year. In the survey sample, the reading rate of urban residents is 92.23%, which is significantly higher than that of rural residents (77.47%), indicating a significant gap in reading participation between urban and rural areas, as is shown in Figure 5.

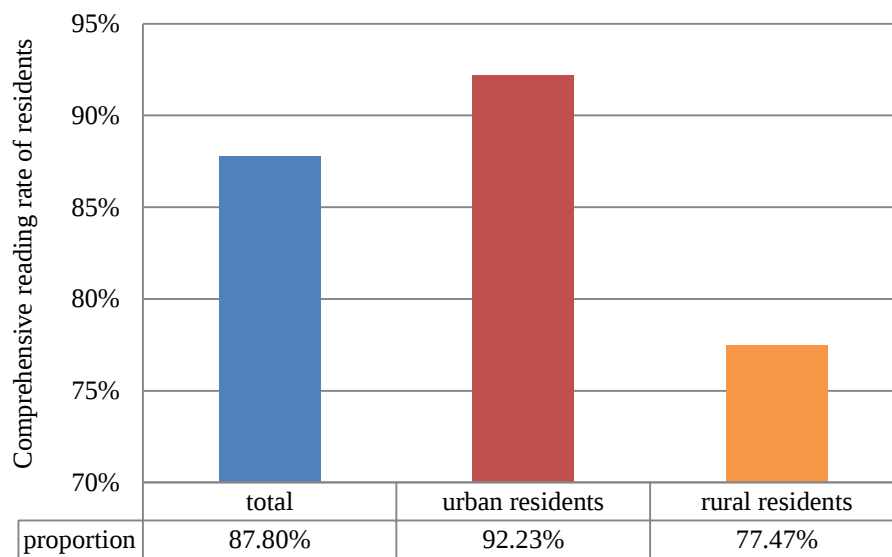


Figure 5. Comprehensive reading rate of residents

Among all valid samples, the comprehensive reading rate of male residents is 86.43%, slightly lower than 89.26% of female residents, indicating that women prefer reading.

There is a strong positive correlation between the level of education and the comprehensive reading rate. The higher the educational background is, the higher the comprehensive reading rate is, as shown in Figure 6. Only half of those with a primary school education had read, while only one of those with a postgraduate education had not.

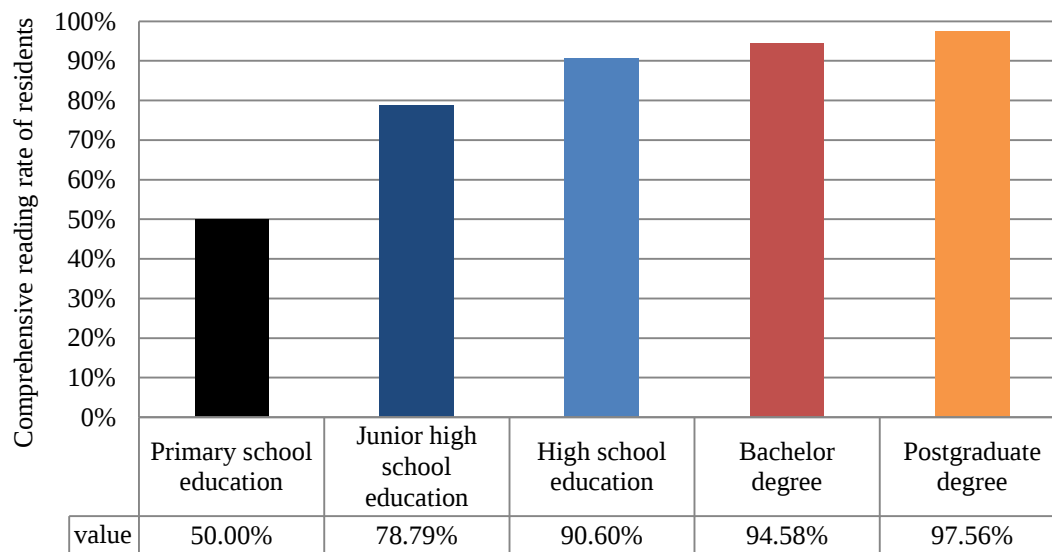


Figure 6. Comprehensive reading rate of residents with different levels of education

The difference of occupations has a great influence on the comprehensive reading rate. Among all occupations, the reading rate of teachers and students is the highest, reaching 100%. The reading rate of public official, company leaders/managers and professional and technical personnel is also relatively high, exceeding 95%. Among all occupations, the reading rate of unemployed people and agricultural personnel is relatively low, reaching 74.42% and 57.3% respectively, as shown in Figure 7.

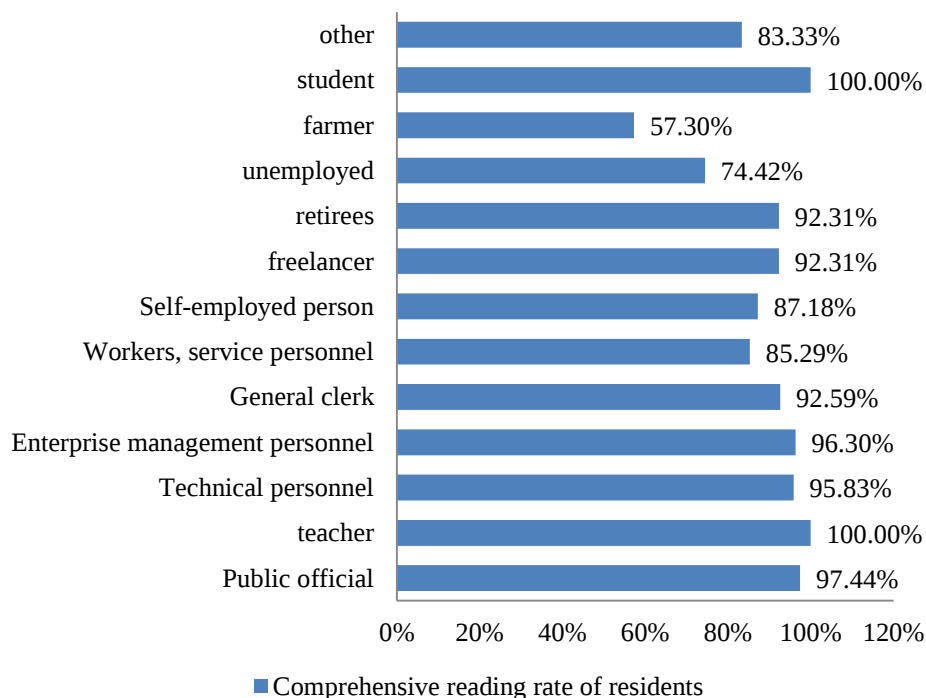


Figure 7. Comprehensive reading rate of residents of different occupations

5.2 Average reading time

Per capita reading time refers to the daily reading time of regular residents reading books, newspapers, periodicals and other paper publications and digital publications (Computer, mobile phone, handheld reader, CD, etc.).

According to the survey, the average daily reading time of Huai 'an residents is 81.75 minutes, an increase of 3.13 minutes compared with 2021. The average daily reading time of urban and rural residents are 83.56 minutes and 72.15 minutes, respectively, and urban residents are better than rural residents. In the city, 55.9% of residents read for more than one hour, an increase of 3.37% over 2021. The proportion of reading time of urban and rural residents is shown in Figure 8. More than half of urban and rural residents read for more than 1 hour a day. The gap between urban and rural residents is not obvious, but the proportion of urban residents who read for more than 2 hours and 3 hours a day shows a significant difference. This is closely related to the advanced nature of urban reading facilities, the superiority of reading environment and the better formation of reading habits.

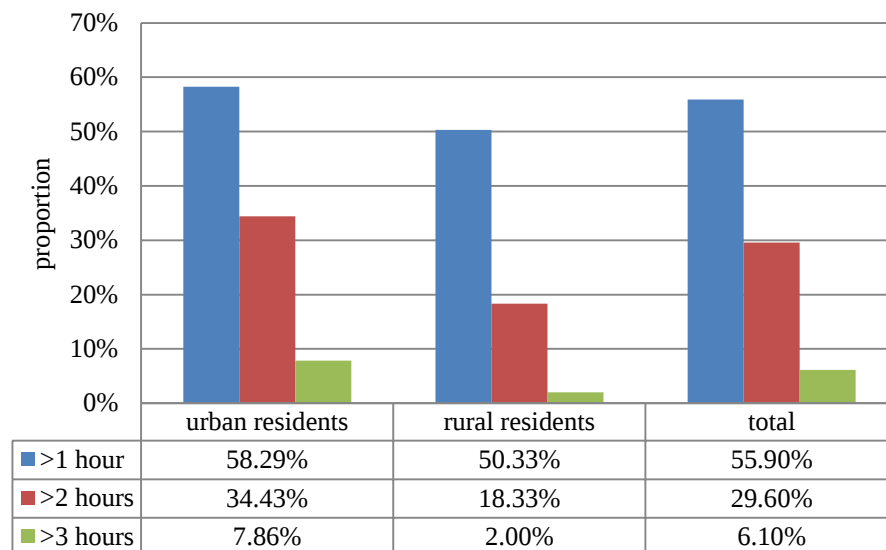


Figure 8. Different reading time ratios of urban and rural residents

The relationship between the average daily reading time of Huai 'an residents and their educational background is shown in Figure 9. It can be seen that the higher the educational background is, the longer the daily reading time is. Those with a graduate degree read an average of 135.50 minutes per day, compared with 23.45 minutes for those with a primary school degree.

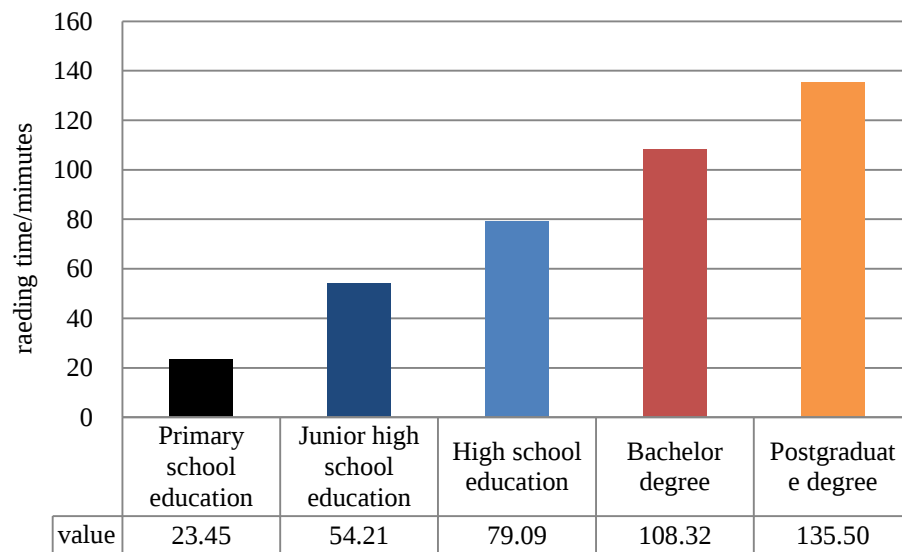


Figure 9. Daily reading time of residents with different degrees

The daily reading time of residents is greatly affected by occupation. Among all occupations, students read for the highest amount of time at 147.4 minutes per day, while teachers and civil servants/public institutions also read for more than two hours. Among all occupations, unemployed/unemployed people and those working in agriculture have the lowest reading time per day, especially those working in agriculture, who read for only 35.7 minutes per day.

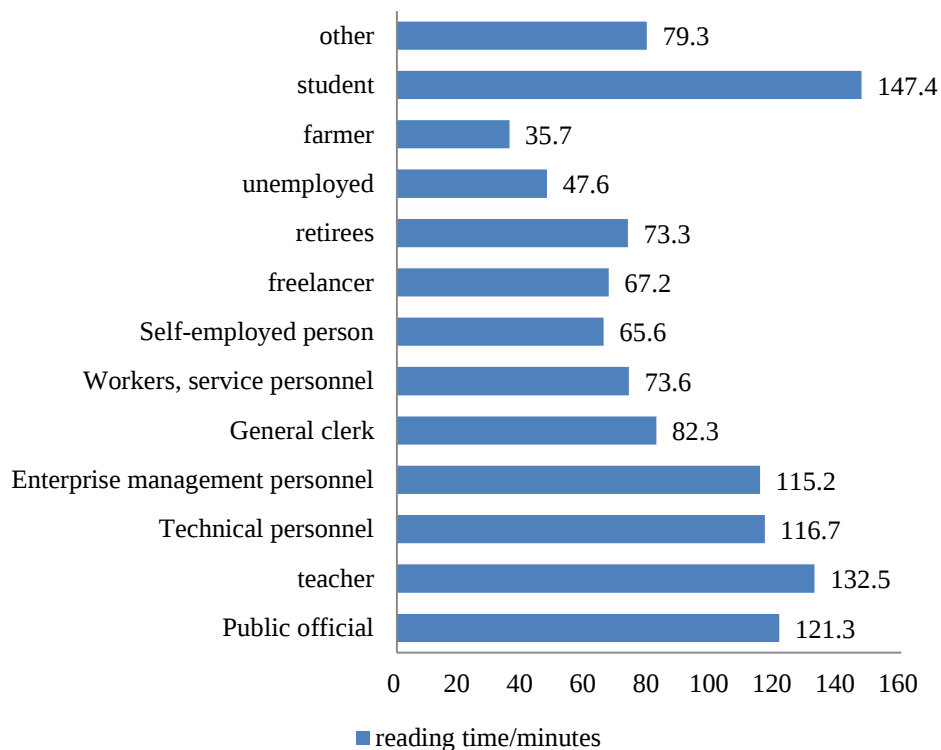


Figure 10. Daily reading time of residents of different occupations

5.3 Reading forms

5.3.1 Reading rate of three journals

The rate of reading paper books is 63.11%, 2.04% points lower than last year. The per capita number of reading printed books is 5.33, down 0.4 than that of last year. The reading rate of printed newspapers is 34.40%, 5.1% points lower than that of last year; The number of per capita printed newspapers reading is 48.45, decreased 3.4% than last year. The rate of printed magazines reading is 33.54%, 4.43% lower than that of last year; The per capita number of printed magazines reading is 4.62, decreased 0.6 than last year. The reading status of the whole city is shown in Figure 11.

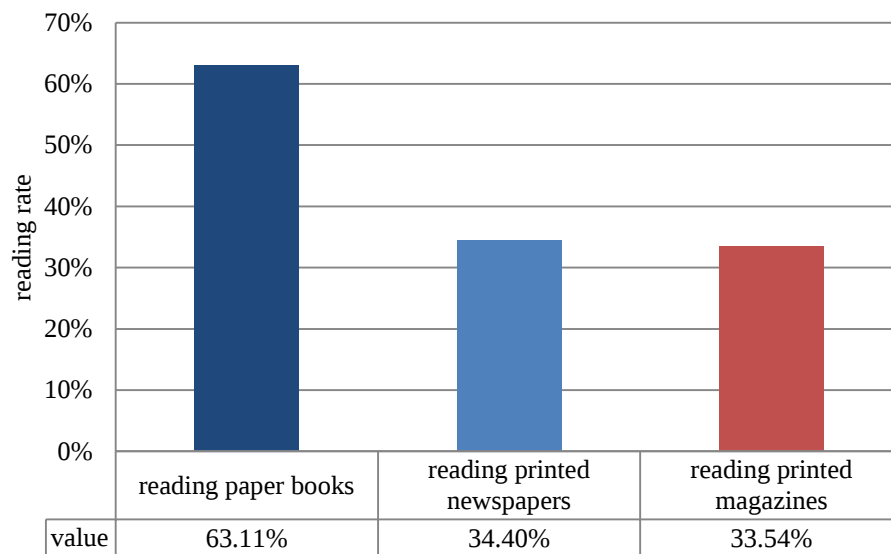


Figure 11. Reading rate of three journals

5.3.2. The rate of digital reading

With the increasing popularity of electronic media such as mobile phones and computers, digital reading has become the main reading form of the local residents. The rate of digital reading is 85.7%, which is higher than that of last year. The e-book reading rate is 62.32%, up 3.2% from that of last year; The per capita number of e-books reading is 9.38, up 0.9 from that of last year. The rate of listening of reading is 38.85%, 2.1% higher than that of last year; The number of books per person listening is 3.87, up 0.22 from that of last year.

5.3.3. Residents' reading channels

The survey shows that digital reading becomes the main way of reading, accounting for 68.27%; The second way is "self-purchase", accounting for 34.56%; Other ways of reading accounted for a relatively low proportion, namely, "reading in library " 20.98%, "reading in bookstores " 12.80%, Community "reading in mini library "8.50%, "other ways" 5.77%. The proportion of different reading forms for residents of Huai'an are shown in Figure 12.

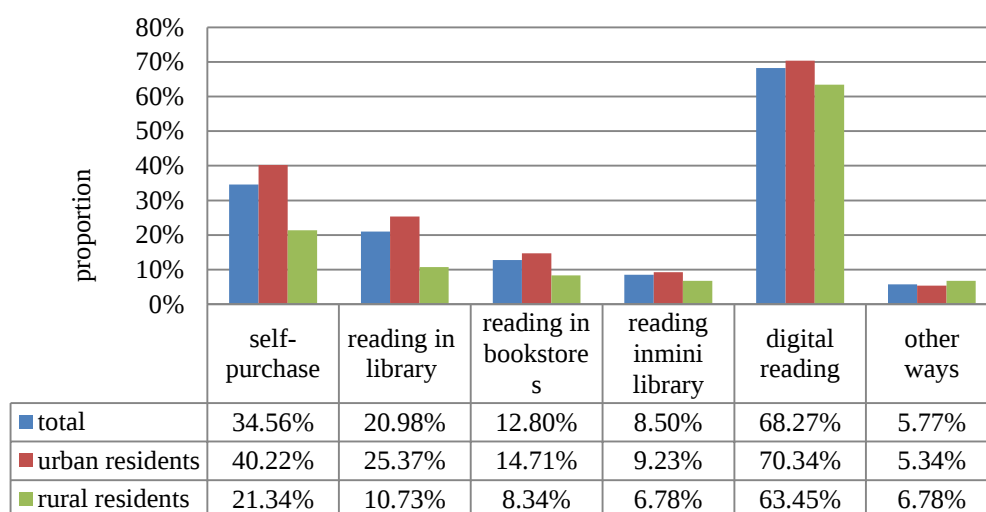


Figure 12. Distribution of residents' reading channels

5. 4 The evaluation of reading facilities and service

(1) The public awareness rate of reading facilities and service refers to the survey of residents' awareness of public reading facilities, reading activities and other public services, so as to investigate the popularity of public reading services, which reflects the coverage of reading public services and the financial input in it.

According to the survey, 75.8% of the residents in Huai 'an expresses that there are Reading Facilities in their community or near their residence (a 15-minute walk), which is higher than that of last year, and steadily increased. Among these reading service facilities, libraries and bookstores respectively accounted for 53.2% and 35.8%; The proportion of other reading facilities is 30.4% like community mini libraries and book reading bar, 21.7% in reading poster (screen) and 3.9% in other reading facilities, as shown in Figure 13.

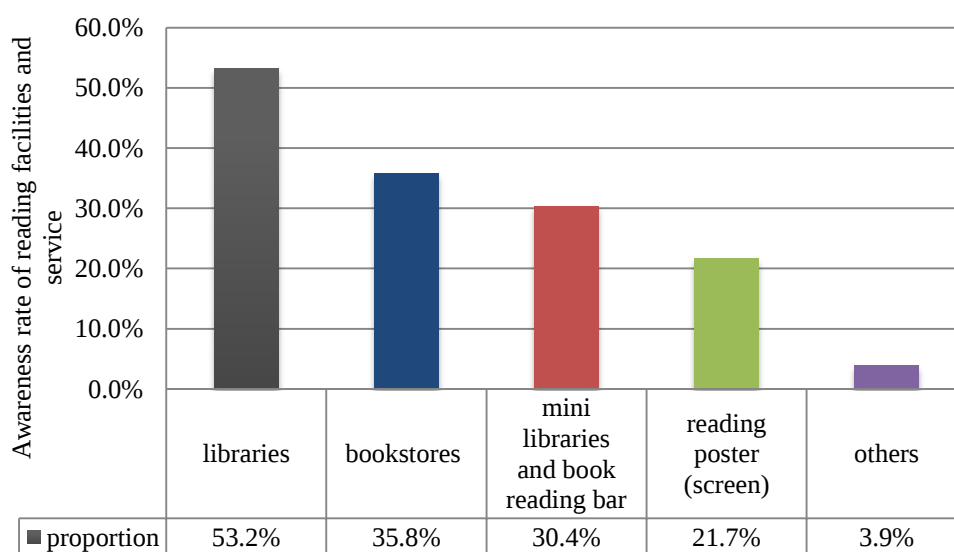


Figure 13. Public awareness rate of reading service facilities

(2) The utilization rate of public reading service facilities is to evaluate the utilization degree of public reading service through residents' use of public reading facilities. It includes the usage rate of public reading facilities, rural libraries and school libraries. The utilization rate of public reading service facilities reflects the actual situation of residents participating in reading activities, using reading facilities and enjoying reading services, and aptly evaluates the supply level of reading public services.

According to the survey, the utilization rate of public reading facilities in Huai'an city is 47.2%, among which the utilization rate of urban and rural residents is 54.8% and 32.3%, respectively. Compared with last year, the usage rate of reading service facilities increased by 2.18 percentage points. On the whole, the usage rate of reading service facilities was stable but increased.

(3) The satisfaction rate of public reading service facilities refers to the evaluation of residents' satisfaction with public reading facilities to examine the service quality of public reading services. The satisfaction degree of reading public service examines residents' satisfaction with reading facilities and reading activities, which is a direct reflection of the quality and effect of reading public service.

A further survey of those who had used reading facilities showed that 87.5% of residents were "satisfied" with the services provided by reading facilities, down 4.79 percentage points from last year; 11.9 percent said they were not satisfied, 0.2 percent said they were not satisfied, and 0.4 percent said they did not know.

5.5 Evaluation of reading activities

5.5.1 Awareness rate of reading activities

The awareness rate of reading activities is a survey of residents' awareness of public reading activities, which is used to investigate the popularity of public reading activities. The reading awareness rate of Huai'an residents was 43.6 percent, which was higher than last year, and the reading activity was further promoted. Among them, the awareness rate of reading activities of urban and rural residents was 49.4% and 28.3%, respectively. Compared with last year, the awareness rate of reading activities in both urban and rural areas increased significantly. All kinds of employment groups have different life circles, and there are obvious differences in reading activities: civil servants/public institution staff (88.2%), teachers (83.5%), students (71.2%), professional and technical personnel (60.3%), four groups carry out reading activities around relatively high proportion, more than 60%; Business leaders and managers (49.5 percent) and general employees (44.6 percent) exceeded the average. Others are below the average, in order of freelancers (35.5%), private and self-employed persons (33.5%), retired persons (31.4%), workers, business and service workers (28.5%), unemployed persons (24.4%), and agricultural persons (14.7%), as shown in Figure 14.

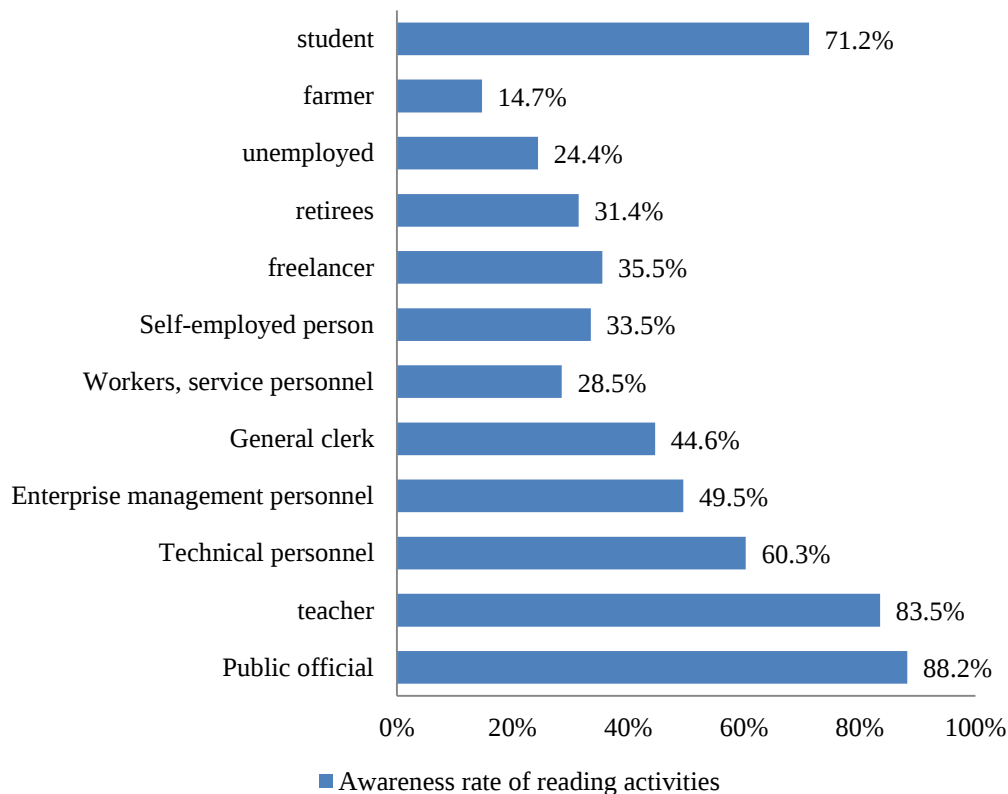


Figure 14. Awareness rate of reading activities

5.5.2 Participation rate of reading activities

The participation rate of the public in reading activities reflects the actual residents Participation in reading activities and how they enjoy reading services. The reading participation rate of Huaian residents is 25.1%, 1.9% higher than that of last year; Among them, the reading participation rate of urban and rural residents are respectively 28.5% and 15.3%, showing a significant difference between the two areas. The enthusiasm of different employment groups to participate in reading activities is also different. The reading participation rate of public official (65.3%), teachers (61.3%), students (44.2%), professional and technical personnel (40.2%), enterprise leaders or managers (27.5%), and general employees (25.9%) , and all of these exceed the average. By contrast, the participation rate of reading activities of other employment groups is below the average: freelancers (16.4%), self-employed people (15.6%), retired people (14.5%), workers, business and service workers (12.3%), unemployed people (12.4%) and farmers (7.3%). As shown in Figure 15.

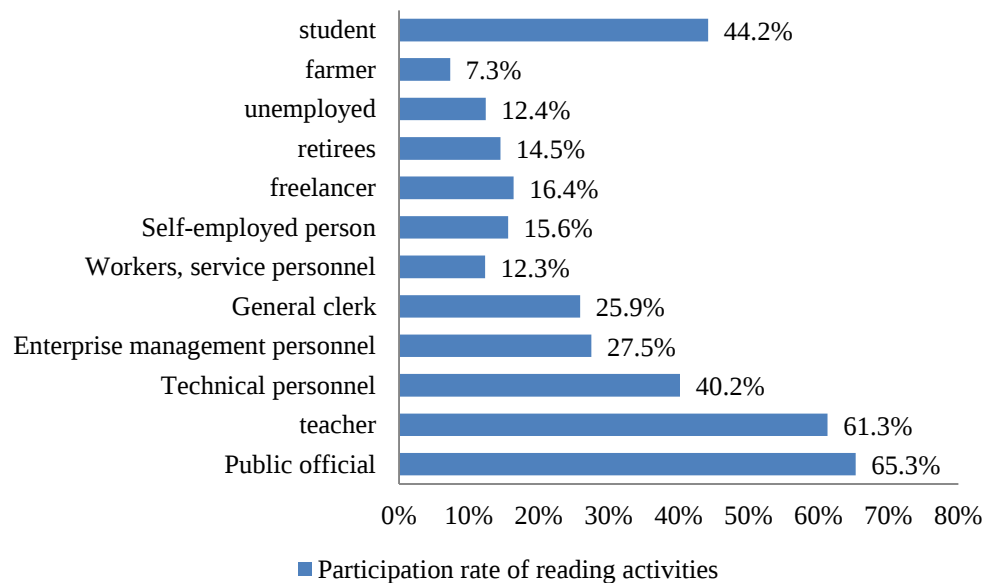


Figure 15. Participation rate of reading activities

5.5.3 Satisfaction rate of reading activities

The service quality of public reading service is investigated by evaluating residents' satisfaction of public reading activities. The index directly reflects the quality and effect of reading public services. A further survey of the residents who participate in reading activities shows that 93.40% is "satisfied" with reading activities, 2.38% high than that of last year; 6.35% said "ordinary quality", 0.13% said they were not satisfied, and 0.12% said they did not sure.

6. The problems found in Literary Huai'an

It is one of the important measures to promote national reading, optimize the reading environment, enhance national reading awareness and develop good reading habits, which is to improve national quality and realize "high-quality cultural development". According to the investigation results, there are still some problems.

(1) The overall reading quality is not high.

With the development of digital reading, residents increasingly rely on electronic media such as mobile phones to read and obtain information. From the category of mobile phone reading, news information and video accounted for the highest proportion, respectively first and second. Digital books, newspapers and articles ranked third and fourth, which fully shows the overall reading forms of residents tends to "fragmentation reading", and profounder and high-quality reading needs to be improved.

(2) The utilization rate of reading service facilities needs to be improved.

Although the construction of reading facilities and service is advancing comprehensively, it has not been effectively used. The awareness rate of residents is 75.8%, but the utilization rate is only 47.2%, which is not developing with the construction of reading facilities and service.

(3) The participation rate of reading activities is still low.

Although the coverage of reading activities in Huai'an has been expanded, the participation rate of reading activities is still low. The participation rate of reading activities is 25.1%, a little higher than that of 2021, but is still low.

(4) There is a significant gap of reading levels between urban and rural areas.

In terms of residents' comprehensive reading rate, per capita reading time, utilization rate of reading facilities and service, awareness rate and participation rate of reading activities, urban areas are much higher than rural areas, showing an obvious imbalance. National reading activities in rural areas still need strong support and help from the government.

(5) Reading level is low in low education, low income, the elderly and other disadvantaged groups.

Although various reading promotion activities have been carried out in Huai'an on a large scale, the influence on vulnerable groups such as those with low education, low income, the elderly and the disabled is weak, and the awareness rate and participation rate are low. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a certain support mechanism to improve the overall reading level of these residents.

7. Conclusion

Based on the questionnaire survey, this paper investigates and analyzes the effect of the national reading activity of "Literary Huai'an", including the evaluation of residents' reading level, reading service facilities and reading activities. The above research results can be summarized as follows.

(1) The national reading activity in Huai'an has shown a positive phenomenon. Compared to 2021, the following indicators showed increases, such as comprehensive reading rate, average daily reading time, utilization rate of public reading facilities, awareness rate of reading activities, satisfaction rate of reading activities.

(2) The way of reading shows the distinct characteristics of times. With the increasing popularity of electronic media such as mobile phones and computers, digital reading has become the main reading form of the local residents and the reading rate of paper books shows a downward trend.

(3) There is a significant gap of reading levels between urban and rural areas. First, the reading rate of urban residents is 92.23%, but rural residents is 77.47%. Second, the average daily reading time of urban is 83.56 minutes but rural residents is 72.15 minutes. Third, the utilization rate of public reading facilities of urban is 54.8% but rural residents 32.3%. Fourth, the awareness rate of reading activities of urban is 49.4% but rural residents is 28.3%. Fifth, the reading participation rate of urban residents is 28.5% but rural residents is 15.3%.

(4) Reading activities are closely related to academic qualifications. There is a strong positive correlation between comprehensive reading rate, average daily reading time and the level of education.

(5) The difference of occupations has a great influence on the reading activities. Among all occupations, the comprehensive reading rate of teachers and students is the highest, and students

read for the highest amount of time at 147.4 minutes per day, and the reading participation rate of public official is the highest at 65.3%.

(6) The utilization rate of reading service facilities, participation rate of reading activities and overall reading quality needs to be improved. In addition, among the disadvantaged groups, such as those with low education, low income, the elderly and the disabled, the awareness rate and participation rate of the whole people in reading are relatively low, so it is necessary to establish a certain support mechanism.

Finally, it is suggested that the local government needs to continue to optimize the reading channels, give full play to the promotion forces of all sectors of society, focus on the characteristic reading activities to create a positive reading atmosphere and establish a support mechanism for vulnerable groups to improve their reading levels.

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